

Does Looking Good Equate to Feeling Good? Examining Selfie Practices, Peer Comparisons, and Self-Esteem Among Instagram Users

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ABSTRACT: This study investigates the complex interplay between selfie practices, peer appearance comparisons, and self-esteem among Instagram users in the United Kingdom. Employing a quantitative survey design, data was collected through structured questionnaires from a convenient sample of 455 respondents whereby the sample size was calculated using principles based on the item response theory. The sample comprised of female, male and non-binary respondents, mainly of ages 18 to 29 who were users of Instagram. Data analysis was conducted using Process Macro by Hayes Mediation Model 4 in SPSS software. Our findings reveal that frequent exposure to idealized and highly curated images on Instagram significantly intensifies peer-to-peer appearance comparisons, which in turn adversely affect users' self-esteem. Key findings also show that direction of appearance comparison has a negative association with drive for thinness and a positive association with self-esteem. In addition, the study introduces the construct of 'drive for thinness' as a mediating variable which refers to a person's inclination towards appearing thin, as measured through items available in existing literature. Grounded in established theoretical frameworks including Social Comparison Theory, Objectification Theory, and the Tripartite Influence Model this research deepens our understanding of how social media shapes body image and self-worth and also provides valuable insights for the development of targeted interventions such as media literacy education or mental health awareness programs. In the context of the relevant underpinning theories, the study provides several implications including how individuals engage in social comparisons within the context of appearance on social media and also how cultural ideals, societal norms, and values shape individuals' navigation of the digital landscape.

Keywords: selfie practices, peer comparison, self-esteem, drive for thinness, digital well-being.

I. INTRODUCTION

The exponential growth of social media on a global scale has led to a growing debate about its potential negative effects and ubiquitous implications. Every day, young adults, especially teenagers, are exposed to peer criticism over their self-portraits on the internet [1]. When the youth see peers, bloggers, influencers, and celebrities with glass skin, slim and thin physique, their minds are wired to believe that being slim and thin is the only beauty standard. This particularly puts women under peer and social pressure to look their best on social media and hence, they often project themselves in ways contrary to reality [2]. Consequently, many young women strive to obtain the degree of perfection which only exists with filters and editing apps. Instagram, as social media platform, provides plenty of features for beautification through filters and effects. These features have completely changed the way people portray themselves online [3] and the peer portrayal of idealized beauty has a very likely chance to affect viewers' emotional and psychological responses [4].

Research carried out previously tends to have a gap in the context of the United Kingdom particularly regarding selfie practices and peer appearance comparisons on Instagram. This study fills the research gap on the study topic by investigating the nexus of selfie practices, peer appearance, and the direction of appearance comparisons, unravelling their collective impact on the self-esteem of Instagram users in the UK. In order to provide a fresh perspective to the existing body of literature, a novel mediator of 'Drive for thinness' has also been added to our conceptual framework. This is a significant contribution as these variables have been studied for the first time collectively in a social sciences research study. A thorough review of the literature establishes the foundation for this research, which employs a quantitative approach to gather and analyses data from a representative sample of Instagram users. The study illuminates the intricate relationship between selfie practices and self-esteem, underscoring the pivotal role of appearance comparisons in shaping individuals' perceptions of self. Peer appearance emerges as a significant determinant, influencing users' self-esteem through both upward and downward comparisons. The findings not only contribute to the academic understanding of digital interactions but also offer practical implications for future research, digital well-being initiatives, and targeted interventions to foster positive online experiences. It advocates for a nuanced comprehension of social media dynamics, striving to empower individuals in navigating the complexities of self-esteem within the contemporary digital landscape.

In light of the above, following are the objectives of our research:

- To evaluate the relation between selfie practices, peer appearance comparison, and direction for appearance comparisons with a drive for thinness.
- To study the role of drive for thinness as a mediator.
- To identify the relation between selfie practices, peer appearance comparison, and direction for appearance comparisons with self-esteem.

II. APPLICATION OF RELEVANT THEORIES

1. SOCIAL COMPARISON THEORY

According to social comparison theory, people assess who they are by contrasting their qualities with those of others [5]. People may engage in social comparison processes as a result of the constant exposure to images and content on social media. In example, selfies which are frequently used to showcase one's physical attractiveness may serve as the basis for social comparison. Research has linked lower levels of self-esteem to social comparison on social media platforms [6]. Researchers have also successfully utilized this theory to explain the connections between internalizing body norms, comparing oneself to others' appearances, and experiencing body pleasure [7]. Furthermore, this theory has frequently been applied as a theoretical framework to clarify the relationship between users' body image and social media [8]. Studies show that women who regularly use social media are more likely to internalize and assess their appearance in light of the idealized representations of women that are published on these platforms [9].

People often compare themselves to others, which may result in body dissatisfaction since social media photographs of individuals often represent society's expectations and are often out of reach owing to the usage of photoshop and other body enhancement/modification techniques [10]. Also, whatever aspect a person is concentrating on is often impacted by unfavorable social comparison. Thus, it is probable that a person's perception of their beauty will be adversely influenced if they are staring at a model who they believe to be more physically appealing than they are [11]. Selfie uploading and editing on social media is a separate part of our use. According to the "self-awareness viewpoint," looking at oneself in selfies would make one more self-aware and self-aware of their imperfections, which might have a detrimental effect on their self-esteem. Also, some people modify their selfies, which has been associated with face dissatisfaction and thoughts of cosmetic surgery [12].

2. OBJECTIFICATION THEORY

The psychologists Barbara Fredrickson and Tomi-Ann Roberts' thesis of objectification, explains how women are often reduced in our culture to their outward appearance and sexual allure. According to the notion, women are typically objectified and seen as things to be examined, judged, and devoured by others rather than as whole individuals with thoughts, emotions, and agency. Objectification may have a variety of harmful effects on females,

including body shame, lowered self-esteem and a higher risk of developing eating disorders. The view of women as being less competent, intellectual, and capable than males may also result from objectification.

[13] contend that objectification is a societal issue in addition to a personal one. They argue that objectification is facilitated by marketing, society norms that place a premium on physical attractiveness and sexual appeal, and how women are portrayed in the media. In the end, objectification theory clarifies the ways in which women are harmed by being objectified and highlights the need for a cultural shift that values women as complete individuals rather than just their physical appearance [14].

3. THE TRIPARTITE INFLUENCE MODEL

In attempt to explain the complex interplay between social, interpersonal, and individual factors in the development of disordered eating behaviors and negative body image, a theoretical model known as the Tripartite Influence Model was developed. The main claim of the concept is that negative body image and unhealthy eating habits can arise from social pressures to adhere to idealized body types, as well as from interpersonal interactions and specific personality traits [15]. Irrational and unrealistic beauty standards can be created as a result of sociocultural influences, such as those supported by peers and the media, which can worsen feelings of inadequacy and body dissatisfaction. These negative feelings may be heightened by interpersonal factors like mocking, peer pressure, and comments from loved ones and romantic partners. Last but not least, traits such as anxiety, perfectionism, and low self-esteem may contribute to the emergence of disordered eating habits and problems with body image [16].

This model suggests that by being aware of and paying attention to these important factors, eating disorders and unhealthy eating behaviors may be avoided. This could entail promoting a greater range of body types in the media, developing positive and supportive connections, and providing resources to help people manage their stress and anxiety as well as raise their self-esteem. Lastly, the Tripartite model provides a useful framework for comprehending the various factors that contribute to disordered eating patterns and negative body image, as well as insights into potential preventative and therapeutic strategies [17].

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media has radically changed how individuals live their lives during the past decade and as a result, our interpersonal relationships have also evolved. The introduction of Facebook gave rise to a new era in online communication as there were not many social networking sites in use at the turn of the century. Users may access a huge selection of social media networks and platforms nowadays. Due to social media's quick rise, it is now an omnipresent and addictive part of contemporary culture [18, 19]. In recent times, many renowned scholars have focused their research endeavors on various aspects of digital marketing and social media, particularly influencer marketing, user comments, source roles and future trends [20-30].

Instagram is a highly popular social networking site, especially among teens as it allows multiple options for sharing photos and videos [3]. One thing that makes Instagram stand out from other social media sites is that users can opt for different filters to make photos look better. Because videos and photos are a direct way of self-expression, they have become a highly valued form of online social currency. This feature has caused a big change in how people present themselves online and peer portrayals of idealized beauty also affect how viewers feel and think [31]. Instagram posts and editing are done by users to attract the attention they want as they need people to believe that they were born this way [32]. However, advocates believe that it takes a lot of effort to shoot the ideal selfie from the best viewpoint [33]. The key issue is that Instagram users can easily modify photos using retouching techniques, and as a consequence, there is a chance that these "perfect photographs" might affect the body image of (young) Instagram users. In addition, celebrities and models establish an unreachable physique ideal when they serve as role models for girls and young women, which is also damaging [34].

Regarding Selfie culture, it has both positive and negative impact on self-esteem of users. On the positive side, selfies can empower people by giving them greater control over their image and how they are seen. Being able to capture and share moments of self-expression allows many to build confidence, especially when they receive affirming feedback from friends or followers. This can be particularly uplifting for individuals who may not have traditionally seen themselves represented in mainstream media. Celebrating personal appearance, creativity, and milestones through selfies can create a sense of validation and self-worth. However, the flip side reveals some

concerning effects. The constant pursuit of the "perfect" selfie can lead to unrealistic comparisons and an overreliance on external approval for self-esteem. Filters and editing tools often create distorted standards of beauty, encouraging people to judge themselves harshly when they don't meet these exaggerated ideals. For some, this can result in feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and even body dysmorphia. Additionally, the pressure to maintain a certain image online can make self-esteem fragile and dependent on social media metrics like likes and comments, rather than internal self-acceptance.

Overall, this study is unique as it yields significant theoretical implications across several academic domains. In the context of the underpinning theories, the study provides insights into how individuals engage in social comparisons within the context of appearance on social media. It advances understanding of the psychological impact of Instagram use in the UK context. Furthermore, knowing users' positioning relative to peers enhances our understanding of the mechanisms behind self-esteem in the digital age. In addition, this study provides several practical recommendations on promoting healthy online behaviors and mitigating negative impacts on self-esteem.

1. SELFIE EDITING PRACTICES, BODY IMAGE & SELF ESTEEM

Selfies, or self-portrait photos taken with a mobile device, are among the most well-liked methods to express oneself on Instagram, a social networking site for sharing photos [35]. Social media users may use technologies like smartphone applications and image filters to alter their selfies and present what they believe to be a better version of themselves to online users. However, the increasing emphasis of selfie culture on physical appearance has increased concerns about the negative effects of selfies on body image.

The way a person thinks, feels, and believes about how they look is what is called their "body image." Having a bad body image means being unhappy, embarrassed, and worried about how one looks. On the other side, having a good body image means accepting, appreciating, and respecting your own body. However, research also indicates that posting selfies on social media might help people internalize thinness norms, which can result in body dissatisfaction and disordered eating habits [36].

Self-esteem is a person's general sense of worth. It is affected by factors like personal accomplishments, social ties and physical beauty, among others. Negative thoughts and actions can also make people feel bad about themselves [37]. Low self-esteem is linked to having a bad opinion of one's own body. Numerous negative outcomes, including eating disorders, profound despair, and anxiety, may result from this [38].

Another aspect that may affect one's self-esteem and body image is media influence. The media promotes false ideals of beauty and thinness while presenting idealized pictures of attractiveness. Being exposed to these pictures might cause one to internalize these standards and become over conscious about their looks [39].

One's self-esteem will decrease if they begin to believe that their unique qualities are less significant than gaining societal acceptance [40-41] and his colleagues did a study, and the results showed that college students who scored higher on social comparison orientation had less confidence in themselves and a more negative view of themselves. Another study found that people's self-esteem went down when they thought that their social media friends had better lives [42].

- H8: There is a significant negative relationship between selfie editing practices and self-esteem.

2. SELFIE EDITING PRACTICES, PEER ACCEPTANCE AND DRIVE FOR THINNESS

The most popular photographic self-presentation technique on social media platforms in recent years, i.e., selfies, have developed into crucial tools for users to express themselves, connect with others, build a feeling of community and assess their body image based on the opinions of others. A study by [1] discovered that people were seen as more socially attractive and competent when they highlighted their successes and good traits (such as travel, fitness, and achievements). Yet the research also found that those who shared an excessive number of "bragging" selfies were seen as being less endearing and more egotistical. Research has also found gender differences in selfie editing practices, social comparison and self-esteem. A study by [14] discovered that seeing selfies of beautiful women on social media resulted in greater feelings of appearance-related anxiety and body dissatisfaction among young women than reading non-appearance-related information. Young males, however, did not report the same outcomes. This shows that social comparison and selfie behavior may affect different genders in various ways.

Peer appearance describes the outward look of people in one's network or social circle. It includes how individuals exhibit themselves in terms of their physical size and form, as well as how they dress and style their hair. Individuals'

opinions regarding their bodies, as well as their actions related to body image and weight control, may be significantly influenced by the current social media beauty trends [43]. Peer appearance may have an impact on how people are seen by others and can lower self-confidence and self-esteem. Height, body type, and other characteristics might affect how people are seen by their peers [44].

Media personalities are often seen as the pinnacle of achievement and social desirability, which is why there are specific messages about body weight linked with them. Although overweight actresses and models are sometimes made fun of in the media, their physical weight and attractiveness are usually linked to their success. If women see images of thin women in the media over and over again, they are more likely to accept this as the norm and try to achieve it. Many obese viewers start to feel unhappy when they realize that this thin-ideal is not only possible but also physically possible. If women judge themselves based on these images and hold them up as the ideal for their own bodies, they might be unhappy with their bodies.

Because social media is so focused on interactions between users, it is different from other types of media that have been studied a lot for a number of important reasons. In places like media literacy workshops and public discussions, models and celebrities are often shown to have unrealistic ideas of being extra thin. This is because the well-known ways that images of media models are edited and retouched make it look like the pictures have not been changed. People do not realize that "normal" people who use social media also use similar techniques to control the impression they make with how they present themselves. When girls look at photos of their peers that have been digitally changed to look extra thin, they may think they are comparing themselves to their peers, but in reality, they are comparing themselves to the bodies of celebrities whose bodies they think are unattainable. Girls may think they are comparing themselves to their friends when they look at photos of them that have been changed digitally. Even so, one might think that what these peers show to the rest of the world might not be the whole truth [34].

According to the Tripartite Influence Model of Body Image [45] the most important connection between media use and being unhappy with one's body are internalizing the thin-ideal and making social comparisons based on looks. Studies that support this theory show that women who give in to pressures about their looks and internalize societal ideals of beauty as shown in the media but can't reach those ideals are likely to suffer from low self-esteem. These studies show that women with a lower body mass index or thinness, are more likely to say they are unhappy with how they look [46]. Furthermore, research suggests that women are more likely to compare their appearance to societal norms of beauty in the media, which they often don't meet, leading to disruptions in body image [47].

- H10: There is a significant negative relationship between peer appearance comparison and self-esteem.
- H1: There is a significant positive relationship between selfie editing practices and the drive for thinness.
- H2: There is a significant positive relationship between peer appearance comparison and drive for thinness.

3. DIRECTION OF APPEARANCE COMPARISON, DRIVE FOR THINNESS AND SELF ESTEEM

While peer acceptance has been discussed at length earlier, another important variable is direction of appearance comparison. It relates to whether people compare their physical characteristics to those of others they think are more or less beautiful. Comparing oneself to those who are seen as having a more appealing look is known as an upward comparison, whilst comparing oneself to people who are viewed as having a less attractive appearance is known as a downward comparison [48]. Comparing one's appearance to others is a regular occurrence in daily life, and it may have both good and bad consequences for people. When people participate in upward comparison, they could be inspired to enhance their looks, but they might also feel unfavorable feelings like jealousy and discontentment. On the other side, those who participate in downward comparison may feel better about themselves but may also feel guilty or humiliated for thinking they are better than other people [49].

Several things can affect how someone thinks they look compared to someone else. Some of these are a person's self-esteem and how often they compare themselves to others. Self-esteem is the way people think and feel about themselves it is the overall sense of self-worth or personal value. People with high self-esteem are more likely to think well of themselves compared to other people, while people with low self-esteem are more likely to think poorly of themselves compared to other people [50].

Self-esteem is an attribute that has a lasting effect on a person's growth. It is defined as one's subjective and general assessment of one's value [51]. In addition, because self-esteem denotes self-worth and people also expect ongoing maintenance and growth in self-esteem, they seek self-worth in a variety of contexts and make an effort to live up to cultural norms. The factors influencing one's sense of self-worth span from external to interior factors: social

acceptance, physical attractiveness, superior performance, scholastic achievement, familial support, virtue, and God's love [52].

Adolescent girls go through bodily changes, build their identities, and are prone to feel self-conscious about their appearance and how their peers perceive them as they make the journey to adulthood [53] observed that teenage females use social media to communicate with their classmates and to express their desire to belong to the virtual community. In addition, empirical research revealed that teenage girls' psychological well-being might be negatively impacted by perceived unfavorable peer appraisal on social media.

Girls often get their sense of self-worth from what other people think of them, especially when it comes to how they look and how hard they try to be popular despite pressures from the outside world. People who have a good sense of worth are more likely to see themselves as more beautiful, popular, and capable than others in a variety of situations, especially in the context of visual culture in social media [54]. Individuals with low self-esteem are more sensitive to what they perceive to be criticism from others, are less confident in themselves, and depend on the support of others to feel more confident [55]. Adolescents who have poor self-esteem are more prone to believe they aren't good at anything. This increases the likelihood that when things don't go their way, they will not feel good.

Numerous research studies have demonstrated that viewing images of the thin ideal in publications and on television increases people's propensity to embrace this ideal and compare their appearance to others', which is consistent with the socio-cultural hypothesis of body image disturbance [56]. Women experience issues with how they view their bodies and are subject to eating disorders as a result of this acceptance of the perfect and thin-ideal.

Similarly, objectification theory asserts that women are socialized to self-objectify as a result of the sexual objectification of thin women in the media. Body surveillance, a behavioral self-objectification behavior, entails ongoing self-monitoring of one's physical appearance and raises the likelihood of eating disorders. Several recent studies have looked into how body image worries are linked to social media and social networking sites [57]. Peer interactions, how popular it is to share pictures, and the fact that mobile technology is available all make it very likely that people who use social networking sites will internalize the thin ideal, look at themselves as objects, and compare their looks to those of their peers. To back up this claim, a review of the available research showed a link between the general use of social networking sites and disordered eating as well as body image [58]. From the point of view of sociocultural theory, the Tripartite Influence Model also shows that being thin is a key way that the media affects how people feel about their bodies.

Teenagers can post pictures of themselves that are mostly about how they look on social media. Because publishing this information brings a lot of attention to their looks, it is likely that teens will act in a way that makes them the center of attention while doing this. This makes it more likely for teens to self-objectify, particularly looking as thin as possible [59]. A lot of research has been done to find out what happens when people post selfies on social media sites. [60] discovered that self-objectification and desire for being thin in adolescent girls was connected to the practice of uploading selfies on social media.

However, the type of social media usage also effects users in different ways. For instance, using Facebook may include a range of activities including publishing images, messaging friends privately, reading newsfeeds, and seeing and participating in updates and posts from friends. It's possible that spending a lot of time on Facebook and looking at pictures of friends makes people compare their looks and internalize the thin ideal, which may have a bigger effect on body satisfaction than reading the news or keeping up with current events. Similar to this, Instagram users who follow accounts with a heavy focus on beauty (like models and fitness bloggers, for example) are probably more self-conscious about their looks than Instagram users who follow accounts with a low focus on appearance (e.g., travel).

- H3: There is a significant negative relationship between the direction of appearance comparison and the drive for thinness.
- H9: There is a significant positive relationship between the direction of appearance comparison and self-esteem.
- H4: There is a significant negative relationship between the drive for thinness and self-esteem.

4. DRIVE FOR THINNESS AS A MEDIATOR

Drive for thinness is the feeling or urge to have low body weight and appear slim. Research in this area has caught the attention of many scholars in the current era [61- 62] say that people who are appearance-schematic by nature, care more about their looks and are more affected by things that have to do with their looks, particularly appearing thin. According to this study, such people are more likely to make mistakes in their thinking or make bad decisions

after being socially compared to a beautiful person. Negative body image attitudes and schemas can lead to faulty and incorrect thoughts about one's looks, like exaggerating flaws and only comparing oneself to some people. Some people might use less-than-ideal ways to deal with their physical pain because society compares them to others in ways that aren't fair. Hence, a person's view of their body may or may not get worse when they see pictures of thin people. The central reason for this is peer comparison. Several studies have found that perfectionism is often linked to both a lack of adaptable cognitive coping skills and a lack of dysfunctional cognitive coping skills [63]. Even though there is limited research on the link between desire for thinness and direction of acceptance, there have been some consistent patterns found with the use of rumination and acceptance. Studies that were done not too long ago also found that taking selfies and changing them led to more people being unhappy with their faces, seeing themselves as objects, and having low self-esteem.

In a number of studies, participants were asked to compare their bodies to pictures of very thin fashion models. Next, they were asked to discuss their dissatisfaction with their physical appearance. Following that, the participants were instructed on how to engage in "acceptance" or "rumination" exercises to assist them process the emotions the images had evoked. Refocusing on one's appearance when staring at photos of slender models might make one feel bad about their body, yet accepting oneself can make one feel better.

- H5: Drive for thinness mediates the relationship between selfie editing practices and self-esteem.
- H6: Drive for thinness mediates the relationship between peer appearance comparison and self-esteem.
- H7: Drive for thinness mediates the relationship between the direction of appearance and self-esteem.

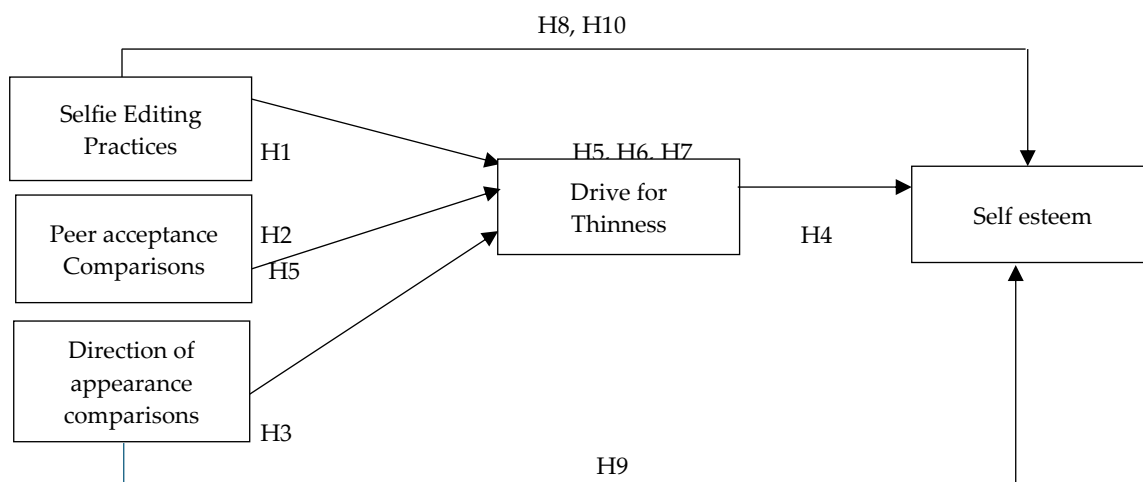


FIGURE 1. Theoretical framework.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Best practices of research ethics were observed during the data collection process including acquiring informed consent, sharing the purpose of the study, maintaining confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents. The questionnaire for this quantitative, hypothesis testing study comprised of 6 sections, i.e., one for demographics and one for each of the variables. The demographics included gender, age, education and estimated household income. A screening question was also added on whether the respondent was an Instagram user. Data collection process included online sources (google forms) as well as distribution of questionnaires by hand.

Items and scales for measurement of variables were acquired through credible research available on the study topic. The variable of 'Selfie editing practices' was measured through the 5-point Likert scale of [52] ranging from (1 = never, 5 = always). A sample item is "Before posting a selfie on Instagram, how frequently do you use photo-editing apps to modify your facial features or body shape?". 'Peer Appearance Comparisons' was also measured through a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "1 = Never, 5 = Always" sourced from [64]. A sample item is "At parties or other social events, I compare my physical appearance to the physical appearance of others." A total of 5 items were used to measure this variable.

For ‘Direction of appearance comparisons’ the scale was adapted from [65]. Respondents were asked the following question “When comparing your body to each of the following people on Instagram, how do you rate yourself?”. The given items/comparative references included Family members, close friends, Instagram friends, Friends of friends and Celebrities. Scale measurement range was from “1=Much Worse to 5=Much Better”. Scales and items for the mediating variable ‘Drive for thinness’ were sourced from [66] ranging from “1 = Never, 5 = Always”. It comprised of 7 items including “I eat sweets and carbohydrates without feeling nervous”. The dependent variable ‘Self-esteem’ was measured through 10 items sourced from the 5-point Likert scale of [67] ranging from “1=Strongly disagree to 5=Strongly agree”. A typical item is “I take a positive attitude toward myself”.

The data was collected from 455 respondents whereby the sample size was calculated using principles based on the item response theory [68]. The sampling method was non-probability convenient sampling. Demographic characteristics included female, male and non-binary respondents living in any part of the United Kingdom who were users of Instagram. Exclusion criteria comprised of respondents below 18 years of age or non-Instagram social media users, for example people who use Facebook only. The setting for the study was a non-contrived with minimal researcher interference categorizing this research as a field study. From a time, horizon and research design perspective, it was a one-shot, cross-sectional study. Data analysis included descriptives, correlation, reliability and process macro mediation model 4 by Andrew Hayes [69] using SPSS software.

Regression analysis is widely used because it provides a powerful way to examine the relationship between variables, especially in social sciences. It is useful for prediction, forecasting, and decision-making which are relevant requirements for our research as well. Despite its strengths, regression analysis has several limitations. It relies on assumptions such as linearity, independence, normality, and homoscedasticity, which may not always hold true in real-world data.

1. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

1.1 Respondent Demographics

Due to inherent nature of the study, 85.1% respondents were females, 14.7% were male while 0.2% (1 respondent) was non-binary. The age distribution, which is showcased in the lower section of Table 1, exhibits significant diversity, with the preponderance of participants (74.9%) falling within the 18-23 age range, totaling 341 individuals. The 24-29 age bracket comprises 19.3% of the total population, consisting of 88 persons. The next age categories (30-35, 36-41, 42-47, and 48-53) show decreasing frequencies, accounting for 2.9%, 1.5%, 0.9%, and 0.2% of the set of data, respectively.

Table 1. Frequency analysis of respondents gender and age.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	387	85.1
	Male	67	14.7
	Non-Binary	1	0.2
Age	18-23	341	74.9
	24-29	88	19.3
	30-35	13	2.9
	36-41	7	1.5
	42-47	4	0.9
	48-53	1	0.2
	54+	1	0.2

1.2 Descriptive Statistics of The Study Variables

Descriptive statistics, as presented in Table 2, offer vital details into the sample's central tendencies and volatility.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of study variables.

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Selfie Editing Practices	1	5	2.825	0.901
Peer Appearance Comparisons	1	5	2.302	0.970
Direction of Appearance Comparison	1	5	3.004	0.799
Drive for Thinness	1	5	2.496	1.204
Self Esteem	1.4	5	3.699	0.697

1.3 Measurement Validation

Cronbach's alpha varies between 0 and 1, where higher values indicate a stronger level of internal consistency [70]. Cronbach's Alpha for each of the variables and respective interpretations are given in Table 3, below:

Table 3. Reliability of scales.

Scales	No. of Items	Cronbach's α Value	Level of Reliability (Interpretation)
Selfie Editing Practices	3	0.529	Moderate
Peer Appearance Comparisons	5	0.804	Very good
Direction of Appearance Comparison	4	0.744	Very good
Drive for Thinness	7	0.907	Excellent
Self Esteem	10	0.883	Very good

1.4 Correlation Matrix

Correlation coefficients quantify the magnitude and direction of the linear association between two variables, varying from -1 (showing a perfect unfavorable correlation) to 1 (representing a perfect positive correlation), whereas 0 signifies no linear link [70]. Table 4 given below depicts the correlation between the study variables, all of which are within acceptable range:

Table 4. Correlation for the study variables.

Variables	Correlations				
	SEP	PAC	DAC	DT	SE
Selfie Editing Practices (SEP)	1				
Peer Appearance Comparisons (PAC)	0.284	1			
Direction of Appearance Comparison (DAC)	0.045	-0.272	1		
Drive for Thinness (DT)	0.217	0.426	-0.124	1	
Self Esteem (SE)	-0.151	-0.325	0.366	-0.276	1

1.5 Hypothesis Testing – Process Macro by Hayes

For the purpose of hypothesis testing through regression analysis, Process Macro mediation model 4 was run thrice in SPSS. This was done to assess the significance of relation of each of the three independent variables, i.e., Selfie Editing Practices (SEP), Peer Appearance Comparison (PAC), Direction of appearance comparison (DAC) with the dependent variable i.e., Self-esteem (SE), while assessing the partial or full mediation effect of Drive for Thinness (DT). Following is the analysis and findings, of the three models separately:

Analysis of model 1:

Selfie Editing Practices (SEP) – Drive for thinness (DT) – Self Esteem (SE)

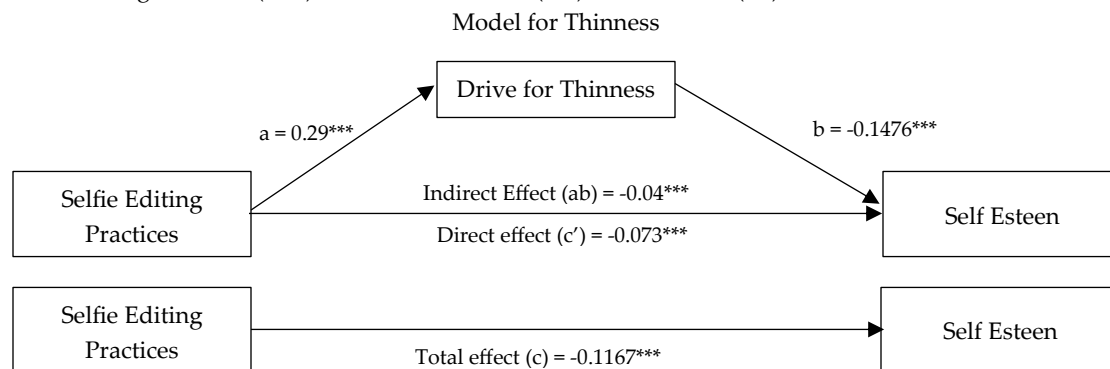


FIGURE 2. Graphical depiction of model 1.

DT mediated the impact of SEP on SE using SPSS Process Macro. a, b, c, and c' are unstandardized regression coefficients; *** p>0.001. Table 5 appended below shows the outcome of the simple mediation model regressing 'Drive for Thinness' as a mediator between 'Selfie editing practices and 'Self-esteem':

Table 5. Outcomes of simple mediation model regressing drive for thinness as mediator (Model 1) (SEP-DT-SE).

Direct Effect model						
Predictor	Outcome=M (DT)					
	R	R-sq	MSE	F	Df1	DF2
	0.2175	0.0473	1.3847	22.4901	1	453
	B	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	1.67	0.1817	9.2176	0.0000	1.3179	2.0321
X (SEP)	0.2907	0.0613	4.7424	0.0000	0.1702	0.4111
Total Effect Model						
Predictor	Outcome=Y (SE)					
	R	R-sq	MSE	F	Df1	DF2
	0.2912	0.0848	0.4462	20.9377	2	452
	B	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	4.2767	0.1124	38.0462	0.0000	4.0558	4.4976
M (DT)	-0.1476	0.0267	-5.5338	0.0000	-0.2	-0.0952
X (SEP)	-0.0738	0.0356	-2.0706	0.0390	-0.1439	-0.0038
Direct Effect Model						
Predictor	Outcome= Y (SE)					
	R	R-sq	MSE	F	Df1	DF2
	0.1509	0.0228	0.4753	10.5614	1	453
	B	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	4.0295	0.1065	37.8464	0.000	3.8202	4.2384
X (SEP)	-0.1167	0.0359	-3.2498	0.0012	-0.1873	-0.0461

Bootstrap Results for Indirect Effect

	M	SE	LL95%CI	UL95%CI
Effect	-0.0429	0.0128	-0.0746	-0.0222

A. Interpretation of results (Model 1):

- For Path a

The coefficient of determination, R-sq, is 0.0473. This indicates that approximately 4.73% of the variability in "DT" can be accounted for by the predictor(s) used in this construct. The Mean Squared Error (MSE) is found as 1.3847, which indicates the average of the squared differences between the observed and projected values. The value is relatively lower which indicates a more accurate alignment between the model and the data. The F-statistic of, 22.4901, implies that the SEP has a meaningful and significant impact on the DT. The statistical significance of these findings confirms that the model effectively accounts for a substantial amount of the variation in "DT," hence bolstering confidence in the association between the SEP and the mediator.

Examining the Direct Effect Model (Outcome = M, DT), as showcased by the path a in the diagram, it is shown that the beta coefficient for SEP is 0.2907, supported by a p-value of 0.0000 which is less than the level of significance of 5%. This demonstrates a statistically significant relationship between the act of editing the selfies and the desire to have a thin body, hence providing support for hypothesis H1. This would result in the acceptance of the H1. Hence, the regression analysis proves that H1 is supported.

- For Path b

In the Direct Effect Model, (Outcome = Y, SE), which is shown by the path b, the Beta coefficient for DT is -0.1476 and a p-value of 0.0000. This demonstrates a statistically significant inverse correlation between the desire to be skinny and self-esteem. Furthermore, the negative magnitude of the beta coefficient indicates a significant negative relationship between the desire for thinness and self-esteem. This is an indication that the increased desire of thinness decreases the self-esteem of individuals.

The coefficient of determination, denoted as R-sq, is calculated to be 0.0848. This value indicates that about 8.48% of the variability in the dependent variable "SE" can be accounted for by the independent variable included in the model. In the present scenario, MSE has been determined to be 0.4462. This result signifies that, on average, the squared discrepancy between the observed and predicted values for the variable "SE" amounts to 0.4462 which indicates a stronger correspondence between the model's predictions and the actual data, indicating a more exact fit. The value of F is 20.9377, which signifies the overall statistical significance of the model. Furthermore, the degrees of freedom utilized in the F-test pertain to the number of predictor variables and the size of the sample being tested. The regression analysis and p value of 0.000 implies that there is support for a positive relationship and H4 is hence, accepted.

- For Path c'

The coefficient of determination, denoted as R-sq, was found to be 0.0228. This value indicates that about 2.28% of the variability in the SE can be accounted for by the PAC. The Mean Squared Error (MSE) value of 0.4753 signifies that there is little variation between the actual and predicted results. The value of F is 10.5614, which reflects the overall statistical significance of the model.

In the Total Effect Model, the coefficient (Beta) for selfie editing practices (SEP) is -0.1167, indicating a negative relationship. The p-value associated with this coefficient is 0.0012, suggesting that the relationship is statistically significant. There is a statistically significant inverse relationship between engaging in selfie editing activities and levels of self-esteem. The negative beta coefficient demonstrates a substantially negative relationship between SEP and self-esteem, which concludes that increased selfie editing practices are associated with lower self-esteem. The regression analysis provides support for acceptance of H8.

- For mediation analysis

The analysis of mediation can be supported as both path a and path b are significant, along with the significance of path c' as well. Both the lower and upper confidence intervals are also negative. This provides evidence for the partial mediation, as some of the variation in the outcome variable is also explained by the indirect path ab, and some of the variance is explained through the direct path as well. This is described as partial mediation and provides us with enough evidence to accept H5, which is DT mediates the relationship between SEP and SE. The analysis provides enough support for the acceptance of H5 of the study.

The mediation model demonstrates that the relationship between SEP and SE is partially mediated by DT. The statistical significance of the routes a (from SEP to DT), b (from DT to SE), c (representing the entire influence of SEP on SE), and c' (representing the direct effect of SEP on SE, after controlling for the mediator) has been established. The results indicate a positive relationship between SEP and DT, whereby a rise in SEP is linked to an increase in DT. Furthermore, this increase in DT is connected with a subsequent decrease in SE. The overall impact of SEP on SE is found to be negative in this study. Model 2 is represented by figure 3:

Analysis of Model 2:

Peer Appearance Comparison (PAC) – Drive for Thinness (DT) – Self Esteem (SE)

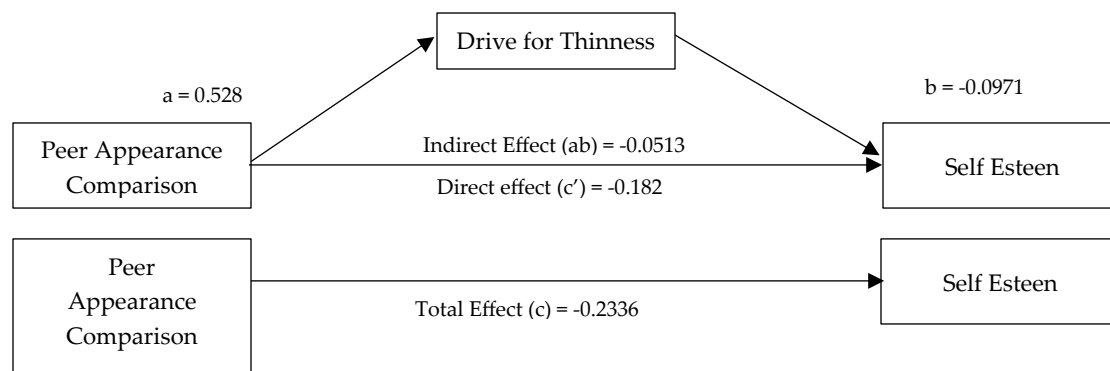


FIGURE 3. Model 2 (PAC-DT-SE).

DT mediated the impact of SEP on SE using SPSS Process Macro. a, b, c, and c' are unstandardized regression coefficients; *** p>0.001. Table 6 given below shows the outcome of the simple mediation model regressing 'Drive for Thinness' as a mediator between 'Peer appearance comparisons and 'Self-esteem':

Table 6. Outcomes of simple mediation model regressing drive for thinness as mediator (Model 2) (PAC-DT-SE).

Direct Effect model						
Predictor	Outcome=M (DT)					
	R	R-sq	MSE	F	Df1	DF2
	0.4256	0.1811	1.1902	100.196	1	453
	B	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	1.2799	0.1318	9.7098	0.0000	1.0209	1.539
X (PAC)	0.5283	0.0528	10.0098	0.0000	0.4246	0.632
Direct effect Model						
Predictor	Outcome=Y (SE)					
	R	R-sq	MSE	F	Df1	DF2
	0.359	0.1288	0.4247	33.4261	2	452
	B	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	4.3617	0.0866	50.3952	0.0000	4.1916	4.5318
M (DT)	-0.0971	0.0281	-3.4603	0.0006	-0.1523	-0.042
X (PAC)	-0.1822	0.0348	-5.231	0.0000	-0.2507	-0.1138
Total Effect Model						
Predictor	Outcome= Y (SE)					
	R	R-sq	MSE	F	Df1	DF2
	0.3252	0.1058	0.435	53.5806	1	453

	B	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	4.2374	0.0797	53.173	0.000	4.0808	4.394
X (PAC)	-0.2336	0.0319	-7.3199	0	-0.2963	-0.1708
Bootstrap Results for Indirect Effect						
Effect		M	SE	LL95%CI	UL95%CI	
		-0.0513	0.0171	-0.0891	-0.0221	

B. Interpretation of results (Model 2)

- For path a

The coefficient of determination, denoted as R-squared, is equal to 0.1811 in the model, indicating that about 18.11% of the observed variability in the variable DT(M) can be accounted for by the model. The residual 81.89% of the variation remains unaccounted for and could potentially be ascribed to additional factors that were not taken into consideration inside the model. The presence of a positive β coefficient of 0.5283 and p value of 0.00 indicates a statistically significant positive impact. This implies that there exists a positive correlation between the PAC and the variable DT whereby an increase in the former is accompanied by an increase in the latter. This provides evidence for the acceptance of H2.

- For path c'

The R-squared, is calculated to be 0.1288, which shows that around 12.88% of the variability observed in the SE variable can be accounted for by the independent variables incorporated in the model, which in this case is the outcome variable. The beta coefficient associated with the predictor variable is -0.1822 with a statistically significant p-value of 0.0000 which shows that a unit increase in the PAC will decrease the SE by -0.1822 units. Furthermore, this finding suggests a statistically significant adverse impact. The observed relationship suggests that a rise in peer appearance comparison is associated with a drop in Self-esteem. Hence, a statistically significant negative relationship exists between PAC and SE. Based on the regression results, the H10 is supported.

- For mediation analysis

Based on the statistical significance observed in all paths, particularly paths a, b, and c', it is justifiable to posit that there exists empirical evidence supporting the mediation effect. In addition, both the lower and upper confidence intervals are also negative. The importance of these paths indicates that the observed fluctuations in the dependent variable are impacted by both the direct path (c') and the indirect path (ab), which supports the put-forward mediation hypothesis (Hypothesis 6). Therefore, it is suitable to classify this mediation as partial, as it suggests that both direct and indirect factors are influencing the observed alterations in the outcome variable. The results of the study provide enough statistical evidence for the acceptance of hypothesis 6. Figure 4 depicts Model3:

Analysis of Model 3:

Direction of Appearance Comparison (DAC) – Drive for Thinness (DT) – Self Esteem (SE)

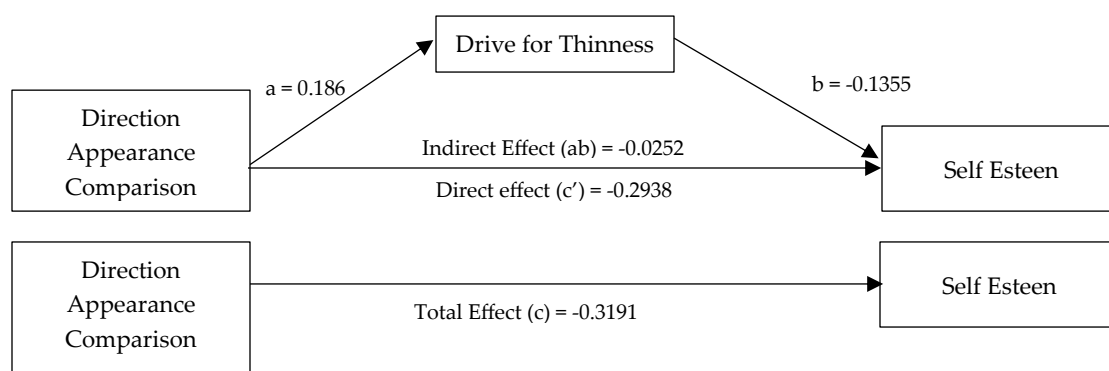


FIGURE 4. Model 3 (DAC-DT-SE).

DT mediated the impact of SEP on SE using SPSS Process Macro. a, b, c, and c' are unstandardized regression coefficients; *** p>0.001. Table 7 displays the outcome of the simple mediation model regressing 'Drive for Thinness' as a mediator between 'Direction of appearance comparisons and Self-esteem.

Table 7: Outcomes of simple mediation model regressing drive for thinness as mediator (Model 3) (DAC-DT-SE).

Direct Effect model						
Predictor	Outcome=M (DT)					
	R	R-sq	MSE	F	Df1	DF2
	0.1235	0.0153	1.4312	7.0175	1	453
	B	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.0554	0.2185	13.9858	0.0000	2.6261	3.4847
X (DAC)	-0.1862	0.0703	-2.6491	0.0084	-0.3243	-0.0481
Direct effect Model						
Predictor	Outcome=Y (SE)					
	R	R-sq	MSE	F	Df1	DF2
	0.4334	0.1879	0.3959	52.2816	2	452
	B	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.1555	0.1375	22.9509	0.0000	2.8853	3.4257
M (DT)	-0.1355	0.0247	-5.4844	0.0000	-0.1841	-0.087
X (DAC)	0.2938	0.0373	7.887	0.0000	0.2206	0.367
Total Effect Model						
Predictor	Outcome= Y (SE)					
	R	R-sq	MSE	F	Df1	DF2
	0.3658	0.1338	0.4213	69.9913	1	453
	B	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	2.7414	0.1185	23.1279	0.000	2.5084	2.9743
X (DAC)	0.3191	0.0381	8.3661	0	0.2441	0.394
Bootstrap Results for Indirect Effect						
			M	SE	LL95%CI	UL95%CI
Effect			0.0252	0.0123	0.0046	0.0518

C. Interpretation of results (Model 3)

- For path a

The R-squared was determined to be 0.0153, which suggests that approximately 1.53% of the variability in the Drive for Thinness can be accounted for by the DAC. The constant exhibits a β factor of 3.0554 and a p-value of 0.0000, suggesting that it possesses statistical significance. The predictor variable DAC which represents the Direction of Appearance Comparison, expresses a statistically significant negative effect on the Drive for Thinness variable. This is evidenced by a β coefficient of -0.1862 and a p-value of 0.0084.

In summary, there exists a negative association between DAC and the DT. Both the constant term and DAC exhibit low p-values which are less than the level of significance, suggesting a high level of statistical significance. Finally, it can be summarized that the variables have a negatively significant relationship. Based on the results of the analysis, H3 is supported by the results of this research.

- For path c

The examination of the Total Effect Model, specifically focusing on the outcome variable of "Self Esteem (SE)," yields significant findings. The coefficient of determination, which is 0.1338 in this case, indicates that around 13.38% of the variability in the "Self Esteem (SE)" variable can be explained by DAC. In addition, the coefficient of the constant term, denoted as β , is estimated to be 2.7414 with a p-value of 0.0000 suggests strong statistical significance and also reveals a highly significant relationship between the constant term and the dependent variable. The predictor variable, DAC, demonstrates a substantial positive impact, as seen by its β coefficient of 0.3191 and a p-value of 0.0000. These findings indicate a statistically significant association between the Direction of Appearance Comparison and Self Esteem. Hence, it may be inferred that within the framework of the Total Effect Model, there

exists a favorable relationship between the Direction of Appearance Comparison and Self Esteem. The results of the research support the H9 to conclude the positive relationship between the DAC and SE.

- For mediation analysis

When there is statistical significance observed in both the direct and indirect channels, it provides support for the notion of mediation. In addition, both the upper and lower confidence intervals are also positive. Within the framework of mediation analysis, the central aim is to ascertain the extent to which a mediating variable, in this case, Drive for Thinness (DT), contributes to the understanding of the relationship between the predictor variable, DAC, and the dependent variable, SE. The presence of a strong and meaningful relationship between them is evident in the direct path observed. This suggests that DAC and SE are inherently linked, regardless of the mediator variable (DT), hence supporting the notion that DAC has a direct impact on SE.

The identification of a notable indirect pathway suggests that the mediator variable (DT) may partially or totally explain the relationship between DAC and SE. This highlights the concept that Drive for Thinness (DT) acts as an intermediary factor in the connection between the aforementioned variables. Overall, the results support the hypothesis that DT serves as a mediator in the context of the relationship between DAC and SE. The results of this study are consistent with the proposed H7 hypothesis. The coexistence of substantial direct and indirect pathways provides robust evidence in favor of this mediation concept. The results of the regression analysis support the acceptance of H7 to conclude DT as the mediating variable between the relationship of DAC and SE. Hence, we conclude that all our hypotheses are supported.

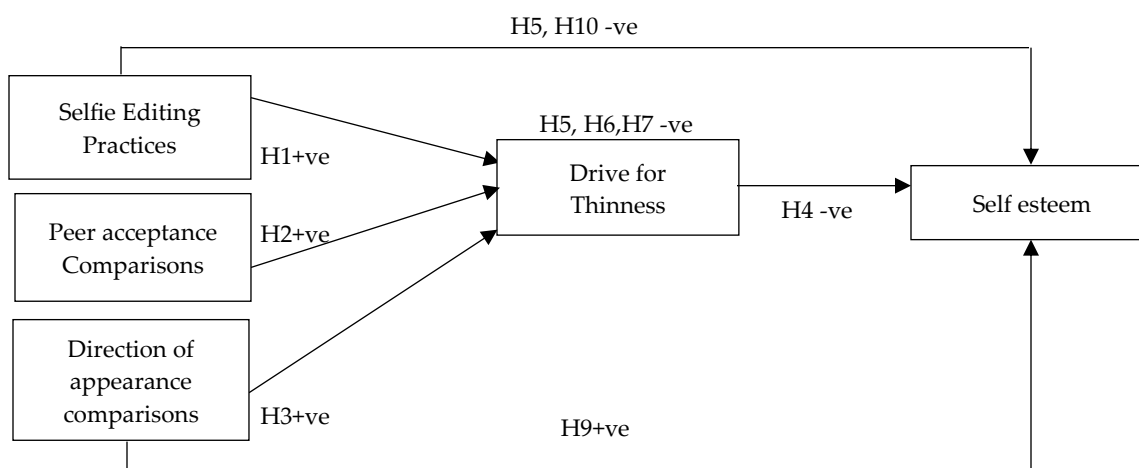


FIGURE 5. Mediating role of drive for thinness between appearance comparisons and self-esteem.

V. DISCUSSION

The influence of Selfie Editing Practices, peer appearance, and the direction of appearance comparisons on self-esteem within the context of Instagram use is a multifaceted and culturally rooted topic. In exploring the interconnected dynamics of these variables, this study aimed to unravel the psychological impact on users in the United Kingdom. Self-editing practices are crucial in forming one's sense of self-worth because they are characterized by the feeling of appreciation from others.

The research compliments earlier studies on the subject in many areas including presentation of a well-chosen version of oneself can, for example, boost self-esteem particularly if it stems from social media stars or influencers [71]. On the other hand, studies also show that an overemphasis on receiving likes and comments from others can result in a dependence on digital validation and may even exacerbate poor sexual self-perception [72]. However, in comparison to other studies, our research adds another level of intricacy by the impact of peer appearances on Instagram. Even though social media platforms give users the chance to get ideas from their friends, frequent exposure to idealized photos might cause negative social comparisons. Self-esteem problems can arise when people

start evaluating their own value in relation to other people's perceived success or attractiveness. It is essential to comprehend how users perceive and absorb these peer effects in order to determine the psychological effects.

Furthermore, the equation is further complicated by the direction in which users compare their appearance that is, whether they rate themselves negatively or favorably. Self-esteem may be raised by comparing oneself to those who are viewed as relatively less attractive, but negative self-perceptions might result from comparing oneself to those who are thought to be more attractive or successful. These comparison inclinations may be greatly influenced by cultural variables, which introduces additional complexity that has to be investigated.

The research is further enhanced by the cultural backdrop of the study, which included people from the United Kingdom. Social media's influence on self-perception, cultural standards of attractiveness, and societal conventions all play a part in how people view themselves. A fuller knowledge of the various ways that society norms and values affect users' self-esteem can be gained by investigating these cultural aspects in further detail.

VI. CONCLUSION

This research has studied in detail, the relationship between Selfie Editing Practices, peer appearance, and the direction of appearance comparisons, and their collective impact on the self-esteem of Instagram users in the United Kingdom with the mediating role of drive for thinness. Several important conclusions have been reached as a result of a thorough review of pertinent literature, a methodologically sound research design, and a careful examination of the results.

It is critical that we acknowledge the wider ramifications of these results as we move forward. Instagram and other social media platforms have become essential parts of contemporary life, influencing how people view themselves and other people. This study urges further research and the creation of interventions that encourage healthy online activity. It also adds to the expanding body of literature that aims to understand the psychological impact of such platforms.

1. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

While the study provides valuable insights into the influence of Selfie Editing Practices, peer appearance, and the direction of appearance comparisons on the self-esteem of Instagram users in the UK and Pakistan, it is crucial to acknowledge certain limitations that may impact the generalizability and interpretation of the findings. First of all, the study focused exclusively on Instagram users in the UK. Hence, it potentially limits the generalizability of findings to a broader population. Cultural, demographic, and regional variations in Selfie Editing Practices and appearance ideals may not be fully captured. In addition, the sample size was limited due to specific focus on users of one social media platform only and minimum level of respondent biasedness may exist due to the highly personal nature of the study topic. The research design adopted a cross-sectional approach, capturing data at a specific point in time. This limits the ability to establish causation or examine the dynamics of change over time. A longitudinal study would provide a deeper understanding of the relationships investigated. Another limitation is that given the rapidly evolving nature of social media platforms, particularly Instagram, there may have been changes in features, user behavior, or platform policies that occurred during or after the study.

While the study explored the influence of Selfie Editing Practices and appearance comparisons, it may not fully capture the broader social and cultural contexts in which these behaviors occur. A more in-depth qualitative exploration could provide richer insights into the lived experiences of participants. Exploring how different demographic factors intersect with Selfie Editing Practices and appearance comparisons represents another promising future direction. Understanding how age, gender, socioeconomic status, or other demographic variables influence these dynamics could uncover disparities in the impact of social media on various user segments. Such insights would be invaluable for tailoring interventions and support systems to specific user demographics.

Considering the increasing influence of influencers and celebrities on social media platforms, particularly Instagram, future research could delve into their impact on appearance standards. Understanding how users perceive and emulate these figures can illuminate the role of parasocial relationships in shaping self-esteem, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the social dynamics at play. Future research can also focus on new contemporary variables such as users initial self-confidence or type of content they engage with. In addition, there are several other social media platforms which have their own dynamics. For example, other studies can focus on Tik Tok, X (formerly known as twitter) and Snapchat, among others.

2. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

In light of the study's practical implications, there are several recommendations to promote healthy online behavior and mitigate negative impact on self-esteem. Firstly, it is recommended to conduct digital well-being initiatives and educational programs in the UK whereby schools, communities, and digital platforms may collaborate to promote healthy online behavior, emphasizing positive self-esteem and mental health. The integration of media literacy education in schools and community programs can help individuals, especially the youth, to develop critical thinking skills in navigating social media. This education can empower users to understand and resist the societal pressures associated with appearance comparisons. Other social media platforms may use the findings to refine their policies and features. Implementing features that promote positive interactions and discourage negative comparisons could contribute to a healthier online environment. Mental health support services in the UK may incorporate insights from the study to better address the challenges posed by social media. Counselling services can be tailored to help individuals cope with the impact of appearance comparisons on self-esteem. Community workshops and awareness campaigns can be organized to inform individuals in about the potential impact of social media on self-esteem. These initiatives can provide practical tips for fostering a healthy online presence. Lastly, in light of the evolving realm of technology, developing and testing technological interventions, such as AI-driven tools promoting body positivity or filtering out harmful content, could be a proactive step toward creating a more supportive and nurturing online environment.

3. THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

This research yields significant theoretical implications across several academic domains. In the context of Social Comparison Theory, the study provides insights into how individuals engage in social comparisons within the context of appearance on social media. Understanding users' positioning relative to peers enhances our understanding of the mechanisms behind self-esteem in the digital age. Moving to Self-Presentation Theories, findings from this research inform and extend self-presentation theories, such as Goffman's dramaturgical perspective. By examining motivations behind Selfie Editing Practices and the impact of peer appearances, the study deepens our understanding of how individuals strategically present themselves online to manage impressions and boost self-esteem.

In the realm of Cultural Psychology, incorporating a cross-cultural perspective, the study contributes by highlighting how cultural ideals, societal norms, and values shape individuals' navigation of the digital landscape. This adds a deeper understanding on how culture influences self-esteem processes in the context of social media. Considering Media Effects Theories, this research has implications, particularly related to the impact of media exposure on individuals' perceptions of self and others. It adds granularity to our understanding of how exposure to idealized images on Instagram influences self-esteem and contributes to discussions on the consequences of media consumption. Finally, the research adds to the Uses and Gratifications Theory by examining how users actively utilize Instagram for the goal of self-presentation and how this activity affects their self-esteem. Our theoretical comprehension of user motives in online environments can be improved by comprehending the satisfactions gained from social comparison and selfie editing practices. To summarize, this research has theoretical implications that extend across multiple psychological and sociological frameworks, contributing to our comprehension of the complex dynamics of self-esteem in the digital era. In addition to advancing theoretical frameworks, these contributions open up new avenues for future research projects that aim to understand the intricacies of human behavior in the always changing social media world.

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Authors Contribution

All authors made an equal contribution to the development and planning of the study.

Conflict of Interest

The authors have no potential conflicts of interest or such divergences linked to this research study.

Data Availability Statement

Data are available from the authors upon request.

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