The portrayals of cultural norms have represented an unfair definition of the ideal body image. The article “Social media effects on young women’s body image concerns” argues this point. One aspect of these deleterious portrayals are the websites that exist to only promote anorexic and bulimic behaviors. These websites promote the negative actions of eating disorders as positive impacts on others’ lives. The websites do this as stated by the Richard M. Perloff by three simple projections. These projections consist of perfection, transformation and success. Perfection refers to when “cultural norms are linked to thinness as the ideal image (Perloff, 2014, p. 366). The sites also promote that these behaviors will lead you from “ugly and fat to thin and beautiful” (Perloff, 2014, p. 366). Further ability and strength to keep off the weight is projected as success (Perloff, 2014, p. 366). These sites provide this convoluted sense of normalcy that only damages people’s self-perception and their views of what is normal. These sites then cause people to have lower self-esteem and lower perceived attractiveness.

Perloff presents the case that “simple exposure to media in itself will not cause any harm to people” (Perloff, 2014, p. 367). However, it is the psychology of the individual that visits these profiles that inflicts damage. “Media thinness portrayals” are a factor that influence the psychological well-being of the people visiting sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. Through longer exposure to these thin norms, the receiver develops lower self-esteem, depression, perfectionism, and the internalization of the thinness ideal (Perloff, 2014, p. 370). These long exposures tend to lead to more time spent on social media. This time spent leads to social comparisons that harm the receiver psychologically as they compare themselves to other pictures (Perloff, 2014, p. 368). These analytic approaches of surfing through Facebook profile pictures and Instagram posts leads to harmful tendencies as eating disorders. Eventually these visits’ primary purpose ends up being gratification seeking. This is when people tend to seek reassurance and validation through upwards and downward comparisons in social media only to seldom receive that validation. The more they are exposed, young women will take part in more harmful social comparisons.

Richard Perloff clearly states the effects of social media on body image. He emphasizes the importance of the psychology of the receiver of the content rather than just examining the nature of the harmful content online. The complexity of the individual being affected by these norms was thoroughly examined and explained. Many examples were given to further create firm understanding of the internal effects these ideals cause. Such examples include websites that take advantage of others low self-esteem and make them feel included. Throughout the article, the author mentions the psychological state of the person who is victim of these social norms portrayed online. The author mentions how their depression and low self-esteem strongly affects the influence of the content in social media.

The extensive explanation of the psychology of young women has clearly explained the effects of social media on self-perception. The reciprocal transaction between the user and the social media proved to have harmful effects on the user as they began centralizing on appearance focused content (Perloff, 2014, p. 369). An ample amount of analysis was provided to explain the effects of these prolonged searches of Facebook profile pictures and Instagram posts. Explanations of upward and downward comparisons further clarified the tendency for users to seek gratification online. The thorough explanations of the psychology of young women as they interact with this content has lead me to understand more about the negative effects of social media. The argument was unbiased as it considered a rich demographic spanning across other countries, ages, and even other genders. The article approached the problem by analyzing studies from the UK, Australia, and Netherlands. The various references allow the article to contain a diverse sample of data that provide it an unbiased argument. Furthermore, the article is unbiased to effects on different genders as well. However, the intended audience of the entire article was young women who frequent appearance focused content who have low self-perceived attractiveness.

The article’s many citations of various studies gave it a credible stance on the issue. Every issue was addressed by an earlier study that has proven a hypotheses or idea. This strongly affects the ethos of the article. It brings forward the credibility of the article as it approaches the situation from these numerous unique studies. Throughout the article there were many mentions of studies done in the UK or other foreign nations. This involvement of a diverse sample allows for more information on the studies. Using the results of these studies is a strong logos appeal throughout the article. The strong facts and results of the studies strengthens the argument the author is presenting. The author also provides their contact information at the bottom of the page. This further improves the credibility of the author as they were open to questions and comments from their readers.

Pathos is a definite appeal apparent through the whole article. The article appeals to emotion through the familiarity of the issues that are presented to the audience. Realizing that this problem is common and ultimately preventable gives hope to those that are facing the struggles. The explanation of the problems of social norms through the articles establishes the norms as an issue that needs to be resolved. Approaching this issue in this way appeals to a major audience. This article tells women they don’t need to conform to these false ideals and contradicting movements. It appeals to women emotionally as it expresses and suppresses the issues of the thin-ideal that is presented by society. The article gives hope. It gives reason to fight against these norms.

References

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