



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Research Commons

<http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/>

Research Commons at the University of Waikato

Copyright Statement:

The digital copy of this thesis is protected by the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

The thesis may be consulted by you, provided you comply with the provisions of the Act and the following conditions of use:

- Any use you make of these documents or images must be for research or private study purposes only, and you may not make them available to any other person.
- Authors control the copyright of their thesis. You will recognise the author's right to be identified as the author of the thesis, and due acknowledgement will be made to the author where appropriate.
- You will obtain the author's permission before publishing any material from the thesis.

**Investigation of how body image focused social media posts and
comments affect viewers' thoughts, feelings and responses: A behavioural
perspective**

A Qualitative Study

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree

of

Master of Applied Psychology (Behaviour Analysis)

at

The University of Waikato

by

Ayodhya Udeshini Chandrasekara Panadare Chandrasekara Mudiyansele



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

2025

Abstract

Previous research has focused on body image as an important research topic. This could be due to the fact that body image is linked with psychological outcomes such as body satisfaction that could affect one's emotions and quality of life, as well as acting as a protective factor by improving self-esteem, maintaining social connections and affecting lifestyle choices. (Merino et al., 2024). On the other hand, a negative body image can also affect physical well-being through practising unhealthy dietary habits and reduced physical activity (Jiménez-Morcillo et al., 2024). Due to these factors, researchers have utilised both qualitative and quantitative research methods to study the impact of body image on an individual's wellbeing. However, qualitative research employing visual stimuli to explore the effect on individual body image remains limited, particularly within the context of Aotearoa. To address this research gap, I conducted a study utilising a simulated Instagram frame featuring an artificially generated image accompanied by comments as the stimulus material, presented to young women aged 18 to 28 years at the University of Waikato. A semi-structured interview was conducted with each participant to get an understanding of their perspective on social media and body image. The findings indicated that participants' thoughts, feelings and actions related to their body image were affected more positively by viewing the body post and comments. This study also aims to frame the research outcomes in a behaviour analytic perspective, to provide implications for future body image research in Aotearoa.

Keywords: social media, body image, young women, qualitative, behaviour analysis

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my deep and sincere gratitude for the guidance, encouragement, and much assistance given to me by different personnel to make this project a success. I'm quite sure this research would not have turned out this successful without the intervention of these great personalities, so I make this the opportunity to thank a few people who helped me to make this project a reality.

Firstly, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Katrina Roen. Thank you very much for your constant support and guidance that kept me focused on moving forward throughout this project. Your valuable feedback and advice always steered me in the right direction. Thank you for encouraging me to complete this journey, even when tasks felt challenging. I've learned so much from you and truly appreciate having you as my supervisor.

Also, I want to thank Dr Rebecca Sargisson for providing extensive feedback regarding my writing, which was a great help during the final days of putting everything together.

A special thanks goes to Allie Knight for setting up the IPRP platform, which significantly facilitated participant recruitment. I am also deeply appreciative of the guidance provided in managing participants and the prompt responses to my numerous inquiries.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Dr Amy Bird of the ALPSS ethics committee of The University of Waikato for approving my research proposal and providing patient, constructive feedback that greatly contributed to this thesis.

Thank you to all my teachers and tutors during the first year of the master's degree, Dr Tim Edwards, Mr Gabriel Chand, Mr Rewi Nankivell, Ms Tina Bourke, Dr Tania Blackmore, and

Dr Amy Bird. Without your guidance in the first year and your acceptance into the courses in the beginning, I wouldn't have gotten the opportunity to make this possible.

I want to thank my family, especially my parents and sisters, for their steadfast support in countless ways, despite the distance between us.

A heartfelt thanks also goes to my friends Buddhika Perera and Annie George, whose unwavering motivation and encouragement I felt backing off.

A special thank you also goes to our family friend, Ms Hansi Welivita, for proofreading this document and helping me on such short notice.

On a final note, I want to express my deepest sense of gratitude towards my husband, for demonstrating all the love, strength, and constant encouragement and tolerating me through every step of the way and for standing by me in challenging moments, celebrating the small wins and providing the emotional strength that made the completion of this possible. I could not have done this without you.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
List of Tables.....	vi
Introduction.....	1
Literature Review.....	2
Method.....	14
Results.....	18
A Behaviour Analysis Perspective.....	27
Discussion.....	31
Limitations and future directions.....	38
Implications for future research.....	39
Conclusion.....	40
References.....	41
Appendices.....	65

List of Tables

Table 1.....57

Introduction

The concept of body image is a broadly defined concept. As stated by Slade (1994) it is a loose representation of how one views themselves based on seven factors defined by the history of sensory input to the body, the history of weight change, cultural norms, individual attitudes, cognitive and affective variables, individual psychopathology and biological variables. There are multiple factors affecting one's body image, including internal factors such as self-esteem (Pop, 2016), personality traits (Allen & Walter, 2016) and physical activity levels (Sabiston et al., 2019). Among these, social media has emerged as a main contributing factor to body image issues. Features on social media, such as posting and commenting, have been researched, focusing on how they affect an individual's body image. Previous research has indicated mixed results on how these features affect body image. Studies involving artificially generated content as stimulus materials to generate feedback based on body image content remain limited. Therefore, this study aims to use artificially generated content as stimulus material to study the effect of social media posts and comments on thoughts, feelings and behaviours of young women, with regard to body image.

Literature Review

Visual media in the past have helped in building up and maintaining standards of beauty in a society, depending on the cultural contexts in each of them. For example, in a study done in Japan, based on body image and eating concerns of young women, it was shown that media pressures had a significant impact on the body image of young Japanese women (Ando et al., 2021). Research has shown that women are more affected by body image issues compared to men due to women being portrayed in the media in such a manner that often emphasises unrealistic beauty standards and appearance ideals (Levine, 2017). These standards most often portray women as “objects of desire”, which is often considered a marketing strategy for selling products, to attract consumer attention and boost sales. One study that aimed to discover the attitudes about female representation in media found that the media image of the ideal female body is used as a profit-making instrument in industries such as fashion, fitness, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals. This study also demonstrated that women are used as a symbol of attraction, leaving a strong impression on target groups to manipulate the behaviour of buying the same product, due to the satisfaction it brings them by viewing advertisements with women. (Velov & Kolev, 2021). These portrayals could have a significant impact on women’s body image. To understand these impacts, it is important to explore how different forms of media affect women.

Different forms of media have had an impact on women’s body image. For example, A study that explored the role of television in shaping the body image of young women found that thin-ideal reality TV content, along with peer and parental attitudes, directly affected their ideas regarding thinness and indirectly affected body dissatisfaction levels (Kinnally & Van Vonderen, 2014). In terms of viewing fashion magazines, it was found that young women who viewed them preferred to have a lower body weight, were less satisfied with their body image and showed preoccupation with the desire to be thin and feared being considered “fat”

more than their peers who viewed news magazines (Turner et al., 1997). Another type of media that has become popular in the last few decades is music videos. These might also have an impact on how young women perceive themselves. For example, one exposure experiment found that adolescent girls exposed to thin models in music videos showed increased levels of body dissatisfaction in comparison to girls who did not view the music videos (Bell et al., 2007). Therefore, it is worthwhile to study the impact of media on women's body image, due to previous research findings indicating the importance of the topic.

Even though research has considered women of all age groups, one of the most important age groups is young women between the ages of 18 and 28 years, because body image dissatisfaction and related issues are highly prevalent at this age, and a greater number of women score above the clinical threshold levels for body image disturbance at this age (Malloy et al., 2024). Previous research has also shown that the psychological and behavioural patterns occurring during these years significantly impact young women's mental health (Matud et al., 2020) as well as physical health (X. Xu et al., 2019). It is also important to note that during the ages between 18 and 28 years, they are exposed to appearance-focused activities and peer comparisons, which could increase body image concerns and thin-ideal internalisation (Myers et al., 2012). Therefore, it is essential to discuss the age group of women between 18 and 28 years in body image research.

University students are another important group of individuals who are worth researching when it comes to a topic like body image. This is because the university context has been identified as an interference with body satisfaction as well as dissatisfaction (Costa & Vasconcelos, 2010). Another study found that the use of medication to support studies, good academic performance, and higher BMI was associated with higher levels of body image concerns, which might make such students vulnerable to the development of eating disorders

(Silva et al., 2015). In addition to this, due to higher levels of academic stress and anxiety, female college students are found to be more vulnerable to body image issues (Sepulveda et al., 2008). Most importantly, university students are at a critical phase of their development, considering them as young adults who are more vulnerable to peer pressures based on appearance (Shen et al., 2022). Therefore, it is worth conducting body image research with a focus on University students, due to their increased vulnerability towards body image related issues.

With the popularity of social media, researchers have been studying the relationship between social media and psychological wellbeing, based on different variables, where one such variable is body image (Saiphoo & Vahedi, 2019). Studies have shown that constant usage of social media by young women can significantly impact their body image in negative ways. For example, a study that evaluated the relationship between time spent on a smartphone (including usage of social media) and body image found that spending excessive time periods on mobile devices and social media leads to increased body distortion and inappropriate weight control behaviours (Nam, 2023).

As a result of the growing negative effects of social media on body image, researchers have produced behavioural interventions based on social media to prevent body image related issues such as eating disorders that could occur as a result of it. For example, a study testing self-compassion, which is a condition that could protect against body image issues, utilised a curated Instagram profile that was designed so that participants viewed it after completing a self-compassion task as the experimental condition, and the control group engaged in a regular sorting task before viewing the curated Instagram profile. Results indicated that the self-compassion intervention led to a reduction in weight and appearance dissatisfaction (Gobin et al., 2022). This intervention, based on pre-exposure to self-compassion, showed that thoughts and actions of individuals can be shaped in a positive manner by using

interventions such as this. Therefore, studies that focus on thoughts, feelings, and behavioural activity of young women on social media, like what I aim to do in this study, could provide implications for future body image research based on eating disorders.

Content based on artificial intelligence has become one of the main features in social media that might have accelerated the negative effects of social media on body image. The advancements occurring in generative artificial intelligence might be the main reason for this sudden surge of artificial intelligence based content usage, as it enables content creation on a mass scale, within a short time period, which leads to an increase in the amount of artificial content shared via social media (Wei & Tyson, 2024). One of the key issues that has occurred due to this is the erosion of public trust with regard to the content they see on social media, such as “Deepfakes.” This is a type of artificially generated media that is created to look extremely realistic in the form of images and videos, to create large scale deception on social media, making it difficult to distinguish between real content and artificially generated content (Agha, 2025). Deepfakes carry negative impacts such as the spreading of misinformation and even the spreading of stereotypes and biased information, in addition to malicious use, according to the opinions of young people, in a study conducted based on everyday encounters with deepfakes (Lao et al., 2025). Similar to this, artificially manipulated images on social media can also negatively impact young women’s body image, as indicated by a study by Kleemans et al. (2018) that found that manipulated Instagram photos lead to negative body image in young women. However, the usage of content generated using artificial intelligence to study body image in young women remains limited.

In addition to artificial intelligence content, social media also contains features such as posting, commenting and liking that individually contribute to the communication network in social media, in unique ways. For example, social media posts enable the formation of online communities by gathering like-minded people around a common idea. For instance, a study

conducted regarding Twitter interaction patterns and community formation revealed that online communities are formed based on interaction patterns of participation and the leader of a community holds a significant place, in terms of engagement and also their supporters (Gruzd & Haythornthwaite, 2013). Similarly, in a study that explored the outcome of online social interactions on Facebook, it was found that leaving positive comments on a post causes high user engagement as it stimulates users to engage in liking, commenting behaviours, as well as sharing the post (Chandrasekaran & De, 2019). On the other hand, leaving negative comments would also be favourable for a post, but only in the context where it occurs as a part of a social media brand community, as it stimulates more people to leave comments, raises the comment count, which signifies the impact of user engagement in the form of comments on social media (Khobzi et al., 2018). When it comes to liking behaviour on social media, it was found that individuals engaged in liking behaviours directed towards close friends, if they had received the same from this person and when they were looking at a novel person's content on social media, they provided likes if they have received the same from this person, signifying an important aspect in user engagement described as relational closeness (Stsiampkouskaya et al., 2023). Based on this account of social media features, commenting and posting hold higher importance in comparison to likes, which is considered low effort engagement.

Above mentioned social media posts and comments have increasingly become a factor that affects the body image of young women (Vendemia & DeAndrea, 2018, 2021). This is because these features are used in highly visual social media platforms such as Instagram to enhance engagement with more personalised and image-based content (McCrory et al., 2022). To understand how these features contribute to body image issues in young women, it is important to understand the underlying mechanisms of the social media platforms mentioned above. Social media platforms at present operate on algorithms that provide

personalised content and are designed to keep users entertained for extensive periods of time (Singh, 2025). This mechanism learns user preferences instantly and fuels their interests by suggesting and displaying similar content, creating a bubble of biased information that is sometimes difficult to escape, similar to a rabbit hole of information (Boivin et al., 2021). In a similar fashion, if a person interacts with body image content during one instance of using social media or looks up a related topic later, they could be bombarded with body image content, whether they prefer to see it or not. This could lead to increased exposure to body image content and related commentaries made by other users, which could give rise to an array of complex issues related to body image. Therefore, through this study, I aim to explore the young women's thoughts and feelings associated with body image posts and comments, along with what behaviours are associated with viewing these on social media.

Popular culture and mass media have affected what people post on social media and their preferences for viewing content (Pande & Asthana, 2024). Some examples of types of content preferred by young women include fitness content (Lavoie et al., 2025) and entertainment content (Kontolatou, 2025). Fitness content on social media includes workout content, exercising, fitness challenges, and even eating patterns that could be used to lose weight, often demonstrated by fitness content creators. For example, in a study conducted based on engagement with fitness inspiration or "fitspiration" content on social media, one of the main topics accessed by participants was "clean eating", and social media content generated by athletes and personal trainers (Cohen et al., 2019). Entertainment content would include humorous content/ funny content as well as art and creative content. In a study based on social media content preferences in young women, it was shown that they preferred funny videos more than informational videos (Skurka et al., 2022). Additionally, social media also acts as a platform for creating art related content for young women, by allowing them to distribute and edit their content across different online spaces (Nikolić, 2020).

Among these types of content, content related to body image is a significant theme that young women might inevitably come across when using social media. Body image content could include body positive content as well as thin ideal content, which could have positive and negative impacts on body image, respectively. For example, in a study conducted by Cohen et al., (2019) based on effects of viewing body positive content on social media on women, it was shown that exposure to body-positive content was directly related to positive health outcomes in women, such as positive mood and greater body satisfaction, as opposed to exposure to thin-ideal posts that resulted in body dissatisfaction and lower mood. On the other hand, a study conducted based on systematically reviewing the exposure of young adults to beauty ideals found that exposure to thin idealised content led to greater body dissatisfaction in both young women and men (Fioravanti et al., 2022). Issues such as body dissatisfaction could extend up to serious matters such as changing one's appearance through cosmetic surgery. In a study conducted based on evaluating the relationship between social media exposure and thin ideal internalization, social appearance anxiety and cosmetic surgery consideration, it was shown that baseline social media exposure was positively associated with a 6 month follow up for cosmetic surgery reconsideration and baseline thin ideal internalization was associated with a 6 month follow up social media exposure (Yao et al., 2024).

In addition to this, previous research has indicated that the impact of body image content on social media, being positive or negative, would depend on the preexisting body image issues of the individual viewing the post, like self-discrepancy, that could moderate the impact of viewing idealised body images on social media (Zhang et al., 2021) . Similarly, in a study that investigated the effects of a body positive video on body image and capacity to reduce the impact of exposure to social media images, it was found that the participants who had high levels of thin ideal internalisation and viewed the body positive video indicated lower

body satisfaction regarding body and facial features, in addition to overall negative mood (Danthinne et al., 2022). But such studies have been conducted in the context of Aotearoa in limited numbers, making this study an important study in the body image literature of New Zealand.

Young women also tend to engage in various behaviours involving body image related content on social media. One such behaviour is digital photo modification. Many social media platforms contain built in tools to enhance body and facial features, in addition to appearance and skin (Vendemia & DeAndrea, 2021). Photo editing or modification allows users to compare their appearance to societal beauty standards and think about what modification needs to be done to get close to the ideal image (Ozimek et al., 2023).

Therefore, this could cause a discrepancy between their existing body image/ facial image and the ideal image (Ahadzadeh et al., 2017) resulting in lower self-esteem and body dissatisfaction (Rizzo et al., 2025). Another behaviour involving body image on social media is selfie posting. This could involve posting the best image of themselves online, by the above mentioned retouching and digital modification procedures and could result in lowering of mood and worsened self-image (Mills et al., 2018).

Commenting is also another important feature on social media that facilitates user engagement, providing a space for individuals to have their say, be aware of others' opinions and interact with other users (Tenenboim, 2022). Commenters on social media or viewers of comments tend to interact with diverse types of comment sections based on personal preference. One example is a humorous or funny comment. Research has shown that preferences for types of humour such as disparaging and slapstick humour decreased over time, and preferences for coping humour increased, as a result of cognitive development that occurs during adolescence (van der Wal et al., 2022). On the other hand, some young women would prefer to view controversial or “out of the norm” comments. This might be due to the

increased sensitivity and empathy possessed by women, which could make them more interested in seeking injustices and controversies in comment sections, to see what others think and form moral judgements based on them (Christov-Moore et al., 2014).

One of the most important types of comments that are worth discussing in this research is the comments related to body image. This has been the topic of much social media research in recent years, due to its impact on individual body image, particularly among young women. Viewing comments under social media posts could have positive as well as negative effects on young women. For example, earlier studies have demonstrated that viewing positive body image comments could surprisingly lead to negative body image related outcomes, such as body dissatisfaction, due to factors such as media ideal internalisation (Kvardova et al., 2023). On the other hand, viewing body positive captions accompanying social media posts was found to have some protective value over female body esteem (Davies et al., 2020). Another important finding regarding viewing body image comments is that it leads to boosting levels of confidence in young women when receiving positive feedback in the form of comments for their posted selfies on social media (Wang et al., 2020). Therefore, current research shows mixed findings regarding the impact of viewing body-positive comments on young women.

When considering the impact of viewing negative body image comments, hate comments towards body image create a greater negative impact on vulnerable individuals, whose bodies do not align with typical beauty standards, which would push an individual towards more harmful behaviours, such as eating disorder behaviours and restricted eating, to be accepted by society (Kristensen, 2023). Additionally, some researchers have utilised both positive and negative or “reality check” Instagram comments to study the impact of these comments on young women’s body image. “Reality check” comments challenge the appearance of women in posted photos on social media. This emphasises the unrealistic nature of posted images,

resulting in viewers identifying that the posted images are not always appropriate for comparison with themselves (Tiggemann & Velissaris, 2020). One such study found that viewing appearance comments did not elicit body dissatisfaction specifically, but viewing reality check comments after viewing positive appearance comments reduced body dissatisfaction in relation to viewing positive comments alone (Tiggemann & Velissaris, 2020). Therefore, it is important to understand the impact of positive and negative body image/ appearance comments on young women's body image.

Commenting on social media is also associated with certain behavioural reactions. One of the main behaviours is avoidance of the comment section or reading the comments. Taking a break from social media can be described as one form of avoidance behaviour, which helps avoid negative emotions associated with reading these comments such as low self-esteem, social anxiety, feeling insecure about their appearance and emotional distress (Pamisa et al., 2025). Another behaviour associated with commenting behaviours online is young women's preference to interact with peers online in comparison to online interactions with strangers. This might be due to the reason that they feel safe and comfortable interacting with peers online as opposed to strangers. A study done based on teenage girls' online practices and relationships with peers found that they preferred to share their profiles with family and friends, and took precautions not to accept friendships from strangers or people they have not met in person, keeping social media profiles private (R. Thompson, 2016).

In addition to this, one of the main behaviours involved with a comment section on social media at present days is lurking behaviour, which is scrolling through social media, without actively participating in online forums, but rather observing activities by other users (Hong et al., 2023). Research indicates that factors such as social comparison, as well as privacy concerns, are positively related to social media fatigue and anxiety. In addition to these external factors, such as information overload and social overload, social media fatigue is

also said to be associated with them. This social media fatigue and anxiety is found to be a determining factor of lurking behaviour on social media, where lurking could serve as a coping mechanism to reduce social media-induced stress (Liu et al., 2024). But a limited number of studies have been conducted regarding the behaviours associated with commenting, with a specific focus on women. Therefore, it is important to conduct future research based on commenting associated behaviours, focusing on women.

When considering the mechanisms behind the relationship between viewing body image content on social media and individual body image, one of the main theories in psychology that is used in research is the social comparison theory. This theory offers a framework for understanding the intentions of self-evaluation (Caliskan et al., 2024), and explains that there is a tendency for humans to look outwards from themselves to evaluate their opinions and abilities (Festinger, 1954). There are two types of social comparisons: upward social comparison, which occurs when comparing oneself to those who are superior in certain features, such as social comparison orientation (Gibbons & Buunk, 1999) and downward social comparison that occurs when comparing oneself to those who are less superior than oneself (Caliskan et al., 2024). In the event of body image, those who are insecure or anxious about their body image would engage in an upward social comparison, comparing themselves to those high in appearance-based values, resulting in further body dissatisfaction (Want, 2009). Such a situation could be further escalated with the use of social media platforms that, at present, are increasingly focused on external appearance. For example, in a study conducted by Tiggemann et al., (2018), it was shown that receiving more likes on Instagram leads to more facial dissatisfaction, and those with high social media engagement also engage in higher levels of social comparison.

This study aims to discuss how young women's body image related thoughts and behaviours are affected by social media using a behavioural perspective. It could be useful to take a

behaviour analytic perspective in a study that involves body image because behavioural psychology helps identify the setting event or situational factor for the occurrence of a body image behaviour (K. J. Thompson et al., 1999) . It is also important to understand the setting event that evoked a behaviour related to body image because it helps identify specific triggers that could predict the onset of behaviour in the future, like social comparison feedback, social scrutiny and body exposure as examples of precipitating events (Cash & Pruzinsky, 2004). In addition to this, it allows researchers to develop effective interventions by identifying what maintains behaviours such as eating disorder behaviours by analysing the functions of these behaviours and how they are reinforced, either positively or negatively (Fairburn & Harrison, 2003).

Therefore, this study aims to take a behaviour analytic approach by studying how the artificially generated post and related comments act as an antecedent stimulus to evoke private behaviours such as thoughts and feelings in young women. Through the participants' responses to interview questions in the form of verbal reports, the study aims to identify consequences that might maintain the private behaviours through mechanisms such as social reinforcement in the form of likes and comments and through negative reinforcement such as avoidance behaviours. By analysing the relationship between these behavioural functions, the study adapts a behaviour analytic perspective to help in understanding how social media affects body image related outcomes.

Method

Design

I used a qualitative research design in the study due to its ability to gather rich data and provide an understanding of the participants' feelings and experiences (Nassaji, 2015). Therefore, similar to Burnette et al., (2017), I used a semi-structured interview guide with open-ended questions to gain a better understanding of young women's point of view on body image.

Ethics approval

The ALPSS committee for human research at the University of Waikato granted ethical approval under the approval code FS2025-30 (Appendix E). I took several ethical measures to ensure the safety of the participants joining the study prior to conducting the interviews. All participants needed to indicate whether they had a past history of eating disorders or any sensitivity towards body image related issues to ensure no harm was inflicted on them. I conducted a verbal debriefing process after each interview to answer any questions the participants had and to ensure their psychological state was unharmed after the interview. I also provided an information sheet with mental health support details accessible to all students to use in case they felt any discomfort after the interview.

Participants

I selected participants for this study based on the inclusion criteria of identifying as female or having lived experience as a female, being between 18 and 28 years old, being able to communicate in English and absence of a past history of eating disorders or sensitivity towards body image issues. I used IPRP for participant recruitment and was able to recruit twelve participants through this method. IPRP stands for the Introduction to Psychology

research program managed by the School of Psychological and Social Sciences at the University of Waikato. This program made the research accessible for psychology students who were eligible to participate and get extra course credit as compensation. Participants could sign up for time slots available on SONA, which is the online platform for IPRP. I received email notifications after each participant signed up for a time slot. After receiving the notification, I emailed the participants with a Google Form link (appendix F) to confirm they matched the eligibility criteria for the study. Upon receiving the Google form (appendix F), I emailed the eligible participants with the information sheets (appendix A) and consent form (appendix B) and informed them via email that they needed to return them to me. Upon return, I sent a Zoom link for the sign-up time slot.

Materials

I conducted the interviews through the Zoom workplace application using a predesigned semi-structured interview guide (appendix C) and used Otter.ai for transcription of the interviews.

I used artificially generated images as stimulus materials for this study, similar to Tufail et al., (2024) That examined the impact of exposure to artificial intelligence based images on the self-esteem of university students. I chose to use artificially generated images in this study due to the ethical and privacy considerations that could arise from using the identity of a real person in a study that discusses a sensitive topic such as body image. I used ChatGPT to generate the image used as the body image post, given the prompt to generate an image of a young woman at the beach, matching today's beauty standards and representing the population in New Zealand. I used this artificially generated image to create a simulated Instagram frame with artificially generated comments (Appendix D) using the website "Zeob", which generates artificial Instagram posts for research purposes.

Interview

Each interview lasted for approximately 20 minutes. I recorded the interviews on the Zoom application and used real time transcription to retrieve the transcripts soon after the interview. Participants answered questions about their social media use and preferences in the first part of the interview. Next, participants addressed the questions presented to them regarding the commenting feature on social media and their opinion on it. Afterwards, I shared the artificially generated image with them by screen sharing on Zoom and asked about their thoughts and feelings if they saw the image in real life as a social media post. After this, they viewed the artificially generated Instagram frame with comments and answered questions based on it. During the last part of the interview, the participants answered questions about their behavioural reactions to seeing the artificially generated post. The strategy of using an artificially generated frame to discover its impact on body image was similar to Kvardova et al. (2023), where a hypothetical Instagram frame was utilised to examine the impact of exposure to positive appearance comments on body dissatisfaction in young adults (appendix D).

Data analysis

Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) for analysing participant data. After transcribing the interviews, I anonymised and edited the transcripts to familiarise myself with the data. I then highlighted each interview transcript and took notes to develop the first set of codes. I then gave each code an identifiable name and inserted the data excerpts related to each code into Microsoft Excel, similar to (Byrne, 2022) to ensure I was able to access each data excerpt without having to go back to the transcripts. I colour coded the first codes to identify potential themes afterwards. I used Microsoft Word to insert colour-coded data to

identify main themes and sub-themes. As the next step, I arranged relevant data excerpts under each theme and sub-theme to develop an interpretation of the participant data.

Results

This section describes the results obtained by analysing participant interview data.

Social media

Participant interviews revealed social media as a main theme across interview data. All interviewed participants indicated they were frequent users of social media in the initial screening process. Social media as a theme is worth noting since it serves as the base for building other main themes across interview data.

I identified sub-themes such as types of social media used by participants, the content preferred on social media and online interactions that occur on social media.

Types of social media

The study has discovered the frequent use of appearance focused social media among young women in New Zealand. When asked which platforms they used, participants most often listed Instagram, which is entirely based on visual media consisting of posts and reels. This was described by one participant as “Instagram, TikTok and sometimes Snapchat, Facebook” when asked about their preferred social media platforms at the beginning of the interview. The second most commonly used social media platforms were TikTok, Facebook, Snapchat; some participants also mentioned Discord and Pinterest.

Content

Participants expressed their preference for a variety of content they would like to see on social media. Most participants indicated that they preferred entertainment content on social media that included humorous and creative content, while a few participants indicated they preferred culinary and fitness content, in addition to viewing their peers’ activity online.

In addition to this, participants explained that being exposed to body positive content makes them feel confident in their own body, especially when the content does not tally with ideal beauty standards. This was described by one participant as “I do follow a couple people who are, I guess, into like, body image positivity and like seeing them being so confident about their body, even though, like, maybe it's not perfect, because what body is like seeing that actually makes me feel a lot better about myself and my body”.

Another type of content that was mentioned as preferable by a few participants was fitness content. One participant mentioned that fitness content inspires them to work out more and gain a similar physique as their favourite content creators, in a sentence as “there are a couple girls that I watch on tick tock that inspire me for sure. They like have got the physique at from the gym that I want to gain over the next few years”.

Online interactions

Interactions that occur among participants in social media platforms were another identified sub theme. Participants described interactions such as bullying, forming an online community and standing up for people online, against bullying.

One participant mentioned that bullying another person based on their physical appearance could be the result of feeling insecure in themselves in the first place. This was described as “Are they saying this about me? Is the same way that somebody else might comment and say, like, comment that because they feel like, ‘how are they rocking that? When I feel insecure about that’.”

The feeling of a sense of community was described by one participant as,

Maybe there'll be something that I saw last night and she's talking about it, and maybe I asked the question, I'm like, girl, did you see this too? That was so crazy. Like, kind

of like that. Yeah, maybe they might reply to your comment. Maybe they won't, but it's just kind of feels like a community.

This states that interacting with the same content, with likes and comments, with different people, helps form a sense of community online.

Standing up for people online against bullying was another online interaction that came up in the interviews with participants. One participant mentioned this as “ But if they were, if they were saying something rude about her herself, like how she looked, or saying something mean about her, I would be very quick and to go like, hey, no, I've known this person a long time, and even regardless of that, you shouldn't just make assumptions or write mean things about someone”. They described that if they had known the person previously, they would be quick to defend them,

Comments

Another main theme that was revealed by analysing interview data was the “comments” or “commenting feature” on social media. All social media platforms mentioned by participants above have an embedded commenting feature to facilitate user interactivity. This theme is significant due to the previous research indicating the importance of the commenting feature and its impact on young women’s body image. For instance, Tiggemann & Barbato, (2018) discovered that exposure to appearance comments on Instagram led to higher levels of body dissatisfaction, which conveys the importance of the commenting feature as a main theme in this study.

Thoughts and feelings about commenting.

Participants indicated that there are two sides to commenting, as “positive” and “negative” comments, and that each of these sides can have different impacts on people. For example,

one participant mentioned, “Sometimes the comment section can be really helpful and encouraging, but also sometimes it can be quite negative towards the post”. This is an example of a thought that a participant holds regarding social media comments.

Another important idea that emerged through interview data was that comments emphasising another person’s body image could make the participants think about their own body image. This was described by one participant as “I don't like the comments that are emphasising the body. I just feel like it's unnecessary. Yeah, yeah, just highlighting the body kind of makes you think about your own”.

As a result of this, a few participants indicated that they would avoid the comment section and related interactions altogether to prevent exposure to aversive stimuli. One participant described this as,

If I saw those negative comments, I think part of me would be interested to see if there are other comments like that, but honestly, I'd probably avoid looking for things like that, because I know they're just not going to make me feel great

Instances and actions of commenting.

Most participants indicated they wouldn’t be inclined to comment but would be reading the comments and rarely using the liking feature to like comments. This was described by one participant as “I don't personally comment myself, but I always seem to be looking through the comments of what people’s opinions”.

Also, participants mentioned that they would more likely comment, like or private message a person they have known previously rather than interacting with a stranger. In the words of one participant, this idea can be conveyed as follows. “Um, I think depending on like, how

well I knew the person, I'd probably give it a like, ... how well I knew the person, and, like, how I know that person”.

Types of preferred comments

Most participants indicated their preference for reading positive comments which was described by a participant as “ Funny comments that aren't harmful, or anything, just someone's like, if it's on a meme or something, just someone saying something that is really relatable or doesn't have anything harmful to another person” as an answer to a question asked regarding their type of preferred comments.

In addition to this, two participants mentioned they might be seeking out negative comments or out of the ordinary comments, out of curiosity which was described by one of them as follows.

Probably the ones that probably are, like, not very nice, or just like, go against what would be the norm. Yeah, it's just interesting. Yeah, it's eye catching because it's not what most of the comment section is filled with and the ones that are out of the ordinary that catches my eye

Body Image

This was the most central theme that came up when analysing interview data. The interview guide for the study was prepared keeping the concept of body image in mind and based on previous research on body image and social media, therefore making “body image” a running theme throughout the data. The reasoning behind it is that body image has been a factor that has been affecting young women’s wellbeing in both positive and negative ways (Bajpai, 2024; Modica & Markley, 2024). Therefore, all participants, being young women, expressed

their opinions regarding body image and how they felt about their own body image in various ways.

Beauty standards

A few participants in the study expressed ideas regarding the existing beauty standards of modern society, which that explains how young women are expected to fit into the preexisting models of beauty to be considered societally acceptable. This was described by one participant as,

Society constantly projects this idea of what the ideal body type is, specifically for women, ideal body shape is to have big breasts, a big butt, curves, but to be skinny, but not too skinny, that still have some curves, but not be too fat, yeah, very specific body image

Another similar idea put forward by a participant was about how society expects women to look a certain way. This was described as,

I think maybe, I suppose, like the expectations that come with seeing a picture like that on social media. And I suppose like you're expected to have you're expected to look a certain way. And I feel like, maybe the subliminal expectations that come with a post surrounding body image or a person's body that can definitely like impact me am I holding myself to those same expectations?

How did the body image post make them feel?

While some participants indicated that the post had no impact on how they felt. A few indicated that it would impact them positively as well as negatively. Based on one participant's own words, the positive impact was described as follows

I feel like I look quite similar. My body image is quite similar to that, which makes me feel, I don't know, ...I'm happy with that sort of thing. I'm kind of content. I'd say in myself that it made me feel content.

The negative impact was described by one participant as, "I would be, there would be a little bit of jealousy, because she looks perfect, but I wouldn't, I wouldn't start to get sad or angry at myself because I don't look like her".

Thinking associated with the body image post.

This sub-theme emerged when analysing participant data in response to viewing the body image post. A few participants indicated that certain questions would come into mind, for example, in the words of one participant " , how is she that skinny? How is she that tan? and how can I be like her?" was mentioned. In another situation, one participant indicated that the post motivated them to exercise and gain a body type that is similar to the one displayed on the post. This was described by the participant as "if anything, it gave me motivation to go to the gym and take that extra step to look like that. ... Bang, I'm going to do something about it".

How did the comments associated with the body image post make them feel?

Participants indicated that viewing positive comments would make them confident in posting about themselves on social media, according to one participant who stated, "Some comments are definitely positive. They definitely will make you confident about posting yourself."

According to some participants, viewing negative comments brought up negative emotions, such as relating the negative comments to themselves and overthinking. This was described as,

I would start to overthink my own body saying that, commenting, when one of the comments saying the body is so tea, it does make me go if I don't look like that, So is my body, “so tea” too?

Comparison

Participants said that if they saw such a post in their day-to-day life, then they would engage in a comparison to the body image post with regard to its body proportions, which could lead to feelings of inadequacy and jealousy. This was described by one participant as “there, I guess it was a bit of jealousy, because naturally, I don't look that way”, and by another participant describing feelings of inadequacy as “you are constantly comparing yourself to other people's bodies. And it does make you feel that you're a bit inadequate, or that there, or that you will never be able to get to the place that they're at”

They also indicated wishful thinking regarding how they wished their body looked, which occurred as a result of noticing that their own body image was dissimilar to the body image shown in the artificially generated post. This was described by one participant as “wish my body looked like that”.

Behaviours

When asked about the behavioural reactions of participants to viewing the artificially generated post, most participants indicated that their behaviours would be in support of the body image post, whether to like the positive comments, to defend the person who posted the body image post or to comment positively. This was described by one participant as

I'd probably like the comments that are like, saying that she looks nice. And then if people had replied to the mean comments and been like, “wow, you should take a look at yourself”, or something like that, I'd probably like their comments

Another participant mentioned that they would read other people's comments under the post and base their comments on what other people have said. This was described as "I'd see what everyone else has said probably first, and then I'd base my comments off everyone else a little bit".

Consequences

Participants mentioned the aftermath or consequence of viewing the body image post would mostly include scrolling behaviour, in addition to having no reaction or "leaving it as it is", according to one participant. In addition to this, most participants stated that they would be inclined to scroll past the post if they saw it in real life, which was described by one participant as "If I'm already on, like, say, Instagram, just keep scrolling". One participant mentioned that they would be focusing on the body of the person in the body image post, which was described as "I feel like if I saw that in real life, I couldn't help myself but look at her perfect body". Another participant mentioned that if the comments under the body image post were increasingly positive, it would make them feel gutted and motivate them to exercise. This was described by them as follows.

If they were positive and really like, wow, it would either make me feel a bit gutted in myself that I don't feel like that, or it could actually motivate me, and I could get up and go for a run or something.

Summary

Overall, through this study, the analysis of the data suggests that social media, commenting, and body image emerged as key themes. It was also found that participants were engaged in the use of appearance focused social media and that they preferred to view humorous and familiar content, in addition to body positive content and fitness content. Online interactions

such as bullying, forming online communities and defending people online were reported significantly. Considering the nature of comments, both positive and negative comments were mentioned, where comments about someone else's body image made them think about their own, and they mentioned avoiding negative comments to protect their feelings. It was also discovered that young women would only be inclined to comment on a social media post if the creator was a peer or a previously known person. Some participants mentioned seeking out negative comments out of curiosity, while others showed interest in reading funny comments. When discussing the topic of body image, themes such as comparison of oneself to online content and beauty standards, were mentioned. Participants also associated feelings of curiosity and motivation after viewing the body image post. Positive comments associated with the post lead to them feeling confident, whereas negative comments lead to overthinking. On a final note, behaviours related to viewing the body image post included those in support of the post, including liking the positive comments under the post, defending the content creator, and scrolling behaviour after viewing the post.

A Behaviour Analysis Perspective

This section attempts to describe the data from the results section using a behaviour analysis lens. Prior to explaining the results, it is important to understand the key concepts used to describe the data.

Behaviour Analytic Framework and Limits of Interpretation

By definition, verbal behaviour occurs through the mediation of other people and is conditioned to support the speaker's behaviour (Schoneberger, 2025). In this research, the speaker is the interviewer, and the participant answers the interviewer's questions through verbal behaviour to support the interviewer's behaviour of interviewing the participant. The responses of the participants reflected their own actions and thoughts, therefore making their

responses self-reports of verbal behaviour (Fernández-Ballesteros, 2004). However, these responses may be subject to change depending on the context, since self-reports do not reflect the actual behaviours of participants and the study did not aim to measure those behaviours, and the responses of the participants may be subject to bias in the presence of an interviewer (Adams-Quackenbush et al., 2019).

The study also discusses how learning history from past events shapes current behaviour through consequences and reinforcement. By definition, reinforcement is broadly defined as a process where the aftermath of a behaviour increases the likelihood of a behaviour occurring again, through rewards such as praise, attention in the form of social reinforcement (Wise, 2009). A consequence is an event that occurs immediately after a behaviour (Kodak & Halbur, 2020). Therefore, reinforcement and consequences may shape learning by making behaviours with positive consequences more likely to occur and those with undesirable consequences less likely to occur. (López-Tolsa & Pellón, 2025).

In addition to this, participants express their opinions in terms of their private behaviour. By definition, private behaviour is a type of event that is not accessible to another person and cannot be externally observed (Moore, 2018). Participants expressed their thoughts and feelings with regard to viewing body image posts and comments, in terms of their private behaviours.

Social Media Engagement and Interactions

From a behaviour analysis point of view, participants' preference for visual and text-based platforms can be understood in terms of the observable consequences (Sabatini, 2025). For example, behaviours such as posting and viewing content are followed by social responses such as likes and comments on these social media platforms (Marengo et al., 2021). These can be described as social reinforcement that maintains engagement with social media

platforms (Lindström et al., 2021). In addition to this, the expression of participants' preference for different types of content which they expressed that body positive content as “encouraging” and fitness content as “motivating” may be shaped by individual learning history (Vargas, 2013).

Participants of this study also verbally described their behaviours in the situation where they may act as bystanders or viewers being exposed to appearance related cyberbullying and they only intervene if they know the victim of the bully previously. Behaviourally, this can be described in the context of previously having had positive interactions with the person they are defending against bullying (R. Thompson, 2016).

Passive social media engagement by participants indicates their behavioural preference with regard to interacting with social media platforms (Bide & Dhage, 2021).

Private Events Associated with Exposure to Comments and Body Image Posts

Behaviour analysis can be used to describe the wording of participants as verbal accounts (Luque & O'Hora, 2016) of past experiences by interacting with comments. Additionally, participants also reported that viewing comments regarding other people's bodies made them think about their own bodies. This can be analysed as participants describing their private events (Baum, 2017). Some study participants mentioned they might avoid reading comments altogether due to having faced negative experiences in the past. This can be explained in behaviour analysis as disengagement after facing aversive situations (Aleksandric et al., 2022).

Participants' varying reactions to viewing the comments under the artificially generated Instagram post can be described behaviour analytically as their private verbal experiences (Tourinho, 2006) in correspondence to viewing positive, negative and neutral comments.

Also, participants' responses to when asked about how the body image post made them feel, consisted of positive, mixed and null reactions. These responses demonstrate participants' private events and self-reported feelings (Robinson & Clore, 2002) after viewing the artificially generated post. Additionally, participants' thinking after viewing the post represents their verbal statements regarding private behaviours in response to the image (Moore, 2018).

Participants also verbally reported engaging in comparison with images seen on social media. These reports are verbal statements regarding participants' private events (Moore, 2018) after viewing the artificially generated image in the study.

Reported Behaviours and Consequences

Participants stated they may engage in behaviours such as “liking” and “commenting” when interacting with such content. Participants' descriptions about what they would likely do after viewing the body image post can be described behaviourally as self-reported tendencies, as they only indicated they would engage in these behaviours, which sometimes occur, that even though one intends to engage in a behaviour, they might not follow through (Feil et al., 2023).

Discussion

Through this study, I explored the thoughts, feelings and behavioural reactions of young women when viewing body image posts and related comments from a behaviour analytic lens. The purpose of the study was to explore how exposure to body image posts would affect participants' thoughts, feelings and associated reactions relating to their body image and how comments would similarly impact individuals. Findings indicated that viewing artificially generated posts led to thinking patterns such as seeking ways to look like the body image post, as well as feeling motivated and having behavioural reactions such as liking the posts and scrolling. Viewing comments related to the body image post revealed that positive and negative comments affect participants in diverse ways. The following is a discussion on how these research findings align with the research questions and previous research findings.

Engaging with Body Image Content

Previous research has discovered that viewing social media posts that highlighted body appreciation and resistance to appearance ideals were highly useful (Rodgers et al., 2023). These findings are supported by the present study, where it was revealed that body positive posts are a type of content that are commonly viewed by young women when discussing their preferences for different types of content on social media. Through the interviews, it was revealed that they also prefer to view fitness content. For example, research on people's engagement with body positive content suggests that participants accounted for fitness influencers as reliable sources of information regarding physical activity (Lavoie et al., 2025). Hence, these research findings regarding participants' preference for viewing body image posts are consistent with previous research.

Previous research has also discovered how engaging in social media activity could lead to comparisons and feelings of inadequacy. As an example, it was found that looking at social

media posts would lead to feelings of inadequacy due to constant comparison, in a study that examined the relationship between social media use and mental health in the digital age (Opoku et al., 2025). This can be explained using the social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954). This explains that upward social comparisons that occur as a result of comparing oneself to another person whom you consider superior can result in feeling inadequate regarding one's own body (Gibbons & Buunk, 1999). The current study aligns with these findings, that it was discovered that exposure to the body image post evoked thinking patterns such as self-comparison and feelings of inadequacy. Additionally, previous research has explored the perceptions of young women on beauty ideals on social media to discover that their perceptions regarding beauty are perceived as unattainable (Bertilsson & Gilberg, 2017), which is consistent with this study's findings.

Research findings have shown that when the occurrence of thin bodies in the environment increased, the concept of being overweight expanded to include bodies that would otherwise be considered "normal" (Devine et al., 2022). This idea is subject to the cultural context of one's society as well. For example, previous research such as (Romo et al., 2016) describes the emphasis in Latin culture on a slender, but curvy figure. However, in the context of Aotearoa, research suggests that even though dominant Western beauty standards are imposed on young women in New Zealand, these are often rejected in favour of cultural knowledge and inheritance in celebrating strong brown bodies (Nemani & Thorpe, 2023). In relation to these findings, the current study discussed the ideal body type as a very specific body image, and anyone who is even slightly overweight can be made fun of or called "fat", even if they are midsized.

Content creators have been a source of information and new opinions for the young generation at present. Therefore, young people are increasingly finding value in readily tested tips from content creators regarding body types similar to those of content creators, which

leads them to discard their own thinking (R. Xu et al., 2024). The need to follow the guidance of content creators might also be due to the need to conform to social norms regarding diet and exercise. For example, Carrotte et al., (2017) discovered that young people are motivated to exercise due to appearance-related reasons, to improve their appearance, where the media portrays being “desirable” and being “physically fit” as a main concept. These findings align with the current study, where it was discovered that looking at the artificially generated body image post evoked curiosity in participants regarding how to achieve the displayed body type and therefore evoked information-seeking behaviours. It was also found in the current study that conforming to social norms regarding body image resulted in feeling motivated to engage in exercise to achieve the body type displayed on the body image post. This aligns with previous research findings that indicated that fitness content not only impacts exercise behaviour but also psychological mechanisms related to it (Xiao et al., 2025).

Previous research has indicated that viewing body image posts can give rise to positive as well as negative feelings. For example, negative feelings could arise due to identifying dissimilarities between one’s body image and a body image post and the lack of features that reflect the perfect body image, in themselves, due to appearance related perfectionism, thereby causing higher body dissatisfaction and lower confidence levels (McComb & Mills, 2021). However, the findings of my study revealed that the body image post that was used as a stimulus material for this study, which was neither considered “body positive” nor made to represent the “thin ideal” body image, gave rise to feelings of body satisfaction in young women. In addition to this, it was also found that positive feelings such as contentment arose due to comparison with the body image post and realised that their body was similar to the post. This finding is consistent with previous research showing that downward social comparison, when the target is perceived as similar, can produce body satisfaction (Fardouly et al., 2017; Perey & Koenigstorfer, 2023)

Behaviours and Actions

Previous research regarding the behavioural reactions associated with viewing body image posts indicated that commenting positively on body image posts was a significant behavioural reaction that also indicated prosocial tendencies (Kvardova et al., 2025). This could be interpreted as the willingness of viewers to promote body-positive idealisation. This is consistent with the current research findings, where behavioural reactions such as liking positive comments posted by other users are discovered.

Scrolling behaviours are a significant reaction associated with social media across visual platforms. Research has indicated that this could occur due to boredom as a result of spending an extensive amount of time on social media, reducing other time for meaningful activities (Tam & Inzlicht, 2024). This was explained using theories of dissociation, where it was stated that one's attention could narrow down on a certain stimulus, excluding all other surrounding stimuli, which might cause a temporary suspension of awareness and consciousness, resulting in feeling dissociated during mindless scrolling behaviours (Mackay, 2023). Due to this dissociative state, having no reaction to posts on social media could be explained, where the only behaviour they would engage in would be scrolling, while blocking out all other stimuli. The current study also reported similar findings, where "scrolling" past the body image post was a commonly reported consequence of viewing the body image post.

Online Interactions

Commenting facilitates direct interactions among users through online communities (Gruzd & Haythornthwaite, 2013) and helps each other online through mechanisms such as problem solving (Molinari, 2004). These findings align with the current research findings, which discovered that commenting itself is an online interaction, which forms the basis of the identified subthemes "bullying," "defending people online", and "formation of a sense of

community.” This is due to the reason that bullying online, mentioned by participants would take place textually, in the form of comments to create an effect on another person, therefore making it an online interaction among people, where one person would post on social media, and another person would be inclined to comment negatively on the post, which would result in a third person coming in to defend the original content creator, resulting in online interactions. In addition to this, like-minded people interacting on social media, through commenting on social media posts, and the comments receiving the support of more people with similar ideas, lead to the formation of an online community on social media with the help of the commenting feature, which is consistent with previous research findings (O’Reilly et al., 2022).

Chun & Lee, (2022) that indicates that supportive comments increase the willingness of individuals to present their opinions when they align with that of the social climate, mediated by feelings of community. On the other hand, viewing negative comments on social media would lead to negative mental health outcomes, such as increased anxiety (Ai & von Mühlennen, 2025). Therefore, when looking at a comment section, one can find positive as well as negative comments and viewing these comments can have varied impacts on its viewers depending on their content. Current research is consistent with these findings, where it was discovered that thoughts associated with the commenting feature involved both positive and negative ideas, where positive ideas involved the comment section being helpful and encouraging in some instances.

Engaging with Body Image Comments

One of the main factors that could lead to body dissatisfaction is viewing appearance-related comments. Previous research findings have explained how positive appearance comments on social media could lead to higher levels of body dissatisfaction in adolescent girls (Kvardova

et al., 2023). Due to this reason, some young women would engage in avoidance behaviours such as avoiding undesirable social media posts that cause appearance comparisons as a way of protecting their own body image (Mahon & Hevey, 2021). These outcomes align with those of the current study, where it was found that viewing appearance-related/ body image comments led to participants thinking about their own body image, in addition to viewing negative comments, leading to avoidance behaviours that would prevent participants from viewing the comment section and reading the comments in the future due to past negative experiences.

Viewing body image related comments has had a significant impact on young women's body image, according to previous research. For example, Davies et al., (2020) described viewing body positive captions under social media posts increased body esteem levels compared to neutral and fitspiration captions, which is consistent with the findings of the current study that discovered that viewing positive comments mostly leads to positive feelings, such as confidence, regarding posting pictures of themselves online. However, viewing these comments could also have a negative impact in the sense that individuals with high self-awareness and body image concerns would view the negative comments and think that the negative body image related adjectives are directed at them, as opposed to the actual person that is targeted through the comment and that the negative comments would align with their self-schemas regarding negative body image and lead to heightening of that negative belief, leading to rumination over time (Dent & Martin, 2023). These findings align with the current research findings where it is stated that one of the main negative emotions that arose due to viewing the comments was overthinking regarding their own body, as to whether someone online would say the same things about them if they posted a picture online. In addition to this, it was found that viewing positive comments would lead to negative feelings, such as jealousy.

Behaviours Associated with Commenting

Researchers have asked questions about the importance of familiarity in the context of social media interactions. Findings regarding this topic indicate that individuals engaged in providing likes to friends regardless of whether they had received likes from them before, and that if they were not close friends, the liking behaviour was dependent on whether their posts had been liked before. In addition to this, a behaviour known as “lurking” on social media has also been identified with regard to commenting. This is used to define users who read information posted by other users, but rarely or never post their own content (Neelen & Fetter, 2010). These findings support this body of literature by indicating that the majority of the participants indicated they would not be inclined to comment or interact on social media, and even if they were inclined to comment publicly or privately, it would have to be a person they have interacted with previously, such as a peer or family member, rather than with a stranger. In terms of the lurking behaviour, this could occur due to the need to minimise their digital footprint, as mentioned by one participant, which is associated with less disclosure of personal information, similar to Trifiro & Goyanes (2025), who discovered that users who engage in lurking behaviour are more likely to disclose personal information.

Limitations and future directions

Like all research studies, this study also has some limitations. One of the main limitations was that the interview guide did not entirely match the research questions to obtain rich data. Therefore, in future studies, it is important to prepare the interview guide in a way that more qualitative data can be extracted, since even though I was able to obtain meaningful qualitative data, the richness of the data were reduced due to participants answering certain questions using short answers. In addition to this, behaviours related to body image or social media were not measured in this study, making the results based entirely on the verbal reports of behaviour by participants, which may be subject to interview biases at the time of interviewing (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Therefore, in future body image studies that aim to have a behaviour analysis perspective, they need to measure body image behaviours as observable behaviours, instead of verbal reports of private behaviours.

Implications for future research

The findings of this study suggest that by exploring the thoughts, feelings, and behavioural reactions of young women in response to social media posts and comments, future studies regarding body image can gain a deeper understanding of their thoughts and actions. This could be a valuable insight when designing future body image interventions, such as for conditions like eating disorders, as this study highlights psychological aspects of young women that could contribute to the formation of eating disorders, such as self-objectification and social comparison. In addition to this, it is also important for future studies to use observable measures of body image behaviours when analysing those measures using a behaviour analysis lens, which may allow for an accurate representation of observable behaviours more than verbal reports of observable behaviours.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the impressions, experiences, and feelings around viewing an artificially generated Instagram post and related comments, on young women's body image, where they were aged between 18 and 28 years and students at The University of Waikato. My findings indicate that participants reported positive and negative responses when viewing the stimulus material. In addition to this, participants of the study reacted to the simulated post by supporting the artificial creator of the post and reading the comments without much interaction (lurking behaviour) and mentioning that they would defend the artificial content creator for receiving negative comments, under the given post.

The study also framed the results in a behaviour analytic perspective, which provides implications for future body image studies from a similar point of view. It is worthwhile in future studies to further develop this psychological perspective in body image research, which can be used to develop behavioural interventions for body image related issues such as eating disorders.

References

- Adams-Quackenbush, N. M., Horselenberg, R., Hubert, J., Vrij, A., & van Koppen, P. (2019). Interview expectancies: Awareness of potential biases influences behaviour in interviewees. *Psychiatry, Psychology, and Law*, *26*(1), 150–166.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13218719.2018.1485522>
- Agha, A. M. Q. (2025). Artificial intelligence in social media: Opportunities and perspectives. *Cihan University-Erbil Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, *9*(1), 125–132. <https://doi.org/10.24086/cuejhss.v9n1y2025.pp125-132>
- Ahadzadeh, A. S., Pahlevan Sharif, S., & Ong, F. S. (2017). Self-schema and self-discrepancy mediate the influence of Instagram usage on body image satisfaction among youth. *Computers in Human Behaviour*, *68*, 8–16.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.11.011>
- Ai, Y., & von Mühlénen, A. (2025). An experimental online study on the impact of negative social media comments on anxiety and mood. *Scientific Reports*, *15*(1), 26642.
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-10810-8>
- Aleksandric, A., Roy, S. S., & Nilizadeh, S. (2022). *Twitter users' behavioural response to toxic replies* (No. arXiv:2210.13420). arXiv.
<https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2210.13420>
- Allen, M. S., & Walter, E. E. (2016). Personality and body image: A systematic review. *Body Image*, *19*, 79–88. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2016.08.012>
- Ando, K., Giorgianni, F. E., Danthinne, E. S., & Rodgers, R. F. (2021). Beauty ideals, social media, and body positivity: A qualitative investigation of influences on body image among young women in Japan. *Body Image*, *38*, 358–369.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2021.05.001>

- Bajpai, P. (2024). The effect of negative body image on self confidence and self esteem among youth. *Mind and Society*, 13(03), 28–33. <https://doi.org/10.56011/mind-mri-133-20244>
- Baum, W. M. (2017). *Understanding behaviourism: Behaviour, culture, and evolution*. John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.
<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/waikato/detail.action?docID=7104455>
- Bell, B. T., Lawton, R., & Dittmar, H. (2007). The impact of thin models in music videos on adolescent girls' body dissatisfaction. *Body Image*, 4(2), 137–145.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2007.02.003>
- Bertilsson, E., & Gilberg, E. (2017). *The communicated beauty ideal on social media :Perceptions of young women in Sweden* [Thesis]. Jönköping University.
<https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1107740/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Bide, P., & Dhage, S. (2021). Comprehensive survey of user behaviour analysis on social networking sites. *International Journal of Computer Applications in Technology*.
<https://www.inderscienceonline.com/doi/10.1504/IJCAT.2021.119601>
- Boivin, B., McAleese, K., & McAleese, S. (2021). *Algorithmic awareness: Conversations with young Canadians about artificial intelligence and privacy*. MediaSmarts.
<https://mediasmarts.ca/research-reports/algorithmic-awareness-conversations-young-canadians-about-artificial-intelligence-privacy>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Burnette, C. B., Kwitowski, M. A., & Mazzeo, S. E. (2017). “I don’t need people to tell me I’m pretty on social media:” A qualitative study of social media and body image in early adolescent girls. *Body Image*, 23, 114–125.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2017.09.001>

- Byrne, D. (2022). A worked example of Braun and Clarke's approach to reflexive thematic analysis. *Quality & Quantity*, 56(3), 1391–1412. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-021-01182-y>
- Caliskan, F., Idug, Y., Uvet, H., Gligor, N., & Kayaalp, A. (2024). Social comparison theory: A review and future directions. *Psychology & Marketing*, 41(11), 2823–2840. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.22087>
- Carrotte, E. R., Prichard, I., & Lim, M. S. C. (2017). "Fitspiration" on Social Media: A Content Analysis of Gendered Images. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 19(3), e6368. <https://doi.org/10.2196/jmir.6368>
- Cash, T. F., & Pruzinsky, T. (2004). *Body image: A handbook of theory, research, and clinical practice*. New York : Guilford Press. http://archive.org/details/bodyimagehandboo0000unse_x2t0
- Chandrasekaran, S., & Kumar De, S. (2019). Decoding user interaction dynamics on Facebook fan page: A sentiment mining approach. *Sage Journals*, 22(5). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0972150918825078>
- Christov-Moore, L., Simpson, E. A., Coudé, G., Grigaityte, K., Iacoboni, M., & Ferrari, P. F. (2014). Empathy: Gender effects in brain and behaviour. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioural Reviews*, 46, 604–627. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neubiorev.2014.09.001>
- Chun, J. W., & Lee, M. J. (2022). Understanding empowerment process of willingness to speak out on social media: Amplifying effect of supportive communication. *Telematics and Informatics*, 66, 101735. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2021.101735>
- Cohen, R., Fardouly, J., Newton-John, T., & Slater, A. (2019). #BoPo on Instagram: An experimental investigation of the effects of viewing body positive content on young

women's mood and body image. *New Media & Society*, 21(7), 1546–1564.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444819826530>

Cohen, R., Irwin, L., Newton-John, T., & Slater, A. (2019). #bodypositivity: A content analysis of body positive accounts on Instagram. *Body Image*, 29, 47–57.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2019.02.007>

Costa, L. da C. F., & de Vasconcelos, F. de A. G. (2010). Influence of socioeconomic, behavioural and nutritional factors in body image dissatisfaction among female university students in Florianopolis, SC. *Rev Bras Epidemiol*, 13(4), 1–12.

<https://doi.org/10.1590/S1415-790X2010000400011>

Danthinne, E. S., Giorgianni, F. E., Ando, K., & Rodgers, R. F. (2022). Real beauty: Effects of a body-positive video on body image and capacity to mitigate exposure to social media images. *British Journal of Health Psychology*, 27(2), 320–337.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/bjhp.12547>

Davies, B., Turner, M., & Udell, J. (2020). Add a comment ... how fitspiration and body positive captions attached to social media images influence the mood and body esteem of young female Instagram users. *Body Image*, 33, 101–105.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2020.02.009>

Dent, E., & Martin, A. K. (2023). Negative comments and social media: How cognitive biases relate to body image concerns. *Body Image*, 45, 54–64.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2023.01.008>

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). *The handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA : Sage Publications. <http://archive.org/details/handbookofqualit0000unse>

Devine, S., Germain, N., Ehrlich, S., & Eppinger, B. (2022). Changes in the prevalence of thin bodies bias young women's judgments about body size. *Psychological Science*, 33(8), 1212–1225. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09567976221082941>

Fairburn, C. G., & Harrison, P. J. (2003). Eating disorders. *The Lancet*, 361(9355), 407–416.

[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(03\)12378-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(03)12378-1)

Fardouly, J., Willburger, B. K., & Vartanian, L. R. (2017). *Instagram use and young women's body image concerns and self-objectification: Testing mediational pathways*. 20(4). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444817694499>

Feil, K., Fritsch, J., & Rhodes, R. E. (2023). The intention-behaviour gap in physical activity: A systematic review and meta-analysis of the action control framework. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 57(19), 1265–1271. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2022-106640>

Fernández-Ballesteros, R. (2004). Assessment and evaluation overview. In *Encyclopedia of Applied Psychology* (pp. 163–176). Elsevier.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com:5037/science/chapter/referencework/abs/pii/B0126574103003731>

Festinger, L. (1954). A theory of social comparison processes. *Human Relations*, 7(2), 117–140. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001872675400700202>

Fioravanti, G., Benucci, S. B., Ceragioli, G., & Casale, S. (2022). *How the exposure to beauty ideals on social networking sites influences body image: A systematic review of experimental studies*. 419–458. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40894-022-00179-4>

Gibbons, F. X., & Buunk, B. P. (1999). *Individual differences in social comparison: Development of a scale of social comparison orientation*. 76(1), 129–142. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.76.1.129>

Gobin, K. C., McComb, S. E., & Mills, J. S. (2022). Testing a self-compassion micro-intervention before appearance-based social media use: Implications for body image. *Body Image*, 40, 200–206. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2021.12.011>

- Gruzd, A., & Haythornthwaite, C. (2013). Enabling community through social media. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, *15*(10), e248. <https://doi.org/10.2196/jmir.2796>
- Hong, Y., Hu, J., & Zhao, Y. (2023). Would you go invisible on social media? An empirical study on the antecedents of users' lurking behaviour. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, *187*, 122237. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2022.122237>
- Jiménez-Morcillo, J., Ramos-Campo, D. J., Rodríguez-Besteiro, S., & Clemente-Suárez, V. J. (2024). The association of body image perceptions with behavioural and health outcomes among young adults. *Nutrients*, *16*(9), 1281. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu16091281>
- Khobzi, H., Lau, R. Y. K., & Cheung, T. C. H. (2018). The outcome of online social interactions on Facebook pages: A study of user engagement behaviour. *Internet Research*, *29*(1), 2–23. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IntR-04-2017-0161>
- Kinnally, W., & Van Vonderen, K. E. (2014). Body image and the role of television: Clarifying and modelling the effect of television on body dissatisfaction. *Journal of Creative Communications*, *9*(3), 215–233. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0973258614545016>
- Kleemans, M., Daalmans, S., Carbaat, I., & Anschütz, D. (2018). Picture perfect: The direct effect of manipulated Instagram photos on body image in adolescent girls. *Media Psychology*, *21*(1), 93–110. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15213269.2016.1257392>
- Kodak, T., & Halbur, M. E. (2020). Consequent interventions. In *The Encyclopedia of Child and Adolescent Development* (pp. 1–12). John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119171492.wecad078>
- Kontolatou, A. M. (2025). Gender differences in audience engagement and interpretation of global media content. *Journalism and Media*, *6*(2), 91. <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia6020091>

- Kristensen, T. (2023). Hate, disgust, and restrictive eating: Abusive comments on body inclusive posts on Instagram. In D. Dalton & A. Smith (Eds.), *Gender, Sexuality and the UN's SDGs: A Multidisciplinary Approach* (pp. 215–235). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-31046-1_11
- Kvardova, N., Machackova, H., & Gulec, H. (2023). 'I wish my body looked like theirs!': How positive appearance comments on social media impact adolescents' body dissatisfaction. *Body Image*, 47, 101630. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2023.101630>
- Kvardova, N., Maes, C., & Vandenbosch, L. (2025). BoPo online, BoPo offline? Engagement with body positivity posts, positive appearance comments on social media, and adolescents' appearance-related prosocial tendencies. *Computers in Human Behaviour*, 162, 108471. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2024.108471>
- Lao, Y., Hirvonen, N., & Larsson, S. (2025). Everyday encounters with deepfakes: Young people's media and information literacy practices with AI generated media. *Journal of Documentation*, 81(7), 216–235. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-01-2025-0007>
- Lavoie, H. A., Mejia, D., & Jake-Schoffman, D. E. (2025). Exploring fitness influencer content preferences among female college students in the southeastern United States. *Journal of American College Health*, 0(0), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2025.2501007>
- Levine, M. (2017). *Perception of beauty*. BoD – Books on Demand.
- Lindström, B., Bellander, M., Schultner, D. T., Chang, A., Tobler, P. N., & Amodio, D. M. (2021). A computational reward learning account of social media engagement. *Nature Communications*, 12(1), 1311. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-020-19607-x>

- Liu, X., Feng, R., Chen, X., & Yuan, Y. (2024). “Left on read” examining social media users’ lurking behaviour: An integration of anxiety and social media fatigue. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1406895>
- López-Tolsa, G. E., & Pellón, R. (2025). Dynamic interactions between induction and reinforcement in the organization of behaviour. *Perspectives on Behaviour Science*, 48(2), 315–339. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40614-025-00453-5>
- Luque, F. C., & O’Hora, D. (2016). Verbal reports in the experimental analysis of behaviour. *International Journal of Psychology and Psychological Therapy*, 16(2).
<https://www.proquest.com/docview/1801396381?accountid=17287&parentSessionId=Oe%2BkBO76zHNMMuvcGhrrJkXb3kroQU4qJkKgGL416I%3D&pq-origsite=primo&sourcetype=Scholarly%20Journals>
- Mackay, D. (2023). *Infinite scrolling, dissociation, and boredom spiraling as the drivers of habitual social media use* [M.S.W., Southern Connecticut State University].
<https://www.proquest.com/docview/2814614312/abstract/276C3D8C1FA649D8PQ/1>
- Mahon, C., & Hevey, D. (2021). Processing body image on social media: Gender differences in adolescent boys’ and girls’ agency and active coping. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.626763>
- Malloy, J. A., Kazenbroot-Phillips, H., & Roy, R. (2024). Associations between body image, eating behaviours, and diet quality among young women in New Zealand: The role of social media. *Nutrients*, 16(20), 3517. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu16203517>
- Marengo, D., Montag, C., Sindermann, C., Elhai, J. D., & Settanni, M. (2021). Examining the links between active Facebook use, received likes, self-esteem and happiness: A study using objective social media data. *Telematics and Informatics*, 58, 101523. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2020.101523>

- Matud, M. P., Díaz, A., Bethencourt, J. M., & Ibáñez, I. (2020). Stress and psychological distress in emerging adulthood: A gender analysis. *Journal of Clinical Medicine*, 9(9), 2859. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jcm9092859>
- McComb, S. E., & Mills, J. S. (2021). Young women's body image following upwards comparison to Instagram models: The role of physical appearance perfectionism and cognitive emotion regulation. *Body Image*, 38, 49–62. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2021.03.012>
- McCrary, A., Best, P., & Maddock, A. (2022). 'It's just one big vicious circle': Young people's experiences of highly visual social media and their mental health. *Health Education Research*, 37(3), 167–184. <https://doi.org/10.1093/her/cyac010>
- Merino, M., Tornero-Aguilera, J. F., Rubio-Zarapuz, A., Villanueva-Tobaldo, C. V., Martín-Rodríguez, A., & Clemente-Suárez, V. J. (2024). Body perceptions and psychological wellbeing: A review of the impact of social media and physical measurements on self-esteem and mental health with a focus on body image satisfaction and its relationship with cultural and gender factors. *Healthcare*, 12(14), 1396. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare12141396>
- Mills, J. S., Musto, S., Williams, L., & Tiggemann, M. (2018). "Selfie" harm: Effects on mood and body image in young women. *Body Image*, 27, 86–92. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2018.08.007>
- Modica, C. A., & Markley, A. E. (2024). Reciprocal longitudinal associations between positive body image and wellbeing among early-adult women. *Body Image*, 51, 101770. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2024.101770>
- Molinari, D. L. (2004). The role of social comments in problem-solving groups in an online class. *American Journal of Distance Education*, 18(2), 89–101. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15389286ajde1802_3

- Moore, J. (2018). Private behavioural events. *Revista Brasileira de Análise do Comportamento*, 13(2). <https://doi.org/10.18542/rebac.v13i2.5906>
- Myers, T. A., Ridolfi, D. R., Crowther, J. H., & Ciesla, J. A. (2012). The impact of appearance-focused social comparisons on body image disturbance in the naturalistic environment: The roles of thin-ideal internalization and feminist beliefs. *Body Image*, 9(3), 342–351. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2012.03.005>
- Nam, Y. J. (2023). The association between smart phone usage and body image distortion among adolescents and the effect of social media. *European Psychiatry*, 66(S1), S108–S108. <https://doi.org/10.1192/j.eurpsy.2023.299>
- Nassaji, H. (2015). Qualitative and descriptive research: Data type versus data analysis. *Language Teaching Research*, 19(2), 129–132. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168815572747>
- Neelen, M., & Fetter, S. (2010). Lurking: A challenge or a fruitful strategy? A comparison between lurkers and active participants in an online corporate community of practice. *International Journal of Knowledge and Learning*, 6(4), 269. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJKL.2010.038649>
- Nemani, M. J., & Thorpe, H. (2023). “My thighs can squash you”: Young Māori and Pasifika wāhine celebration of strong brown bodies. *Youth*, 3(3), 971–990. <https://doi.org/10.3390/youth3030062>
- Nikolić, T. (2020). Social engagement of young female artists in the digital context. *Kultura*, 169, 86–112. <https://doi.org/10.5937/kultura2069086N>
- Opoku, D., Donkor, C., Yeboah, J. N. O., & Quagraine, L. (2025). Navigating the relationship between social media use and mental health in the digital age. *Discover Mental Health*, 5(1), 149. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44192-025-00285-4>

- O'Reilly, C., Maher, P. J., Lüders, A., & Quayle, M. (2022). Sharing is caring: How sharing opinions online can connect people into groups and foster identification. *Acta Psychologica*, 230, 103751. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2022.103751>
- Ozimek, P., Lainas, S., Bierhoff, H.-W., & Rohmann, E. (2023). How photo editing in social media shapes self-perceived attractiveness and self-esteem via self-objectification and physical appearance comparisons. *BMC Psychology*, 11(1), 99. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-023-01143-0>
- Pamisa, A. P., Satura, J. C., Ganzon, M. R. C., Sumayang, J. P., & Taja-on, E. P. (2025). Mirror or magnifying glass? Exploring the impact of negative social media comments on student self-worth. *Journal of Social Interactions and Humanities*, 4(2), 489–506. <https://doi.org/10.55927/jsih.v4i2.183>
- Pande, P. C., & Asthana, D. K. B. (2024). Social media and cultural trends. *International Journal for Multidimensional Research Perspectives*, 2(6), 26–33. <https://doi.org/10.61877/ijmrp.v2i6.153>
- Perey, I., & Koenigstorfer, J. (2023). Perceived similarity determines social comparison effects of more and less physically active others. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 28(2), 162–175. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13591053221086759>
- Pop, C. (2016). Self esteem and body image perception in a sample of university students. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 16(64), Article 64.
- Rizzo, A., Barbera, M., Aydoğdu, F., & Akbağ, M. (2025). “Too good to be true”: An explorative study of photo manipulation, body image dissatisfaction and critical thinking. *Clinical Neuropsychiatry*, 22(3), 243–252. <https://doi.org/10.36131/cnfioritieditore20250307>

- Robinson, M. D., & Clore, G. L. (2002). Belief and feeling: Evidence for an accessibility model of emotional self-report. *Psychological Bulletin*, *128*(6), 934–960.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.128.6.934>
- Rodgers, R. F., Laveway, K., Zalvino, J., Cardone, W., & Wang, L. (2023). #BodyPositive: A qualitative exploration of young people’s responses to body positive social media content. *Body Image*, *47*, 101613. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2023.08.005>
- Romo, L. F., Mireles-Rios, R., & Hurtado, A. (2016). Cultural, media, and peer influences on body beauty perceptions of Mexican American adolescent girls. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *31*(4), 474–501. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558415594424>
- Sabatini, F. (2025). The behavioural, economic, and political impact of the Internet and social media: Empirical challenges and approaches. *Journal of Economic Surveys*, *39*(3), 1000–1036. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joes.12629>
- Sabiston, C. M., Pila, E., Vani, M., & Thogersen-Ntoumani, C. (2019). Body image, physical activity, and sport: A scoping review. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, *42*, 48–57.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2018.12.010>
- Saiphoo, A. N., & Vahedi, Z. (2019). A meta-analytic review of the relationship between social media use and body image disturbance. *Computers in Human Behaviour*, *101*, 259–275. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2019.07.028>
- Schoneberger, T. (2025). Defining verbal behaviour: Two conflicting approaches. *The Analysis of Verbal Behaviour*, *41*(1), 117–149. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40616-025-00217-x>
- Sepulveda, A. R., Carrobes, J. A., & Gandarillas, A. M. (2008). Gender, school and academic year differences among Spanish university students at high-risk for developing an eating disorder: An epidemiologic study. *BMC Public Health*, *8*(1), 102. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-8-102>

- Shen, J., Chen, J., Tang, X., & Bao, S. (2022). The effects of media and peers on negative body image among Chinese college students: A chained indirect influence model of appearance comparison and internalization of the thin ideal. *Journal of Eating Disorders, 10*(1), 49. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40337-022-00575-0>
- Silva, W. R., Dias, J. C. R., Maroco, J., & Campos, J. A. D. B. (2015). Factors that contribute to the body image concern of female college students. *Revista Brasileira de Epidemiologia, 18*, 785–797. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1980-5497201500040009>
- Singh, R. (2025). The Algorithm Effect: How social media shapes your thinking. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Science, Communication and Technology, 5*(7). <https://doi.org/10.48175/IJARSCT-28066>
- Skurka, C., Romero-Canyas, R., Joo, H. H., & Niederdeppe, J. (2022). Choose your own emotion: Predictors of selective exposure to emotion-inducing climate messages. *Environmental Communication, 16*(3), 424–431. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17524032.2022.2083207>
- Slade, P. D. (1994). What is body image? *Behaviour Research and Therapy, 32*(5), 497–502. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0005-7967\(94\)90136-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0005-7967(94)90136-8)
- Stsiampkouskaya, K., Joinson, A., & Piwek, L. (2023). To Like or Not to Like? An Experimental Study on Relational Closeness, Social Grooming, Reciprocity, and Emotions in Social Media Liking. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 28*(2), zmac036. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcmc/zmac036>
- Tam, K. Y. Y., & Inzlicht, M. (2024). People are increasingly bored in our digital age. *Communications Psychology, 2*, 106. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44271-024-00155-9>
- Tenenboim, O. (2022). Comments, shares, or likes: What makes news posts engaging in different ways. *Social Media + Society, 8*(4), 20563051221130282. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051221130282>

- Thompson, K. J., Heinberg, L. J., Altabe, M., & Dunn, S. T. (1999). *Exacting beauty: Theory, assessment, and treatment of body image disturbance*. Washington, DC : American Psychological Association.
- <http://archive.org/details/exactingbeautyth0000unse>
- Thompson, R. (2016). Teen girls' online practices with peers and close friends: Implications for cybersafety policy. *Australian Educational Computing*, 31(2).
- <https://journal.acce.edu.au/index.php/AEC/article/view/118>
- Tiggemann, M., & Barbato, I. (2018). "You look great!": The effect of viewing appearance-related Instagram comments on women's body image. *Body Image*, 27, 61–66.
- <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2018.08.009>
- Tiggemann, M., Hayden, S., Brown, Z., & Veldhuis, J. (2018). The effect of Instagram "likes" on women's social comparison and body dissatisfaction. *Body Image*, 26, 90–97. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2018.07.002>
- Tiggemann, M., & Velissaris, V. G. (2020). The effect of viewing challenging "reality check" Instagram comments on women's body image. *Body Image*, 33, 257–263.
- <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2020.04.004>
- Tourinho, E. Z. (2006). Private stimuli, covert responses, and private events: Conceptual remarks. *The Behaviour Analyst*, 29(1), 13–31. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03392115>
- Tufail, R., Shahwani, A. M., Khan, W., & Badar, Y. (2024). Examining the impact of AI-generated content on self-esteem and body image through social comparison. *Bulletin of Business and Economics (BBE)*, 13(3), 413–421. <https://doi.org/10.61506/01.00514>
- Turner, S. L., Hamilton, H., Jacobs, M., Angood, L. M., & Dwyer, D. H. (1997). The influence of fashion magazines on the body image satisfaction of college women: An exploratory analysis. *Adolescence*, 32(127), 603–614.

- van der Wal, A., Pouwels, J. L., Piotrowski, J. T., & Valkenburg, P. M. (2022). Just a Joke? Adolescents' preferences for humor in media entertainment and real-life aggression. *Media Psychology, 25*(6), 797–813. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15213269.2022.2080710>
- Vargas, E. A. (2013). The importance of form in Skinner's analysis of verbal behaviour and a further step. *The Analysis of Verbal Behaviour, 29*(1), 167–183. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf03393133>
- Velov, B., & Kolev, D. (2021). Female body in media and marketing. *EMC REVIEW - ECONOMY AND MARKET COMMUNICATION REVIEW, 21*(1), 8–22. <https://doi.org/10.7251/EMC2101008V>
- Vendemia, M. A., & DeAndrea, D. C. (2018). The effects of viewing thin, sexualized selfies on Instagram: Investigating the role of image source and awareness of photo editing practices. *Body Image, 27*, 118–127. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2018.08.013>
- Vendemia, M. A., & DeAndrea, D. C. (2021). The effects of engaging in digital photo modifications and receiving favourable comments on women's selfies shared on social media. *Body Image, 37*, 74–83. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2021.01.011>
- Wang, Y., Wang, X., Liu, H., Xie, X., Wang, P., & Lei, L. (2020). Selfie posting and self-esteem among young adult women: A mediation model of positive feedback and body satisfaction. *Journal of Health Psychology, 25*(2), 161–172. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1359105318787624>
- Want, S. C. (2009). Meta-analytic moderators of experimental exposure to media portrayals of women on female appearance satisfaction: Social comparisons as automatic processes. *Body Image, 6*(4), 257–269. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2009.07.008>
- Wei, Y., & Tyson, G. (2024). *Understanding the impact of AI generated content on social media: The Pixiv case* (No. arXiv:2402.18463). arXiv. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2402.18463>

Wise, R. (2009). Reinforcement. *Scholarpedia*, 4(8), 2450.

<https://doi.org/10.4249/scholarpedia.2450>

Xiao, X., Huang, D., & Li, G. (2025). The impact of fitness social media use on exercise behaviour: The chained mediating role of intrinsic motivation and exercise intention. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 16. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1635912>

Xu, R., Le, N., Park, R., & Murray, L. (2024). *Like-minded, like-bodied: How users (18-26) trust online eating and health information* (No. arXiv:2402.18753). arXiv. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2402.18753>

Xu, X., Mishra, G. D., & Jones, M. (2019). Trajectories of mental health symptoms for women in their 20s predict the onset of chronic physical conditions in their 30s: Two decades of follow-up of young Australian women. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 246, 394–400. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2018.12.106>

Yao, L., Niu, G., & Sun, X. (2024). A longitudinal study on the relationships between social media ideals exposure and thin-ideal internalization, social appearance anxiety, and cosmetic surgery consideration. *Body Image*, 51, 101813. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2024.101813>

Zhang, X., Zhu, W., Sun, S., & Chen, J. (2021). Does influencers' popularity actually matter? An experimental investigation of the effect of influencers on body satisfaction and mood among young Chinese females: The Case of RED (Xiaohongshu). *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.756010>

List of Tables

Table 1

Results: Themes and subthemes derived from participant interview data

Theme	Sub theme	Interpretation	Data examples
Social media	Types of social media	Using appearance focused social media such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, Snapchat and rarely the use of Discord and Pinterest	<p>“Um, I'd say the ones that I use the most, Instagram and TikTok, but I also use Discord”</p> <p>“Instagram, TikTok and sometimes Snapchat, Facebook”</p> <p>“Just use Instagram and occasionally Pinterest”</p>
		Preferable content Having a variety of preferences for types of content such as entertainment, cooking and fitness content in addition to seeing peer activity online	<p>“Quite like a lot of different like art and different, like creative contributions to communities and fandoms that I'm a part of”</p> <p>“Short videos, funny prank videos, fitness influencers, meal planning”</p> <p>“Instagram, usually just like seeing what my friends are up to in terms of what they post”</p>

	Body positive content increases confidence and inspires them	“I do follow a couple people who are, I guess, into like, body image positivity and like seeing them being so confident about their body, even though, like, maybe it's not perfect, because what body is like seeing that actually makes me feel a lot better about myself and my body”
	Fitness content inspires them to workout	“I maybe with, say, workout content inspires me to work out more. They get, like, stronger and feel more confident”
Online interactions	Feeling insecure in their own body while another person would be confident in the same body type could lead to bullying	“Are they saying this about me? Is the same way that somebody else might comment and say, like, comment that because they feel like, “how are they rocking that? When I feel insecure about that”
	Sharing similar interests with people online forms a sense of community	“Maybe there'll be something that I saw last night and she's talking about it, and maybe I asked the question, I'm like, girl, did you see this too? That was so crazy. Like, kind of like that. Yeah, maybe they might reply to your comment. Maybe they won't, but it's just kind of feels like a community”
	Standing up for people online against people being bullied for their looks and to defend their favourite content creators	“But if they were, if they were saying something rude about her herself, like how she looked, or saying something mean about her, I would be very quick and to go like, hey, no, I've known this person a long time, and even regardless of that, you shouldn't just

make assumptions or write mean things about someone”

Commenting Thoughts and feelings about commenting

There are two sides to commenting as positive and negative

“Sometimes the comment section can be really helpful and encouraging, but also sometimes it can be quite negative towards the post”

Comments emphasising a person’s body image can impact own body image

“I don't like the comments that are emphasizing the body. I just feel like it's unnecessary. Yeah, yeah, just highlighting the body kind of makes you think about your own”

Avoiding the comment section and having privacy barriers on social media as a shield to receiving negative comments

“If I saw those negative comments, I think part of me would be interested to see if there are other comments like that, but honestly, I'd probably avoid looking for things like that, because I know they're just not going to make me feel great”

“I feel like I get to enjoy it because I'm anonymous, almost, right? So, like I said, with Facebook, it's just my family and friends that are going to be commenting on my photos or whatever it is that I post. So more than likely, I won't get maybe, like, bad comments if that make sense.

you don't want to have at the back of your mind that somebody might say something mean about it”

	<p>Feeling bad for people receiving negative comments and feel empathetic towards them</p>	<p>“It does make me feel. It probably more brings up feelings of sadness, just because I think it's quite for me personally, it's quite sad to see that people feel and need to treat others negatively, or I just don't. I feel like the world has lost a bit of positivity”</p>
<p>Instances of commenting and actions</p>	<p>Not commenting, but reading the comments and rarely using the liking feature</p>	<p>“I don't personally comment myself, but I always seem to be looking through the comments of what people’s opinions”</p> <p>“If there's lots of hate comments, and then there's one saying you guys are so mean, this is so heartless. I'd like that comment”</p>
	<p>Commenting positively, liking the posts, or privately commenting to a person on social media if they knew the person previously.</p>	<p>“I probably wouldn't do it unless it's one of like my mates or something like I, not often will I comment on someone's post that I don't know”</p>
<p>Types of comments</p>	<p>Mostly preferred to read positive comments while two participants indicated to be seeking negative comments out of curiosity to understand human nature.</p>	<p>“Funny comments that aren't harmful, or anything, just someone's like, if it's on a meme or something, just someone saying something that is really relatable or doesn't have anything harmful to another person”</p> <p>“Probably the ones that probably are, like, not very nice, or just like, go against what would be the norm. Yeah, it's just interesting. Yeah, it's eye</p>

catching because it's not what most of the comment section is filled with and the ones that are out of the ordinary that catches my eye”

Body image	Beauty standards	Societal expectations of beauty for young women	“Society constantly projects this idea of what the ideal body type is, specifically for women, ideal body shape is to have big breasts, a big butt, curves, but to be skinny, but not too skinny, that still have some curves, but not be too fat, yeah, very specific body image”
------------	------------------	---	--

“Think maybe, I suppose, like the expectations that come with seeing a picture like that on social media. And I suppose like you're expected to have you're expected to look a certain way. And I feel like, maybe the subliminal expectations that come with a post surrounding body image or a person's body that can definitely like impact me am I holding myself to those same expectations?”

Comparison	Engaging in a comparison of the body image post and themselves	“I thought that her waist was much smaller than mine, in that she just is very looks tan, naturally pretty, just a bit flawless. We assume I look at myself and I don't exactly like I'm confident, but I don't exactly see, you know those things?”
------------	--	--

“You are constantly comparing yourself to other people's body. And it does make you

feel that you're that you're a bit inadequate, or that there, or that you will never be able to get to the place that they're at"

How did the body image post make them feel

Viewing the post led to positive and negative feelings

"I would be, there would be a little bit of jealousy, because she looks perfect, but I wouldn't, I wouldn't start to get sad or angry at myself because I don't look like her"

"I feel like I look quite similar. My body image is quite similar to that, which makes me feel, I don't know, look looking at that, and then thinking about myself doesn't make me feel bad. It makes me feel like, oh yeah, that's that kind of, kind of, what I look like. I'm happy with that sort of thing. I'm kind of content. I'd say in myself that it made me feel content"

Thinking associated with body image post

Questions that arise to mind as to how they can achieve the ideal body shape and take action to achieve the socially acceptable self-image

"I see how like someone could think, oh, well, how is she that skinny? How is she that tan? And how can I be like her? I don't look like her, but honestly, I'm fine with that"

"If anything, it gave me motivation to go to the gym and take that and that extra step to look like that. So, yeah, probably it gave me motivation, and it made me look at that person and think that's how I want to look. Bang, I'm going to do something about it"
 "Yep. I think every time that I see a post of someone, and they seem to have a perfect

body, there is always going to be a little bit of jealousy”

How did the comments about the body image post make them feel

Comments evoked jealousy and overthinking while relating the negative comments to themselves

“I would start to overthink my own body, saying that, commenting, when one of the comments saying the body is so tea, it does make me go if I don't look like that. So would is my body so tea too”

“Looking at the comment section. Oh, oh, um, some comments are definitely positive. they definitely will make you confident about posting yourself”

Exposure to negative comments could lead to comparison of body image and being cautious to posting their own selves on social media

“It would kind of make me cautious if I were to ever post anything like that, like it probably is preventing me from posting anything like that because of the backlash people receive”

Behaviours

Behavioural reactions after viewing the artificially generated post

“I'd probably like the comments that are like, saying that she looks nice. And then if people had replied to the mean comments and been like, wow, you should take a look at yourself, or something like that, I'd probably like their comments”

“I would I definitely like it, and if it's someone I'm close to, I'd probably leave a comment being like you're looking like you're glowing, or something like that. I'd see what everyone else has said probably first, and

Consequences	Consequences or aftermath of viewing the body image post	then I'd base my comments off everyone else a little bit" "I feel like if I saw that in real life, I couldn't help myself but look at her perfect body" "If I'm already on like, say, Instagram, just keep scrolling" "I'm not sure. I think I'll just leave it as it is"
--------------	--	--

Appendices

Appendix A

DIVISION OF ARTS, LAW, PSYCHOLOGY & SOCIAL SCIENCES

HUMAN ETHICS RESEARCH

Investigation of how body image-focused social media posts and comments affect viewers' thoughts, feelings and responses: A behavioural perspective

INFORMATION SHEET

Who are we?

We are a duo of researchers consisting of a Master of Applied Psychology student specialising in Behaviour Analysis and a Professor in Social Sciences at the University of Waikato. The professor supervises the student's master's degree Thesis.

We can be contacted via email through the following.

Ms. Ayodhya Panadare: apc29@students.waikato.ac.nz

Dr. Katrina Roen: katrina.roen@waikato.ac.nz

What is this study about?

This study focuses on the thoughts, feelings and behavioural reactions associated with body image related social media posts and comments and how it can affect viewers' body image and their reactions.

What do you have to do?

People who choose to participate in the study will attend an online interview lasting 30 to 45 minutes. During this interview, they can openly discuss their views on how body image posts and related comments affect their body image perception. The participants will be shown an artificially generated Instagram post with artificially generated comments and asked about their reactions and feelings.

Disclaimer:

You are about to view an image sourced from an artificially generated Instagram post. This image is being used for educational/research purposes only. Please be aware that the photo may reflect idealised beauty standards that do not represent the general population. If you feel uncomfortable or triggered at any point, you may choose to exit the study without consequence.

If you need any mental health-related support, please feel free to use the information provided in the mental health support information sheet supplied with this sheet.

Anonymity and Confidentiality:

All relevant measures are taken to protect the participants' anonymity and confidentiality. The researcher will only transcribe the data; identification information such as names will be removed from the transcripts.

Collected Information:

The collected information will be stored in a secure folder on the University of Waikato Server upon transcription. The research findings can be provided via email upon the participants' request.

Participant rights:

- Participants can withdraw up to 2 weeks after the interview; however, they will receive extra credit for participation.
- Participants can refuse to answer questions during the interview or withdraw if they feel uncomfortable, vulnerable, or unsafe.
- They will still receive compensation for participation.
- Participants have the right to ask further questions about the research during their participation.

- Participants are invited to let the researchers know if they would like a copy of the transcript of their interview and to provide any necessary edits.
- Participants can provide any edits up to one week after receiving the transcripts (Consent for these can be provided in the consent form)

Appendix B

THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO

DIVISION of ARTS, LAW, PSYCHOLOGY & SOCIAL SCIENCES

Investigation of how body image-focused social media posts and comments affect viewers' thoughts, feelings and responses: A behavioural perspective

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Name of person interviewed:

I have received a copy of the Information Sheet describing the research project. Any questions relating to the research have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can ask further questions about the research at any time during my participation and can withdraw my participation within two weeks following the interview.

During the interview, I understand I do not have to answer questions unless I am happy to discuss the topic. I can stop the interview anytime and ask to turn off the recording device.

When I sign this consent form, I will retain ownership of my interview, but I consent to the researcher using it for the research outlined in the Information Sheet.

I understand that my identity will remain confidential when presenting the research findings.

I would like to receive a copy of the research findings.

I would like to receive a copy of my interview transcript.

I would like to edit and highlight my interview transcript.

Participant :

Signature :

Date :

Contact Details :

Researcher :

Signature :

Date :

Contact Details :

Appendix C

Interview Guide: Semi-Structured Interview with Open-Ended Questions

Research Question: How body image-focused social media posts and comments affect viewers' thoughts, feelings and responses?

Focus areas:

Social media use and exposure:

- What types of social media platforms do you feel mostly drawn towards?
- Would you feel comfortable sharing with me the content you enjoy the most on social media?
- What appeals to you regarding this type of content?
- Are there particular people who inspire you on social media?
- What makes it feel connected to them or not connected?

Body image perception and the role of comments

- When you are using social media, do you engage with the commenting section at all?
- How do you feel about commenting on another person's post on social media, in general?
- What kinds of comments mostly catch your eye? Would you like to share an example with me?
- Let us say you encounter a post about body image, and the comments falling into it are significantly negative. How would that make you feel? What feelings might that cause?
- Has there ever been a time when something you saw on social media significantly affected how you felt about your own body? What was that like for you?
- Have you faced situations where something you saw on social media affected how you felt about your own body? What was that like?

Comments frame.

- Initially, show them the picture and ask whether they would be inclined to comment. Afterwards, show them the post with comments.

- Looking at the post, do you feel like commenting on it or not? What went through your mind?
- Sometimes, looking at things on social media can bring up feelings, which could also be about us. How did you feel looking at this post?
- Body image is a constantly changing concept of our body, which is shaped by our experiences related to it. Would you be like to discuss with me or tell me how the comments made you feel about your own body?



Reactions: Behavioural analytic account

- Can you tell me about a time you faced a real-life situation similar to this, on social media? What happened there?
- After viewing the post, what would your immediate reaction be? What would you do
- Do you feel your responses would be affected depending on whether you knew the person in the post previously?
- What would you do after viewing the post, having a behavioural reaction, and as a consequence to that?
- What would happen if you saw a similar post again in the future? Do you feel like viewing this post would affect your reactions to similar posts in the future?


Appendix D

Research Materials



 **beach_girl_*)** ·  · [Follow](#)



1035 likes

beach_girl_*) Getting my Vitamin Sea 🌊 ... more

[View all 16 comments](#)

sarah.jameson You're glowing, girl! Loving this vibe 🥰

thekewalker Slayy Queen 🙌🥰🥰🥰


Yours_Confidant3 You look stunning and confident! beach days done right 🥰🥰

@vibewithcharlie The body is soo tea gurl like 🥰❤

nina.miles Come on girl give us nothing

tylorthetalker this is not a flex imo. just promoting skinny culture

zebuu_lol girl literally ate and left no crumbs 🥰❤

 Add a comment...

6 days ago

Appendix E

*Te Wānanga o Ngā Kete | Division of Arts,
Law, Psychology & Social Sciences*

The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton 3240
New Zealand

School of Psychological and Social Sciences
Psychology Programme
Dr Amy Bird
Tel: +64 7 838 4094
Email: amy.bird@waikato.ac.nz
www.waikato.ac.nz



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Ayodhya Pandare
udeshinipandare101@gmail.com

Professor Katrina Roen

School of Psychological and Social Sciences
Psychology Programme

4 August 2025

Dear Ayodhya

Re: **FS2025-30: Investigation of How does body focused social media posts and comments affect viewers' body image perception and responses**

Thank you for submitting your revised application to the ALPSS Human Research Ethics Committee. We have reviewed the final electronic version of your application and the Committee is now pleased to offer formal approval for your research activities.

We encourage you to contact the committee should issues arise during your data collection, or should you wish to add further research activities or make changes to your project as it unfolds. We wish you all the best with your research. Thank-you for engaging with the process of Ethical Review.

Kind regards



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'AB-d'.

Dr Amy Bird, Convenor
Division of Arts, Law, Psychology & Social Sciences Human Research Ethics

Appendix F


Link: <https://forms.gle/Ns9hCVGfsLuL7DS48>

Study about Body Image



B *I* U  

Kia ora,

I'm Ayodhya Panadare, a student in the Master of Applied Psychology program in Behaviour Analysis at the University of Waikato, Hamilton. This demographic form was developed as a part of my thesis for participant recruitment. This study is about body image perception and social media. Further details can be shared with you after we ensure you are eligible to participate. If this interests you, fill out the following information.

Name  Short answer

Short answer text

  Required

Age *

Short answer text

Do you identify as female or lived experience as a female? *

yes

no

What languages are you comfortable in using? *

English

Other:

Have you ever faced any challenges related to eating habits or body image in the past? *

Yes

No

Are you a frequent user of social media? *

Yes

No

Phone or email *

Short answer text

.....