Plan Overview

A Data Management Plan created using DMPonline

Title: Highly Visual Social Media and Adolescent Male Body Image: A Qualitative Study

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Project abstract:

The digital age of social media is rapidly developing, and the user base is increasing with boys as young as eight years old reporting consistently accessing at least one highly visual social media (HVSM) platform (e.g., Instagram). Adolescence and early adulthood mark critical developmental periods for identity and self-concept formation, with adolescents highly vulnerable to influence from their social network. Currently, many boys report being consistently exposed to unrealistic and idealized body types online, specifically ones depicting high muscularity. There are few theories that link identity and body appraisal in young males, and some are mostly based on women's experiences with social media and idealized body types. Researchers emphasize that tools that measure dimensions body dissatisfaction have been created based on idealized thinness and female-derived body image standards. As a result, findings about males may have been misrepresented in collected data. Moreover, masculine norms in society have deemed vulnerability as an indicator of weakness while suppressing emotions cultivates hyper-self-reliance. Consequently, young males are hindered from disclosing and discussing mental health struggles, trauma, and personal issues. This further contributes to men being underrepresented in data and studies about sensitive topics such as body image issues, body dysmorphia, eating disorders, and overall mental health wellbeing. These gaps will be investigated via qualitative research methods consisting of individual interviews and focus groups with males aged 13 to 18 who self-report highly visual social media usage. Purposive sampling will be used to recruit 29 total participants (n=14 for individual interviews, n=15 for focus groups) through social media, local schools, institutions, youth groups, and University of Plymouth affiliated colleges. The prompt questions will explore participants' experiences with social media, their ideas on idealized male bodies, and how these impact self-esteem, identity, and body image. The aim is to provide young males the opportunity to share their experiences with these topics in a safe and secure environment. Reflexive thematic analysis will be used to analyze the data, with NVivo supporting the process.

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Highly Visual Social Media and Adolescent Male Body Image: A Qualitative Study

Data Collection

What data will you collect or create?

The study will collect quantitative data about body image concerns and identity formation in relation to social media use in young male adolescents aged 13—18 years. Anonymised interview and focus group transcripts will be collected as well as audio recording of responses to prompt questions during discussions. Data formats will include audio recordings (WAV/MP3), and text-based transcripts (DOCX/PDF). Personal data using LimeSurvey will also be collected and transfered onto password-protected and secure devices.

How will the data be collected or created?

Data will be collected through online and in-person interviews and focus groups using audio recordings which will be transcribed manually or using approved transcription software. LimeSurvey will be used for recruiment - this means the collection of personal information as a means for young boys to express interest in participating in the study. This data will be downloaded/transfered onto secure and password-protected devices from the LimeSurvey database and then subsquently destroyed from the database. Standardised protocols and operating procedures will be used to ensure consistency and data quality across all stages of collection.

Documentation and Metadata

What documentation and metadata will accompany the data?

Comprehensive documentation will accompany the dataset, including data dictionaries, codebooks, participant information sheets, consent forms, and methodology notes. Metadata will describe file structures, variable names, coding schemes, collection dates, and software versions used. Documentation will follow University of Plymouth research data guidance to ensure the data are understandable and reusable.

Ethics and Legal Compliance

How will you manage any ethical issues?

In regards to ethics approval, data collection for the project Will only Start after Obtaining ethical approval Of the University Of Plymouth Faculty of Health Ethics and Integrity Research Committee. For the focus groups and interviews, managing power dynamics through creating a safe and non-judgmental environment inviting participants to share experiences freely. Also, the researcher will consistently check in with participants to ensure that they are comfortable, able, and willing to continue with the study, For the participants under 18, parental consent is necessary. A guardian information sheet will be provided, outlining study purposes, procedures, potential risks, benefits, confidentiality, and data use. Once this is approved, an assent form will be provided to the minor participant. The assent form will use age-appropriate language, briefly explaining what the study involves and emphasizing that they can withdraw from the studies at any time. This will include information about how to withdraw and that doing so will not result in any negative impact and/or harm to the participant or research teams. At the end of participation, all individuals will receive a sheet containing inforrnation about mental health and counselling support services, including school wellbeing services and relevant youth support organizations. All data will be anonymised and no identifiable informaiton will be included in the Good safeguarding practice guidance for vulnerable populations (children) also recommends enhanced DBS screening for the facilitator and prinicipal researcher.

How will you manage copyright and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) issues?

Intellectual Property and copyright arising from the research will be owned by the University of Plymouth in accordance with institutional policy. Any third-party materials or copyrighted assessment tools Will be used under appropriate licences or permissions. Data shared publicly will be anonymised and released under a suitable licence where appropriate.

Storage and Backup

How will the data be stored and backed up during the research?

Research data will be stored securely on encrypted University of Plymouth servers and approved cloud storage systems (i.e., OneDrive) with regular automated backups. Portable devices used during data collection will be encrypted and password protected. Backup copies Will be maintained in separate secure locations to minimise the risk of data loss. The information will only be accessible to the principal researcher and supervisors.

How will you manage access and security?

Access to identifiable data will be restricted to authorised members of the research team through password-protected systems and role-based permissions. Anonymised datasets will be stored separately from participant identifiers. All data handling will comply with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, and University of Plymouth data security policies. Physically submitted consent/assent forms will be stored in a locked and secure storage area to ensure that personal data is not compromised.

Selection and Preservation

Which data are of long-term value and should be retained, shared, and/or preserved?

Anonymised datasets, codebooks, methodological documentation, analysis scripts, and final research outputs will be retained for long-term preservation due to their potential value for replication, secondary analysis, and future research. Raw identifiable data will only be retained for as long as necessary under ethical and legal requirements.

What is the long-term preservation plan for the dataset?

Data of long-term value will be deposited in an appropriate institutional or discipline-specific repository following project completion. Files will be preserved in open or Widely used formats such as CSV, TXT, PDF and DOCX where possible. Data will be retained in line with University of Plymouth retention policies, typically for a minimum of 10 years.

Data Sharing

How will you share the data?

Anonymised datasets and supporting documentation may be shared through the university of Plymouth research repository or other trusted repositories following publication of the study findings. Data sharing will comply with ethical approvals, and participant consent agreements. Findings will be presented via journal article and/or presentation to other researchers or individuals as a part of doctoral dissertation or psychology conferences. The article will also be submitted for publication to relevant academic journal. No identifiable data will be included in the finalized and disemnated versions.

Are any restrictions on data sharing required?

Restrictions apply to sensitive or potentially identifiable data involving minors and mental health or body image concerns. Personally identifiable information will not be shared publicly. Access to some datasets may require controlled access procedures, data sharing agreements, or approval from the principal investigator.

Responsibilities and Resources

Who will be responsible for data management?

The principal investigator at the University of Plymouth will be responsible for overseeing data management throughout the project lifecycle. Responsibilities include secure storage, ethical compliance, data quality assurance, documentation, preservation, and data sharing activities.

What resources will you require to deliver your plan?

Resources required include secure university storage infrastructure, encrypted devices, approved survey and data collection software, statistical analysis software (e.g., Coevidence), transcription support if required, and access to institutional data repositories. Time and training for research staff in data protection and research data management practices will also be necessary.