

Media, The New Mirror?

Research conducted to understand the effects of media on teenagers' body image

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¹ Social Media, Image Credit Google Images | Social media, Social, Entertainment industry. (2020a). Pinterest. <https://in.pinterest.com/pin/228979962290454470/>

ABSTRACT

Through our research paper we intended to find out “**How do the unrealistic appearances and beauty standards in different media impact teenage minds?**” Our hypothesis was that young teenage minds are negatively impacted by these standards. The negative impact could extend to lower self-esteem, lack of confidence, distorted eating habits, social anxiety etc. The reason behind hypothesising this is because we personally have experienced negative thoughts about our bodies due to what we see on media. **Our hypothesis was proven correct.** Majority of teenagers are affected by unrealistic appearances and beauty standards. Females are affected more than males. Social media has the most negative impact. Those who are extremely affected by it tend to change the way they eat and their social life and behaviour may change as well. We collected data on a large scale by sending a survey to a large number of teenagers. In addition to conducting personal and professional interviews, we also analysed external research. Our research will make people aware of the impact of media on a teenager’s mind and how parents, teachers, teenager themselves can try to reduce and minimise the impact. This project will also help erase stigma about this topic and lead to it being more openly discussed.

Word Count: 207 words

A. Research Question

Through our research, we intend to find out, ‘How do the unrealistic appearances and beauty standards in different Media impact teenage minds?’

B. Hypothesis

Media and the entertainment industry perpetuate unrealistic beauty standards and expectations created by society. Our hypothesis for the project is that young teenage minds are negatively impacted by these standards. The negative impact could extend to lower self-esteem, lack of confidence, distorted eating habits, social anxiety etc.

We consider this a valid hypothesis because:

1. We ourselves have compared our bodies to what we see on social media and on television, by doing this we often feel insecure about how we look.
2. People around us start dieting and exercising excessively at very young ages, not to be healthy, but for the purpose of wanting to look ‘skinny’.
3. The constant worrying about what to eat and what not to eat, has caused people to develop eating disorders, in turn affecting their social life, their academic performance and general wellbeing.
4. Teenagers are refusing to come out of their house simply because they don’t look pretty enough to show themselves to the world and many feel the need to edit and filter how they look before posting an image on social media.

C. Rationale

Personal Rationale-

After spending a lot more time on social media during lockdown, we noticed that almost all of our habits had been impacted by media. Whether it was the music we listened to, books we read or food we ate. We were curious to see whether the impact of spending more time on media had extended to the how we and other teenagers perceived our body image.

We have personally felt insecure after seeing the perfect figures presented by media and the entertainment industry. We wanted to know about how other teenagers are affected and understand more about the impact.

Researched Rationale-

*What is body image?*²

Body image is a person’s perception of their physical self and the thoughts and feelings they have about their body - positive, negative, or both.

It is crucial to realize that what you think of your body may not always reflect reality.

² Body Image. (2020). <https://Nedc.Com.Au/>. <https://nedc.com.au/eating-disorders/eating-disorders-explained/body-image/>

Different types of body ideals

1. Thin-ideal³: As explained by Allison Mecca from the Lindner Centre of HOPE, the thin ideal is basically a slim female body. It is ideally a woman who is slender, has a feminine physique, a small waist, and a low body fat percentage. Many teenagers workout for the sole purpose of becoming skinny and even change their eating habits drastically. Being underweight is idolised by many females and this can be very unhealthy as it can lead to eating disorders and low self-esteem issues.

2. Muscular- ideal⁴: From page 103 and 104 of the publication ‘Desiring the Muscular Ideal: Men’s Body Satisfaction in the United States, Ukraine, and Ghana’ we can say that the muscular ideal is a concept of ideally muscular and large male bodies. The common perception of this ideal is a man who possesses a large amount of muscles specifically in the upper body and back, with six-pack abs and a low body fat percentage. Teenage boys feel the need to be tall and strong which has caused an increase in the usage of steroids and unhealthy supplements at young ages. Many teens have even suffered from severe injuries due to over-exercising in the gym.

3. Hourglass figure⁵: As explained by the fact-checked article on the website ‘Flo’, the hourglass figure is a human body shape resembling an hourglass. It is the one most promoted by the fashion industry for females. The common perception is a woman with a measurement of 36 inch at the bust and hip and 24 inches at the waist. However, any person with roughly equal bust and hip measurements and a significantly narrower waist is considered to have an hourglass- shaped body. Female teens feel the need to have slimmer waists and larger hips. Many even fall for the click-bait on workout videos promising to give them an ‘hourglass figure’ but are disappointed when they put in the work but do not see the promised results.

According to the article ‘A Study on Consciousness of Adolescent Girls About Their Body Image’⁶, published in the Indian Journal of Community Medicine: About one-fifth (20.5%) of girls desired to become even thinner though they already perceived their body image as thin at the time of their body assessment. 73.4% adolescent girls were satisfied with their body image, while 26.6% of studied girls were dissatisfied. Results also showed that among the girls who were satisfied with their body image 32.8% girls were underweight and 38.4% were stunted. social media and photo shopped images of people appearing on social media platforms have led to the concepts ‘ideal body’ or ‘perfect appearance’ . Another very influential branch of the entertainment industry is television itself.

Although such unrealistic standards and the mental illnesses caused by them have been prevalent for a long time, they have come further into the spotlight during the Covid-19 pandemic. Considering that most people are confined to their houses, mobile phones and

³ Ekern, B. (2021, April 19). The Impact of Media, the Thin Ideal, and the Power of You. Eating Disorder Hope. <https://www.eatingdisorderhope.com/blog/impact-media-thin-ideal-power-of-you>

⁴Frederick, D. A., Buchanan, G. M., Sadehgi-Azar, L., Peplau, L. A., Haselton, M. G., Berezovskaya, A., & Lipinski, R. E. (2007). Desiring the muscular ideal: Men’s body satisfaction in the United States, Ukraine, and Ghana. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, 8(2), 103–104. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1524-9220.8.2.103>

⁵ Adereyko, O., MD. (2021, January 4). Hourglass Body Shape Measurements: Is 36–24–36 Still In?&inline=1. Flo.Health - #1 Mobile Product for Women’s Health. <https://flo.health/health-articles/beauty/style-and-makeup/hourglass-body-shape-clothes>

⁶ Singh, J., Singh, N., Dixit, S., Agarwal, G., & Kant, S. (2011). A study on consciousness of adolescent girls about their body image. *Indian Journal of Community Medicine*, 36(3), 197. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0970-0218.86520>

televisions have become more commonly used devices. People are spending a lot more time looking at perfectly shaped celebrities making it a significant reason for high undesirable impacts.

The impact of different types of media on body image:

1. Magazines:

Most magazines write about trends related to appearance and fitness. A lot of the content is based on diets and various types of exercise regimes⁷. While the correct approach to losing weight would be to consult a doctor or professional, we often see people taking advice from magazines leading to a drastic restriction in the amount of food they eat and then being dispirited when they don't see the unrealistic results the magazine had promised.

The above is borne out from the abstract of the clinical trial 'The influence of fashion magazines on the body image satisfaction of college women: an exploratory analysis'⁸ in which 39 college-going women were randomly divided in two groups with the same mean height and weight in each group. One group was made to read News Magazines and the other read Fashion Magazine. The women who viewed fashion magazines were less satisfied with their bodies, more frustrated about their weight and were more afraid to get fat in comparison to their peers who had read News Magazines.

2. Movies and reality show⁹:

As explained by the website of Canada's Centre for Digital and Media Literacy, the hero and heroine in a movie are almost always slim and fit. The women are skinny yet curvy and the men are muscular and strong. Their hair is always perfectly styled and the make-up is flawless. Given that so many teenagers look up to these actors and actresses, their body persona becomes the 'ideal'. However, hidden from these viewers is the reality that all of this is done by professionals and these celebrities dedicate many hours each day to beautify themselves.

The website also shares that researchers found that a mere ten-minute segment of one of the most popular TV Shows - F.R.I.E.N.D.S. had a negative impact on how satisfied women were with their appearance. We must keep in mind that all the lead female characters in this show were extremely thin, and the occasional 'fat' joke is directed towards one of the females who used to be fat in the show but lost all that weight. Researcher Gregory Fouts also found that only 5% of women in sitcoms were overweight and were often used just to add humour to the show or draw negative remarks about their looks from other characters. This obviously makes many women feel that they won't be accepted by society if they are overweight and consequently, they start disliking their body.

3. Video games¹⁰:

⁷ Body Image – Advertising and Magazines. (2021, February 8). MediaSmarts. <https://mediasmarts.ca/body-image/body-image-advertising-and-magazines>

⁸ Turner, S. L., Hamilton, H., Angwood, L. M., & Dwyer, D. H. (1997). The influence of fashion magazines on the body image satisfaction of college women: an exploratory analysis. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/9360734/>

⁹ Body Image – Film and TV. (2014). <https://Mediasmarts.Ca/>. <https://mediasmarts.ca/body-image/body-image-film-and-tv>

¹⁰ King, H. (2015, July 24). Female video game characters with realistic bodies. CNNMoney. <https://money.cnn.com/2015/07/24/technology/realistic-video-game-bodies/index.html>

In many video games, the characters are animated, therefore it is often seen that a female's curves and a male's muscles are exaggerated. The characters are also often seen scantily dressed giving more emphasis to the appearance of their body.

Empirical studies included in the research article 'The Impact of Body Emphasizing Video Games on Body Image Concerns in Men and Women'¹¹ show that after fifteen minutes of playing a video game which displayed muscular or thin characters, participants in the study had significantly lower body esteem as compared to before playing the game.

4. Social media apps¹²:

Apps such as Facebook and Instagram are considered to be the most influential media regarding one's perception of their body. These mainstream apps present unrealistic beauty standards in the form of photo shopped celebrities and stick-thin fashion models. In today's day and age, almost everyone uses social media and it's the most convenient way to stay in the social loop. However, the constant scrolling leads many to compare themselves to the perfect pictures they see online. Many forget that most of these pictures have been edited and that out of the many photos that were taken, only the best is displayed.

In the experimental study 'The effects of active social engagement with peers on body image in young women'¹³, 118 undergraduate students were first asked to fill in a form regarding how much dissatisfaction they felt about their overall appearance, using a scale ranging from none to "very much". They were then asked to find an image on social media of a peer whom they considered "explicitly more attractive than themselves". Next, they had to post a comment on that picture. Lastly, they were made to fill in the form they filled in the beginning once again. The results revealed that after looking at pictures of attractive peers, the women's perceptions of their own appearances changed negatively.

5. Advertisements¹⁴:

Advertisement agencies target our insecurities because it is more profitable for them to do so. Many a times if there is an advertisement for a beauty product - say makeup for example - more than emphasizing the qualities of the lipstick, the main focus is on how skinny and perfect the model is. Since we too want to look like this model, we buy this makeup, and are disappointed when it doesn't look half as good on us.

Another issue is that many advertisements use explicit sexuality to sell their products. Since the model's body is on full display, people feel ashamed that their body isn't like that. Many labels on products give false promises, such as weight loss pills, weight loss oils, body-toning creams etc. People actually do buy all of this because they are desperate to lose weight because of society's expectations and many people buying these products are already at a healthy body weight.

In an interview included in the essay 'Effects of Advertising on Body Image'¹⁵, a 16-year-old girl was shown an advertisement and she said that she found the models to be "too

¹¹ Barlett, C. P., & Harris, R. J. (2008). The Impact of Body Emphasizing Video Games on Body Image Concerns in Men and Women. *Sex Roles*, 59(7–8), 586–588. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-008-9457-8>

¹² Sandoiu, A. (2018, November 19). How does social media use affect our body image?

<https://www.Medicalnewstoday.Com/>. <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/323725>

¹³ The effects of active social media engagement with peers on body image in young women. (2019, March 1). ScienceDirect. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S174014451730517X#!> page 3 and 4

¹⁴ Kilbourne, J. (2020, March 28). Advertising's toxic effect on eating and body image.

<https://www.Hsph.Harvard.Edu/>. <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/features/advertisings-toxic-effect-on-eating-and-body-image/>

¹⁵ UKEssays. (November 2018). Effects of Advertising on Body Image. Retrieved from <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/psychology/advertising-body-image-effects-5522.php?vref=1>

thin”. However, she also stated that she wanted to look as good as that model. The idealized image in the advertisement had a lot of influence on how she wished she looked.

D. Data Collection Method

1. *Surveys through Google Forms-*

How: We each came up with a few questions which would help us understand if a teenager’s body image is impacted by Media or not. We then held a meeting over zoom where we compiled these questions on a Google Form. After that, we sent the form to many teenagers and requested them to circulate it as well.

Pros and cons of choosing this method:

Teenagers could misuse the survey filling in many times or putting in inaccurate information, however, we chose the method due to the following pros:

- Surveys are anonymous which encouraged people to answer honestly as our research is based on a slightly personal topic.
- Surveys allow us to collect a lot of data at once.
- Since all the members of our group have siblings, we were able to get teenagers from different grades to fill the form.
- Surveys can be spread around easily.

2. *Personal Interviews-*

How: We prepared a few questions which were related to the research question and could test the hypothesis. We then interviewed a eighteen year old boy and a eighteen year old girl, and a thirteen year old boy and a thirteen year old girl. We even interviewed a parent who has a teenage daughter and son. All interviews were conducted over Zoom and were recorded so that we could refer to them while extracting the required data.

Pros and cons of choosing this method:

Although it was a perspective of only one teenager, we used personal interviews for the following reasons:

- Personal interviews provided us with more in depth answers which were even supported with personal experiences or examples.
- If a certain point was interesting, we could also ask follow – up questions
- Personal interviews gave us very honest and accurate data.

3. *Expert Interviews-*

How: We prepared a list of questions and then contacted three professionals- a dietician, a counsellor and a psychologist. We interviewed them over Zoom and asked for their inputs on our hypothesis. The meeting was recorded so that we could extract the required data.

Reasons:

- We wanted a professional’s opinion and their expertise
- We could ask follow up questions if necessary

- We received detailed, and in some cases, scientific answers and facts which has been very helpful throughout this research.

4. *Secondary Research-*

How: We analysed research publications and official policy statements. We went through it to find information relevant to our hypothesis and then summarised them, making sure to include the key points and to give due credit to the respective authors whose work we have cited.

Reasons:

The already done research may be inaccurate or could be too old, however, we chose it because:

- Secondary research helps expand our understanding of the topic.
- It makes us take into account previous research conducted on larger scales so that we are more informed while writing our conclusion.

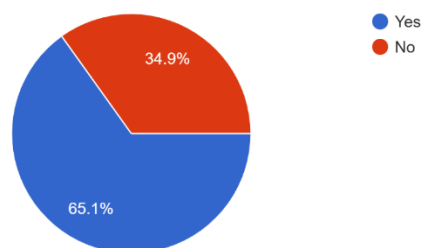
E. Findings

Data Summary

We had 384 responses for our survey of which 241 responses were from teenagers 15 years and below while 16 years and above had 143 responses. Around 75% of our respondents were females and around 25% were males.

Majority of the respondents do compare themselves to actors and actresses that they see in movies and TV shows:

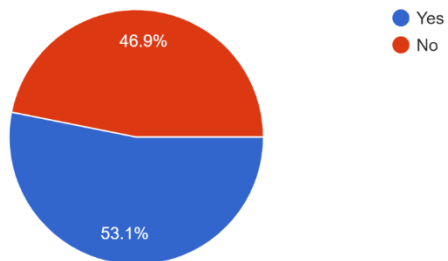
Do you find yourself comparing your body to the actors or actresses you see in movies and TV shows?
384 responses



Most of our respondents do compare their own bodies to those in swimsuits:

When you go to the beach and see people wearing swimsuits, do you end up comparing yourself to them?

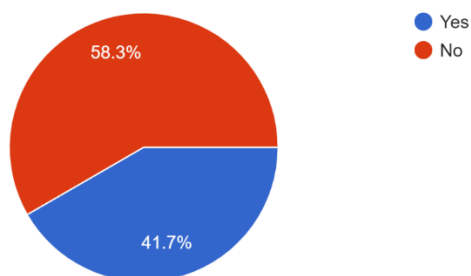
384 responses



Majority of our respondents do not change the way they eat to fit into certain pieces of clothing:

Have you ever changed the way you eat so that you can fit into a certain piece of clothing?

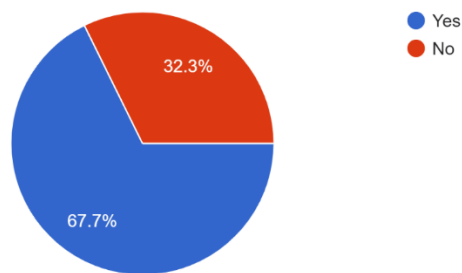
384 responses



A vast number of our respondents do compare themselves to pictures their peers post on social media platforms:

Do you find yourself comparing your body to the pictures your peers post on social media?

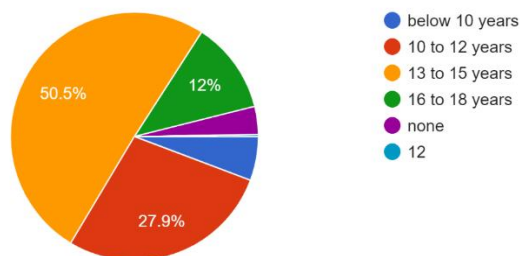
384 responses



Majority of our respondents began to care about their looks between the ages of 13 and 15:

Around what age do you feel you began to care about how you looked?

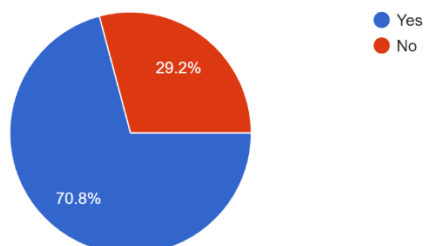
384 responses



Most of our respondents are afraid to wear outfits because they are not confident of their body:

Do you ever see an outfit you like but are afraid to wear it because you don't think you have the right body for it?

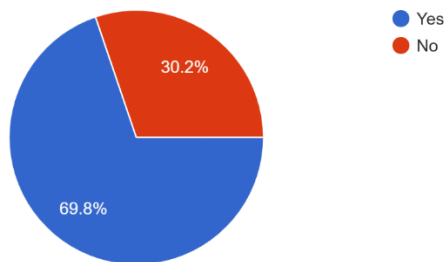
384 responses



Most of our respondents are negatively affected by comments made by relatives/friends:

Has a friend / relative ever made a comment on the way you look which affected you negatively?

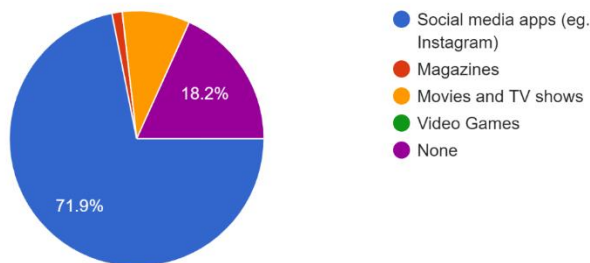
384 responses



Majority of our respondents think social media is the most impactful media on body image:

What media do you think affects your opinion of your body the most?

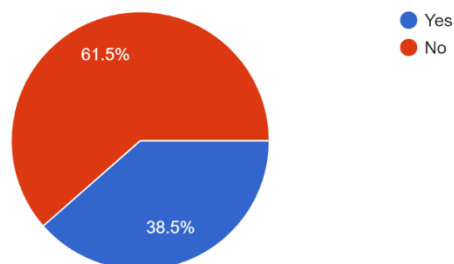
384 responses



Most of our respondents are not tempted to buy products that exploit their insecurities:

Have you ever felt tempted by an advertisement that exploits your insecurities about your physical self - i... (Eg. Clothes that make you look slimmer)

384 responses



Open ended question: ‘Do you have any other thoughts on the impact of media on body image?’

In our survey we asked the teenagers if they had any other thoughts of the impact of media on one’s body. This was an optional question. Many people who answered stated that social media, especially Instagram had a negative impact on their body image. They believe that extremely thin and unreal bodies are promoted by the pictures posted by celebrities. Even though they admitted to knowing that most of these images are fake and edited, they still felt pressured by the photos. A lot of them were afraid to post pictures of themselves for the fear of their body being judged. Many even claimed that not just Media, but comments made by family members and friends caused them to feel insecure about their body.

On the other hand, we had a decent number of people saying that media can be used to promote a healthier lifestyle. For example, one teen said that fitness posts can encourage an overweight person to lose weight and become fit. Many even said that nowadays they find many body positivity posts on social media and have even heard celebrities talk about their own struggles with body image, which has helped the teenagers accept their bodies. Understanding that celebrities struggle too helped them realise that they don’t have to have the ‘ideal’ body which is promoted by society.

A few people even said that having a strong mind and building resilience is the only way to be unaffected by the media and continue to love your body.

A handful of teenagers stated that they felt as if influencers and social media tend to promote eating disorders and have a dangerous effect on a person’s mental health.

Some teenagers even explained how they overcame the struggles of constantly hating their body. They stressed on the fact that there is no one body can be considered “perfect” and that being healthy is more than just having defined abs and biceps. They also pointed out that being extremely overweight or skinny is also unhealthy. The key is to find a balance and to neither be obsessive about achieving a certain body type nor to follow an extremely restrictive diet.

A few complained that they felt insecure because they were “too skinny” and did not meet society’s standard of an hourglass or muscular body.

Here are a few answers given by the teenagers:

(Question: Do you have any other thoughts about the impact of media of one’s body image?)

1. “I think one of the major sources of body issues today is social media. Apps like Instagram are full of influencers who post things that can cause so many people to compare themselves, and the worst part is that many teenagers will hide it and keep the issue to themselves which can lead to a lot of damage. While influencers try to come off as relatable about these issues there is still a lot of stigma associated about it which has led to the development of body issues in a lot of young kids”

2. "I think media has a positive and negative impact on body image. Obviously seeing only skinny models and reinforcing the idea that beauty is only one size will have awful consequences but sites like Instagram have info graphics and posts that spread the message of inclusivity and body positivity, which a young child growing up may not have heard. It can help make an under confident child feel beautiful too."
3. "Media does not really have a significant impact on me, and I don't believe other people should be affected as well. Stoicism and Self-confidence are essential values which we as people living in the age of media and advertisements need to cultivate."
4. "As long as one maintains a healthy lifestyle with a healthy body, comparison with that of others is not necessary. While media can make others feel bad about their bodies, it also does add a motivation factor to those who want to change the way the look and therefore doesn't always produce negative effects."
5. "In today's day and age, with the exposure of social media at such a young age, especially teenage girls start to question not only themselves but the people around them as well. Even though we tell ourselves that we should not get influenced by what we see on social media or on billboards or magazines because they are often edited, but it does affect us. I can say this on behalf of almost all women and as someone who doesn't get influenced by what I see on social media easily, while answering this survey I realized that it does affect me as well as every other female."

The detailed findings of the survey are attached in Annexure I.

Data Analysis

1. From the 384 responses in our survey, we found that overall, most teenagers' body image is impacted by media. Media includes movies, TV shows, social media, magazines, video games etc.
2. The survey showed that, across all ages, females are more affected than males.
3. The impact of TV shows and movie stars becomes more with age as the exposure increases. The impact of TV shows and movie stars is approximately 65% for teenagers between 13-14 years of age and increases to around 80% for teenagers aged 15-17.
4. Over 50% of teenagers feel that they began getting conscious about their looks between the ages of 13 and 15 while almost 28% felt it began between the ages of 10 and 12 itself.
5. The impact on one's body image is seen to alter teenagers' lifestyles and habits. Our charts show that on an average, 41.7% of teenagers control their diet so as to fit into certain types of clothing.

6. We feel that self-esteem among teenagers tends to get affected by media as they become conscious about their looks. The survey shows that 70.8% of teenagers said they were not confident to wear certain clothes because of their perception of their own body.

F. Interview Summary

a) Expert Interviews

We interviewed Dr. Ruhaina Khan. She has done her PhD in Applied Psychology from the University of Mumbai. She has over 15 years of experience in counselling and teaching counselling in a Master's program. She is the Senior School counsellor at The Cathedral and John Connors School, Mumbai. She said the following:

Q1. Around what age do you start seeing children become insecure about how they look? Why do you think it starts at this particular age?

Ans 1. Around 11 years is when young people start getting more conscious about how they look. Usually, it's around puberty because their bodies start to change and more hormones are produced.

Q2. What are the main problems caused due to a negative perception of one's own body?

We know that it affects one's eating habits but what else does it affect?

Ans 2. There are many things that can get impacted due to negative body image, starting from one's self esteem, a change in one's personality, a change in social life etc. There are teenagers who don't want to go out because they aren't happy with how they look. Others want to wear certain types of clothes that are in fashion but feel that they don't have the right body to wear that and so they don't end up going out to socialize.

Q3. It's our understanding that females tend to have a more negative body image in comparison to males. Would you agree? Please explain your thoughts about this?

Ans 3. Even men have ideal standards that they feel they need to meet. Girls have more concerns about body image but only marginally so. Males feel the need to have the ideal height, ideal body type, large number of muscles and lean, strong bodies. Being short is a big insecurity for boys because it's the stereotype to be taller than girls. For women the ideal is being slim while having curves in the right places.

Q4. Which form of media do you think impacts one's body image the most? Do you think media can be used to actually promote body positivity? Do you think these negative impacts are an inevitable result of media?

Ans 4. Mainstream media is what perpetuates these stereotypes. Social media is blamed for impacting body image the most, but on social media there is a mix of positive and negative body image promoted. A lot of people are putting content out there that is more real, which shows unedited pictures of them. In France, there's a new law that if you are editing a photo, you have to mention that. Many brands are choosing to show diversity in their models and include models of all body-types in their advertisements.

Young people get very influenced by images of celebrities/models that they see. Sometimes, products are sold exploiting one's body insecurities. For example, an advertisement of a cream or shampoo will tell you that if you use this product, you will have smoother skin and get rid of pimples. The advertisement will show a picture of a model whose hair and skin looks absolutely perfect. The advertisers will fail to convey that the model was made to spend 2 hours in a salon with professional make-up artists and hair stylists. Teenagers should not buy these products just to look like these models as they will feel disappointed when they don't see the expected results.

Q5. What is a way in which we can promote body positivity?

Ans 5. It is very important to define what is healthy. If you put your definition of 'healthy' as a particular number on the scale, you will continuously be fretting over how you look and how much you eat. However, if you change your definition and realize that a healthy person is someone who has the energy to get through their day and eats a balanced diet, while living an active life, you will find it easier to find the motivation to work towards being fit instead of 'skinny' or 'shredded'.

A few additional points she raised:

1. You cannot blame celebrities for posting picture which make teenagers feel insecure about their bodies because they are simply doing their job. However, they should have a moral code that they should use a product before endorsing it. Consumers are the only ones that can change the way organizations act.
2. The medical community also does a bit of a disservice to people here because they only tell patients about the average weight for their height which tends to make people obsessive over the number on the scale. Instead, they should ask the patients questions like, "Do you have enough energy throughout the day?" "How often do you go for a walk?" etc.

We interviewed Bansari Tejookaya, a psychologist who has worked in this field since the past 20 years She is a M.A.Clinical Psychologist and a certified EMDR specialist. She gave the following inputs:

Q1. Around what age do you start seeing children become insecure with how they look? Why do you think it starts at this particular age?

Ans 1. Around 10 years ago, one would see eating disorders such as bulimia and anorexia amongst teenagers but now it is more common amongst children as young as 5 years old as a result of body-shaming and fat-shaming.

Follow Up Q. Could you please name and explain a few of the eating disorders that teenagers suffer from?

Ans. Anorexia is when you imagine that your body is not the right weight, and you restrict what you eat to become thinner and thinner. Often it means restricting your consumption of nutritious food as well to portions almost suited for a baby.

Bulimia is when one binges on large amounts of food and forces themselves to purge or throw up what they have eaten. Both these disorders are characterized by a strong desire to lose weight.

Q2. It's our understanding that females tend to have a more negative body image in comparison to males. Would you agree? Please explain your thoughts about this?

Ans 2. Although an equal number of boys and girls suffer from these body and self-esteem issues, boys seem to have a better coping mechanism. Previously, it seemed that there were more girls with body image issues than boys, but current trends show that the impact on teenagers does not vary with gender.

Earlier, most girls were told that they had to look pretty and work at home, whereas boys were told to provide for their families and their looks were not important at all. However, for the most part, parenting trends have changed so the gap between genders in body-issues and even other illnesses has become less.

Q3. Which form of media do you think impacts one's body image the most? Do you think media can be used to actually promote body positivity? Do you think these negative impacts are an inevitable result of media?

Ans 3. Earlier on, print media such as the cosmopolitan magazine used to have a significant impact. The impact of television also gradually increased. Now even social media and advertisements are very impactful, all types of media have an equal but significant impact.

Media can definitely be used to have a positive impact on teenagers' self-image as one's thoughts and emotions are majorly influenced by it throughout the day..

Q4. What factors other than Media cause a negative impact on a teenager's body image?

Ans 4. The influence of judgment by family and peers is as impactful as media.

Q5. What are the main problems caused because of a negative perception of one's own body?

We know that it affects their eating habits but what else does it affect?

Ans 5. Many teenagers suffer from depression, anxiety, bulimia, anorexia or with the problem of not being to adapt in schools or colleges. Often after delving further, it is found that this can be indirectly or directly be attributed to body issues and self-esteem issues. These self-esteem issues have a negative impact on the teenager's social life as well and all other aspects of their growth.

A few additional points she raised:

1. Our brains have reward centers which get triggered and thrive after being given attention and praise. The developmental stages that teenagers are going through makes them want to be more liked and get more praise. Humans, being social animals, also like to follow what the crowd is doing.

We interviewed, Sonal Chowdhary, a Holistic Nutrition Consultant based in Mumbai with specialization in weight management, sports and clinical nutrition. She has a comprehensive focus on nutrition, emotional balance and creates customized wellness plans that work for her clients' lifestyles.

Q1. How can we prevent a teenager from following the unhealthy trend of fad dieting and actually make sure that they stick to a balanced and healthy diet?

Ans 1. To prevent teenagers from following fad diets, it is important to spread awareness about how dangerous and unhealthy disordered eating habits can be. Many teenagers coming to the clinic have already tried some sort of fad diet which did not work.

Q2. Which media do you think impacts a teenager's body image the most? Why?

Ans 2. Social media impacts teenagers the most. Pictures on social media are photo shopped and are taken with great lighting, which gives a false narrative to teenagers. This causes teenagers to focus more on the shape of their body than their overall health.

Q3. What is a healthy way for teenagers to lose weight?

Ans 3. A healthy way for teenagers to lose weight is to attain a healthier lifestyle, where they exercise often, eat a balanced diet, sleep the right amount, drink lots of water and reduce their daily stress. People have the misconception that being thin makes them healthy which is not always true.

Q4. Have teenagers ever come to you with a picture of a celebrity or model saying they want their body to look like that?

Ans 4. Teenagers often show the dietician pictures of models and celebrities that they have seen on different medias, saying that they want a similar body. They say they feel inferior because their body does not look like the celebrity's.

b) Personal Interviews

We interviewed a mother of two teenagers: a 14-year-old girl and an 18 year old boy. She is 46 years old and a banking professional.

Q1. When you were a teenager were people affected by body image as much as they are now? If not, do you think the increase of body negativity is because of the different types of media prevalent today?

Ans 1. A person's body image was affected by media even when I was a teenager. Earlier, media exposure was restricted to certain celebrities seen in magazines and the available media. Now, since teens have more access to media, they are affected a lot more. Nowadays almost all users post filtered images on apps like YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook.

Q2. Do you think your daughter and her female friends are impacted more negatively by the bodies they see on media in comparison to your son and his male friends?

Ans 2. My daughter seems more open to discuss body image with her friends than my son. However, I feel that males and females are equally impacted though females may talk about it more.

Q3. As a parent, do you think limiting your child's time on media is beneficial for their body image?

Ans 3. Limiting time on certain media wouldn't help reduce the impact. It's not possible to stop children from using media because that's the reality today. Coaching children on being able to differentiate between what is real and what isn't is important.

Q4. Do you and your children find it tough to discuss the different body types perpetuated by media?

Ans 4. My children are comfortable talking about the perfect body types perpetuated by media at home. If my children ever come to me saying that they look too fat or have too many pimples I don't blatantly praise them. Instead, I say things like, 'your skin looks nice today' or I will tell them to eat healthy food which is good for their skin.

Q5. Around what age do you think teenagers start feeling conscious about body image, if at all?

Ans 5. Teenagers begin to get conscious when they start getting exposed to excessive media, which is typically around grade 5 or grade 6, that is 11 or 12 years.

We interviewed a 13-year-old girl, 13-year-old boy, 18-year-old girl, 18 year old boy. We did this to get an idea of the difference of opinion between males and females and teenagers of different ages.

Question	13-year-old girl's response	13-year-old boy's response
Q1. Around what age did your peers, and you start feeling conscience about how you'll looked and started comparing yourselves to others? Do you feel this got progressively worse as you grew older and spent more time on social media or watching movies?	Around age 10 was when she and her friends started feeling conscious about how they looked, and their insecurities worsened as they grew older and spent more time on media.	Around age 12 was when he and his peers started comparing themselves to others, mainly because everyone got onto social media at this time. Everyone was at home during that time due to Covid-19, so they spent a lot of time on it.
Q2. Do you and your friends feel comfortable talking about body image?	She and her friends are not too comfortable talking about body image. She believes that it's considered to be a taboo topic amongst her peers.	His close friends and him are mostly always comfortable talking about topics like body insecurity etc.
Q3. Do you think that males your age are affected by the unrealistic beauty standards they see on media just as much as females?	Males her age don't seem to be as affected by the unrealistic beauty standards as much as females. However, they are affected a little bit.	He has seen that girls are more self-conscious and many of them try to look like certain celebrities. However, boys also aspire to look like certain celebrities and have body-image issues as well.
Q4. Have you or your friends ever followed an extreme diet or exercise routine so that you could achieve a certain body type?	Her friends and her have followed a few workout regimes just because they wanted to look a certain way and not to become fitter. When they did not achieve the promised results after the program was over, they felt demotivated and disappointed.	His friends and him do follow a fitness regime, mainly to become fit and be healthy, but sometimes even to look like a certain celebrity.
Q5 Have you or your peers ever declined the invite to a social gathering because you did not like how you looked?	She has declined the invitation to a few social gatherings because she was unhappy with how she looked.	Neither he nor his friends have ever declined an invite.
Q6. If you or your friends have seen any positive body	The body positivity posts and videos on different	Positive body image posts mainly seem forced because

image posts on social media, have they actually made you feel more confident about yourself, or do they seem forced?	media seem to be forced most of the times and do not actually help her feel more confident.	most of them are just posted so that one can receive more likes and better comments.
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Question	18-year-old girl's response	18-year-old boy's response
Q1. Around what age did your peers, and you start feeling conscience about how you'll looked and started comparing yourselves to others? Do you feel this got progressively worse as you grew older and spent more time on social media or watching movies?	Around 13 or 14 years was when her friends and her got affected. In the middle there was this phase where body image became important to them but then it reduced again. It grew when everyone began getting social media.	Around the age of 14 and 15 is when his friends and his body image started being affected both positively and negatively by social media.
Q2. Do you and your friends feel comfortable talking about body image?	Her friends and her feel comfortable talking about body image.	He and his friends are not too comfortable talking about body image.
Q3. Do you think that males your age are affected by the unrealistic beauty standards they see on media just as much as females?	Males' opinion of body image is affected by media as much as girls, maybe more. She has that seen that it affects the way males view other females in their lives. They expect these females to match the unrealistic standards shown on media.	Males his age are not affected by and subjected to unrealistic beauty standards as much as females. He thinks this is because of social stigma, many stereotypes cultural factors etc.
Q4. Have you or your friends ever followed an extreme diet or exercise routine so that you could achieve a certain body type?	Her friends and her have never really followed an extreme fitness regime to look thinner.	He has seen people workout for the sole purpose of looking like a celebrity or model that they have seen on some Media.
Q5. Have you or your peers ever declined the invite to a social gathering because you did not like how you looked?	Neither her nor her friends have been so affected by body image that they would decline an invite to a social gathering.	There have been times where he felt a bit insecure about going for a social gathering as he did not like how he looked, but he still went. He has never declined an invite solely due to insecurity.
Q6. If you or your friends have seen any positive body	Positive body image posts never make her feel more	He understands the intention behind body positivity posts

image posts on social media, have they made you feel more confident about yourself, or do they seem forced?	confident.	but he they come off as unnatural. He thinks the intentions behind these posts are pure, but it may not be the best way to promote body positivity as it comes across as fake.
Q7. What advice would you give to a 13-year-old on this topic?	She would advise a thirteen-year-old not to change their mindset because of social media. It is best to understand that everything is filtered.	He advises younger teenagers to have a logical approach while being on media or watching celebrities as most of what they see is fake. They should just focus on being healthy, both mentally and physically.

G. Secondary Research

Secondary Research 1

The research article ‘The Struggle Between the Real and Ideal: Impact of Acute Media Exposure on Body Image of Young Indian Women’¹⁶, expands specifically on the impact of unrealistic beauty standards perpetuated by western media on college going Indian teenage girls. The study examines the impact on 3 aspects: ‘a) thin-ideal internalization, b) body dissatisfaction, and c) self-esteem of young Indian women’, as quoted from the article.

Participants (ranging from 18 to 22) were randomly allotted to either a media intervention condition or to a control condition.

For the media intervention, the participants were shown a video of models exhibiting clothes from a famous brand called Victoria's Secret¹⁷

The video displayed lingerie models exhibiting the thin body ideal. For the control condition, the participants were shown a cartoon for 1 minutes which did not have any references to body image. The study also employed statistical analysis and the figure rating scale.

The study found that ‘young urban Indian women experience body dissatisfaction and reduced self-esteem when exposed to Western thin-ideal images to the same extent as their counterparts in Europe and North America. Media images of duration as little as a minute can lead to increased acceptance (internalization) of socially defined ideals’, as quoted from the paper.

¹⁶ I.N.R.V. (2017). The Struggle Between the Real and Ideal: Impact of Acute Media Exposure on Body Image of Young Indian Women. Sage Open. Published. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244017691327>

¹⁷ <https://www.victoriasssecret.com/us/>

This research article is extremely significant and helpful for our research as it established the impact of unrealistic beauty standards and expectations that are perpetuated by short advertisements. Although some of the participants are older than the subject of our research, the impact of unrealistic beauty ideals promoting thinness or other kinds of body image is extremely relevant to our research.

Secondary research 2

The research article ‘Influence of the Mass Media and Body Dissatisfaction on the Risk in Adolescents of Developing Eating Disorders’¹⁸, examines the influence of media on body dissatisfaction and the development of eating disorders amongst adolescents. The study was conducted with 527 girls and 484 boys from Fortaleza, Brazil. The BMI (body mass index) was assessed of each participant and then a ‘body shape questionnaire’, ‘Eating Attitudes Test’ and ‘Sociocultural Attitudes towards Appearance Questionnaire’ was applied. For statistical analysis, the study employed measures such as the Pearson’s Correlation Test and the chi-square test. The study found that ‘a total of 54.7% of the adolescents suffered a slight influence from the mass media, 27.3% a moderate influence, and 18.0% a strong influence. A larger number of girls than boys was found to suffer a strong influence from mass media’, as quoted from the article.

The findings of the article were presented in a table attached below,

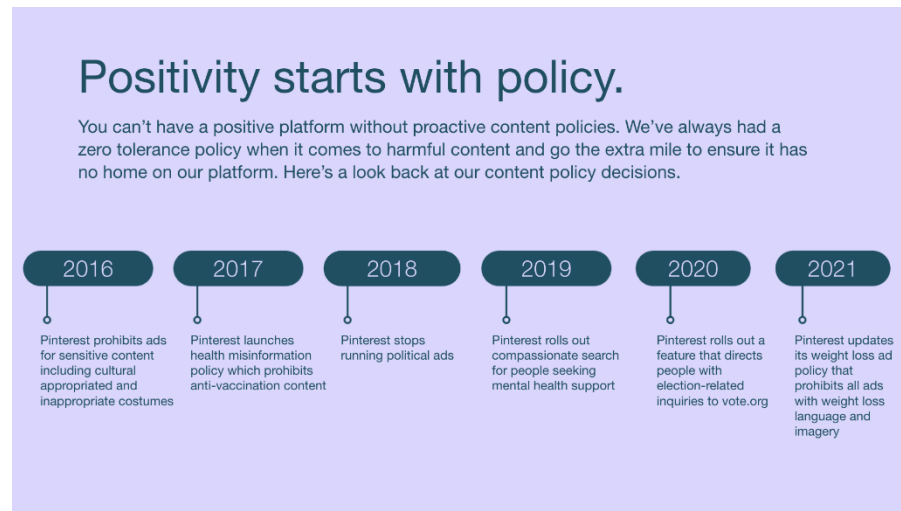
Comparison of quantitative variables in adolescents aged between 14 and 18 years, by gender.

Variables	Values	Gender	
		Girls	Boys
Age (years)	Mean (SD)	15.6 (1.0)	15.7 (1.1)
	<i>p</i> value	0.105	
BMI	Mean (SD)	21.8 (3.5)	22.0 (3.7)
	<i>p</i> value	0.468	
Body image (score) (BSQ)	Mean (SD)	78.6 (34.9)	63.0 (27.3)
	<i>p</i> value	≤0.001	
Eating attitudes (score) (EAT-26)	Diet	Mean (SD)	7.74 (7.61)
		<i>p</i> value	≤0.001
	Bulimia	Mean (SD)	3.18 (2.97)
		<i>p</i> value	≤0.001
	Oral control	Mean (SD)	4.41 (3.86)
		<i>p</i> value	≤0.001
	Total	Mean (SD)	15.3 (10.9)
		<i>p</i> value	≤0.001
	INT-GEN	Mean (SD)	24.4 (8.4)
		<i>p</i> value	0.011
	INT-ATH	Mean (SD)	12.0 (4.7)
		<i>p</i> value	12.7 (4.9)

This detailed research article expands on the potential for development of eating disorders or unhealthy eating habits in teenagers as a result of mass media. It also expands on the different extents of body dissatisfaction experienced by teenagers. Considering that our research in this regard was limited, this extensive study establishes that our hypothesis of unrealistic body standards having a direct or indirect impact on teenager’s eating habits was correct.

¹⁸ Uchôa, F. N. M., Uchôa, N. M., Daniele, T. M. D. C., Lustosa, R. P., Garrido, N. D., Deana, N. F., Aranha, G. C. M., & Alves, N. (2019). Influence of the Mass Media and Body Dissatisfaction on the Risk in Adolescents of Developing Eating Disorders. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(9), 1508. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16091508>

Pinterest is ‘a visual discovery engine for finding ideas like recipes, home and style inspiration, and more’, as described by the website. It has 450 million monthly active users²⁰ The platform recently banned all advertisements with weight loss language and imagery, advertisements with weight loss or weight loss product testimonials, advertisements idealizing certain body types or advertisements referencing BMI (Body Mass Index).



Although the impact of this policy will only be seen after the completion of our research project, this is one of the most major steps taken by a social media company in regard to preventing negative body image, insecurities etc. All the experts who we have interviewed have emphasized on the need for stricter action by social media organizations and hence we felt that this was a very relevant policy to examine.

Conclusion

Our hypothesis was proven correct.

Teenage minds are negatively impacted by the unrealistic appearances and beauty standards in different media. We can conclude that:

- The impact varies across different genders, as do the manifestations of the impact. The impact is greater on females across all ages.
- Social media is the most impactful type of media.
- Majority of teenagers who experience an impact, first experience it between the ages of 13 to 15 years. They are impacted the most during the ages of 15 to 17 years. However, this impact declines after the age of 18 years.
- To some extent, this impact is unavoidable as insecurity is omnipresent during adolescence. However, for many teenagers, these insecurities are worsened by the pressure to have ‘perfect body types’ shown in the media.

¹⁹ Pinterest embraces body acceptance with new ad policy. (2021, July 1). Pinterest Newsroom. <https://newsroom.pinterest.com/en/post/pinterest-embraces-body-acceptance-with-new-ad-policy>

²⁰ West, C. (2021, March 3). 23 Pinterest stats and facts marketers must know in 2021. Sprout Social. <https://pagely.sproutsocial.com/insights/pinterest-statistics/>

Implications

1. We proved that there is a stigma about discussing beauty standards and the impact of media on individuals which in turn leads to a lack of awareness. We hope to create awareness in our city and reduce this stigma.
2. By sharing this research with parents and teenagers in our community, they will have easy access to experts' insights, summaries of other research articles and also data about how teenagers feel about this topic.
3. This research may be helpful in a broader context for social media and other types of companies who want to restructure their marketing in a way that has a better effect on teenagers. We pinpointed which aspects of the beauty standards presented have the most impact.

Factors Affecting Research Question

The factors that could have influenced the result are:

1. Our sample size of 384 responses had respondents from similar socio – economic backgrounds.
2. We did not have an equal number of male-female responses for each age group. Some males were hesitant to fill up the form.

Solutions:

1. Celebrities and models should clearly state whether any filters have been used while posting pictures on social media. Celebrities should also be open about the role of stylists and nutritionists in the way they present themselves to society. Ideally, while endorsing workouts and products (such as a protein supplement that will make you more muscular), the celebrity should actually have used it. Companies should hire models of all body shapes, specifically while promoting products for a teenage audience.
2. Parents should educate themselves through seminars by experts about the correct way to talk to their teenagers about their body image or eating habits. Teenagers should try to express and discuss their thoughts about body image with their peers and family to reduce the taboo about the topic.
3. Institutions like schools or companies should provide counsellors for their students/employees to talk about such insecurities.

Ultimately, whilst systemic change occurs in the beauty standards presented by the entertainment industry and media, teenagers should keep reminding myself that what they are being shown is unrealistic.

New Questions:

1. Do comments made at home impact a teenager's body image even more than media does?
2. Do video games make teenagers insensitive to violence more than affecting their body image?

Appendix:

1. Questions for the interviews (Conducted on the Zoom application)

a. Counsellor

1. Around what age do you start seeing children become insecure with how they look? Why do you think it starts at this particular age?
2. What are the main problems caused because of a negative perception of one's own body? We know that it affects their eating habits but what else does it affect?
3. It's our understanding that females tend to have a more negative body image in comparison to males. Would you agree? Please explain your thoughts about this?
4. Which form of media do you think impacts one's body image the most? Do you think media can be used to actually promote body positivity? Do you think these negative impacts are an inevitable result of media?
5. What is a way in which we can promote body positivity?
6. What ways would you recommend to counter balance the unrealistic beauty standards on social media?

b. Psychologist

1. Around what age do you start seeing children become insecure with how they look? Why do you think it starts at this particular age?
2. It's our understanding that females tend to have a more negative body image in comparison to males. Would you agree? Please explain your thoughts about this?
3. Which form of media do you think impacts one's body image the most? Do you think media can be used to actually promote body positivity? Do you think these negative impacts are an inevitable result of media?
4. What is a way in which we can promote body positivity? What are your views on the 'hourglass body type' and why is it so hard to achieve?
5. We have read that males don't feel comfortable about opening up about their body insecurities? Why do you think that is, and can it be changed?

c. Dietician

1. It's our understanding that females tend to have a more negative body image in comparison to males. Would you agree? Please explain your thoughts about this?
2. How can we prevent a teenager from following the unhealthy trend of fad dieting and actually make sure that they stick to a balanced and healthy diet?
3. Why is it so much harder for some people to maintain a healthy weight in comparison to others? Is it due to metabolism, genetics or something else?

4. What is a way in which we can promote body positivity? What are your views on the 'hourglass body type' and why is it so hard to achieve?

5. We have read that males don't feel comfortable about opening up about their body insecurities? Why do you think that is, and can it be changed?

d. Mother of two teenagers

1. When you were a teenager were people affected by body image as much as they are now? If not, do you think the increase of body negativity is because of the different types of media prevalent today?

2. Do you think your daughter and her female friends are impacted more negatively by the bodies they see on media in comparison to your son and his male friends?

3. As a parent, do you think limiting your child's time on media is beneficial for their body image?

4. Do you and your children find it tough to discuss the different body types perpetuated by media?

5. Around what age do you think teenagers start feeling conscious about body image, if at all?

e. Teenagers (13- and 18-year-olds)

1. Around what age did your peers and you start feeling conscience about how you'll looked and started comparing yourselves to others? Do you feel this got progressively worse as you grew older and spent more time on social media or watching movies?

2. Do you and your friends feel comfortable talking about body image?

3. Do you think that males your age are affected by the unrealistic beauty standards they see on media just as much as females?

4. Have you or your friends ever followed an extreme diet or exercise routine so that you could achieve a certain body type?

5. Have you or your peers ever declined the invite to a social gathering because you did not like how you looked?

6. If you or your friends have seen any positive body image posts on social media, have they actually made you feel more confident about yourself, or do they seem forced?

2. Survey Questionnaire (on Google Forms)

Study on Impact of Media

Hi! We Ananya Tawakley, Ananya Shah and Samaira Bhalla are conducting a research for the 'City as Labs' project where we are trying to understand the impacts of different media on teenager's body image. It would be a great help if you could take out just two minutes to fill this form. It's anonymous :) Thank you!

What is your age? *

Short answer text

What is your gender? *

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Other...

Do you find yourself comparing your body to the actors or actresses you see in movies and TV shows? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Have you ever changed the way you eat so that you can fit into a certain piece of clothing? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

When you go to the beach and see people wearing swimsuits, do you end up comparing yourself to them? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Do you find yourself comparing your body to the pictures your peers post on social media? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Around what age do you feel you began to care about how you looked? *

1. below 10 years

2. 10 to 12 years

3. 13 to 15 years

4. 16 to 18 years

5. none

Do you ever see an outfit you like but are afraid to wear it because you don't think you have the right body for it? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Has a friend / relative ever made a comment on the way you look which affected you negatively? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

What media do you think affects your opinion of your body the most? *

☐ Social media apps (eg. Instagram)

☐ Magazines

☐ Movies and TV shows

☐ Video Games

☐ None

Have you ever felt tempted by an advertisement that exploits your insecurities about your physical self-image? (Eg. Clothes that make you look slimmer) *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Do you have any other thoughts about the impact of media on one's body image?

Long answer text

Group Reflection:

Indicators -Collaboration	4	3	2	1	Example
<u>Every</u> member of the team was <u>always</u> prepared, well informed on the project topic and ready to work.	✓				We always communicated with each other and conducted a meeting not only on the day our exams ended but also got on calls to discuss our progress during our exams.
<u>Every</u> member of the team <u>always</u> completed assigned tasks on time without having to be reminded.		✓			Once in a while if one of our teammates were very tired or had another urgent commitment we would understand and the assigned tasks would be completed a day or two after the deadline. However, most of the time they were completed on time.
As a team, we created a detailed task list that divided project work reasonably among the team members.	✓				In a big picture, Ananya Tawakley worked most on the citations and secondary research while Ananya Shah and Samaira Bhalla worked on the survey, personal and expert interviews. This was more detailed like for example, each of us took up interviews and summarized the learning from it.
As a team, we set a schedule and tracked progress toward goals and deadlines.	✓				The very day our examinations ended we created a detailed deadline list to complete conducting interviews by a specific date, write the learnings by a specific date, get atleast 100 responses on our survey by a specific date etc.

As a team, we used time and ran meetings efficiently; kept materials, drafts, notes organized		✓		Our meetings always got work done but sometimes we would get carried away with chatting about other topics and work that should have been done in an hour took two hours. However, we each had access to all documents and were able to find things easily and efficiently.
As a team, we developed ideas and created products with the involvement of <u>all</u> team members			✓	Everyone did not work on everything in the project. Like, if Ananya Shah worked on the survey and graphs, Ananya Tawakley would take up another task such as secondary research and Samaira would take up a third task like interview summaries. We all would not work on the same thing at the same time.
Indicators Communication				
Every member of the team listened to others' ideas without interrupting; responded positively to ideas even if rejecting.		✓		Although we each did not think of every single thing the same way we were patient enough to listen to the other person's perspective. So, if we felt their idea was better than ours, we would choose to go with that but if we thought our idea was better we would politely explain that one and as a group decide which way to go.
Team members communicated openly and treated one another with respect.	✓			Even if we did not have similar ideologies about everything we communicated with respect and shared our perspective without disrespecting the other

					teammate.
Every member of the team felt safe and free to seek assistance and information, share resources and insights, provide advice, or ask questions of each other.	✓				We were always comfortable discussing our tasks with each other. Even if the other teammate was not working on the same task we would share our difficulties and collectively provide advice or find a solution.

Individual reflection:

Ananya Shah: Personally, the most enjoyable part of the research was conducting the interviews and interacting with all kinds of people. Also, analyzing and reading teenagers' opinions on the topic was quite eye – opening like many spoke about how being too skinny was just as unappealing to others as being overweight. I struggled with prioritization and time management while working on this project as there were many other tasks to be completed but this couldn't be sidelined either. Like, I had to manage tests, exams, projects and many other extracurricular activities while working on this project. I not only learned the skill of making graphs from raw data but also putting them together in a way that I could read and infer from them to make fruitful conclusions.

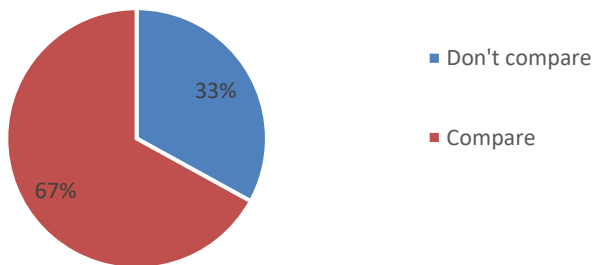
Samaira Bhalla: I enjoyed conducting personal interviews the most. It was great to hear the teenagers share their personal experiences with us and their inputs helped the research a lot. They gave us real-life examples of struggles they or their friends have gone through with body image which made the research a lot more authentic. I struggled while interacting with the professionals we interviewed as I would get nervous while talking to them. However, I did try my best to get my nerves under control and I managed to improve my communication skills. I developed better time management skills as I started making to-do lists for all the work I needed to do for the project. I even started setting reminders on my phone and some days I would wake up a bit earlier to complete the work.

Ananya Tawakley: I enjoyed talking to the experts and listening to their insights the most such as the relation between changing parenting trends and children's perception of their body image. It was fascinating to hear the scientific aspects behind the impact on teenagers. I did not know that our brains have reward centers which thrive on attention and praise. While doing secondary research, I struggled with choosing which research articles were the most apt to include. It was difficult to read through all the long articles without losing focus. I feel like my research skills have greatly improved and I have learnt about citing work correctly. I now know how important it is to gauge whether the sites or publications I'm reading are legitimate or not. My communication skills with my teammates have also developed, I have become better at listening and understanding other people's point of view.

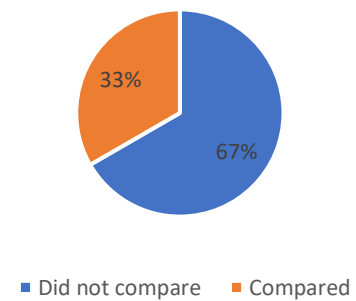
Annexure – Detailed Findings of the Survey

a. Data Summary of 13 year old males and females

% of 13 year old females who compare themselves with movie stars



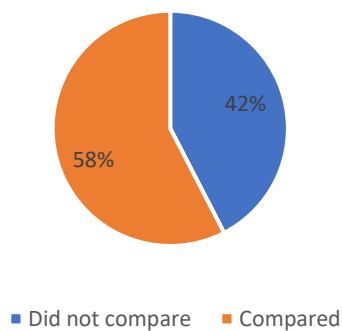
% of 13 year old males who compared themselves with movie stars



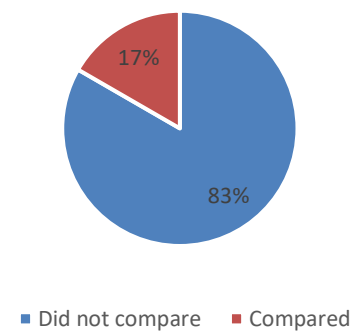
67% of 13 – year – old females compare themselves with movie stars.

33% of 13 – year – old males compare themselves with movie stars.

% of 13 year old females who compared themselves to those in swimsuits



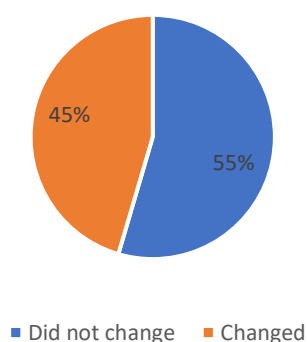
% of 13 year old males who compared themselves to those in swimsuits



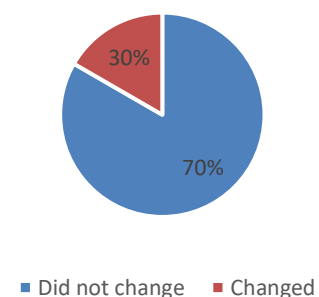
58% of 13 – year – old females compared themselves to those in swimsuits.

17% of 13 – year – old males compared themselves to those in swimsuits.

% of 13 year old females who changed diet patterns to fit into certain clothing



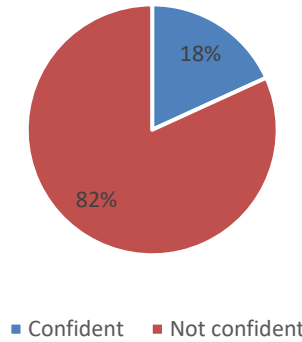
% of 13 year old males who changed diet patterns to fit into certain clothing



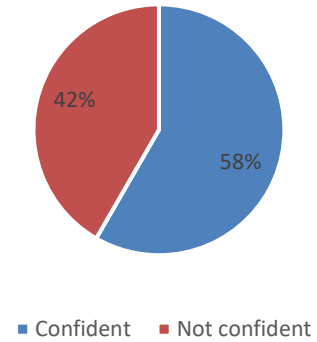
45% of 13 – year – old females change their diet so that they can fit into certain clothing.

30% of 13 – year – old males change their diet so that they can fit into certain clothing.

% of 13 year old females who are not confident to wear certain outfits



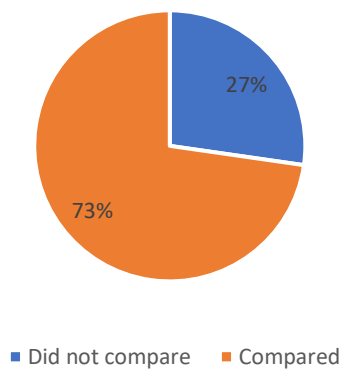
% of 13 year old males who are not confident to wear certain outfits



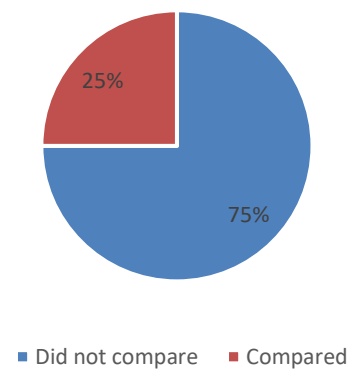
82% of 13 – year – old females are not confident to wear certain outfits.

42% of 13 – year – old males are not confident to wear certain outfits.

% of 13 year old females who compared themselves to peers on social media



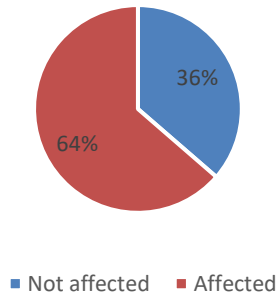
% of 13 year old males who compared themselves to peers on social media



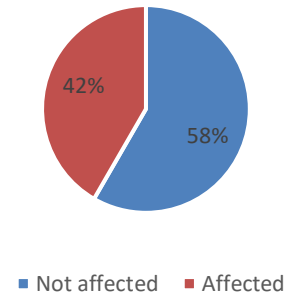
73% of 13 – year – old females compare their body to those of their peers on social media.

25% of 13 – year – old males compare their body to those of their peers on social media.

% of 13 year old females who are affected negatively by comments from family and friends



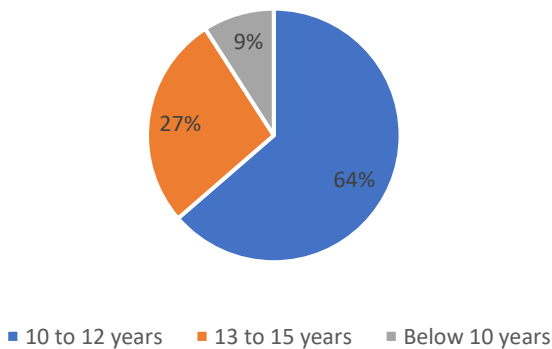
% of 13 year old males who are affected negatively by comments from family and friends



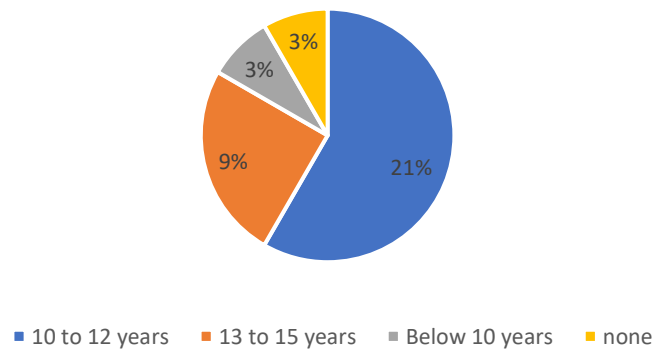
64% of 13 – year – old females are affected negatively by comments from friends and family.

42% of 13 – year – old males are affected negatively by comments from friends and family.

% of 13 year old females sorted by age at which they began to care about their looks



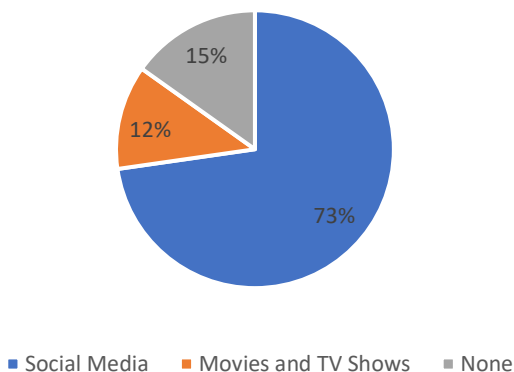
% of 13 year old males sorted by age at which they began to care about their looks



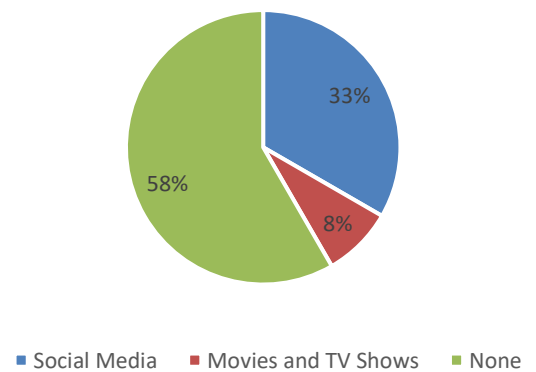
Most (64%) 13 – year – old females began to care about their looks between the ages of 10 and 12. While 27% began to care between 13 and 15 years, 9% cared below 10 years as well.

21% of 13 – year – old males began to care about their looks between the ages of 10 and 12. While 9% began to care between 13 and 15 years, 3% cared below 10 years as well.

Most influencing media for 13 year old females



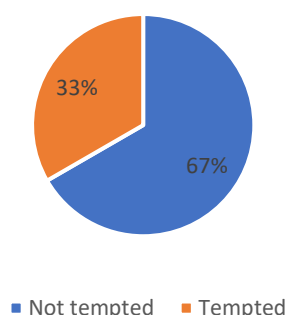
Most influencing media for 13 year old males



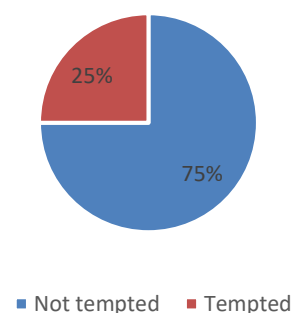
Most (73%) 13 – year – old females find social media the most impactful form of media on their perception of self-body image. The other 12% found movies and TV shows most impactful and 15% weren't affected by any of the options (Social media, Movies and TV shows, Magazines and Video Games).

33% of 13 – year – old males find social media the most impactful form of media on their perception of self-body image. The other 8% found movies and TV shows most impactful and 58% weren't affected by any of the options (Social media, Movies and TV shows, Magazines and Video Games).

% of 13 year old females who are tempted to buy products based on how the ads exploit their insecurities



% of 13 year old males who are tempted to buy products based on how the ads exploit their insecurities

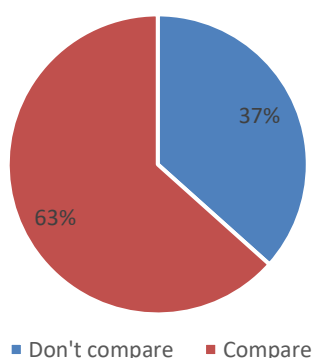


33% of 13 – year – old females are tempted to buy products that exploit their insecurities (eg. Clothes that make you look slimmer)

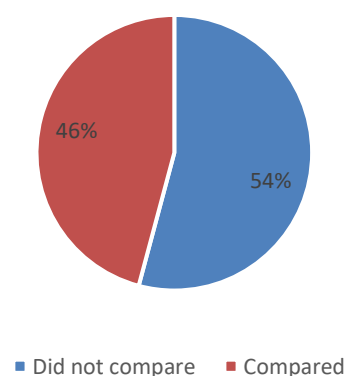
25% of 13 – year – old males are tempted to buy products that exploit their insecurities.

b. Data summary of 14 year old males and females

% of 14 year old females who compare themselves with movie stars



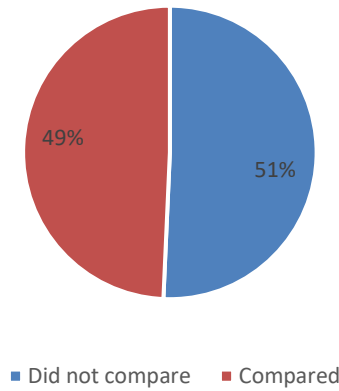
% of 14 year old males who compared themselves with movie stars



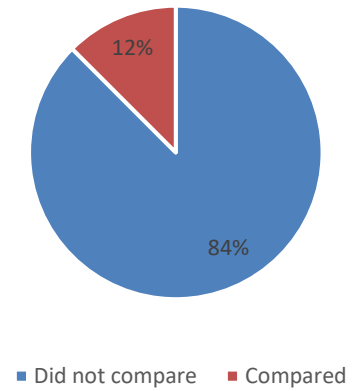
63% of 14-year-old females compare their bodies to those of movie stars.

46% of 14-year-old males compare their bodies to those of movie stars.

% of 14 year old females who compared themselves to those in swimsuits



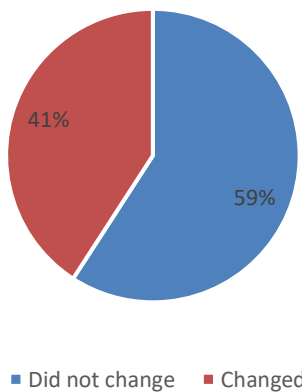
% of 14 year old males who compared themselves to those in swimsuits



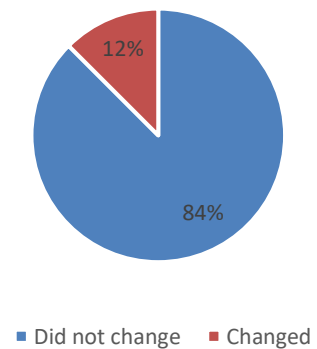
49% of 14-year-old females have compared themselves to those in a swimsuit.

12% of 14-year old males have compared themselves to those in a swimsuit.

% of 14 year old females who changed diet patterns to fit into certain clothing



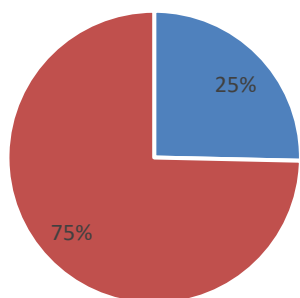
% of 14 year old males who changed diet patterns to fit into certain clothing



41% of 14-year-old females have changed diet patterns to fit into certain clothing.

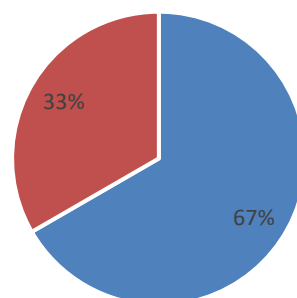
12% of 14-year-old males have changed diet patterns to fit into certain clothing.

% of 14 year old females who are not confident to wear certain outfits



■ Confident ■ Not confident

% of 14 year old males who are not confident to wear certain outfits

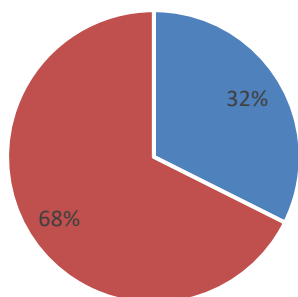


■ Confident ■ Not confident

75% of 14-year-old females are not confident to wear certain outfits.

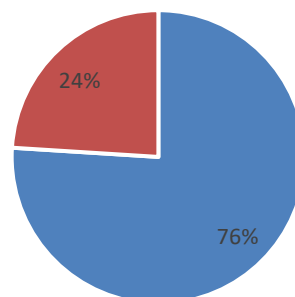
33% of 14-year-old males are not confident to wear certain outfits.

% of 14 year old females who compared themselves to peers on social media



■ Did not compare ■ Compared

% of 14 year old males who compared themselves to peers on social media

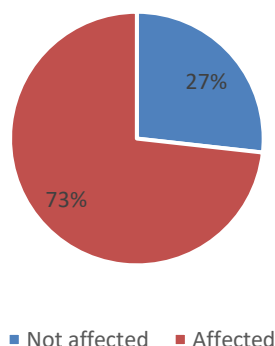


■ Did not compare ■ Compared

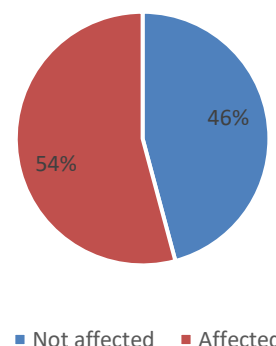
68% of 14-year-old females have compared their body to those of peers on social media.

24% of 14-year-old males have compared their body to those of peers on social media.

% of 14 year old females who are affected negatively by comments from family and friends



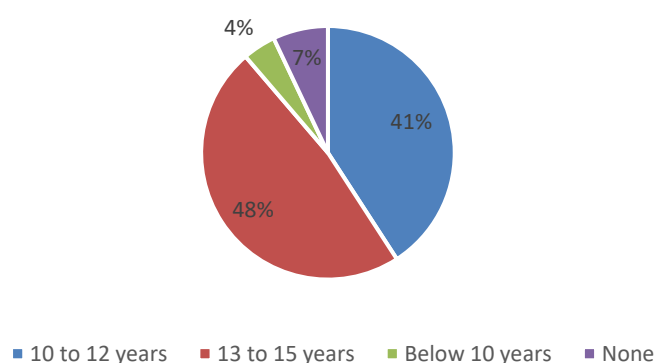
% of 14 year old males who are affected negatively by comments from family and friends



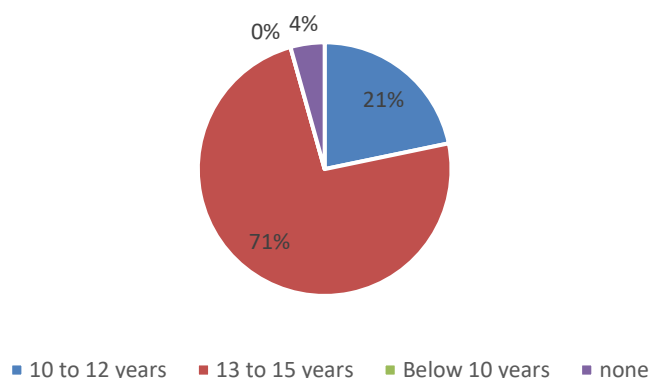
73% of 14-year-old females are affected negatively by comments on their appearance made by friends and family.

54% of 14-year-old males are affected negatively by comments on their appearance made by friends and family.

% of 14 year old females sorted by age at which they began to care about their looks



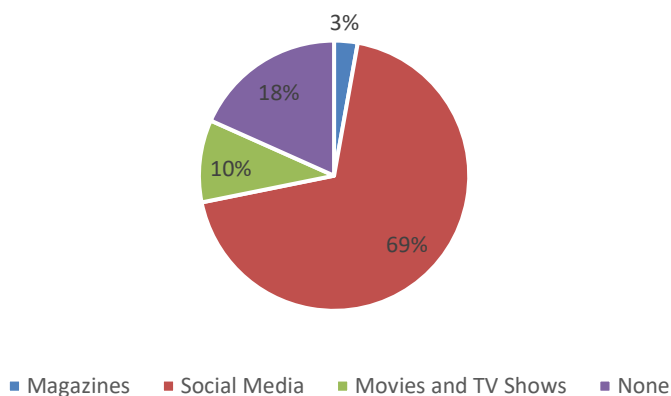
% of 14 year old males sorted by age at which they began to care about their looks



48% of 14-year-old females began to care about their looks from ages of 13 to 15. 41% began from ages of 10 to 12 and 4% began below 10 years of age. 7 % of them do not care about how they look

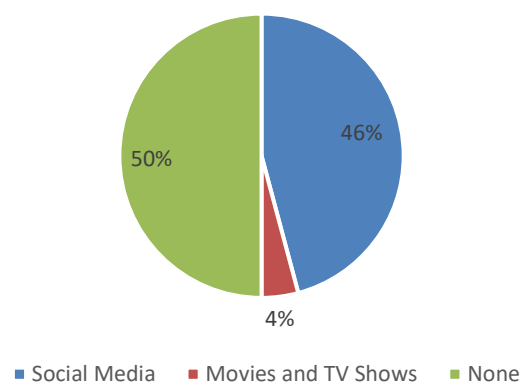
71% of 14-year-old males began to care about their looks from the ages of 13 to 15. 21% began from the ages of 10 to 12 and 4% do not care about how they look.

Most influencing media for 14 year old females



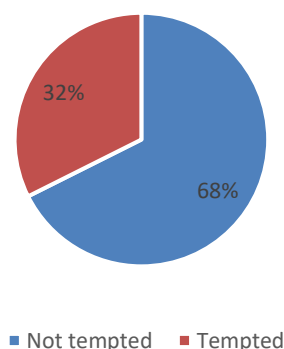
69% of the 14-year-old females said that their body image is influenced most by social media. 10% said that movies and TV shows are the most influencing media and 3% said that they are most influenced by magazines. 18% said that their body image is not affected by media.

Most influencing media for 14 year old males



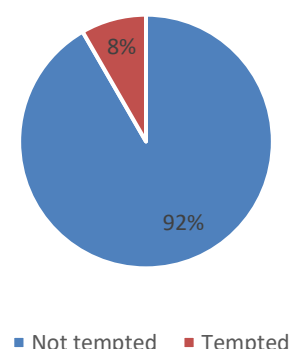
46% of the 14-year-old males said that their body image is most influenced by social media. 4% said that they are most affected by movies and TV shows and 50% said that their body image is not affected by media.

% of 14 year old females who are tempted to buy products based on how the ads exploit their insecurities



32% of 14-year-old females are tempted to buy product based on how the advertisements exploit their insecurities.

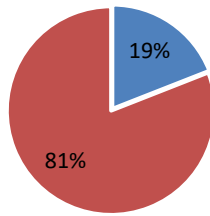
% of 14 year old males who are tempted to buy products based on how the ads exploit their insecurities



8% of the 14-year-old males are tempted to buy products based on how the advertisements exploit their insecurities.

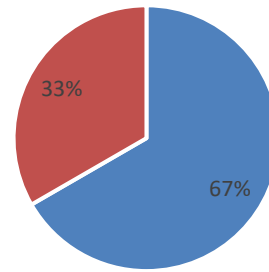
c. Data summary of 15 year old males and females

% of 15 year old females who compare themselves with movie stars



■ Don't compare
■ Compare

% of 15 year old males who compared themselves with movie stars

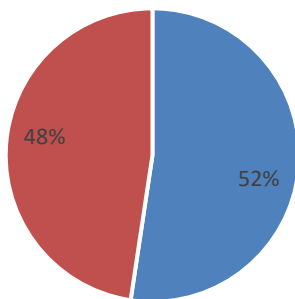


■ Did not compare ■ Compared

81% of the females compared themselves with movie or tv stars

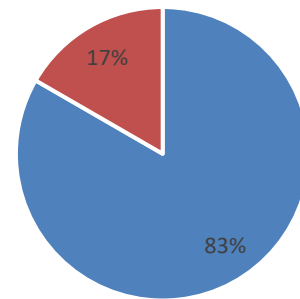
33 % of the males compared themselves with movie or tv stars

% of 15 year old females who changed diet patterns to fit into certain clothing



■ Did not change ■ Changed

% of 15 year old males who changed diet patterns to fit into certain clothing

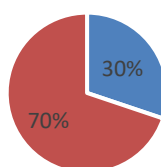


■ Did not change ■ Changed

52% of 15 year old females changed diet patterns to fit into certain clothing

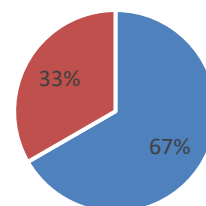
17% of 15 year old males changed diet patterns to fit into certain clothing

% of 15 year old females who compared themselves to those in swimsuits



■ Did not compare ■ Compared

% of 15 year old males who compared themselves to those in swimsuits

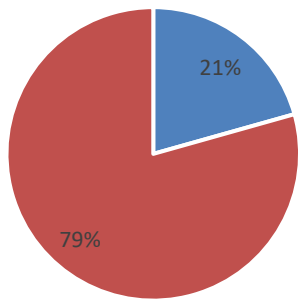


■ Did not compare ■ Compared

70% of the females said they compared themselves to those in swimsuits

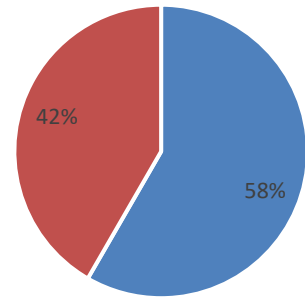
33% of the males said they compared themselves to those in swimsuit

% of 15 year old females who are not confident to wear certain outfits



■ Confident ■ Not confident

% of 15 year old males who are not confident to wear certain outfits

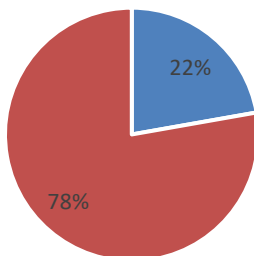


■ Confident ■ Not confident

79% of 15 year old females were not confident to wear certain outfits

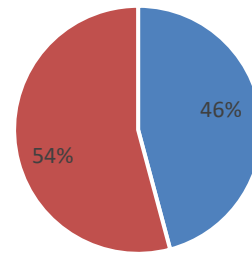
42% of 15 year old males were not confident to wear certain outfits

% of 15 year old females who are affected negatively by comments from family and friends



■ Not affected ■ Affected

% of 15 year old males who are affected negatively by comments from family and friends

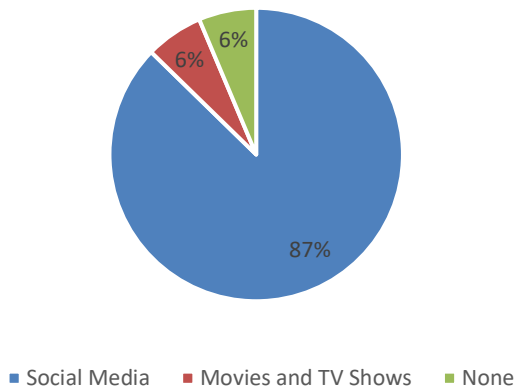


■ Not affected ■ Affected

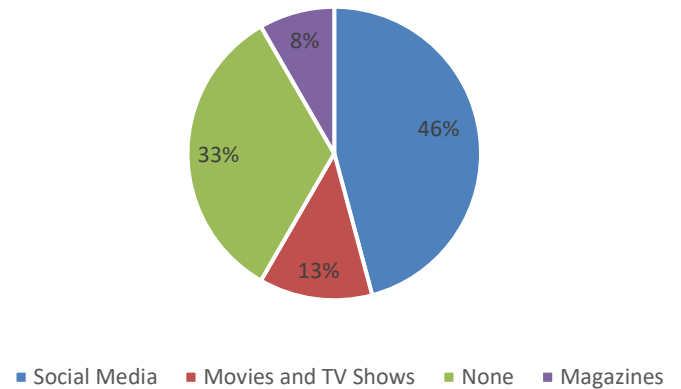
78% of 15 year old females said they were affected negatively by comments from family and friends

54% of 15 year old males said they were affected negatively by comments from family and friends

Most influencing media for 15 year old females



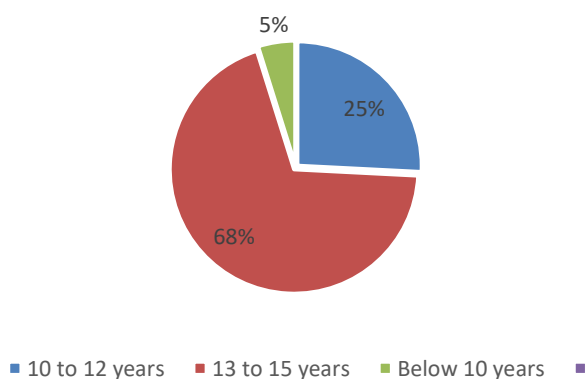
Most influencing media for 15 year old males



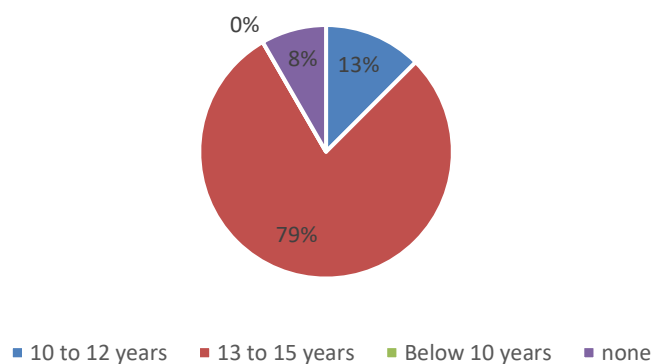
87% of the year old females said they were most influenced by social media such as Instagram

46% of the year old males said they were most influenced by social media such as Instagram while 33% said they were not really influenced by media

% of 15 year old females sorted by age at which they began to care about their looks



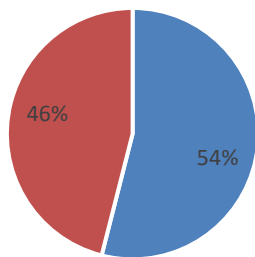
% of 15 year old males sorted by age at which they began to care about their looks



68% of the 15 year old females said they began to care about their looks from 13 to 15 years of age

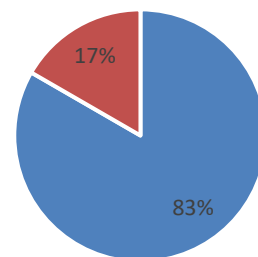
79% of the 15 year old male said they began to care about their looks from 13 to 15 years of age

% of 15 year old females who are tempted to buy products based on how the ads exploit their insecurities



■ Not tempted ■ Tempted

% of 15 year old males who are tempted to buy products based on how the ads exploit their insecurities



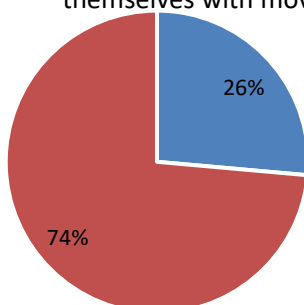
■ Not tempted ■ Tempted

46% of 15-year-old females are tempted to buy product based on how the advertisements exploit their insecurities.

17% of the 14-year-old males are tempted to buy products based on how the advertisements exploit their insecurities.

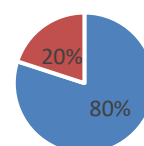
d. Data Summary of 16 year old male and females

% of 16 year old females who compare themselves with movie stars



■ Don't compare
■ Compared

% of 16 year old males who compared themselves with movie stars

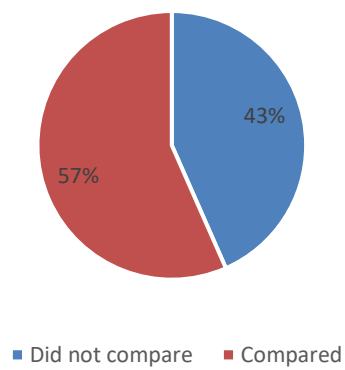


■ Did not compare ■ Compared

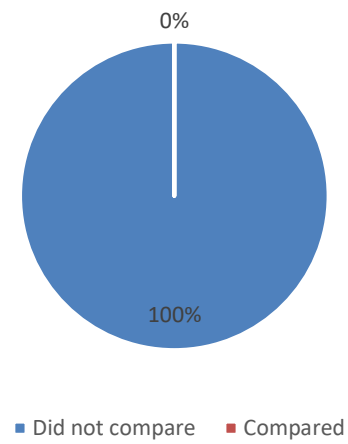
57% of 16 – year – old females compare themselves to movie stars.

20% of 16 – year – old males compare themselves to movie stars.

% of 16 year old females who compared themselves to those in swimsuits

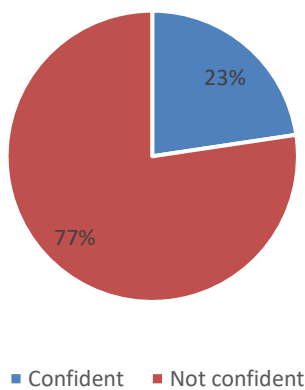


% of 16 year old males who compared themselves to those in swimsuits

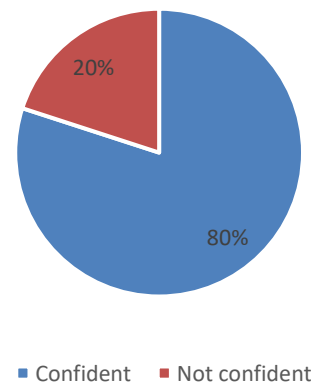


57% of 16 – year – old females compared themselves to those in swimsuits.

% of 16 year old females who are not confident to wear certain outfits



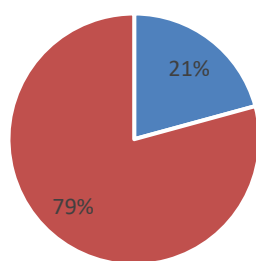
% of 16 year old males who are not confident to wear certain outfits



77% of 16 – year – old females are not confident to wear certain outfits

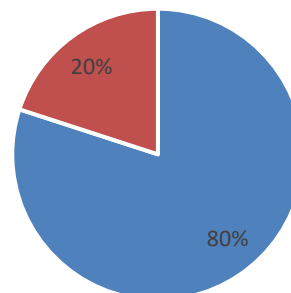
20% of 16 – year – old males are not confident to wear certain outfits.

% of 16 year old females who compared themselves to peers on social media



■ Did not compare ■ Compared

% of 16 year old males who compared themselves to peers on social media

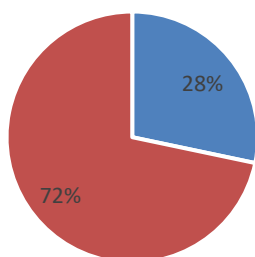


■ Did not compare ■ Compared

79% of 16 – year – old females compare themselves to peers on social media.

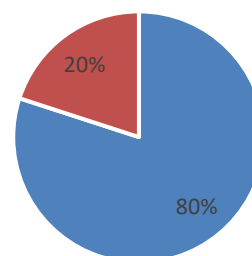
20% of 16 – year – old males compare themselves to peers on social media.

% of 16 year old females who are affected negatively by comments from family and friends



■ Not affected ■ Affected

% of 16 year old males who are affected negatively by comments from family and friends

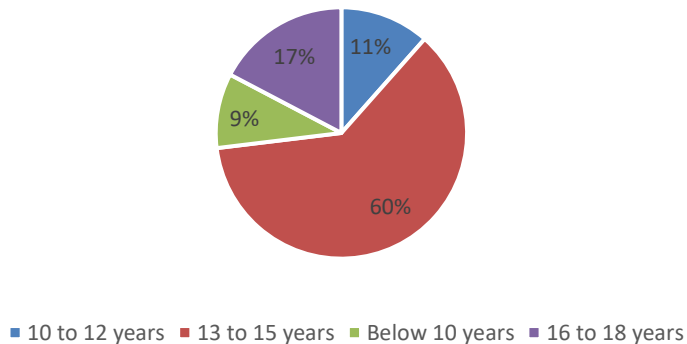


■ Not affected ■ Affected

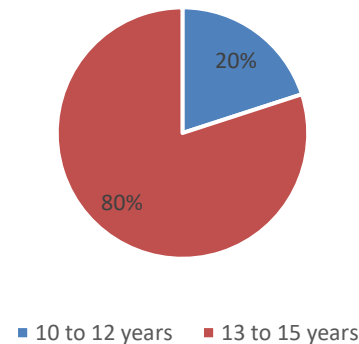
72% of 16 – year – old females are affected negatively by comments from friends and family.

20% of 16 – year – old males are affected negatively by comments from friends and family.

% of 16 year old females sorted by age at which they began to care about their looks



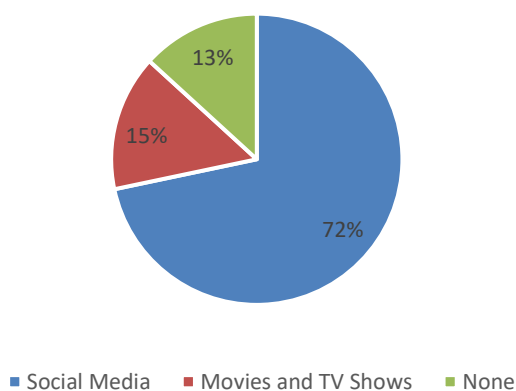
% of 16 year old males sorted by age at which they began to care about their looks



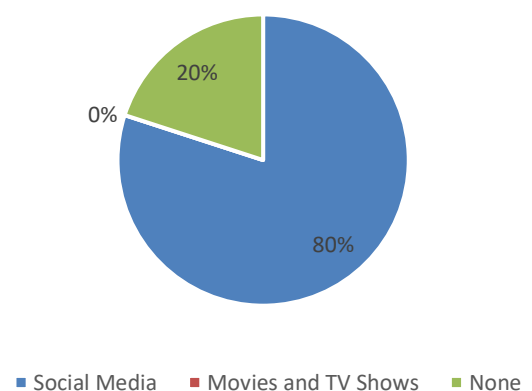
60% of 16-year-old females began to care about their looks from ages of 13 to 15. 11% began from ages of 10 to 12 and 9% began below 10 years of age. 17% of them began to care only between the ages of 16 and 18.

80% of 16 – year – old males began to care about their looks between the ages of 13 and 15 and 20% began to care between the ages of 10 and 20.

Most influencing media for 16 year old females



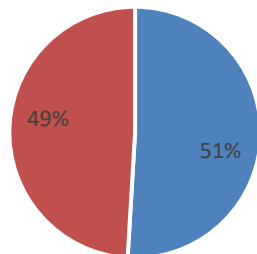
Most influencing media for 16 year old males



72% of 16 year old females said they were most influenced by social media such as Instagram

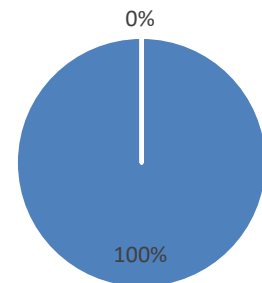
80% of the year old males said they were most influenced by social media such as Instagram while 20% said they were not really influenced by media

% of 16 year old females who are tempted to buy products based on how the ads exploit their insecurities



■ Not tempted ■ Tempted

% of 16 year old males who are tempted to buy products based on how the ads exploit their insecurities

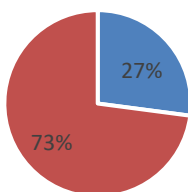


■ Not tempted ■ Tempted

51% of 16 – year – old females are tempted to buy products based on ads that exploit their insecurities.

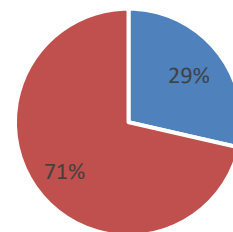
e. Data summary of 17 year old males and females

% of 17 year old females who compared themselves with movie stars



■ Did not compare ■ Compared

% of 17 year old males who compared themselves with movie stars

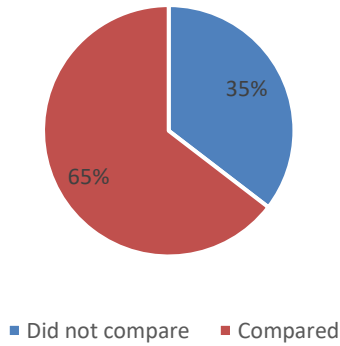


■ Did not compare ■ Compared

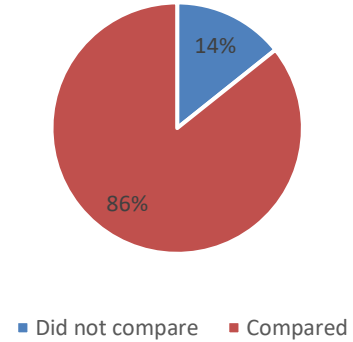
73% of 17 – year – old females compare themselves with movie stars.

71% of 17 – year – old males compare themselves with movie stars

% of 17 year old females who compared themselves to those in swimsuits



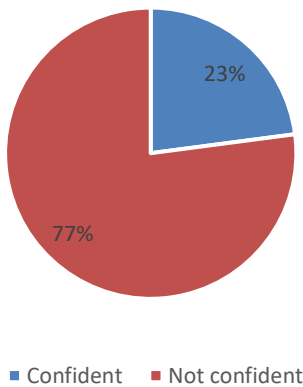
% of 17 year old males who compared themselves to those in swimsuits



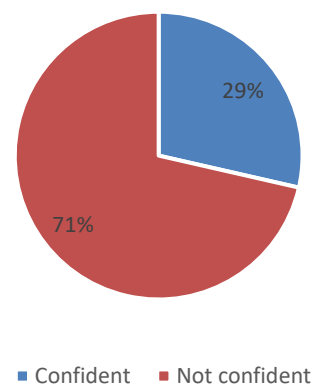
65% of 17 – year – old females compare themselves to those in swimsuits.

86% of 17 – year – old males compare themselves to those in swimsuits.

% of 17 year old females who are not confident to wear certain outfits



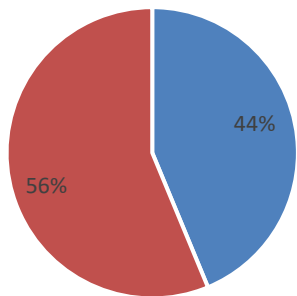
% of 17 year old males who are not confident to wear certain outfits



77% of 17 – year – old females are not confident to wear certain outfits.

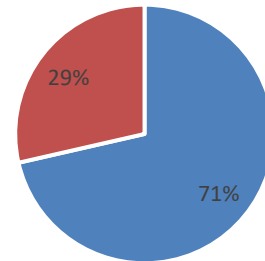
71% of 17 – year – old males are not confident to wear certain outfits.

% of 17 year old females who changed diet patterns to fit into certain clothing



■ Did not change ■ Changed

% of 17 year old males who changed diet patterns to fit into certain clothing

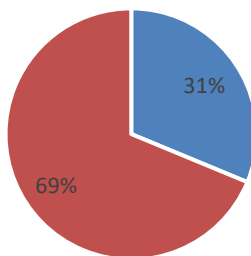


■ Did not change ■ Changed

56% of 17 – year – old females changed their diet patterns to fit into certain clothing.

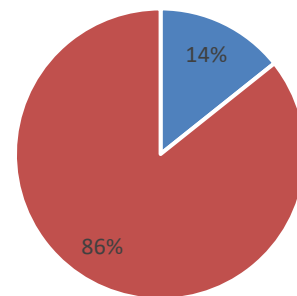
29% of 17 – year – old males changed their diet patterns to fit into certain clothing.

% of 17 year old females who compared themselves to peers on social media



■ Did not compare ■ Compared

% of 17 year old males who compared themselves to peers on social media

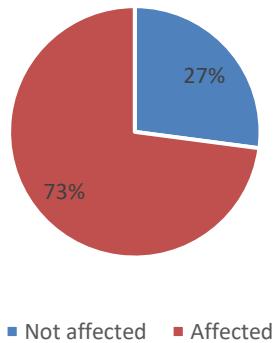


■ Did not compare ■ Compared

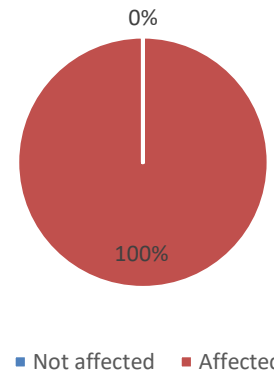
69% of 17 – year – old females compare themselves to peers on social media.

86% of 17 – year – old males compared themselves to peers on social media.

% of 17 year old females who are affected negatively by comments from family and friends



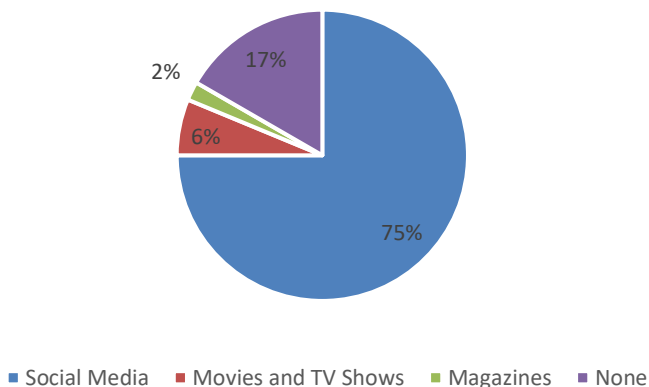
% of 17 year old males who are affected negatively by comments from family and friends



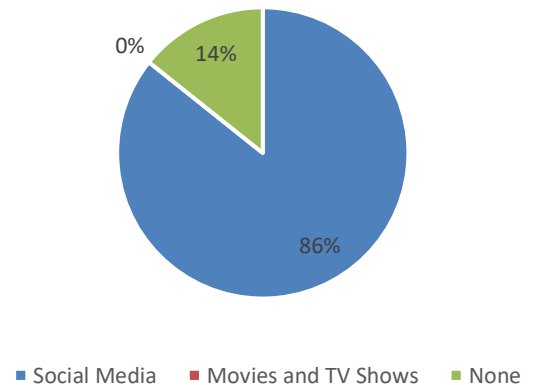
73% of 17 – year – old females are affected negatively by comments from friends and family.

100% of 17 – year – old males are affected negatively by comments from friends and family.

Most influencing media for 17 year old females



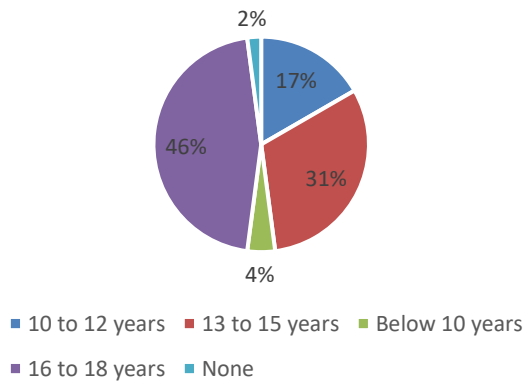
Most influencing media for 17 year old males



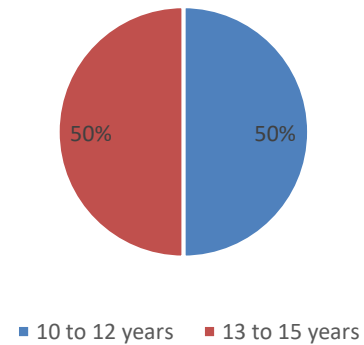
Most (75%) 17 – year – old females find social media the most impactful form of media on their perception of self-body image. The other 6% found movies and TV shows most impactful, 2% were impacted most by magazines and 15% weren't affected by any of the options (Social media, Movies and TV shows, Magazines and Video Games).

86% of 17 – year – old males find social media the most impactful form of media on their perception of self-body image. 14% weren't affected by any of the options (Social media, Movies and TV shows, Magazines and Video Games).

% of 17 year old females sorted by age at which they began to care about their looks

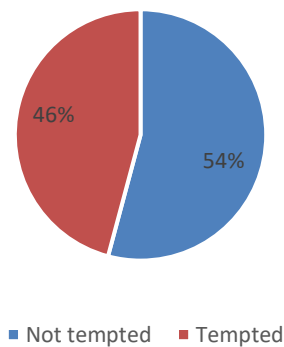


% of 17 year old males sorted by age at which they began to care about their looks

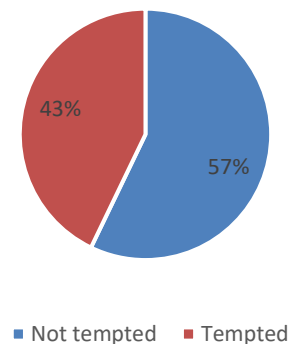


46% of 17 year old females began to care about their looks between the ages of 16 and 18, 31% began between 13 and 15 years, 4%

% of 17 year old females who are tempted to buy products based on how the ads exploit their insecurities



% of 17 year old males who are tempted to buy products based on how the ads exploit their insecurities



46% of 17 – year – old females are tempted to buy products based on ads that exploit their insecurities.

43% of 17 – year – old males are tempted to buy products based on ads that exploit their insecurities

