



# Intuition: The BYU Undergraduate Journal in Psychology

---

Volume 13  
Issue 3 *iss3*

Article 12

---

2018

## Beauty Imbalance: Social Media's Dictation of Worth

Aileen Washburn  
*Brigham Young University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/intuition>



Part of the [Psychology Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Washburn, Aileen (2018) "Beauty Imbalance: Social Media's Dictation of Worth," *Intuition: The BYU Undergraduate Journal in Psychology*. Vol. 13 : Iss. 3 , Article 12.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/intuition/vol13/iss3/12>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Intuition: The BYU Undergraduate Journal in Psychology by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact [scholarsarchive@byu.edu](mailto:scholarsarchive@byu.edu), [ellen\\_amatangelo@byu.edu](mailto:ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu).

Beauty Imbalance: Social Media's Dictation of Worth

Aileen Washburn

Brigham Young University

Abstract

The recent implementation of social-networking sites into Western societies has resulted in cognitive changes for those who participate. Online presence has been linked to social comparison, primarily female upward peer-comparison: comparing oneself to others who are perceived as better according to physical appearance or personality traits. The nature of social media and its underlying comparative promotions may lead many female users to develop body dissatisfaction, self-objectification, disordered eating, and other negative mental habits. Media in the Western world has been found to promote unrealistic beauty ideals as well as poor means of determining self-worth for women. These social ideals and views are being perpetuated and intensified as social media becomes more prevalent. As exposure leads to undesirable cognitive effects, girls and women are experiencing lower levels of overall self-esteem and self-acceptance. The way an individual uses social-networking sites, taking into account things like perspective and time involved, may also affect the degree of negative cognitive alteration. Conversely, appropriate online usage has been found to benefit users by providing social connectivity and support. For women and girls, poor self-perception can be prevented through the implementation of healthy social media use, belief in a higher power, and exposure to feminist beliefs focusing on female empowerment.

### Beauty Imbalance: Social Media's Dictation of Worth

In 2016, the Dove Corporation set out to understand women and girls in a way that no one had before. After extensive research involving over 10,500 women between the ages of ten and sixty, the *Dove Global Beauty and Confidence Report* (2016) was published. This study proved to be groundbreaking, becoming the largest brand-commissioned study regarding beauty. The extreme conclusions drew global attention: an estimated 96% of women did not consider themselves beautiful (Magrath, 2015). Unfortunately, lack of satisfaction with oneself now seems to be the norm; only a minority of females feel that they can declare themselves to be beautiful. Dove (2016) observed that the inability to accurately evaluate one's appearance affected women and girls everywhere, regardless of demographics. Dove researchers further examined the causes for the growing dissatisfaction and pressure. A majority of women reported media as a primary contributor to this consuming problem. While lack of self-love appears to be a global issue, the lowest levels of self-esteem were found in Western societies (Brown, 2016). Researchers noticed that African, Asian, and Latin countries all ranked higher in regard to rates of body confidence than other countries. This Dove study and others like it (Andreassen, Pallesen, & Griffiths, 2017; Primack & Escobar-Viera, 2017) highlight the growing low self-esteem pandemic affecting women everywhere.

The results of the *Dove Global Beauty and Confidence Report* (2016) led many to more crucially consider the impact of media in the lives of women. For some time, researchers have recognized media exposure and distortion as leading contributors to female body dissatisfaction (Fardouly & Holland, 2018). The influence of television, billboards, and magazines all negatively impact female well-being (Fardouly, Pinkus, & Vartanian, 2017), but a new form of media has emerged in connection with these rising rates of low self-confidence. Social media has

become an integral part of life in Western civilization, and its effects are now being noticed by researchers and users alike. With usage rates jumping from 5% to 69% between 2005 and 2018, it is now the norm to own accounts on multiple social networking platforms (Lenhart, 2015). Sites like *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *Instagram*, and *Snapchat* feed the general population information and images daily. Social media has profound effects on the human mind relating to addiction, narcissism, and personality development (Andreassen et al., 2017). These effects are only recently being acknowledged and examined.

Fardouly et al., (2017) discovered that girls are no longer comparing themselves to models or celebrities, but rather to those around them. This peer comparison seems to have the greatest effect on personal perception. Rather than obsessing over unrealistic ideals of photo-shopped women, girls spend their time looking at friends and acquaintances. When exposed to positive peer qualities, such as ideal body shapes or desired personality traits, girls tend to harshly criticize themselves (Tatangelo & Ricciardelli, 2017). This phenomenon is unique to females, with similar exposure having minimal or even positive effects on males (Tatangelo & Ricciardelli, 2017). Innate gender differences are complex and can be difficult to isolate but are likely the reason self-comparison disparities exist between men and women (Fardouly et al., 2017). Social media often portrays augmented images and distorted truths, such that social platforms have become flooded with “ideal” qualities. No matter the platform, whether a social networking site like Instagram or a micro-blogging site like Twitter, people yearn to present their best self to the public (Feltman & Szymanski, 2017). Some users present a hyper-idealistic version of themselves, which others often compare themselves to. This upward-reaching form of comparison exists as users compare their self to the best qualities and traits inaccurately

presented online (Andreassen et al., 2017). This behavior seems inescapable on social-networking sites today, yet often goes undetected by the one comparing.

Consequences of social media influence stretch beyond negative feelings towards oneself. Destructive behaviors can easily stem from media's unrealistic standards: it is common for women to opt out of activities, stop themselves from eating, and lack assertiveness—all because of the way they perceive themselves (Dove, 2016). Nevertheless, through their worldwide studies and interviews, Dove researchers found many women voicing their desire for a new definition of beauty. By further studying and addressing the issues that result from social media's influence in the lives of women, beauty can begin to be reexamined and thereby redefined.

Although the perspectives and behavior of women are now being examined, the issues that threaten female well-being seem to be worsening. The diminishment of female self-love has become a critical issue, and social scientists are studying how to lessen the negative effects of media. While widespread social media exposure in Western society connects, impacts, and informs most people, this powerful influence likely damages female self-esteem. Increased social-networking site usage is linked to increased rates of body dissatisfaction (including distorted eating and self-objectification) as well as decreased rates of self-love and satisfaction (Rodgers, Damiano, Wertheim, & Paxton, 2017; Slater & Tiggemann, 2015; Stice, Ng, & Shaw, 2010).

### **Social Media's Influence on Body Dissatisfaction**

Because social media is new and rapidly evolving, its effects are only beginning to be studied and understood. The majority of online users are teenagers, with 92% of young people using the internet daily (Lenhart, 2015). However, though most of those using social media sites

are in critical developmental stages, online presence is increasingly becoming common among a wide range of ages. Online use remains unproblematic for some, but for others it becomes excessive and compulsive (Andreassen et al., 2017). Moreover, increased time using social media impacts individuals at every age. Individuals are affected both by what they see online and what they post, through direct and indirect comparison (Fardouly et al., 2017). Social media involvement primarily consists of the sharing of personal pictures and information. For women and girls specifically, social media use has been linked to a number of undesired cognitive tendencies (Tatangelo & Ricciardelli, 2017). Whether through the promotion of body dissatisfaction, self-objectification, or mental disturbance, social media may have a greater effect on feminine well-being than is being considered by those involved (Primack & Escobar-Viera, 2017; Slater & Tiggemann, 2015).

### **Comparison**

In Western society today, media is a central part of everyday life and has been observed to have an impact on girls as young as age three (Rodgers et al., 2017). This far-reaching aspect of society has, for years, been directly connected to unhealthy comparison for girls and women (Fardouly & Holland, 2018). With the rise of social media, girls are no longer being primarily affected by models and celebrities found in magazines and on billboards (Fardouly et al., 2017). Recent studies suggest that harmful upward comparison is predominantly the result of peer relations (Fardouly et al., 2017; Tatangelo & Ricciardelli, 2017). Now girls tend to compare themselves to friends and acquaintances, rather than to celebrities, and the effects are still damaging. Tatangelo and Ricciardelli (2017) examined this social comparison and found that when exposed to positive peer qualities, girls harshly criticized themselves. This self-deprecating behavior may be more common as online connectivity has increased (Fardouly et al., 2017). The

power of media's influence and the strong impact of peer comparison is now combined with social media. This new form of connection and constant exposure has intensified the personal comparison of girls to those around them.

The image-based comparison that results from mass media consumption is being continued through social media. Tatangelo and Ricciardelli (2017) found that for girls, social comparison was primarily appearance-based. As participants repeatedly examined the positive qualities of their peers, their automatic response was to criticize themselves harshly. This phenomenon was defined as *peer appearance culture* (Tatangelo & Ricciardelli, 2017). This new cultural element highlights how young girls compare their body to those around them and feel worse about themselves as a result. This phenomenon was described as unique to females, as social comparison is not as prevalent among boys. For males who were affected by media or peer comparison, the interaction was actually described as being positive or motivational. Researchers asserted that the difference between responses can be traced back to inherent mental differences between the genders (Tatangelo & Ricciardelli, 2017). Thus, it appears that the harmful and negative influence of social media primarily affects women due to innate sex differences in cognitive processing.

Social networking appears to infiltrate female thought processes due to its accessibility and social relevance. Although a variety of body types are represented on social media, as opposed to traditional media like magazines or billboards, women still consistently upwardly compare (Fardouly et al., 2017; see Table 1). Burnette, Kwitowski, and Mazzeo (2017) found that most groups of girls they questioned acknowledged the negative consequences of social comparison. The damaging effects of social media seem to be noticed by users, yet participation



continues. Social comparison thus seems to be unavoidable and is intensifying as online connection grows.

While social media's promotion of comparison may be significant, individual interpretation may determine either harmful or helpful results. Fardouly et al., (2017) suggested that most appearance-based comparisons are made in person, yet social media adds an additional level of peer exposure to the lives of women. Social media use was found to have the greatest impact on comparison when compared to all other media outlets, because usage leads to perpetual and extensive peer comparison (Fardouly et al., 2017). The power and scope of social media, as well as the way females participate online, call for the consideration of adverse cognitive effects.

### **Body Dissatisfaction**

As media and social media share similar image-based promotions and elicit a range of both positive and negative viewer reactions, the definition of appropriate or ideal body image has become central. Online exposure to others may lead girls to alter their self-concept and to adopt social stereotypes regarding body size (Rodgers et al., 2017). The internalization of weight-associated values has been observed in girls as young as ages three to five, due to various forms of media influence (Rodgers et al., 2017). Unhealthy ideals and, almost always, unobtainable body-mass indices and heights were found reflected in girls' behavior and thoughts (Rodgers et al., 2017). Social comparison affects females at a critical, young age. What girls learn and internalize when they are young tends to be amplified as they grow and develop (Rodgers et al., 2017). Strong negativity regarding one's body is promoted as females are more often exposed to unhealthy ideals.

As social media sites function somewhat differently from each other, and as some are used more than others, the nature of sites that are currently popular should be considered. Feltman and Szymanski (2017) observed the link between the most commonly used social-networking site, *Instagram*, and body surveillance among American women. The more time participants spent visiting the site, the more they were aware of their size, weight, and image. Although both upward and downward social comparison occurred, as well as both positive and negative appearance-related commentary, the same physical awareness resulted (Feltman & Szymanski, 2017). Regardless of the type of online feedback or input, women left *Instagram* more aware of their flaws and were therefore more dissatisfied with themselves in general. When social media usage becomes a daily habit, so does this negative form of body surveillance.

### **Self-Objectification**

The tendency for females to view themselves as objects to be used, rather than as valued individuals, appears to increase when an online presence exists (Slater & Tiggemann, 2015). When examining the development of self-objectifying behavior in girls, social networking sites seem to contribute to the behavior more extensively than traditional media outlets (Slater & Tiggemann, 2015). Slater and Tiggemann (2015) noticed that appearance-related comments contributed to personal objectification; many of these comments originated online, and most were connected to peer comparison. Further study found that positive, appearance-related comments were just as likely to lead to self-objectification as negative ones (Slater & Tiggemann, 2015). Peer influence, which is widely offered through social media, no matter the type of commentary, may lead to the objectification of oneself.

Western societies often promote beauty ideals that can be recognized in the general media and now translate into social media interactions (Vandenbosch & Eggermont, 2016).

Media has long promoted appearance-based ideals and standards. Internalization of these beauty ideals has led to the focus on and fixation of attractive peers on social networking sites (Vandenbosch & Eggermont, 2016). The mixture of ingrained beauty ideals and monitoring attractive peers typically leads to self-objectification in girls (Vandenbosch & Eggermont, 2016). The desire to be perceived as beautiful is commonplace both on- and offline. This drive for social acceptance may be augmented when self-objectification is the product. All too often, girls treat themselves as having less worth than they otherwise have, when attempting to uphold a presence online.

### **Mental Illness**

Many factors contribute to the development of cognitive disorders; Unhealthy habits in all facets of life can increase susceptibility to mental illness, including habits surrounding social media usage. Unfortunately, primary users of social media are young adults who are typically in transitional and crucial developmental periods (Primack & Escobar-Viera, 2017). When considering social media's general impact on mental health, emotional contagion seems to impact and determine mental regulation (Primack & Escobar-Viera, 2017). This phenomenon—in which emotions and behaviors can be determined by the emotions and behaviors of those with which one interacts—alludes to the idea that social media likely interferes with psychosocial development. In general, many unhealthy thought processes and habits that lead to mental illness are also products of social media presence (Primack & Escobar-Viera, 2017).

**Depression and anxiety.** Epidemiological studies, which focus on the analysis of determinants to health, contribute support for the idea that social media use may be associated with mental-illness conditions such as anxiety and depression. Gibbons, Horowitz, and Dunlap (2017) examined the *fading affect bias* among individuals involved on social media. This form of

bias refers to the fact that unpleasant affect fades quicker than pleasant affect. While this natural effect normally leads to healthy outcomes, when examined in the context of online social networking, negative correlations were observed. In this study, as online involvement increased, one's cognitive ability to lose negative affect quickly decreased (Gibbons et al., 2017). The inability to let go of negative affect increased individuals' stress levels and therefore their mental disturbance (Gibbons et al., 2017). Furthermore, a high degree of mental disturbance was directly correlated with the presence of depression and anxiety (Gibbons et al., 2017). The inability to adequately regulate emotions, a behavior acquired through consistent online interactions, can thus be inheritably harmful (Primack & Escobar-Viera, 2017). Fortunately, social media exposure can be limited or altered to avoid adverse mental health effects such as depression or anxiety.

**Eating disorders.** While social media is connected to comparison, social pressure, ideal internalization and dissatisfaction, studies have linked these same factors to the onset of eating pathology (Stice et al., 2010). Many of the correlations being made between social media use and poor mental health are being further connected to dietary restraint (Cohen, Newton-John, & Slater, 2017). Body dissatisfaction is most often present when stages of eating disorders have developed. Society tends to promote thinness as the female ideal, which further promotes unhealthy food-intake habits. However, Stice et al. (2010) have shown that intervention programs have proved beneficial when it comes to decreasing eating-disorder symptoms and ideals. The effectiveness of these programs primarily depends on the group being targeted, with the goal being to identify high-risk individuals (Stice et al., 2010). Intervention programs impact identified individuals by reducing pressure for thinness and redirecting pursuits that would otherwise lead to unhealthy eating habits (Stice et al., 2010). To address and prevent eating

pathology, reaching vulnerable demographics (those more susceptible to eating disorder development) should include considering those greatly involved on social platforms.

### **Social Media's Impact on Self-love and Satisfaction**

#### **Self Esteem**

Addictive behaviors promoted by social media strongly correlate with low levels of self-esteem. Andreassen et al. (2017) considered these social-networking effects in relation to the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Findings supported the notion that excessive use leads to low self-evaluation in an attempt to inhibit negative feelings. These findings were unique to women, as being female was a main determinate of low self-worth, when it came to involvement on social media (Andreassen et al., 2017). Furthermore, while women tend to form more addictive social-networking habits, they also may be more prone to possess low levels of self-esteem (Andreassen et al., 2017). A combination of these two female tendencies typically leads to the perpetuation of low self-confidence when interacting on social-networking sites.

By closely observing online interactions, self-esteem can be accurately predicted by researchers. Yang, Holden, and Carter (2017) found that authentic self-presentation and healthy social media usage, based on mindfulness, related to higher rates of self-esteem for college-aged women. Conversely, the presentation of personal and intimate information online was correlated with lower levels of identity clarity or clear self-perception (Yang et al., 2017). By considering how one presents themselves on social media, self-esteem can be gauged. Research has further shown that the presentation of oneself online is directly associated with the development of identity as one enters adulthood (Primack & Escobar-Viera, 2017). Social media revolves around the sharing and viewing of personal information, which augments individual self-perception.

Thus, a lack of clear sense of identity is being adopted in young girls and then continued into their adulthood.

### **Beauty**

For many social networking sites, photo-sharing activities have become the focus of involvement. Girls are much more likely to use visual-based sites online, as opposed to text-based sites, as they prefer to share and observe photos (Lenhart, 2015). A common form of photography, known as the “selfie,” which is a picture one takes of him- or herself, has become increasingly popular on social sites. In a qualitative study of girl’s feelings towards selfie-taking, it was observed that a high percentage of young girls refrain from posting these pictures of themselves due to a belief that their appearance is not adequate (Burnette et al., 2017). In the same study, girls who did post pictures of themselves often claimed the reason was related to their desire to increase self-confidence. Further examination led the same researchers to the realization that confidence only existed due to the validation received from others, but it was often temporary and insufficient. Appearance dissatisfaction was also found in most girls, as words like “ugly,” “bad,” and “horrible” were used when self-describing (Burnette et al., 2017). Social media seems to highlight preexisting insecurities and perpetuates outside means of obtaining confidence in attempt to measure up to peers. For girls, something as simple as taking and posting a picture can lead to physical dissatisfaction, as a result of the feedback given (or not given) by others.

The measure of beauty on social-networking sites is often distorted and superficial, due to editing and general image augmentation. The distortion began in mainstream media and has since translated into peer and everyday comparisons (Fardouly et al., 2016). Exposure to the

number of “likes” and appearance-praising comments of others may lead to decreased appearance satisfaction for the viewer (Fardouly et al., 2016). This perpetuated culture of social comparison often leads to appearance dissatisfaction for female comparers, as there is always someone receiving more attention online. As individuals who heavily use social media compare and interact with others online, their worth begins to be defined by the online external validation received regarding their appearance. Appearance dissatisfaction ensues as the result of an augmented and abnormal sense of self-worth.

### **Possible Solutions Through Empowerment**

Social media has an immense impact on the population today and therefore holds great potential for either harm or good. While many studies in this literature review have highlighted the negative effects social-networking sites have on women, much good has come from this new way to connect. Many social media users experience higher levels of life satisfaction and social support when compared to those uninvolved (Primack & Escobar-Viera, 2017). The ability to connect with others easily does more than simply influence girls to harmfully compare to those around them. When used appropriately, ability to identify and interact with others online has proven to be a great benefit when considering overall mental health (Barry, Sidoti, Briggs, Reiter, & Lindsey, 2017). Individuals can now connect easily with people they otherwise would never reach. New ideas, stories, and thoughts now circulate due to fast, interpersonal association (L. Westman, personal communication, March 6, 2018). This authentic sharing of information, even pictures alone, can help people learn, cope, grow, and see the world differently (L. Westman, personal communication, March 6, 2018). A new way to mitigate effects is now being studied, which centers on feminist beliefs (Feltman & Szymnski, 2017). Moderate to high feminist ideals that focus on female empowerment, significance, and equality, appear to act as a

buffer against poor self-image and body dissatisfaction (Feltman & Szymnski, 2017). This progressive way of thinking can help protect girls and women everywhere from the harmful effects of social media. General promotion of healthy and positive self-perception can also help condition females to love and accept themselves.

### **Using Social Media in a Healthy Way**

Studies have shown that there are healthy and unhealthy ways to interact online. Technology usage affects emotional, social, and cognitive development, not only for teens and adolescents, but for adults, as well (Gold, 2015). Since more time online is being used for social purposes, appropriate use, which involves authentic self-presentation and mindful usage, is important for one's optimal mental development (Yang et al., 2017). Social media offers a wide range of benefits to users, such as connection, healthy self-expression, community support and interaction, as well as access to health-promoting resources (Elmquist & McLaughlin, 2017). By implementing healthy online practices, low self-esteem, increased self-objectification, and the internalization of body dissatisfaction may be mitigated.

How and why one uses social media plays a role in determining whether it harms or benefits the user (Yang et al., 2017). The amount of time spent on social sites is a main contributor to distorted social comparison (Gold, 2015). As people increase their time spent online, social media accounts can become an integral part of people's lives, and social media usage may even shift into obsession or addiction (Gold, 2015). Limiting use not only decreases exposure to peers' posts and pictures, which may lead to harmful comparison, but it also allows for alternate activities and avenues to fill one's life (Gold, 2015). This translates into the reason social networking should be used in the first place: Social media is meant to inform, connect, and share. Conversely, when the reason for going online is boredom, impulse, or the desire for



validation, negative results may ensue. Research supports the notion that home and school environments have the power to determine girls' attitudes regarding social media, whether positive or negative (Burnette et al., 2017). Parents and teachers have the power impact girls in this way. Decreasing time online and implementing healthy social outlooks can turn the adverse effects of social media into beneficial ones.

While social media use may contribute to negative mental habits, there is also a great potential for it to correct those unhealthy conditions. Elmquist and McLaughlin (2017) argued that understanding social media usage is imperative due to its great potential for good. Social media provides access to mental health resources in a way that has never been seen before—through countless services online (Elmquist & McLaughlin, 2017). These online services can have a great impact on women in need by providing social support and professional assistance. Elmquist and McLaughlin (2017) called on future researchers to focus on integrating social media use into identifying and finding those individuals who need mental health services. Potentially unsurpassable benefits may result by using this new form of connectivity to find and help those struggling in society.

### **Religion**

When personal value is measured according to appearance or outside approval, susceptibility to low self-esteem appears to increase significantly. While women may try to refrain from this poor gauge of worth, complete avoidance is often unrealistic. The female placement of self-worth on appearance and peer approval is positively correlated with body comparison and scrutiny (Inman, Snyder, & Peprah, 2016). Given that these psychological disturbances originate in society, it is valuable to find factors that alleviate negative social media effects. In one study, feelings of being loved and loving oneself increased after reading religious

material that emphasized a loving God who accepts everyone unconditionally (Inman et al., 2016; see Figure 1). This correlation further translated into decreased levels of body-dissatisfaction for women who otherwise based worth on physical or outside sources (Inman et al., 2016). Thus, when patients participate in religious activities, the demeaning aspects of media's influence are lessened.

The influence and significance of religiosity often rests in the validity of the sect according to the participant. Whether what a religion preaches is true or not, there are psychological benefits to worship (Inman et al., 2016). While the reality of a God and all that that entails would undoubtedly alleviate much self-dissatisfaction and disdain, simply the belief in a greater power and purpose may prove beneficial (Inman et al., 2016). While religious involvement is based on personal choice, health benefits may reach far beyond those commonly acknowledged.

### **Conclusion**

While religion and healthy online usage appear to help mitigate many of the negative effects social media has on girls, more can be done to help promote self-love. The overarching result of Western-societal promotion is the fact that many females measure their worth according to outside sources (Burnette et al., 2017; Fardouly et al., 2016). Extraneous influences, such as peer validation and approval, may lead to a faulty and fragile self-perception. While the *Dove Global Beauty and Confidence Report* (2016) was focused on the women who did not consider themselves beautiful, a small portion of women did consider themselves beautiful. There must be something significant that separates that 4% from the other 96% and that difference likely resides in how each group of women defined self-worth.

The comparative aspects of social media typically harm positive self-perception for females of all ages. The negative impact social media use has on well-being seems to be primarily a female concern, and therefore, the implications of increased incorporation of social networking sites into Western society remain profound. Media's emphasis on appearance shapes females' perception of worth, and comparison seems to be particularly harmful to the mental and psychological health of girls (Fardouly et al., 2017). Given the widespread use of social-networking sites, healthy practices should be adopted, as this aspect of Western life will likely not fade. Considering that young girls are exposed to social media during critical developmental periods, healthy practices involving mindful online use should also be promoted in schools and homes.

While social media appears to shadow many positive qualities in girls and highlight other negative ones, the potential for online resources to good is significant. Great benefits have been seen in the widespread connectivity and interaction made possible by social media, as some personal forms of comparison help individuals (Elmquist & McLaughlin, 2017). For girls, an internal sense of value seems to be necessary for true self-acceptance and confidence. Internal self-love often comes from following personal goals, interests, and passions (L. Westman, personal communication, March 6, 2018). By recognizing social media's harmful promotions and redirecting their focus, Western women and girls can learn to better love and appreciate themselves.

## References

- Andreassen, C. S., Pallesen, S., & Griffiths, M. D. (2017). The relationship between addictive use of social media, narcissism, and self-esteem: Findings from a large national survey. *Addictive Behaviors, 64*, 287-293. doi:10.1016/j.addbeh.2016.03.006
- Barry, C. T., Sidoti, C. L., Briggs, S. M., Reiter, S. R., & Lindsey, R. A. (2017). Adolescent social media use and mental health from adolescent and parent perspectives. *Journal of Adolescence, 6*, 11-11. doi:10.1016/j.adolescence.2017.08.005
- Brown, V. (2016, June 23). Women's body confidence becomes a 'critical issue' worldwide, Dove global study indicates. *News.com.au*. Retrieved March 23, 2018, from <https://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/beauty/face-body/womens-body-confidence-becomes-a-critical-issue-worldwide-dove-global-study-indicates/news-story/5bf063c6a19c838cee9464a248af6bff>
- 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. doi:10.1016/j.bodyim.2017.09.001
- Cohen, R., Newton-John, T., & Slater, A. (2018). 'Selfie'-objectification: The role of selfies in self-objectification and disordered eating in young women. *Computers in Human Behavior, 79*, 68-74. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2017.10.027
- Dove. (2016). Our Research. Retrieved March 28, 2018, from <https://www.dove.com/us/en/stories/about-dove/our-research.html>

Elmquist, D. L., & McLaughlin, C. L. (2017). Social media use among adolescents coping with mental health. *Contemporary School Psychology, 21*, 1-9. doi:10.1007/s40688-017-01675

Fardouly, J., & Holland, E. (2018). Social media is not real life: The effect of attaching disclaimer-type labels to idealized social media images on women's body image and mood. *New Media & Society, 20*(11), 4311–4328. <https://doi-org.erl.lib.byu.edu/10.1177/1461444818771083>

Fardouly, J., Pinkus, R. T., & Vartanian, L. R. (2017). The impact of appearance comparisons made through social media, traditional media, and in person in women's everyday lives. *Body Image, 20*, 31-39. doi:10.1016/j.bodyim.2016.11.002

Feltman, C. E., & Szymanski, D. M. (2017). Instagram use and self-objectification: The roles of internalization, comparison, appearance commentary, and feminism. *Sex Roles, 78*(6), 311-324. doi:10.1007/s11199-017-0796-1

Gibbons, J. A., Horowitz, K. A., & Dunlap, S. M. (2017). The fading affect bias shows positive outcomes at the general but not the individual level of analysis in the context of social media. *Consciousness and Cognition: An International Journal, 53*, 47-60. doi:10.1016/j.concog.2017.05.009

Gold, J. (2015). *Screen-smart parenting: How to find balance and benefit in your child's use of social media, apps, and digital devices*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Inman, M., Snyder, A., & Peprah, K. (2016). Religious-body affirmations protect body esteem for women who base self-worth on appearance or others' approval. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture, 19*, 98-111. doi:10.1080/13674676.2015.1124634

- Lenhart, A. (2015, April 09). Teens, social media & technology overview 2015. Retrieved March 23, 2018, from <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/04/09/teens-social-media-technology-2015/>
- Magrath, A. (2015, April 08). Watch what happens when women are forced to choose between walking through doors marked 'average' or 'beautiful'... as it is revealed that 96 PER CENT of women rate themselves as average looking. *Daily Mail*. Retrieved March 23, 2018, from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-3029777/Dove-survey-reveals-96-CENT-women-rate-average-looking.html>
- Primack, B. A., & Escobar-Viera, C. G. (2017). Social media as it interfaces with psychosocial development and mental illness in transitional age youth. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 26(2), 217-233. doi:10.1016/j.chc.2016.12.007
- Rodgers, R. F., Damiano, S. R., Wertheim, E. H., & Paxton, S. J. (2017). Media exposure in very young girls: Prospective and cross-sectional relationships with BMIz, self-esteem and body size stereotypes. *Developmental Psychology*, 53(12), 2356-2363. doi:10.1037/dev0000407
- Slater, A., & Tiggemann, M. (2015). Media exposure, extracurricular activities, and appearance-related comments as predictors of female adolescents' self-objectification. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 39(3), 375-389. doi:10.1177/0361684314554606
- Stice, E., Ng, J., & Shaw, H. (2010). Risk factors and prodromal eating pathology. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 51(4), 518-525. doi:10.1111/j.1469-7610.2010.02212.x

Tatangelo, G. L., & Ricciardelli, L. A. (2017). Children's body image and social comparisons with peers and the media. *Journal of Health Psychology, 22*(6), 776-787.

doi:10.1177/1359105315615409

Vandenbosch, L., & Eggermont, S. (2016). The interrelated roles of mass media and social media in adolescents' development of an objectified self-concept: A longitudinal study.

*Communication Research, 43*(8), 1116-1140. doi:10.1177/0093650215600488

Yang, C., Holden, S. M., & Carter, M. K. (2017). Emerging adults' social media self-presentation and identity development at college transition: Mindfulness as a moderator. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 52*, 212-221. doi:10.1016/j.appdev.2017.08.006

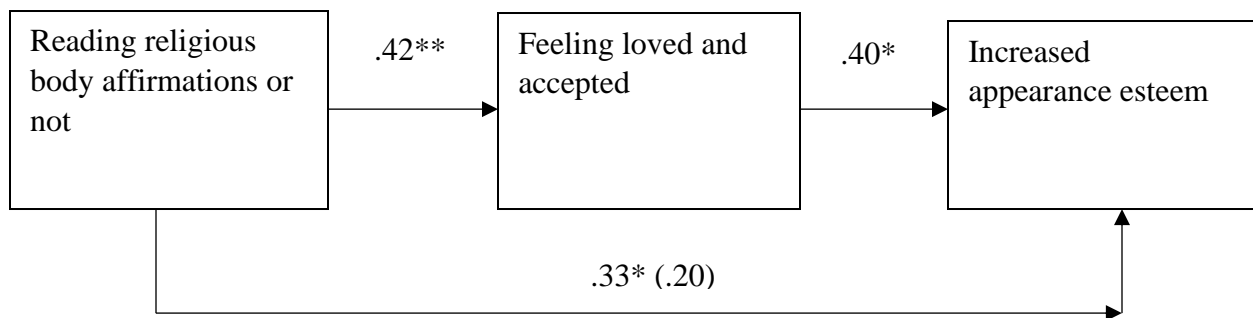
## Appendix

Table 1

*Percentage of Female Comparison Made Within Different Contexts*

	Upward	Lateral	Downward	Total
Social media	71 (67.0%)	22 (20.8%)	13 (12.2%)	106
Traditional Media	71 (80.7%)	5 (5.7%)	12 (13.6%)	88
In person	289 (45.1%)	152 (23.7%)	200 (31.2%)	641
Total	431	179	225	

*Note.* Adapted from “The Impact of Appearance Comparisons Made Through Social Media, Traditional Media, and in Person in Women’s Everyday Lives” by J. Fardouly, R. T. Pinkus, and L. R. Vartanian, 2017, *Body Image*, 20, p. 35.



\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

*Figure 1.* Mediated model predicting changes in appearance esteem for women with strong approval concerns. Reading theistic body-affirming statements was related to increased self-esteem for women with high-approval concerns. Adapted from “Religious-Body Affirmations Protect Body Esteem for Women Who Base Self-Worth on Appearance or Others’ Approval” by M. Inman, A. Snyder, and K. Peprah, 2015, *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, 19, p. 107.