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The Lived Experiences of Individuals with Body Dysmorphic Issues in the Use of Social Media

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Article Info

Abstract

The influence of social media on mental health has become a critical area of study, particularly concerning its impact on individuals with Body Dysmorphic Issues (BDI). This research explores the lived experiences of individuals with Body Dysmorphic Issues in the use of social media, aiming to understand how these platforms affect their self-perception, psychological well-being, and coping mechanisms. Through a qualitative phenomenological approach, this study focuses on individuals aged 19 to 65 from Cabuyao and Santa Rosa, Laguna, who self-identify as having BDI. In-depth interviews revealed key themes such as the pressure to conform to idealized beauty standards, heightened social comparison and self-objectification, psychological distress, and the search for positive online spaces. Participants reported significant emotional struggles, including anxiety, low self-esteem, and compulsive behaviors, exacerbated by constant exposure to curated images on social media. Despite these challenges, some individuals adopted coping mechanisms, such as limiting social media usage and following body-positive accounts. The study emphasizes the profound role of social media in shaping body image perceptions among individuals with BDI and highlights the need for targeted interventions, including media literacy programs and supportive online communities. This research contributes to the broader discourse on mental health and social media, offering insights for mental health professionals, educators, and policymakers.

1. Introduction

Social media has revolutionized the way individuals communicate, interact, and perceive themselves. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and Facebook have become integral to daily life, offering users the ability to curate and share their lives through images and videos. However, this constant exposure to curated content has profound implications on self-perception, particularly among individuals with Body Dysmorphic Issues (BDI). Body Dysmorphic Issue (BDI) refers to a psychological condition characterized by an obsessive preoccupation with perceived flaws or defects in one's appearance. These flaws, often minor or imagined, can cause significant emotional distress and interfere with daily functioning. While Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD) is a clinically recognized condition, many individuals experience subclinical symptoms, collectively referred to as BDI. The lived experiences of individuals with Body Dysmorphic Issues in the use of social media highlight a complex relationship between online content and self-perception. Studies have shown that social media platforms, especially those emphasizing visual content, contribute to heightened body dissatisfaction and self-objectification (Ryding & Kuss, 2020). The constant exposure to idealized beauty standards fosters social comparison, leading to negative self-evaluations and psychological distress.

In Cabuyao and Santa Rosa, Laguna, where social media usage is prevalent, individuals struggling with BDI face unique challenges. The pervasive nature of social media, combined with societal beauty standards, exacerbates feelings of inadequacy and body dissatisfaction. This study seeks to explore the lived experiences of these individuals, focusing on how social media influences their self-perception, emotional well- being, and coping strategies.

By examining the lived experiences of individuals with Body Dysmorphic Issues in the use of social media, this research aims to provide valuable insights for mental health professionals, educators, and policymakers. Understanding these experiences is crucial for developing targeted interventions that promote media literacy, body positivity, and psychological resilience.

2. Methodology

A. Research Design

This qualitative study utilized a phenomenological approach to deeply explore the lived experiences of individuals with Body Dysmorphic Issues in the use of social media. Phenomenology was selected for its focus on understanding and interpreting the subjective, lived experiences of individuals. This approach enabled the researchers to capture the nuanced ways in which social media influences the thoughts, emotions, and behaviors of individuals with BDI.

The phenomenological method allowed participants to share their personal narratives in their own words, providing rich, detailed insights into their experiences. This approach emphasized empathy and understanding, aiming to uncover the essence of how social media impacts self-perception and psychological well-being among individuals with BDI.

A. Research Locale

The study was conducted in Cabuyao and Santa Rosa, Laguna, urban areas characterized by high social media engagement. These locations were chosen due to the prevalence of social media use among residents, providing a relevant context for examining its impact on body image and mental health. Both cities offer a blend of urbanization and cultural diversity, contributing to varied experiences among participants.

B. Population and Sampling

Data collection was conducted using semi-structured interview guides designed to explore participants' thoughts, emotions, and behaviors related to social media use and body image. The interview questions were developed based on existing literature and validated by mental health professionals to ensure sensitivity and appropriateness.

The semi-structured format allowed for flexibility, enabling participants to elaborate on their experiences while ensuring that key topics were consistently addressed across interviews. This approach facilitated deep, meaningful conversations that captured the complexity of participants' lived experiences.

C. Research Participants

The intended respondents were individuals who self-identified as experiencing Body Dysmorphic Issues in the use of social media. Participants ranged from 19 to 65 years old and were residents of Cabuyao and Santa Rosa, Laguna. The inclusion criteria required participants to be active social media users and to have experienced symptoms of BDI, such as obsessive focus on perceived flaws and body dissatisfaction.

Participants were recruited through online advertisements, local mental health organizations, and community outreach. Efforts were made to ensure diversity in terms of age, gender, and social media usage patterns to capture a wide range of experiences. A total of ten participants were selected, representing various demographics and providing rich, diverse insights into the lived experiences of individuals with BDI.

D. Research Instrumentation

The researchers used a specially designed semi- structured interview guide to explore the lived experiences of individuals with Body Dysmorphic Issues in the use of social media. This guide was developed to ensure comprehensive data collection while allowing participants the freedom to express their thoughts and emotions fully.

The interview guide was validated by professionals in the field of mental health to ensure that the questions were sensitive, relevant, and capable of eliciting in-depth responses. It covered key areas such as social media usage patterns, perceptions of body image, psychological impacts, and coping mechanisms.

To enhance the reliability of the findings, the researchers also utilized a pre-interview questionnaire aimed at gathering demographic information and assessing participants' general social media habits. This questionnaire provided context for the qualitative data collected during the interviews.

The interview guide included both open-ended and probing questions, allowing for a flexible and adaptive approach to data collection. This format enabled participants to share detailed narratives about their experiences, providing rich data for analysis.

E. Data Gathering Procedure

A letter of request to conduct the study was prepared. The researcher constructed an interview guide, validated by experts in the field, and then the interview schedules were arranged at Cabuyao and Santa Rosa, Laguna. After obtaining the necessary approval, the researchers coordinated with local mental health professionals and community leaders to identify and recruit participants who fit the study's criteria. A list of potential participants, who self-identified as having experienced symptoms of Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD) measured as Body Dysmorphic Issues (BDI) but without a clinical diagnosis, was compiled with the help of local organizations. The list included individuals aged 19 to 65 years old who were active social media users.

The researchers prepared a validated interview guide, which was reviewed by experts in the field of psychology to ensure its appropriateness and sensitivity. The guide included a mix of open-ended and probing questions designed to elicit comprehensive responses regarding participants' experiences with BDI and social media use. Upon contacting the participants, the researchers scheduled face-to-face and virtual interviews based on participant availability and preference. Each session began with an explanation of the study's purpose, emphasizing the importance of their honest responses. Informed consent was obtained, ensuring participants understood the confidentiality and voluntary nature of the study.

During the interviews, the researchers clarified any terms or questions to help participants provide accurate and insightful responses. Field notes were taken alongside audio recordings

to capture non-verbal cues and contextual details.

After completing the initial interviews, the researchers transcribed the recordings and began the process of coding the data. Coding involved categorizing and organizing qualitative data to identify recurring themes and patterns. Responses were classified based on similarities, and initial themes were established. The researchers then conducted follow-up interviews to delve deeper into emerging themes and clarify participant responses. These follow-up sessions aimed to validate initial findings and explore subthemes that required further investigation.

The final step involved synthesizing the data to develop a comprehensive understanding of the lived experiences of individuals with Body Dysmorphic Issues in the use of social media. The findings were then used to draw conclusions and formulate recommendations aimed at addressing the psychological impacts of social media on individuals with BDI.

Throughout the entire data gathering process, ethical considerations were strictly followed, ensuring participant confidentiality, informed consent, and emotional support when needed.

H. Ethical Consideration
To ensure the rights, dignity, and privacy of the members, researchers need to protect the members, develop trust, promote the integrity of research and guard against misconduct and impropriety. All the members' personal and identifying information and their answers to the questionnaire were given the utmost importance. Ethical consideration was also applied in disclosing any identifying information.

3. Results and Discussions
This chapter presents the themes collected from the participants, aiming to explore and interpret the lived experiences of individuals with Body Dysmorphic Issue in the use of social media. It presents the analysis and discussion of findings, connecting them to the study's objectives and theoretical framework. Through this approach, a deeper understanding of their unique challenges and perspectives is sought.

Table 1: Superordinate theme for research question number one is the influence of Social media on individuals with Body Dysmorphic Issues. It's subordinate themes are body dissatisfaction, influence of popular figures with the trends, beauty contents and fitness trends and platform- specific effects.

Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Theme	Description
The Influence of Social Media Use on Individuals with Body Dysmorphic Issues	Body Dissatisfaction	Participants feel dissatisfaction with their appearance due to unrealistic portrayals of beauty on social media, leading to a desire to alter physical features.
	Influence of Popular Figures with the Trends	. Celebrity culture and trending body ideals on platforms like Instagram and TikTok reinforce specific beauty standards, causing self-comparison and impacting self-esteem.
	Beauty Contents and Fitness Trends	Exposure to fitness routines, makeup tutorials, and slimming trends on social media creates pressure to conform to specific beauty standards, influencing participants' self-objectification and self-care routines.
	Platform-Specific Effects	The nature of different platforms (e.g., visual focus on Instagram, interactive trends on TikTok) uniquely impacts users' self-perception and sense of body image.

1.1 The Influence of Social Media Use on Individuals with Body Dysmorphic Issues (BDI)
Social media significantly impacts individuals with Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD), often worsening body dissatisfaction through constant exposure to idealized body types. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube promote unrealistic beauty standards, leading to comparison, self-criticism, and behaviors like body checking and validation-seeking. Studies highlight how social media reinforces BDD symptoms. For instance, Khanna and Sharma (Putman, 2021) presented a case of a 21-year-old woman whose BDD was worsened by excessive social media use.

Worrall (2020) noted that societal beauty standards, amplified by platforms like Instagram and Facebook, pressure young adults, leading to issues like disordered eating and exercise addiction.

Sulistyo et al. (2022) emphasized that rapid information spread on social media increases body dissatisfaction and eating disorders among youth due to unrealistic portrayals. Gupta et al. (2023) found a two-way link between appearance-focused social media use and BDD symptoms, driven by perfectionism and validation- seeking behaviors. Lastly, Castle, Rossell, and Kyrios (2020) highlighted that older adults are also affected, with exposure to youth-centric

content contributing to body dissatisfaction and BDD development.

Subordinate 1: Body Dissatisfaction
Participants expressed feelings of body dissatisfaction influenced by social media. They frequently compare themselves to others, leading to frustration over their own physical features. Regular mirror-checking, stress from perceived flaws (e.g., eye bags, weight gain), and the desire for cosmetic enhancements were common. Studies (Roberts *et al.*, 2022; Castle *et al.*, 2020; Di Gesto *et al.*, 2022) highlight that social media fosters body dissatisfaction across age groups, increasing risks of BDD, depression, low self-esteem, and an obsession with unattainable beauty standards.
Subordinate 2: Influence of Popular Figures with the Trends
Participants revealed how celebrities and influencers impact their body image. Admiration for figures like Marian Rivera led to insecurities, especially when they couldn't replicate trends like wearing bikinis. However, some influencers, like Nana Silayro, promote body positivity, boosting self-confidence. Research (Kataoka, 2023; Hafeez & Zulfiqar, 2023) supports that idealized portrayals of beauty (often Western-centric) in media can lead to body dissatisfaction,

particularly in cultures that impose strict beauty norms on women.
Subordinate 3: Beauty Content and Fitness Trends Social media trends around makeup, fitness, and fashion amplify insecurities. Participants discussed pressures from beauty content, such as makeup tutorials and fitness influencers, leading to unhealthy comparisons. Lack of exercise and changes in body shape led to feelings of inadequacy. Studies (Phillips *et al.*, 2019; Craythorne, 2020) emphasize that social media fosters obsessive behaviors, such as excessive grooming or hiding perceived flaws, exacerbating BDD symptoms.
Subordinate 4: Platform-Specific Effects Participants highlighted how different platforms affect self-image. Facebook was seen as a space for casual sharing but also a source of negative comments, while Instagram promoted curated, idealized content, leading to self-comparison. TikTok was both entertaining and triggering due to beauty trends. YouTube was seen as more positive, offering self-improvement content. Studies (Adkins, 2018; Santiago *et al.*, 2023) found that image-centric platforms like Instagram and Snapchat are particularly harmful to body image, intensifying BDD symptoms through curated and idealized content.

Table 2: Superordinate theme is coping mechanisms and self-acceptance. It's subordinate themes are positive content consumption, support networks, self-monitoring and routine body checks

Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Theme	Description
Coping Mechanisms and Self-Acceptance	Positive Content Consumption	Engaging with body-positive content or limiting exposure to certain media helps some individuals manage the negative impact of social media on their body image.
	Support Networks	Consulting with trusted individuals and using social media in a more constructive manner aids in coping with beauty standard pressures.
	Self-Monitoring and Routine Body Checks	Individuals frequently check their appearance in mirrors to assess physical changes, particularly concerning body shape, weight, and facial features. Some individuals engage in regular checks like weighing themselves or inspecting for signs of health changes post-exercise.
	Limiting Exposure on Social Media	Limiting media consumption reduces exposure to negative content.

1.2 Coping Mechanisms and Self-Acceptance
Coping with body dysmorphic issues (BDI) involves developing healthy strategies and fostering self- acceptance. Positive content consumption is a key approach, where individuals engage with uplifting social media content that promotes body diversity, self-love, and mental well-being. Curating feeds to showcase empowering messages helps counteract negative, idealized images that trigger BDD symptoms.

Limiting social media exposure is another effective method. Constantly viewing appearance-focused content on platforms like Instagram or TikTok can worsen body dissatisfaction. Setting boundaries, such as reducing screen time and unfollowing harmful accounts, helps minimize triggers and fosters healthier habits.
Support networks play a vital role in recovery. Emotional validation from friends, family, or therapy groups helps individuals challenge distorted body beliefs and reduces

feelings of isolation. Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is often used to help reframe negative thoughts and promote healthier self-perceptions.

Managing self-monitoring and routine body checks is crucial. These behaviors can heighten distress and reinforce negative body image. Strategies like limiting mirror checks and practicing mindfulness help reduce compulsive behaviors. Over time, these methods can ease body dissatisfaction and promote self-acceptance.

Subordinate 1: Positive Content Consumption

Participant 1: "Ah, nagbabasa ako sa social media ng mga positive things, mga motivation, at higit sa lahat, mga tungkol kay God."

Participant 2: "Kagaya kanina, pinipili ko lang yung mga positive na content. Nililimit ko yung mga pinapanood kong videos kung hindi naman makakatulong sa akin."

Participant 4: "Nag-i-spread ako ng positivity tungkol sa body dysmorphic, lalo na nang napanood ko si Nana Silayro, yung morena girl na nagpa-enhance talaga ng confidence ko. May content siya tungkol sa pagiging chubby niya at morena na nagpakita ng imperfections niya habang naka-bikini. Dun ko na-realize na hindi lahat ng tao perfect."

According to the American Psychological Association (APA) (2024), youths who halved their social media use for a few weeks reported improved body image. Limiting exposure to distressing content, practicing positive self-talk, and seeking professional support can significantly help.

Subordinate 2: Support Networks

Participant 3: "Social media comments, wala ng effect sakin pero my mom's comment triggers me. Pag sinabi niyang 'uy payat ka na,' I feel good. Pero kada kain ko iniisip ko na baka hindi ko na kailangan kumain pa. Usually, kinokonsulta ko boyfriend ko o friend ko, lalo na yung friend kong nutritionist."

Participant 4: "Naranasan ko rin yung sa ex ko, na parang nako-compare ako. Pero buti na lang ngayon may supportive akong boyfriend na tinatanggap ako kung sino ako."

According to Mind Organization (2022), supporting someone with BDD involves acknowledging their emotions, providing nonjudgmental support, and fostering open communication. Encouraging gradual exposure to distressing situations and connecting with support groups can aid recovery.

Subordinate 3: Self-monitoring and Routine Body Checks

Participant 1: "Maraming beses kong tinitingnan ang sarili ko sa salamin para makita kung may nagbabago sa katawan ko. Kapag napapansin kong lumalaki ang tiyan ko o nagkaka-eye bags ako, naiinis ako."

Participant 3: "Dati araw-araw akong nagtitimbang, minsan tatlong beses pa sa isang araw. After kumain o mag-exercise, tinitimbang ko agad sarili ko. Sa salamin din, halos araw-araw akong nagche-check lalo na kapag pumipili ng damit."

According to Gryncewicz, A. (2023), individuals with BDD often engage in obsessive body checking, such as frequent weighing or mirror checking, which exacerbates distress and negatively impacts daily life.

Subordinate 4: Limiting Exposure on Social Media

Participant 3: "Sinusunod ko yung payo na i-skip yung videos na nakakatrigger sakin sa TikTok. Mas ginagamit ko YouTube para sa mga exercise videos. I-limit ang TikTok at mas piliin yung platforms na may positive impact."

Participant 5: "Para mabawasan yung negative impact ng social media, nagli-limit ako ng screen time. Mas nagfo-focus ako sa hobbies tulad ng pagwo-workout o paglalaro ng basketball para hindi ako masyadong nagbababad online."

According to Mayo Clinic (2024), exposure therapy encourages individuals with BDD to face distressing situations while avoiding compulsive behaviors, like excessive mirror checking. Reducing social media exposure and engaging in non-appearance-focused activities are recommended strategies.

Research Question #1: Lived Experiences of Individuals with Body Dysmorphic Issues on Social Media Individuals with Body Dysmorphic Issues (BDI) face significant challenges on social media due to the constant exposure to idealized beauty standards. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube amplify self-comparison and self-objectification, leading to negative self-perceptions, anxiety, and dissatisfaction with appearance. Influencer culture and beauty trends intensify body shame, pushing individuals towards coping mechanisms like body-checking or curating positive content. Some limit exposure to triggering content, engage in fitness routines, or seek support from friends, family, or therapy to foster self-acceptance and navigate the pressures of social media.

Research Question #2: Participants' Lived Experiences and Emerging Themes

Participant 1: A Zumba dancer and mother who enjoys social media but struggles with self-scrutiny. She copes through spiritual readings, body-positive content, and fitness.

Participant 2: A coffee shop owner and Zumba dancer who balances self-acceptance with societal pressures. Though she expresses contentment, she still compares herself to others.

Participant 3: A professor who has struggled with body image since 18. She limits exposure to triggering content, relies on support from loved ones, and balances her well-being through exercise and mindfulness.

Participant 4: A call center agent who has overcome many BDD struggles thanks to her supportive partner, focusing on self-acceptance and confidence despite insecurities.

Participant 5: A fitness enthusiast who manages self-comparison by limiting social media use, focusing on personal goals, and maintaining a healthy mindset.

Research Question #3: Emerging Themes from Qualitative Data

1. The Influence of Social Media on Individuals with Body Dysmorphic Issues

Social media creates an environment where unrealistic beauty ideals dominate, significantly impacting individuals' self-perception and body image. This influence can manifest in several ways:

A. Body Dissatisfaction

Participants often feel dissatisfied with their physical appearance due to the proliferation of edited and idealized images on social media. The constant exposure to these portrayals fosters a sense of inadequacy, pushing individuals to desire physical alterations such as cosmetic procedures or extreme dieting. This dissatisfaction can also lead to decreased self-esteem and feelings of unworthiness.

B. Influence of Popular Figures with the Trends

Celebrity endorsements and the widespread popularity of specific beauty trends on platforms like Instagram and TikTok reinforce unattainable standards. These platforms amplify messages that link physical attractiveness to success and happiness, compelling users to compare themselves to influencers and celebrities. This comparison intensifies feelings of inadequacy and creates pressure to emulate these

trends.

C. Beauty Content and Fitness Trends
The prominence of beauty-related content, such as makeup tutorials, fitness routines, and weight-loss programs, perpetuates rigid beauty norms. This content pressures users to adhere to idealized body standards, often leading to self-objectification. Many individuals internalize these ideals, leading to obsessive self-monitoring and the adoption of harmful habits to conform to societal expectations.

D. Platform-Specific Effects
Each social media platform uniquely shapes users' perceptions of beauty. For example, the visual emphasis on Instagram encourages users to present the most attractive version of themselves, while interactive features on TikTok can magnify body-focused trends. These platform-specific dynamics create a tailored environment that reinforces self-comparison and body insecurities.

3. Coping Mechanisms and Self-Acceptance
Despite the negative effects of social media, some individuals develop strategies to combat its harmful influence and foster self-acceptance:

A. Positive Content Consumption
Engaging with body-positive content and influencers who challenge traditional beauty standards can provide a healthier perspective. Limiting exposure to harmful media and focusing on messages of self-love and diversity help individuals manage their body image issues and build resilience against societal pressures.

B. Support Networks
Relying on trusted individuals, such as family, friends, or support groups, enables users to process the unrealistic standards perpetuated by social media. Constructive discussions about self-worth and the curated nature of online content help mitigate negative influences, providing a balanced and grounded outlook.

C. Self-Monitoring and Routine Body Checks
Individuals experiencing body dysmorphic tendencies often engage in habitual self-monitoring. This includes frequently checking mirrors to assess perceived flaws, weighing themselves obsessively, or scrutinizing post-exercise changes. These behaviors stem from an overemphasis on physical appearance and can exacerbate body image concerns, trapping individuals in a cycle of self-criticism and insecurity.

D. Limiting Exposure on Social Media
Limiting exposure to harmful content plays a crucial role. Individuals can reduce time spent on platforms that amplify beauty standards or unfollow accounts that promote comparison and insecurities. This conscious effort, supported by trusted networks, helps individuals detach from negative influences and create healthier media consumption habits.

4. Discussion
The study focused on lived experiences of individuals with body dysmorphic issues in the use of social media. The core questions that guided the research were as follows:
1. What is the lived experiences of individuals with Body Dysmorphic Issues in the use of social media?
2. What themes emerge based on the analysis of qualitative data?

3. Based on the findings of the study, what intervention program for clinically diagnosed individuals with Body Dysmorphic Issues in the use of social media may propose?

The study examined the lived experiences of individuals with Body Dysmorphic Issues in the Use of Social Media, focusing on their challenges, coping mechanisms, and daily routines. Participants highlighted self-objectification and self-comparison that leads for having the criteria of having Body Dysmorphic Issues. They navigated these pressures through the influence of social media on individuals with BDI. Despite the issues, participants experience self-acceptance.

The findings revealed two major themes that defined participants' experiences: (1) the influence of social media on individuals with Body Dysmorphic Issues and (2) Coping Mechanisms and Self-Acceptance. Under this two major themes are the eight (sub-themes: (1) Body Dissatisfaction, (2) Influence of Popular Figure on Trends, (3) Beauty Contents and Fitness Trends, (4) Platform-Specific Effects, (5) Positive Content Consumption, (6) Support Networks, (7) Self-Monitoring and Routine Body Checks and (Limiting Exposure on Social Media. Together, these themes highlighted their lived experience as someone who uses social media with Body Dysmorphic Issues.

The study's results highlight a critical realization: that these platforms significantly influence the way individuals with BDI perceive their bodies, both positively and negatively. The lived experiences of individuals with Body Dysmorphic Issues (BDI) on social media are complex and multifaceted, as these platforms can significantly influence how they perceive their bodies, appearance, and beauty standards. Social media often amplifies the pressure to conform to idealized beauty standards, which can be particularly harmful to those with BDI. On platforms like Instagram and TikTok, where curated images and filters are prevalent, users are frequently exposed to unattainable body types and polished depictions of beauty that can exacerbate feelings of inadequacy and self-criticism. For individuals with BDI, these constant comparisons may trigger or worsen obsessive thoughts about perceived flaws. However, the impact varies across different platforms. While visually- driven sites like Instagram may emphasize physical appearance and appearance-related comparisons, platforms like Twitter or Facebook may foster more dialogue, including body-positive or mental health discussions, which could help reduce stigma and offer supportive communities. On the other hand, platforms where users actively engage in "likes" and comments can make people with BDI feel validated or criticized based on external approval. Social media can thus have both negative and positive effects, depending on the content consumed and the user's interaction with it.

Worrall (2020) mentioned that society plays a big role in Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD) as many people with BDD focus on society's views and standards of beauty. Social media, like Instagram and Facebook, heavily promote these ideals. Young adults especially feel pressure to fit in and find friends and partners according to society's beauty standards. Social media reinforces the thin ideal and other beauty standards. A large number of young people, about 90%, are active on social media, where they're influenced by role models and ads that showcase certain standards of beauty. While social media can exacerbate body dissatisfaction

through exposure to idealized beauty standards, it can also provide spaces for support, education, and empowerment. The study highlights the dual impact of social media—where constant comparisons can fuel negative self- perception, but online communities and body-positive content can foster healing and a sense of belonging. Ultimately, the effect of social media on BDI is shaped by both content and community engagement.

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