

# Social Comparison and Body Image in Teenage Boys and Girls Users of the TikTok App

Muhammad Rifqi Rahmadiansyah<sup>1</sup> Yulmaida Amir<sup>1</sup> Ilham Mundzir<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. Hamka, Jakarta 12130, Indonesia

\*Corresponding author. Email: Ilhammundzir@uhamka.ac.id

## ABSTRACT

Teenagers have the concept of an ideal body image by interacting with the social environment in the form of social comparisons with other people. Social comparison is closely related to social media. TikTok is one of the video-based social media that is currently booming and loved by teenagers. This is because TikTok is one of the tools that helps relieve boredom during social goals due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This research is to find out the relationship between social comparisons and body image and find out the differences between boys and girls in doing social comparisons and body image. The research subjects involved 62 respondents consisting of 31 men and 31 women aged 12-19 years who had or had a TikTok application account. The sampling technique in this research is purposive sampling. Social comparisons were measured using the Upward and Downward Physical Appearance Comparison Scale from O'Brien., et al (2009) and body image was measured using the Multidimensional Body-Self Relation Questionnaire-Appearance Scale (MBSRQ-AS) from Cash (2000). This research uses different and correlational test analysis techniques. The results of this study indicate that male adolescents make more social comparisons than female adolescents, but both have the same level of body image. Teenagers using TikTok have a significant positive relationship between social comparison and body image. That is, the higher the adolescents make social comparisons, the higher their body image and vice versa. The lower the adolescents make social comparisons, the lower their body image. In male adolescents, the relationship between social comparison and body image shows a positive relationship, while in female adolescents the negative relationship is not significant.

**Keywords:** Social Comparison, Body Image, TikTok, Social Media, Teenagers

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The use of TikTok among teenagers raises an interesting social phenomenon to discuss as for the social phenomenon, namely the phenomenon of social comparisons carried out by teenagers against people who upload video content on TikTok social media. The social comparison of teenagers on tiktok content reported from kompasiana.com due to TikTok content which contains beauty and wealth makes teenagers see and lower their level of confidence. reported by Suara.com [13] which raised the phenomenon of a teenager named Amber May who was willing to change her body shape by doing plastic surgery. He did plastic surgery starting from seeing women on Instagram who have a better body shape than him and want to have a body shape like that woman. He claimed to have been obsessed with plastic surgery on seven parts of his body so that his body looks good.

Batubara [3] teenagers are identical with the occurrence of various types of changes in themselves, both hormonal, physical, psychological and social changes. This happens because in adolescence will experience the phase of

puberty. Puberty is a period of markers that individuals have entered the stage of maturity which is marked by the maturity of the sexual tools along with rapid, regular and continuous physical development.

Teenage girls experience physical development with breast growth, armpit hair, and menstruation, while male teenagers grow hair in the pubic area, testicular and penis growth, changes in voice, and muscle development [7]. Usually, teenage girls have more weight and height than boys of the same age in late adolescence. This is confirmed by the opinion of Batubara [3] after menstruation growth in height will increase slightly and will stop and the growth of fat mass will double before puberty.

Adolescents consider physical appearance to be the clearest and most easily seen picture or self-identity for others so that it becomes an important factor in social relationships. Therefore, the rapid physical development makes teenagers have fears or concerns over certain physical characteristics that develop in an abnormal direction or do not match their gender [8]. To reduce the

feeling of anxiety, teenagers focus their attention and do various ways to get an attractive body shape [7].

Girls and boys have different body concerns. Girls and boys have different body concerns. Women will feel worried if their height will not look attractive to men and boys, fat is considered something that does not fit in the group. Men's concerns are centered on physical appearance and masculine body shape [7] and on women they will worry if their appearance does not show feminist sides such as having beautiful facial skin [8].

Body image is a perception or overall assessment of the body that will affect cognitive, feelings and behavior [4]. The results of the assessment or perception are manifested in positive or negative feelings which are reflected in the body image they have.

Gender roles affect teenagers' perceptions or judgments in viewing their own bodies [15]. Both boys and girls pay more attention to their bodies and develop an ideal body image. However, many researchers have found that women are more prone to having a negative body image than men.) compared to boys, girls are more dissatisfied with their bodies during puberty [15].

This indicates that teenage boys have a body image with a body shape that is not overweight and has muscle mass [18] and while teenage girls have a body image with attractive appearance, tall, slim and beautiful [4]. (Supriyadi 2019). Body images of both genders have grown when they go through puberty and have concerns about changing body shapes.

The ideal body image can be obtained by teenagers by doing social interaction with their environment. According to Brahmini & Supriyadi [4], the social environment plays a very significant role in teenage beliefs regarding the ideal appearance they want. This is because the social environment will provide all descriptions and information regarding the concept of ideal body image and physical appearance from peers, family and figures. another ideal figure. Nowadays social interaction can be done online through social media as a social environment.

Today, social media has mushroomed with the advantages and conveniences it provides, such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook and n many others. Recently, TikTok has become a video-based social media that is booming in use because during the Covid-19 pandemic TikTok can be entertainment and help get rid of boredom while the social distancing period throughout Indonesia As of October 2020, TikTok users have reached 689 million [19] and the average user is teenagers with a range of 14 to 24 years [5].

Lately, TikTok has become one of the most popular social media that is most loved by teenagers. Reporting from tekno.kompas.com [10] social media TikTok as of February 2021 global daily active users are estimated to reach 35.28 million with 42 percent of users belonging to Generation Z. Generation Z is a generation born between 1997 and 2012 with The estimated age of 8 to 35 years is dominated by teenagers [11]

TikTok is a video-based social media that allows users to be creative by making a video with lip-synchronization and movement features with several types of songs that

can be selected with a duration of 15 to 60 seconds [12]. According to Anderson & Katie [1] TikTok also allows users to upload sounds or images, filters and stickers and upload videos with soundtracks.

According to research conducted by Khattab [12] on TikTok social media, it was found that some TikTok content that displays the transition from ordinary appearance to appearance with an ideal body image represents the role of body image in accordance with body image standards in society. This is coupled with video-based social media that allows users to see body image with more dynamic and moving images.

Every social media has an influencer or artist who has a very large following. On Instagram it is called selebgram and on TikTok it is called selebtiktok. Each influencer has a different style or content, whether it's content about beauty, fashion, lifestyle and others (Kompas.com). This phenomenon is closely related to body image, because selebtiktok will display content by displaying their ideal body image and become a source of information related to body image for teenagers. The image of celebrity exposure with an ideal and attractive body image can damage body image [2]

Due to rapid physical changes, teenagers will evaluate their body image by making social comparisons [18]. Social comparison is a form of individual interaction with other individuals that aims to evaluate attributes [9] and enrich the attributes they have [6]. This is done because individuals need information about the physical attributes they are developing through the figures they see as references. Social media is one of the places that can provide information about body image because there are ideal figures that teenagers want [2].

Research conducted by Sari & Suarya [16] which focuses on examining social comparisons, body image and self-esteem with 100 female teenage respondents shows the results that female teenagers have a very high level of social comparison so that it contributes to the low body image of female teenagers. Research conducted by Wahyuni & Wilani [18] which focuses on examining social comparisons and body image with 100 male teenagers shows that male teenagers have a moderate level of social comparison with lower social comparisons so that male teenagers are more positive in assessing their own body image. Social comparison in women has more social comparisons than men [9].

From these two studies, it can be said that gender does have a role in social comparison. Men are more likely to perform downward social comparisons and the effect on the acceptance of a more positive body image. This is in line with the opinion of Wahyuni & Wilani [18] that teenagers who do downward social comparisons will make comparisons with people who are worse off than themselves so that teenagers are more satisfied with themselves. Meanwhile, teenage girls have a high level of social comparison and the effect on body image is low. This indicates that teenage girls perform upward social comparisons. Wahyuni & Wilani [18] Teenages who do upward social comparisons will compare themselves with

other people who are better than themselves so that teenagers become dissatisfied with themselves.

Adolescence, social comparison, body image and TikTok have an empirical and engaging relationship. Teenagers who are going through puberty will spend a lot of time paying attention and improving their body image to look ideal because teenagers believe body image is a day

## **2. RESEARCH METHODS**

### **2.1. Variables & Operational Definitions**

The independent variable in this study is social comparison, while the dependent variable in this study is body image. The operational definition of each variable is as follows:

#### **2.1.1. Social Comparison**

Social comparison is a social psychological process that occurs in almost everyone to carry out cognitive evaluations and assessments in the form of comparisons of the attributes we have with the attributes of others, both physical attributes (height, weight, shape and facial features) and attributes. personal (personality, intelligence, style and popularity).

#### **2.1.2. Body Image**

Body image is a multidimensional, subjective and dynamic assessment of body shape that refers to a social perspective on ideal body image so as to produce perceptions, thoughts and feelings about body shape and physical appearance, both producing negative perceptions, thoughts and feelings as well as perceptions, thoughts and feelings. positive feelings.

### **2.2. Research Participants**

In this study, the population taken were teenage boys and girls using TikTok social media, consisting of 100 boys and 100 girls. By using the purposive technique of determining the sample in accordance with the characteristics that have been determined by the researcher, namely 1). Teenages aged 12-19 years, 2). TikTok Social Media App Users 3). Boy and girl.

### **2.3. Measuring Instrument**

The measuring instrument used in this research is the social comparison scale and body image. The social comparison scale was measured using the Upward and Downward Physical Appearance Comparison compiled by O'Brien, et al (2009). This measuring instrument has two subscales, namely upward social comparison and downward social comparison. This measuring instrument

uses a Likert scale type and has 18 items. The validity index on this scale is 0.653 – 0.895 and the reliability is 0.964.

The body image scale was measured using the Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire (MBSRQ) which was compiled by Cash and adapted by Swami, et al (2019). This measuring instrument has five subscales, namely evaluation of appearance, orientation of appearance, anxiety about obesity, categorization of body weight, and area of body satisfaction. This measuring instrument uses a Likert scale type and has 34 items. There are 13 items that do not reach the limit of validity and are declared invalid, leaving 21 valid items with a validity of 0.317 – 0.751 and a reliability of 0.756.

### **2.4. Data Analysis Techniques**

The data analysis technique used in this research is T-test analysis on social comparison and body image and additional analysis using correlation analysis. This data analysis technique uses IBM SPSS statistical software version 22.

## **3. RESULT**

Through the t-test to find out the difference in social comparisons carried out by male teenagers and female teenagers, the t-coefficient is 2.261 and the probability value is 0.037 ( $< 0.05$ ) with the mean value for male teenagers is 54.90 and the mean value is 54.90. teenage girls by 44.93. It can be ascertained that there are significant differences between teenage girls and boys in making social comparisons and that boys make social comparisons the most often compared to girls.

The results of the t-test on the body image variable show a t-coefficient of 1.314 and a probability value of 0.690 ( $> 0.05$ ). This indicates that both male and female teenagers have the same level of body image and there is no significant difference.

The results of the correlation test to determine the relationship between social comparison variables and body image resulted in an r-value of 0.284 and a probability value of 0.025 ( $< 0.05$ ). This indicates that there is a significant positive relationship between social comparison and body image in teenagers. This positive relationship indicates that the higher the social comparison, the higher the body image, and vice versa, the lower the social comparison, the lower the body image.

The results of the correlation test to determine the relationship between social comparison variables and body image in teenage boys resulted in an r-value of 0.657 and a probability value of 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ ). This indicates that there is a significant positive relationship between social comparison and body image in teenage boys. This positive relationship indicates that the higher the social comparison of eating, the higher the body image in male teenagers, and vice versa, the lower the social comparison, the lower body image in male teenagers.

The results of the correlation test to determine the relationship between social comparison variables and body image in teenage girls, the  $r$  value of  $-0.143$  and the probability value of  $0.444$  ( $> 0.05$ ). This indicates that there is no significant relationship between social comparison and body image in teenage girls.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that there are differences between teenage boys and girls when doing social comparisons on TikTok social media with boys doing the most comparisons and on body image both boys and girls have the same level of body image.

Social comparison with body image shows a significant positive relationship. This positive meaning indicates that the higher the social comparison, the higher the body image, and vice versa, the lower the social comparison, the lower the body image.

Boys also showed significant positive relationship results, this indicates that the more boys make social comparisons on the TikTok application, the higher their body image will be, and vice versa, the lower boys make social comparisons on the TikTok application. the lower the body image and there is no significant positive relationship between social comparison and body image in teenage girls

Participants in this study were minimal. Therefore, the researcher suggests for further research to ensure that participants reach a sufficient number to make generalizations. It is recommended that this research related to TikTok be expanded to include other variables.

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