

Fitspiration on Facebook: Physical, Social and Psychological Implications of Pakistani Female Students



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Abstract: *Fitspiration is a current online craze that aims to inspire Pakistani female students to eat well, stay confident and exercise. The objective of the study was to investigate the psychological (disordered eating), social (body shame) and physical (exercise behavior) implications among Pakistani female students who consume fitspiration content on Facebook. Fitspiration content on Facebook is the independent variable whereas the social, physical and psychological aspects of Pakistani female students are the dependent variables. The study was exploratory in nature and quantitative approach was applied. Convenience sampling technique was applied and the data was collected from 600 Pakistani female university students from 3 public and 3 private universities of Lahore to cater the quantitative part. Social comparison theory was applied in this study. A survey questionnaire was developed to collect data from the respondents. The current study employed partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) method. The empirical findings indicated that exposure to fitspiration content on Facebook have a significant impact on exercise behavior, body shame and disordered eating of Pakistani female university students.*

Key Words: Body Shame, Compulsive Exercise, Disordered Eating, Fitspiration, Facebook, Social Networking Sites

Introduction

In today's digital age, social media platforms have become an integral part of our daily lives, connecting individuals from all walks of life and serving as a hub for information, communication, and inspiration. Among these platforms, Facebook stands out as one of the most prominent and influential, with over 2.85 billion monthly active users as of the first quarter of 2021 (Bellicha, 2021). Originally founded by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004, Facebook has evolved into a multifaceted platform that offers a wide range of features and functionalities.

Another notable aspect of Facebook is its ability to serve as a powerful tool for sharing and consuming content related to health, wellness, and fitness. This

has given rise to a subculture known as "fitspiration," where individuals especially females seek motivation, support, and guidance to pursue their fitness goals. Fitspiration, often abbreviated as "fitspo," is a term coined to describe content that inspires and motivates individuals, especially females to lead healthier lifestyles, achieve physical fitness, and adopt positive habits (Dixon, 2019).

Facebook and other social networking sites have drawn millions of members (Pew Research Centre, 2015). A modest amount of correlational research has shown that Instagram use is connected with internalization of the thin ideal, body dissatisfaction, and disordered eating, despite the fact that research on the psychological ramifications of social networking is still in its infancy (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2015; Mabe,

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Forney & Keel, 2014; Meier & Gray, 2014; Tiggemann & Slater, 2013, 2014; Holland & Tiggemann, 2016). More thorough research has revealed a link between "photo activity" and body image concerns (Mabe, Forney & Keel, 2014; Meier & Gray, 2014) suggesting that image-based social media platforms such as Facebook may have a particularly strong impact on its viewers.

Till today the psychological investigation on social networking sites has concentrated more on the effects of content exposure (Holland & Tiggemann, 2016). But unlike traditional media, a significant portion of the information on social networking sites is user-generated. As a result, users are both producers and consumers of information. Therefore, in this study, we examined the physical, social and psychological implications of female university students who consume "fitspiration" content on Facebook on their exercise behavior, body shame and eating disorders.

Especially, taking into account the socio-cultural constraints of young females to appear in a specific manner in Pakistan (Trends Desk, 2017). It is likely that fitspiration images and videos on Facebook may add or assist to unrealistic body image ideals among them and lead them to psychological, physical and social consequences such as eating disorders, compulsive exercise behaviors and body shame. Moreover, the apparent weight, height, age and abs portrayed through fitspiration images and videos on Facebook influence the Pakistani university female students' perception towards their own body image as they encounter the content of fitspiration (as such, an overweight older female may perceive herself as worse off after spotting fitspiration in a average weight younger female). Similarly, the frequency of perceiving fitspiration images and videos and its techniques (work out, consuming less calories) on Facebook can influence and lead the Pakistani females towards increased physical, psychological and social consequences.

Fitspiration, which stands for "fitness and inspiration," is a collection of pictures and text that encourages individuals particularly females to lead healthy lives by working out and eating right has been promoted as a wholesome substitute for thinspiration, which consists of texts and visuals that encourage dieting and an eating-disordered lifestyle (Abena, 2016). The majority of fitspiration photographs feature women exercising or dressed for the gym, sometimes

with motivational sayings (such as "Strong is the new skinny").

The fitspiration movement on Facebook has gained significant traction, with countless individuals and communities sharing their journeys, accomplishments, and advice. From workout routines and meal plans to before-and-after transformation photos and motivational quotes, fitspiration on Facebook encompasses a diverse range of content designed to encourage and empower individuals on their fitness journeys. However, it is important to approach fitspiration with a critical eye. While Facebook can provide a wealth of valuable information and support, it is crucial to distinguish between healthy, science-backed advice and potentially harmful trends or unrealistic expectations.

Despite the great intentions, there are a number of concerns with fitspiration content. These include the reinforcement of a single idea. The promotion of a type of physique (lean and toned) which is beyond reach for the majority of women in addition to the positive effects of food and exercise that are more associated to physical appearance than to overall well-being (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015). There are certain similarities between fitspiration and thinspiration, including guilt-inducing messages about weight and other signs of disordered eating, according to a content analysis of the text of fitspiration on general websites (Boepple & Thompson, 2016). In a similar way, the promotion of extreme attitudes towards exercise is an alarming approach (e.g., "Crawling is acceptable, vomiting is acceptable, weeping are acceptable, pain is acceptable) but the only thing unacceptable is to give up.

Frequent eliminating food, dietary restriction, psychologically induced element of body shame and other unhealthy weight loss practices typically coexist with compulsive exercise (Morris, 2008). However so far, no research has been utilized to empirically analyze the characteristics of women who are exposed to fitspo photographs, quotes and videos on Facebook (or any other social networking site). Therefore, the objective of this study was to test the hypothesis that, Pakistani female university students who are Facebook users and consume more fitspiration content are more likely to display detrimental characteristics with regard to their exercise behavior (physical aspect), body shame (social aspect) and eating habits (psychological aspect). This is a significant and pertinent question given the increased popularity of fitspiration.

Rationale of the Study

Fitspiration content often promoted unrealistic beauty ideals, such as a thin and toned physique. This led to a culture of body shaming and perpetuated unrealistic expectations for females. A study by Boyce et al. (2021) found that exposure to fitspiration images on Instagram increased internalization of thin-ideal beauty standards among young females, which contributed to different health and body concerns. Moreover, various research studies had indicated that exposure to fitspiration images led to increased body dissatisfaction among females (Perloff et al., 2014). Additionally, it had negative consequences on mental health, such as depression and anxiety, or led to disordered eating behaviors such as binge-eating, purging, or excessive exercise addiction or serious health consequences such as malnutrition, amenorrhea, and even death (Fardouly et al., 2018).

Therefore, it was very important to study why and to what degree female University students of Lahore, Pakistan were influenced by the consumption of fitspiration content on Facebook and internalized these beauty standards. The journey from childhood to maturity was an extremely vulnerable period during which a young individual experienced a series of unexpected and major shifts in their physiological processes especially among youth such as high-school, college and university students (Cataldo et al., 2021). Additionally, studies had shown that body image concerns and disordered eating behaviors were prevalent among Pakistani youth as a result of traditional and mainstream media (Vannucci et al., 2020). Therefore the impact of fitspiration content on Facebook was an important area for research, particularly when it came to understanding how these messages imposed psychological, social and physical consequences on the Pakistani female university students.

The psychological, social and physical consequences which Pakistani female university students experienced as a result of exposure to fitspiration content on Facebook were body shame, compulsive exercise behavior and eating disorders which influenced the females and pushed them to alter their body image/appearance.

In a similar way, a study by Jabeen (2020) found that 65% of female students in Pakistan were more indulged in self-objectification and were extremely dissatisfied with their body shape and size. Therefore, this argument explained the rationale for the selection

of Pakistani female University students of Lahore. However, there was very limited research on this topic in Pakistan, where the societal and cultural ideals standards for appearance and body image differed from those promoted in the West. Similarly, most of the existing research on this topic was conducted in Western countries, where the cultural norms regarding body image and beauty ideals differed from those in Pakistan.

Therefore, this study helped to fill the gap in knowledge and provided insights into how Pakistani university students of Lahore were affected by exposure to fitspiration content on Facebook leading them to into different consequences and risks to appear attractive and beautiful to other people.

Significance of the Study

Therefore, this research study had a significant contribution on the basis of its applicability and prominence among young individuals as the impact of a fitspiration content, which is a latest trend on social networking sites and particularly Facebook still needs to be studied in the Pakistani context. At present, the hashtag #fitspiration had about 18.5 million posts on Instagram alone (Fardouly et al., 2015). Therefore, further investigation of fitspiration content on Facebook and its impact on Pakistani female university students was necessary due to its novelty and connection to thinspiration (Hasan, 2012). Moreover, a call was made by Medina (2017) to study the physical, social and psychological consequences of fitspiration content through variables such as disordered eating, body shame and compulsive exercise behavior with respect to impact of fitspiration content shared on Facebook. Therefore, physical, social and psychological consequences associated with fitspiration content on Facebook were studied in this research.

Moreover, fitspiration content on Facebook was taken as the medium for promotion of idealistic beauty and body standards this research. In a similar way, an integrative theoretical approach was used in this study to provide the theoretical framework for this study through social comparison theory (SCT). Additionally, this study used quantitative approach to enable a more detailed investigation to study the impact of fitspiration content on Facebook of Pakistani female university students of Lahore. Therefore, the findings of this research had practical implications for culture as well as the society, as on its basis, certain effective

interventions were developed to interfere with the potential social, physical and psychological consequences resulting from exposure to fitspiration content on Facebook and to contain it from developing into something more serious.

Objective of the Studies

- To evaluate the impact of exposure to fitspiration content on Facebook on body shame of Pakistani female university students.
- To explore the impact of exposure to fitspiration content on Facebook on exercise behavior of Pakistani female university students.
- To investigate the impact of exposure to fitspiration content on Facebook on disordered eating of Pakistani female university students.

Literature Review

Social networking services, such as Facebook, Snapchat, and Instagram, are Internet-based sites that allow users to create public or private profiles, form a network of 'friends' or 'followers', and share, view, and comment on user-generated content (Perloff, 2014). Social networking services are now more popular than conventional media formats among young women (Bair, Kelly, Serdar, & Mazzeo, 2012), with 90% of 18–29 year old women reported to be active users of social media (Perrin et al., 2015). A number of correlational studies have reported associations between exposure to Facebook and poorer body image in adult women (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2015) and adolescent girls (Tiggemann & Miller, 2010; Tiggemann & Slater, 2013, 2014). These studies have used 'time spent on Facebook' as an indicator of social media engagement, and found relationships between this measure and self-objectification, weight dissatisfaction, thin-ideal internalization, appearance comparison, and drive for thinness.

Experimental studies (e.g., Fardouly, Diedrichs, Vartanian, & Halliwell, 2015b) have also found brief exposure to Facebook to be associated with poorer outcomes on mood and body image among women high in the tendency to make appearance comparisons. More recently, it has been proposed that rather than overall social media usage driving the association with poorer body image outcomes, a more nuanced approach, which considers specific components of the social media environment, may be

required. Specifically, photo-based activities, such as sharing, viewing, and commenting on images of oneself and others, have been highlighted as playing an important role (Holland & Tiggemann, 2016). This suggestion has been supported in a study with American adolescent girls, whereby engagement in photo-based activities on Facebook was correlated with internalization of the thin-ideal, self-objectification, and drive for thinness (Meier & Gray, 2014).

Similarly, McLean et al. (2015) found that Australian adolescent girls who regularly share 'selfies', and who are more invested in, and more likely to manipulate (edit) their self-images, reported poorer body image. Recently, Instagram (a social networking service solely for photo and video sharing) has risen in popularity, with over 600 million active users sharing over 95 million photos per day (Instagram, 2016). It is the second most used social networking site in the U.S. after Facebook, with 32% of US Internet users accessing Instagram weekly (Stein, 2017). Instagram is particularly popular with young women, with 59% of women aged 18–29 years using this service (Perrin et al., 2015). A popular trend that has emerged on the Internet in recent years, and in particular on Instagram, is 'fitspiration.' Fitspiration (a blending of the words 'fitness' and 'inspiration') arose as an antidote to the trend of 'thinspiration' (a blending of 'thinness' and 'inspiration'), which glamorizes thinness and promotes unhealthy eating habits (Ghaznavi & Taylor, 2015). Fitspiration consists of images and messages that purport to motivate people to exercise and pursue a healthier lifestyle (Abena, 2013), and aims to encourage strength and female empowerment (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015).

However, content analyses have demonstrated that just like thinspiration, fitspiration also promotes a homogenous body shape (tall, lean, toned, and 'perfectly proportioned'), and often contains guilt-inducing messages, stigmatizes weight and body fat, and emphasizes dieting and restrictive eating (Boepple, Ata, Rum, & Thompson, 2016; Boepple & Thompson, 2016; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2016). In terms of body image, the ideal body upheld in 'fitspiration' shares many features with the 'traditional' thin-ideal body (tall and extremely thin), but adds the further dimensions of fitness and (moderate) muscularity (Simpson & Mazzeo, 2016; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015). As such, it is likely to be just as unattainable for most women (Krane, Waldron,

Michalenok, & Stiles-ShIPLEY, 2001; Krane, Waldron, Stiles-ShIPLEY, & Michalenok, 2001). Thus, despite its purported aim of empowerment and inspiration, it appears that fitspiration is likely to communicate messages that are potentially harmful to women's body image. Indeed, a recent experimental study supported the claim that exposure to fitspiration images is detrimental to body satisfaction (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015). Australian undergraduate women who were exposed to fitspiration images were found to have increased body dissatisfaction and negative mood, and reduced state self-esteem compared to women who were exposed to appearance-neutral (travel) images. Trait appearance comparison tendency was found to mediate the effect of image type on mood, body dissatisfaction, and self-esteem (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015). To date, there has been very little empirical consideration of potentially positive aspects of the social media environment.

In a similar way fitspiration portrays idealized appearances as attractive and attainable through exercise, and the material it contains frequently addresses looks, according to content studies (Boepple et al., 2016). This can be particularly problematic for young people who may not have the knowledge or resources to engage in healthy behaviors. While working out and eating behaviors are both regular and essential parts of human actions, research shows that the impact of media causes changes in perceptions of bodies, which in turn leads to behaviors that affect the body (Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2003a; Anschutz & Engels, 2010). According to Latner et al. (2007) media impacts beliefs about how life turns out by providing compelling narratives about surviving in a social environment. One of the most powerful metaphors in popular culture links being thin with desirability, admiration, and success, whereas being obese is seen as being slow, foolish, and disappointing.

According to Fatt et al. (2019), men who watched more fitspiration were more likely to internalize muscular ideals as well as they evaluated their appearances with others. In contrast women had lower tendency and willingness to exercise for the purpose of health. Similarly, in a research Klaczynski et al., (2004) stated that one of the most common perceptions about being fat or chubby was that it was the consequence of ones own flaws or weaknesses.

The worst part is that, obesity can be pointed out shamelessly at any moment for everyone who does not follow the unrealistic ideal. As a result, everyone is at a risk of being judged, criticized and labelled obese following their evaluation. Similarly, the concept of slimness is internalized among adolescents at a very early age, and they start perceiving it as a sign of desirability and success. Therefore, they value it more and follow these concepts in their adulthood as well (Brown & Slaughter, 2010).

According to Felker (1972) through an assessment when the comments and opinions of children belonging to first, third and fifth standard were studied, it reflected that the children idealized thin body types and had negative criticisms for obese people. It was also indicated that the desire for slimness can supercede the drive to remain healthy. According to Stephen and Perera (2014), a certain number of college students at the Malaysian college were provided multiple pictures of female models to review and rate according to their appearance, making comparisons between their apparent desirability and health. The results indicated that the females which appeared thinner in comparisons to other models were labelled more attractive. Despite the fact, that the BMI of models in both cases was recorded to be underweight. The researchers endorsed that such results were a reflection of the perception which is being promoted in the media, where slimness is promoted as an attractive characteristic while obesity was criticized.

Similarly, Body shame is a negative emotional experience that arises from a perceived discrepancy between one's actual body and the idealized standards of physical appearance upheld by society (Thompson, 1990). It is a multifaceted construct that involves negative attitudes, beliefs, and feelings about one's body, which can lead to a range of negative outcomes such as disordered eating, depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem (Cash & Pruzinsky, 2002). Body shame is a common experience among women, who are disproportionately affected by societal pressures to conform to narrow and unrealistic beauty standards (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015).

Research has shown that body shame is associated with a range of negative health outcomes, including disordered eating behaviors, depression, anxiety, and poor self-esteem (Cash & Pruzinsky, 2002; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015). Women are

particularly vulnerable to experiencing body shame, as they are socialized to value appearance and are held to strict beauty standards by media and society (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). In recent years, social media has emerged as a powerful influence on body image and body shame, with studies showing that exposure to images of idealized bodies on social media can contribute to negative body image outcomes among women (Fardouly et al., 2015). Similarly, The pressure to conform to a particular body type can contribute to mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression. Studies have found that exposure to fitspiration content is associated with lower self-esteem and higher levels of depression and anxiety (e.g., Perloff et al., 2020; Yom-Tov et al., 2016).

In a similar way Mendes and Ferreira (2020) used social ranking approach to explore the relationship between internalized shame, compassionate fears, striving and body shame leading towards eating disorders. They argue that though existing literature verifies the effects of social ranking mentality on eating habits and attitudes of individuals leading them to various eating disorders but the exact path between the various variables is still vague. This study was intended to find out the effects of insecure striving and internalized body shame on relationship of externalized body shame and fear of compassion from others with eating disorders. This study implicated that those western women who negatively evaluate their bodies and also fear about the compassionate feedback from others use maladaptive strategies.

Bachner-Melman and Zohar (2019) examined the potential risks of eating disorders and preventive factors among ultra-orthodox Jewish women, commonly known as Haredi community. Potential risk factors that were identified included food, poverty, modesty laws, thin ideals, perfectionism, selflessness and unclear sense of identity. Similarly, culturally influenced protective factors included faith, attitudes towards food and food-related rituals, body image and modesty laws. Moreover, Woodward, McLwain and Mond (2019) explored the role of feelings about one's own body and self in leading towards eating disturbances among Australian women (Macquarie University). This study was intended to examine the mediating role of internalized body shame, one's self-esteem, externalized perceptions about body, depression and body shaming in disordered eating. This research was divided into two different studies.

The first part of the study mainly focused on internalization process including eating attitude, depression, anxiety, stress, feelings, self-esteem and body shame. Where as the second part of this study assessed the response to ads placed on different websites regarding eating disorders. This part of the research was intended to examine the externalized self-perceptions and body shame which included eating disorders, self-objectification, and body surveillance. Findings of the study indicated that all the internalized variables and externalized variables have strong association to eating disorders pathology both directly and indirectly.

Theoretical Framework

Social Comparison theory (SCT) provides the theoretical framework for this research. According to the Social comparison theory, which was developed by Leon Festinger in 1954, individuals assess their societal and self-worth by comparing themselves to other people. According to this theory, people have a natural urge to evaluate their own abilities and beliefs by observing their surroundings and those of others (Gerber, 2020). The notion of social comparison explains how people judge themselves in relation to others but compare themselves to others who are similar to them in their social or cultural surroundings because they lack the benchmarks with which to do so internally (Craft, Harney, Brownstone, Higgins, & Cone, 2012). There are also two distinct categories of social comparison, according to study (either upward or downward). When someone compares oneself to those they perceive to be slightly lower or less fortunate than they are, it is known as a downward social comparison. This form of comparison tends to result in a feeling of higher self-worth and mood improvement. The upward social comparison, on the other hand, occurs when a person compares themselves to those they believe to be superior to them, which can further depress a person's mood and jeopardize their sense of value.

Methodology

This study explored the impact of exposure to fitspiration content on the psychological, social and physical implications through dependent variables such as disordered eating, body shame, and exercise behavior on Pakistani female university students of Lahore. Therefore, this research employed cross-

sectional survey (N=600), where the sample size was 100 from each university, to gather data from the female university students of " Forman Christian College (FCCU), Government College University (GCU), University of Education (UOE), University of Lahore (UOL), University of Management and Technology (UMT) and University of the Punjab (PU)". Pakistani female students enrolled in different private as well as public sector universities of Lahore were the universe of this study.

Reliability and Validity of the Scale

After collecting 300 responses during pre-testing, data was entered into SmartPLS to check its reliability and validity of the scale which was calculated as 0.933 indicating that the devised tool is strong.

Data Analysis

Smart PLS-SEM (Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling) was utilized to assess the correlations between various variables.

Measures and Preparation of Tool

Body shame - Body shame refers to the idea that someone feeling shame when his/her body fails to meet the socio-cultural standards of beauty. Body Shame sub-scale of Objectified Body Consciousness Scale, commonly known as OBSCS, developed by McKinley and Hyde (1996) was used to measure whether body shame themselves when they fail to conform the ideal beauty standards of society or not. Original Body Shame sub-scale was used in this study which comprised 8-questions including 'I feel ashamed of myself when I haven't made the effort to look my best' and 'When I'm not the size I think I should be I feel ashamed'. The original sub-scale used 7-point Likert scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree but this study used 5-point Likert scale (i.e. 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; and 5 = strongly agree) where a respondent could get lowest score of 8 while maximum score could be 40. Cronbach alpha was applied on the data collected for pre-testing and the value obtained for this section was 0.715.

Compulsive exercise - Compulsive exercise was measured using the four-item Emotional Element subscale of the Obligatory Exercise Questionnaire.

This addresses feelings of shame and depression that accompany a missed exercise session, rather than exercise frequency. Such negative emotionality is thought to be most salient indicator of compulsive exercise. This study used 5-point Likert scale (i.e. 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; and 5 = strongly agree) Cronbach alpha was applied on the data collected for pre-testing and the value obtained for this section was 0.815.

Disordered Eating - According to the literature, it is evident that due to excessive dieting people experience different eating disorders (from severe to mild). Garner and Garfinkel (1979) devised a tool named Eating Attitude Test (EAT) comprising 40-items to measure the Anorexia Nervosa among people. It was further refined by Garner, Olmsted, Bohr and Garfinkel (1982) into 26-item scale to identify the eating disorders among people that need professional consultation. This refined 26-item tool was used in this study as Mintz and O'Halloran (2000) and Lee, Kwok, Liao and Leung (2002) found this tool highly valid and reliable to be used. However, the original response set was 6-point Likert scale from Always to Never but in this study it was changed into 5-point Likert scale (1 = never; 2 = rarely; 3 = sometimes; 4 = often; and 5 = regularly), however, for item 26 i.e. 'I enjoy trying new rich foods' it was reverse coded (5 = never; 4 = rarely; 3 = sometimes; 2 = often; and 1 = regularly). Other questions included in this section were 'I feel extremely guilty after eating' and 'I like my stomach to be empty' etc. to measure the respondents' attitude towards eating and dieting. The minimum a respondent scored in this section was 26 while maximum a respondent scored was 130 and the reliability of this section calculated through Cronbach alpha was 0.907.

Fitspiration content on Facebook - Exposure to fitspiration content on Facebook and what it makes the female university students feel about themselves and their appearance, after they view fitspiration messages, images or videos on the Facebook. This study used the adapted version of Exposure to Fitspiration devised by Ooms (2019). Its original version comprised of 41 self-report questions but this study included 6-questions. While the response set was devised on 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; and 5 = strongly agree).

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1

Analysis of Convergent Validity

Construct	Item	Standardized Item Loading (> 0.7)	Cronbach's Alpha (> 0.7)	Composite Reliability (> 0.7)	Average Variance Extracted (< 0.9)
Body Shame	BS2	0.878	0.864	0.906	0.708
	BS3	0.809			
	BS4	0.859			
	BS5	0.817			
Exercise Behavior	EB1	0.855	0.773	0.868	0.687
	EB3	0.857			
	EB4	0.772			
Fitspiration Content on Facebook	FI1	0.704	0.716	0.793	0.562
	FI4	0.771			
	FI5	0.770			
Disordered Eating	DE1	0.748	0.876	0.904	0.612
	DE3	0.813			
	DE4	0.786			
	DE5	0.797			
	DE6	0.772			
	DE8	0.775			

Note: BS: Body Shame, EB: Exercise Behavior, FC: Fitspiration Content on Facebook, DE: Disordered Eating.

Table 1.1 is the graphical representation of values for internal consistency comprising Cronbach's- α and composite reliability for the variables. Hair et al. (2019) stated that for Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values to be deemed valid, they must be above 0.7. The aforementioned table demonstrates that the reliability values were above 0.7 (such as, the

lowest value for fitspiration content on Facebook is 0.716 and the highest value for disordered eating is 0.876, respectively), indicating that the reliability was sufficient. In a similar way, Figure 1.3 indicates the values of Discriminant Validity which were calculated by employing Larcker and Fornell (1981) assessment criteria.

Table 2

Larcker and Fornell (1981) Assessment Criterion for Discriminant Validity Heterograft Monorail Ratio (HTMT) (< 0.9)

Latent Variables	Body Shame	Exercise Behavior	Fitspiration Content	Disordered Eating
Body Shame				
Exercise Behavior	0.345			
Fitspiration Content	0.463	0.568		
Disordered Eating	0.588	0.546	0.574	

Note: Off diagonals stands for correlations, while diagonals refer to the square root of the AVE.

Table 3

Results of Direct Path Analysis

Hypotheses Path	R Square	T-values	P Values (Sig.)	Hypothesis Testing
Fitspiration Content => Exercise Behavior (H1)	0.145	17.789	0.000***	Supported

Hypotheses Path	R Square	T-values	P Values (Sig.)	Hypothesis Testing
Fitspiration Content => Disordered Eating (H2)	0.210	23.867	0.000***	Supported
Fitspiration Content => Body Shame (H3)	0.130	17.453	0.000***	Supported

Table 1.3 represents the findings of the numerous direct effects which were analyzed through Smart-PLS usage. The results indicated that fitspiration content on Facebook had direct and significant impact on body shame ($t = 17.453, p = 0.000$) and disordered eating ($t = 23.867, p = 0.000$). Likewise, fitspiration content on Facebook had significant and strong effect on exercise behavior ($t = 17.789, p = 0.000$).

Discussion

Fitspiration refers to the trend of sharing images, quotes, and messages that promote fitness, exercise, and a healthy lifestyle on social networking platforms. In 2013, the word "fitspiration" sprang to prominence on the internet. Since then, a growing number of websites, pages, and accounts have begun to profit on fitspiration. As of 2021, the hashtag "fitspiration" was related to 19.4 million posts on Instagram and 2.3 million results on Google. Social networking sites were frequently flooded with appealing photographs of tanned, toned, thin, and muscly men and women. These pictures were intended to inspire viewers to

strive for and achieve "fit" bodies.

Through social networking sites, the words "fitspiration" and "inspiration" were combined and referred to 'fitspo' for a shorter version. In order to live healthier lives, viewers were encouraged to exercise and eat well (Tiggemann, & Zaccardo, 2018). Fitspiration was frequently displayed in the form of body images that idealized tone, abs, muscles, tan, and health. The photographs were frequently in line with modern beauty ideals, which were portrayed favorably on a variety of social networking platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, TV, as well as advertisements. Due to the popularity of fitspiration, the culture it created had the ability to both enlighten and favorably motivate consumers and spectators but at the same time it also misinformed dangerously and drove individuals to engage in detrimental behaviors.

Therefore, this study was intended to investigate the impact of exposure to fitspiration content on Facebook on the social (body shame), psychological (disordered eating) and physical (exercise behavior) aspects of Pakistani female university students.

Table

Hypothesis Testing for Impact of Fitspiration Content on Facebook on Social, Physical and Psychological Aspects of Female University Students (H1-H3)

Hypotheses	Status
H1: Fitspiration content on Facebook has a significant impact on compulsive exercise behavior of female university students.	Approved
H2: Fitspiration content on Facebook has a significant impact on disordered eating of female university students.	Approved
H3: Fitspiration content on Facebook has a significant impact on body shame of female university students.	Approved

Thus, it can be stated that exposure to fitspiration content on Facebook impacts female university students in a way that it makes them internalize the idealized standards of thin, fit and toned bodies and therefore has significant impact on body image of female university students, and has adverse consequences on their social, psychological and physical aspects such as body shame, exercise behavior and disordered eating. The results attained

are evidently supporting the findings of Alberga, Withnell and von Ranson (2018); Barnes, Newman and Keenan (2023); Binder, Noetzel, Spielvogel and Matthes (2021); Boepple and Thompson (2016); Curtis, Prichard, Gosse, Stankevicius and Maher (2023); Czepczor-Bernat (2022); Dignard and Jarry (2021); Donovan et al. (2020); Griffiths et al. (2018); Gu, Huang, Ye, and Zhang (2021); He, Harford, Petersen and Prichard (2022); Holland and Tiggemann

(2017); Imperatori et al. (2022); Jerónimo and Carraça (2022); Klier, Rommerskirchen and Brixius (2022); Mayoh, & Jones (2021); Plateau, Bone, Lanning and Meyer (2018); Robinson, et al. (2017); Sagrera et al. (2022); Slater, Varsani and Diedrichs (2017); Tiggemann, Churches, Mitchell and Brown (2018); Tiggemann and Zaccardo (2015); Tiggemann and Zaccardo (2018); Watson, Murnen and College (2019); Wick and Harriger (2018); Wu, Harford, Petersen and Prichard (2022).

Conclusion

There is already a substantial body of information on fitspiration, which clearly supports the idea that beauty and fitness standards, body image and diverse criteria of attractiveness have always been a main theme of intellectual discourses and research projects. Numerous society members had shown a willingness in researching it and performed out extensive investigations for comprehending fitspiration, fitness and beauty in various ways. However, as technology advanced, societal values and norms have altered the extent to which females value their physical attractiveness and how they see their physical characteristics. Over the years, perceptions of attractiveness and the importance of the ideal physique have undergone major transformations and taken on a new dimension.

The Influence of the media especially the social networking sites such as Facebook, along with other significantly influencing components like family, cultural and social pressures cannot be ignored in context of fitspiration content. Additionally, social networking sites had grown into a very effective tool for changing people's perceptions regarding attractiveness and body image in addition to disseminating the problematic ideally thin, fit and toned standards of beauty imposed by society. Females today are becoming more and more concerned about how they appear and have become obsessed with the thought of presenting themselves a particular way.

In the current study, the impact of exposure to fitspiration content on Facebook on the physical, social and psychological implications of Pakistani female students has been investigated through dependent variables such as exercise behavior, disordered eating and body shame. On the basis of quantitative findings, it is thus established that the exposure to fitspiration content on Facebook greatly influences the body

image as well as the physical, social and psychological aspects of females. Females are frequently exposed to objectified and unrealistic standards of beauty and fitness on media, which makes them feel more pressured and leads them into making social, physical and psychological implications, which makes them further insecure if they don't fit into the socio-culturally accepted ideals of extremely thin, fit and toned bodies. Females are constantly striving to meet the unattainable standards of society as they are increasingly concerned about their body image in regard to relationships, associations, professions, employment, and so on.

Females compare their physical appearance, attractiveness, popularity, and fitness with others in an attempt to improve their position in society. They start constantly evaluating their own bodies with other females who have ideally thin, fit and toned bodies with an added layer of slight muscles and therefore body shame themselves if they feel they are falling behind in this race. This eventually leads to them to develop different psychological, social and physical disorders and the desire to permanently alter their bodies and appearance as per the popular social and cultural standards of ideally fit, thin and toned bodies. Another significant conclusion of the current study is that these characteristics are hazardous to all Pakistani female university students.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were drawn in order to address the impact of exposure to fitspiration content on Facebook on the psychological, physical and social implications of Pakistani female university students.

1. It is important for females to be confident and comfortable with their physical appearance but at the same time they must acknowledge their shortcomings and constraints so it can be improvised in a healthy way.
2. Compatible associations and relationships can only be built when females are not only physically but mentally fit as well. Therefore, more focus should be paid to the psychological well-being of individuals especially females.
3. Our natural instinct attracts us towards beauty. However, a culture of compassion needs to be created in society, which is more acceptable towards diversity and different.

4. Media literacy programs should be promoted to equip young women with the skills to critically evaluate and challenge the unrealistic

beauty standards perpetuated on social networking sites.

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