

#MoreThanASelfie

Evaluating the efficacy of a brief school based intervention to promote media literacy and improve body image in young adolescents



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Why?

- Body image is a key issue affecting youth mental health. In a survey of 2,500 young people 72% identified body image concerns as causing them difficulty in their lives (Chambers, 2017)
- *Body dissatisfaction is linked to depression, anxiety, eating disorders, alcohol and substance misuse, self harm & suicide (Dooley et al, 2013)*

Body image continues to be a key factor

MY WORLD SURVEY 2: (2019)

- Body-esteem was found to be one of nine key factors which related to youth mental health outcomes.
- There was a significant relationship between time spent online (more than 3 hours) and higher levels of depression and anxiety and lower levels of body esteem.



BODYWHYS

The Eating Disorders Association of Ireland



Centre for Mental Health
& Community Research



**Maynooth
University**
National University
of Ireland Maynooth

Developing the intervention

- Develop an evidence based intervention to promote media literacy and improve body image
- Youth experts as key stakeholders at all stages
- Teacher consultation on presentation style, format and preferred types of resources

Objectives of schools based research

The aims of the present study were to: (a) examine the nature and extent of media and social media use in young adolescents (aged 12-14 in Ireland) (b) evaluate the efficacy of a school based intervention to promote media literacy, improve body image and self-esteem and to promote a peer supportive environment.

Method

- **Method:** Participants were 161, male and female first year students in three secondary schools in Ireland. Participants in each school were allocated to an experimental or control group. The experimental group participated in 4, 40 minute lessons on media literacy body image, while the control group received their usual classes.

Measures

All participants completed baseline and post intervention questionnaires. The experimental group also completed an evaluation form to assess their experience of the intervention. All measures were age appropriate and had successfully been used before with young adolescents (age 12-14)

- The Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale
- CASSS Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale
- SATAQ.4. Sociocultural Attitudes to Appearance Questionnaire
- Social Media Use Questionnaire

4 Lessons in SPHE

Target group: First Year Students

With 1 week in between – to assimilate learning

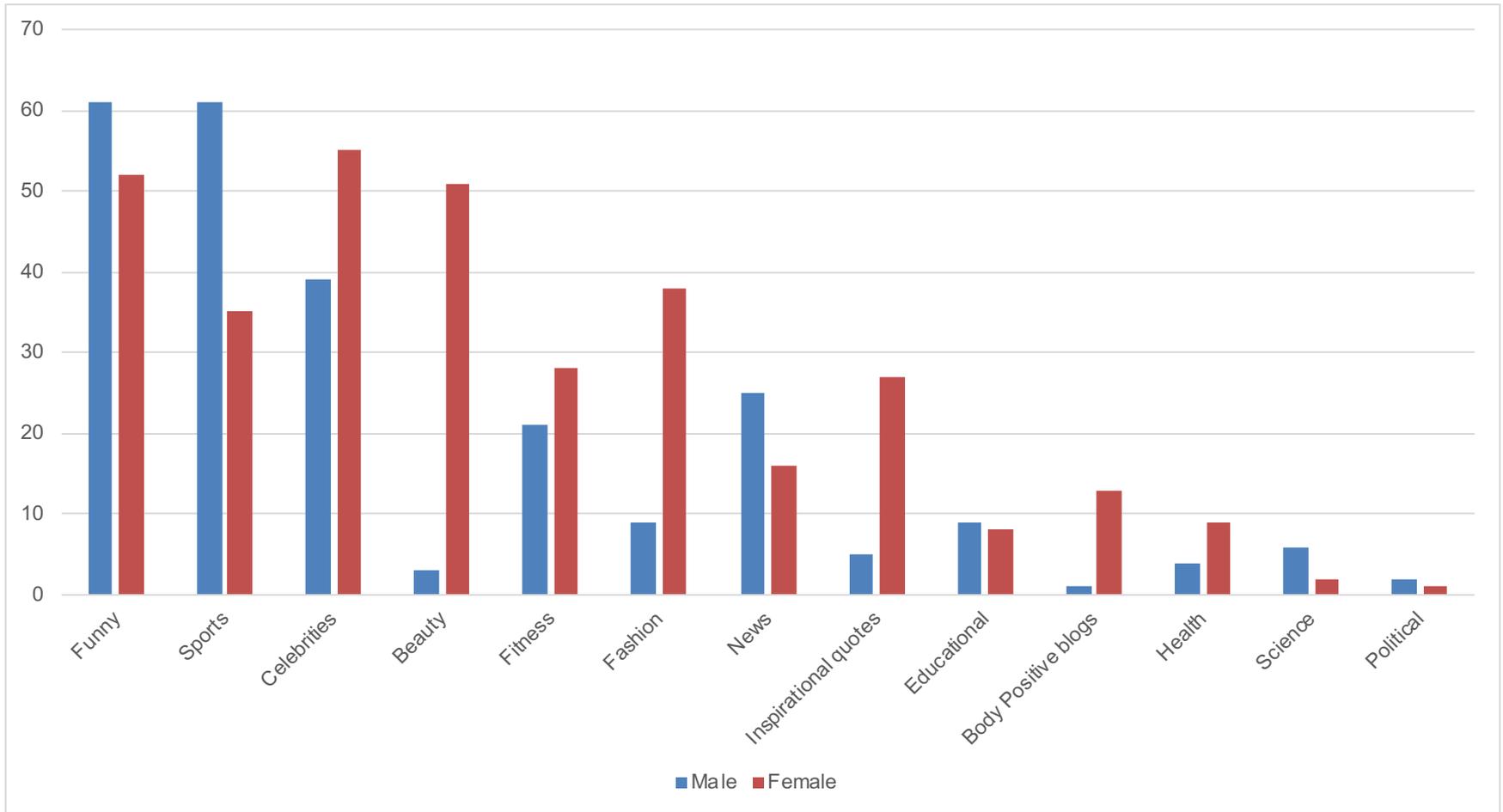
Lesson 1 Body Image & The Media	Lesson 2 Body Image & Media Literacy	Lesson 3 The Right Fit	Lesson 4 Body Image & Mental Health
 <p>Encourage open discussion on the influences to body image.</p> <p>Media Literacy: Consider how media images affect us</p> <p>Critically reflect on how social media posts and comments affect us.</p> <p>Reflect on what we do/ don't see on social media</p>	 <p>Talk about body image in relation to self esteem.</p> <p>Talking about 'not feeling great'</p> <p>Consider how our media choices could affect how we feel.</p> <p>What changes could we engage with social media in a positive way to reduce the negative effects and enjoy time online</p>	 <p>Identity and fitting in.</p> <p>Reflecting on friendship and supporting each other in feeling good</p> <p>Foster a peer supportive environment to promote and maintain positive body image and self esteem</p>	 <p>Promote awareness and understanding of mental health.</p> <p>Highlight the relationship between body image, mental health and eating disorders</p> <p>Promote awareness of supports available and how to access help</p>

Findings

Baseline questionnaires

- All participants had access to personal internet enabled devices and 99.4% of participants owned a smartphone. The majority of students (88.2%) reported using social media every day and worryingly a small majority also indicated checking social media at night (54%).
- Differences in social media use between male and female respondents were noted. Girls were significantly more likely to use social media every day (97.4%) than boys (80.7%). Boys were significantly more likely to report that parents were not supervising their social media use (65.9%), compared with girls (32.5%).
- Boys scored significantly higher on the SATAQ-4 scale identifying the internalisation of a muscular/athletic body ideal than girls. However, girls were significantly more likely to identify appearance-related pressure to coming from media than boys.

What boys and girls follow on social media



Results

Post Intervention Questionnaires

- There is evidence that students who experienced the programme showed significant improvements in attitudes towards their appearance, as measured by the Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire – 4 (SATAQ-4). These were most pronounced for attitudes about appearing muscular or athletic among male students.
- Male respondents who experienced the intervention also reported a significant decrease in social media use between baseline and follow up
- Female respondents reported a decrease in perceived pressure to body image from family

Results

Evaluation forms

Students were asked “Do you think the lessons were good for your class?”

- All boys: 89.5% said yes
- Mixed: 90.9% said yes
- All girls: 93.9% said yes

Students were asked “Would you recommend this programme for friends or family?”

- All boys: 86.5% said yes
- Mixed: 89.5% said yes
- All girls: 87.9 % said yes

Comments and recommendations

All resources have since been redesigned and amended and will be launched and available for schools in the coming months.

Final thoughts

Despite limitations, the current research supports the efficacy and effectiveness of the #MoreThanASelfie programme for use in the school setting to reduce appearance related pressure and to promote media literacy.

This programme has the advantage of being piloted by teachers in the classroom setting.

It has been designed to fit into and complement the SPHE curriculum in Ireland and due to the brief nature of the lessons, the inclusion of presentation slides, facilitator's guides and student notes, it could be easily adapted for use in other countries as required.