

The effect of new media on women's body perception: Exploring appearance related comparisons between Black Female celebrities and Black peers



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Recently, social media with the immeasurable and sporadic influences attributed to female brand ambassadors, model, content creators and celebrities activities as depicted on all over various social media sites and platforms such as Instagram, snapchat, Facebook and Tik-tok in the course of advertising, promoting or creating awareness about a brand has become a ubiquitous threshold and fast gaining popularity which continually has been a reckoning factor densely contributing immensely to the idolization of ideal body types and appearance comparison by peers rather than fulfilling the purpose of brand or content publicity for which they are hired. This hegemonic act in no doubt has gain a stance to unequivocally prompt and instigate the exploration of appearances related comparisons between black peers and black female celebrities and as a result had thereby brought about conflicting and deteriorating negative effect on the self-esteem, self-evaluation, self-worthiness and self-actualization of such peers by questioning her body image. Self-dissatisfaction, depression, PTSD, inferiority complex, breakdown in emotional order and psychological well-being are notable consequences among others disastrous consequences' suffered by peers that falls into this category due to this unethical act aftermath. Appearance comparisons made on social media and the influence of idealized images on body image can better be understood using a discrete social comparison theory which will go a long way to help this research arrived at conclusion and establish relation or paradigm of how badly the social media generally has made an hampered effect on the women body perception warranting the exploration of appearance related comparisons



between female celebrities and black peers in high School (Deanna R. P., 2017). Social comparison theory asserted that in the absence of objective standards, individuals measure every aspects of their lives and lifestyle by comparing themselves to others. Social comparisons refers to a behavior were we compare certain aspects of ourselves (e.g., our behavior, opinions, status and success) to other people so that we can have a better assessment of ourselves (Bunks & Gibbnos, 2017). Downward comparisons are measure with others who are sensed to be worse off, while upward comparisons are measure with individuals also sensed to be better off or superior than (Bunks & Gibbnos, 2017). The attitude of comparison of one's appearance or likeness to images of beautiful strangers on social media platforms form of upward comparison, has been found to have dirge negative effects on body image (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015) as well develop substantial feelings of envy, jealousy and animosity in women (Chae, 2018). In general, comparisons are most frequently made when the comparison entity is sensed to be alike and shared same peculiarities (a distinguishing trait) with oneself (Deanna R. P., 2017).

2.1 Social Media

Adler (2014), asserted that women generally tends to spend a longer active period of time on social media daily than any other major Internet activity which encompass streaming, blogging, mining, teleconferencing, electronic transaction, and other trans-electronic activities such as banking, mailing, marketing and commerce (Adler, 2014). It was evident in data collected and result formulated by "Statistic Brain" in 2014 that social media claims a record millions of active users compared to other web based



applications, and billions of minutes were accumulated from those users (Statistic Brain, 2014). Social media is defined as a web-based services which functions includes the interconnection of bounds that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, in relation to a articulated list of other users with whom they shared connection, view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (Kalnes, 2013). Apparently, for many people, social media function has been greatly overturned and has become more than just a web-based service; but a based social-oriental lives, further perceived as a gateway to others lifestyle, orientation and act.

Over millions of people associate on daily basis through the aid of media platforms and forum; among these millions, adolescents within the age bracket or age range of 18 to 24 poise the heaviest users, with a spontaneous rate of 98% usage (Statistic Brain, 2014). Subsequently, the analysis released by "Statistic Brain", in 2014 reported half of the US population to own at least a social networking account (Statistic Brain, 2014). In light of this, it is not to be contested that social media serves as the main source for communicating with families and friends and its form a indivisible, indissoluble and inseparable core of their daily lives which functions cannot be over-emphasized. An estimated number of people over the 213 million people reach out through social media using their electronic gadgets which includes smart-phones, tablets, and computers, and 52 million users has been categorized as users communicating with/from their mobile devices in their social media (Nielsen, 2012). In 2012, a reliable survey from a reliable source disclosed the total minutes spent on social media in the United States which average 520.1 billion, letting social media claim the most time spent on a network



over any other Internet site; and in 2014, social networking sites still claimed that spot. From the list of the top ten social media sites with the most unique PC visitors in the U.S., Facebook reached an outrageous landmark of media with the most users thereby grabbing the number one spot shoulder heading other famous social media while sites like Pinterest and Twitter notably made a clear presence. In reckoning, Pinterest had a massive increase of 1,047 percent in just a year, from 2011 to 2012. This same study also pointed out the fact that that females are obsessed with images and are the primary users of Pinterest, and spend most of their time scrolling through this image content site with their mobile phones. Use of social media through mobile devices could indicate that females are not only constantly on social media, but that they literally take it wherever they go, with exposure to image content (and possibly thin-ideal images) many times during any given day (Nielsen, 2012). In Three specific social media sites, Facebook, Pinterest, and Instagram, are heavily focused on image content and have all experienced large increases in users over time. These sites focus on image sharing and give young users access to content that houses images of the thin-ideal body type.

2.1.1 Facebook

Facebook is a famous America social media site which has existed for years and has come to be literally part of people daily affairs, Facebook enable users to upload, post and distribute picture of any likeness from their mobile devices and also sharing to other user as well as advertisement content integrated into Facebook pages to boost commercial activities. Facebook is in-abruptly filled with collective and specially designated image contents from users, and recreation of photo album for storage and



possession on web. Facebook stood in the America BI statistics as the top leading site in social media owing to the largest audience base by a far reach landmark, and also acclaim the most minutes spent on a social media site, the most unique PC visitors, and the most mobile usage time (Nielsen, 2012). In 2014, Facebook span over 1.4 billion users and accumulated a ridiculous time spent that average 700 billion monthly minutes of usage time (Statistic Brain, 2014). Its ease of usability, connection and access to millions of people has given birth to remarkable amounts of images to its users. Facebook, just like other social media sites, is been navigated by using “personal pages” which could be set up by individuals for their own unique profiles. There is presence of toggle icons for Individuals to add “friends” build relationship and connect with as many people as they like while having full jurisdiction and autonomy of privacy and control over who can poke their page and make a commentary. Other interesting feat achieved by Facebook which is fascinating to users is the present of the “like” feature that denotes the sense of conformity by choice to likeness or acceptance that also allowed a user uploaded picture or image, to be liked by their “friends,” peers or colleagues or the people who they are connected with on Facebook, There is inclusion and availability of the comment section for users that which to state explicitly or express their feelings on the image or “like” the image depending on the users choice. Liking an image in Facebook is when a Facebook friend clicks on the word “like” on a PC (Figure 2-1) or on an icon of a tiny thumbs up picture in mobile devices which indicates that they find the picture appealing in some way, almost as if they are giving their approval of the picture. It is possible that these “likes” can be perceived as affirmation for the person who posted the image and is receiving the likes. For instance, as seen in a recent study that



examined images seen in social media and its impact on adolescent girls, “participants mentioned focusing on the number of likes their pictures had received compared to friends’ photos” (Kalnes, 2013). Research work by Kalnes (2013) revealed that individuals who frequently is obsess with their number of likes to others suffered lower levels of self-esteem, inferiority complex and poor self-evaluation. In light of this, conclusion was drawn that participants who compared themselves to others suffered reported increased feelings of jealousy, envy, feud, animosity, body dissatisfaction, and covet for a perfect body shape, or longing for “things” such as wearable fashion brand wears e.g., clothes, shoes and bags, that others may possess (Kalnes, 2013). In view of this, it is arguable that the number of likes associated with a picture could impact an individual’s self-esteem and body satisfaction, particularly if the picture uploaded happens to be of the individual’s own self-image.

2.1.2 Instagram

Instagram with couples of similarities to Facebook hold and shares the same distinct features in multiples ways, the use of toggle icons for likes and comment sections for other users who which to give acceptance and make a remark about a particular image is available, and also enhances sharing of images to other users. Instagram uses individual profiles created solely by users who which to be involve in various social activities (Julia Wallis., 2015). However, Instagram is focused solely on photos just like



other social media. Instagram allows users to take a photo from their mobile device and edit to their suitability by using filters, moderating tone intensity, sharpness, brightness, contrast, blurring effects, and color adjustments, etc., in order to enhance or change the image. Instagram is primarily accessed through mobile devices although is available for use on a computer (however users are limited to upload photos through that medium limiting its usages mostly to phone. Instagram was created in October of 2010 (Instagram, 2014) and therefore has limited studies associated with it. However, Instagram gained tremendous popularity since it first began and is now more than home to approximately 300 million users with over 70 million photos uploaded on a daily basis (Instagram, 2014). As Instagram gains popularity with Millennials, the effects of sharing and engaging in social comparison behavior to images on Instagram merits further exploration.

2.1.3 TikTok

TikTok, known in China as Douyin (*Dǒuyīn*), is a short-form video hosting service owned by Chinese company ByteDance. It hosts a variety of short-form user videos, from genres like pranks, stunts, tricks, jokes, dance, and entertainment with durations from 15 seconds to ten minutes. TikTok is an international version of Douyin, which was originally released in the Chinese market in September 2016. TikTok was later launched in 2017 for iOS and Android in most markets outside of mainland China; however, it became available worldwide only after merging with another Chinese social media service, Musical.ly, on 2 August 2018. (Wikipedia 2022). It swiftly became the most downloaded app on Apple iOS in 2018, with half of TikTok's 500 million users



being between the ages of 13 and 18 (Bresnick, 2022). Only a few people possibly are not aware of this controversial application, which has been utilized not only as a source of entertainment and amusement. (Amoda1 *et al.*, 2022).

Previewing its recent level of growth and development rate over the last couples of years since it came to existence, its worthwhile saying that TikTok has fast gain lot of popularity and mouthwatering attention earlier than expected among other elite social medial sites in the world, It also retain vividly a very high interests among adolescents and adults especially women which is characterized or due to its unusual surplus collection of animated effects and avatar which is suitable for creation and recreation of any ideal body image and video contents as fantasized by women through emulation with addition of several groomed effects plus series of modification and editing. It also enables the merging of video clips, allowing a 60- second video clip wherein quick cuts, music samples, filters, stickers, and other add-ons could be incorporated. (Amoda1 *et al.*, 2022). Users can listen to a variety of mainstream songs and watch videos on other platforms, such as "lipsync videos." This can be like, add to favorite, shared and commented on by their followers (Amoda1 *et al.*, 2022). The exponential rise in the number of TikTok users suppose the success of the said social media site and its widely acceptance and satisfaction by the vast majority of people (users) but it does not put to light the dirge and underlying need to check and question the usage, raise alarm and show concern on the overlying-awaited danger and threat poist on the arbitrary and persistent usage which is a disaster on the brink yet on foretold and capable of inhibiting psychological well-being, and emotional order of such users but rather offering emotional damage, traumatization, depression, body dissatisfaction, low self-



esteem and inferiority complex to such user. Despite its inexorable popularity, Tiktok is the media had with most controversial issues which has been dragged legally several times for legal charges due to obscene, immoral, vulgar, and encouraging pornography among others (Korbani & LaBrie 2021). Concerns have been voiced regarding content relating to, and the promotion and spreading of, hateful words and far-right extremism, such as anti-semitism, racism, and xenophobia by different authors. (Weimann & Masri, 2020). This massive user base drew more attention and scrutiny from several groups as well as plethora of negative outcome (Korbani & LaBrie 2021). With over 41% of users aged 16 to 24 years old, the app has created a number of body-related content problems. (Bresnick, 2022) As a result of these concerns, a new set of recommendations has been published to address misleading and inflated claims in diet and weight-loss products. (Levinson & Rodebaugh, 2012) Apart from these, the primary problems brought by TikTok are those which involve privacy and settings, mental health inclusive of cyberbullying and depression, and inappropriate content (Rofagha, A., 2019). And this could affect the self-esteem of the users (Bresnick, 2022)



2.2 Women's Body Perception, Body Image and Ideal image

2.3 Effects of Media on Body Image and Self Perception

Social media has brought about a dimensional perspective in the exploration of Appearance related comparisons between female celebrities and their black peers as seen and observed from research works of different authors and scholar in ((Juliane K. Bauer., 2020); (Julia Wallis, 2013) : (Deanna R., Puglia. 2017) ; (Bunks & Gibbnos, 2017) ; (Tiggemann, M., 2006) & (Kalnes, K. 2013)). The celebrities ideal image of the thin female body-type has evolve like widespread fire considering the staggering volume of attention it captivated and enjoyed under media outreach/outrage and as such been a unique keen point of interest and admiration by peers on social media who are highly obsess with stereotypes. Stereotype defined as a standardized mental picture that is held in common by members of a group and that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude or uncritical judgement. (Merriam Webster, 2022). In (Alana P, *et al.*, 2022), BMC women Health Journal reported peers who have a relatively low self-esteem and body dissatisfaction caused by body comparison of self with celebrities sexualized images online. The study further revealed how sexualized images typically found on social media influenced adolescent girls' mental health, in negative ways. Further revelation was made that comparisons also influenced adolescent girls' efforts to



change their appearance and seek validation on social media.

Jennifer Harriger, a psychology professor and coordinator of Pepperdine's Body project (an organization designed to promote positive body image among female students) supported the notion of (Vizard *et al.*, 2020 & World Health Organization, 2020) that peers are hell bent and going extremely to own a perfect body shapes like the contemporary celebrities or have a striking resemblance and would give it their all which could jeopardize their health status and state of well-being.

(Vandenbosch L., & Eggermont S., 2012) in his research inoculated the discussion about the influence of the social media on the female psychological reasoning and the generally accepted female gender values. The study investigation that celebrities practiced sexual objectification, i.e. a set of practices or believes that distinguished and focus more attention or treatment on the sexuality function and part of the body as an object in other to be looked at, adore, venerated, touched or coveted which reality is in separation from her whole and complex being. (Frederickson & Robberts, 1997). Appraisal of false body image and idealized image by frequent uploading of either effected and doctored photos as depicted on media sites has been greatly applauded, glorified and raise to bar by celebrities which has through this action either consciously or unconsciously deviated the acceptable concept of normalize body image by society and peers couldn't but help to come in agreement to the preached body image on sites as influences of celebrities is at the peak as they serve as role model to most peers, As a result peers are more than ever focused on their sizes, (i.e. weight and height) body types e.g. (Ectomorph, mesomorph & endomorph) and body shapes, (straight, athletic, muscular, ample, straight) and will do everything possible to match make it with that of



the celebrities.

2.4 Social comparison theory

2.5 Appearances Related Attitudes

References

1. Juliane K. Bauer 2020, *"The Effects of Instagram Influencers and Appearance Comparisons on Body Appreciation, Internalization of Beauty Ideals and Self Esteem in Women"*<https://doi.org/10.15760/honors.929>
<https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/honorsthesis>
2. Julia Wallis 2013 *"The Effects Of Social Media On The Body Satisfaction Of Adolescent And Young Adult Females"*
3. Deanna R. Puglia 2017 *"Social Media Use And Its Impact On Body Image: The Effects Of Body Comparison Tendency, Motivation For Social Media Use, And Social Media Platform On Body Esteem In Young Women"*
4. (Bunks & Gibbnos, 2017).
5. Tiggemann, M. (2006). The role of media exposure in adolescent girls' body



dissatisfaction and drive for thinness: prospective results. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 25(5), 523-541.

6. Kalnes, K. (2013). Influence of social media use on adolescent females' perceptions of their body image. (Ed.D., Walden University). ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1435634429?accountid=11789>
7. Alana P et al., 2022 *"Why don't I look like her?" How adolescent girls view social media and its connection to body image*
8. Nielsen. (2012). State of the media: The social media report 2012Nielsen; NM Incite.
9. Nielsen. (2014). The digital consumer Consumer Report. New York: The Nielsen Company.
10. Adler, E. (2014). Social media engagement: The surprising facts about how much time people spend on the major social networks. Retrieved December 14, 2014, from <http://www.businessinsider.com/social-media-engagement-statistics-2013-12>
11. Statistic Brain. (2013). Social networking statistics. online: Browser Media, Socialnomics, MacWorld.
12. Statistic Brain. (2014). Social networking statistics. Retrieved April 2, 2014, from <http://www.statisticbrain.com/social-networking-statistics/>
13. Amoda1 *et al.*, 2022 Self-Esteem and Social Appearance Anxiety of TikTok Users:



Appraising Social Support as Probable Moderator International Journal of Scientific Research in Research Paper. Multidisciplinary Studies E-ISSN: 2454-9312 Vol.8, Issue.4, pp.47-51, April (2022)

14. A. Korbani and J. LaBrie, 2021 "Toxic TikTok Trends," J Stud Res, vol. 10, no. 2, Aug. 2021, doi: 10.47611/jsrhs.v10i2.1687.
15. E. Bresnick, "Intensified Play: Cinematic study of TikTok mobile app," ResearchGate, Accessed: Feb. 21, 2022.
16. C. A. Levinson and T. L. Rodebaugh, "Social anxiety and eating disorder comorbidity: The role of negative social evaluation fears," Eat Behav, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 27–35, Jan. 2012, doi: 10.1016/j.eatbeh.2011.11.006.
17. A. Rofagha, "Coming together to support body positivity on TikTok," Newsroom | TikTok, Aug. 16, 2019.
18. Weimann & Masri (25 May 2020). "[Research Note: Spreading Hate on TikTok](#)". *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*: 1–14. doi:10.1080/1057610X.2020.1780027. S2CID 225776569. Archived from the original on 24 May 2021. Retrieved 2 March 2021.
19. Vandebosch L, Eggermont S. Understanding sexual objectification: a comprehensive approach toward media exposure and girls' internalization of beauty ideals, self-objectification and body surveillance. J Commun. 2012;62:869–87.

