

## Content Analysis on Media Pressure and Body Dysmorphic Disorder from Celebrity Perspective

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### ABSTRACT

Media pressure plays a significant role in shaping societal beauty standards and ideals. Celebrities are constantly in the public eye, and the body of celebrities are often scrutinized and compared to unrealistic standards of beauty. This pressure can come from various sources, including tabloids, social media, and the entertainment industry itself. Constant exposure to such ideals can lead celebrities to develop negative body image perceptions, and contribute to body dysmorphia. The aim of study focuses on the way media pressurise celebrities into developing body dysmorphia. The study employs qualitative study called content analysis on confessions made by the celebrities about having body dysmorphia given by Hollywood celebrities, American T.V show artists, pop stars and media personalities. A total number of 10 samples collected for the study. Investigation revealed that, celebrities with body dysmorphic disorder and body image issue are caused by the media pressure. Analysis done for this study shows that celebrities with hard time upholding social expectations regarding the appearance are more prone to body dysmorphia. Implication of the study is to gain a deeper understanding of the mental health issue of celebrities, the study can contribute to raising awareness about the pressures and expectations placed on individuals in the public spotlight, helping to foster empathy and understanding among the general public.

**Keywords:** *Body Dysmorphia, Appearance anxiety, Body Image, Celebrities, Content analysis*

The study focuses on how media influences body dysmorphia and highlights the impact of media on an individual perception of their bodies. It recognizes that celebrities often speak about the significance of mental health and share personal experiences, but it also emphasizes that celebrities themselves can struggle with mental health issues, including body dysmorphia.

American Psychiatric Association (2013) Body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) or body dysmorphia is a mental health disorder in which a person cannot stop thinking about one or more perceived flaws or defects in their appearance. No matter how small or undetectable these "flaws" are, the person may feel so embarrassed and ashamed that they may avoid social situations. While many struggled with self-esteem from time to time, people with

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## **Content Analysis on Media Pressure and Body Dysmorphic Disorder from Celebrity Perspective**

BDD have a particularly hard time overcoming this perceived flaw. People with this condition scrutinize their bodies every time they look in the mirror to find out more about why they think they look "ugly" or unattractive. And when they are not satisfied with the result of their observation, they tend to repeat it again and again and try to find what is wrong with them, because for this purpose it probably helps them feel better about themselves in a way. This cycle can continue for hours, days, or even weeks until the person suffering from BDD becomes completely consumed with their appearance. It can lead to tremendous anxiety and depression, which can then lead to problems in personal relationships, difficulties at work, and even suicidal thoughts.

Media plays a significant role in shaping societal beauty standards and can contribute to the development or exacerbation of body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) in individuals. Body dysmorphic disorder is a mental health condition characterized by an obsessive preoccupation with perceived flaws in one's appearance, which may or may not be noticeable to others. The media often portrays unrealistic and idealized images of beauty, emphasizing thinness, flawless skin, and other specific physical features. These representations can create a distorted perception of what considered normal or desirable, leading individuals to compare themselves unfavourably and feel inadequate or flawed. The constant exposure to such images in magazines, advertisements, social media, and other platforms can fuel body dissatisfaction and contribute to the development of body dysmorphia.

Moreover, the rise of social media has intensified these issues. Platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok are saturated with filtered and edited images that present an idealized version of individuals' lives and appearances. The pressure to present oneself in a perfect light, combined with the ability to digitally enhance and manipulate images, can further distort perceptions and fuel body dissatisfaction.

It is important to recognize that media is not solely responsible for body dysmorphic disorder or body image issues. BDD is a complex condition that arises from a combination of genetic, psychological, and environmental factors. However, the media's portrayal of beauty standards can contribute to the development or worsening of body dysmorphia in susceptible individuals. To address the impact of media on body dysmorphia, it is crucial to promote media literacy and critical thinking skills. Encouraging individuals to question and challenge the unrealistic beauty ideals presented in the media can help them develop a more balanced and realistic perception of themselves and others. It is also important to promote diverse representations of beauty in the media, embracing different body types, sizes, and appearances, to foster inclusivity and reduce the pressure to conform to a narrow definition of beauty.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

(Tiggemann, 2003) conducted a study titled "social comparison and body dissatisfaction". aimed to examine the impact of thin idealized images of women as portrayed in music television on social comparison and body dissatisfaction among young women. The study involved a sample of 84 women who were exposed to either appearance music videos, which emphasized physical appearance and showcased thin and attractive women, or nonappearance music videos that did not focus on appearance. The results of the study indicated that music videos highlighting thin women led to amplified social comparison and body dissatisfaction among the participants. This study provides empirical evidence supporting the notion that exposure to idealized and thin media portrayals of women can

## **Content Analysis on Media Pressure and Body Dysmorphic Disorder from Celebrity Perspective**

have negative effects on body image perceptions and contribute to body dissatisfaction, particularly when individuals engage in social comparisons.

Yuanyuan Zhang et al, 2009, The study titled "Female Body Image as a Function of Themes in Rap Music Videos: A Content Analysis" focuses on examining the portrayal of female body images, particularly the overrepresentation of thin females, in rap music videos. The research involved conducting a content analysis of rap music videos aired on popular cable outlets in the United States, namely BET, MTV, and VH1. A total of 258 female characters were analysed, with the majority being Black (87.6%), followed by White (5.8%), and other races (6.6%). The study aimed to explore the relationship between the body images of female characters and the thematic content of the videos, including violence and sex. The findings revealed that rap music videos, as a whole, exhibited a higher representation of thin females. This study sheds light on the representation of female body images in rap music videos, highlighting the overrepresentation of thin females and the influence of thematic content on body size portrayal.

Rizwan et.al (2022) "Increase in body dysmorphia and eating disorders among adolescents due to social media". The aim of the review was to examine the influence of social media on body dissatisfaction and the development of unrealistic body image ideals. The review suggests that the constant exposure to idealized and often unattainable body images on social media contributes to the development of body image issues. Overall, the systematic review emphasizes the detrimental effects of social media on both physical and mental health, particularly in relation to body dissatisfaction and eating disorders. The findings underscore the need for further research and interventions to address the negative impact of social media on body image and promote a healthier relationship with one's body.

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

The study is aimed to understand the influence of media on body image of an individual and chances of developing body dysmorphic from celebrities' perspective. To fulfil the purpose, the confession of 10 celebrities about their Body dysmorphia is considered and 10 of them are from different media industries. A total of 10 interviews were used for the study. The data was collected through the help of social media, YouTube, different sites, news articles and other streaming platforms.

In this study the research method of content analysis was used. According to Hsieh & Shannon, 2005 Content analysis allows for a systematic and structured approach to understanding and interpreting textual data, providing insights into the underlying meanings and messages conveyed within the content and according to Kolbe and Burnett,1991 Content analysis it involves the systematic and structured analysis of texts, images, or other forms of communication to extract meaningful insights and patterns. By examining the content of recorded communications, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the messages, themes, and underlying meanings conveyed within the data. Hayes and Krippendorff (2007) mentioned content analysis can encompass a wide range of sources, including newspaper editorials, television news, advertisements, public speeches, and other verbal or nonverbal units of analysis. By applying systematic coding and classification techniques, researchers can extract valuable insights, identify patterns, and draw conclusions from the content under examination.

## **Content Analysis on Media Pressure and Body Dysmorphic Disorder from Celebrity Perspective**

The given study is qualitative approach there for the content used for the study is interviews and news articles relevant to the aim of the study. The content analysis is used because it is appropriate for the conduct of the research.

### ***Transparency and Openness***

In the realm of research, fostering openness and transparency holds paramount significance. With an unwavering commitment to these principles, this research paper endeavours to provide a comprehensive and transparent account of its findings and methodologies. Through meticulous documentation of the research process, including data collection, analysis, and interpretation, every effort has been made to ensure that the research remains accessible to fellow scholars, policymakers, and the wider community. By openly sharing the research design, sources of data, and analytical frameworks employed, this paper aims to promote reproducibility and facilitate a constructive dialogue within the academic community. Moreover, any limitations or potential biases inherent in the study have been candidly addressed to maintain intellectual integrity. By embracing openness and transparency, this research paper aspires to contribute to the collective knowledge and inspire further inquiry in the field.

### ***Research Hypothesis***

H1: The media pressure leads to body image dissatisfaction and body dysmorphia in celebrities.

## **DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

### ***Social Comparison:***

According to Leon Festinger in 1954 Social comparison refers to the process of evaluating oneself by comparing one's abilities, qualities, achievements, or possessions with those of others. It is a natural human tendency to assess ourselves in relation to others, as we seek information and validation about our own characteristics and performance.

People magazine (December 15, 2017) "I was always worried about my appearance; I couldn't look in the mirror. Brittany Snow says it took her years to accept that her "muscular" body would never look like the supermodel shapes she saw in magazines.

"I had a big problem with exercise and diet. I wanted so badly to be like the girls I saw in fitness magazines. I thought that was the ideal of happiness,".

Brittany snow confessed about her struggle with mental health from her confession its analysed that she goes through social comparison due the portray of media about body appearance. She compared her appearance with models that appeared in the magazines and became insecure about her appearance which potentially led to many struggles regarding body image.

BBC November 2015 Modern family star Reid Ewing also mentioned that he wanted to look like Brad Pitt and ended up undergoing many cosmetic surgeries. Even though he has to face lot of health complications but still he never gave on having cosmetic surgeries and his body dysmorphia gets worse.

From the above cases, social comparison can play a significant role in the development and maintenance of body dysmorphia. Constant exposure to idealized and unrealistic beauty standards in the media and society can contribute to feelings of inadequacy and a distorted

## **Content Analysis on Media Pressure and Body Dysmorphic Disorder from Celebrity Perspective**

perception of one's own body. Comparing oneself to others, particularly through social media platforms where people often curate and present their best selves, can exacerbate these feelings and fuel body dissatisfaction. This process occurs across various domains, including physical appearance. In the realm of body image, individuals often engage in upward or downward social comparisons. Upward comparisons involve comparing oneself to individuals perceived as more attractive or physically fit, which may lead to feelings of inadequacy, dissatisfaction, and lower self-esteem. Downward comparisons, on the other hand, involve comparing oneself to individuals perceived as less attractive or physically fit, which may temporarily boost self-esteem but can also contribute to a distorted view of reality.

### ***Social Perspective:***

It Refers to the influence of society, media, culture, and social interactions on individuals' perception of their own bodies. It recognizes that the way we view our bodies is not solely based on our own personal experiences but is also shaped by external factors. Tiggemann (2011) It begins with the premise that "there are social ideals of beauty (within a particular culture)" which are then "transmitted through various sociocultural channels". It can be the media, family, and peers. Ideals are then "internalized by individuals". The final step—the result of this process—is that "satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with appearance will be a function of the extent to which individuals meet (or fail to meet) the ideal prescription," in other words: the greater the deviation. is between an individual's body image and society's idea of beauty, the less satisfied they will be.

International Business Time, 2013 reports, Robert Pattinson revealed how he always thought he does not have sixpack and he hates going to gym and always insecure about taking off his shirt and his co-star actress May 2012 interview on ABC's revealed how he always negatively view about his appearance and how he always felt awful and ugly.

People magazine (December 15, 2017) Brittany snow confessed about how she finds insecure about her muscular body and obsessed over the body of models shown in the magazines.

BILLBOARD 2015 reports Miley Cyrus explained how she experienced body dysmorphia during the Hannah Montana show because she was pressured to appear in certain way wearing tons of makeup, wig. She was forced to believe that this is how pop star are supposed to look.

These three confessions revealed the way social perspective can become major cause of body dysmorphia. The social perspective influenced by external factors and internal factors in case of Miley Cyrus it was the show makers of Hannah Montana where she was forced to give unrealistic appearance to the viewers and ended up questioning her own identity and in case of Brittany also she believed that the ideal body image is the one shown in the magazines not her muscular body but for International Business Time, 2013, Robert Pattinson it was internal factor he believed his own that his body doesn't worth and he tends to perceived that he should appear muscular that is more acceptable.

It is important to consider the social perspective when discussing body dysmorphia because societal ideals and cultural standards of beauty can significantly influence an individual's perception of their own body. In many societies, there is a strong emphasis on physical appearance, and certain body types or features are often idealized and celebrated. Unrealistic exposure to these unrealistic beauty standards can contribute to feelings of inadequacy and

## Content Analysis on Media Pressure and Body Dysmorphic Disorder from Celebrity Perspective

fuel body dissatisfaction. The desire to achieve an idealized body image can become all-consuming and significantly impact an individual's self-esteem and overall well-being. It is essential to recognize that body dysmorphia is a result of societal pressures, expectations and social interactions can significantly impact the severity and course of the disorder.

### ***Perceived Flaw:***

Body Dysmorphic Disorder DSM-5 300.7 (F45.22), American Psychiatry Association Perceived flaw is defined as an individual perception about their flaws which is either non-existent or minimal. Fixation on a perceived flaw is an excessive preoccupation with a perceived defect or flaw in one's physical appearance. It can cause significant distress and can interfere with daily functioning and overall well-being. Media plays a role inducing this perceived flaw in celebrities through pressuring media appearance, social validation, and expectation, so media plays a significant role in inducing perceived flaws.

Women's Health magazine 2012 Hayden Panettiere revealed how she ended up having fixation about her body weight she was overly concerned about the body weight, and she also mentioned how much she stressed over it she did this confession in Women Health magazine. She also mentioned that she started experiencing body dysmorphia after a magazine published her legs with the word cellulite on it, cellulite is a bacterial infection. She was only 16-year-old at that time. The way the magazine portrayed her appearance made her insecure about her look and the fixation on her perceived flaw later led to body dysmorphia.

Interview with Rolling Stone 2019 Billie Eilish also mentioned her struggles with body image, she was so focused on her body and even unable to look herself in the mirror and, she explained how she was always uncomfortable in tiny clothes. She experienced a lack of body confidence when joined a competitive dance company.

Instagram post on 1/14/22 Lili Reinhart confessed through her Instagram post that she is overconcerned with her body weight.

Celebrities often get obsessed over their body weight because of the media portray, the media always expected them to maintain an ideal body appearance to please the audience.

### ***Perfectionism:***

Body Dysmorphic Disorder DSM-5 300.7 (F45.22), American Psychiatry Association Perfectionism characterized by setting extremely high standards for oneself and striving for flawlessness in various areas of life. People who exhibit perfectionistic tendencies often have a strong desire to achieve excellence, but they can also be overly critical of their own performance and have difficulty accepting anything less than perfection. Some celebrities exhibit "adaptive perfectionism," which can be characterized by high standards combined with a healthy drive for achievement. On the other hand, "maladaptive perfectionism" involves rigid standards, excessive self-criticism, and a negative impact on well-being. Perfectionism can be characterized by personal standards, concern over mistakes, excessive self-criticism. From the analysis of confessions made by celebrities the media role in inducing perfectionism is through,

1. Idealized portrayals: Media often presents flawless and airbrushed images of celebrities and models. These portrayals set unrealistic standards of beauty and can lead individuals to compare themselves unfavourably, fostering feelings of inadequacy and a desire to achieve perfection.

## **Content Analysis on Media Pressure and Body Dysmorphic Disorder from Celebrity Perspective**

2. Promotion of success culture: Media often celebrates extraordinary achievements, highlighting the accomplishments of highly successful individuals. While this can be inspiring, it can also create pressure to constantly excel and attain similar levels of success in various aspects of life. This can fuel perfectionistic tendencies and a fear of failure.
3. Social media influence: Social media platforms are known for their curated representations of people's lives. Users tend to highlight only the positive aspects, creating an illusion of perfection. People may feel pressured to showcase their own lives in a similar manner, contributing to the pursuit of an unattainable ideal.
4. Cyberbullying and body shaming: The anonymity of online platforms can facilitate cyberbullying and body shaming. Negative comments and criticism, often related to appearance or personal attributes, can reinforce perfectionistic tendencies and damage self-esteem.

Perfectionism can lead to Body Dysmorphic as both share some common traits, such as excessive self-criticism and a strong desire for external validation, BDD is specifically focused on appearance-related concerns.

### ***Clinical Distress:***

Body Dysmorphic Disorder DSM-5 300.7 (F45.22), American Psychiatry Association Clinical distress is a term used to describe distressing symptoms, Anxiety, excessive worry, or panic attacks, social withdrawal or isolation, self-harm behaviour.

Individuals with body dysmorphia experiences anxiety regarding the appearance celebrities confessed about having anxiety about their appearance while facing media or when appearing events.

Teen Vogue report 2017 Kim Kardashian confessed about having anxiety attacks about her appearance. She also mentioned of having an anxiety attack when her bikini pictures heavily scrutinized by the media. International Business Time, 2013 Robert Pattinson also revealed of having anxiety when he has to appear to an event.

Body dysmorphia is often accompanied by high levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms. Celebrities with body dysmorphia experience intense anxiety related to their appearance, such as fear of being judged or ridiculed. The distress associated with BDD can also contribute to feelings of hopelessness, sadness, and low self-esteem, leading to depressive symptoms. The distress experienced in BDD is often significant and can have a profound impact on daily lives, especially when appearing events and facing camera is an important part of celebrity profession.

### ***Further Analysis:***

There are several factors that can contribute to the development of body dysmorphia in celebrities:

1. Societal Pressure: Celebrities often face immense pressure to conform to a certain standard of beauty or physical perfection, as their appearance is constantly scrutinized by the media and the public. The relentless scrutiny and comparison to unrealistic beauty ideals can create a heightened sense of self-consciousness and dissatisfaction with their own bodies.
2. Industry Standards: The entertainment industry often emphasizes physical attractiveness, and celebrities may feel compelled to meet the expectations set by

## Content Analysis on Media Pressure and Body Dysmorphic Disorder from Celebrity Perspective

their profession. They may face pressure to maintain a particular body shape or size, leading to excessive concern about their appearance.

3. **Public Image:** Celebrities rely on their public image for their careers, and they may fear that any perceived flaws in their appearance could negatively impact their success or public perception. This fear can contribute to an obsessive preoccupation with their physical appearance.
4. **Constant Evaluation:** Celebrities are constantly evaluated and judged based on their appearance, both in the media and by their fans. This can lead to self-comparison and a distorted perception of their own bodies, as they may focus on minor imperfections that others may not notice or consider significant.
5. **Emotional Vulnerability:** Like anyone else, celebrities can experience personal insecurities, low self-esteem, or past traumatic experiences related to their body image. These emotional vulnerabilities can contribute to the development or exacerbation of body dysmorphia.

## CONCLUSION

The media can indeed contribute to body dysmorphia in celebrities. Body dysmorphia is a mental health disorder characterized by a preoccupation with perceived flaws in one's appearance. Celebrities are often under intense scrutiny and pressure to meet society's unrealistic standards of beauty and perfection. One way the media contributes to body dysmorphia is through the use of photo editing and retouching techniques. Magazine covers, advertisements, and social media posts often present highly edited and airbrushed images of celebrities, creating an unattainable standard of beauty. These manipulated images can lead celebrities to compare themselves to an unrealistic ideal, causing feelings of inadequacy and dissatisfaction with their own appearance. Moreover, the media often focuses on discussing and critiquing celebrities' bodies and physical appearances. Tabloid magazines and online gossip columns frequently scrutinize and make negative comments about celebrities' weight, size, or physical features. This constant scrutiny can create immense pressure for celebrities to conform to narrow beauty standards, leading to body dysmorphia and various mental health issues. Additionally, the constant presence of paparazzi and the demand for "red carpet" appearances put celebrities under immense pressure to maintain a certain image. They may feel compelled to undergo extreme measures to alter their appearance, such as engaging in excessive dieting, cosmetic surgery, or other unhealthy behaviours, to fit the perceived expectations of the media and the public. It is important to note that the media is not solely responsible for body dysmorphia in celebrities. The disorder is complex and influenced by various factors, including personal experiences, genetics, and societal pressures. However, the media's role in promoting unrealistic beauty standards and perpetuating the objectification of bodies can contribute significantly to the development and exacerbation of body dysmorphia in celebrities.

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## Content Analysis on Media Pressure and Body Dysmorphic Disorder from Celebrity Perspective

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