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Tichelle Porch   April 15, 2015

Society, Culture, and the Selfie: Analysis of the Impact of the Selfie Practice on Women's Body

Image

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An abstract of
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Abstract

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Previous research on mass media and idealistic images of women have been shown to negatively impact women's body image. Although much is known about how mass media affects women, little is known about how the selfie practice, in particular, may impact women's body image. The present thesis sought to examine how aspects of the selfie practice, such as a person's frequency of posting or viewing selfies of other women on social networking sites, affected women's self esteem, body esteem, physical appearance comparison score, and perception of self. Additionally the study sought to understand the important qualities and characteristics of selfies and if there was a connection between the selfie practice and society' and men's expectations of the female body. It was hypothesized that the selfie practice would negatively impact women's body image and there would be similarities between how women create their selfies and society and men's expectations of the female body. While the survey results supported the hypothesis, the interview results showed both negative and positive impacts of the selfie practice. However, further analysis of the interview results showed how there are a number of complex, sociocultural factors that negatively impact women's body and body image. As one of the initial studies on the selfie practice and women's body image, this study suggests a number of sociocultural and personal factors should be further examined in order to better understand the impact of the selfie practice on women's body image.

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Chapter 1:

Introduction

Project Origination

Beyond allowing women to be in constant communication with the world, social net-working sites have been an avenue for women's constant exposure to images of celebrities, models, and more recently, selfies of non-famous women. Due to previous coursework in my Anthropology and Human Biology major, particularly my Freshman Seminar, Good Bodies, I was aware that mass media images of celebrities and models could negatively impact women's body satisfaction or perception of self (Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2006 ; Wilcox & Laird, 2000; Clay et al., 2005; Durkin & Paxton, 2002; King, 1997; Grogan, 1996; Cattarin et al., 2000; Tiggemann & Slater, 2005). However, I was unaware of any studies that assessed the effects of images including non-famous women, such as selfies. Reflecting on puberty and the beginning of my young adult years has led me to believe that girls and women of the 21st century are being exposed to a new media that may affect women physically, emotionally, and mentally. Particularly, I realize girls and women have experienced two phenomenons not present in the culture of women before us, and those are the rise of social networking sites and the selfie phenomenon. I began to embrace the selfie practice at the age of 12 with the increasing popularity of Myspace. Following Myspace, I became involved in Facebook, and recently, Instagram and Snapchat. While I believe the puberty process increased my focus on my body, I also believe my participation in the social media and selfie practice increased my attention to certain aspects of my body.

Throughout my middle and high school years I remember spending hours in my room using my digital camera or cell phone to post the perfect picture on my social networking profile. I continued this pattern up until the end of my college sophomore year, when I realized the negative impact social media and selfies had on my life. For me, social networking sites were an avenue to post my pictures in order to receive peer approval. Social media and selfies were very important aspects of my life and influenced my decision to sometimes take 50 to 100 pictures in order to create the perfect selfie. After posting the picture, I would constantly check my profile to see if anyone liked or commented in approval. The few times when I failed to receive any comments or likes on pictures I thought were good enough to post was very devastating for me. Through maturing and reflecting, I realized my participation in social media often revolved around receiving validation from my peers in order to feel that I was attractive and acceptable. When I did not receive comments or likes on selfies posted to social networking sites I would experience a decrease in body satisfaction because I had not received the validation I desperately needed.

Due to my coursework in women's body image, internships, and negative experiences and interactions with social media and selfies, I decided to pursue a Senior Honors Thesis that would examine the relationship between the selfie practice and women's self esteem, body esteem, tendency to compare themselves to others, and overall perception of self. It is my hope to assess whether there is a significant relationship among these variables in order to educate young girls and women about the potential detrimental effects of participating in today's selfie practice.

Using anthropological theory, the study characterizes the selfie phenomenon as a sociocultural practice. First and foremost, selfies are a medium through which people view a cultural representation of an individuals' body. Secondly, when the individual decides to participate in

the selfie practice, there are cultural rules and expectations of that individual body. For example, there are a number of undocumented rules on how to take the 'perfect' selfie. According to a number of celebrities and magazines, the perfect selfie includes the right angle, facial expression, lighting, camera position, and appropriate location (Wortham, 2013). In addition to the rules and expectations for the process of taking a selfie, there are cultural norms for what should and should not be included in selfies. For example, selfies that are more likely to receive significant amounts of affirming feedback are often sexualized in a number of ways, and this sexualization aligns with cultural tendencies to sexually objectify women's bodies. However, while women receive more affirming feedback when they produce sexualized selfies, they must also remain within Western culture's limitations of the female body's sexualization. For example, while it may be deemed appropriate and desirable to post a selfie that focuses on seductive, facial features and includes a little cleavage, it may also be frowned upon to take a selfies where the focus is on the breasts instead of the face.

Furthermore, the body parts and features included in selfies have to align with the cultural ideals of those parts and features. For example, those who are overweight report only including their face or from the breasts up in their selfies because their body size does not adhere to the cultural ideal of thinness. Additionally, selfies are heavily edited and photo-shopped to achieve the Western cultural ideal of soft, blemish free skin. Lastly, if selfies include more than the face, the selfies must adhere to the cultural ideal of being thin, while also having big breasts, a curvy butt, and a small waist. Overall, a review of selfies suggests there is a selfie practice where women must adhere to the norms and expectations of their culture in order to receive approval from their peers.

Thus, I believe studying the selfie practice and its effects will be helpful to young girls and women because it may help them reassess what they expose themselves to in order to ensure their physical, emotional, and mental health. For example, when I realized how my participation in social media and the selfie practice negatively impacted my life, I took a hiatus from the two and over time, I began to appreciate my looks. Decreasing my exposure helped me focus more on what I liked about my body as opposed to frequently comparing myself to selfies of women I thought were more beautiful. Although I have improved in my confidence and self-esteem and resumed my participation in social media and the selfie practice, I continue to limit my daily exposure because I believe it is the option that works best for me. Limiting myself allows me to continue sharing my life events with my friends through selfies, while also limiting my exposure and decreasing the likelihood that I will begin to compare myself to others and experience a decrease in my perception of self. Thus, I hope by contributing research on the selfie practice and its effect on women, young girls and women will become more aware of how this phenomenon may impact their lives and how to take action based on selfies' impact on their physical, emotional, and mental health.

Background

In 2013, Oxford Dictionaries declared selfie as the International Word of the Year. According to Oxford Dictionaries, the usage of 'selfie' in the English language increased by 17,000% since 2012 (2013). Similarly to the increase in its usage, selfies are now included in multiple aspects of our culture, including our political world and social media ("Oxford Dictionaries Word of the Year", 2013). Technological advances in the internet along with sociocultural changes that focus on constant communication and sharing of life events has helped promote a global selfie practice through global mediums such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Snap-

Chat. While some believe the selfie phenomenon is a fad that will eventually wane, Oxford Dictionaries shows the concept of the selfie has been around since 2002 and is increasing in its popularity (2013). Furthermore, while some believe selfies are a superficial and narcissistic activity, observation of the selfie practice suggests it can actually be described as a sociocultural practice that has its own rules, expectations, and norms and is not restricted to a certain age, group, or region (Blackburn, 2014, p.38; Bergman et al., 2010; Carpenter, 201; Buffardi & Campbell, 2008). However, despite its global popularity, few studies have evaluated the rising selfie practice. Particularly, few studies have considered the effect of selfies on its largest participants, women.

While men are also frequent participants in the selfie practice, Google searches of the word 'selfie' and content on social media news feeds suggests selfies are more prevalent among women. Women from different age groups, socioeconomic statuses, racial and ethnic groups, and career paths all participate in the selfie practice. However, despite selfies' popularity among women, few studies have assessed the impact of the selfie practice on women's lives. Most of the current studies have shown that women's exposure to ideal images in the mass media can negatively impact women's self esteem, body esteem, and tendency to compare themselves to other women (Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2006 ; Wilcox & Laird, 2000; Clay et al., 2005; Durkin & Paxton, 2002; King, 1997; Grogan, 1996; Cattarin et al., 2000; Tiggemann & Slater, 2005).

For example, in a study of young girls and the relationship between media influences and body satisfaction and self esteem, results revealed that upon school entry, girls were influenced by their peers and media's thin ideals, which negatively impacted their body image development (Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2006). Likewise, a study by Wilcox and Laird examined the impact of thin images in mass media on women's self esteem (Wilcox & Laird, 2000). Wilcox and Laird

found women who based their emotions on personal cues had lower self esteem when viewing images of slender models compared to those who were "unresponsive to personal cues" (Wilcox & Laird, 2000, p.278). Furthermore, Clay et al. found that an internalization of sociocultural attitudes towards appearance and social comparison with media models led to a decrease in body satisfaction and self-esteem among adolescent girls, particularly older girls (Clay et al., 2005).

Numerous studies have also examined the effect of mass media images on women's body esteem. For example, Wilcox and Laird also examined the association between body esteem subscale scores, thin and normal images, and cue response, and found women "who were more responsive to personal cues were less satisfied with their weight when viewing thin pictures compared to heavier pictures" (Wilcox & Laird, 2006, 283). Another study by King and King found that women whose bodies were not close to the thin ideals were more negative towards their body when they viewed ideal images compared to viewing neutral images (King, 1997, p.412). Grogan et al. also observed negative impacts among women who viewed same-gender photographic models (Grogan, 1996). Those who viewed the models had a significant decrease in body esteem compared to the control group that viewed landscapes, which was believed to be due to upward comparisons made by women viewing the photographic models (Grogan, 1996, p.574).

In addition to examining the relationship between ideal, mass media images and women's body esteem, studies have assessed the relationship with women's tendency to compare themselves to other women (Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2004; Clay et al., 2005; Durkin & Paxton, 2002; Tiggemann &Slater, 2004; Bessenoff, 2006; Cattarin et al., 2000; Tiggemann & McGill, 2004; Grabe, Hyde, & Ward, 2008; Lin and Kulik, 2002; Wilcox & Laird, 2000). Researchers, Hargreaves and Tiggemann, examined the relationship between idealized beauty in the media

and adolescent girls' tendency for social comparison (Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2004). The study revealed adolescent girls —particularly those who were very involved in appearance investment —-experienced increased appearance comparison when exposed to thin-ideal and muscular ideal commercials. Additionally, a study by Durkin and Paxton found that among adolescent girls, the tendency to engage in physical comparisons when exposed to idealized female advertising images predicted a reduction in body satisfaction and increase in depression (Durkin & Paxton, 2002).

Overall, previous research has shown that idealized images have negatively impacted women's self esteem, body esteem, and tendency to compare their physical appearance to others (Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2006 ; Wilcox & Laird, 2000; Clay et al., 2005; Durkin & Paxton, 2002; King, 1997; Grogan, 1996; Cattarin et al., 2000; Tiggemann & Slater, 2005). However, while the previous studies have focused on images of celebrities and models in the mass media, few have observed the effects of the selfie practice and its inclusion of every day women.

Due to the negative impact of mass media images on women's self esteem, body esteem, and tendency to compare themselves to other women, it may be easy to assume that research on how selfies affect women will show similar results. However, selfies differ from mass media images in number of ways. For example, mass media images of celebrities and models often promote extremely thin bodies, with blemish-free, and light and toned skin women (Yamamiya et al., 2005; Bessenoff, 2006; Harper and Tiggemann, 2008; Prichard & Tiggemann, 2012; Tiggemann & Slater, 2004; Bell, 2011; Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2004). On the other hand, selfies are open to all women, not just celebrities and models, and allows for women to see other women of varying skin shades, sizes, and overall look. The differences in the rigid standards of mass media images compared to the diversity of selfies suggest whether selfies negatively or positively im-

pact women's body image may not be as clear as previous research on mass media images and women.

Rather than negatively impacting women's self esteem, body esteem, and tendency to compare themselves to others, selfies could positively impact women in each aspect and improve their overall perception of self. For example, unlike mass media images of celebrities and models, selfies may be perceived to be more realistic because it is a practice that is open to most women. Unlike portraits done in the past and mass media images, selfies provides the object of the photograph the ability to choose how their bodies are represented and the message portrayed to its viewers (Wortham, 2013). As a result, the selfie practice may work toward showing women that the "everyday" woman is different from the ideal the mass media portrays and sells. Thus, selfies may work towards enhancing women's self esteem, body esteem, and tendency to compare themselves to other women by debunking the myth that the ideal women is what is advertised in the mass media.

In addition to positively impacting women's self esteem, body esteem, and tendency to compare themselves to others, selfies may help improve women's sense of self by enabling women's agency. In the past, artists and photographers determined how the woman's body was portrayed and the message it sent. Thus, if those involved in the production of mass media decided to advertise a thin, yet curvy and sexualized body, that was the message that would be popularized in society. On the other hand, in selfies, the creators can be non-celebrity women of varying complexions and sizes that have the agency to develop how they advertise their body. Thus, it is possible that selfies impact women differently than mass media images because it advertises realistic images and provides women with the agency to control what others see.

While it is probable that selfies have a positive effect on women due to providing agency and realistic portrayals, it is also possible that selfies negatively impact women's body image. Although women have the agency to create their own selfies, selfies of non-celebrity and non-model women may negatively impact women's body image. The way non-famous women create their selfies may be influenced by societal standards and expectations of the female body, which may perpetuate those standards. Furthermore, women's agency in selfies may be reduced by the influence of mass media images. For example, non-celebrity and non-model women may choose to create selfies that are sexual and adhere to certain body standards because the mass media promotes the sexualization of women through images of celebrities, such as Kim Kardashian and Nicki Minaj. Celebrities such as Kim Kardashian perpetuate the idea that being thin and having a small waist, big breasts and butt, and enhanced eyes and lips are what is attractive, and accepted in today's society. Thus, women who are influenced by mass media images and desire to look like celebrity women, such as Kim Kardashian, may aim to achieve that body ideal in their selfies and promote that image to their viewers through makeup, cosmetic surgery and photo-editing. In this way, selfies could negatively impact women viewing selfies of the "everyday" woman that is adhering to societal standards and expectations of the female body.

Additionally, selfies may negatively impact women because it deceptively portrays a realistic picture of women. For example, selfies posted by non-model and non-celebrity women are often described as being effortless and based on natural beauty. However, despite the idea of selfies capturing a realistic picture of women, selfies can include significant amounts of makeup and editing in order to create the most beautiful and perfect picture before being shared on social networking sites. As a result, women's self esteem, body esteem, and tendency to compare them-

selves to others may be negatively impacted because of falsely portraying the idea that women look flawless and beautiful in their carefully, constructed selfies.

Furthermore, selfies may negatively impact women's perception of self through promoting social comparison and the objectification of women's bodies. For example, there are many types of selfies portrayed in society and one of the most common selfies among celebrity and non-celebrity women can be described as the "sexualized selfie". Sexualized selfies often portray characteristics of the face in a sexual way, such as the eyes and lips, and may highlight other areas of the female body, such as the breasts. The sexualized selfie perpetuates the concept emphasized in objectification theory and prevalent in mainstream culture, which is that the women's body is as an accessory or product that is valued predominately for other's consumption. Additionally, since selfies pervade many aspects of women's lives, women's constant exposure may provoke upward and downward social comparisons, which has been shown to negatively impact women's body satisfaction (Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2004; Clay et al., 2005; Tiggemann &Slater, 2004; Bessenoff, 2006; Tiggemann & McGill, 2004; Lin and Kulik, 2002; Wilcox & Laird, 2000).

Thus, while selfies may appear to be a superficial aspect of Western culture, further analysis shows that this phenomenon warrants a study due to the lack of literature on the selfie practice, the diversity of the selfie practice, and the potential for positive and/or negative effects of selfies on women's body image. As a result, the present study aims to examine:

<u>Objective 1:</u>

1. Is there is a relationship between aspects of the selfie practice, such as frequency of posting selfies or viewing selfies of other women, and a women's self esteem, body esteem, and physical appearance comparison score, and perception of self?

Objective 2:

2. What are the important qualities or characteristics of a selfie?

Objective 3:

3. Is there a connection between the selfie practice and societal perceptions and standards of the female body and its' identity?

In order to address the objectives, surveys and follow-up interviews were conducted based on a review of the current literature and knowledge of selfie cultural practices. The survey collected demographic information of the participants and their participation in social media and the selfie practice. Specifically, the survey collected information about the participant's frequency of posting selfies and viewing selfies on social media. Additionally the survey, included scales that assessed the participant's self esteem, body esteem, physical appearance comparison score, and perception of self. The survey results were analyzed using statistical software to assess any associations between participation in the selfie practice and the various scales assessing women's body satisfaction.

The interview included questions that addressed the meaning of selfies in today's society, the body's objectification in selfies and society, and how selfies and feedback on selfies affect women's view of themselves and others. It was hypothesized that the data analysis would show those who report posting selfies and seeing selfies more frequently than others would have a lower self-esteem and body esteem score, a higher physical appearance comparison score, and an overall more negative perception of self. Additionally, it was hypothesized that what was included in women's selfies would correlate with society's standards and men's expectations of the female body.

Chapter 2:

Western Culture and the Woman's Body

Introduction

Globally, many mediums are used to convey meanings and express the values of a society. The amount of money, size and location of homes, type of car, education level, and speech have been used to indicate a person's status, morality, and personality. Although these mediums are used in evaluating individuals, one of the most popular entities used in individual evaluation is the human body (Hillman & Mazzio, 1997, p.xii; Shilling, 1993, p. 154; Shahshahani, 2004, p.1). Throughout human society the human body has embodied people's social, cultural, and political values (Hillman & Mazzio, 1997, p.xii; Shilling, 1993, p.73; Douglas, 1996, p.xxxvi). What the body embodies has been influenced by its social location and differences in its locations has contributed to differences in the social, cultural, and political values it represents (Strathern 1996; p.197; Shilling, 1993, p.129). Across societies, the female body, in particular, has embodied her social position within society and portrayed the gender roles assigned by her social location (Shilling, 1993, p.107,172; Wiesner-Hanks, 2008,p.57; Davis, 1995, p.54). Historically, the female body's social location has contributed to the socially constructed, inferior, and unstable female body that needs to be controlled (Shilling, 1993, p.77-78; Davis, 1995, p.54; Wiesener-Hanks, 2008, p.19). Additionally, the objectification of and increased focus on the female body, along with social and cultural constraints, has designed an ideal body that women are pressured to achieve through numerous practices. A particular social and cultural constraint that will be further analyzed is new and old media and its relation to the body. With the rise and current prevalence of the body in media, studies show women experiencing adverse effects from

image exposure through magazines, advertisements, and television (Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2006 ; Wilcox & Laird, 2000; Clay et al., 2005; Durkin & Paxton, 2002; King, 1997; Grogan, 1996; Cattarin et al., 2000; Tiggemann & Slater, 2005). However, as the media industry evolves, women have switched from being the observer of images to being both the creator and observer of images through a less formal image, the selfie. Due to the unusual popularity and prominence of the selfie in Western culture, the present study aims to examine the selfie practice and its connection with women's body through anthropological theory. At its core, the selfie is a cultural practice that displays the objectified, gendered, and pressured female body. Additionally, on the surface, the selfie is a simple picture a person takes to advertise a specific purpose, with the face as the center of the photograph. However, further analysis shows the selfie uses the body as a symbol to represent some aspect of the individuals' social and cultural values.

Definitions	
Selfies	Photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a smartphone or webcam and shared via social media.
Objectification Theory	Posits that girls and women are typically acculturated to internalize an observer's perspective as a primary view of their physical selves.
Social Comparison Theory	Process of self evaluation and evaluating opinions and abilities by comparing them to others.
Upward Comparison	Action performed when people compare themselves to others who are better off on a particular dimension
Downward Comparison	Action performed when people compare themselves to others who are worse off on a

Definitions
particular dimension

Embodiment

The idea of the body as a symbol representing a society's values can be traced to anthropologist, Mary Douglas, and her work, *Natural Symbols.* In *Natural Symbols*, Douglas presents the idea of the culturally constructed body that is a symbolic representation of the social system. Douglas specifically argues the human body is an "organ of communication" or text upon which a society's social and cultural meanings are constructed upon and can be divided into the social and physical body (Douglas, 1996, p.xxxvi). The physical body "is a microcosm of society, facing the centre of power, contracting and expanding its claims in accordance with the increase and relaxation of social" and cultural pressures (Douglas, 1996, p.77). Douglas uses an example of stockbrokers, artists, and academics to show how social and cultural pressures constrain people's physical bodies and influences how they treat them. In the example, stockbrokers are less likely to display "carefully modulated shagginess" and more likely to adhere to the "norms of the profession," while artists and academics, who typically criticize society, are more likely to "display carefully modulated shagginess according to the responsibilities they carry" and rejection of society (Douglas, 1996, p.77; Shilling, 1993, p.129). Ultimately, Douglas' example shows the way a person manipulates and presents their physical body depends on a society's social and cultural pressures and their acceptance or rejection of their society's social and cultural values. This limitation of the physical body by society results in the perpetuation of social and cultural values and the body's extreme restriction as a medium of expression (Douglas, 1996, p.69).

Douglas was not the only theorist to propose the body as a symbol. Pierre Bourdieu also believed the body was "a bearer of symbolic value and a material phenomenon" (Shilling, 1993, p.74; Bourdieu, 1973; Bourdieu, 1986). Additionally, he believed the body was influenced and limited by the social and cultural world and its societal position was determined by its habitus and tastes (Shilling, 1993, p.129; Bourdieu, 1973). The habitus was "the way society became deposited in persons" and was formed by the body's social location (Shilling, 1993, p.129; Bourdieu, 1984). As the habitus created "lasting dispositions, trained capacities and structured propensities of how to think, feel, and act in determinant ways," it was believed to affect people's treatment of their bodies (Wacquant, 2005, p.316). The habitus is often manifested in the development of tastes, which is how people develop certain preferences and lifestyles and a certain orientation to the body (Shilling, 1993, p.129). For example, Bourdieu mentions how seemingly insignificant movements and techniques of the body, such as ways of walking, eating and talking, were actually fundamental to the construction and evaluation of social and cultural systems (Shilling, 1993, p.130). Ultimately, Bourdieu believed the combination of the social location, habitus, and tastes helped develop the body and influence its societal position.

Overall, scholars believe the body to be a symbol that contains information about a society and a tool others can use to express and interpret a society's core social and cultural values. However, in addition to being a symbol of values, the human body is an active agent in the social, political, and cultural worlds (Reischer and Koo, 2004). The body is considered an agent because people experience the world through the body, use the body to display values, and in the process, mediate the relationship between it and the social and cultural world (Reischer and Koo, 2004). This idea of the body as an active participant that allows individuals to experience the world is known as embodiment. The embodiment concept is similar to Douglas and Bourdieu's

view of social location and its influence on the body in that embodiment is the process by which the body inculcates a set of meanings, values, tendencies, and orientations that represent a particular sociocultural location (Strathern, 1996, p.2) Additionally, further analysis of embodiment shows that what the body embodies varies across cultures as the body's social and cultural locations varies (Reischer and Koo, 2004; Strathern, 1996, p.197-198). This embodiment difference is evident in comparing and contrasting the body's meanings in Western and non-Western cultures.

Western and Non-Western Body

Unlike Western cultures, non-Western cultures such as Fiji believe the body is a "reflection of the community" (Reischer and Koo, 2004, p.306). Instead of the body being a personal representation, the Fiji body represents the nurturing or negligence of its social location (Reischer and Koo, 2004). Thus, in Fiji, the focus is more on the development of others' bodies and their success is determined from the bodies of others, rather than the personal body (Reischer and Koo, 2004). This is in contrast to Western cultures where they focus on the personal body as the ultimate expression of self and the object from which social and cultural position is achieved and inscribed (Reischer and Koo, 2004). This comparison shows how in Fiji, the sociocultural location emphasizes the group over the individual, which is reflected in how they treat their bodies and others. In contrast, the sociocultural environment in Western culture emphasizes the self and the body embodying particular meanings, values, tendencies, and orientations that reflect an individual concern (Reischer and Koo, 2004). However, while Western and non-western cultures differ in their social and cultural construction of the body's meanings, similarities rise in the sociocultural construction and distinction between the male and female body.

The Gendered Body

Cross culturally there has been a distinction in the treatment of the female and male body (Kabeer, 2005; "Promoting Women's Agency", 2012). Historically, the sociocultural location of the female's self and body in a patriarchal society has resulted in its inferiority to the male. As a result, the female body has been socioculturally constructed to be dangerous, appetitive, ruled precariously by emotions, mysterious, and the "other," compared to the masculine body's embodiment of social power, rationality, and self control (Shilling, 1993, p.77-78; Davis, 1995, p.54). Historically, ideas about the female body's inferiority have stemmed from religious ideologies. In early modern Europe, Christianity promoted the idea that women were inferior and subordinate to man (Wiesener-Hanks, 2008, p.19). There was also the idea that women needed to be controlled because they were prone to errors, such as Eve's contribution in the fall of man (Wiesener-Hanks, 2008, p.19). Additionally, women were required by law to respect the authority of their husbands and fathers. Furthermore, women who had power and were rulers were still subject to men and less respected because of their biological sex (Wiesener-Hanks, 2008, p.281). Ultimately, in early modern Europe, "female was a condition that could never be overcome" (Wiesener-Hanks, 2008, p.279).

Although the freedom and power of women has improved significantly since that time, differences in the treatment of men and women remain (Kabeer, 2005; "Promoting Women's Agency", 2012). Additionally, while men are often accused for women's subordination, some believe that women's embodiment of dominant gender ideologies created by social and cultural systems enforce the original gender roles, which leads to the further oppression of women as the weaker sex (Shilling, 1993, p.112). Thus, it is believed that both women and men play a role in women's subordination through the embodiment of gender roles. An explanation for why both

men and women contribute to a difference between the sexes can be explored using objectification theory.

Objectification Theory

Objectification theory focuses on women's experience of being treated as a "body or collection of body parts that are valued predominantly for its use or consumption by others" (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p.174; Lindner et al., 2012). The "theory posits that girls and women are typically acculturated to internalize an observer's perspective as a primary view of their physical selves" (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p.184). Although there is no single reason for women's objectification, some scholars argue "the cultural practice of objectification" is used to create, maintain, and express patriarchy, with men as the agents that objectify and sexualize women's bodies (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p.177). The objectifying gazes occur in three experiences: in interpersonal and social events, visual media depicting interpersonal and social events, and personal encounters with the visual media (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p.176). During this process, it is posited that women adopt a self-objectification approach and as women adopt this observer's perspective, they begin to embody men's perceptions of their body, as well as their own perceptions that are influenced by others (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p.184; Lindner et al., 2012; Prichard & Tiggemann, 2012; Moradi, 2010). Thus, objectification theory shows men and women have a direct role in the objectification of women's bodies and influencing what women embody by promoting self-objectification (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Lindner et al., 2012; Prichard & Tiggemann, 2012; Moradi, 2010). Additionally, further analysis shows women, men, and the larger Western sociocultural systems in which they live, have worked together to not only objectify and control a women's social location relative to men, but

also objectify and control women's body manipulation and presentation through the development of body ideals.

The Ideal Female Body

In the 1920's a major change occurred in the Western culture's film and fashion industry that had a drastic effect on female body ideals, changes that remain with us today. During that time, women's bodies were said to gain more freedom as certain body parts, such as their arms and legs, were displayed for the first time (Brumberg, 1997, p.98). However, this unveiling and supposed freedom increased women's objectification and self-objectification and led to lasting beauty and dietary restrictions, as well as the need for more self and body control (Brumberg, 1997, p.98). In Western culture, body control is considered necessary because a well managed body symbolizes the individual self and the body's sociocultural location (Shilling, 1993, p.132-133; Davis, 1995, p.55). When women adhere to their sociocultural location's standards they are said to have good character, possess self-control, and show perseverance and determination, while those who do not "lack self control, are slovenly, weak, and inadequate" (Miller, 2006, p.11). For these reasons, women and men desire aesthetically appeasing bodies and strive to em-body it because of the benefits it provides and its connection with a person's character (Gosse-link et al., 2008).

Beauty's association with character can be found in many aspects, such as during the Victorian era when beauty aesthetics was associated with personal qualities, such as morality, spirituality, and health (Brumberg, 1997, p. 70). Additionally, it can be found in Christianity's belief that beautiful things were more God-like and represented God's glory (Etcoff, 1999, p.19). While beauty may not have all of the same associations today, the beauty culture that has developed over the past few centuries includes the universal and culturally constructed standards, as

well as women's "personal and interpersonal awareness of, interaction with, and responses to" those standards (Gosselink et al., 2008, p. 308). Women are encouraged to participate in this beauty culture because it provides economic and social advantages, such as gaining a new job or success in the marriage market (Reischer & Koo, 2004, p.310). On the other hand, those who fail to participate in the beauty culture experience social disadvantages and discrimination (Etcoff, 1999, p.25; Shilling, 1993, p.134). Thus, in order for women to avoid the disadvantages and reap the benefits of beauty, there are certain constructed beauty ideals within Western society's beauty culture that women must meet.

Thin Ideal

One of the present beauty ideals in Western, beauty culture is the thin ideal. The rise of the thin ideal can be traced to the early twentieth century when Parisian designer, Paul Poiret, substituted the plum, hourglass figure with a tiny waist and exaggerated hips (Brumberg, 1997, p.99). However, although Poiret introduced the thin ideal, it was the global cultural machine: advertising, communications media, and cosmetic industry, that popularized a slender female body (Reischer and Koo, 2004; Davis, 1995, p.26). As the global cultural machine popularized the slender body, the Western sociocultural system established the slender body's embodiment of morality, willpower, energy, elegance, social attractiveness, youth, and "the ability to shape its life" (Reischer and Koo, 2004, p.300; Bordo, 1993, p. 95; Davis, 1995, p. 52). In contrast, the overweight figure embodied warmth, friendliness, fertility, nurturance, personal disorder and was subject to prejudice (Grogan, 2008, p.10-12). Additionally, overweight women were viewed as "less active, less intelligent, hardworking, athletic, and popular" compared to their slender counterparts (Grogan, 2008, p.10). In connecting a person's body size with individual responsibility and popularizing the thin ideal with the help of the global cultural machine, the Western soci-

ocultural environment has pressured women to restrict their diets and monitor their activities to conform to slender body ideals within their social location (Grogan, 2008, p.9-12).

Cross Culture Ideals

Although Western cultural standards promote a slender ideal, cross-cultural analysis shows body size ideals vary. According to Counihan, "in the majority of cultures for which data exist, plumpness, rather than slenderness, is preferred" (Miller, 2006, p.173). Additionally, just as slenderness is associated with positive characteristics in Western culture, plumpness is viewed favorably in other cultures. For example, in Jamaica, the plump body is described as embodying fertility and sexiness (Miller. 2006, p.174). Furthermore, although with slightly different meanings, plumpness is also viewed positively in certain Islamic cultures. Specifically, within the Islamic culture of the Azawagh of Niger, females as "young as five or six years old are forcibly fattened…to accelerate the sexual maturity process" (Popenoe, 2004, p.44-45; Reischer & Koo, 2004, p.309). This process speeds up the rate at which Islamic women meet the marriageable age and also achieve the embodiment of softness, pliability, stillness, and seatedness," which is in stark contrast to the Islamic male's "hardness, uprightness, and mobility" (Popenoe, 2004, p. 191; Reischer & Koo, 2004, p.309). Thus, unlike Western sociocultural connections of fatness and individual failure, and slimness and self-control, the positive view of the plump woman in Azawgh and Jamaican women shows how body ideals and the way they are viewed across cultures varies.

Preferences for plumpness are also found within American culture, particularly among African-American females. Within the African-American community, African-American females are less likely to be influenced by the popularized thin ideal and more likely to have a "more fluid, flexible image of beauty" (Nichter, 2000, p178; Reischer and Koo, 2004, p. 304;

Milkie, 1999, p.203). According to a study by Milkie, African-American women are less likely to be influenced, emulate, and compare themselves negatively to white beauty ideals because "they consider the images less relevant to their culture" (Milkie, 1999, p.203). Additionally, unlike other American women, African-American women favor a plump figure and are more likely to focus on "attitude and style over body and size" (Nichter, 2000, p.17; Reischer and Koo, 2004, p.304). Thus, while Western sociocultural standards may promote a slender ideal and emphasize women's preoccupation with the body, analysis of African-American women within Western culture shows some subcultures focus on aspects other than body size, and embody other ideals relevant to their subculture, such as plumpness. Ultimately, analysis of Jamaican, Azawgh, and African-American cultures show how body size ideals and the meanings attached to them vary. However, studies on certain aspects of the body, such as the face, suggest there are certain facial qualities viewed positively and deemed beautiful across all cultures.

Facial Beauty Ideals

Evolutionary research has shown that there is a "high degree of agreement" on facial beauty within and between cultures, which suggests that there are certain facial characteristics that are considered attractive across all cultures (Little et al., 2011, p.1639). Although some studies have shown cultural and racial differences in facial standards of beauty, evolutionary approaches have shown "beauty is a universal part of human experience that evokes pleasure, rivets attention, and impels actions to help ensure the survival of our genes (Etcoff, 1999, p.24; Little et al., 2011).

In determining a woman's facial beauty, there are certain facial characteristics considered universal in assessing facial attractiveness, which include facial symmetry, averageness, and secondary sexual characteristics (Little et al., 2011). According to Little et al., facial symmetry, av-

erage faces, and enhanced female, sexual secondary characteristics are all rated more attractive. Average faces are considered more attractive because they are similar to the population average, which is an indicator of a more diverse set of genes. In addition, average faces and multiple blended faces are considered more facially symmetrical and attractive than constituent faces (Little et al., 2011).   Lastly, faces with extreme secondary sexual characteristics, particularly more feminine faces for women, are considered more attractive because they imply a women has heritable benefits by possessing "good genes" (Little et al., 2011).

One of the reasons for women's preoccupation with facial characteristics and their attractiveness is that the face is one of the essential body parts used in determining attractiveness, and as mentioned previously, level of attractiveness is associated with positive and negative qualities and advantages and disadvantages (Fink and Neave, 2005). Similar to body shape and size and personal characteristics, a women's face is said to embody her social and physical health. Historically, a face burdened with acne and other blemishes embodied poor morality and physical health (Brumberg, 1997, p.63). While the face is no longer connected with morality, facial blemishes are still viewed negatively as acne is associated with dirtiness and low social class (Brumberg, 1997, p.74). As a result, facial skin care is now an important body project because of the connection between facial attractiveness and social, cultural, and economic success, which is evident in the increased availability of acne medications and treatments. However, acne medications and treatments are one of many products used to achieve the facial beauty standards by altering women's appearance. A more invasive and increasingly common procedure used to alter women's facial attractiveness and achieve beauty standards is cosmetic surgery.

Body Modification: Cosmetic Surgery

Cosmetic surgery allows women to alter their facial characteristics, and achieve the facial symmetry, averageness, secondary sexual characteristics, and clear skin associated with being attractive. While women's investment in cosmetic surgery has increased significantly in the past few decades, it was initially described as a disreputable or blasphemous practice because it "disturbed the natural order of things" by removing signs of disease or deformity, which were considered to be God's "marks of punishment" (Davis, 1995, p.15). It was not until medical science introduced new ideas of the physical body and replaced traditional beliefs that perceptions of plastic surgery improved (Davis, 1995, p.16). With plastic surgery becoming a more respectable practice and women's increasing dissatisfaction with their body, women began to view their body as a "cultural plastic" unrestricted by history, social location, or individual biography (Davis, 1995, p.17). As a result, the body became "something that could be accomplished through consumption" of cosmetic surgery (Davis, 1995, p.17).

Western cultures' body control and manipulation also pervades other cultures, such as Japan. The influence of Western female body ideals in places such as Japan has promoted eyelid surgery, which is believed to help Japanese women achieve aesthetic progress, and a more open eye appearance by obtaining "Western eyes" and reducing the look of sleepiness, dullness, and passivity (Miller, 2006, p.135; Reischer and Koo, 2004). The prevalence of body modification within Japanese society highlights a common view in the younger generation of Western cultures, which is that the body is a malleable surface open to modification (Miller, 2006, p.201). Less extreme practices of body modification and control present today are makeup appliance and facial waxing, which allow women to use man-made products to transform their facial appearance and achieve certain facial beauty standards. Overall, an analysis of the body modification industry and the Western sociocultural systems' effect on women's body shows the body has un-

dergone increasing pressure to achieve culturally constructed body ideals by any means. Ultimately, the female body's susceptibility to social and cultural body ideals lies in its ability to be commodified (Bourdieu, 1986; Shilling, 1993, p. 32, 131).

Commodification

Bourdieu's philosophy of the commodification of the body is the idea that the human body can be converted into a commodity in order to possess physical capital and collect resources or can be used as production site for capitalist labor and consumption by others (Shilling,1993, 128; Sharp, 2000, p.293). In relation to women, women's body commodification and embodiment of physical capital can be interpreted as their physical attractiveness and beauty. Bourdieu believes women will be inclined to treat their body as a project and invest in their physical capital because it can be converted to economic, social, and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Women will participate in the "production of physical capital" in order to produce value within their bodies that can ultimately be converted to the different forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Shilling, 1993, p.127). Particularly, as women's physical bodies are converted through processes like cosmetic surgery, makeup appliance, body hair removal, dieting, and exercise, it will provide economic, social, and cultural benefits, such as "money, goods, services, education, and social networking" (Shilling, 1993, p. 128). Women will continue to invest in their physical capital and manipulate their bodies because of sociocultural ideals that the body is "never fully finished and constantly being affected by social, cultural, and economic processes" (Bourdieu, 1985; Shilling, 1993, p.133). Thus, as sociocultural systems connect certain body ideals to social and cultural values, women are pressured to adhere to those body standards and continue to transform their bodies. This pressure ultimately commodifies the body because it encourages women to invest in their physical capital in order to adhere to their society's sociocultural stand-

ards and reap the economic, social, and cultural benefits. However, through converting the women's physical capital into other forms, women's bodies are at risk for objectification, which may result in the objectification of the body in its entirety or fragmented parts, and the ultimate "reduction to vaginas, wombs, or breasts" (Sharp, 2000, p.293). Another source of pressure for women to participate in body modification processes that also commodify the body is visual and social media.

The Body in New and Old Media

The rise of the media industry created a new avenue for sociocultural beauty ideals to be constantly transmitted to the public and further pressure and commodify women's bodies. Through women's representations in advertisements, magazines, and television, women have been encouraged to consume and achieve the photo-shopped, unrealistic, popularized images by suggesting the attainment of certain beauty standards will lead to "greater value in a beauty obsessed society" (Gosselink et al., 2008, p.308). For example, Fouts & Burggraf found television media often promoted the unrealistic thin ideal, as evidenced by 76% of female characters on television programs being underweight (Fouts & Burggraf, 2000). Furthermore, Thompson et al. showed how the media perpetuated false body ideals due to its saturation with unrealistically, beautiful images that have been heavily edited and contained women who had undergone cosmetic surgery (Thompson et al., 1999). While the research highlights magazines, television, and movies as media avenues to promote unrealistic body ideals, one of the mass media instruments that has increased in Western culture and is an avenue for transmitting these images is social networking sites (Body & Ellison, 2008; Boyd, 2008).

Social Networking As A Medium

Social networking sites are defined as web-based services that allow individuals to display and construct an identity through their profile and communicate through wall posts, private messages, comments, videos, and other forms of information (Boyd & Ellison, 2008, p. 211). According to a survey of Midwest, United States college students, social networking site use has increased dramatically in the last decade, with 91% of the survey's participants reporting use of the social networking site, Facebook. Likewise, another study revealed college students used social networking sites, such as Facebook, from 10 to 30 minutes daily (Boyd, 2008). One feature social networking users provided for their frequent use of these web-based services is that they provided individuals with the agency to choose their self-presentation and engage in impression management (Boyd & Ellison, 2008, p. 219). Self-presentation and impression management is crucial for those experiencing emerging adulthood, which is a period characterized by the person's development of a sense of self (Pempek, 2009). This period is common among college students and often requires that the emerging adults receive external feedback from their peers for their identity's development. Thus, unlike other media outlets, social networking sites provide the social input needed for emerging adults' self development (Pempek, 2009; Buhrmester and Prager, 1995)

Considering the impact of social networking sites on adolescents and young adults' identity development, researchers have begun to assess the impact of social networking sites on women's sense of self and body image. Social networking sites are reported to positively influence women's body image by evoking objective self-awareness and promoting profile editing, which includes personal images. The profile creation and editing allows women to create a representation of who they are through their public profile. In this creation, "the body serves as a critical site" and allows individuals to "protect information about themselves through movement,

clothes, speech, and facial expressions" (Boyd, 2008,p. 128). While women may not always create an accurate representation of self, viewing their social networking profile enhances their self-esteem by allowing them to "edit information about the self, or selectively self present" personal information (Gonzales and Hancock, 2010, p.3). The agency to selectively self-present on social networking sites has been very influential in the rise of the selfie phenomenon as a new, cultural practice and tool in young adults' identity development.

Importance of the Face

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and SnapChat are some social networking sites used daily, not only for identity development, but for selfie posting. Unlike other images currently used in social media, however, the face, rather than the full body, is the center of the selfie. Furthermore, the focus of selfies is different from portraits of the past. In the nineteenth century, portraits were less focused on women's physical beauty and more concerned with displaying women's embodiment of good morals and character (Brumberg, 1997, p.63). Portraits of the past showed more of women's full body, fully clothed, and well groomed, with little decoration of the face and a proper posture. However, the nineteenth century introduction of mirrors in middle class homes, increased women's concern with her physical beauty and promoted scrutiny of the face and facial blemishes (Brumberg, 1997, p.67). By the twentieth century, women's facial features and its cleanliness were important to a woman's appearance and character and it became common for women's faces to be emphasized in photographs and filled with "powder, lipstick and eyebrow pencil" (Brumberg, 1997, p.71). Throughout the rest of the twentieth century, the focus on the face increased and with the rise of social media and profile pictures, and the selfie practice in the twenty-first century, pressure had been placed on women to maintain clear, blemish-free faces (Featherstone, 2010). As women failed to achieve these unrealistic beauty standards, this pro-

moted self-objectification, which according to Lindner, Dunn, and Jentsch, can lead to social comparison and relationship conflicts (Gosselink et al., 2008; Lindner et al., 2012)

Social Comparison Theory

Social comparison is prevalent in the beauty and visual media culture, as studies have shown women are trained throughout life to assess and compare their bodies with images of women based on determined beauty standards (Gosselink et al., 2008). According to social comparison theory, women will compare their bodies to women who they believe are similar in order to assess their "own levels of abilities and success" (Lindner et al., 2012, p.223). Women will make upward social comparisons when they compare their bodies to those they consider better in a certain category and will make downward comparisons when they compare their bodies with bodies they consider worse in a certain category (Lin and Kulik, 2002). Compared to upward comparisons, downward comparisons in visual media, particularly within advertisement, are less available due to the media's saturation with idealistic images (Lin and Kulik, 2002). In addition, upward comparisons should promote certain actions that will improve the body when there are differences and "downward comparisons should have a compensatory, elevating effect on women's body satisfaction (Lin and Kulik, 2002, p.120). However, studies show both upward and downward comparisons have negative effects on body image and upward comparisons lower women's body satisfaction (Lin and Kulik, 2002; Linder et al., 2012).

According to Lindner, Dunn, and Jentsch, what prompts women to make upward and downward social comparisons is the objectification and self-objectification of their bodies (Linder et al., 2012). This interrelationship between social comparison, objectification, and self-objectification theories shows how social systems that objectify women's bodies may motivate those women to participate in self-objectification, by which women may be inclined "to define

the self in terms of how the body appears to others" (Linder et al., 2012, p.223). Furthermore, the self-objectification aspect of objectification theory encourages women to participate in upward and downward social comparisons and "wonder how their body or appearance compares to other women" (Linder et al., 2012, p.223). Ultimately, social comparison theory suggests that when women encounter visual media, such as selfies, they will be inclined to objectify themselves, which will lead them to compare themselves in and upward and downward fashion (Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2004; Clay et al., 2005; Tiggemann &Slater, 2004; Bessenoff, 2006; Tiggemann & McGill, 2004; Lin and Kulik, 2002; Wilcox & Laird, 2000). As a result, women's exposure to selfies of other women through social media networking sites may contribute to self-objectification and social comparison, which can negatively affect body image (Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2004; Clay et al., 2005; Tiggemann &Slater, 2004; Bessenoff, 2006; Tiggemann & McGill, 2004; Lin and Kulik, 2002; Wilcox & Laird, 2000).

Selfie Practice

Due to the potential impact selfie exposure may have on women's body image, the present study aims to study an area of visual media that is not frequently studied, which is the selfie practice. According to Oxford Dictionaries, the selfie is a "photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a smartphone or webcam and shared via social media" (2013). However, further analysis shows the selfie is a sociocultural practice that uses the body as a gendered symbol, commodity and tool that embodies Western sociocultural beauty standards. The selfie, similar to selective editing of social networking profiles, is an image that captures the selectively edited self and is publicly displayed to portray the image women want society to see. While the selfie implies there is an aspect of the individual self, the uniformity of most selfies among all women suggests a successful selfie requires certain facial characteristics deemed at-

tractive by the Western sociocultural system. Additionally, the uniformity in selfies suggests in order to participate in the selfie practice, women must commit to certain body ideals. Although less extreme than cosmetic surgery, women may commit to selfie body ideals by modifying the body through makeup application, facial waxing, and jewelry. Photo-editing is another way women may modify the body in order to achieve a certain selfie image, however, unlike the previous forms, photo-editing focuses more on editing the image rather than the body. In today's media culture, many images are photo-shopped through airbrushing, lighting, and other methods, in addition to makeup appliance (Bell, 2011, p. 479; Clay et al., 2005, p.452; Want 2009). And with the introduction of Instagram and photo-editing options, "everyday" women are now allowed to edit their personal images and achieve those unrealistic images. However, while photo editing allows women to achieve certain beauty standards, it also enforces unrealistic beauty ideals that negatively affect women's body image (Bell, 2011). Thus, with the rise of social media, inclusion of idealized body images in selfies, and commodification of the body, women's body image and well-being are of more concern.

Present Study

Few studies have focused on selfie images in social media and how it might affect women's body image and overall well-being, however, previous studies on adolescent and college aged women exposed to thin media images report negative impacts on women's body image. Studies have shown that exposure to these idealized, images increases women's body dissatisfaction, levels of depression, lowers self esteem, and promotes a negative mood, all of which decreases well-being (Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2006; Wilcox & Laird, 2000; Clay at al., 2005; Durkin & Paxton, 2002; Tiggemann & McGill, 2004; Yamamiya et al., 2005; Posavac et al., 1998; Pinhas et al., 1999; Tiggemann & Slater, 2004; Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2004; Grabe, Hyde, &

Ward, 2008; Lin and Kulik, 2002). Additionally, it has been shown that "approximately 50% of girls and undergraduate women" express body dissatisfaction, which has been linked to "the development of excessive dieting and exercise" (Grabe, Hyde, & Ward, 2008, p.460). Furthermore, research shows negative body images that result from objectification, self objectification, and social comparison of media images create a "psychologically salient discrepancy between the body and comparison body, which is a "risk factor for a range of physical and mental health problems," bulimia, depression, and obesity (Bell, 2011, p.479; Grabe, Hyde, & Ward, 2008, p.460). Thus, due to media images affect on women's body, the present study aims to study the selfie's connection with women's self esteem, body esteem, tendency toward physical comparison, and perception of self. In examining the relationship between the selfie practice and its effect on women, anthropological theory will be used. At its core, selfies are a cultural practice that is based on Western society's standards of the body. Additionally, as the main object of a selfie, the women's body conveys information about the norms and values of the body's sociocultural location. For example, similarly to the mass media, observations of the selfie practice shows how Western standards have promoted the thin ideal, blemish free skin, and the sexualization and objectification of the female body in selfies. In addition to representing society's values and standards, the 'selfie body' shows whether the individual has accepted the social and cultural pressures and chooses to embody those set of meanings, values, tendencies, and orientations of its sociocultural location (Strathern 1996; p.197; Shilling, 1993, p.129). Furthermore, observations of selfie practices shows there are a set of norms, rules, and expectations for those participating in this activity. Through an anthropological focus and understanding of selfies as cultural artifacts that are created to display an identity that is influenced by sociocultural systems, the study aims to examine the selfie practice and its impact on women's body image. Ultimately, by study-

ing the women's body and its social location, the research hopes to understand what prompts a

selfie, the effects of selfies on women's perception of self, and its relationship to the female

body's identity.

Chapter 3:

Methods

In order to better understand the impact of selfies on women and their self-esteem, body esteem, and tendency to compare themselves to others, an online survey and follow-up interview were conducted among college-aged women in the Atlanta, Georgia area. Survey and interview questions were developed based on current knowledge of mass media research and general knowledge about selfie cultural practices. Survey and interview questions were assessed to ensure they included the proper questions and scales to test the study's hypotheses.

Survey Development

Survey research and development began in August 2015. Based on the objectives of the study, a literature review was perfumed to assess current research relating to the study topic. Additionally, the current literature was reviewed to assess what methods were commonly used in studies relating to the study topic. Based on the literature review, three scales were used in assessing the study objectives, which included the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale, Body Esteem Scale, and the Physical Appearance Comparison Scale. In addition to incorporating the scales in the survey, questions were developed that addressed the subjects' participation in social networking sites and the selfie practice. For example, the two following questions were asked in order to ultimately assess a relationship between the selfie practice and women's self esteem, body esteem, and tendency to compare themselves to others:

How many selfies posted by your friends or people you follow do you see, on average, each day? (Never, Seldom, Sometimes, Often, and Always)

How frequently do you post selfies? (Multiple times in one day, Daily, Once A week, Twice a week)

Furthermore, in order to understand the nature of the selfie, questions were asked to assess the importance of certain body characteristics or qualities in selfies. After preparing the survey, the questions were cross analyzed with the study objectives to ensure the survey questions aligned with the study goals and provided the opportunity to answer the research questions.

Interview Development

After completing survey research and development, interview development commenced. The goal of the follow-up interview was to elaborate on questions asked in the survey and to ask questions not included in the survey. For the interview development process, the main objectives of the study guided the research more than the review of current literature. Before the final interview template was developed, the interview questions were first analyzed to assess whether or not they addressed the main study objectives. Next, the interview questions were cross evaluated with the survey questions to ensure both the survey and interview addressed the three study objectives. Last, the interview was tested on a few subjects from the sample and revised to ensure the questions were clear to the interviewees and questions were added based on the initial testing of interviews and interviewee questions that arose during testing. For example, after the first interview testing, questions were changed to ensure the structure of the question did not influence the direction of the respondent's answer. Additionally, questions 15 and 16 (see Appendix) assessed the impact of selfies on self-esteem and were clarified to indicate viewing selfies of other women was the variable being evaluated, as opposed to selfies posted by the women themselves.

IRB Approval

After developing the survey and interview questions, protocol, and completing the necessary documentation, all files were submitted for approval to the Emory University Institutional Review Board on September 27, 2014. After making the necessary revisions, some of which included revising the consent form and security measures to ensure privacy of the survey and interview data, the study received approval on January 9, 2015. The Institutional Review Boards at Georgia State University and Georgia Institute of Technology received the approval documents from Emory's Institutional Review Board and approved the project without review among their individual boards.

Recruitment

Once approval was received, the online survey became open to the public on January 17, 2015. Participants were recruited by sending individual emails to college students and sending emails to professors who posted information about the study on their Blackboard website or placed the information on department discussion boards. Additionally, some professors allowed a short presentation at the beginning of their class and sent a follow-up email to their students, which included a link to the online survey. The snowball effect was also used as students shared the survey information with their peers. In order to recruit interviewees, the last question on the survey asked participants to enter an email address if they were interested in a follow-up interview. The response goal for the survey was 100 participants and after collecting a total of 161 responses, the survey was closed on February 15, 2015. Thirty-four survey participants agreed to participate in a follow-up interview and 10 follow-up interviews were conducted. Those who agreed to a follow-up interview were emailed to schedule a time and location to conduct the interview. The completion rate for the online survey was 67.7%.

Study Population

In this study, 108 college women completed the online survey assessing the study objectives. Of the 108 survey respondents, 21.3% of the sample were African American, 15.7% of the sample identified as Asian, 0.93 % identified as Native American, 44.4% identified as Caucasian, 4.6% identified as Hispanic, and 13.0% identified as other. The race category, "other", included respondents who either did not believe their race category was included in the survey or those who identified more than one ethnicity. The age range for the sample was 18 to 23 and the average age was 20. Majority of the respondents were students at Emory College of Arts and Sciences, with a few respondents from Georgia State University and Georgia Institute of Technology.

Measures

Dependent Variables

Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (SES) is a self-report tool used to evaluate individual's self esteem. The scale consisted of 10 items measuring "global self worth by measuring positive and negative feelings about the self" (Rosenberg, 1965). A 4-point Likert scale is used to answer each item and the answer options include, strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. For items 1,2,4,6, and 7, strongly agree was coded as 3, agree as 2, disagree as 1, and strongly disagree as 0 (See Appendix Survey Question 26). For items 3,5,8,9, and 10, strongly agree was coded as 0, agree as 1, disagree as 2, and strongly disagree as 2 (See Appendix Survey Question 26). The possible scores for the Rosenberg Self Esteem scale ranges from 0 to 30, with scores between 15 and 25 being within the normal range, and scores lower than 15 suggesting a low self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965). For this scale, the internal reliability was satisfactory (Cronbach alpha=0.7549).

Body Esteem Scale. The Body Esteem Scale (BES) is a self-report tool used to evaluate an individual's level of satisfaction with characteristics and features of their body. The scale consists of 35 questions that can be divided into sub-scales that address three aspects of women's satisfaction with their body, which includes weight concern, sexual attractiveness, and physical condition. However, in this study, only the sexual attractiveness and weight concern sub-scales were used. Respondents rate their feelings on certain aspects of their body using a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from 1, which represents strongly negative feelings about a certain body feature, to 5, which represents strongly positive feelings about a body feature (See Appendix Survey Question 27). Scores on each individual features are summed and higher scores indicate higher body esteem or positive feelings about body features. For further analysis, the total body esteem score can be divided into the three sub scales to assess individual scores on the person's feelings about their sexual attractiveness, weight concern, and physical condition (Franzoi & Shields, 1984). For this scale, the internal reliability was satisfactory (Cronbach alpha=0.8116).

Physical Appearance Comparison Scale. The Physical Appearance Comparison Scale (PACS) is a self-report tool that consists of 5 items used to assess an individual's tendency to engage in comparisons between their physical appearance and others. A 5-point Likert scale is used with 1 indicating never engaging in a social comparison activity, and 5 indicating always engaging in comparison activities (See Appendix Survey Question 25). However, for question 4, the scale is reversed, and 1 is Always and 5 is Never. The values for all 5 items are summed to give an overall PACS score and higher values indicate higher tendencies to compare one's physical appearance with others (Thompson, et al., 1991). For this scale the internal reliability was satisfactory (Cronbach alpha=0.8423).

Independent Variables

Selfie Use. In order to assess the relationship between the selfie practice and women's self esteem, body esteem, and physical appearance comparison scores, questions about the frequency of seeing selfies posted by others on social networking sites and the participant's frequency of posting selfies to social networking sites were included in the interview. For the question assessing the frequency of seeing selfies posted by others on social networking sites, a 5 point- Likert scale was used, with 1 being coded as Never, 2 as Seldom, 3 as Sometimes, 4 as Often, and 5 as Always. Similarly, the question assessing the participant's frequency of posting selfies to social networking sites used a 4-point Likert Scale, with 1 being Multiple times in one day, 2 being Daily, 3 being Once a week, and 4 being Twice a week. In addition to the survey questions, the interview component included questions that assessed whether women believed selfies could affect women's self esteem, perception of their body, and ideas about standards of the female body.

To further examine a possible association with the selfie practice and women's SES, BES, and PACS score, questions assessing the number of likes, comments received, and nature of comments received were used. For the questions assessing the number of likes, None was coded as 0, Few as 1, Several as 2, and A lot as 3. For the questions assessing comments received and nature of comments received, Never was coded as 0, Seldom as 1, Sometimes as 2, Often as 3, and Always as 4.

Respondents Major. As a demographic question, the college women's majors were asked in the survey and majors were grouped into four broad categories based on major categories determined by Emory University's classification. Those majors who were classified as being a part of the Arts, Humanities, or Social Sciences were grouped into a single category and coded as 1, those majors classified as relating to math or science were grouped into a single category

and coded as 2. Those majors classified as relating to business were grouped into a single category and coded as 3. Respondents who indicated they were undecided on their major or undeclared were grouped into a single category and coded as 4.

Importance of Body Parts. To assess the importance of certain body characteristics and features in selfies, 12 items were used to assess the importance of predetermined body characteristics and features. A 6- Point Likert Scale was used, with 0 being "Not at all important" and 5 being "Extremely important". Additionally, open-ended questions were included in the survey and interview to assess what body parts, features, and other qualities were important to include in selfies.

Survey Analysis

After the data was extracted from surveymonkey.com and imported into STATA 13.1, the variables were created and coded in order to conduct the analysis. The frequency of the basic demographics of the study population, such as race, major, social network use, and selfie use was tabulated using the STATA software. Additionally, the average number of friends and followers on social networking sites and average self esteem, body esteem, and physical appearance comparison scores were determined using the summarize command. After summarizing the background information, t-test and regression models were used to examine the main objectives of the study.

In analyzing the association between frequency of seeing selfies and their corresponding, SES, BES, BES sub scale on sexual attractiveness (SA), BES sub scale on weight concern (WC), and PACS score, t-tests were used to compare the mean differences between those who saw selfies always, as opposed to those who reported a lower frequency. The variable assessing the frequency of seeing selfies was divided into five separate variables, according to those who se-

lected Never, Seldom, Sometimes, Often, and Always. The Always variable was included in the final analysis to compare high frequency to low frequency responses. Additionally, t-tests were used to examine the mean difference between the different frequencies of posting selfies and corresponding, SES, BES, BES sub scale SA, BES sub scale WC, and PACS scores. In order to examine the association between likes, comments, and the nature of comments received and SES, BES, BES SA, BES WC, and PACS scores, regression models were used. After conducting the analysis to address the study's main objectives, regression models were used to examine the association between the frequency of seeing selfies always and women's SES, BES, BES SA, BES WC, and PACS scores based on the four major categories.

Interview Analysis

Analysis of the interview discourse was conducted using grounded theory. Through grounded theory's three rounds of text analysis, open coding, axial coding, and selective coding, analyses were conducted to develop the common themes within the discourse. Open coding allowed the initial text interpretation, conceptualization, and categorizing of the data. After establishing the initial concepts, axial coding was performed in order to understand any relationships between the concepts and categories and further refine the groups. In the last phase, selective coding, the core category or story of the interview discourse was developed, with further refinement of the relationships between the concepts, and the concepts and the core category (Titscher et al., 2000, p. 74-89).

Chapter 4:

Results

Survey Results

Demographics

*percentages are listed in the order in which the variables are mentioned

      Among the 108 people in the study sample, most of the participants reported using multiple social networking sites (59.3%) and 25% reported only posting selfies to SnapChat, while other social networking sites had visiting frequencies all under 7%.
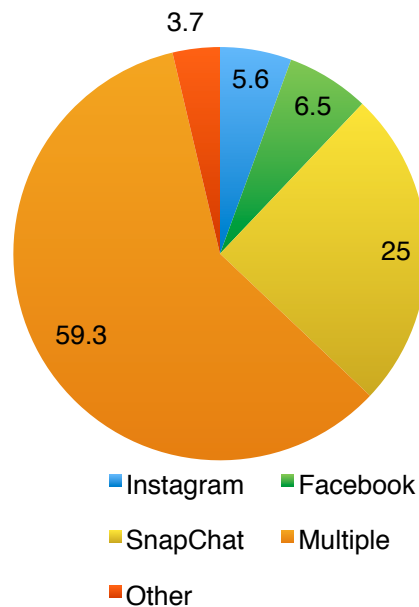

**Figure 1. Social Networking Sites (SNS) Used by Participants**
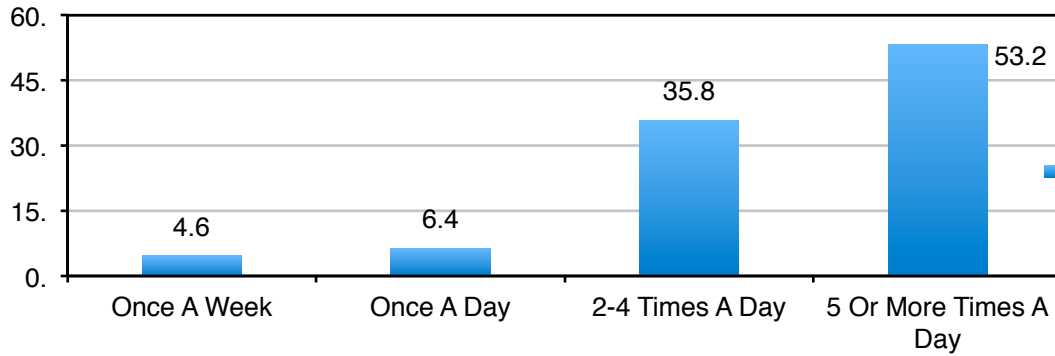
Figure 2. Frequency of Visiting Social Networking Sites

For the frequency of visiting social networking sites, most of the sample reported a relatively high frequency of visiting social networking sites, with 53.2% reporting visiting 5 or times a day and 35.8% reporting 2 to 4 times a day. In assessing the number of likes received on selfies posted to social networking sites, most participants reported receiving several likes on their selfies (42.2%) and reported receiving comments sometimes (54.6%).
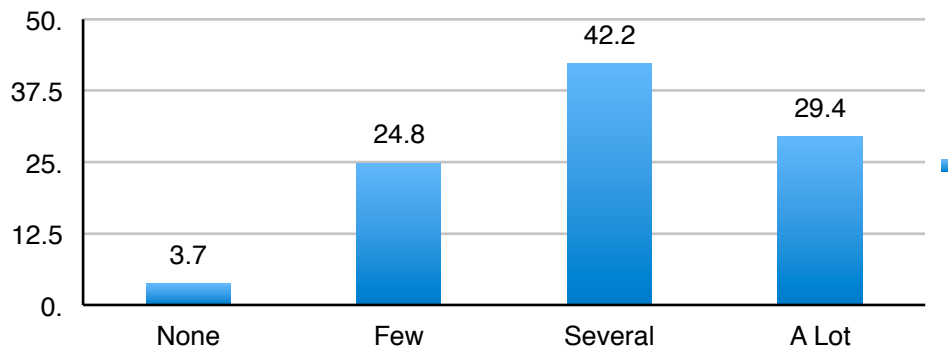

Figure 3. Amount of Likes Received on Selfies Posted to SNS
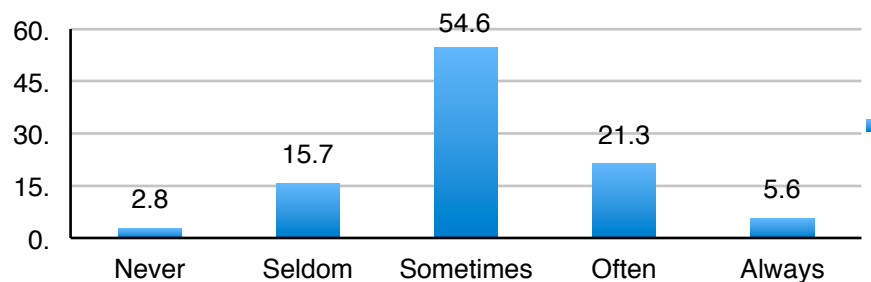

Figure 4. Frequency of Receiving Comments on Selfies Posted to SNS

Additionally, most participants were divided between reporting receiving positive comments often (35.9%) or sometimes (28.3%) and majority of the sample reported never receiving negative comments (75.9%).
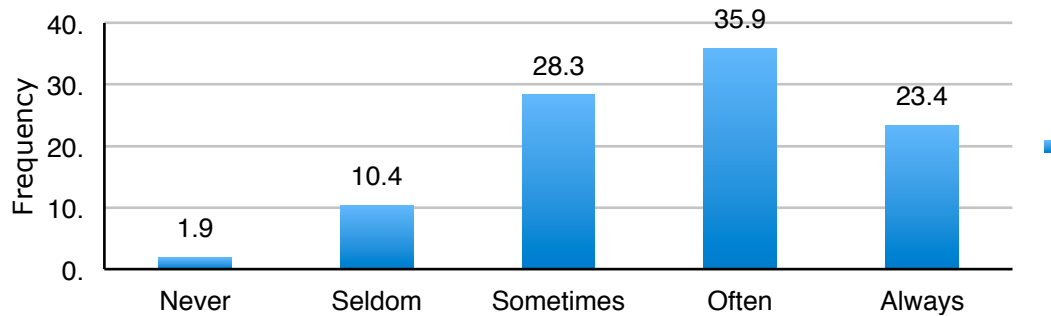

Figure 5. Frequency of Receiving Positive Comments on Selfies Posted to SNS
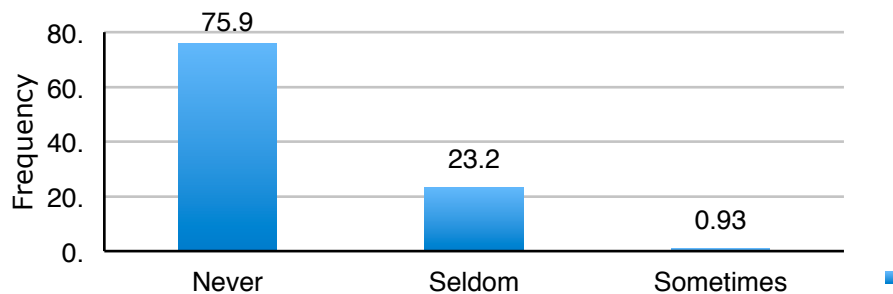
**Figure 6. Frequency of Receiving Negative Comments on Selfies Posted to SNS**

Examining the frequency of selfies posted by friends and followers on social networking sites showed most participants either reported seeing selfies often (44.0%) or always (32.11%) on social networking sites. Additionally, majority of the sample reported posting selfies to social networking sites once a week (75.0%).
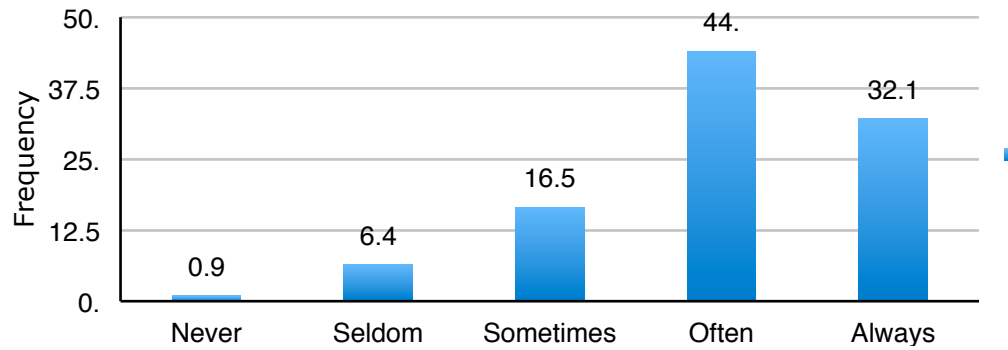
**Figure 7. Frequency of Viewing Selfies Posted by Others to SNS**
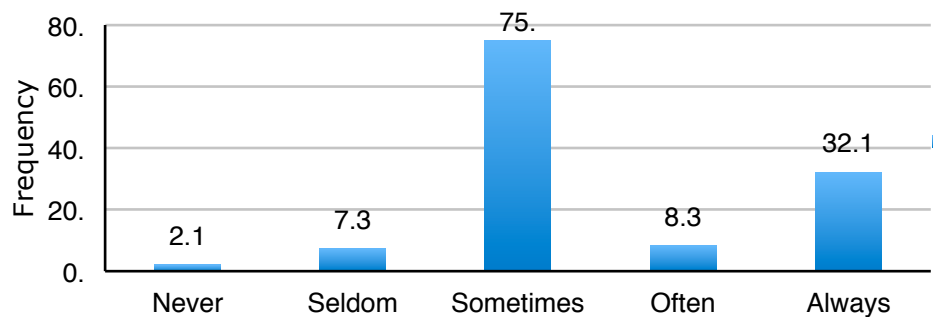
Figure 8. Frequency of Posting Selfies to SNS

The average number of friends and followers reported on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and SnapChat were 918, 158, 369, and 63, respectively, with Facebook having the highest average number of friends and SnapChat having the lowest. The mean self-esteem score for the sample was 20.7, indicating the self-esteem score for the sample was neither poor nor excellent, but average. The mean body esteem score was 70.4, the mean score for the body esteem's sub scale assessing sexual attractiveness was 35.5, and the mean score for the body esteem's sub scale assessing weight concern was 31.4, indicating the body esteem scores for the sample was average. Lastly, the mean physical appearance comparison scale score was 15.7, indicating the physical appearance comparison score for the sample was average. Overall, the sample had a satisfactory

self-esteem, body esteem, and physical appearance comparison scores and a wide range of scores for each scale.

Importance of Body Parts and Features

Table 1: Importance of Body Parts and Features

	Not at all Important (%)	Somewhat Important (%)	Neither important nor unimportant (%)	Somewhat Important (%)	Extremely important (%)
Face	2.75	1.83	0.92	24.8	69.7
Breasts	39.5	9.17	22.0	24.8	4.59
Arms	27.5	21.1	30.3	20.2	0.92
Teeth	5.56	5.56	17.6	43.5	27.8
Smile	3.67	2.75	8.26	37.6	47.7
Neck	16.5	11.9	40.4	21.1	10.1
Hands	30.6	15.7	38.0	13.9	1.85
Hair	4.63	0.93	4.63	36.1	53.7
Eyes	4.59	0.92	7.34	34.9	52.3
Upper Torso	21.1	11.0	25.7	33.0	9.17
Lower Torso	34.9	19.8	29.3	13.2	2.83
Applied Makeup	13.8	7.34	24.8	38.5	15.6

According to the sample, most participants reported the face was extremely important to selfies (69.7%). For breasts, the sample was divided with 39.5% reporting the breasts were not at all important in selfies, while 24.8% reported it was somewhat important. Similarly, the sample was divided for arms, with 30.2% reporting the arms were neither important nor unimportant, while 27.5% reported the arms were not at all important. However, most college women believed the teeth were generally important in selfies, with 45.5% and 27.8% selecting somewhat im-

portant or extremely important. Likewise, the smile was also considered generally important in selfies, with 37.6% and 47.7% reporting the smile was somewhat important and extremely important. Most participants were neutral towards the neck and its importance in selfies as 40.4% of the sample selected the neck was neither important nor unimportant. Participants were divided on the importance of the hands, with 30.6% of the sample reporting the hands were not at all important and 38.0% of the sample being neutral and reporting the hands were neither important nor unimportant. The majority of participants believed the hair (53.7%) and the eyes (53.4%) were extremely important in selfies. In assessing the importance of the upper torso, participants were divided, with 33.0% reporting the upper torso was somewhat important, while 24.7% reported the upper torso was neither important nor unimportant. Likewise, the sample was divided on the importance of the upper torso, with 34.9% selecting the torso was not at all important, while 29.3% reported the lower torso was neither important nor unimportant. Lastly, the sample was also divided on the importance of applied makeup, with 38.6% agreeing that applied makeup was somewhat important and 24.8% reporting applied makeup was neither important nor unimportant in a selfie. Overall, there was a general consensus that the face, teeth, smile, hair, and eyes were important to include in selfies.

Importance of Selfie Feedback

Table 2: Association between likes received on selfies and SES, BES, & PAC Score

	SES	BES	PAC	BES_SA	BES_WC
None	1.15 [0.93, 1.44]	1.01 [0.94, 1.08]	0.81 [0.62, 1.06]	0.99 [0.82, 1.18]	1.01 [0.90, 1.13]
Few	0.96 [0.89, 1.04]	1.00 [0.97, 1.03]	1.02 [0.92, 1.14]	0.99 [0.91, 1.07]	0.99 [0.94, 1.04]

Several	1.01 [0.94, 1.08]	1.00 [0.97, 1.03]	1.00 [0.91, 1.10]	0.99 [0.92, 1.06]	1.00 [0.96, 1.04]
A Lot	1.01 [0.94, 1.08]	1.00 [0.97, 1.04]	1.02 [0.92, 1.13]	1.03 [0.95, 1.11]	1.01 [0.96, 1.06]

In assessing the association between likes received on selfies and self esteem, body esteem, body esteem sub-scales' on sexual attractiveness and weight concern, and physical appearance comparison score, few results showed a statistically significant association. Statistical significance was indicated by a p-value of less than 0.05, which indicated the association was not only due to chance (Saint-Germain, 2001).

Table 3: Association between comments received on selfies and SES, BES, & PAC Score

	SES	BES	PAC	BES_SA	BES_WC
Never	0.85 [0.72, 1.01]	0.99 [0.91, 1.07]	1.05 [0.78, 1.41]	1.07 [0.88, 1.30]	0.94 [0.83, 1.07]
Seldom	1.11 [0.99, 1.24]	1.00 [0.97, 1.03]	0.99 [0.86, 1.13]	0.96 [0.87, 1.06]	1.01 [0.95, 1.07]
Sometimes	0.94 [0.87, 1.00]	1.00 [0.97, 1.03]	1.04 [0.95, 1.15]	0.99 [0.93, 1.07]	1.00 [0.96, 1.05]
Often	1.06 [0.97, 1.15]	1.00 [0.97, 1.04]	0.93 [0.83, 1.05]	1.03 [0.95, 1.12]	1.00 [0.95, 1.06]
Always	1.02 [0.88, 1.19]	1.00 [0.93, 1.07]	1.04 [0.84, 1.28]	0.98 [0.82, 1.18]	0.99 [0.89, 1.11]

For the regression of the SES, BES, BES SA, BES WC, and PACS scores, and frequency of receiving comments on selfies, no general trends were observed and no results showed a statistically significant association.

Table 4: Association between positive comments received on selfies and SES, BES, & PAC Score

	SES	BES	PAC	BES_SA	BES_WC
Never	0.78 [0.63, 0.97]***	0.95 [0.85, 1.06]	1.23 [0.82, 1.84]	1.04 [0.81, 1.32]	0.85 [0.69, 1.05]
Seldom	1.02 [0.91, 1.14]	0.99 [0.94, 1.03]	0.96 [0.82, 1.12]	0.91 [0.80, 1.03]	1.00 [0.93, 1.07]
Sometimes	0.99 [0.92, 1.07]	0.97 [0.94, 1.00]	1.07 [0.96, 1.19]	0.94 [0.86, 1.02]	0.95 [0.90, 1.00]
Often	1.02 [0.95, 1.10]	1.01 [0.99, 1.05]	0.99 [0.90, 1.10]	1.02 [0.94, 1.09]	1.03 [0.99, 1.08]
Always	1.00 [0.93, 1.08]	1.04 [1.00, 1.07]	0.94 [0.84, 1.06]	1.11 [1.02, 1.22]	1.04 [0.98, 1.10]

In examining the regression including positive comments received on selfies and the dependent variables (SES,BES, BES SA, BES WC, AND PACS), only one result showed an association and revealed those who reported never seeing a selfie had a lower odds [Odds Ratio:0.78 CI 95%: 0.63-0.97] for a decrease in their self esteem score.

Table 5: Association between negative comments received on selfies and SES, BES, & PAC Score

	SES	BES	PAC	BES_SA	BES_WC
Never	1.01 [0.94, 1.09]	1.01 [0.97, 1.04]	0.91 [0.81, 1.03]	1.01 [0.93, 1.09]	1.00 [0.96, 1.06]

Seldom	1.00 [0.93, 1.08]	1.00 [0.96, 1.03]	1.09 [0.97, 1.23]	1.00 [0.92, 1.09]	1.00 [0.95, 1.05]
Sometimes	0.88 [0.67, 1.15]	0.96 [0.83, 1.12]	1.09 [0.65, 1.84]	0.84 [0.55, 1.29]	0.97 [0.78, 1.21]
Often	—	—	—	—	—
Always	—	—	—	—	—

Similarly to previous results, there were no general trends or statistically significant associations in the examination of the relationship between the dependent variables and the frequency of receiving negative comments on selfies posted to social networking sites.

Table 6: Frequency of Seeing Selfies on SNS and Average SES, BES, PAC Score

	Less than Always	Always	P value
SES	21.95	18.65	0.0033
BES	71.64	67.15	0.1146
BES SA	36.67	34.67	0.3852
BES WC	32.4	28.85	0.0583
PAC	15.19	16.94	0.0305

However, in examining the association between the frequency of seeing selfies always on social networking sites and the dependent variables, there were many statistically significant associations. Those who reported seeing a selfie always (M=18.7, SD=6.56) had an average self esteem score that was lower than those who saw selfies less frequently (M=21.9, SD=4.62; t(106)=3.00, p=0.003). For body esteem score, those who reported seeing selfies always (M=67.2, SD=2.69) on social networking sites had a lower body esteem compared to those who

saw selfies less frequently (M=71.6, SD=1.47), however the association was not statistically significant; t(101)=1.59, p=0.115. For the sexual attractiveness sub-scale of body esteem, those who reported seeing selfies always had a lower average sub-scale score (M=34.7, SD=6.45) compared to those who reported seeing selfies less frequently (M=35.7, SD=4.92), however the association was not statistically significant; t(101)=0.87, p=0.385 . Likewise, for the weight concern body esteem sub-scale, those who reported seeing a selfie always had a lower average score (M=28.4, SD=10.3) than those who did not (M=32.4, SD=8.01), however, the association was not statistically significant t(101)=1.92, p=0.058. Lastly, for the physical appearance comparison score, a statistically significant association was observed and those who reported seeing selfies always had a higher average score (M=16.8, SD=4.37) than those who reported seeing selfies less frequently (M=15.2, SD=3.63; t(106)=-2.19, p=0.0305). Although the results for body esteem score, sexual attractiveness, and weight concern did not show a statistically significant association, there was a general, decreasing trend for all variables.

Table 7: Association between major category and SES, BES, and PAC scores Among Participants seeing selfies Always

	Major 1	Major 2	Major 3	Major 4
SES	-6.64 [-10.3, -2.97]	-3.14 [-7.28, 0.98]]	1.60 [-4.93, 8.13]]	-3.40 [-13.0, 6.18]
BES	-5.925 [-15.6, 3.72]]	-2.63 [-14.1, 8.82]]	-6.62 [19.5, 6.21]]	4.00 [-24.8, 32.8]
BES: SA	-0.36 [-4.34, 3.61]]	-0.81 [-5.12, 3.50]	-1.38 [-7.95, 5.19]	-0.81 [-5.12, 3.50]
BES: WC	-6.05 [-12.0, -0.06]	-0.96 [-9.02, 7.08]	-5.29 [-12.5, 1.88]	1.75 [-17.1, 20.6]
PAC	2.32 [-0.81, 5.46]	1.41 [-1.25, 4.08]	2.50 [-2.17, 7.17]	-3.00 [-8.27, 2.27]

The relationship among the frequency of seeing selfies always and the broad major categories: 1) humanities, arts, and social sciences, 2) math and science, 3) business, and 4) undecid-

ed or undeclared majors was also examined using simple regression models. The humanities, arts, and social sciences categories were associated with a higher odds of having a decrease in their self esteem score [Odds Ratio:-6.64 CI 95%:-10.3, -2.97] compared to those who were business or science and math majors or those classified as undecided or undeclared. Similarly, for the body esteem sub scale, weight concern, those who reported seeing selfies always had a higher odds [Odds Ratio:-6.05 CI 95%: -12.0,-0.06] for having a lower weight concern score than business and math and science majors or those classified as undecided or undeclared. Other results examining the association between the dependent variables and major category did not show a statistically significant association.

Interview Results

After the conclusion of the online surveys, participants who agreed to participate in a follow-up interview were recruited and 10 of the 34 participants who agreed to be interviewed were included in the interview cohort. The interview consisted of 16 questions and question content was based on four themes: purpose of selfies in today's society, selfie feedback and its affect on women, objectification of the female body in society and selfies, and selfies overall affect on women's self esteem and mental health.

Purpose of Selfies

In assessing the importance of selfies in today's society and participant's purpose for posting selfies, a number of themes were apparent. When asked "why do you think selfies are so important in today's society, " a theme recurrent in the majority of the responses was that participating in the selfie practice permitted the agency to control the body's representation. Additionally, selfies were considered a tool to help boost confidence and promote self-appreciation. While the respondents' personal reasons for posting selfies varied, there were some similarities

with the importance of selfies in today's society. For example, similarly to how participant's viewed selfies as a tool to promote a positive body image, when participants were asked about their reasons for posting selfies, respondents mentioned it helped them positively view and have pride in their own body:

> R: Selfies are also pretty positive because of the comfort in taking a selfie…its reinforcing how you feel about yourself and it makes you want to like appreciate yourself and want to take pictures…makes you want to look good.

Another similarity was the agency that selfies provide allowed participants to express their emotions in an exaggerated state and create "ugly" selfies that were considered funny and would make their friends and followers laugh. Sharing life events, such as going out, doing community service, or activities deemed interesting and cool by the respondent, was another common theme for why respondents posted selfies. However, while most respondents described selfies as a positive cultural practice, another theme was the idea that selfies were a practice that promotes competition and approval-seeking behavior.

In order to assess the demographics of the selfie practice, participants were asked whether they believed men and women equally participated in the selfie practice or one participated more than the other. The majority of respondents believed women took more selfies than men. However, a few of the respondents acknowledged that they recently experienced seeing more selfies among their male friends and followers on social networking sites. Overall, the participants' responses suggest the selfie practice includes a large proportion of women and women participate in the selfie practice for a number positive, personal, and general reasons, such as improving body satisfaction and sharing life events.

Selfie Feedback

After assessing the purpose of selfies in today's society, the volume and nature of feed-back received on selfies and its effect on women was addressed through three questions. When asked about feelings towards receiving no feedback on selfies posted to social networking sites, such as likes or comments, the majority of the respondents reported experiencing negative feel-ings. A common theme was that depending on the picture and amount of likes or comments re-ceived, respondents would begin to question the details of their selfies and wonder if the picture contained flaws they failed to notice before posting:

> R: If nobody likes it, I have negative feelings. I feel essentially like I didn't get any
>
> approval on how I look, so I must look bad because nobody liked it.

However, a few respondents differed from the majority and reported they were unaffected by not receiving any feedback on selfies posted to social networking sites.

> R: If no one responds to a snap that I think is really funny…I would like a response, but it
>
> doesn't matter that much to me and I'll forget about it pretty quickly.

In order to assess the nature of the feedback received on selfies posted to social network-ing sites, participants were asked about their feelings towards receiving positive feedback or negative feedback on selfies posted to social networking sites. When respondents received posi-tive feedback on their selfies, the majority of respondents described their feelings as happy and stated the positive feedback from their peers helped them believe they were beautiful.

Similarly to the previous question assessing the effects of receiving no feedback on selfies, a few respondents stated they were unaffected by receiving positive feedback on selfies posted to social networking sites.

For negative feedback, the majority of respondents reported never receiving negative feedback. Additionally, a common theme was receiving no feedback was described as negative feedback by some of the respondents. Overall, a majority of the sampled reported negative feelings when receiving no feedback on selfies and perceived negative feedback as receiving no feedback. Likewise, participants reported positive feelings towards positive feedback received on selfies and majority of the sample reported never receiving negative feedback. While there were a few outliers who reported feedback did not affect their feelings, the majority of the sample reported the nature and volume of feedback received on selfies could negatively or positively impact their feelings.

Objectification of the Female Body

Next, a series of six questions were asked to assess whether the female body was objectified in society and selfies and if there was a connection between society's standards of the female body and its' objectification. Additionally, the questions examined whether the participant's selfies aligned with sociocultural standards of the female body and its objectification. When asked what parts of the female body are objectified in society, participants' responses were categorized into negative and positive objectification. The majority of respondents believed the entire female body was objectified negatively, with emphasis placed on the breasts and butt. Parts of the body that were described as being objectified positively were the eyebrows, eyes, and hair.

When asked what parts of the female body do you feel are objectified in selfies, there were some similarities among the participants responses. For example, similarly to society's objectification of the breasts and butt, participants also believed those body parts were objectified in selfies. Other common body parts respondents reported as being objectified in selfies were the face, hair, and smile. Additionally, a few participants mentioned physical beauty, skin, upper body, eyes, and makeup.

After assessing the objectification of the body in society and selfies, participants were asked whether they believed men objectified women's bodies. Specifically, participants were asked to describe what body parts or features men would want women to emphasize in selfies. The majority of respondents believed what a guy would choose depended on the type of guy and the relationship between the guy and the girl:

> R: I think the right guy would want it to be upper waist…he wouldn't have to see any thing else to get to know the person…so the smile, inner beauty more than just the physical features, but then other guys…probably not.

Respondents believed if the guy was a friend or interested in the girl beyond sexual activities, the guy would prefer to see a happy selfie that focused on the face. Contrastingly, respondents believed if the guy was only interested in sex, he would choose the butt and breasts as prominent features in the selfie. Other body parts a few participants believed men would want to see were the eyes and smile.

In order to assess whether society's sociocultural standards influenced women's body representation in selfies, questions assessed mass media's influence on women's selfies and what body features and characteristics the women included or neglected to include in their selfies.

When asked what message the mass media suggests a successful or acceptable selfie must include, most participants agreed there were a number of features important for a successful selfie:

> R: Media portrays a successful a selfie as one where you have a spotless face, your makeup is well done, and your hair…whether it be messy or not, is neatly done… and smiling.

Those features were the right angle and lighting, blemish-free skin, applied makeup, perfect hair, a seductive face, and a selfie that appeared effortless. There were many similarities between what women believed was important in their selfies and what they believed mass media deemed important for a successful selfie.

There were also similarities between what features of the body women believed were objectified in society and what they included in their selfies. When asked what parts of the body they highlight in selfies, the majority of respondents reported their face and the face's emotional expression were important. Similar to previous questions assessing the objectification of women's bodies, participants reported their eyes, eyebrows, smile, and hair were highlighted in their selfies. A few respondents also reported making the effort to take ugly or funny selfies as opposed to selfies that were too serious.

> R: I typically highlight my emotion and take selfies in an exaggerated state… either really happy or stressed and expressing an emotion that's not my everyday norm. I also take ugly pictures on purpose, or what is classified as ugly because they're normal, human, and funny.

Other features mentioned, but not in all responses, were the participant's outfit, surroundings, and lips. Additionally, while previous questions revealed women believed the female body was

sexually objectified in society, when asked what parts of the body they did not like to include in selfies, most participants emphasized not including the breasts or sexual aspects of their body in selfies.

Some respondents emphasized how they did not want to sexualize their body and a few mentioned their lack of confidence in those areas were another reason for not including them in selfies. Other body parts women neglected to include in selfies due to a lack of confidence were the nose, chin, neck, legs, and skin. Overall, the questions assessing the objectification and sociocultural standards of the female body suggest there are some similarities between the objectification of and standards placed on the female body and what women include in selfies. However, the results also show women had the agency to choose what body parts were objectified in their selfies and whether they chose to adhere to society's standards of the female body.

Selfies and its' Effect on Women

The last section of the interview assessed women's perceptions of selfies and self-esteem. One question assessed the impact of selfies on women by asking how many selfies they took before they were satisfied and decided to post the picture to a social networking site. The number of selfies respondents reported taking before posting their selfie to a social networking site ranged from 1 to 100 pictures. Most reported taking 1 to 10 pictures before posting a selfie to a social networking site and two respondents reported taking 30 to 100 photos before posting to a social networking site. Reasons cited for taking numerous pictures included taking multiple selfies in order to send multiple pictures to friends and not liking the angle or details of their body in the selfie.

The remaining questions assessed whether participants' viewed selfies negatively or positively and if they believed selfies could affect women's self esteem. When asked if the compul-

sion to take selfies was a mental health issue, majority of the sample believed it was extreme to classify the compulsion to take selfies as a mental health problem for various reasons. Some believed this was extreme because selfies were a positive way to appreciate their bodies and boost their self-confidence, which was similar to participant's reasons for the importance of selfies in society.

> R: They (selfies) are a really important tool for self esteem and self worth in a culture that is constantly berating people for their looks. It's a way of reclaiming the way they see themselves and to take pride in their looks.

Although the majority of participant's believed it was extreme to label the compulsion to take selfies as a mental health issue, however, many admitted selfies could be considered an issue if it significantly impacted activities in a person's life and became addictive.

> R: I don't really see it as an issue unless it's turned into something extremely drastic, like obsessive compulsive disorder. I think it's a long lasting fad that will probably die out in the future and there are certain people that get caught up in it more than others and believes it to be the be all, end all. I don't think it would be a mental health issue unless the responses to it are impacting the person in a negative way.

Furthermore, respondents mentioned whether or not selfies could be considered a mental health issue depended on the person and the motivation behind taking the selfie.

After asking whether selfies could be classified as a mental health issue, participants were informed of how studies have shown mass media images negatively impact women's self esteem. Based on this information, participants were asked whether they believed viewing selfies

of other women was another avenue to affect women's self esteem. A common theme among the responses was that selfies could similarly affect women's self esteem. Some respondents believed selfies could affect women's self esteem by promoting social comparison among women. Similarly to the previous question, some respondents believed whether or not viewing selfies of other women negatively affected a women's self-esteem depended on the women, their view of themselves, and motive for posting a selfie. Contrastingly, a few respondents did not believe seeing selfies of other women negatively affected women's self esteem because they believed selfies showed more realistic pictures of women and respondents had the ability to control the selfies they were exposed to.

To further understand the association between selfies and women's self esteem, respondents were asked if they believed selfies of other women would affect women's self esteem more or less than mass media's representation of women. There were two contrasting themes among the respondents' answers. Some respondents believed seeing selfies of other women could more negatively impact women's self esteem, compared to the mass media's representation of women. A reason supplied for this answer was selfies of non-celebrity, beautiful women could promote social comparison and falsely portray the idea that selfies are realistic images, when they have actually undergone a substantial amount of editing.

On the other hand, some respondents believed selfies more positively impacted women's self esteem because it shows more realistic women, as opposed to the women in mass media's representations. In comparing selfies of non-celebrity women to celebrity women, a few respondents cited Kim Kardashian as an unrealistic representation of women's body shape and appearance. Overall, the questions addressing the impact of selfies and the participant's view of selfies, self esteem, and mental health suggests that selfies may be another avenue to negatively impact

women's self esteem, however, it depends on personal characteristics of the woman. Further-

more, the combined analysis of interview and survey suggests whether selfie cultural negatively

impacts women's body image varies.

Chapter 5:

Discussion

Over the last century there have been numerous sociocultural and technological changes in Western culture that has transformed society. Particularly, the invention of the cell phone, camera, and social networking sites, and the increasing desire within Western culture to share life events has paved the way for constant communication through calls, instant messaging, and more recently, selfies (Boyd & Ellison, 2008, Boyd, 2008). In the past decade, selfies have become a common, visual medium for sharing personal, life events with others (Worthman, 2013; Kwon & Kwon, 2015). On the surface, today's selfie is simply a picture or memory that captures a specific moment, however, further analysis shows that similarly to mass media's requirements for images of models and celebrities, the selfie phenomenon is a sociocultural practice that has a diverse set of rules and expectations for those involved, particularly women (Worthman, 2013. Kwon & Kwon, 2015).

Many scholars have posited that the rules and expectations placed on mass media images of models and celebrities have not only negatively affected women participating in the industry, but women that are constantly exposed to these images through the mass media (Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2006; Wilcox & Laird, 2000; Clay at al., 2005; Durkin & Paxton, 2002; Tiggemann & McGill, 2004; Yamamiya et al., 2005; Posavac et al., 1998; Pinhas et al., 1999; Tiggemann & Slater, 2004; Hargeaves & Tiggemann, 2004; Grabe, Hyde, & Ward, 2008; Lin and Kulik, 2002). Although a significant amount of literature is available on how mass media images can negatively affect women's body image, there is a lack of research on the impact of the selfie practice on women's body image. Thus, due to the known effect of mass media images on wom-

en, the increasing popularity of the selfie practice among women, and lack of literature examining the selfie practice, the present study aimed to asses the impact of the selfie practice on women's self esteem, body esteem, tendency to compare themselves to others, and perception of self. Additionally, the study aimed to understand the important qualities or characteristics of selfies and the connection between the selfie practice and societal standards of the female body and its' identity. In addition, the relationship between major category and self-esteem, body esteem, and physical appearance comparison score was examined. It was first hypothesized that those who reported posting selfies and seeing selfies more frequently than others would have a lower self-esteem and body esteem score, a higher physical appearance comparison score, and an overall more negative perception of self. Additionally, it was hypothesized that what was included in women's selfies would correlate with society's standards and men's expectations of women's bodies.

According to the survey results, there was no association between the participant's frequency of posting selfies and their self-esteem, body esteem scale and sub-scales, and physical appearance comparison scores. Contrastingly, there was an association between frequency of seeing selfies on social networking sites and self-esteem and physical appearance comparison score. Those who reported seeing selfies always had a lower average self-esteem score and higher physical appearance comparison score compared to those who reported seeing selfies less frequently. Analysis of the interview discourse along with the survey results provides insight into why a higher frequency of seeing selfies may affect women's self-esteem and tendency to compare themselves to others.

Social Comparison and Competition

A common theme among interview responses on the purpose of selfies and how the selfie practice may negatively impact women was by promoting competition and social comparison between women. Some of the participants believed many women compared their selfies with others to determine if they were "good enough," which could result in them being more self-conscious. For example, when asked if selfies were another avenue to affect women's self esteem a respondent stated:

> R: My sister will obsessively stalk other girls selfies…I think social media can be very poisonous for this exact same reason, which is why I choose not to be active on it… there's so much competition and comparison…One girl my sister compares herself to because they both like the same guy and the guy went between them and she's always looking at the girl's selfies and comparing herself to her.

Throughout the interview, the participant repeatedly referred to her sister and how she believed social media and the selfie practice has negatively impacted her sister's mental health. Analysis of the context suggests the selfie was a tool through which the sister engaged in competition for the interest of the opposite sex. Thus, rather than passively seeing a selfie and engaging in social comparisons, the sister actively searched for the girl's Instagram profile in order to compare her body features with her competition. Although the social comparison in this instance was more actively sought than passively seeing an image, the participant believed her sister's mental health history, obsession with social media and the selfie practice, and tendency to engage in social comparisons negatively impacted her self esteem. This example also shows how in some situations, men may play a role in women engaging in social comparisons. The participant explained that she believed her sister constantly looked at the other girls' selfies and judged her characteris-

tics and features relative to the other girl because the guy liked both of them and would alternate between the two. Thus, in this instance, male attention was an important factor in promoting social comparisons when viewing selfies of other women. As a result, the respondent mentioned this could be more detrimental to her sister than others because of her sister's past history with an eating disorder. Additionally, the respondent mentioned she refused to participate in the selfie practice because of how it affected her sister and she feared it would negatively impact her personal body image by promoting social comparisons.

Other respondents believed selfies could negatively impact women's self esteem because women compared themselves to images they believed to be beautiful, realistic, and effortless, although the images were heavily photo-shopped, edited, included heavy makeup application, and were thoughtfully created. For example, when asked whether or not selfies could have a stronger impact on women's self esteem compared to mass media images of celebrities and models, a respondent stated:

> R: Selfies can be more intimidating because they're supposed to be kind of effortless even though I've talked about how many selfies I take (before posting to social networking sites), selfies are still supposed to appear more effortless…so when people see amazing pictures and they appear effortless then it could be like 'why can't I do that'…compared to celebrities where its like 'oh they have all their team', so thats probably why.

As indicated in the response above, a common theme among participants was selfies could more negatively impact self-esteem because women expected images of models and celebrities to be beautiful because they were skillfully created, using beauty enhancing resources.

However, when viewing selfies of non-celebrities and models and comparing themselves, women would be more negatively impacted by those images because those images seemed effortlessly beautiful, although they were also skillfully created. Thus, similarly to Lin and Kulik's study on social comparison theory, analysis of the participant's statements suggests the selfie practice negatively impacts women's self esteem by promoting upward social comparisons (Lin and Kulik, 2002). As women engage in upward social comparisons and compare themselves to women's selfies and judge those women's bodies more positively, the comparison may promote lower body satisfaction (Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2004; Clay et al., 2005; Tiggemann & Slater, 2004; Bessenoff, 2006; Tiggemann & McGill, 2004; Lin and Kulik, 2002; Wilcox & Laird, 2000).

Additionally, further analysis of the responses suggests women's self-objectification and objectification of other women's bodies promotes the upward social comparisons that negatively impact their body image (Linder et al., 2012, Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2004; Clay et al., 2005; Tiggemann &Slater, 2004; Bessenoff, 2006; Tiggemann & McGill, 2004; Lin and Kulik, 2002; Wilcox & Laird, 2000). For example, in describing why selfies may more negatively impact women, participants mention beautiful images of non-celebrities and models make them question why they cannot achieve those beautiful images. This suggests that women internalize an observer's perspective of their body and assess their looks, while also objectifying other women's bodies as they compare the two (Moradi, 2010). Thus, these results suggest there is an interrelationship between social comparison, objectification, and self-objectification practices that may explain why the selfie practice negatively impacts women's self esteem.

Selfie Validation and Objectification

Another reason supplied for how selfies could affect women's self esteem and tendency to compare themselves to others involves feedback received on selfies posted to social network-

ing sites. Prior to the survey, it was hypothesized that a lack of positive feedback on selfies post-

ed to social networking sites could negatively impact women. While the survey results did not

reveal any associations between selfie feedback and its affect on women, the interview discourse

showed the amount and nature of feedback had an impact on women. According to some of the

participants, receiving positive feedback positively impacted their mood and, in some cases, was

the purpose for posting a selfie. Additionally, while most respondents reported receiving no neg-

ative feedback, respondents interpreted negative feedback as no feedback and associated nega-

tive feelings with no feedback. For example, when asked about feelings associated with not re-

ceiving feedback on selfies posted to social networking sites, two respondents stated:

> R: No feedback is negative feedback. I'm trying to get something out of every single
>
> selfie that I take and if I don't get what I want from that it's disappointing because I set
>
> out with a goal that I'm taking this picture because I want to feel better about myself and
>
> have a better day. I have an agenda.

> R: Delete! At first it would hurt my feelings, but then later on I'd think maybe it
>
> wasn't that great anyways and so I'd delete it. You go for the most likes and comments
>
> unfortunately and then if its not up there you delete it.

Analysis of these responses suggests that the woman's body in selfies aligns with Bour-

dieu's philosophy about the commodification of the body. According to Bourdieu, women's bod-

ies embody physical capital, such as their physical attractiveness and beauty, and as a result,

women will be inclined to treat their body as a project, and invest in their physical capital (Bour-

dieu, 1986; Shilling, 1993, p.127). Investing in their physical capital will be important because it

can be converted to economic, social, and cultural capital. The body can be commodified and

used as a tool to acquire forms of capital because it is considered "never fully finished and con-stantly affected by social, cultural, and economic processes" (Bourdieu, 1985; Shilling, 1993, p.133; Bourdieu, 1986). Furthermore, women live in a sociocultural system where engaging in impression management by investing in physical capital is connected to their social and physical survival (Walther et al., 2008; Hogan, Jones, & Cheek, 1985). Due to the body's position in a cultural system that promotes unrealistic body ideals, body manipulation, and the connection of certain body ideals with positive personality traits, such as the thin body's association with intel-ligence, women will be pressured to adhere to those sociocultural standards and invest in their physical capital. (Grogan, 2008, p. 1-2). Thus, in relation to the selfie practice, and according to the interview discourse, women will invest in their physical capital by creating beautiful and ef-fortless selfies. This investment results in gaining social capital, which in this instance, is feed-back from their peers, through comments and likes. Social capital in the form of social media feedback provides the approval that their physical capital is beautiful. However, while it may provide validation, commodifying the body places women at risk for objectification, which is known to negatively impact women's body image (Prichard & Tiggemann, 2012; Harper & Tiggemann, 2008; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

For example, when asked about feelings associated with not receiving validation or ap-proval from their peers, participants were more likely to objectify their bodies and engage in selfie and body critique, express body dissatisfaction, and in some cases, delete their selfies completely. The negative impact of no feedback is evident in one participant's response:

R: Amount of likes make you question the details of yourself…like oh, if this one doesn't get as many likes as the last one then what was wrong with this one…was it my hair…face…lighting…it makes you just take a deeper look at the picture.

Similarly to this participant, most respondents reported analyzing their selfies when they failed to receive any feedback and believed their selfies failed to receive as much approval as other women's selfies because they lacked certain body features or characteristics. For example, some respondents mentioned how they neglected to include anything below their face in their selfies because they were dissatisfied with their lower body or lack of well-developed breasts.

However, while respondents mentioned their lack of curves contributed to receiving less validation from their peers and expressed their dissatisfaction with their body shape, all of the participants stated they did not include their breasts or other sexual features in their selfies because of their modesty or refusal to sexually objectify their body. The rejection of the female body's sexual objectification was a common theme among participants. For example, when asked what parts of the body they did not like to include in selfies two participants stated:

R: Not necessarily because I'm not confident, but I wouldn't purposely put my breasts in a selfie or something like that.

R: I don't think I'd ever want to send someone a picture where I was trying to attract them…so I wouldn't want to ever send a picture of just my body or picture where I'm trying to look sexy.

Analyzing the participants responses shows that while participants believed the female body was sexually objectified and its' sexualization was valued within the selfie practice, they refused to include those body parts and features in their selfies. Furthermore, although participants believed society and men objectified women's entire body, with particular emphasis on the breasts and butt, interview and survey participants reported not including those parts in their selfies. For example, when asked which body parts were important in selfies, most of the partici-

pants agreed the face, teeth, smile, and hair were important. For other body parts, participants were divided. For example, while 39.5% agreed the breasts were not at all important, 24.8% believed they were somewhat important in selfies. When asked what body parts or features were objectified in selfies, interview responses were similar to the survey results. Most of the interview responses mentioned the face, breasts, hair, and smile were objectified in selfies. This suggests that there are similarities between what is objectified in society and selfies. A respondent also noted that there were similarities between the two when asked what parts of the female body are objectified in selfies:

> R:I think one influences the other, society influence selfies. In a lot of our selfies we conform to what society wants, what will give you the most likes. Like if you see a picture of a girl and she's alright looking, but her boobies are out and she gets 1,000 likes and you do the picture and you're prettier than her, but you don't show your tatas and don't get as many likes, then you think maybe I should show more…so your selfie reflects or conforms to that so that you are matching what society wants.

In addition to noting the similarities between society's standards of the female body and its' manifestation in selfies, the participant mentions how women can be pressured to conform to society's standards in order to receive peer approval. However, while the respondent mentioned that she felt pressure to conform, she also mentioned how she refused to conform to society's standards and did not include anything below her face in her selfies. Thus, while women may perceive that their body continues to be objectified by society and men today, interview and survey results suggests that women counter this objectification by choosing whether or not they will sexualize their bodies in selfies.

Selfies: A Tool for Agency

The participant's awareness of women's sexual objectification and decision to either allow or remove those parts in their pictures highlights a positive aspect of selfies. According to the interview results, participant's believed selfies could be viewed positively because they provided women with the agency to control how their body was represented. In the case above, participants emphasized how they did not want to create a "sexualized selfie" by including sexual body parts, such as the breasts and butt. Other participants mentioned how their agency to control how they look in selfies played a role in boosting their self-confidence and self esteem. For example, two participants mentioned:

R: It's like you have the agency to make sure you look right at a certain angle or whatever else. As opposed to someone taking a picture of you, you might say 'oh that doesn't look good,' but when you post a selfie you've tried over and over and over to make sure you get the right angle and you look good.

R: It's one of the first times where you get to pick a representation of yourself… like if I post a selfie I can take 10 and pick the best one and be like 'this is me…perfect and beautiful all the time.' Its nice…you don't have to depend on somebody else for how you're represented.

Further analysis of these responses suggests the participant's agency to control how they were represented in selfies was also connected to their body's commodification. Both participants mentioned selfies "provide the agency to make sure you look right" and removes the need to "depend on somebody else" for creating the perfect selfie. Additionally, the participants mentioned repeatedly trying to capture the perfect selfie. Analyzing both statements suggests the

agency to repeatedly take pictures in order to capture the perfect selfie is analogous to the idea of investing in the body's physical capital. One way women may invest in the selfies' physical capital is by ensuring they have the right facial expressions and angles. Studies have shown perceived attractiveness can vary based on facial expressions and angles (Morrison et al., 2013; Tracy & Beall, 2011). Due to the association between facial expressions and physical attractiveness, and physical attractiveness' association with positive traits, such as better health, higher physical fitness, greater reproductive success, and longer life expectancy, women may deem it necessary to invest in their physical capital (Mares et al., 2010). Thus, by investing in their physical capital and using their agency to portray themselves in a way they perceive to be beautiful, participants are ultimately investing in their social capital and may reap the benefits associated with physical attractiveness. Furthermore, as a result of carefully creating the perfect selfie, participants reap the social benefits of positive and affirming feedback from their peers, which may boost their confidence.

Selfies and Self Appreciation

Another perceived benefit for participating in the selfie practice was self-appreciation and self-love. For some participants, selfies were very influential in improving their body image and emotional and mental health. Thus, a few participants disagreed with a recent, Huffington Post article that mentioned psychiatrists were considering the compulsion to take selfies as a mental health issue (" Selfie Addiction", 2014). For example, one respondent described the selfie practice as a body positive concept because it allowed her to be proud of who she was. Additionally, the respondent mentioned:

R: For me…with certain mental health issues I've been struggling with…a selfie is a way to overcome them…so I'd be very against them saying it's a mental health issue because for me it's a mental health solution.

Additionally, in contrast to the previous notion that social comparison between selfies can negatively impact women, one respondent mentioned how it had the opposite effect. When asked whether selfies were another avenue to affect women's self esteem, the participant stated:

R:Yes, and not in a negative way for me because I get to control what media I see a lot and I am seeing a lot more heavier women, women of color, women that are not conventionally attractive, which makes me feel less weird about posting my own selfies because its like 'oh I'm normal,' which is nice.

These responses show that selfies may actually be a form of mental maintenance and source of inclusion for women struggling with body image and mental health issues. Thus, a combined analysis of the interview and survey results shows that while selfies may negatively impact women in some cases, they can be positive in others. This was also evident in participant's responses when asked about the purpose of selfies and whether or not selfies could affect women's self-esteem. Many participants believed whether or not selfies negatively impacted women depended on the woman and context in which the selfie was posted. For example, when asked whether or not viewing selfies of other women could affect a woman's self esteem, two participants stated:

R: It can go both ways. Some people can look at these pictures and gain positive impact, motivation, and self esteem and they can also look at in a negative way and they can lower themselves and say I'm not as pretty as her.

R: Depending on like the efforts the person puts into taking the selfie, but if they're the type of person who will only take a perfect selfie or send to others just to show that they're beautiful or what not, then it could impact the viewer as much as models and actresses on social media

Thus, an integrated analysis of the survey and interview results suggests the relationship between the selfie practice and women's self-esteem, body esteem, tendency to compare themselves with others, and perception of self is complex and neither completely positive nor negative.

Perceived Agency

Although the interview results do not support the initial hypothesis that the selfie practice will negatively impact women, Mary Douglas' philosophy about the body as a symbol may explain the variability in some of the results. As mentioned previously, in *Natural Symbols,* Douglas states the human body is an "organ of communication" imprinted with a society's social and cultural meanings and divided into the social and physical body (Douglas, 1996, p.xxxvi). Douglas believed the way people manipulated and presented their physical body depended on their acceptance of their society's social and cultural values (Douglas, 1996, p.77). Furthermore, the social and cultural values limited the physical body and resulted in the perpetuation of social and cultural values and the body's extreme restriction as a medium of expression (Douglas, 1996, p.69).

In relation to the study results, the participants acknowledged the social and cultural pressures placed on women's bodies and most participants believed society and men objectified women's entire body. However, while the participants did not sexually objectify their body in selfies, their responses suggest they still accepted and were impacted by Western cultural pressures on the body. For example, when certain sociocultural body ideals were considered, such as the big butt, big breasts, and small waist ideal, the participants' responses suggested they desired the curvy ideal and were unsatisfied with their lack of it. Those participants seemed to internalize an observer's perspective of their body and judge their body characteristics and features more negatively by comparing their lack of big breasts and a butt, and small waist to other women's selfies. For example, when asked what body parts or features a respondent did not like to include in selfies, one participant mentioned:

R: I don't like to emphasize face down…like my boobs or stomach…I'm just very modest…I know you should love yourself no matter what, but I'm not confident with my body shape because I don't have big breasts, or booty poppin,' and a small waist. Maybe that could be a reason too…I'm not well developed as some people, but then again, most people are like, 'plastic surgery'.

In this response, the participant attributes her decision to not display her breasts or stomach to modesty, but later mentions that it could also be because she is less developed than others. This participant also mentioned how she believed the thin, yet curvy body ideal was desired by men and society. Thus, analyzing the participant's interview discourse shows how while the participant rejected the sexualization of her body in selfies, she still accepted and desired the sociocultural body ideal of big breasts, big butt, and a small waist and compared her body more neg-

atively to sexualized selfies. Furthermore, this participant, along with other respondents who desired to adhere to the curvy, body ideal, were also more likely to be negatively impacted by not receiving feedback on selfies and associate selfies with social comparisons and lower self esteem. Thus, analyzing selfies in the context of Mary Douglas' philosophy suggests that a reason selfies may negatively impact some women and positively impact others lies in women's agency to accept or reject sociocultural pressures and how it influences their selfies.

However, while participants ability to reject sociocultural pressures on the body may explain why selfies positively impact some women, further analysis of the participants responses shows restrictions on this ability and questions their claim to agency. Nabeer describes agency as "people's ability to make decisions and act on their own life choices, even in the face of others' oppositions" (Nabeer, 2005, p. 14). Analyzing the interview discourse in the context of Nabeer's definition suggests the participant's do not possess the full agency they believe they have. For example, in relation the response above, the participant's agency to reject the curvy, sociocultural body ideal was restricted by Western cultural influences. The participant's agency was limited because she believed in order to receive the approval she wanted from her peers, her selfie needed to reflect and conform to what society wants, which she believed was a curvy, yet thin body. Another example of limitations on participant's perceived agency is evident in the following statement:

> R: It's like you have the agency to make sure you look right at a certain angle or whatever else. As opposed to someone taking a picture of you, you might say 'oh that doesn't look good,' but when you post a selfie you've tried over and over and over to make sure you get the right angle and you look good.

While it is true that, unlike portraits of the past, the participant now has the ability to capture a picture of the body in the way she wants it and has the ability to determine which pictures will be advertised, according to Nabeer's definition, the ability to create and choose a selfie to advertise is not true agency. Nabeer's definition states that agency allows people to make their own choices in the face of opposition. However, many of the participants responses suggest their choices, such as how they construct their selfie, are guided and limited by the opposition presented by Western sociocultural body ideals. For example, when asked about what messages the media sends about what is acceptable in society, the previous participant also stated:

> R: Hair straight, waist small, and manage to have a butt too. The goal is to look like Kim Kardashian and specifically, Kim Kardashian. Don't be a women of color.

This example shows how not only did the participant believe there were societal restrictions on body shapes, but also restrictions on skin color. In addition, when asked what body parts or features she did or did not like to include in selfies and why, this participant mentioned how she would often choose to exclude her hair because that was a body feature she did not consider to be her best. The participant identified as African-American and did not have straight hair. Thus, the fact that the participant stated that Western culture preferred straight hair and she excluded her non-straight hair from selfies because she believed it was not her best feature, suggests that Western culture restricted her agency in selfies by influencing what she believed "looks good". Analyzing these responses in the context of the participant's entire interview suggests she possessed a perceived, rather than true agency because rather than rejecting Western culture, body ideals, her participation in the selfie practice was guided by those ideals, as evidenced by the exclusion of her hair.

Another example of participants' perceived agency is evident in the previous response when the participant mentions how she has the agency to try "over and over and over" to create the perfect selfie so that she looks good. The process of continually trying to create the perfect selfie by taking multiple pictures was prevalent among many participants responses and relates to the previous analysis involving the concept of commodification. Repeatedly trying to create the perfect selfie suggests that women are continually trying to invest in the physical capital of the selfie by improving their physical attractiveness and beauty. As mentioned previously, the goal of investing in the physical capital is to obtain social capital, which is peer feedback and approval. However, while women may perceive they have the agency to continually invest in the physical capital of the selfie, their agency is limited because how they decide to invest in their physical capital is influenced by Western culture's body ideals. For example, as evident in the previous responses above, during the process of investing in the physical capital of the selfie, participants excluded the body features and characteristics that did not adhere to Western culture's standards, such as the hair and breasts. Thus, once again, in reference to Nabeer's definition, women have the ability to create and invest in the beauty of the selfie, but they do not have the agency to invest in the selfie's physical capital because agency implies that they create the selfie in opposition to Western culture's standards. However, analysis of the interview discourse shows how the participants create their selfies based on Western sociocultural standards.

Another example is the idea of the "ugly selfie". In emphasizing their agency and rejection of the sexualized selfie or attractive selfies, many respondents mentioned a preference for taking "ugly" selfies. Some respondents stated they enjoyed taking "ugly" selfies because it was funny and one respondent mentioned:

R: Generally, I'm trying to look as bad as possible with my face…I don't ever

include my body. People get judged really hard for selfies no matter what, if they're

taking them seriously. In my opinion, the only time people don't or when it's an

acceptable selfie is if they're making fun of themselves.

On the surface, the "ugly" selfie appears to be a source of agency for women to reject the

sexualization of their body, however, further analysis suggest the "ugly" selfie is a protective

mechanism. In the quote above, the respondent mentions how people are judged when they take

themselves seriously, as opposed to if they are making fun of themselves and taking an "ugly"

selfie. Participants who were likely to take ugly selfies were also more likely to reject sociocul-

tural pressures placed on the body and report not being affected by receiving no feedback. While

taking "ugly" selfies aligns with those participants rejection of sociocultural body standards, fur-

ther analysis of the above statement suggests "ugly selfies" was a way to help some participants

avoid the harsh criticism and judgment they may have received if they took themselves "serious-

ly," which participants described as trying to appear attractive. Thus, although participants per-

ceived they had the agency to reject society's standards by taking the ugly selfie, this example

suggests they had the ability to take selfies, but not the agency because the idea of the "ugly"

selfie may have been a way to prevent criticism if the selfie failed to align with Western soci-

ocultural standards.

Furthermore, objectification theory further explains how women's agency is limited. As

mentioned previously, objectification theory focuses on women's experience of being treated as

a "body or collection of body parts that are valued predominantly for its use or consumption by

others" (Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997; Lindner et al., 2012). The "theory posits that girls and

women are typically acculturated to internalize an observer's perspective as a primary view of

their physical selves" (Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997, p.184). In relation to the selfie practice, women's acculturation to self-objectification manifests itself in the process of creating the selfie. According to objectification theory, as women adopt an increased focus on the body their critique of the body will align with its' objectification by the sociocultural system. Thus, objectification theory shows how as women continually invest in their physical capital in order to construct the perfect selfie and receive peer approval, they are ultimately objectifying the body according to Western culture's standards.

Thus, although participants perceived they had agency to choose how they presented their bodies, further analysis of the interview discourse suggests they did not possess true agency because how they developed their selfies was influenced by Western sociocultural standards. Additionally, their selfie development was influenced by their purpose for posting the selfie, which was to be consumed and validated by their peers. Thus, while it is true that selfies may provide women with the ability to control how their bodies are represented, the interview discourse suggests the issue is very complex and, in many cases, their agency is restricted by Western sociocultural pressures.

Chapter 6:

Conclusion

The increasing popularity of the selfie practice and its unknown impact on women warranted a study examining this relationship. The present study aimed to examine an association between the frequencies of posting selfies or viewing selfies of other women, and a woman's self esteem, body esteem, and physical appearance comparison score, perception of self, and beliefs about society's expectation of women's body. Additionally, the study aimed to determine the important qualities or characteristics of a selfie and possible connections between the selfie practice and societal standards of the female body and its' identity.

The combined analysis of the survey and interview results suggests that a generalization about a negative or positive impact of the selfie practice on women would be incorrect. For some women, participating in the selfie practice provided a number of benefits, such as boosting their self-esteem and self-appreciation of their body. Participants also reported participating in the selfie practice provided them with the ability to control how they looked and were represented. For example, analysis of the interview and survey results shows that while the participants believed women's bodies were objectified by men and in society and selfies, selfies provided the ability to control whether or not their bodies were sexualized. Furthermore, selfies were described as a form of "mental maintenance" to help overcome mental health issues. Lastly, participants believed the selfie practice helped contradict the mass media's saturation with ideal images by showing more realistic images of "everyday" women, women of color, women of varying sizes, and women who did not conform to conventional beauty standards.

On the other hand, some participants believed the selfie practice negatively impacted women's body image. In contrast to some participants' belief that selfies were realistic images, others believed selfies did not portray realistic images of the "everyday woman". Instead, some participants believed selfies were deceptively, beautiful images that contained significant amounts of makeup and were heavily edited, photo-shopped, and well-planned. Furthermore, participants believed selfies promoted upward social comparisons between women and produced feelings of inadequacies based on other women's body characteristics and features. Additionally, while selfies may have provided the agency to accept or reject sociocultural pressures placed on the body, the interview analyses suggest this agency was limited by the strong influence of Western sociocultural body ideals. For example, in one of the previous responses a participant mentioned how she was aware that she should love herself no matter what, but struggled with being confident in her body shape because it did not align with Western culture's curvy, body ideal. The participant also mentioned her desire for the curvy, body ideal and how in order to receive peer approval, she believed you needed to adhere to that ideal. This suggests that the participant acknowledged the need to accept her body as is and reject sociocultural pressures, while also feeling the need to accept those pressures in order to receive peer approval. Thus, although the participant had the agency to reject sociocultural body standards, the influence of Western culture limited her ability to reject those pressures.

In addition to limitations on agency, the selfie practice promotes an increased focus on the body as people invest in its' physical capital in order to create the perfect selfie. For example, many participants mentioned how they took many selfies in order to capture a picture that they believed looked good enough to post. One participant mentioned how she sometimes took up to 100 pictures before deciding to post a selfie or sometimes did not post any of them because she

was not satisfied with how she looked. Thus, this example, shows how the selfie practice promotes body critique because those who participate in it believe they have to post the perfect selfie. Additionally, this analysis suggests a distinction should be made between the participant's perceived, positives aspects of selfies, such as their perceived agency, and actual, positive aspects of selfies, such as some participant's exposure to selfies of a diverse group of women.

Overall, these results suggest women's perception of themselves and other women, internalization of an observer's perspective, motivation behind participating in the selfie practice, and acceptance or rejection of sociocultural pressures, as well as the influence of those pressures, affect how the selfie practice impacts women's body image. For example, the participants who internalized an observers' perspective of their body were also more likely to report posting selfies in order to receive approval. As a result, these participants may be more negatively impacted by the selfie practice because their body satisfaction depends on approval from their peers, which is in contrast to the participants who mentioned they did not take selfies to receive peer approval and had a more positive body image. These results align with many participants' belief that whether or not selfies can negatively impact a woman's self esteem depends on the women's level of confidence and motive for taking selfies.

Based on these results, there are many aspects within the selfie practice that can negatively impact women, such as the deceptively, beautiful selfies that have been heavily edited and planned. There are also aspects that help improve women's body image, such as their agency to choose whose selfies they are exposed to on social media. However, while the interviews do not support the initial hypothesis and suggest the selfie practice has positive impacts on women's body image, there are still a number of complex factors within the selfie practice that negatively

affect the woman's body by encouraging its objectification, restricting its' expression, and promoting the body's perpetuation of Western social and cultural body standards.

Whether the motivation behind taking a selfie is to receive peer approval or to appreciate the body, the end result of most selfies is its consumption by others. Since most selfies are mainly posted to social networking sites, this suggests that the selfie is more than just a tool for self-appreciation. If the selfie was only a medium to appreciate the body, there would not be a need to also post the selfies to social networking platforms where other social media users can consume and evaluate them. However, the fact that selfies are appreciated by the person, in addition to being posted to social networking sites shows how, in general, selfies are a form of self-advertisement. Selfies and social networking sites are intertwined because both allow people to advertise aspects of themselves. Selfies, in particular, allow people to advertise certain aspects of their body, such as their best body features, clothing, or other body accessories. For example, one participant who mentioned that she did not need approval on her selfies, also mentioned that she would often post selfies when she was wearing a really nice outfit. This shows how those who state they are not affected by whether they receive feedback or not on selfies are still advertising a feature of themselves to others on social networking sites. This self-advertisement may promote social comparisons as women view the body features, clothing, and accessories of others compared to themselves. Furthermore, these self-advertisements may promote a distorted or biased representation of others because research has shown that what is posted to social networking sites is selectively chosen. As a result, people may negatively view what they posses based on these deceptive and glamorous representations, which may negatively impact their body image. Ultimately, irrespective of a person's motivation for posting a selfie or need for approval,

the selfie practice is a form of self-advertisement that transforms the body into a commodity and advertises certain aspects of people's body.

In addition to the selfie advertising some aspect of the body and promoting the body's commodification, it also promotes the body's objectification and self-objectification. The objectification occurs as the pictures are posted to social networking and consumed and evaluated by others. The self-objectification occurs as the person creates the selfie, but can also be the product of the person experiencing their body's objectification. For example, when the selfies are posted to social networking sites, whether or not the person's main goal is to receive feedback, a common activity on social media sites is to like and comment on aspects of a person's body or clothes within the selfie. Thus, irrespective of the person's motive for posting the selfie, by posting it to a public space, the body is vulnerable to objectification by social media users because commenting and liking selfies is a common practice within social media, which can ultimately lead to further self-objectification.

The selfie practice not only promotes the body's objectification and self-objectification, but it also promotes selective-editing of the body. Similarly to the selective editing of social networking profile pages, selfies are also selectively edited and portrays what the person believes is their best representation. Whether the person is confident in their body or seeking approval from their peers, most people analyze their body features within the selfie and decide whether or not it is the best representation of themselves before posting to social networking sites. By selectively editing selfies and only choosing those that look the best, those who participate in the selfie practice are ultimately validating mass media's message that only the best images of the body are acceptable to advertise. If women only view the best selfies of other women, women may judge their body characteristics and features more negatively compared to the other women's selfies

that are well-planned and heavily edited. Some of the tools available for women to selectively

edit their photos are filters, which affect the lighting and tint of the photograph, and a number of

other tools social networking sites provide for those who post selfies. For example, Instagram,

which is a social media site whose main mode of communication is selfies, provides a number of

tools to edit selfies before they are posted to the social media profile (See Figure 9).
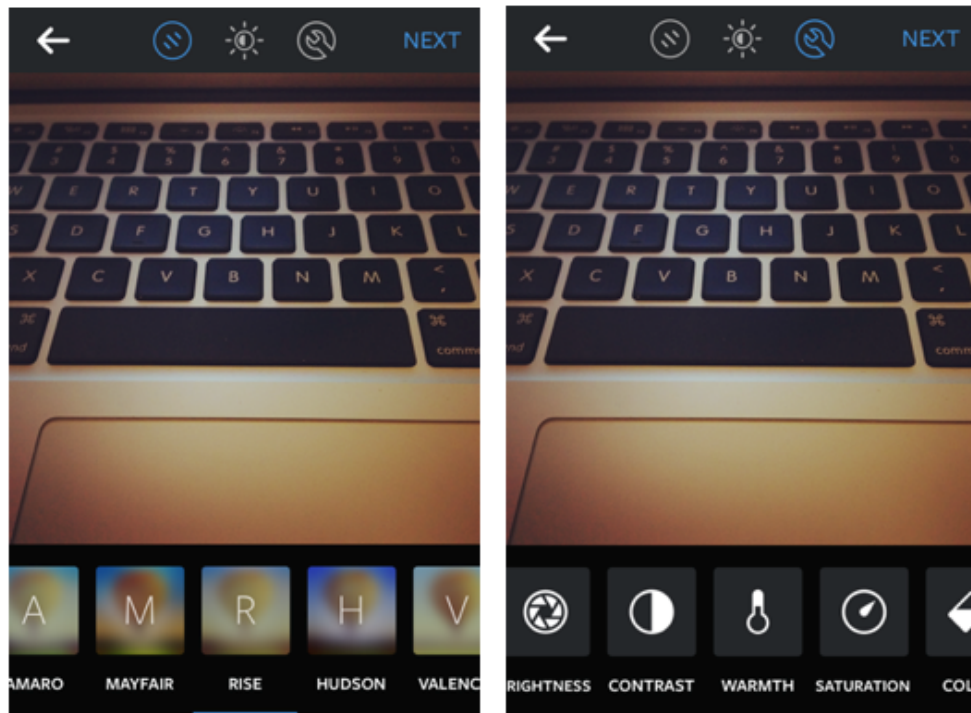

Figure 9. Instagram Editing Options

Although less extreme, selfie editing is similar to cosmetic surgery in that both practices

operate on the premise that the body is an unfinished entity and is something that can and should

be modified in order to adhere to sociocultural standards. Bourdieu's theory on habitus and taste

may explain why Western culture's body standards influence the body's modification and how

women edit their selfies. According to Bourdieu, the habitus is a product of a "person's sociali-

zation and results in lasting dispositions or trained capacities and structured propensities of how

to think, feel and act in determinant ways" (Wacquant, 2005, p.316). Furthermore, the habitus is

a "durable set of dispositions that are formed, stored, recorded, and exert influence to mould

forms of human behavior" (Wacquant, 2005, p.315). The concept of tastes is a "conscious mani-

festation of the habitus and affects people's orientations to the body" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 175-

177; Shilling, 1993, p.129). Thus, in relation to the selfie practice, Western culture promotes the

body as a "cultural plastic" and malleable commodity that "can be continuously upgraded and

modified to meet prevailing fashions and cultural values" (Davis, 1995, p.17). According to

Bourdieu, as a result of Western culture's approach to the body, women will develop a habitus

that is trained to adopt certain orientations to the body, such as viewing the body as a malleable

commodity. Their habitus may manifest itself by promoting activities like photo-editing, which allows women to edit their selfies and "continuously upgrade and modify the pictures" so that they align with Western cultures' body standards (Davis, 1995, p.17). For example, Figure 10 includes selfies that have been edited using filtering techniques on Instagram. The pictures that are often considered more attractive are the filtered images over the original images. Analyzing the images suggest that the reason the filtered images are more likely to be selected as more attractive over the original images is because the filtered images soften and lighten the appearance of the skin and
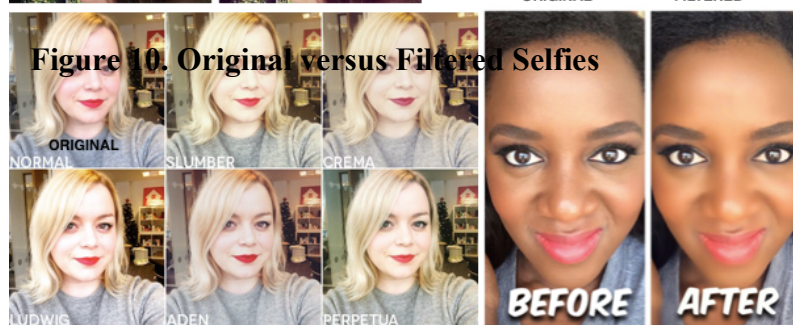
Figure 10. Original versus Filtered Selfies

hides facial blemishes. Thus, the filtering allows the person's skin within the selfies to align with

Western sociocultural standards of the face and skin tone. Another example of selectively editing photographs can be described as the "sexualized" selfie. While the participants within this study reported not posting those types of selfies, a Google search of the "sexy selfie" shows how this is a very common photograph within the selfie practice. Similarly to how women may selectively edit the lighting or filtering of the photo, women selectively edit how their body is positioned when creating a sexualized selfie. For example, in creating the sexualized selfie, women take selfies from the top down to expose their breasts or take selfies in front of mirrors to show their entire body and emphasize features, such as their breasts, hips, and butt. Analyzing these selfies within the context of Davis, Reischer and Koo, and Wiesener-Hanks suggests that the goal of these selfies is ultimately to acquire the interest and approval of men. These selfies ultimately show that while women's place in Western culture has improved, the female body is still used as a commodity that is valued for its consumption by both men that objectify the female body in these images, and women that self-objectify themselves by creating and posting these images. However, it also important to note that while some consider it too extreme to sexualize their body in selfies, some participants mentioned how the way they positioned their body and captured the selfie would be different if they were sending it to a guy they were interested in because their goal was to appear attractive.

Thus, in a way, both the sexualized and non-sexualized, but attractive selfie help perpetuate the idea that the female body is a commodity to be valued by men. Ultimately, analyzing the selfie practice within the context of Bourdieu's habitus' and tastes' concepts suggests the selfie practice and the selective editing involved in selfies is a manifestation of Western culture's socialization of the body as a malleable commodity and restriction of the body as a medium of expression. Thus, as women edit their selfies and bodies within the selfies according to Western

cultures approach to the body, they ultimately promote the perpetuation of Western cultures's body and gender standards.

So while the participants may vary in whether they view the selfie practice as positively or negatively impacting their body image, further analysis suggests there are a number of elements within the selfie practice that restricts and pressures the woman's body in general, while also perpetuating Western body and gender standards. As a result, those standards pressure women to adhere to Western culture's body ideals in order to maintain a certain status and value within Western culture. In addition, similarly to how the increase exposure of women's body parts in the 20th century led to an increase in objectification, self objectification, and promoted body control, selfies advertisement of women and their bodies also increases its objectification, self-objectification, and restriction as a medium of expression. In a culture where consumerism and materialism is very common, these self-advertisements may encourage people to compare what they possess to others and sometimes experience envy or feelings of inadequacy because they may not have those glamorous, body features, clothing, or accessories others may advertise in their selfies. Thus, while the interview participant's may believe that selfies allow them to appreciate their bodies and determine how their body is represented, the selfie practice also promotes a number of other factors, such as objectification and social comparisons, because the selfie is ultimately posted to a medium to receive feedback, which allows others to consume and evaluate the body and compare their body features to these selfies. Overall, the selfie practice involves a combination of complex, Western sociocultural forces that influence how and why selfies are taken and how they negatively affect women's body and body image.

While this study has contributed to knowledge on the selfie practice and its impact on woman, there are a few limitations. First, some analyses could not be conducted due to a small

sample size. For example, due to 75% of participants reporting they posted selfies Once a Week, further analysis of an association between the frequency of posting selfies and women's self esteem could not be conducted. Furthermore, 34 women out of 108 survey participants agreed to participate in a follow-up interview. Of those 34 women, only 10 agreed to participate in the follow-up interview and thus, it is possible that there may be differences between the views of the interview participants and the entire sample.

Despite these limitations, the interview provides qualitative data that are not present in the survey results. While the survey results revealed those who see selfies more frequently than others had a lower, average self esteem and higher tendency of comparing themselves to others, the interview suggested whether or not viewing selfies negatively impacted women varied by women and depended on a number of factors. Thus, this study provides both a quantitative and qualitative analysis of how the selfie practice impacts women's self esteem, body esteem, tendency to compare themselves to others, and perception of self.

These results suggest future research should be conducted on the relationship between the selfie practice and its impact on women. Based on these results, there are a number of potential areas for future research. One area to consider is if there are certain personality traits that may affect whether the selfie practice negatively or positively impacts women. Additionally, future research should examine motives behind women posting selfies and their self esteem, body esteem, tendency to compare themselves to others, and perception of self. Research should also examine whether women believe the selfies posted to social networking sites are realistic images of women or heavily, edited and planned images that portray deceptively, perfect women. Furthermore, an additional analysis performed in the study revealed those who reported seeing selfies always and were in the humanities, social sciences, or arts majors had a significantly low-

er self-esteem and weight concern score than those who were business or math and science majors or those classified as undecided or undeclared. A review of the literature suggests that a reason those in the humanities, social sciences, and arts majors had a lower self esteem was because the subject matters of those majors involved an increased focus on the body than the business, math and science majors, and those classified as undecided or undeclared. Thus, future research should examine what aspects of the social sciences, humanities, and arts majors may have an impact on how the selfie practice impacts women's body image. Lastly, some of the interview responses suggested there is a difference between selfies posted to SnapChat versus other social networking sites, thus future research should examine the differences among selfies posted to different social networking sites and how it impacts women's body image.

In addition to conducting future research, the interview discourse suggests there are certain steps for women who are negatively impacted by selfies. One respondent mentioned decreasing her activity on social media has helped rebuild her self-confidence, self-esteem, and body satisfaction. While she admitted she still struggles with insecurities, she believes limiting her social networking activity has helped her mental health and perception of self. Other respondents mentioned that they improved their level of confidence and body satisfaction by surrounding themselves with others like them on their social media feeds. For example, one participant mentioned how she followed women of color and different sizes on social media and by following those women, she feels as if she is normal and beautiful. Furthermore, other participants mentioned how most of the peers they interact with on social media are there friends and as a result, they do not feel the need to compare themselves with their friends. Thus, similarly to the variability in how the selfie practice impacts women, the approaches to maintaining a positive perception of self while participating in the selfie practice and social media varies.

Overall, this study shows there a number of complex factors to consider when examining the relationship between the selfie practice and its impact on women. As a participant mentioned:

> Selfies are a double edged sword, but if you focus on the positive, it makes people more confident in themselves…it boosts their self esteem and so kind of like perpetuates self love…however, with that, a lot of people compare their selfies with others and if they are good enough or not…it *depends on how the person sees it*.

Thus, on the surface, the study results and participants comments suggests that whether the selfie practice negatively impacts women's body image "depends on they how see it". However, further analysis shows that the selfie practice is a ultimately a form of self-advertisement that aligns with Western cultures values and orientations to the body and perpetuates the gendered and restricted female body.

Chapter 7:

Appendix

Survey Questions

Emory University
Consent to be a Research Subject

Title: The Selfie Phenomenon and its Affect on Women's Self Perception
Principal Investigator: Tichelle Porch, Department of Anthropology, Emory College

Funding Source: No funding is required for the present study.

Introduction

You are being asked to be in a research study. This form is designed to tell you everything you need to think about before you decide to consent (agree) to be in the study or not to be in the study. It is entirely your choice. If you decide to take part, you can change your mind later on and withdraw from the research study. You can skip any questions that you do not wish to answer.

Before making your decision:

Please carefully read this form or have it read to you Please ask questions about anything that is not clear

You can take a copy of this consent form, to keep. Feel free to take your time thinking about whether you would like to participate. By signing this form you will not give up any legal rights.

Study Overview

The purpose of this study is to understand the cultural practice of taking selfies and its relationship to the standards of the female body, changes in societal standards, and women's perception of self.

Procedures

The study will consist of a survey that will be administered through a paper or online survey. The survey should take no more than 20 minutes to complete.
Photos of subjects will also be used if you decide to participate in submitting a photo. Questions on survey will relate to the photo's submitted. With your consent in submitting a picture, the picture may be used in the study and manuscript.

A follow up interview will also be conducted at your convenience, if you choose to participate in a follow up interview. The interview should last no more than 20 minutes.

Risks and Discomforts

The risks to the study are minimal and include possible discomfort during the survey or interview. You have the right to refuse to submit a selfie and answer any question on the survey or interview if it causes you discomfort and you prefer to not answer.

Risk of Breach of Confidentiality

With all research there is a possibility in a breach of confidentiality, however, measures are being taken to minimize this risk. Data will be accessed using a secure network, a password protected computer, and stored on a password protected flash drive. Data will be decoded and key will be stored on paper in a separate, locked location. After the study is over, the key will be destroyed.

Photos submitted may be used in the project's results with the permission of the participant. Those that are not used in the study will be destroyed. While the photo may be used in the final products, such as the publication and presentation, the data from the information submitted in the survey or interview will not be linked to the photo and the photo's will not be identified as a study participant. However, with the submission of photos, there is the risk of identification.

New Information

It is possible that the researchers will learn something new during the study about the risks of being in it. If this happens, they will tell you about it. Then you can decide if you want to continue to be in this study or not. You may be asked to sign a new consent form that includes the new information if you decide to stay in the study.

Benefits

This study is not designed to benefit you directly. This study is designed to learn more about how social media and social expressions through social media in the form of selfies affect women perceptions and self esteem. The study results may be used to help others in the future.
Compensation
You will not be offered payment for being in this study.

Confidentiality

Certain offices and people other than the researchers may look at study records. Government agencies and Emory employees overseeing proper study conduct may look at your study records. These offices include the Emory Institutional Review Board and the Emory Office of Research Compliance. Emory will keep any research records we create private to the extent we are required to do so by law. A study number rather than your name will be used on study records wherever possible. Your name and other facts that might point to you will not appear when we present this study or publish its results.

Study records can be opened by court order. They may also be produced in response to a subpoena or a request for production of documents.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal from the Study

You have the right to leave a study at any time without penalty. You may refuse to do any pro-

cedures you do not feel comfortable with, or answer any questions that you do not wish to answer. If you choose to discontinue your participating in the study at any time you have the option to request that your information not be used in the study.

The researchers and funder also have the right to stop your participation in this study without your consent if: They believe it is in your best interest;
You were to object to any future changes that may be made in the study plan;
or for any other reason.

Contact Information

Contact Tichelle Porch at 5048750775:
if you have any questions about this study or your part in it,
if you have questions, concerns or complaints about the research

Contact the Emory Institutional Review Board at 4047120720 or 8775039797 or
irb@emory.edu:
if you have questions about your rights as a research participant.
if you have questions, concerns or complaints about the research.
You may also let the IRB know about your experience as a research participant through our Research Participant Survey at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/6ZDMW75.

1. Check yes if you agree to be in this study. By checking yes on the consent form, you will not give up any of your legal rights. You may print a copy of this checked consent form for your records.

    ○ ○   ○   Yes, I agree to participate in this study.
    ○ ○   ○   No, I do not agree to participate in this study.

___ _____ _____ _____ _____

2. What is your age?

3. What is your race/ethnicity?

- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- ☐ White
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ Other

4. What is your current major?

[   ]

5. What school are you currently enrolled in?

- ◯ Georgia State University
- ◯ Emory University
- ◯ Georgia Institute of Technology
- ◯ Agnes Scott College

6. What is your gender? (Only females may participate in this study)

- ◯ Female
- ◯ Male

7. Which social networking sites do you typically post selfies to?

- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Myspace
- ☐ Snapchat
- ☐ Other

8. How often do you visit social networking sites?

- ◯ Never
- ◯ Seldom
- ◯ Sometimes
- ◯ Often
- ◯ Always

9. Approximately how many likes, on average, do you receive when you post a selfie to a social networking site?

◯ None

◯ Few

◯ Several

◯ A lot

10. When you post a selfie to a social networking site, how often do you receive comments from your followers or friends on the social networking sites?

◯ Never

◯ Seldom

◯ Sometimes

◯ Often

◯ Always

11. When you post a selfie to a social networking site, how often do you receive positive comments? (Positive comments are comments that affect your emotional state in a positive way)

◯ Never

◯ Seldom

◯ Sometimes

◯ Often

◯ Always

12. When you post a selfie to a social networking site, how often do you receive negative comments? (Negative comments are comments that affect your emotional state in a negative way)

◯ Never

◯ Seldom

◯ Sometimes

◯ Often

◯ Always

13. Approximately how many friends/followers do you have on the social networking sites you post selfies to?

Facebook

Twitter

Instagram

Snapchat

14. On a typical day, how frequently do you see selfies posted by friends or people you follow on social networking sites?

◯ Never

◯ Seldom

◯ Sometimes

◯ Often

◯ Always

15. How often do you visit these social networking sites?

◯ Once a week

◯ Once A Day

◯ 2-4 times a day

◯ 5 or more times a day

16. Do you post selfies...

◯ Multiple times in one day

◯ Daily

◯ Once a week

◯ Twice a week

◯ 3 or more times a week

17. When are you most likely to post selfies (type of social events)?

18. When should you not post selfies (type of social events)?
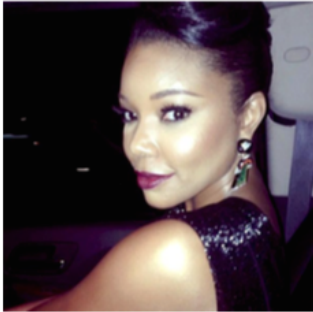
19. Rate the importance of these qualities for a selfie
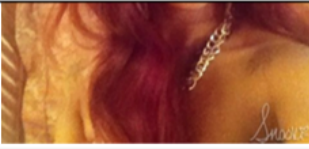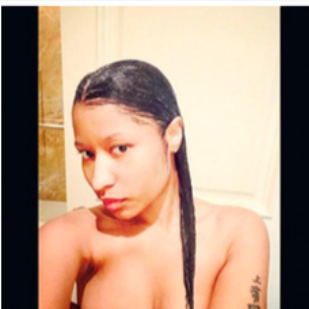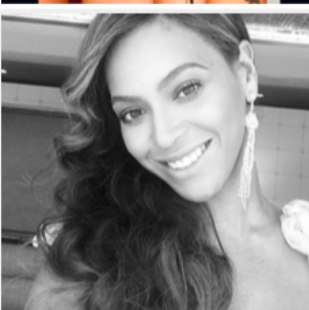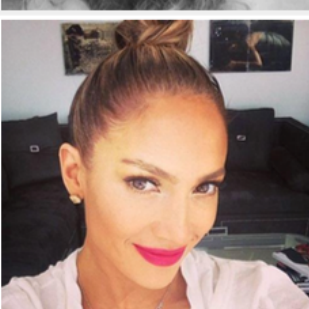
	Not at all important	Somewhat unimportant	Neither important nor unimportant	Somewhat important	Extremely important
Face	○	○	○	○	○
Breasts	○	○	○	○	○
Arms	○	○	○	○	○
Teeth	○	○	○	○	○
Smile	○	○	○	○	○
Neck	○	○	○	○	○
Hands	○	○	○	○	○
Hair	○	○	○	○	○
Eyes	○	○	○	○	○
Upper Torso (above waist)	○	○	○	○	○
Lower Torso (below waist)	○	○	○	○	○
Applied Makeup	○	○	○	○	○

20. Are there other qualities you feel are important to selfie? If so, what are they?

21. Rate the following selfies on attractiveness.

	Very Unattractive	Somewhat Unattractive	Neither attractive nor unattractive	Somewhat Attractive	Very Attractive
	○	○	○	○	○
	○	○	○	○	○
	○	○	○	○	○
	○	○	○	○	○
	○	○	○	○	○

22. What features about the selfies you take do you like?

23. What features about the selfies you take do you not like?

24. Do you ever take selfies without makeup?

Physical Appearance

25. Please read and rate the statements below using the presented the scale rate.

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
At parties or other social events, I compare my physical appearance to the physical appearance of others.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The best way for a person to know if they are overweight or underweight is to compare their figure to the figure of others.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
At parties or other social events, I compare how I am dressed to how other people are dressed.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Comparing your "looks" to the "looks" of others is a bad way to determine if you are attractive or unattractive.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
In social situations, I sometimes compare my figure to the figures of other people.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

26. Please read the following statements that pertain to general feelings about yourself and rate them according to the presented scale.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	◯	◯	◯	◯
At times I think I am no good at all.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I am able to do things as well as most other people.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I certainly feel useless at times.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I wish I could have more respect for myself.	◯	◯	◯	◯
All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I take a positive attitude towards myself.	◯	◯	◯	◯

Body Esteem

27. This question includes body parts and functions. Please read each statement and rate the items using the presented scale according to how you feel about each body part and function.

	Have strong negative feelings	Have moderate negative feelings	Have no feeling one way or the other	Have moderate positive feelings	Have strong positive feelings
Body scent	○	○	○	○	○
Appetite	○	○	○	○	○
Nose	○	○	○	○	○
Lips	○	○	○	○	○
Waist	○	○	○	○	○
Thighs	○	○	○	○	○
Ears	○	○	○	○	○
Chin	○	○	○	○	○
Body build	○	○	○	○	○
Buttocks	○	○	○	○	○
Chests or breasts	○	○	○	○	○
Appearance of eyes	○	○	○	○	○
Cheeks/cheekbones	○	○	○	○	○
Hips	○	○	○	○	○
Legs	○	○	○	○	○
Figure or physique	○	○	○	○	○
Appearance of stomach	○	○	○	○	○
Health	○	○	○	○	○
Body hair	○	○	○	○	○
Face	○	○	○	○	○
Weight	○	○	○	○	○

28. If you are interested in participating in a follow up interview enter your email address below.

[   ]

InterviewQuestions

1. Why do you think selfies are so important in today's society?

2. What is your purpose for posting selfies?

3. Do you experience any negative feelings when you do not receive any feed back on selfies you post to social networking sites? How would you describe your feelings?

4. How would you describe your feelings when you receive positive feedback on selfies?

5. How would you describe your feelings when you receive negative feedback on selfies?

6. What parts of the female body do you feel are objectified in society?

7. What parts of the female body do you feel are objectified in selfies?

8. If a guy had to choose what a woman should emphasize in a selfie, what would it be?

9. What message does the mass media (all forms of communication, television, radio, internet, social media) send to you about what a successful or acceptable selfie must include?

10. What parts of your body do you highlight in your selfies? Why?

11. What parts of your body do you not like to include in your selfies?

12. How many selfies do you take before you are satisfied with the picture?

13. What do you think about some psychiatrists now considering compulsion to take selfies as a mental health issue? Why do you believe this is so?

14. Do you believe women and men equally take selfies or one takes more than the other?

15. Studies in the media on how mass media, such as pictures can negatively impact women's self esteem. Do you think looking at selfies of other women are another avenue to affect women's self esteem?

16. Do you think selfies of other women may affect women's self esteem more or less than mass media's representation of women? worse or better

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