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The Role of Social Media in Body Image Distortion among Female Students: A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Social media has become an integral part of adolescent life, providing diverse content that shapes how teenagers perceive their bodies and appearance. Exposure to ideal body standards, social comparison, photo filtering and editing, and body shaming can increase the risk of body dissatisfaction and distortion among adolescent girls. This study aims to analyze the influence of social media on body image distortion in female adolescents and identify the mechanisms and underlying factors influencing this relationship as a foundation for developing guidance and counseling services. Employing a literature review design, this study analyzes and synthesizes relevant prior research on social media, adolescent body image, social comparison, beauty standards, self-esteem, self-acceptance, and mental health. Data were analyzed using a descriptive-synthetic approach by identifying patterns, themes, similarities, differences, and implications of previous empirical findings. The results indicate that social media contributes to body image distortion primarily through appearance-based content exposure, social comparison, internalization of ideal body standards, and unrealistic body representation resulting from photo filters and editing tools. Body image distortion is linked to low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, and maladaptive health behaviors. However, the impact of social media is multifaceted, as it is moderated by content characteristics, usage patterns, self-esteem, self-acceptance, social support, and media literacy. Preventing body image distortion among female adolescents requires a comprehensive approach by fostering media literacy, self-acceptance, self-esteem, social comparison management skills, and healthy social media usage. In educational settings, guidance and counseling services play a strategic role in developing preventive measures and interventions to help adolescents cultivate a positive body image and adaptively navigate appearance pressures in digital environments.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an essential aspect of adolescent life, serving not only as a platform for communication and entertainment but also as a space for constructing self-perception, identity, and attitudes toward physical appearance. The evolution of visual-based social media platforms, such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube, continuously exposes adolescents to photos and videos displaying specific body shapes and beauty standards. The widespread use of digital media among adolescents positions social media as a potent social environment influencing their psychosocial development. In this context, exposure to public figures, celebrities,

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influencers, and content depicting ideal bodies can establish appearance standards that adolescents use as benchmarks to evaluate themselves (Jannah, 2020; Mahon & Hevey, 2021).

Body image development during adolescence constitutes a vital component of self-concept formation and adjustment to physical changes. Body image refers to how individuals perceive and evaluate their physical selves, which can evolve positively or negatively. A healthy body image is characterized by an individual's ability to accept physical characteristics realistically without relying on external appearance standards as the sole metric of self-worth. Conversely, a negative body image arises when individuals experience dissatisfaction with their body shape or appearance and feel compelled to alter themselves to align with societal standards. This issue is particularly pronounced among female adolescents, as they engage more frequently with appearance- and body-focused social media content than their male peers. Consequently, critical media evaluation skills are necessary for adolescents to prevent exposure to ideal body standards from escalating into negative self-evaluations.

The problem intensifies when social media repeatedly promotes ideal, lean, proportional, and seemingly flawless body representations that rarely reflect realistic physical conditions. Adolescents frequently compare their physical appearance to figures perceived as more attractive on social media, triggering body dissatisfaction. Prior research indicates that adolescents aspiring to achieve specific physical traits face a higher risk of body dissatisfaction, particularly when benchmarked against unattainable standards (Toselli et al., 2021). Idealized body representations can also prompt adolescents to adopt drastic measures to modify their weight or physical appearance, which under certain conditions leads to body image disorders and unhealthy behaviors (Arulmohi et al., 2017). These consequences extend beyond physical perception, contributing to low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, eating disorders, and various other psychological difficulties (Lubis et al., 2020; Tenkorang & Okyere, 2022).

Numerous studies demonstrate a strong connection between social media exposure and body image issues in adolescents. Tiggemann and Slater showed that female adolescents who frequently access social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook tend to experience higher levels of dissatisfaction with their physical appearance due to repeated exposure to ideal body images. Active engagement with appearance-related content—such as liking or commenting on idealized body photos—further amplifies the inclination to engage in social comparison. Moreover, photo filtering and editing applications construct appearance standards that are increasingly unachievable in real life (Kurniasari, 2023; Nurhidayah, 2022). Other research indicates that appearance-focused content on TikTok heightens body dissatisfaction, although contrasting findings suggest that TikTok usage under specific circumstances can enhance user self-confidence (Mink & Szymanski, 2022; Fauziah, 2019). These divergent findings demonstrate that social media's impact on body image is not straightforward; rather, it depends on content types, user engagement patterns, and how adolescents process appearance-related information.

Although previous studies provide evidence regarding the relationship between social media and body image, existing findings remain fragmented across various dimensions, such as usage intensity, exposure to ideal bodies, appearance comparison, filter usage, and psychological factors like self-esteem and self-acceptance. Some studies emphasize the impact of visual exposure, whereas others highlight user interaction and social comparison mechanisms. Conversely, protective factors such as social support and critical media literacy skills can mitigate these negative effects. Therefore, an integrative review is needed to synthesize these diverse findings and provide a comprehensive understanding of how social media exposure contributes to body image distortion among female adolescents. This integration is crucial, as empirical evidence reveals that social media functions not merely as a passive source of body standards, but as an active social environment where adolescents continuously evaluate and compare their appearance.

Investigating social media's impact on body image is increasingly vital, given that body image distortion in adolescents carries significant implications for psychological well-being and behavioral outcomes. Body dissatisfaction can manifest as negative self-evaluations, diminished self-esteem, anxiety, depression, unhealthy dieting, excessive exercise, and clinical eating disorders (Grabe et al., 2008; Fardouly et al., 2015). Furthermore, negative comments and online body shaming exacerbate adolescents' negative body perceptions (Holland & Tiggemann, 2016). Thus, scholarly perspectives must extend beyond viewing social media solely as a risk factor by incorporating protective elements such as self-acceptance, social support, and media literacy. Within school guidance and counseling contexts, this comprehensive understanding provides a foundation for developing preventive strategies, including self-esteem enhancement, critical media thinking skills, body image group counseling, and healthy media usage education (Perloff, 2014). This literature study contributes by synthesizing research findings on social media exposure, ideal body standards, social comparison, photo filtering, and the psychosocial factors associated with body image distortion in female adolescents.

Based on the aforementioned rationale, this study aims to analyze the influence of social media exposure on body image distortion among female adolescents, identify the underlying mechanisms, and examine factors that moderate these effects based on prior research. This study was conducted through a literature review, critically analyzing relevant scientific sources on social media, body image, body dissatisfaction, adolescent development, and associated psychosocial factors.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a literature review design with a descriptive-analytic approach. A literature review was utilized to identify, examine, compare, and synthesize various written sources relevant to the influence of social media on body image distortion in adolescents. The reviewed sources included books, journal articles, and previous research discussing social media, body image, body dissatisfaction, adolescent development, as well as psychosocial factors related to body image. A literature review was chosen because this study focuses on understanding and synthesizing existing research findings rather than collecting primary data from respondents.

2.2 Research Subject

The subject of this study comprised scientific literature addressing the relationship between social media and body image among adolescents, particularly female adolescents or junior high school female students. The scope of the study was directed toward several key aspects: (1) adolescents' exposure to social media content displaying ideal body standards; (2) appearance comparison with other users, celebrities, and influencers; (3) the use of photo filters and editing applications; (4) body dissatisfaction and body image distortion; and (5) factors that potentially exacerbate or mitigate the impact of social media, such as self-esteem, self-acceptance, social support, and media literacy.

2.3 Data Collection

The research data consisted of secondary data gathered through searching and reviewing written sources relevant to the research topic. Data sources included books, journal articles, and prior research used to obtain information on body image concepts, adolescent developmental characteristics, social media usage, ideal body standards, and the psychological impacts of body dissatisfaction. The data collection process involved several stages: (1) defining the research scope based on the research problem; (2) identifying relevant literature sources; (3) reading and reviewing source content; (4) recording information related to the focus of the study; and (5) categorizing information based on predefined themes. Literature that lacked direct relevance to social media, body image, or the adolescent population was not used as a primary basis in the research synthesis.

2.4 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis with a descriptive-analytic approach. The analysis was conducted by identifying key information from each source, grouping findings by theme, comparing results across studies, and synthesizing them to gain a comprehensive understanding of social media's influence on body image distortion in adolescents. Analytical themes included exposure to ideal body standards, social comparison, internalization of beauty standards, photo filtering and editing usage, body image dissatisfaction, and psychosocial factors related to adolescents' responses to social media. Findings showing similarities, differences, or relationships among themes were critically compared to identify general patterns and variations in previous research. The results were then presented narratively to explain the link between social media exposure and body image distortion, as well as its implications for school guidance and counseling services.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.2 Result

The results of the literature review indicate that social media is linked to the formation and alteration of adolescents' body image perceptions. The reviewed literature demonstrates that this influence is associated not only with the intensity of social media use but also with the types of content consumed, forms of user engagement, and how adolescents evaluate their appearance after exposure to social media. The examined sources encompass research on Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and various visual content mediums displaying specific appearance standards.

Based on the literature synthesis, several main themes emerged: exposure to ideal bodies, appearance comparison, the use of filters and photo editing applications, psychosocial factors, and the impact of body image distortion on adolescents' psychological conditions and behaviors.

Table 1. Synthesis of Previous Research on Social Media and Adolescent Body Image

Researcher(s)	Focus of Study	Media/Aspect Examined	Key Findings	Implications
Tiggemann & Slater (2017)	Social media use and adolescent female body image	Instagram and Facebook; exposure to ideal bodies	Social media use is associated with body dissatisfaction among adolescent females.	Exposure to ideal body images requires attention in body dissatisfaction prevention.
Kurniasari (2023)	Social media exposure and body image disorders	Likes, comments, and photos of ideal bodies	Engagement with ideal body content reinforces social comparison and pressure to meet beauty standards.	Education on social media usage and social comparison management is necessary.
Nurhidayah (2022)	Photo filters and editing	Filters and editing applications	Filter usage can foster unrealistic expectations regarding physical appearance.	Literacy regarding visual manipulation needs to be strengthened.
Mahon & Hevey (2021)	Processing body image on social media	Body content and gender differences	Adolescent females engage more with body-related content and are more vulnerable to negative impacts.	Interventions must account for gender characteristics.
Mink & Szymanski (2022)	TikTok and body image	Appearance-focused content	Appearance-based content can heighten body dissatisfaction.	Adolescents need the ability to select and evaluate content critically.
Fauziah (2019)	TikTok and self-confidence	TikTok platform	TikTok usage in specific contexts can increase user self-confidence.	Social media impacts are not entirely negative and are influenced by context of use.
Febriani & Rahmasari (2022)	Ideal body standards	Images and videos of ideal bodies	Ideal body standards on social media increase body dissatisfaction.	Self-acceptance needs to be reinforced.
Lacroix et al. (2022)	Social media appearance messages	Messages on appearance and ideal bodies	Social media can overemphasize the achievement of unrealistic body goals.	Adolescents must develop critical skills toward media messages.
Lubis et al. (2020)	Body image and psychological well-being	Body image, self-esteem, self-compassion	Body image is linked to self-esteem and overall psychological well-being.	Interventions must address psychological aspects.
Toselli et al. (2021)	Early adolescent body image perceptions	Body perception and physical characteristics	Desires for specific physical traits are linked to body dissatisfaction.	Guidance on body perception should begin in early adolescence.
Tenkorang & Okyere (2022)	Body image and health	Body dissatisfaction	Body dissatisfaction is associated with psychological and health issues.	Prevention strategies must consider health consequences.
Fardouly et al. (2015)	Body image and mental health	Appearance comparison	Body dissatisfaction is associated with heightened anxiety and depression.	Body image interventions must prioritize mental health.
Holland & Tiggemann (2016)	Body shaming and its impacts	Negative comments on appearance	Body shaming exacerbates psychological distress in adolescents.	A supportive social media environment is essential.

Researcher(s)	Focus of Study	Media/Aspect Examined	Key Findings	Implications
Grabe et al. (2008)	Body dissatisfaction and health behaviors	Body dissatisfaction	Body dissatisfaction is linked to unhealthy dieting behaviors and eating disorders.	Preventive measures should be directed toward fostering body acceptance.
Perloff (2014)	Social media and body image	Body perception and social media	Critical thinking skills regarding media content are necessary to mitigate negative impacts.	Guidance and counseling play a key role in preventive interventions.

As shown in Table 1, the majority of the literature demonstrates that social media exposure is linked to increased body dissatisfaction, particularly among female adolescents. Tiggemann and Slater (2017) indicated that female adolescents who frequently access Instagram and Facebook tend to experience higher body dissatisfaction due to repeated exposure to idealized body representations promoted by celebrities and influencers.

However, synthesis results also show that social media usage frequency is not the sole determining factor. Content type and forms of user engagement represent critical dimensions. Active engagement through liking or commenting on ideal body photos, for instance, heightens adolescents' inclination to compare themselves with others.

Table 1 demonstrates that several studies point to a shared underlying mechanism: appearance comparison. Adolescents compare their bodies and appearance to celebrities, influencers, peers, and other social media users. When adolescents perceive their appearance as falling short of displayed standards, negative self-evaluations and body dissatisfaction emerge.

Synthesis of the research highlights that photo filters and editing applications are major drivers in shaping unrealistic body perceptions. Adolescents do not merely consume content portraying ideal bodies; they are also continuously exposed to digital modifications of physical appearance. Nurhidayah (2022), as cited in the review, demonstrated that using filters or editing tools creates unrealistic appearance expectations.

These findings underscore the necessity of media literacy, as adolescents must understand that social media

Based on Table 1, adolescents' responses to social media exposure are not uniform. Self-esteem, self-acceptance, social support, and media literacy act as moderating factors that influence how adolescents process social media content. Adolescents with positive self-acceptance possess a stronger psychological foundation to accept their physical strengths and limitations, whereas those with low self-esteem exhibit greater vulnerability to negative self-evaluations.

Thus, social media should be understood as one contributing factor in body image formation rather than the sole cause. Individual traits and the social environment collectively determine whether social media exposure leads to harmful outcomes or adaptive usage.

Literature findings show that body image distortion carries broader implications for adolescent psychological well-being and behavior. Body dissatisfaction is linked to diminished self-esteem, anxiety, depression, eating disorders, and maladaptive health behaviors.

Furthermore, online body shaming exacerbates negative body perceptions. This indicates that body image issues encompass both psychological and social dimensions that require structured attention within educational settings.

Table 2. Thematic Synthesis of Review Results

Theme	Review Findings	Identified Mechanism	Impact/Function
Ideal Body Exposure	Social media content heavily displays specific body and beauty standards.	Internalization of ideal body standards	Increases body dissatisfaction
Social Comparison	Adolescents compare their appearance with celebrities, influencers, and peers.	Appearance comparison	Drives negative body evaluations
Appearance-Based Content	Photos/videos focus heavily on beauty and physical features.	Excessive focus on physical appearance	Pressures individuals to meet standards

Theme	Review Findings	Identified Mechanism	Impact/Function
Filters & Editing	Photos and body features are digitally modified.	Construction of unrealistic representations	Fosters unrealistic appearance expectations
Content Interaction	Liking, commenting, and engaging with body-focused photos.	Reinforced attention to physical appearance	Increases tendency for social comparison
Self-Esteem	Overall self-worth evaluations dictate responses to body standards.	Self-evaluation processes	Increases or reduces vulnerability
Self-Acceptance	Ability to acknowledge physical strengths and limitations.	Adaptive self-evaluation	Functions as a protective factor
Social Support	Environmental support fosters self-acceptance.	Validation and social acceptance	Reduces psychological distress
Media Literacy	Ability to critically analyze and evaluate media content.	Critical thinking toward visual representations	Mitigates acceptance of unrealistic body standards
Body Shaming	Negative comments targeting physical appearance.	Negative social evaluation	Exacerbates psychological distress
Guidance & Counseling	Group counseling, media literacy education, and self-esteem building.	Development of adaptive coping skills	Functions as preventive and interventional support

Based on Table 1 and Table 2, the literature review shows that the relationship between social media and body image distortion unfolds through interconnected processes. Exposure to ideal body content prompts appearance comparison, which subsequently reinforces the internalization of specific body standards. When adolescents perceive that their bodies fail to meet these standards, negative evaluations arise, developing into body dissatisfaction and distortion.

However, review findings also reveal variations in social media's impact. Mink and Szymanski (2022) indicated that appearance-focused TikTok content increases body dissatisfaction, whereas Fauziah (2019) demonstrated that TikTok can enhance user confidence in certain contexts. These divergent outcomes highlight that social media's effects depend on content type, engagement patterns, and user characteristics.

Consequently, the findings position appearance-focused content exposure, social comparison, and ideal standard internalization as the primary mechanisms driving body image distortion. Meanwhile, self-esteem, self-acceptance, social support, and media literacy represent critical protective factors that must be reinforced to help adolescents interact with social media adaptively.

These findings provide a framework for guidance and counseling services, emphasizing that interventions should move beyond merely restricting social media use to enhancing media literacy, self-acceptance, self-esteem, social comparison management, and critical thinking toward digital beauty standards.

3.2. Discussion

a) Social Media as an Environment for Adolescent Body Image Formation

The results of this study indicate that social media plays a pivotal role in shaping adolescents' perceptions of their bodies and appearance. This influence is determined not only by the duration of social media use, but also by the specific characteristics of consumed content and the nature of user engagement. Visual-centric platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube create a continuous stream of curated images and videos showcasing idealized physical appearances. Consequently, social media serves as a primary benchmark against which adolescents evaluate their physical selves. This aligns with review findings indicating that intense engagement with visual social media correlates directly with heightened appearance dissatisfaction among adolescent girls.

These findings can be understood through the lens of adolescent developmental dynamics, characterized by significant physical, psychological, and emotional transitions. During this phase, physical appearance becomes central to identity construction and self-acceptance. When social media platforms repeatedly present narrow physical ideals as the norm for beauty and attractiveness, adolescents internalize these representations as external benchmarks for self-assessment. Thus, social media operates not merely as a communication medium, but as an active social environment that continuously defines how individuals "ought" to look.

In this context, the core issue extends beyond mere screen time to encompass repeated exposure to restrictive beauty standards. High social media usage does not affect all individuals uniformly; rather, exposure to appearance-focused content and the specific nature of user interaction represent far more critical determinants of body image outcomes than total usage duration.

b) Social Comparison and Internalization of Ideal Body Standards

A primary finding of this review is that social comparison serves as a pivotal psychological mechanism linking social media exposure to body image distortion. Adolescents routinely compare their physical appearance to celebrities, influencers, digital creators, and peers. When these comparison targets are perceived as more attractive, leaner, or closer to societal beauty ideals, adolescents are prone to evaluating themselves negatively.

This phenomenon can be explained by the expanding discrepancy between the actual self and the ideal self. A larger perceived gap directly increases the likelihood of body dissatisfaction. Algorithmic recommendation engines and personalized feeds amplify this effect by repeatedly delivering tailored visual content that reinforces unattainable standards.

Furthermore, social comparison often transitions into the deep internalization of ideal body standards. At this stage, external standards become embedded as personal imperatives, compelling adolescents to modify their appearance through restrictive dieting, cosmetic application, clothing choices, or extreme physical regimens. The evidence demonstrates that body distortion develops through a sequential psychological pathway: *exposure $\rightarrow$ social comparison $\rightarrow$ internalization $\rightarrow$ negative self-evaluation $\rightarrow$ body dissatisfaction*. Consequently, interventions must target these underlying cognitive processes rather than relying solely on screen-time restriction.

c) Filters, Editing, and Unrealistic Appearance Standards

Digital photo filters and image-editing applications have become important factors in shaping adolescents' perceptions of physical appearance. These technologies enable users to modify facial features, skin texture, body proportions, and other physical characteristics before sharing images on social media. As a result, adolescents are increasingly exposed to visual representations that may differ substantially from ordinary physical reality. The literature reviewed in this study indicates that adolescent girls who frequently use filters or image-editing applications may develop unrealistic expectations regarding their physical appearance. Repeated exposure to digitally enhanced images can gradually establish a perception that smooth skin, symmetrical facial features, and particular body proportions represent normal or desirable standards of attractiveness. Consequently, social media may contribute to the construction of appearance standards that are difficult to achieve in everyday life.

This condition becomes more problematic when adolescents have difficulty distinguishing between digitally constructed representations and actual physical appearance. During adolescence, perceptions of the self are still developing, making young people particularly sensitive to social evaluation and appearance-related feedback. When edited images are repeatedly encountered and normalized, adolescents may unconsciously use these representations as reference points for evaluating their own bodies and faces. The discrepancy between their actual appearance and the digitally enhanced images they encounter can generate negative self-evaluations, dissatisfaction, and pressure to modify their appearance. In this context, the problem does not originate solely from the use of filters or editing technologies, but from the internalization of digitally constructed standards as legitimate benchmarks for personal appearance. The repeated comparison between the unedited self and idealized digital representations may therefore reinforce an unrealistic body image and contribute to the development of appearance-related concerns.

Unlike traditional mass media, social media allows users not only to consume idealized representations but also to actively produce, modify, and redistribute them. This continuous cycle of content creation and consumption can reinforce appearance norms because idealized images are repeatedly reproduced by peers, influencers, celebrities, and ordinary users. Therefore, addressing the potential consequences of filters and image editing requires more than simply limiting adolescents' access to social media. Media literacy should be strengthened to help adolescents critically evaluate digitally altered images, recognize the difference between online representations and physical reality, and understand how technological manipulation can shape perceptions of attractiveness. Such literacy can support adolescents in developing more realistic standards of appearance, reducing harmful appearance comparisons, and strengthening acceptance of their actual physical characteristics.

d) Psychological Factors: Self-Esteem and Self-Acceptance

The review indicates that individual psychological characteristics play an important role in shaping how adolescents respond to social media content related to body image. Self-esteem is particularly relevant because it influences how adolescents evaluate their personal worth and interpret appearance-related information. Adolescents with low self-esteem may be more dependent on external validation and more vulnerable to upward social comparison. When they repeatedly encounter individuals who appear to possess more attractive or socially valued physical characteristics, they may interpret these comparisons as evidence of personal inadequacy. Consequently, exposure to idealized appearances on social media can reinforce negative self-evaluations and intensify feelings of inferiority, dissatisfaction, and reduced confidence in their own physical appearance.

In contrast, self-acceptance may function as an important psychological protective factor against appearance-related social pressure. Self-acceptance enables adolescents to recognize and acknowledge their physical characteristics, including perceived strengths and limitations, without allowing physical appearance to become the sole basis for determining personal worth. Adolescents who possess greater self-acceptance may be better able to recognize that the appearance standards presented on social media represent particular and often selectively constructed forms of attractiveness rather than universal measures of personal value. As discussed in the reviewed literature, Puspasari (2019) emphasizes the importance of positive self-acceptance in supporting confidence and a healthier evaluation of oneself. Thus, strengthening self-acceptance may reduce adolescents' tendency to evaluate themselves exclusively through comparison with digitally represented appearance ideals.

The interaction between self-esteem, self-acceptance, and social media exposure therefore suggests that the psychological consequences of appearance-related content are not uniform across adolescents. Social media may become more psychologically problematic when external appearance standards are combined with fragile self-evaluation and a strong dependence on social approval. Conversely, stronger internal psychological resources may enable adolescents to engage with social media content more critically without automatically incorporating unrealistic appearance standards into their self-concept. Accordingly, intervention strategies should not focus solely on reducing adolescents' exposure to social media but should also strengthen self-esteem, self-acceptance, and adaptive self-evaluation. In the context of guidance and counseling, these psychological resources can be developed through individual and group counseling, psychoeducational activities, and interventions that help adolescents distinguish personal worth from physical appearance and develop healthier responses to social comparison.

e) Impact on Mental Health and Behavioral Outcomes

Body image distortion extends beyond dissatisfaction with physical appearance and may have broader implications for adolescents' psychological well-being. The literature reviewed in this study indicates that persistent dissatisfaction with one's body can be associated with diminished self-esteem, anxiety, depressive symptoms, and feelings of worthlessness. Fardouly et al. (2015), as discussed in the reviewed literature, demonstrated an association between greater body dissatisfaction and higher levels of anxiety and depressive distress. These findings suggest that negative perceptions of the body may become an important psychological stressor, particularly when adolescents repeatedly evaluate themselves against appearance standards presented on social media. When perceived discrepancies between actual and idealized appearance persist, negative evaluations of the self may become increasingly generalized and affect broader aspects of psychological functioning.

The consequences of body image distortion may also extend to adolescents' behavioral patterns. Persistent dissatisfaction with physical appearance can encourage attempts to alter the body in order to conform to perceived appearance ideals. Such efforts may include restrictive eating practices, excessive exercise, or other unhealthy strategies aimed at controlling body weight and shape. The concern becomes more significant when appearance-related goals are pursued rigidly and are accompanied by negative self-evaluation. In this context, behaviors intended to achieve an idealized appearance may paradoxically contribute to poorer physical and psychological well-being. Therefore, body dissatisfaction should not be understood simply as an aesthetic concern, but as a condition that may influence how adolescents regulate eating, exercise, and other health-related behaviors.

Taken together, the reviewed findings indicate that body image distortion represents a multidimensional psychological and behavioral concern involving the interaction of appearance perceptions, emotional well-being, self-evaluation, and health-related behavior. Its potential association with anxiety, depressive symptoms, reduced self-esteem, and maladaptive behavioral patterns highlights the need for early preventive and supportive interventions. In educational settings, particularly within guidance and counseling services, interventions should address both the psychological and behavioral dimensions of body image concerns by strengthening self-esteem, promoting self-acceptance, developing critical awareness of appearance-related social media content, and encouraging healthier ways of responding to concerns about physical appearance. This multidimensional approach

is important because addressing appearance dissatisfaction alone may be insufficient when the underlying problem is also connected to broader psychological and behavioral difficulties.

f) Body Shaming as an Exacerbating Social Factor

In addition to internal social comparison, online body shaming represents an important social factor that can intensify body image concerns among adolescents. Social media platforms provide spaces in which users can publicly comment on, evaluate, and criticize other individuals' physical appearance. For adolescents who are still developing their self-concept and identity, negative comments about body shape, weight, facial features, or other aspects of appearance may become emotionally significant experiences. Unlike private interpersonal criticism, body shaming on social media can potentially reach a wider audience and remain visible through comments, posts, or other forms of digital interaction. This public nature may increase adolescents' awareness of appearance-based judgment and reinforce concerns about how their bodies are perceived by others.

Exposure to body shaming may further strengthen negative perceptions of physical appearance by introducing direct social evaluation into the process of body image formation. When adolescents repeatedly receive or encounter negative judgments about their bodies, they may begin to internalize these evaluations and interpret them as evidence that their appearance is inadequate. Such experiences can reinforce existing insecurities, increase self-consciousness, and contribute to negative self-evaluation. In this respect, body shaming may operate alongside appearance comparison and idealized social media content, creating a reinforcing cycle in which adolescents simultaneously compare themselves with idealized images and receive negative feedback regarding their own appearance. The combination of these experiences can make it more difficult for adolescents to maintain a positive and stable perception of their bodies.

Therefore, addressing body image distortion requires attention not only to adolescents' individual psychological resources but also to the social environment in which appearance-related interactions occur. Supportive online and offline environments can help adolescents develop healthier responses to negative feedback and reduce the extent to which external judgments determine their self-worth. Guidance and counseling interventions can provide adolescents with coping strategies for responding to body-shaming experiences, strengthening self-acceptance, and distinguishing personal value from physical appearance. Preventive efforts should also promote respectful digital communication and discourage appearance-based harassment, thereby creating social environments that support positive body image and psychological well-being.

g) Contextualizing the Mixed Effects of Social Media

An important finding of this review is that the effects of social media on body image are not uniform across platforms or users. The reviewed literature presents contrasting findings regarding TikTok. Mink and Szymanski (2022) reported that exposure to appearance-focused TikTok content was associated with greater body dissatisfaction, suggesting that repeated exposure to idealized appearance-related content may intensify appearance comparison and negative evaluations of one's own body. In contrast, Fauziah (2019) reported that TikTok use under certain conditions could contribute to increased self-confidence. These contrasting findings indicate that the psychological consequences of social media cannot be adequately explained by platform use alone, but need to be considered in relation to what adolescents encounter and how they engage with the platform.

The divergent findings further suggest that content characteristics, usage purposes, interaction patterns, and individual interpretations may shape adolescents' experiences of social media. Appearance-centered content may encourage upward comparison and reinforce concerns about physical attractiveness, whereas content oriented toward creative expression, positive interpersonal interaction, or social support may provide opportunities for self-expression and confidence development. Thus, the same platform may generate different psychological outcomes depending on how it is used and what forms of content dominate an individual's social media experience. This perspective is important because it avoids treating social media as an inherently harmful environment while still recognizing the risks associated with appearance-focused content.

Accordingly, preventive efforts should move beyond generalized restrictions or blanket bans on particular social media platforms and instead emphasize healthy digital engagement and critical media use. Adolescents can be encouraged to curate the accounts and content they follow, reduce engagement with content that consistently triggers negative appearance comparisons, and recognize the constructed nature of idealized digital representations. Media literacy programs can further help adolescents evaluate appearance-related content critically and understand how social media environments may shape perceptions of attractiveness and self-worth. In the context of guidance and counseling, these findings support interventions that focus on developing adaptive digital habits, critical content selection, self-acceptance, and healthy forms of online interaction rather than simply reducing access to social media.

h) Implications for Guidance and Counseling

These findings offer practical implications for school-based guidance and counseling programs. School counselors occupy a key position to help students recognize the relationships between media consumption, social comparison, appearance standards, and self-evaluation. Interventions must be integrated proactively rather than reactively.

First, counselors can implement media literacy modules that teach students to identify digital filters, image manipulation, and commercialized beauty standards. Second, group counseling should focus on enhancing self-esteem and self-acceptance, encouraging students to decouple self-worth from appearance. Third, training in social comparison management can help students process upward comparison triggers adaptively. Finally, schoolwide initiatives involving parents and educators can build supportive ecosystems that encourage healthy digital engagement.

In summary, the relationship between social media exposure and body image distortion is complex and multidimensional. Prevention requires a comprehensive strategy combining media literacy, self-esteem cultivation, self-acceptance, social comparison management, and anti-body-shaming initiatives.

4. IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTION

These findings emphasize the need to strengthen school counseling services in addressing adolescent body image concerns. Interventions should extend beyond limiting screen time to include structured media literacy, self-acceptance cultivation, self-esteem building, and healthy social media usage habits. Counselors can integrate these strategies through psychoeducational sessions, group guidance, and preventive programs that teach students to critically evaluate digital beauty ideals, navigate body shaming, and build self-worth independent of physical appearance. Furthermore, collaborative efforts among counselors, teachers, and parents are essential to establish supportive environments that promote adolescent psychological well-being.

This study contributes conceptually and practically by synthesizing empirical evidence on social media exposure, social comparison, beauty ideal internalization, digital editing, body shaming, self-esteem, and self-acceptance into a unified model of body image distortion. It demonstrates that social media effects are not automatic or uniform, but are moderated by content characteristics, engagement patterns, and individual psychological traits as evidenced by the mixed findings on platform usage. Ultimately, this review provides a framework for developing evidence-based counseling interventions centered on media literacy, self-esteem enhancement, and adaptive digital engagement.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This study relies on a literature review methodology, meaning its findings are contingent upon the scope, design, and quality of the evaluated literature. Without primary empirical data collection, this study does not directly capture the subjective experiences, nuanced usage patterns, or exact body image conditions of specific adolescent populations. Additionally, variations in platform features, cultural contexts, participant age groups, and methodological designs across prior studies present challenges for direct cross-study comparisons. Consequently, these findings represent a conceptual and empirical synthesis rather than direct causal proof.

Future research should empirically test the synthesized framework across diverse adolescent demographics. Subsequent studies should quantitatively model the relationships among specific content types, social comparison mechanisms, ideal internalization, self-esteem, self-acceptance, and body distortion, while evaluating media literacy and social support as moderating protective factors. Qualitative investigations are also needed to capture adolescents' lived experiences with appearance-focused digital media. Within guidance and counseling contexts, future studies should design and evaluate the efficacy of group counseling programs, media literacy interventions, and self-acceptance modules aimed at preventing body image distortion among adolescents.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this literature review, social media is closely linked to the formation and distortion of body image among female adolescents, primarily through exposure to content displaying ideal body and beauty standards, appearance comparison with others, the internalization of ideal body standards, and the use of photo filters and editing applications. This process can prompt negative body evaluations, developing into body image dissatisfaction associated with low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, and maladaptive health behaviors. However, the influence of social media is neither monolithic nor inherently negative, as it is moderated by content characteristics,

usage patterns, and the psychosocial conditions of adolescents, including self-esteem, self-acceptance, and social support.

Consequently, the prevention and management of body image distortion in female adolescents require a comprehensive approach through the reinforcement of self-acceptance, self-esteem, media literacy, social comparison management skills, and healthy social media usage habits. Within the educational context, the findings highlight the strategic role of guidance and counseling services in delivering preventive and interventional support. These services help adolescents critically deconstruct digital beauty standards, cope adaptively with appearance pressures and online body shaming, and cultivate a positive body image. Furthermore, these insights demonstrate that approaches to social media usage should not focus solely on restricting screen time, but rather on content quality, interaction patterns, and adolescents' capacity to interpret the information they receive.

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Author Contribution Statement

Indra Fitri is the sole author of this study. The author was entirely responsible for the conceptualization, study design, literature search and data collection, qualitative analysis, synthesis of findings, and the drafting and revision of the final manuscript.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares that there are no financial, personal, or professional conflicts of interest that could have influenced the conduct, outcomes, or writing of this manuscript.

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