

CHAPTER SEVEN

Influences of Social Media on Adolescents' ideas of Physical Appearance Research with Children and Young People

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ABSTRACT

The research will investigate young people's experiences of appearance anxiety, working with Asian female youth between the ages of 14-16, in Toronto high schools. Many studies have shown that magazine images substantially raise children's concerns about their appearance. This research will explore how adolescents perceive their social image, how social media influences their perceptions of appearance, and how those perceptions relate to their mental status. To examine the relevancies, this research involves child-centred information collection conducted using a variety of qualitative and participatory research methods. It will point out the significance of properly utilizing social media and information dissemination, which also reflects the influence of the Internet on children's aesthetics. Findings of this study will provide valuable insights into how social media promoted beauty trends influence women adolescents' self-worth and body image perceptions, as well as the potential subsequent mental issues.

KEYWORDS: Appearance Concern, Self-perception, Social Media Affection, Mental Situation, Cyber Propagate

This research investigated the impact of social media on young people’s experiences of the development of their appearances, working with female youth between the ages of 14-16, in Toronto. The purpose of this research project focuses on the influence between social media use and the idea of appearance among youth groups. Child-centred information collection was conducted using a variety of qualitative and participatory research methods. As teenagers become increasingly involved in social media, it is inevitable that they will touch on various social topics, including those related to appearance. Children have been shown a sense of appearance anxiety and depression impacted by social media use, where presenting oneself online is indicative of appearance anxiety, as there is a likelihood of unrealistic comparison, a sense of recognition by others, and a degree of expectation of being acknowledged (Hawes et al, 2020; Boursier et al, 2020). Females are at higher risk of body image struggles, as they experience significant internal and external pressures that contribute to appearance related anxiety (Boursier et al, 2020; Adams et al, 2017; Hawes et al, 2020; Trekless & Eggermont, 2017). This leaves young women more vulnerable of being manipulated when they give great attention and concerns to appearance (Adams et al, 2017). Following the scholarly literatures, this report determines the research question to fill gaps in knowledge of defining the root of directing youth females to manage physical presentation from children’s perspectives: How do Asian teenage females (ages 14-16) in Toronto develop ideas of their appearance through social media? In this research, I explored the research topic with my participants with the following objectives,

- What are adolescents’ general perceptions of their social image?
- What influences can be brought from social media on appearance?
- How does social media influence adolescents’ perceptions of their appearance and what are the outcomes reflect on their mental status?

to develop a deeper comprehension of how social media influences teens’ views of appearance, and how appearance has become a growing topic on the internet.

Background - Literature Review

History of the topic

The Internet has provided conveniences for teenagers to locate information through virtual platforms; blogging was one of the popular online platforms where social media cites were relatively rare. Moreover, blogging is mainly content wording with less image which has less engagement between users, that users typically browse and leave (Farooqi and Baig, 2019). Nevertheless, Lenhart et al. (2010) found blogging usage has decreased and shifted significantly to message sending features among teenagers. In addition, this study also found that Twitter wasn’t popular, specifically that “data from September 2009 suggest that teens do not use Twitter in large numbers” (Lenhart et al., 2010, p.21). This indicated that teens then were limited exposed to virtual contents through social media as popular as today. Less frequent use of social media has minimized the influence on teenagers, including the demonstration of their value. As Shafer (2017, para. 5) determined in his study that there is “a rise in sleeplessness, loneliness, worry, and dependence among teenagers — a rise that coincides with the release of the first iPhone 10 years ago”. As mobile devices have become more commonplace, there has been an increase in exposure to social media content. It is an opportunity for children to explore the online world everywhere, which increases social media dependence and results in multiple effects. The recommendation of big data thus allows children interested in appearance to check the relevant information at any time on

mobile devices such as cell phones and tablets, and the social media network spreads the information to boost the chances of children being exposed to topics relevant to appearance.

The current state of the field

The rise of internet and the popularity of social media has introduced a wide range of software and features, which is creating a dynamic online environment for users. At the same time, the variety of online technology has led to the creation of image-editing techniques that negatively impact how adolescents perceive themselves. Specifically, the use of social media software with virtual filters is creating unrealistic beauty expectations for teens and distorts their perception of themselves (Russell, 2022). It is possible that children are disgusted with their appearance because they cannot accept the difference between filtered and non-filtered pictures and will instead see the filtered pictures as a beauty standard. Meanwhile, social media is increasingly offering new features that leave spaces for users to share comments under the posted contents. Even though it is a good tool to create interaction with larger group of users, it also giving allowance to the public for discussing the contents from head to toes in multiple ways, even causing negative outcomes (Hawes et al., 2020). Being bashed a post greatly reduces the person's self-confidence and the perception that their own shortcomings are causing others to leave negative comments, with this effect being especially prominent in women and young girls. Chae (2017) found that women experience jealousy toward social media influencers while noting differences due to body image comparisons, which also tied to beauty standards promoted by influencers. In addition, teenage girls tend to use retouching software to make their physical appearance look more perfect by modifying their faces and body to meet the aesthetics associated with social media (Kleemans et al., 2018). The results indicate that girls pay more attention to their appearance, with the depiction of social media and the trend of appearance generating the strongest impacts on girls in adolescence. Taking all the studies that have pointed out the effects of social media use on adolescents' perceptions of appearance into consideration is worthwhile, as children are affected by social media discussions.

Theoretical Framework

Sociocultural theory - Lev Vygotsky

In Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, it emphasizes the "interdependence of social and cognitive processes in child development" (Yousef & Mahameed, 2022, p.243). Social media is a microcosm of society, as children obtain dozens of information through the interaction with friends on the internet and learn about the cultural perception of others from their participation in social media. Schrader (2015) gives the idea that online platforms have generated a wide array of learning opportunities for young people, with knowledge being shared, engaged, and communicated to help children form their own opinions, such as information about social appearance. The information becomes a knowledge base in children's minds, in turn influencing their construction of self-presentation and the way they think about themselves. Meanwhile, comparison between individuals may result in the formulation of an incentive to move forward for one of them as a learning object to adding others' perceptions on top of self (Taylor, 2020). However, this influence may not necessarily be beneficial since it includes generating jealousy or frustration that brings negativities to children.

UNCRC

In conducting this research project, we as researchers are required to strictly follow the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) articles to protect the rights of the children who are the subjects of the research. Especially in Article 12, it highlights how children can make decisions on their own, that nobody can force them to be present in the research and it should be taken voluntarily. Children's participation and contribution to the project are decided by themselves. Moreover, Article 13 sets a foundation for the right of freedom for children to express themselves and adult should pay attention to their perceptions. It directly shows that children's points of view should be taken into consideration, and that they should be regarded as research partners. Researchers should stand in the children's shoes and listen to their voices to better understand how they feel about appearance anxiety and the impact of social media. In addition, Article 16 has raised the importance of children's privacy to avoid illegal attacks. The topic of appearance anxiety brought up from social media is a privacy concern for children. That is children should be given protection and freedom to discuss the topic and ensure that they feel comfortable talking about it directly face to face with the researcher. In this case, Article 17 is concerned that children have access to information through the media. In other words, children could be affected by the impacts of social media towards their overall development. Following the articles in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, a protection approach is framed in children's studies. Children are encouraged to participate in the study freely to obtain the most up-to-date results about this topic.

Methods

Qualitative & Participatory Methods

In this project, I conducted the research by using a variety of qualitative and participatory research methods to collect Child-centred information. The qualitative research was focused on children's feelings, perceptions, and voices, which aims to emphasize the understanding of children's experiences through their own narratives (Greig et al., 2013). These qualitative methodologies focused on the children's individual experiences and emotional expression about the research topic. This study provides a valuable platform for children to express themselves freely and espouse their experiences to make contributions to the project, which enables the researcher to gain information regarding adolescent girls' perception of self-image and the appearance expectation impacted by social media use. In addition, children are not merely subjects of the project but are viewed as co-researchers. Participating through collaboration in this project highlights the importance of the participatory methodology that was used. It is important that researchers should encourage children in self-expression with less limited structure and utilize creativity to innovate children's voice (Greig et al., 2013). This project used a child-centric approach, creating space for participating children to think independently and providing options for them to contribute, which increases their engagement in the study. Additionally, the immersive research experiences as co-operators promote engagement to increase children's involvement to share authentic information and gain a sense of fulfillment for continuing collaboration. Qualitative and participatory methodologies use information gained from children through their perspective to help to investigate the issues and impacts of topics like appearance perspectives and social media use.

Recruitment

This study used appropriate snowball technique to recruit three Asian teenage girls between the ages of 14 and 16 years old to participate in my research project. This age range was chosen to reflect changes during puberty and because of this age range having higher chances to access electronic devices. I as the researcher for this study made an electronic copy of the poster that included the research topic, abstract, introduction, purpose and objectives and my contact information, and distributed it on my sibling's social media for one week. Children who showed interest in the project could contact me through email for more information and confirmed their participation in this project by signing a consent form. In addition, the study took place in public safe places such as parks and libraries that were preferred by the participants.

Ethics

Low-risk research that prioritizes the interests of children is essential. It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure children's best interests. The principle of voluntary participation by children is mandatory. An age-appropriate poster with full research details was presented to participants in a positive manner, and this poster provided potential participants an idea of what the research is about and how they would contribute. In addition, the guardians or parents of participants were required to read and sign the consent form before the study session. To increase clarity, I would explain the details of the activity to the participant verbally and request a verbal consent form to continue the study. By doing so, it is the responsibility of the researcher to explain the risks and benefits of the research to the participants and their parents. Moreover, participants' real names were not permitted in any of the research materials and were replaced by code names, T, X, and H. The research was documented by handwritten notes, collected data from participants in art form and photos, with access available only to those who are authorized. It is the child's choice and within their power to inform the researcher to suspend, skip or withdraw from the study if they feel uncomfortable in any situation. The collected data and information from the participant will be destroyed immediately for protecting privacy if the participant decided to discontinue with the study. Meanwhile, the withdrawn participants would still be able to connect with York University and participate in any research they are interested in, if they wish.

Meanwhile, giving a corresponding reward to express appreciation for participation after completing the research survey was conducive to the development of proper values in children's wellbeing. In this case, rather than treating them as free labour to claim benefits or bribing the child with a large reward in a mutually beneficial negative partnership to get the answers the researcher wants, a \$5 gift card and a university souvenir pin was given as a meaningful gift for appreciating the participant's contribution to the project.

Triangulating methods

This study used three different methods to provide children with more opportunities to be involved in the project. These included Semi-Structured interviews, PhotoVoice and collage. However, Semi-Structured interviews were only used for clarification purposes from the children to the researcher. According to the article, "The use of triangulation in qualitative research", the authors stated that "Triangulation also has been viewed as a qualitative research strategy to test validity through the convergence of information from different sources" (Carter et al., 2014, p.545). Children are given the opportunity to explain their collage productions and photos verbally in the interview by triangulating multiple research methods, generating discussion from the lead

of the children's experiences instead of following the adult's power. In this manner, I as the researcher gained maximize opportunities to interact with children and facilitate their thinking from their point of view, which helped to obtain information that reflected their perspective comprehensively.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The objective of semi-structured interviews was to understand adolescents' general perceptions of their social image. Semi-Structured interviews are one of the most suitable qualitative research methods that allow researchers to verbally interact with participants to gain a deeper understanding of their ideas. The face to face interaction with children allows the researcher to observe their emotions, facial expressions, and physical movements to better comprehend how they describe their self-image, as well as responding timelier to continue the discussion fluently to discover valuable information. For these reasons, the method of semi-structured interviews provided me with an ideal venue to start a discussion to understand my participants' opinion of their social image and its connection to social media contents by asking them relevant questions. As Mayall (2000) mentioned in the article, a conversation needs to be started with the aim to understand children's knowledge in order to collect data from the children's experience. The participants' answers then assisted me as the researcher to determine the selected group's self-perception following social media trends. Children were giving meaningful data which is one of the evidence reflecting social media impacts to children's self-evaluation of social image. Narratives were found about participants' dissatisfaction with themselves from viewing social media contents.

PhotoVoice

The PhotoVoice method is used to define what influences social media can bring on appearance, with the help of pictures taken by children. PhotoVoice is a method of giving children a camera to capture photos related to the topic, as a camera would help to capture real-time data to document the specific objectives (Chakraborty, 2009). During this research method, children have 10 minutes to take pictures of anything they consider as beauty, including beauty advertisements on the street or their selfies. Participants provided realistic photos to me and to illustrate their thoughts while enhancing their sense of involvement. There is a possibility that the moments captured may reflect the participant's skill of posting and angling their selfies learned from social media. Such action implies that they are making themselves to follow social media trends and therefore display their outlook in a constant attempt to appear pretty and confident. In this study, I as the researcher identified the photos together with the children to seek out their ideas and reflections of how they interpreted the presented picture. This communication and interaction with the researcher allow the children to explain why they took the picture and what it meant to them as they find out the meaningful content from the picture. Furthermore, the researcher utilized participants' insight from the photo as a cushion to apply to their actual situation in a hypothetical manner, using their identified images to reflect the influences brought on from social media use.

Collages

The Objective of collages were to identify how social media influences adolescents' perceptions of their appearance. The collages method was conducted to determine how social

media influences adolescents' perceptions of their appearance. The desire to share information with others arises when children observe the world around them, but verbal expression can hinder the ability to communicate feelings and thoughts. In this case, collages with different facial features to present the participant's idea of beauty is an appropriate technique with less verbal restrictions that engages with flexible expressions (Prasad, 2018). It can also enhance children's imagination and ability to communicate their thoughts to other people in an indirect way.

Children's opinions of social images could be visually presented by using this method, with sorting and conducting the beautiful or not beautiful images in their mind. To continue, participants were requested to represent the popular image from social media by using the provided materials. The portrayal of the subject in the production dominated in participants' interpretation, and it was an attempt to portray their ideals of beauty which are affected by social media. These are works from children's self-expression that interprets the appearance image of pretty, which can represent the trend of appearance standards from social media, and its influence on children. The collage productions that convey children's understanding of the domain can be used by researchers to interview children about their interpretations of the domain to obtain a complete understanding of this specific objective.

Findings

The data from participants consisted of qualitative methodology and discussion of the impact of social media in varying degrees on perceptions of appearance through data collection triangulation to enhance credibility. This study found that it was associated with increased use of social media, with participants increasing their concern about their appearance as they increased their usage time on electronic devices. This included the exploration of online celebrities, topic discussions and comments on pictures, which are found everywhere on the Internet, influenced participants' perceptions of self-image. I organized the collected data and information from participants in the three themes below to demonstrate social media influence on teenage girls' idea of physical appearance.

Theme 1: Participants discussed how social media contents affect self-evaluation.

Data set in Appendix A

Participant	Data coding	Data
Participant T	Awareness of the discrepancy of appearance and the image presented in social media	"I think so, I don't like my nose at all. I did not feel that bad about my nose a few years ago while I have less chances to use social media ... made me feel awful since I have a big nose, as well as a scar from a childhood injury. I decided to wear masks to cover my nose."
Participant X	Social media's comments raise participant's attention	"I really care about other people's comments on me, and I will try to adapt to their thoughts, like editing my picture or losing weight so I can look more attractive in the pictures. Some of the comments made me feel sad."
Participant H	Social media increase participant's dissatisfaction	"I always looked at the glaring pictures of others on the internet. Their perfections made me felt that my features were not good as them. Especially when I compared my pictures with online models, I became increasingly dissatisfied with my mouth."

Participants express different levels of dissatisfaction of their facial features after comparing themselves to others' photos on social media. Their answers reveal that social media intensifies the participants' negative feelings about their appearances, thereby they all try to change or hide their facial features to ease their discomfort of not fitting the public preference on the social

media. At the same time, the participants point out that their self-evaluation and emotions will be greatly altered by internalizing the social media content, such as comments and posts of others.

Theme 2: Participants discuss the changes brought from the opinions of beauty on social media.

Data set in Appendix B

Participant	Data coding	Data
Participant T	Following social media trend and apply to self	"I would like to change myself to follow this "cute" trend, such as clothing and put some makeup on, to ensure that is the pretty look confirm by others."
Participant X	Make changes to fit in social media trend	"I have seen plenty of objects or individuals that may be considered "beautiful", although they are probably sculpted to fit the trends that are popular on the internet. (Participant X placed her two fingers beside her eyes to keep her eye wide open). I want to be considered "beautiful" as well, so I learn the makeup and photoshop skills from social media to make my eyes look better on pictures." "These images would provide me with a template to adjust my aesthetics, and it could be easily tracked through the internet."
Participant H	Do the same things as the participant observer from social media	"...Posts on social media also using mask to create a sense of secret. I may put a mask sticker or any sticker on my face through photo edited software, then I don't need to worry about comments about my appearance on social media...I like the way I am, just like the Instagrammers I follow."

Participant T shared with the researcher that she would like to change her look to cater to the online general standard and the typical representation of appearance. Participant X believes that some of the online beauty trends are not realistic, yet she still would try to adopt some methods to satisfy the public definition of beauty on social media. Meanwhile, participant H feels happy about the online trend of wearing masks in real life and photos (shown below in Data set Appendix B, figure 2), so that she can hide her facial features while following the opinion of beauty on social media. Even though participants hold slightly different views about the opinions of beauty on social media, their response to the trends they found online indicated that social media is prompting them to change themselves to meet the demand. Their behaviour indicates that it is crucial for them to follow the current trends so as not to be left behind. To some degree, participants think that meeting online standards of aesthetics will help them gain a better impression from others. Social media is taking the power to create a set of beauty standards that is recognized by the majority of the public, while leading the teen girls to internalize and execute these concepts of beauty.

Theme 3: Participants discuss the emotional implications from social media.

Data set in Appendix C

Participant	Data coding	Data
Participant T	Emotional Fluctuations raise by multiple exposure to social media	“Sometimes I feel anxious when I see the differences between real “me” and visual representation on social media. Also, I have a cellphone, so I have more time to explore online. I feel the anxiety is raising in my mind while I spent more time on social media and I will try to change myself to fit in the hottest trend.”
Participant X	Social media create a sense of uncomfortable	“...my feelings were quite easily influenced by the comments on my social media post. I really care about other people's comments on me... Some of the comments made me feel sad, and there were even some people left comments under one of my posts that I was a fat girl.
Participant H	- Lack of self- confidence - Frequency use of social media increase participant’s dissatisfaction	“I feel like those photos decreases my self-esteem since I see so many people who look much better than me. Sometimes I see girls with similar looks and shapes as me, there are always bad comments under the post.” “ I always looked at the glaring pictures of others on the internet. Their perfections made me felt that my features were not good as them. Especially when I compared my pictures with online models, I became increasingly dissatisfied with my mouth.”

Three participants created the same collage artwork with the provided facial features (shown below in Data set Appendix C, figure -3), which represents that their opinions of beauty may be all influenced by the online standards. Even though the information from social media has created a sense of negativity toward emotion among all participants, they appreciate the similar template and stereotype of beauty. In addition, the participants recognized that they’ve gotten used to using filters or photoshop to change their social image so that they can fit the public’s perception of beauty. The participants realize that there are differences between their online social image and real image, which causes their senses of frustrations because they try hard to maintain their ideal image on social media. Two of the participants expressed the increasing exposure to social media affecting the feelings of self and magnified the defects of self-image.

Analysis

Previous studies stated that young women reported that frequent use of social media and selfie sharing has increased appearance anxiety and social anxiety (Boursier et al, 2020; Hawes et al, 2020). This was also shown in my study by one participant as she believed that the exposure to beauty images from social media would intensify her concern about her social image and others’ comments on her. Young women may feel frustrated when they fail to meet a criterion of populace aesthetic, which gives rise to their stress of coping with social connections when they receive negative comments or pay too much attention to others’ thoughts. The findings of this project contribute to the exciting studies and confirm that social media is one element leading to a shift in young girls’ perceptions of their appearance. Nowadays, the presentations of beauty on the social platforms are well-selected, and sometimes it creates a single standard of beauty to viewers. Based

on my interview with the participants, two out of the three participants pointed out that they continually used social media frequently for browsing and catching up with beauty trends. The outcomes are indicative of teenagers' problematic use of social media and their social media addiction that creates a hard time of not going through the cyber world (Bányai et al., 2017; Caner et al, 2022). Additionally, the promoted online beauty trends are significantly influencing participant's self-awareness, leading to self-misconceptions as well as focusing oneself to fit in the single standard.

Teenage girls' ideas of appearance are easily influenced by social media if they overly immerse themselves in the online media world because they hardly feel satisfied about their physical characteristics. On one hand, the online contents are changing their self-views and urging them to follow the online trends (Schrader, 2015). On the other hand, using online platforms is a great chance to construct social learning and expand the users' horizons. More specifically, participants are exploring the world from different perspectives in a convenient and flexible way. They are able to learn from various types of influencers to gain and exchange ideas of beauty to develop cognitive skill as a part of the social process (Yousef & Mahameed, 2022; Alkhudiry, 2022). This means that social media platform is regarded as a place for them to explore and play freely. Children should have the right to achieve independent learning and reflection, and using social media is a vital channel to practice children's agency in managing their learning by observing and adapting to the rules in the virtual community. (UNCRC, 1989; Wood, 2014). It is noticeable that all three participants mentioned that they recognized the differences between social media and reality. However, they still tried to present beautifulness in a certain way to meet the public's beauty standard, as well as to satisfy their personal pursuit of fashion trends. Their behavior reflects that a group of youth may be blindly absorbing social media opinions to develop their personal aesthetic views even though they have doubts. They may need more guidance to acknowledge and accept the importance of self-appreciation, instead of repressing their expression of individuality and adjusting themselves to fit the everchanging aesthetic standards on social media. It is significant to continue the research to find out the reasons why teenagers' recognitions of beauty are shaped by online values, and how we can prompt the teenagers to appreciate the diversity of beauty.

Reflection

My participants were busy with schoolwork and after-school programs, so they had limited time to take part in this project. Limited periods for conversations resulted in a shortage of data from this research method. Moreover, collage as one of the research methods needs to be improved. It was noticed that the participants were independent in the whole process, while the pieces of information they presented were consistent. This could be due to the limitations of the available materials. It also could be the reason for the participants having the same aesthetic standards of identifying articulated images of appearance, which may cause the possibility of biasing the data collection. In any case, a semi-structured interview helped clarify the miscommunication between the researchers and the participants. Children who participated in the project were given a great platform to build their consciousness and ability to express themselves. This study contributes to children's studies that the subtle growth of the climbing mentality makes young girls yearn for the feeling of being appreciated and approved based on appearance in both virtual and daily environments.

Conclusion

This study is limited to discussing the effects of frequent social media use and following appearance-related topics on adolescent females. This is a child-center based research project, all information gathered from children. The findings simply represent the effect that frequent browsing on this aspect of social media has on the target group. If I have a chance to do this project again, I will interact with the participants multiple times during the short period to create time slots for gathering more longitudinal information related to the project. In addition, future study can increase the accuracy and power of the study results by increasing the number of participants and broaden the gender range to promote diversity, while also considering social economic status and raising background of the participants. The complex intersectional factors would enhance the findings and validate the issue of social media as universal across populations. Moreover, while most of the literature points to women's changes in appearance being more influenced by social media, there has been little research on minority groups such as LGBTQ+. We should introduce the study to different gender groups to determine whether there are more people affected by social media and influence to alter the acceptance of appearance. Lastly, the findings of this project might remind us to continue research on such topics as promoting diverse individual beauty standards on social media to balance teenagers' sense of self-image and the social media representation.

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Appendix A

Participant T (14-year-old) – Method: Semi-Structured interviews

Awareness of the discrepancy between their appearance and the image presented in social media

Researcher: Do you think your self-evaluation is affected by the posts you have viewed online?

If so, why you view yourself in this way?

Participant T: I think so, I don't like my nose at all. I did not feel that bad about my nose a few years ago while I have less chances to use social media. I noticed that people on social media have tiny, delicate noses, which made me feel awful since I have a big nose, as well as a scar from a childhood injury.

Researcher: I am surprised that you thought this way. What was your reaction or response after you came to this idea?

Participant T: Emmm... I was not sure at that time, but I definitely wanted to make my nose look prettier. I even thought about having a surgery to adjust my nose, but I knew I was too young for a plastic surgery. So, I decided to wear masks to cover my nose, and the pandemic make this behaviour become normal (finger cross). I feel like I am more confident when I hide my nose, probably I will continue wearing mask until I can make it perfect.

Participant X (16-year-old) – Method: Semi-Structured interviews

Social media's comments raise participant's attention.

Participant X: I think my self-evaluation was not really affected by the post I saw online, but my feelings were quite easily influenced by the comments on my social media post. I really care about other people's comments on me, and I will try to adapt to their thoughts, like editing my picture or losing weight so I can look more attractive in the pictures. Some of the comments made me feel sad, and there were even some people left comments under one of my posts that I was a fat girl. I deleted the post immediately because it made me feel stressful.

Researcher: I am so sorry to hear that. Do you feel good? Would you like to stop the conversation?

Participant X: No problem. We can go on. That was happened in 2020. I had to stay home during the pandemic, and I gained weight due to the limitations on my daily activities.

Researcher: Ok, we will continue the questions if you feel fine about discussing about this topic. Please inform me if you need to pause our conversation when you feel uncomfortable. Have you done anything about these comments?

Participant X. Haha, I tried so hard and lost 15 lbs for it. I don't like when my classmates laugh at my body shape. Now I go to gym twice a week to keep myself slim and healthy. Anyway, I prefer slim body, just like the idols and celebrities I followed on social media.

Participant H (15-year-old) – Method: Semi-Structured interviews

Social media increase participant's dissatisfaction

Participant H: My mom doesn't allow me to browse on internet, but only when I need to use it for school. I didn't realize I had a big mouth until I started using social media 3 years ago. I always looked at the glaring pictures of others on the internet. Their perfections made me felt that my features were not good as them. Especially when I compared my pictures with online models, I became increasingly dissatisfied with my mouth.

Researcher: So, do you think social media make any change on your self-satisfaction?

Participant H: Yep, however, mask always helps. I feel better to put mask on, then nobody can see my mouth. Social media raised my beauty awareness, now I focus too much on how I look in other people's eyes.

Appendix B

Participant T (14-year-old) – Method: PhotoVoice
Following social media trend and apply to self



figure -1

T presented a picture she randomly found online.

Researcher: Do you mind telling me how do you feel about this photo?

Participant T: It looks absolutely amazing, and I aspire to that type of look. The big eyes, small nose and small mouth that are popular on social media are all reflected in this cartoon character. If I could look like is, I will be a perfect girl (laughing).

Researcher: Will you edit your photo to follow this trend while posting on social media?

Participant T: It depends, my appearance is overly plain, so I rarely post to indicate the appearance of the post, even when I try to photoshop, it doesn't look good as those on social media. At the same time, I would like to change myself to follow this "cute" trend, such as clothing and put some makeup on, to ensure that is the pretty look confirm by others.

Participant X (16-year-old) – Method: PhotoVoice

Make changes to fit in social media trend

Researcher : How do you feel about the pictures of the online influencers ?

Participant X: I have seen plenty of objects or individuals that may be considered beautiful (finger crossed), although they are probably sculpted to fit the trends that are popular on the

internet. Such as this one (Participant X showed me the picture on her phone), you can tell this picture is after photoshop. Look at her eye (Participant X pointed at the picture), they are huge and un-natural. I don't like the way how this photo was edited, but that is normal on social media. I have seen lots of photos in this trend.

Researcher: So, do you think the edited picture looks better than the original one? You mentioned that the eye in this picture isn't proportional, I am wondering if this is a trend that you found on social media?

Participant X: Emmm... I have no idea, every girl I saw on internet usually had big and beautiful eyes (Participant X placed her two fingers beside her eyes to keep her eye wide open). I want to be considered beautiful as well, so I learn the makeup and photoshop skills from social media to make my eyes look better on pictures.

Participant X (16-year-old) – Method: Collages

Make changes to fit in social media trend

Researcher: What are your thoughts if most of the content available online represents anything close to a perfect image? (Researcher pointed at the collage below figure -3)

Participant X: These images would provide me with a template to adjust my aesthetics, and it could be easily tracked through the internet. Perhaps I am unconsciously following the trends to judge myself over multiple viewings. I recognize that this is good on one hand because it enhances my personal appeal, on the other hand, the gap between myself and the social media template allows me to detect my weaknesses thus leading to a lack of confidence.

Participant H (15-year-old) – Method: PhotoVoice

Do the same things as the participant observer from social media and surrounding environment

Participant H: I want to show you a picture of myself. The girl on the left is me (Participant pointed at the left side, the photo shown below).



figure -2

Researcher: Oh? You are wearing mask. Is that a trend you found online? Can you explain why you selected this photo?

Participant H: Because I can post this picture on my social media, I don't need to change anything, we all are covering face but showing a little bit so people can recognize who it was. Honestly, everyone is wearing mask since 2020 when pandemic started. I already get used to it. Posts on social media also using mask to create a sense of secret. In this case, I may put a mask sticker or any sticker on my face through photo edited software, then I don't need to worry about comments about my appearance on social media because the viewers couldn't see my face completely.

(Participant H putted on her mask and act the same pose in the picture)

Participant H (continue): My face looks small when I put on the mask, the mask is the shading powder. I like the way I am, just like the Instagrammers I follow.

Appendix C



figure -3

(All participants created the same collages with the provided facial features.)

Participant T (14-year-old) – Method: Collages

Emotional Fluctuations raise by multiple exposure to social media.

Researcher: How do you feel about this collages that you just created?

Participant T: These facial features look nice. They perfectly fit the standard of beauty that is normally defined and accepted by the public.

Researcher: Thanks for your sharing. These parts I chose were actually edited with filter based on the description of the authors. When you were browsing on social media, did you see any photos using heavy fitter?

Participant T: (Participant T was scrolling on her social media) Absolutely! Look at mine, there are a lot. It looks pretty, especially girls with cute filter on their face. It makes them look like a cute puppy or kitten, that's so adorable!

Researcher: I see. Will you apply those fitters on your pictures?

Participant T: Why not? Isn't it cute? (laughing) But I know it wasn't me, I will lose the filters in the real life. Sometimes I feel anxious when I see the differences between real "me" and visual

representation on social media. Also, I have a cellphone, so I have more time to explore online. I feel the anxiety is raising in my mind while I spent more time on social media and I will try to change myself to fit in the hottest trend.

Participant X (16-year-old) – Method: Semi-Structured interviews

Social media create a sense of uncomfortable

Participant X: I think my self-evaluation was not really affected by the post I saw online, but my feelings were quite easily influenced by the comments on my social media post. I really care about other people's comments on me, and I will try to adapt to their thoughts, like editing my picture or losing weight so I can look more attractive in the pictures. Some of the comments made me feel sad, and there were even some people left comments under one of my posts that I was a fat girl. I deleted the post immediately because it made me feel stressful.

Researcher: I am so sorry to hear that. Do you feel good? Would you like to stop the conversation?

Participant X: No problem. We can go on. That was happened in 2020. I had to stay home during the pandemic, and I gained weight due to the limitations on my daily activities.

Researcher: Ok, we will continue the questions if you feel fine about discussing about this topic. Please inform me if you need to pause our conversation when you feel uncomfortable. Have you done anything about these comments?

Participant X. Haha, I tried so hard and lost 15 lbs for it. I don't like when my classmates laugh at my body shape. Now I go to gym twice a week to keep myself slim and healthy. Anyway, I prefer slim body, just like the idols and celebrities I followed on social media.

Participant H (15-year-old) – Method: Collages

Lack of self-confidence

Researcher: How do you feel about when you see a lot of posts with heavy fitters on the internet?

Participant H: I feel like those photos decreases self-esteem since I see so many people who look much better than me. Sometimes I see girls with similar looks and shapes as me, there are always bad comments under the post.

Researcher: How do you feel about the comments?

Participant H: The comments hugely impact my emotions, and I don't feel good about it. For example, I have heavy facial hair, if I don't cover my mouth for a picture someone will laugh at me and write it down in a comment, "you look like a guy with beard". This would make me very angry, and I am too afraid of negative comments and unfriendly looks from others.

Researcher: I am so sorry to hear that. Do you think frequent use of social media increases your exposure to this content?

Participant H: For sure. Once I viewed the similar contents, social media will automatically push more content about this topic.

Participant H (15-year-old) – Method: Semi-Structured interviews

Frequency use of social media increase participant's dissatisfaction

Participant H: My mom doesn't allow me to browse on internet, but only when I need to use it for school. I didn't realize I had a big mouth until I started using social media 3 years ago. I always looked at the glaring pictures of others on the internet. Their perfections made me felt that my features were not good as them. Especially when I compared my pictures with online models, I became increasingly dissatisfied with my mouth.

Researcher: So, do you think social media make any change on your self-satisfaction?

Participant H: Yep, however, mask always helps. I feel better to put mask on, then nobody can see my mouth. Social media raised my beauty awareness, now I focus too much on how I look in other people's eyes.