

Boise State University

ScholarWorks

2023 Undergraduate Research Showcase

Undergraduate Research and Scholarship
Showcases

4-21-2023

Body Dissatisfaction in College Students

Sawyer Ellis

Boise State University

Elaine Kozmiuk

Boise State University

Mary Pritchard

Boise State University

Heather Schoenherr

College of Western Idaho

—

Body Dissatisfaction in College Students

Abstract

Previous literature shows that family pressure leads to drive for thinness (Green & Pritchard, 2003). Given the growth of social media, the intent of our current study was to find which sociocultural pressure: family, peers, or media relates the strongest with body shame, body surveillance, and drive for thinness. A sample of 1,049 undergraduate students, ages 18-29 (770 females and 279 males) were surveyed to better understand what predicts body dissatisfaction in young adults. Results revealed a moderate correlation between all variables, with media pressure being the main predictor of drive for thinness. In addition, our results suggest young adults feel body shame and body surveillance, with an increase in media exposure. The increase in online appearance conversations that develop into body shame support this correlation (Wang et al., 2020). Furthermore, this study highlights the imperativeness of young adults being more aware of online appearance conversations that may develop into body dissatisfaction.

Keywords

drive for thinness, sociocultural factors, body shame, body surveillance

Body Dissatisfaction in College Students

Sawyer Ellis, Elaine Kozmiuk, Dr. Mary Pritchard, & Heather Schoenherr

Department of Psychological Sciences: Boise State University & College of Western Idaho

Introduction

Body dissatisfaction, body shame, and body surveillance has become increasingly prevalent among young adults (Wang et al., 2020). Thus, it is important to study which factors may influence young adults to take extensive measures to be thin. By finding the source of influence, researchers can increase awareness of body dissatisfaction in young adults and prevent risky dieting measures from occurring.

The Current Study

Given the growth of social media, the purpose of our current study was to find which sociocultural pressure (family, peers, or media) relates the strongest with body shame, body surveillance, and drive for thinness. Past research demonstrated that family pressure relates to drive for thinness (Green & Pritchard, 2003), body shame (Van den Berg et al., 2002), and body surveillance. Given that social networking sites have become increasingly popular, we wanted to test if this remains true.

H1
First, we hypothesized that family pressure is related to drive for thinness, body shame, and body surveillance.

H2
Next, we hypothesized that media and peer pressure also relate to body dissatisfaction (as measured by the drive for thinness scale), body shame, and body surveillance.

H3
Finally, we hypothesized that family pressure is the main predictor of drive for thinness compared to peer pressure and media pressure.

Method

Participants

Ages 18-29 (770 females and 279 males)
Undergraduate students from Boise State University & University of South Alabama

Measures

Participants completed questions from an omnibus survey consisting of the following scales: The Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire-4 (Schaefer et al., 2015), The Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (Mckinley & Hyde, 1996), and The Drive for Thinness Scale (Garner et al., 1983).



Results & Discussion

Results Supported Hypotheses 1 & 2

- A moderate positive correlation between all variables (see Table 1).
- When family pressure increases, so does drive for thinness, body shame, and body surveillance.
- As media and peer pressure increase, so does body surveillance and body shame.

Results Contrary to Hypothesis 3

- Media pressure was the strongest predictor (28% variance) for drive for thinness in young adults, followed by family pressure (4% variance), and lastly peer pressure (1% variance).

Conclusion

- This knowledge can inform young adults to rethink who they follow online, especially those who have a great influence over their self perception on social media.
- If young adults are aware of the thin beauty ideal and the unrealistic dieting measures that come with it, perhaps they may not engage in these behaviors.
- In general, young adults should reconsider how often they use social media sites.

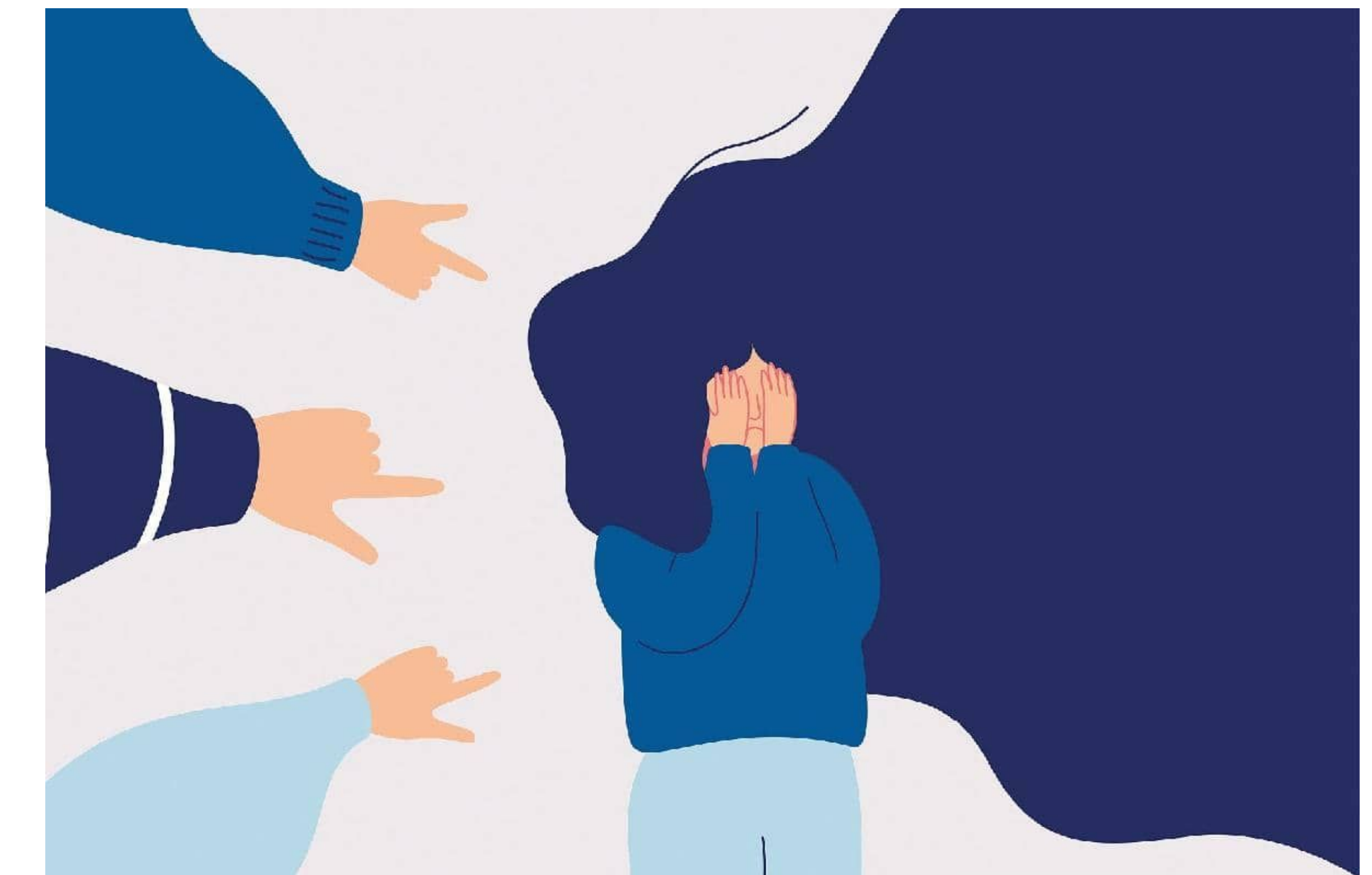


Table 1

Variables	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Drive for Thinness	1045	5.68	5.99	-					
2. Media Pressure	1047	3.40	1.22	.529**	-				
3. Family Pressure	1048	2.51	1.15	.375**	.369**	-			
4. Peer Pressure	1048	2.12	1.00	.367**	.380**	.486**	-		
5. Body Shame	1046	3.31	1.12	.670**	.548**	.413**	.430**	-	
6. Body Surveillance	1043	3.95	.99	.555**	.569**	.270**	.324**	.605**	-