Jan Flan

Ms. Cakesworth

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The Media's Effect on Body Image

According to a study conducted by the Florida House Experience in 2011, among 1,000 men and women "eighty-seven percent of women and sixty-five percent of men compare themselves to the images they see on social media". This has a drastic impact on many individuals' body image. The media affects body image by influencing the way people perceive their bodies, causing mental health issues like eating disorders, and providing unwanted negative feedback.

Mainstream media affects the way all people perceive their bodies. "Social media has become a critical part of our everyday lives, with numerous sources saying that these platforms are to blame for instilling insecurities in individuals" (Adkins). Research shows that media exposure affects how individuals compare themselves and their bodies to influencers seen on many social media platforms. "For everyone, social media can cause individuals to have a negative body image and degrade their self-confidence" (Milmoe). Social media gives people something to compare themselves to that can never be lived up to or matched.

Secondly, social media causes mental health issues. Studies have found a strong link between social media and mental illness; in fact, one of the leading causes of eating disorders and body dysmorphia is social media. "With the rising popularity of social media, photoshopped images of the "ideal" body are made readily available through the internet, shaping society's concept of beauty" (Staff). The influencers that appear on social media are set to unattainable and unrealistic standards. These become expectations, which can cause people to think that they need to change themselves to

meet them. Body dysmorphic disorder is a disorder that is becoming more and more common in connection with social media use. Many social media platforms advertise dieting products and exercise methods, which further increases the potential for people to develop body dissatisfaction, as these methods are not going to work for every body type.

Finally, social media provides unwanted negative feedback. There are many trolls on social media that criticise and degrade people for numerous things. This is a form of cyberbullying and can become quite serious. Even after all of the advertisements for unnecessary products and the struggling with self-body shaming, people can finally post something they are proud of and still be attacked. "Being exposed to judgement and pessimism at an early age is damaging emotionally" (Adkins). The unwanted comments towards people who have tried extremely hard to reach the perfect standard, degrades self-confidence because it is one thing to self-criticise but it is another to receive outside criticism. The negative feedback received from trolls on social media can drastically affect body image.

The media influences the way people perceive their bodies, causes mental health concerns, and provides negative outside feedback. People start to compare themselves to others seen on social media, which causes eating disorders and many insecurities. Mainstream media affects the body image of all people in many ways.

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