

Social Media, Objectification and Well-Being: A Critical Feminist Mixed Methods Approach

By

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Abstract

Social Media, Objectification and Well-being: A Critical Feminist Mixed Methods Approach- Aisling Costello

This thesis sought to investigate objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) in the context of Social Network Sites (SNSs). Mixed methods were employed to investigate whether SNSs cultivate objectifying environments and contribute to objectification, and to explore the consequences of SNS use and objectification for psychological functioning.

A quantitative self-report study assessed the relationship between SNS use, self-surveillance (the behavioural component of self-objectification), surveillance of others, well-being and mood state depression. Using a retrospective baseline measure and nine subsequent ecological momentary assessments completed over a week, trait and state variables were investigated with 193 females and 49 males ranging in age from 18-68 years. Online social comparison and body shame strongly predicted state and trait self-surveillance and surveillance of others. SNS behaviours including photo-based behaviours, also predicted state self-surveillance. SNS variables including passive SNS use and objectification variables including self-surveillance and body shame predicted trait well-being. Time spent on SNSs and body shame predicted state depression.

Focus groups with 32 emerging adults (14 female and 18 male) explored whether participants perceived SNSs as objectifying environments, and whether SNSs impacted on their psychological functioning and perceptions of their own and others' appearance. Using thematic analysis four themes were identified; "SNS use, body image and gender dynamics", "SNS use and psychological functioning", "SNS use and the cultivation of an ideal self" and "Pervasiveness of SNSs". Results indicated SNSs were environments in which objectification occurs and in particular online social comparison was identified as contributing to objectification and negative psychological functioning.

Collectively the findings suggest objectification occurs and is facilitated by SNSs, and SNS use and self-objectification have consequences for psychological functioning. In particular, this thesis provides strong support for the role of online social comparison and body shame in contributing to objectification and negative psychological functioning.

Chapter 1. Introduction

To be objectified “means to be made into and treated as an object that can be manipulated, controlled and known through its physical properties” (Calogero, Tantleff-Dunn, & Thompson, 2011, p.5). The experience of objectification is considered a subtle and harmful form of social control, predominantly experienced by women (Calogero et al., 2011; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). From feminist discourse, theory, and research, Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) developed a framework from which experiences of objectification, and mental health difficulties that disproportionately affect women could be explored. The theory also proposed that living in societies where women are valued for outward appearance, causes women to develop an observer’s perspective of the self and self-objectify. Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) suggest that the experience of self-objectification has several detrimental consequences for women’s mental health. This thesis seeks to extend objectification research to explore both women and men’s experiences of objectification, and the correlates and consequences of objectification.

Objectification occurs within a cultural, historical and contextual space. Westernised societies are characterised by the proliferation of Social Network Sites (SNSs). Traditional media has been identified as frequently portraying people, predominantly women in objectified ways (Brandt & Carstens, 2005; Ey, 2014; Klaassen & Peter, 2015; Mahboob, 2011; Mulvey, 1975; Rohlinger, 2002; Ruggerone, 2006; Stankiewicz & Rosselli, 2008; Tylka & Calogero, 2011), and this has been found to contribute to self-objectification (Morry & Staska, 2001; Tiggemann & Slater, 2014; Vandenbosch & Eggermont, 2012, 2013). Research suggests that given the extensive objectifying content on SNSs (Deighton-Smith & Bell, 2018; Slater, Tiggemann, Hawkins, & Werchon, 2012) and the ability to consume and produce content, SNSs may intensify the effects of media content on self-objectification (Karsay, Knoll, & Matthes, 2018). Thus, this research aims to explore SNSs as environments for objectification.

Before discussing the feminist context from which objectification theory evolved, it is important to locate objectification theory within the context of body image research. Grogan (1999) defines body image as “a person’s perceptions, thoughts and feelings about his or her body” (p. 1). It is considered a multidimensional construct. For example, researchers have investigated the internalisation of the thin ideal, self-surveillance, and drive for thinness as constructs pertaining to body image (Tiggemann & Slater, 2013,

2014). This research is situated within the context of body image research, and the particular aspect under investigation is self-objectification and objectification of others.

This chapter provides an overview of the literature and research that has informed this thesis. Literature pertaining to objectification theory, SNS use and psychological functioning is explored and the relationship between these topics established. Particular attention is given to the constructs under investigation in this thesis, these include self-objectification, objectification of others, SNS use, body shame, depression, well-being, and materialism.

1.1. Feminist Theory and Objectification

The objectification of women has long been a topic of interest to feminist social scientists. Within the literature the terminology of “objectification” and “sexual objectification” are often used interchangeably. To be objectified “means to be made into and treated as an object that can be manipulated, controlled and known through its physical properties” (Calogero, Tantleff-Dunn, & Thompson, 2011, p.5). Bartky (1990) describes that “a person is sexually objectified when her sexual parts or sexual functions are separated out from the rest of her personality and reduced to the status of mere instruments or else regarded as if they were capable of representing her” and sexualisation occurs when someone is “perceived by others in a sexual light on occasions when such a perception is inappropriate” (p.26). Thus, in relation to both objectification and sexual objectification, the person being objectified is reduced to their physical body parts and not perceived as a being with agency. For the purpose of this thesis objectification refers to the value placed on physical characteristics above personality and agency (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

The theorisation of objectification was influenced by Cooley's (1902) concept of the “looking glass self”, which suggests that we learn about the self and construct a sense of self from our ability to consider how we are perceived by others. Kaschak (1992) described women's experiences of living in the world as being like a “prism of self-image...In a mirror, a woman sees how she deviates from the ideal in her size, shape, race or age” (p.106). She argues that women recognise and validate only the parts and qualities of themselves that men and society deem important. In this way, aspects of themselves are fragmented or invisible. Bartky (1990) argues that women's self-esteem becomes based on self-image, and women's image is always a work in progress. This can lead to the body being perceived as a product or object to be exhibited and exploited rather than a functional living system. As a consequence, according to Kaschak (1992) psychological difficulties

arise as women lose the opportunity to develop a fully integrative sense of self, one more internally than externally defined.

Society's emphasis on the importance of the gender dichotomy is seen as contributing to sex-typed cognitions, whereby people develop automatic expectations of individuals based on gender (Bem, 1981). The development of gender roles and gender-typed cognitions has a significant role to play in objectification. MacKinnon (1987) states objectification results from the way sexual socialisation occurs in societies saturated by hierarchy and domination. She argues that men are socialised to experience desire through scenarios characterised by domination and instrumentalisation. In turn, women are taught to experience desire within this same context, however, their function is to be dominated and objectified (Nussbaum, 1995). In this case, it is only women who forfeit their humanity, being turned into something, rather than someone. Kaschak (1992) argues that "it is by virtue of their gaze that men sin against women" (p.63) and although all men do not engage in this behaviour, women cannot choose to escape this gaze.

Individuals may be attentive to their physical appearance, and engage in self-objectification given the perceived benefits of an "attractive" appearance. The phenomenon of "what's beautiful is good" (Dion, Berscheid, & Walster, 1972) has been shown to begin early among pre-schoolers who show no differential treatment of boys related to attractiveness but a difference in the treatment of girls (Smith, 1985). This seems to continue throughout the lifespan as meta-analytic studies suggest attractive people have greater employability opportunities (Hosoda, Stone-Romero, & Coats, 2003), are judged more positively, and treated more favourably than individuals deemed less attractive (Langlois et al., 2000). Research has also found a positive relationship between beauty and electoral success (Berggren, Jordahl, & Poutvaara, 2009). Given the value associated with physical appearance individuals may develop a vigilance about both their own and others' appearances. Society's value and emphasis on physical appearance is considered a key contributor to objectification (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

1.2. Theoretical Framework of Objectification

Derived from consciousness raising awareness developments, feminist literature, philosophical and socio-political thought, in 1997 Fredrickson and Roberts devised a model to highlight the lived experiences and mental health difficulties of girls and women who experience objectification. This seminal article brought together empirical research findings as well as theoretical, medical, political and socio-economic discussion into a

comprehensive and utilisable framework (see Figure 1). Objectification theory postulates that westernised societies sexually objectify the female body judging women primarily on what they look like not who they are. This theory provides a life-course framework for which women's experiences of living in a culture that sexually objectifies the female body can be better understood and the psychological consequences of which can be investigated. This theory states objectification occurs when a person is no longer viewed as a whole human but is reduced to their body or body parts. Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) argue that living in sexually objectifying societies, women internalise an observer's perspective of the self and self-objectify. They propose that situations and environments in which objectification occurs leaves women at increased risk of experiencing shame, anxiety, lack of peak motivational state experiences and a reduction in internal awareness.

Shame is considered a negative emotion, which elicits a painful response where the individual experiences the desire to hide, disappear and shrink in an attempt to rid themselves of this feeling (Lewis, 1997). Shame ensues following disapproval, which can result from the feedback of others or our own internal moral standards (Tangney, Miller, Flicker, & Barlow, 1996). It occurs as a response to our awareness of societal norms and our perceived inability to adhere to these norms (Lewis, 1997; Tangney et al., 1996). Cultures which promote and encourage habitual body monitoring contribute to experiences of shame that are repetitive, persistent and enveloped in morality judgements (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

Anxiety is experienced in the anticipation of danger or threats to the self (Smith & Lazarus, 1990). Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) outline two forms of anxiety experienced by women who are objectified; appearance anxiety and safety anxiety. Not knowing when and how the body will be evaluated can cause appearance anxiety. Appearance anxiety is manifested by behaviours such as checking and monitoring ones appearance (Keelan & Dion, 1992). Appearance anxiety is linked to concerns about safety. Women's clothing (Maurer & Robinson, 2008) and appearance (Gotovac & Towson, 2015) are associated with victim blaming in rape cases. This underscores the concept that sexual objectification is a significant aspect of sexual violence. As a result of this women often feel the need to be attentive to danger and engage in protective behaviours such as double-checking locks, carrying keys between their fingers and staying in after dark (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). This vigilance and attentiveness to safety can be a source of daily and chronic anxiety which has consequences for women's personal and social lives.

Csikszentmihalyi (1988) discusses peak motivational states and “flow” as being situations in which individuals lose self-consciousness and are completely absorbed by mental or physical activities that are challenging and worthwhile. If women are constantly attending to their appearance or thinking about how their body is being perceived by others, they remain self-aware and cannot achieve a sense of “flow”. By limiting women’s abilities to experience peak motivational states, objectification may serve to diminish women’s quality of life. Another consequence of self-objectification is that women may feel an alienation from their bodies and reduced awareness of their internal body states. For example, through dieting, women may suppress hunger cues which, research suggests may lead to a more generalised insensitivity to internal body states (Heatherton, Polivy, & Herman, 1989).

Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) framework outlines two routes through which objectification could contribute to poor mental health for women. The first is that the accumulation of subjective negative experiences (i.e., shame, anxiety, reduced peak motivational states and internal body awareness) could contribute to psychological disorders that disproportionately affect women, namely depression, sexual dysfunction and eating disorders. The second relates to actual sexual victimisation, where a woman’s body is treated as a tool or object to be used, and the consequence of this experience on mental health outcomes. The relationship between objectification, shame and depression were examined in this research.

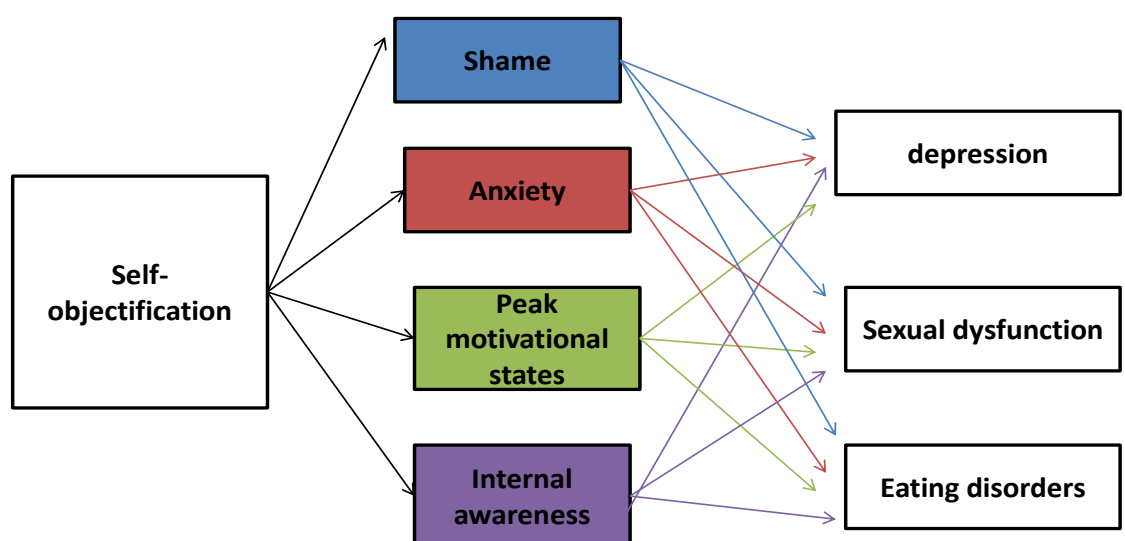


Figure 1. Objectification Theory framework (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

1.2.1. Self-objectification and the objectification of others.

Living in societies ubiquitous with objectification, causes individuals to internalise an observer's perspective of the self and self-objectify (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), and to habitually monitor their bodies or engage in self-surveillance (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). Self-surveillance is considered the behavioural component of self-objectification. Self-objectification can occur both at trait and state level. Trait self-objectification develops as the result of internalising an observer's perspective of the self, and relates to a person's tendency to view themselves through this lens, whereas state self-objectification refers to a person's tendency to adopt this way of thinking about the self as the result of a particular experience or triggered by a context (Gay & Castano, 2010). For example, situations such as trying on a bathing suit (Fredrickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn, & Twenge, 1998), anticipating a male gaze (Calogero, 2004) and being exposed to objectifying words (Roberts & Gettman, 2004) are associated with increased rates of state self-objectification in women. Furthermore, research suggests that the impact of heightened self-objectification may linger beyond the objectification experience (Quinn, Kallen, & Cathey, 2006), potentially contributing to the development of trait self-objectification.

The pervasiveness of objectification and the application of the framework for individuals of all genders, sexual orientations and ethnicities has been reported in research. Heterosexual and lesbian women, as well as heterosexual and gay men experience self-surveillance (Engeln-Maddox et al., 2011; Hill & Fischer, 2008), and women and men of Caucasian, African American, Hispanic, and Asian American descent experience negative consequences following a self-objectifying experience of wearing a bathing suit (Hebl, King, & Lin, 2004). However, there are certain demographic factors associated with a greater engagement in self-objectification and self-surveillance. These include being female (Aubrey, 2006; Fredrickson et al., 1998; Moradi & Huang, 2008; Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005b), having a higher Body Mass Index (BMI; Knauss, Paxton, & Alsaker, 2008; Thompson, Van Den Berg, Roehrig, Guarda, & Heinberg, 2004), being from a Western country (e.g., Aubrey, 2006; Moradi & Huang, 2008), being younger (e.g., Tiggemann & Lynch, 2001) and for men, being homosexual (Engeln-Maddox et al., 2011; Martins, Tiggemann, & Kirkbride, 2007).

Researchers have found that those who self-objectify are more likely to objectify others and engage in a “circle of objectification” whereby they engage in a process of self-objectification, social comparison and the objectification of others (Lindner, Tantleff-Dunn, & Jentsch, 2012). Empirical evidence supports this, as it has been found both women and men who self-objectify are more likely to objectify others (Lindner et al., 2012; Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005b; Zurbriggen, Ramsey, & Jaworski, 2011). Theorists such as Kaschak (1992) and Orbach (2010) suggest that women are socialised to help one another to create ideal appearances and to evaluate one another’s effectiveness. Although a form of female bonding, embedded within this process is the ability and necessity to judge others and one’s self from an observer’s perspective. Research suggests that female bonding involving extensive discussion regarding appearance has been associated with negative consequences including increased levels of body dissatisfaction, body checking, negative affect and disordered eating behaviours (Jones, Crowther, & Ciesla, 2014; Mills & Fuller-Tyszkiewicz, 2018). Furthermore, research suggests that women are more likely than men to engage in the circle of objectification (Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005). Thus, living in an objectifying society may contribute to the objectification of others as well as greater self-objectification.

1.2.2. Objectification within a socio-cultural context.

Experiences of objectification cannot be de-situated. In order to contextualise this research, objectification will be discussed within the current post-feminist, consumerist context, and the relationship between objectification and materialism examined.

1.2.2.1. Objectification, post-feminism and consumerism.

Not all feminist discourse perceives the sexualisation and objectification of women as having negative consequences for women. Post-feminist discourse, as influenced by neo-liberal values, is characterised by agency, liberation and female empowerment through consumption (Baumgardner & Richards, 2004; Mendes, 2012). From this perspective, sexualisation and objectification can be associated with individual choice and sexual liberation (Gill, 2012). Radical/socialist feminists have criticised this perspective for being reductive and individualistic, and argue that the association with consumerism and materialism serves to commodify and depoliticise feminism (Gill, 2012; McRobbie, 2009).

This discourse of liberation and choice has been applied to beliefs about bodies, such that the body has been conceptualised as something that should and can be improved upon through the acquisition of goods and engagement in specific behaviours (Bartky, 1990;

Bordo, 2003; Nichter & Nichter, 1991; Orbach, 2010). Bartky (1990) outlines a “fashion-beauty complex” and suggests that fashion and beauty industries function by creating and highlighting bodily deficiencies and then provide the rituals, procedures, tools and products to minimise these deficiencies. As both the problem and solution are provided, women who do not adhere to this ideal may experience shame and guilt and are perceived as deviant and lazy. Dittmar (2008) proposed a consumer culture impact model detailing how consumer society is dominated by two ideals “the material good life” and “body perfection” which accumulate to represent the “ideal self”. Content analyses of advertising shows that these two constructs are often bounded together and perpetuated by advertisements (Brown & Knight, 2015; Slater, Tiggemann, Hawkins, & Werchon, 2012; Stankiewicz & Rosselli, 2008). In recent years advertisers have also employed the use of female empowerment messages, however these are often presented simultaneously with objectifying content, and have been found to prime state objectification (Couture Bue & Harrison, 2019). Thus, it can be argued that living in consumerist societies that promote neo-liberal/post-feminist discourses of empowerment, may maintain objectification and the oppression of women (McRobbie, 2009), since they present the acquisition of appearance ideals as standards that can and should be achieved, and the attainment of “body perfection” as important societal values and a symbol of success (Dittmar, 2008).

1.2.2.2. Objectification and materialism.

Research suggests that individuals’ value systems can influence their tendency to self-objectify (Rollero & De Piccoli, 2017). Contemporary Western society has been characterised by “perpetual shopping” (Baudrillard, 1998), and the increase in consumerism coincides with an increase in materialism (Haddadi Barzoki, Tavakol, & Vahidnia, 2014; Henderson-King and Brooks 2009; Podoshen and Andrzejewski 2012). Those who hold materialist values, believe the acquisition of goods will lead to happiness and that success can be judged by the possessions one owns (Belk, 1985; Richins & Dawson, 1992). It is suggested that living in consumerist, objectifying societies, materialists may be particularly susceptible to increased self-objectification as they are encouraged to think of their bodies as symbols of success and commodities that can be improved upon through the acquisition of goods (e.g., Teng et al., 2016, 2017).

Research supports the relationship between materialism and objectification. Teng et al. (2016) found that priming materialistic beliefs increased women’s, but not men’s tendency to self-objectify. Their results suggest people are influenced by cultural values to different extents and that having high self-concept clarity can protect against the effect of

materialism on objectification. This finding provides support for Dittmar's (2008) model as it suggests that consumer culture and body vigilance are associated for women. Teng et al.'s (2017) subsequent research supports that materialist beliefs predict self-objectification and self-surveillance in women. Chen (2016) found that objectification moderates the relationship between materialism and attitudes towards transactional sex, and suggests those who self-objectify may be more likely to see themselves as an object that can be exchanged for money, and that those high in materialist values may be more likely to do so to acquire the commodities they desire. Slater and Tiggemann (2016) found that maternal self-objectification and materialism influence the body image and appearance concerns in daughters. Haddadi Barzoki, Tavakol, and Vahidnia (2014) provide further support for the investigation of objectification and materialist tendencies as they found increased self-surveillance was associated with increased conspicuous consumption which refers to participants tendency to display their wealth through expenditure on goods and services. Thus, holding materialist beliefs and living in materialistic societies may contribute to increased risk for self-objectification and this will be investigated in the current research.

1.2.3. Objectification and psychological functioning.

With regards to the original tenets of the objectification framework, research has supported the relationship between self-objectification and the development of mental health risks in women, such as depression (e.g., see Jones & Griffiths, 2014 for review), disordered eating (Greenleaf & Mcgreer, 2006; Slater & Tiggemann, 2010; Tiggemann & Slater, 2015; Tylka & Hill, 2004), and sexual dysfunction, assertiveness and dissatisfaction (Claudat & Warren, 2014; Claudat, Warren, & Durette, 2012; Manago, Ward, Lemm, Reed, & Seabrook, 2015). Research has also extended on the model and found self-objectification is associated with decreased body esteem (McKinley & Hyde, 1996) and decreased self-esteem (Breines, Crocker, & Garcia, 2008; Strelan, Mehaffey, & Tiggemann, 2003). Furthermore, research suggests men also experience negative consequences as a result of objectification. This includes increased body dissatisfaction and disordered eating (Martins et al., 2007; Slater & Tiggemann, 2010; Wiseman & Moradi, 2010), appearance related reasons for exercise and low body esteem (Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005a), appearance anxiety and body shame (Hallsworth, Wade, & Tiggemann, 2005), depression (Tiggemann & Kuring, 2004), a drive for muscularity, muscular dissatisfaction, and muscle dysmorphia (Grieve & Helmick, 2008; Heath, Tod, Kannis-Dymand, & Lovell, 2016).

1.2.3.1. Objectification, body shame and depression.

The current research sought to explore women and men's experiences of objectification, and to investigate the relationship between objectification, body shame and depression, and objectification and well-being, thus an overview of existing research on these relationships follows. Global epidemiological studies have consistently found that the prevalence of depression for women is approximately twice that of men (Kessler, 2003). This disparity begins around puberty and ends in the mid-fifties (Dooley & Fitzgerald, 2012; Freeman et al., 2004; Kessler, McGonagle, Swartz, Blazer, & Nelson, 1993; Lewinsohn, Rohde, & Seeley, 1998). Research has looked at artefactual (Van de Velde, Bracke, Levecque, & Meuleman, 2010) as well as hormonal (e.g. Avis, Crawford, Stellato, & Longcope, 2009; Freeman et al., 2004), genetic (Jacobson & Rowe, 1999; Kendler & Prescott, 1999) and psycho-social explanations (Nolen-Hoeksema, 1987; Rood, Roelofs, Bögels, Nolen-Hoeksema, & Schouten, 2009; Rose, Carlson, & Waller, 2007) in an attempt to understand this gender discrepancy. Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) propose that objectification could shed light on this disparity in rates of depression. Given the relationship between general experiences of shame and depression (Buss, 1980; Tangney, Miller, Flicker, & Barlow, 1996; Tangney, Wagner, & Gramzow, 1992), objectification research has investigated the relationship between self-objectification, body shame and depression.

"Shame is an affective reaction that follows public exposure (and disapproval) of some impropriety or shortcoming" (Tangney et al., 1996, p.1256). Emotions such as shame, guilt and pride are considered self-conscious emotions, the function of which is to drive individuals to behave in morally appropriate ways (Leith & Baumeister, 1998; Tangney et al., 1992). Goffman (1956) suggests that our social acts are influenced by the potential for public shame, and thus we engage in specific behaviours to reduce this possibility. When people experience shame, they tend to focus their attention on their personal actions and inadequacies (Lewis, 1997). In this way shame can be long lasting as people attribute the experience to an internal stable facet of the self (Tracy & Robins, 2004).

Body shame is a component of shame in that it is the feeling of inadequacy when one's appearance does not conform to cultural standards of beauty (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Miner-Rubino, Twenge, & Fredrickson, 2002). It refers not only to negative feelings about the body, but negative feelings about the self and all aspects of our embodied selves. It is experienced when individuals compare themselves to societal beauty standards and find themselves coming up short (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). Those who do not conform to

these ideals are more susceptible to shame as they are seen as violating social norms and lacking in control and moral discipline (Crandall, 1994). Research suggests that experiences of body shame is linked to the extent women internalise cultural beauty standards (Knauss et al., 2008; Moradi, Dirks, & Matteson, 2005).

Research investigating the objectification framework, has provided strong support for the relationship between self-objectification and body shame (e.g., Calogero, 2004; Fredrickson et al., 1998; Noll & Fredrickson, 1998; Slater & Tiggemann, 2002; Tiggemann & Slater, 2015; Tylka & Hill, 2004). Subsequent research extended this line of inquiry to explore objectification, shame and depression. Jones and Griffiths (2014) conducted a systematic review of 28 studies investigating self-objectification and depression. Of the studies which incorporated data from female participants, only one failed to find a relationship between self-objectification and depression. The studies that found a significant relationship used a variety of statistical approaches and measurements. The most common finding among these studies was a mediated relationship between depression and self-objectification ($n=18$) as predicted by objectification theory. The most common mediator was body shame as measured by the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (McKinley & Hyde, 1996) ($n=10$). Five studies found that self-objectification and depression was mediated by body shame alone (Carr & Szymanski, 2011; Chen & Russo, 2010; Evans, 2010; M. E. Haines et al., 2008; Hurt et al., 2007). Several studies also found a direct effect of self-objectification on depression ($n=10$). These findings are consistent across a range of samples. The two prospective longitudinal studies (Grabe, Hyde, & Lindberg, 2007; Impett, Henson, Breines, Schooler, & Tolman, 2011) found that an increase in self-objectification over time was associated with an increase in depression, suggesting a causal relationship. Among men the results were mixed (e.g., Grabe et al., 2007; Tiggemann & Kuring, 2004). A possible explanation for this could be due to the measurement tools used as these scales were originally developed to ascertain women's experiences and perspectives and have not been modified to reflect men's. All of the studies which included female adolescents found a direct link between self-objectification and depression (e.g., Harrison & Fredrickson, 2003; Tolman, Impett, Tracy, & Michael, 2006). This is a particularly interesting finding as it indicates that objectification theory has the potential to explain gender differences in depression at the very time point at which these differences emerge (Jones & Griffiths, 2014).

1.2.3.2. Objectification and well-being.

If experiences of objectification have the capacity to contribute to negative psychological functioning, then objectification may also undermine individual's ability to build positive psychological resources. Researchers have called for objectification research to explore the relationship between objectification and positive aspects of psychological functioning and well-being (Cole, Davidson, & Gervais, 2013; Lindner et al., 2012). The conceptualisation of well-being is complex. Often research on well-being has been derived from "the hedonic approach, which focuses on happiness and defines well-being in terms of pleasure attainment and pain avoidance; and the eudaimonic approach, which focuses on meaning and self-realization and defines well-being in terms of the degree to which a person is fully functioning" (Ryan & Deci, 2001, p.141). Broadly speaking, well-being can be considered to consist of the following three components; positive affect, low levels of negative affect, and life satisfaction (Pavot & Diener, 1993). Huang (2010) however, argues that given the multitude of ways well-being is assessed, e.g. self-esteem, life satisfaction etc., it is often difficult to draw comparisons across well-being research.

With respect to objectification and well-being, findings show a negative associations between self-surveillance and autonomy, purpose in life, personal growth, positive relations and self-acceptance (McKinley, 1999), as well as lower levels of adaptive and positive coping strategies (Sinclair & Myers, 2004). Research by Mercurio and Landry (2008) reported a path model for self-objectification and life satisfaction, such that higher levels of body shame were associated with lower self-esteem, and higher levels of self-esteem were associated with increased life satisfaction. Furthermore, Breines et al. (2008) found that higher levels of self-objectification in women were associated with poorer psychological well-being. Rollero (2013) found that exposure to objectifying content was associated with decreased well-being in both women and men.

Objectification research has also found that for some individuals, experiences of objectification can be associated with improved well-being. For example, research has reported women's nuanced perceptions of cheerleading, (Grindstaff & Davis, 2006), stripping (Ronai & Ellis, 1989) and working in sexually objectifying environments (Moffitt & Szymanski, 2011). The extent to which appearance is perceived a core component of ones self-worth has been found to influence individuals interpretations of objectification and the extent to which they self-objectify (Breines et al., 2008; Noser & Zeigler-Hill, 2014; Overstreet & Quinn, 2012). Thus, although Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) suggest that the experience of objectification is always detrimental to women's

lives, these examples of research suggest that individuals' interpretations of experiences are significant.

Research suggests the objectification framework may be particularly salient in investigating aspects of well-being in men. Cole, Davidson, and Gervais (2013) found that men who self-objectify and experience body shame have lower trait hope, and lower social relationship and romantic relationship hope. Studies have found negative correlations between spirituality and body shame and self-surveillance in men but not in women (Hayman et al., 2007), and that flow may play a mediating role between self-surveillance and depression in men but not in women (Tiggemann & Kuring, 2004). Both spirituality and flow can be conceptualised as contributors to well-being (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi, 1988; Hill & Pargament, 2003; Ryff, 1989). Thus, the investigation of objectification and well-being may be useful in understanding the consequences of living in objectifying societies and therefore well-being will be explored in this thesis.

1.2.4. Objectification and men.

Objectification research with men has often explored men as the perpetrators of the objectification of women (e.g., Mikorski & Szymanski, 2017; Wright & Tokunaga, 2016). Research has found that higher levels of pornography use and endorsement of violent masculine norms was associated with increased rates of objectification of women (Mikorski & Szymanski, 2017). Perceptions of women as sex objects mediates the relationship between exposure to objectifying media and attitudes supportive of violence against women (Wright & Tokunaga, 2016). These findings are concerning and evidence of the extensive damage normalisation of objectification can inflict on women's lives. The process of objectifying women also has negative consequences for men as it impedes the development of relationship intimacy (Moffitt & Szymanski, 2011) and is predictive of decreased relationship satisfaction (Zurbriggen, Ramsey, & Jaworski, 2011). Furthermore, as research suggests that men who objectify others are also likely to self-objectify (Lindner et al., 2012; Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005b; Zurbriggen et al., 2011), research should encapsulate not only men's witnessing and engagement in the objectification of women, but also their own experiences of objectification in order to develop a full understanding of objectification within society.

Research with men and boys suggests the objectification model is also applicable to their experiences (Brewster, Sandil, DeBlaere, Breslow, & Eklund, 2017; Davidson, Gervais, Canivez, & Cole, 2013; Grieve & Helmick, 2008; Hallsworth et al., 2005; Heath et al.,

2016; Martins et al., 2007; Slater & Tiggemann, 2010; Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005a; Tiggemann & Kuring, 2004; Wiseman & Moradi, 2010). Parallel to women's experiences, men also experience body evaluation (e.g., objectifying gazes; Engeln-Maddox, Miller, & Doyle, 2011), unwanted sexual advances (e.g., gender harassment; Wiseman & Moradi, 2010), and are objectified by women and men (Anderson, Holland, Koc, & Haslam, 2018; Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005b) and the media (Rohlinger, 2002). Similar to women, men also learn from society that a certain physique, is associated with various social rewards such as increased social status and the capacity to attract a partner (Tod & Lavalley, 2010). The male appearance ideal tends to be of a toned and muscular physique (Grogan & Richards, 2002; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2016). Exposure to this ideal in the media, and engaging in comparisons with it, are associated with an increased drive for muscularity (Leit, Gray, & Pope, 2002; Morrison, Morrison, & Hopkins, 2003) and new trends of gym use and steroid intake (Brewster et al., 2017).

Although research supports the application of the objectification framework to men's experiences, men frequently report lower levels of self-objectification, self-surveillance and body shame than women (e.g., Aubrey, 2006; Fredrickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn, & Twenge, 1998; Hebl, King, & Lin, 2004; McKinley, 1998; Slater & Tiggemann, 2010; Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005b). A lack of valid measures to assess men's experiences is frequently reported (Daniel & Bridges, 2010; Martins et al., 2007; Tiggemann & Kuring, 2004). Qualitative research suggests male gender stereotypes and expressions of hegemonic masculinity may influence the extent to which men are willing to express a concern for their appearance (Allen, 2005; Grogan & Richards, 2002).

Findings show a difference in men's experiences of objectification depending on sexual orientation. Gay men reported higher levels of self-objectification, self-surveillance, body shame and body dissatisfaction than heterosexual men (Martins et al., 2007; Michaels, Parent, & Moradi, 2013; Wiseman & Moradi, 2010). A potential explanation is that akin to women, sexual minority men may experience the "male gaze" (Kozak, Frankenhauser, & Roberts, 2009) and be exposed to more frequent objectifying content through fitness magazines, pornography and dating apps such as Grindr (Anderson et al., 2018; Martins et al., 2007). The current research aims to explore men's experiences of objectification and its psychological consequences, as well as examining the extent that men objectify others and how objectification influences women and men's relations with one another.

1.3. Social Network Sites (SNSs)

Modern technologies such as SNSs link the different spheres of our lives above and beyond the capacity of traditional media. SNSs are defined as web-based services that allow individuals to (a) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (b) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (c) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature of these connections may vary from site to site (boyd & Ellison, 2007). As SNSs are increasingly growing in popularity, they are considered a defining feature of contemporary life. For example, Facebook boasts 1.56 billion daily active users as of March 2019 (Facebook, 2019).

Howard (2004) presents an embedded media perspective which addresses new technologies and their implications for society. New technologies have facilitated the opportunity for individuals to be both the consumer and producer of online material. Howard (2004) outlines both the capacities and constraints of online social life. An example of the capacities he sees is the ability for new technologies to enrich aspects of our cultural and political lives. Research suggests SNSs can support individuals from minority groups to express themselves and form connections with others (Ceglarek & Ward, 2016), as well as facilitating socio-political engagement (Keller, Mendes, & Ringrose, 2016). An example of constraints relates to the ways modern technology usage restricts daily engagement and research has found SNS use can infringe on social interactions (Brown, Manago, & Trimble, 2016).

Research suggests that users can engage in circumvention whereby they employ specific strategies, to promote the capacities and minimise the constraints afforded by a specific site. Ellison, Heino, and Gibbs (2006) reported that, participants engaged in circumvention on dating apps by creating profiles that stood out as opposed to merely listing features of themselves. Of particular interest with regards to the current study is an examination of the ways SNSs are used and in particular the consequences of their use for objectification and psychological functioning.

1.3.1. Feminism and SNSs.

Research suggests that feminists are using SNSs to make the realities of misogyny and sexism visible (Ging & Siapera, 2018; Keller et al., 2016; Massanari, 2017; Mendes, 2015). Beyond the dissemination of information, SNSs are employed to build active communities around political issues. The development of hashtags, described as “hashtag

feminism” (Khoja-Moolji, 2015), and pages for individuals to share their experiences of sexism, oppression, or abuse (e.g., MeToo, In Her Shoes, Everyday Sexism, Times Up, Miss Representation Movements), and the organisation and development of specific calls to action (e.g., Mendes, 2015) that have been organised through SNSs are examples of the potential benefits of SNS use for feminism. Research suggests users feel a sense of community and support through the use of hashtags (Keller et al., 2016) and that by sharing experiences online, “affective solidarity” can occur (Hemmings, 2012). Furthermore, the development of feminist discourse may serve a protective factor against the harm of objectification as research suggests holding feminist beliefs (Feltman & Szymanski, 2018; Myers & Crowther, 2007) and feminist identities (Hurt et al., 2007) protects against objectification.

SNSs have also provided a space for misogyny and anti-feminist rhetoric (Banet-Weiser & Miltner, 2016; Ging & Siapera, 2018; Massanari, 2017). Banet-Weiser and Miltner (2016) suggest that a “popular misogyny” has developed online as a reaction to growing feminism. Individuals who do not identify as feminists may respond defensively to feminist discourse as a result of intergroup threat (Stephan, Ybarra, & Rios Morrison, 2009), and those who wish to maintain the status quo may engage in system justification to maintain the social hierarchy (Kray, Howland, Russell, & Jackman, 2017). It has been found that those who speak out against misogynistic rhetoric risk sexist abuse and trolling online (Keller et al., 2016). Thus, online misogyny may facilitate the maintenance of objectification of women. These examples of research and campaigns illustrate both the potential capacities and constraints of SNSs as a platform for feminist discourse, however it is the specific relationship between SNS use and objectification and the consequences of SNS use for psychological functioning that is to be investigated in this thesis.

1.3.2. Objectification and SNSs.

SNS use often involves online self-portrayals. Such portrayals differ from face to face interactions in that they are persistent and visible to others long after being created (boyd, 2008). They are characterised by reduced audio-visual cues and the ability to edit, construct and reconstruct one’s self-portrayal. Most importantly they are characterised by easy accessibility (Valkenburg & Peter, 2011). These self-portrayals can be easily distributed and accessed by those who are not given permission to view them. Furthermore, they are often characterised by image based content which may be explained by the fact SNSs were predominantly derived from dating sites (boyd, 2008).

Research suggests that females and younger people are the most frequent and dominant users of SNSs (McAndrew & Jeong, 2012; Smith & Anderson, 2018). Findings show women are more likely to engage in self-presentation behaviours online such as changing their profile pictures, whereas men spend more time browsing SNS profiles looking for friends and potential partners (Haferkamp, Eimler, Papadakis, & Kruck, 2012). Women have also been found to post significantly more photos than men, and may be conscious of the male gaze as they more frequently un-tag photos of themselves (Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009) and engage in more photo editing than men (Fox & Vendemia, 2016).

Young people's online portrayals often replicate images represented in traditional media. For example, Slater et al. 's (2012) content analysis of advertisements on adolescents' websites indicated that the most prevalent models used depicted the thin, attractive, female ideal. Elements which are commonly found on girls' SNS profiles include being attractive and being associated with others considered attractive (Manago, Graham, Greenfield, & Salimkhan, 2008). Bailey, Steeves, Burkell, and Regan (2013) analysed over 1,500 female 18-22-year olds, Facebook profiles, and found only one deviated from the stereotypical profile of a girl. The rest included most or all of the following characteristics; girls depicted as sexualised objects, sexualised glamour shots, minimal clothing in pictures, carefree references to friends and partners, references to drinking and partying, emotional venting, mainstream popular culture, beauty and shopping. Self-presentation on SNSs seems to reinforce and even exacerbate traditional gender presentation in real life, with women being viewed and treated as sexual objects more so than men, and women experiencing extensive policing of their bodies (Bailey et al., 2013; Carrotte, Prichard, & Lim, 2017; Deighton-Smith & Bell, 2018; Ringrose & Harvey, 2015; Tolman, 2018). Young men also often depict themselves as sexual or romantic objects online (Siibak, 2010) and men who frequently self-objectify are more likely to edit their online photos (Fox & Rooney, 2015). These behaviours suggests that individuals internalise cultural beauty standards and often replicate them in their profiles (Haddadi Barzoki et al., 2014).

In the last decade researchers have investigated the relationship between SNS content exposure and self-objectification. Vandenbosch and Eggermont (2012) found that Facebook use was associated with greater endorsement of westernised beauty ideals and greater self-surveillance. Their longitudinal research (Vandenbosch & Eggermont, 2015), found that the use of SNSs to monitor attractive peers and the use of sexualising mass media contributed to self-objectification over time. De Vries and Peter (2013) found that women's online self-portrayal, when combined with sexually objectifying stimuli, leads to

self-objectification. Manago, Ward, Lemm, Reed, and Seabrook (2015) reported that for both women and men, Facebook involvement predicted objectified body consciousness which in turn predicted greater body shame and decreased sexual assertiveness. They suggested that the practice of viewing peers' photos and posting photos of oneself contributes to experiences of objectified body consciousness. SNSs encourage vigilance about how an individual will appear to others as they have the ability to reflect, edit and manipulate their self-portrayal for an audience of followers (Manago et al., 2015). The rise in this form of communication, combined with the increase in objectifying content exposure, is predicted to increase rates of objectification.

Research suggests that photo-based activities and photo-based sites may be particularly salient in contributing to self-objectification. Cohen, Newton-John, and Slater (2017; 2018) found that photo investment, including selfie behaviour and following celebrity accounts on SNSs, was associated with increased self-objectification. Researchers have also reported that specific dating apps such as Grindr (Anderson et al., 2018), and "beauty apps" which allow users to modify and edit their appearance (Elias & Gill, 2018), contribute to increased self-objectification given the emphasis on appearance, and ability to monitor and edit content. In particular the use of Instagram, an extremely popular SNS with over one billion active users (Instagram, 2019), has been associated with greater self-objectification (Fardouly, Willburger, & Vartanian, 2018). The extent women internalised beauty ideals and engaged in upward comparisons was found to mediate the relationship between Instagram use and self-objectification (Feltman & Szymanski, 2018).

Instagram is distinct from Facebook in that the focus is to share images, and in order to create new content users must post a photo or video. A distinguishing feature of Instagram is the use of hashtags. Hashtags can be used to caption and categorise photos. Regardless of privacy settings, all photos with the selected hashtag will be visible on the corresponding hashtag page (Baker & Walsh, 2018). A popular trending hashtag is that of "fitspiration", which is "designed to inspire viewers towards a healthier lifestyle by promoting exercise and healthy food" (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015, p.61). Content analyses of "fitspiration" consistently reports a high prevalence of the objectification of women (Carrotte et al., 2017; Deighton-Smith & Bell, 2018; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2016). Mixed findings have been reported with regards to the consequences of "fitspiration" exposure. Some research reported exposure to "fitspiration" images was associated with decreased body satisfaction and increased negative mood (Prichard, McLachlan, Lavis, & Tiggemann, 2018; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015), and that exposure to body ideal messages was associated

with increased self-objectification compared to body acceptance messages (Betz & Ramsey, 2017). Other research has found no difference between viewing “fitspiration” images compared to neutral images for mood or body satisfaction (Slater, Varsani, & Diedrichs, 2017). Furthermore, exposure to body positive posts has been associated with improved mood and body satisfaction, but also with increased self-objectification relative to appearance neutral posts (Cohen, Fardouly, Newton-John, & Slater, 2019).

Such research findings have contributed to our understanding of the relationship between objectification and SNSs. Perloff (2014) however, asserts that there has been relatively little theoretically driven research on the effects of social media on young people’s body image and self-perception. The current research aims to assess the objectification framework in relation to the effects of SNSs on individuals’ self-objectification and psychological functioning. Alternative theoretical frameworks such as social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954), and impression management theory (Goffman, 1956) have also been noted as potentially useful for understanding the relationship between SNS use and identity development. Given the feminist perspective from which this research was conducted, objectification theory was the particular theory of interest, however, alternative theoretical approaches were also considered.

1.3.3. SNSs and the development of the self.

Emerging Adults (EAs) identity development takes place in societies ubiquitous with SNSs. Young people’s thoughts and actions are often derived from reflection regarding who they are and their roles in society (Arnett, 2006; Erikson, 1968). Aspects and features of SNSs have altered how young people engage in self-expression and navigate identity development. These features include “asynchronous communication, 24/7 connectivity, feelings of anonymity and pseudo-anonymity, and the public, persistent nature of online communication” (Davis & Weinstein, 2017, p.2). EAs are frequent users of SNSs with 88 percent of 18-29 year olds indicating that they use social media (Smith & Anderson, 2018). Research suggests the investigation of SNSs are informative with regards to EAs developmental transitions and tasks such as identity development and establishing intimate relationships (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Manago et al., 2008; McMillan & Morrison, 2006; Steinfield, Ellison, & Lampe, 2008; Subrahmanyam, Reich, Waechter, & Espinoza, 2008; Yang & Brown, 2016).

Erikson (1968) depicted identity development as the central crisis of adolescence. Within westernised societies young people are increasingly postponing significant life events

often perceived as the initiation into adulthood, such as marriage and the birth of a child in favour of prolonged education, diverse career paths and travel (Arnett, 2006). As a result it is now generally considered that the work of identity development is also a critical task and extends into emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2006). Erikson (1968) himself noted that identity development occurs across the lifespan. Thus, it is not to say identity development ceases to be significant beyond emerging adulthood but that adolescence and emerging adulthood represents a particularly important timeframe for identity development.

The concept of the self is complex and to date no unified definition has been provided. Researchers have identified several important aspects that cohere around the construct of the self. Cooley (1902) explains that our self-concept is learned from our ability to see the world from other people's perspectives and we often adopt these views as our own. Our understanding of self is often derived from our public behaviour and feedback received from others (Baumeister, 1986). SNSs may foster a heightened perspective of the self as individuals may engage in extensive reflection upon imagined audiences (boyd, 2008).

Frequently theorists have discussed the importance of the development of a well-integrated sense of self. Higgins (1987) proposed a self-discrepancy theory which suggests that experiences of discrepancy within the self, harbour negative psychological consequences. Erikson (1968) stated that coherence and stability are fundamental for the development of a healthy and satisfying identity. The pervasiveness of social media may create new challenges for the development of a stable, congruent sense of self, yet personal coherence may be precisely what is needed to navigate the complexities of these spaces (Davis & Weinstein, 2017). Specific theoretical perspectives may facilitate our understanding of SNSs and consequences for the development of the self. Research suggests that social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) and impression management theory (Goffman, 1956) may be particularly informative, and complement the use of objectification theory in exploring this topic.

1.3.4. SNSs and social comparison.

Social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) states that humans have an innate drive to compare themselves with others to develop a better understanding of where and how they fit in the world. Festinger (1954) suggested that people are likely to compare themselves with those seen as similar to themselves, as he argues that the function of comparison is often self-evaluation and thus those similar to us can act as a guide as to how much we deviate from who we think we are, or who we aspire to be. Social comparison can be

directed upwards or downwards, to self-enhance, self-improve or avoid shame (Suls & Wills, 1991).

Social comparison is particularly salient with regards to the influence of the media on appearance constructs. Research suggests women are likely to compare themselves to their peers, models and celebrities (Strahan, Wilson, Cressman, & Buote, 2006). Fardouly, Pinkus, and Vartanian (2017) found that appearance comparisons made on SNSs had the greatest negative outcomes compared to comparisons with magazine content or in-person comparisons, which suggests that SNSs may heighten the negative effects of engaging in appearance comparisons. Given the extensive number of photographs that are uploaded to Facebook daily (Mayer-Schönberger & Cukier, 2013), the platform provides individuals with ample opportunities for engaging in appearance-related and lifestyle related comparisons.

Researchers have called for the investigation of self-objectification in tandem with social comparison (Moradi & Huang, 2008; Tylka & Sabik, 2010). Fitzsimmons-Craft et al. (2016) found that social comparison and self-surveillance mediated the relationship between thin-ideal internalisation and body dissatisfaction. Studies have found that engagement in online comparisons are associated with greater self-objectification (Fardouly, Diedrichs, Vartanian, & Halliwell, 2015a; Fardouly et al., 2018), lower self-esteem, poorer mental health, greater body shame (Hanna et al., 2017), increased negative feelings about one's appearance (Fox & Vendemia, 2016), lower positive affect (de Vries, Möller, Wieringa, Eigenraam, & Hamelink, 2018), and the development of a negative self-regard (Chou & Edge, 2012). With regards to online comparisons, Chou and Edge (2012) suggest that individuals base their judgments on information that is easily recalled (the availability heuristic) and engage in attribution bias whereby they tend to attribute the positive content they are exposed to online to aspects of the person's personality (Heider, 1958). Thus, browsing the enhanced photos of celebrities or peers on SNSs may trigger assumptions that these photos are indicative of how these people actually look and live. Such conclusions can make people more vulnerable to judging themselves in relation to the assumed (but often unrealistic) lives of others, which could explain the negative consequences for psychological functioning and appearance satisfaction.

Festinger (1954) suggested that in situations where physical reality is ambiguous (such as SNSs), individuals tend to rely on the consensus of others. In this way comments and feedback, such as the "likes" system on Facebook may serve to reinforce and authenticate

individual's online identity. In daily interactions our bodies act as a site for identity performance. Through our facial expressions, body language, speech, clothing and movement we convey and try to present who we are and how we wish to be perceived. We learn whether this interpretation of the self has been received by others, through the feedback we receive and can adjust our behaviour accordingly. This process is considered the fundamental component of impression management (Goffman, 1956).

1.3.5. SNSs and impression management.

According to Goffman's (1956) impression management theory, people often engage in certain activities in order to moderate and present a flattering self-presentation. Impression management can be conscious or unconscious and is a way to control or influence other's perceptions of the self. Aspects of the self are accentuated or censored depending on contextual factors. Generally, individuals tend to conform or present the aspects of the self that conform to the group norms and ideals.

SNSs are spaces used for impression management and environments in which expressions of the self are enacted and monitored (Haferkamp et al., 2012; Krämer & Winter, 2008; McAndrew & Jeong, 2012; Siibak, 2010; Yang & Brown, 2016). Users portray aspects of the self through the use of photos, comments and self-descriptions, and receive feedback on these impressions through "likes" and comments (Manago et al., 2008; Zell & Moeller, 2018; Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008). Efforts are often made to present favourable self-presentations online and thus individuals frequently edit content (Chae, 2017; Ellison et al., 2006; Fox & Vendemia, 2016). Qualitative research reports the complex way "honesty" is enacted online as individuals attempt to achieve a self-presentation that is both authentic and attractive (Ellison et al., 2006). As SNSs are so pervasive the potential for online impression management may be an omnipresent concern. Furthermore, as SNSs are characterised by invisible audiences (boyd, 2008), users may not receive the same level of feedback which may contribute to ambiguity regarding how impressions have been received.

1.3.6. SNSs and psychological functioning.

Given the pervasiveness of SNSs researchers have explored the psychological consequences of its use. Fundamentally, SNSs may fulfil a basic human need for social interaction and connection as research has frequently reported the benefits of Facebook use for increasing social contact and social capital, and increased self-esteem (Brandtzaeg & Nov, 2011; Ellison et al., 2007; Gonzales & Hancock, 2011; Nabi, Prestin, & So, 2013;

Steinfeld et al., 2008; Subrahmanyam et al., 2008; Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009). Lin (2008) defines social capital as the benefits and resources embedded within one's social relationships. Facebook facilitates the development and/or maintenance of social capital as individuals can stay in touch with their peers (Ellison et al., 2007; O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011). Ellison et al. (2007) found that Facebook is used for both bridging social capital which relates to the informational benefits that can be received online through weak social ties, and bonding social capital which relates to the emotional benefits that can be yielded from strong social ties. Valkenburg and Peter (2007a) reported that SNS use is associated with increased well-being as it facilitates time spent with friends and may improve the quality of friendships. Experimental research has found that posting content on SNSs is associated with reduced loneliness (Deters & Mehl, 2013).

Research also often reports a relationship between extensive SNS use and negative outcomes. Extensive Facebook, and extensive SNS use in general has been associated with higher levels of depression (Steers, Wickham, & Acitelli, 2014; Twenge, Joiner, Rogers, & Martin, 2017; Wright et al., 2013), declines in well-being (Kross, Verduyn, Demiralp, Park, and Lee, 2013), poorer sleep quality, lower self-esteem and anxiety (Woods & Scott, 2016). Social comparison and self-objectification have been reported as mediators between Facebook use and depression (Hanna et al., 2017; Steers et al., 2014), and thus are important constructs to examine to understand the relationship between SNS use and psychological functioning.

The direction of the relationship between SNS use and negative aspects of psychological functioning is inconclusive. There are experimental findings which suggest SNS use leads to depressed mood (Sagioglou & Greitemeyer, 2014). However, other findings suggest that individuals with existing mental health difficulties may gravitate towards SNSs as environments to express themselves (Valkenburg & Peter, 2007b; Widyanto & Griffiths, 2006). Facebook may be perceived as a space in which individuals can express their emotions, given that 25% of college students who used Facebook disclosed reference to depressive symptoms on at least one occasion (Moreno et al., 2011). Some researchers argue that SNSs do not necessarily contribute to the development of mental health difficulties but increase the visibility of these difficulties (boyd, Marwick, Aftab, & Koeltl, 2009; Ging & Garvey, 2018). Research also suggests individuals are likely to engage with SNSs following a blow to the ego, perhaps in an attempt to amend their self-perception (Toma & Hancock, 2013), or for those who are experiencing social loneliness, as a way to

connect with others (Hood, Creed, & Mills, 2018). Thus, individuals may use SNSs to improve their feelings about the self.

The specific ways that SNSs are used has been identified as having significant effects. Qualitative research suggests that individuals experiencing depression engage in both positive and negative behaviours online (Radovic, Gmelin, Stein, & Miller, 2017). Positive online engagement has been found to be a protective factor for those experiencing depression (Frison & Eggermont, 2016; Wright et al., 2013). Marino, Gini, Vieno, and Spada's (2018) meta-analytic study provided support for the relationship between problematic Facebook use and increased psychological distress and decreased well-being. Furthermore, Frost and Rickwood's (2017) systematic review of the mental health outcomes associated with Facebook use emphasised the multidimensional nature of Facebook use and the importance of assessing specific features or aspects of SNSs and their association with psychological functioning. Thus, a relationship between SNS use and negative consequences for psychological functioning has been established; however, this relationship may be dependent on the ways that SNSs are used.

It is important to consider type of online engagement when evaluating the relationship between SNS use and psychological functioning. According to research, only 9% of Facebook users' activities involved communication (Wise, Alhabash, & Park, 2010). Instead, activity consisted mainly of passive use (Pempek et al., 2009). Passive use refers to consuming and monitoring online content without direct engagement with others, while active use involves interaction between the user and the online community (Frison & Eggermont, 2015). Frost and Rickwood (2017) suggested that passive SNS use may be particularly detrimental as it facilitates ruminative behaviours. Passive Facebook behaviour has been associated with increased feelings of stress and lower self-esteem (Kalpidou, Costin, & Morris, 2011), as well as decreased mood (Frison & Eggermont, 2017; Sagioglou & Greitemeyer, 2014) and declines in affective well-being (Verduyn et al., 2015; Wang, Gaskin, Rost, & Gentile, 2018). Furthermore, consuming other people's information such as vacation photographs was shown to evoke feelings of envy, resentment and loneliness, which had negative effects on life satisfaction (Krasnova, Wenninger, Widjaja, & Buxmann, 2013). Frison and Eggermont (2016) found that passive use was associated with depression in adolescent girls whereas active public use was associated with depression in boys; thus, they call for future research to differentiate between types of SNS use.

The consequences of SNS use may also be feedback dependent. Research with adolescents has demonstrated that positive feedback online is associated with enhanced self-esteem and well-being whereas negative feedback had the opposite effect (Valkenburg, Peter, & Schouten, 2006). Receiving more likes and comments is also associated with greater happiness and self-esteem (Zell & Moeller, 2018). These findings indicate that the potential effects of SNS use are complex. Both the ways individuals use SNSs and the type of feedback they receive may influence the psychological consequences of SNS use. Researchers call for further examination of SNSs beyond Facebook and investigation of the mechanisms involved in the relationship between SNS use and psychological well-being (Frison & Eggermont, 2016; Lup, Trub, & Rosenthal, 2015; Perloff, 2014).

Instagram and psychological functioning has been explored. Brown and Tiggemann (2016) found that Instagram users follow on average 100-200 people, including 5-10 celebrities. They reported that exposure to celebrity and peer images can have a negative effect on women's mood and body satisfaction. Tiggemann and Zaccardo's (2015) experimental research found that exposure to "fitspiration" images led to greater negative mood, body dissatisfaction and lower appearance self-esteem in comparison to those who viewed travel images. Frison and Eggermont's (2017) longitudinal research reported that Instagram browsing was associated with increased depression over time. Lup et al. (2015) found that negative social comparisons mediated the relationship between Instagram use and depression. Research investigating the effects of Instagram use indicates that consequences of use are content dependant. For example, research found that for women, exposure to self-compassion quotes was associated with greater body satisfaction, body appreciation, self-compassion and reduced negative mood compared to those exposed to neutral images (Slater et al., 2017), and that exposure to parodies of thin-ideal images was associated with increased body-satisfaction and positive mood compared to those exposed to the thin-ideal (Slater, Cole, & Fardouly, 2019). Collectively these examples of research suggest that the relationship between SNS use and psychological functioning is multifaceted and several aspects of SNS use should be explored when investigating this relationship.

1.4. Current Research Aims and Approach

1.4.1. Research paradigm: critical psychology.

The ideological position adopted in this study was that of critical feminist psychology. It is important to clearly outline the ontological and epistemological assumptions that have informed this ideological position. The fundamental question of ontology refers to "what is there to know?", while epistemology queries "How can we know?" (Willig, 2013, p.61).

A critical realist ontological position was adopted as it holds that the real world does exist and knowledge, although subjective can provide a better understanding of what is “really” happening in the world (Bhaskar, 2008). In relation to the epistemological stance, a transactional/subjectivist perspective was adopted (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This stance acknowledges that the research is always subjective as it is influenced by the values of the researcher. From this perspective how we know is shaped by the interaction between the researcher and those being researched.

Critical psychology refers to a paradigm that employs “a variety of approaches that challenge assumptions, values and practices within mainstream psychology that help maintain an unjust and unsatisfying status quo” (Fox, Prilleltensky & Austin, 2009, p.18). This is not to say that mainstream psychology does not acknowledge socio-cultural and contextual factors but that critical psychologists emphasise the influence of these factors. Critical researchers suggest that through the investigation of individual differences specific attention should be given to contextual factors and assumptions that may influence results and reinforce inequalities (Jankowski, 2015; Kaschak, 1992; Parker, 2009). Within this research, individual differences with regards to objectification and psychological functioning will be examined. Context will be investigated, as the focus of this research is the examination of how SNSs influence objectification and psychological functioning. Furthermore, consideration is given to socio-cultural factors as the data will be interpreted within the current consumerist context, and material values will be assessed.

Feminist psychology fits within a critical paradigm as feminist psychologists have argued that dominant psychological research practices were cultivated and enacted by men and therefore may not successfully address or reflect the experiences of women but serve to reproduce gender inequalities (Kaschak, 1992). Feminist psychologists such as Kaschak (1992) suggest that research approaches and methods should seek to reflect and represent the experiences of all people. “Feminist critical psychology marries the political goals of the feminist movement with the particular theoretical and methodological interests of critical psychology” (Clarke & Braun, 2009, p.247). A goal of critical psychology is to effect societal change and improve the lived experiences of all people by deepening the conscious participation of individuals and groups in identifying their own needs and striving for their achievement (Sloan, 2009). With regards to the current research, the process of participating in studies on the topic of objectification and SNSs may increase consciousness regarding objectification and the potential effects of SNS use. Furthermore, by asking participants about their perceptions of objectification and SNSs, a better

understanding of societal awareness and interpretation of objectification can be understood.

A vital aspect of a critical approach is not only to identify, understand and explain but also to enhance human agency. Psychology can contribute to social justice in several ways. It can document the consequences of certain institutions and structures and the psychological harm and distress these can inflict (Parker & Spears, 1996). Psychology can also help to illustrate how structures and institutional teaching become internalised so that the external influence is no longer recognised and individuals engage in self-policing (Bordo, 2003; Kaschak, 1992). Finally, psychology can be beneficial as by exploring and coming to understand ways for people to become mobilised against structures that perpetuate injustice, theories of change can be developed (Parker & Spears, 1996). In relation to this research, it was considered that through the investigation of objectification, SNSs, and psychological functioning, factors which serve to maintain objectification could be identified and therefore challenged and consideration of the potential benefits and limitations of SNSs identified.

Stainton Rogers (2009) argues that although it is often assumed that as critical researchers reject positivist epistemology, they may be reluctant to conduct research employing quantitative measures; this is not the case as critical psychologists recognise the ability of quantitative data to highlight and draw attention to societal inequalities. Critical psychologists collect data using a wide range of tools and often employ the integration of methods recognising the value of each (Fox et al., 2009). Thus, the use of mixed methods was employed in this thesis and is discussed below.

1.4.2. A feminist theoretical perspective.

This thesis was conducted from a radical feminist perspective (e.g. McRobbie, 2009), which contests post-feminist and neo-liberal feminist discourse (e.g., Baumgardner & Richards, 2004) for its de-politicising and individualistic interpretation of feminist issues. This approach was informed by the work of feminist theorists such as Bartky (1990) and Bordo (2003) and in particular by the work of feminist psychologist Ellyn Kaschak (1992). This thesis involved an investigation of a specific framework derived from the work of these feminist scholars, namely objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Both the research questions and findings were developed, interpreted and considered from a critical, feminist psychology perspective.

1.4.3. Methodology: mixed methods research.

A critical realist position takes a pluralistic approach to research methods, emphasising that methods should be selected on their appropriateness to the concepts under investigation (Joseph, 2014). With regards to this thesis, a mixed methods approach was adopted as it was considered that the use of one particular methodology would have limited the scope of exploration and analysis whereas the juxtaposition of lenses afforded through mixed methods facilitated an in-depth understanding and interpretation of the research questions and findings (Greene, 2008).

In its strive for scientific status and with the growth of behaviourist and cognitivist approaches in the early and middle of the twentieth century, psychology adopted many methods associated with positivism. Positivism is the philosophical position that “progress comes only from a logical, objective application of the formal scientific method” (Fox, Prilleltensky, & Austin, 2009, p.18). Quantitative purists are in line with positivist philosophical assumptions. They maintain that researchers can be objective and that data can be collected in a reliable and valid manner, time and context free, so that causes of social scientific outcomes can be ascertained and generalised to populations (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Qualitative purists however, argue that time and context free generalisations are not possible as logic consistently flows from general to specific and is always value-bound (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Qualitative measures are considered as providing the ability to understand individuals’ subjective reality.

It is now generally considered that there are strengths and limitations to both methodologies. Just as quantitative methods may be reductionist given a focus on specific variables, qualitative findings may be unique to the cohort included in the study and thus in both cases it is difficult to generalise findings. Furthermore, quantitative data can highlight and draw our attention to societal inequalities, while qualitative methods are informative regarding the meaning ascribed and nuanced experiences of people’s lives (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Thus, using a combination of these methods can provide a more holistic insight into the research topic of interest.

Mixed methods research is defined as “the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p.17). Mixed methods provide a methodology that moves beyond conceptualising qualitative versus quantitative

but acknowledges that both methodologies are important and useful, and draws on the strengths of both and attempts to minimise the weaknesses of each.

There are many important issues that are generally agreed upon by both qualitative and quantitative researchers. These include acknowledgement of the variability of interpretation; it is possible many theories may fit a set of empirical data. In empirical research probabilistic evidence is attained not final proof; and human beings are never value free. Experiences and values shape the questions we ask, how we ask, what we see, and how we interpret data (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The current thesis will strive to be conducted in recognition of these characteristics. I aim to be transparent in my approach and recognise that there are many ways this research could have been conducted and interpreted. I acknowledge that this research is shaped by my own beliefs, values, background and from the experiences and knowledge I have been exposed to throughout this process, as well as by the participants who chose to engage in this research.

1.4.4. Methods.

A convergent mixed methods design (Hong et al., 2018) was employed in this thesis as both quantitative and qualitative data was collected to explore the relationship between SNS use and objectification. Study One employed a within group quantitative methodology, specifically the collection of self-report data using retrospective and Ecological Momentary Assessments (EMA). Study Two involved the collection of qualitative data through focus groups. These methods were employed for their unique and distinguishable contributions to informing objectification research. It was felt that each method could provide a novel way of understanding the relationship between SNS use and objectification and the psychological correlates of both. Furthermore, through the integration of the data a more holistic interpretation of these relationship could be presented.

To this author's knowledge, this study is the first to employ the use of EMA methods to investigate the relationship between SNS use and objectification. EMA involves the collection of repeated observations of momentary experiences in participants' natural environments. They are considered valuable methods as they help to capture reliable and valid data on experiences as they occur (Shiffman, Stone, & Hufford, 2008). The vast majority of objectification and SNS research has been retrospective or experimental in design (e.g., Manago, Monique Ward, Lemm, Reed, & Seabrook, 2015; Prichard et al., 2018). Howard (2004) emphasises that social media research should explore how SNSs

are used in people's immediate contexts. EMA methods used in Study One achieved this, as these methods provided the ability to collect data pertaining to SNS use in real time, on the devices that individuals may use for SNS engagement, as signal contingent prompting via participants smartphones was employed. EMA methods were selected as they were identified as valuable methods for generating information regarding participants' self-surveillance, emotional states and behaviours, at times when participants may have been using SNSs.

To date, limited qualitative research has explored the relationship between SNS use and objectification. Furthermore, there is a paucity of qualitative research that has employed the use of the objectification framework to interpret men's experiences. Through the use of qualitative methods, focus groups specifically, this thesis aims to shed light on participants' subjective experiences of SNS use; how they are used and interpreted, and how their use influences self-objectification and psychological functioning.

1.4.5. Aims and Research Questions.

This thesis seeks to explore the relationship between SNS use and objectification, and the psychological correlates of both. The literature presented has indicated that objectification is a form of subtle social control that limits individuals' full participation in society and infringes on their ability to thrive. The current research will investigate whether, and how SNSs contribute to experiences of objectification and the potential consequences of SNS use and objectification for psychological functioning. Through the use of mixed methods, the current research sought to address the following aims and research questions:

1.4.5.1. Thesis aims.

- To employ novel and mixed methodologies to substantiate and extend objectification research.
- To investigate both women and men's experiences of objectification.
- To investigate the relationship between self-objectification, body shame and depression as outlined by the objectification framework (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).
- To explore SNSs as environments for objectification to occur.
- To explore the psychological consequences associated with self-objectification.
- To explore the psychological consequences associated with SNS use.

1.4.5.2. Research questions.

This thesis sought to assess the following broad research questions:

- Do SNSs cultivate an objectifying environment and contribute to self-objectification and objectification of others?
- What are the consequences of SNS use and objectification for psychological functioning?

Quantitative EMA methods investigated the following specific research questions:

- Does self-surveillance (the behavioural component of self-objectification) predict depression, and does body shame mediate that relationship?
- Does SNS use (i.e., engaging in photo-based behaviours, monitoring attractive peers online, time spent on SNSs, type of SNSs used, recency of SNS use), body shame, online social comparison and materialism predict self-surveillance?
- Does SNS use (i.e., engaging in photo-based behaviours, monitoring attractive peers online, time spent on SNSs), body shame and online social comparison predict the objectification of others?
- Does SNS use (i.e., time spent on SNSs, passive and active SNS use), online social comparison, self-surveillance, body shame and materialism predict well-being?
- Does SNS use (i.e., time spent on SNSs, passive and active SNS use), online social comparison, self-surveillance, body shame, and materialism predict the mood state depression?

Focus group methods were employed to explore the following specific research questions:

- Do emerging adults perceive SNSs as objectifying environments?
- What are emerging adults' perceptions of SNS use with regards to their psychological functioning?
- Do emerging adults perceive that SNSs influence how they feel about both their own and others' appearance?

This chapter has provided an overview of the literature that has informed this thesis. The methods employed, aims and research questions addressed in this thesis have been presented. Chapter two, details the quantitative study, chapter three the qualitative study and the final chapter of this thesis entails the discussion and implications of the research findings.

Chapter 2: A Quantitative Investigation of the Objectification Theory Framework: Assessing the Relationship between Social Network Site Use, Objectification, Trait Well-being and State Depression

2.1. Introduction

This chapter will begin by providing an overview of the objectification framework, and existing literature on the relationship between the constructs of interest in this study, namely, self-surveillance, body shame, depression, the surveillance of others, SNS use, social comparison, well-being, and materialism. The chapter will then proceed to outline the quantitative methodology employed; both retrospective and Ecological Momentary Assessment (EMA) methods. Results pertaining to the assessment of trait and state variables will be presented and the chapter will conclude with a discussion of the research findings.

This study sought to investigate the relationship between SNS use and the behavioural component of self-objectification, self-surveillance (McKinley & Hyde, 1996), and the psychological correlates of both, using a quantitative self-report methodology. Both state and trait factors were investigated to examine how SNS use can affect objectification and psychological functioning in real time. Given the factors outlined in Chapter One and the literature and rationale presented below, the following models were examined.

- Model one assessed whether SNS use (i.e., photo-based behaviours, monitoring attractive peers on SNSs, type of SNSs used, and time spent on SNSs), body shame, online social comparison, self-esteem, and materialist values predict trait self-surveillance.
- Model two investigated whether SNS use (i.e., photo-based behaviours, monitoring attractive peers on SNSs, time spent on SNSs), body shame, online social comparison, self-esteem and materialist values predict state self-surveillance.
- Model three assessed whether SNS use (i.e., photo-based behaviours, monitoring attractive peers on SNSs, time spent on SNSs), body shame, and online social comparison predict state surveillance of others.
- Model four assessed whether online social comparison, SNS use (i.e., time spent on SNSs, passive and active SNS use), self-surveillance, body shame and materialist values predict state depression.

- Model five assessed whether online social comparison, SNS use (i.e., time spent on SNSs, passive and active SNS use), self-surveillance, body shame, and materialist values predict trait well-being.
- Additional mediation models investigated whether online social comparison and body shame mediate the relationship between photo-based behaviours and self-surveillance at trait and state level.
- Mediation models also assessed whether body shame mediates the relationship between self-surveillance and trait well-being and self-surveillance and state depression.

2.1.1. Objectification Theory

Objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) was developed as a framework for investigating the causes and consequences of living in a society that views and values individuals in terms of their physical appearance. According to the theory, the internalisation of societal beauty standards and an observer's perspective of the self, causes individuals to self-objectify. Self-objectification occurs when the appearance of one's body is considered more important than its competency (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). It has been suggested that living in societies ubiquitous with objectification causes individuals to engage in self-surveillance which means to regularly monitor one's physical appearance (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). Self-surveillance is considered the behavioural aspect of self-objectification (Calogero, 2011) and is the construct that was examined in this study.

Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) argue that living in objectifying societies increases opportunities for shame and anxiety, and reduces opportunities for achieving peak motivational states, and diminished awareness of internal bodily states. They claim that the accumulation of these experiences contributes to depression, sexual dysfunction and eating disorders (See Figure 2.). Research has provided support for the framework in female (Carr & Szymanski, 2011; Claudat & Warren, 2014; Greenleaf & Mcgreer, 2006; Impett et al., 2011; Slater & Tiggemann, 2010; Tiggemann & Slater, 2015; Tylka & Hill, 2004) and male samples (Hallsworth et al., 2005; Martins et al., 2007; Slater & Tiggemann, 2010; Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005a; Tiggemann & Kuring, 2004; Wiseman & Moradi, 2010). The relationship between self-surveillance, body shame and depression was the aspect of the model investigated in this study (depicted in blue in Figure 2.).

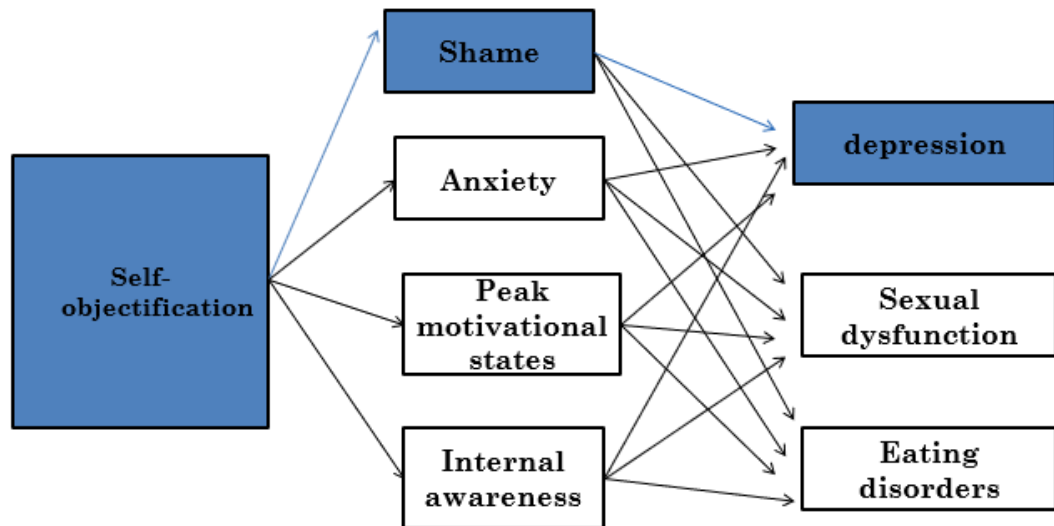


Figure 2. Objectification Theory framework (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) and the aspect of the model examined in this study (in blue).

2.1.1.1. Trait and state self-objectification and self-surveillance.

Self-objectification refers to the internalisation of an observer's perspective of the self, this causes individuals to habitually monitor their appearance and engage in self-surveillance (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Calogero et al. (2011) argue that it is "the subtle and day to day practice of sexualised gazing that women encounter as they move in and out of a variety of social contexts that coaxes girls and women into adopting this evaluative gaze on themselves" (p.10). Research has found that men are also susceptible to experiencing a sexualised gaze (Engeln-Maddox et al., 2011) and also experience situations that cause them to engage in self-surveillance (Hebl et al., 2004). As mentioned in chapter one, individuals can develop trait self-objectification, which refers to a person's general tendency to adopt an observer's perspective of the self, and also experience state self-objectification whereby they adopt this perspective on a momentary basis, as a result of contextual factors (Gay & Castano, 2010). State experiences of self-objectification have been found to linger beyond the objectifying event (Quinn, Kallen, & Cathey, 2006), and interpersonal encounters of objectification have been found to contribute to increased levels of trait self-objectification/self-surveillance (Hill & Fischer, 2008; Kozee, Tylka, Augustus-Horvath, & Denchik, 2007; Moradi et al., 2005). Given these findings, it is possible individuals experience transient states of objectification which, when experienced

multiple times could contribute to the development of trait self-objectification/self-surveillance.

2.1.1.1.1. Measurement of self-objectification and self-surveillance.

The Self-Objectification Questionnaire (SOQ) (Noll & Fredrickson, 1998) and the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS) (McKinley & Hyde, 1996) are the two most widely used measures to assess the extent to which someone has developed an objectified self-concept. Although both measures are derived from the same theoretical foundations, Calogero (2011) argues that empirically and conceptually they are distinguishable and should be assessed as separate constructs. It has been argued that it is possible to highly value one's physical appearance but at the same time engage in different levels of behavioural surveillance of appearance (Calogero, Herbozo, & Thompson, 2009). Miner-Rubino et al. (2002), however, argue that the main difference between self-objectification and self-surveillance is the way these constructs are assessed and that "both measures assess the degree to which a woman thinks of her body in terms of how it looks rather than how it feels" (p.153). Some researchers have suggested that self-surveillance is the behavioural manifestation of self-objectification (e.g., Moradi, Dirks, & Matteson, 2005) and use SOQ scores as a predictor of self-surveillance (e.g., Tiggemann, & Kuring, 2004; Tiggemann & Slater, 2001), while others have included both the SOQ and Self-Surveillance Subscale as indicators of the self-objectification construct (e.g., Hill & Fischer, 2008; Liss, Erchull, & Ramsey, 2011; Miner-Rubino et al., 2002), and some have used the Self-Surveillance Subscale alone as an indicator of self-objectification (Carr & Szymanski, 2011; Cohen et al., 2018; Muehlenkamp, Swanson, & Brausch, 2005). Self-surveillance as measured by the OBCS Self-surveillance subscale was the construct investigated in the current study (A further rationale for the assessment and analysis of self-surveillance is provided in Appendix A. which includes Table 1. *Self-objectification and self-surveillance measure correlations*).

Although there is some debate as to the exact definition and measurement of self-objectification, it is agreed that both self-objectification and self-surveillance exist as a result of living in a culture where individuals are sexually objectified and valued based on their physical appearance. Due to the differing terminology used by researchers in the field, where possible self-objectification and self-surveillance will be differentiated but, in some cases, self-objectification will be used as the umbrella term to describe research evaluating the causes and consequences of internalising an observer's perspective of the self.

2.1.1.2. Self-objectification/self-surveillance, body shame and depression.

In accordance with objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) researchers have investigated the relationship between self-objectification/self-surveillance, body shame and depression. Shame is considered a self-conscious emotion, in which the self is extensively scrutinised and negatively evaluated (Tangney et al., 1992). General experiences of shame have been associated with depression (Buss, 1980; Tangney, Miller, Flicker, & Barlow, 1996; Tangney, Wagner, & Gramzow, 1992). Body shame is a facet of shame experienced following negative self-evaluations for not conforming to cultural beauty standards (Crandall, 1994; Miner-Rubino et al., 2002). The link between self-objectification and body shame is a robust finding (e.g., Greenleaf, 2005; McKinley, 1999; Tiggemann & Slater, 2015; Tylka & Hill, 2004). As indicated in Chapter One research has also reported a direct relationship between self-objectification and depression (e.g., Harrison & Fredrickson, 2003; Tolman, Impett, Tracy, & Michael, 2006), and a mediated relationship between these constructs, as mediated by body shame (Carr & Szymanski, 2011; Chen & Russo, 2010; Evans, 2010; Haines et al., 2008; Hurt et al., 2007). The relationship between self-surveillance, body shame and depression is well established at trait level. The current study sought to assess whether this relationship is replicated at state level. Thus, the self-reported mood state of depression was assessed as opposed to an assessment of clinical depression as state experiences of depression are under-researched in the objectification literature and are pertinent to explore given that mood states of depression are predictive of clinical depression (Iacoviello, Alloy, Abramson, & Choi, 2010; van Rijsbergen, Bockting, Berking, Koeter, & Schene, 2012).

2.1.1.3. Self-objectification/self-surveillance, body shame and well-being.

The conceptualisation and measurement of well-being is multifaceted. Generally well-being can be considered as consisting of three components; positive affect, low levels of negative affect, and life satisfaction (Pavot & Diener, 1993), however researchers vary with regards to the component of well-being they assess, as well as the assessment tools used (Huang, 2010). The Short Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (SWEMWBS) was employed to assess both eudemonic (people's functioning, social relationships, sense of purpose) and hedonic (e.g., feelings of happiness) perspectives of well-being in the current study (Ng Fat, Scholes, Boniface, Mindell, & Stewart-Brown, 2017). Thus, the positive aspects of well-being were assessed.

Researchers have explored experiences of objectification with aspects of well-being. In particular, negative association between self-surveillance and autonomy, purpose in life,

personal growth, positive relations, self-acceptance (McKinley, 1999), adaptive and positive coping strategies (Sinclair & Myers, 2004), flow during physical activities (Greenleaf, 2005), and general well-being (Breines et al., 2008) have been reported. Body shame has been found to be a significant mediator between self-objectification and aspects of well-being, including life-satisfaction in women (Mercurio & Landry, 2008), and aspects of hope in men (Cole et al., 2013). Thus, body shame will be investigated as a mediator between self-surveillance and well-being in the current study.

2.1.1.4. Objectification/surveillance of others.

Research has explored the extent to which living in an objectifying society causes women and men to objectify others (Lindner et al., 2012; Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005b; Zurbriggen et al., 2011). Strelan and Hargreaves (2005) suggest that a “circle of objectification” exists as men and women who self-objectify are more likely to objectify other men and women. Zurbriggen, Ramsey, and Jaworski (2011) substantiated this finding as they reported that those who engaged in self-surveillance were more likely to engage in the surveillance of their partners. Strelan and Hargreaves (2005) suggest the process of engaging in self-objectification and the objectification of others is often unconscious and involves making a comparison. This comparison can contribute to negative thoughts about one’s appearance which may lead to additional comparisons, maintaining a cycle of body monitoring and comparison. Strelan and Hargreaves (2005) found that this relationship is particularly strong for women. This finding indicates that engaging in appearance comparisons may be strongly associated with the objectification of others as in order to make an appearance comparison, individuals have to first attend to the appearance of others and potentially objectify them. In objectifying others, individuals make a judgement as to whether other people’s appearance adheres to societal appearance standards. In this way individuals may compare how both others’ and their own physical appearance measure up to these standards. Lindner, Tantleff-Dunn, and Jentsch (2012) extended on these ideas and developed a theoretical model which views self-objectification, the objectification of others and social comparison as a “self-perpetuating cycle, rather than as processes that occur independently of one another” (p.222). Given the relationship between self-objectification, the objectification of others and social comparison, researchers have encouraged that self-objectification and social comparison be investigated simultaneously (Moradi & Huang, 2008; Tylka & Sabik, 2010). The current study will assess the correlations between self-surveillance, the surveillance of others and online social

comparison, given the methodology employed inferences will be made on associations not causality.

To date little research has been conducted on the environmental factors that contribute to the objectification of others. Zurbriggen et al.'s (2011) seminal research found that consuming traditional objectifying media was associated with greater engagement in the surveillance of a romantic partner's appearance. Research has found that the use of SNSs such as Facebook and Instagram (Cohen et al., 2017; Fardouly et al., 2018; Manago et al., 2015), and monitoring attractive peers online (Vandenbosch & Eggermont, 2015) was associated with greater self-objectification. As both Lindner et al. (2012) and Strelan and Hargreaves (2005) propose a circle of objectification between self-objectification, the objectification of others and social comparison, it can be argued that the same behaviours and SNSs which influence self-objectification, could influence the objectification of others. Zurbriggen et al. (2011) call for further investigation of the potential factors that contribute to the surveillance of others. Furthermore, participants' tendencies to objectify others on a momentary basis is under-researched and therefore the current study will assess whether aspects of SNS use and different types of engagement styles on SNSs contribute to state experiences of the surveillance of others.

2.1.2. SNS Use.

Given the pervasiveness of SNSs in people's lives, researchers have been interested to explore the potential consequences of SNS use for experiences of objectification and psychological functioning (e.g., Manago et al., 2015; Tiggemann & Slater, 2017). Predominantly research has investigated Emerging Adults' (EAs) and adolescents' experiences of SNS use. The current study extended this scope by including other age cohorts and investigated the potential consequences of SNS use for users across the life-course. With regards to research exploring the effects of SNSs, researchers often examine specific sites, and differentiate between passive and active use. Passive SNS use is defined as behaviours that involve non-interactive consumption of online content, whereas active use involves communication between users and online friends (Frison & Eggermont, 2015; Sagioglou & Greitemeyer, 2014).

2.1.2.1. Self-objectification/self-surveillance, social comparison and SNS use.

Research provides support for the relationship between SNS use and objectification. De Vries and Peter's (2013) experimental research found that women's online self-portrayal, when combined with exposure to sexually objectifying stimuli, contributes to self-

objectification. Vandenbosch and Eggermont (2012, 2015) found that observing sexually objectifying media content and using Facebook to monitor attractive peers was associated with greater endorsement of westernised beauty ideals and engagement in self-surveillance. Time spent on the internet (Tiggemann & Slater, 2013), both passive and active Facebook use (Manago, Ward, Lemm, Reed, & Seabrook, 2015), and greater overall Instagram use (Fardouly et al., 2018; Feltman & Szymanski, 2018) has been associated with greater self-objectification/self-surveillance. Engagement in photo-based activities has been found to be particularly salient in contributing to self-objectification (Cohen et al., 2017, 2018; Meier & Gray, 2014). Taken together, these findings indicate SNSs may be ideal environments to foster self-objectification as individuals have ample exposure to objectifying stimuli while also possessing the capability to create an online self-image. The current study aimed to assess several SNS variables, including engagement in photo-based behaviours, monitoring attractive peers on SNSs and time spent on SNSs in order to evaluate the specific aspects of SNSs that facilitate self-surveillance at both trait and state levels.

Online social comparison may be a particularly pertinent construct to investigate with regards to the relationship between SNS use and objectification as research suggests that engagement in online comparisons are associated with greater self-objectification (Fardouly et al., 2015a, 2018) and increased negative feelings about one's appearance (Fox & Vendemia, 2016). Perloff (2014) proposed a transactional model of social media and body image concerns to guide future research on social media effects on individuals' body image and appearance concerns. Perloff suggested that vulnerability characteristics are important to consider when investigating the relationship between SNS use and appearance constructs, as it was hypothesised that women who have particular vulnerability characteristics, such as low self-esteem would gravitate towards appearance-focused SNSs, to seek reassurance and validation from online experiences. This model proposed that processes such as social comparison will mediate the effects between SNSs and body image concerns. Thus, self-esteem was assessed in this study, and given the significant role of social comparison in the relationship between SNS use and objectification, social comparison was also assessed.

2.1.2.2. Psychological functioning and SNS use.

Research has consistently found that higher SNS use is associated with risks to psychological health, including lower self-esteem and higher levels of anxiety and depression (Woods & Scott, 2016; Wright et al., 2013), negative well-being (Oberst,

Renau, Chamarro, & Carbonell, 2016) and less emotional closeness than face-to face interactions (Sherman, Michikyan, & Greenfield, 2013). Twenge, Joiner, Rogers, and Martin (2017) analysis of secondary data collected from nationally representative surveys of U.S adolescents (N=506,820) found that adolescents who spent more time on social media and on smartphones were more likely to report mental health difficulties. In contrast, adolescents who spent more time on non-screen activities such as engaging in interpersonal interactions, were less likely to report negative mental health outcomes. Experimental research has identified a relationship between spending time on Facebook and negative mood immediately after use (Fardouly et al., 2015a; Sagioglou & Greitemeyer, 2014).

A number of explanations have been provided as to why extensive time spent on SNSs may contribute to mental health difficulties. Several theorists argue that time spent on SNSs detracts from time spent on social or cognitively stimulating activities and thus could contribute to feelings of depression or loneliness (Kraut et al., 1998; Nikkelen, Valkenburg, Huizinga, & Bushman, 2014; Twenge et al., 2017). This is inconclusive, however, as other research has found SNS use as being positively associated with time spent with existing friends (Valkenburg & Peter, 2007a). Research has also found that individuals with pre-existing mental-health problems may be more likely to spend greater time on SNSs to compensate for a lack of interpersonal skills (Valkenburg & Peter, 2007b; Widyanto & Griffiths, 2006). In this way problems resulting from SNS use may stem from pre-existing issues.

Research has reported that individuals are motivated to use SNSs to stay in contact with friends, relieve boredom, and pass the time (Brandtzaeg & Nov, 2011; Steinfield et al., 2008). Sagioglou and Greitemeyer, (2014) argue that although there may be several motives for using SNSs, their research findings suggest that individuals tend to engage in forecasting error, whereby they expect more positive outcomes from its use than they receive in reality.

Researchers have differentiated between specific online behaviours in terms of effect on well-being and depression. Passive Facebook behaviour has been associated with increased feelings of stress and lower self-esteem (Kalpidou et al., 2011), low mood (Sagioglou & Greitemeyer, 2014) and declines in affective well-being (Verduyn et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2018). Frison and Eggermont's (2017) longitudinal research reported that Instagram browsing was associated with decreased mood over time, while Frison and Eggermont (2016) reported that both active and passive SNS use was associated with depression.

Huang's (2010) meta-analysis reported that SNS use is positively associated with well-being when used for social communication but unrelated to well-being when it is used for browsing content. Given that several constructs such as self-esteem, loneliness, depression, and life-satisfaction have been used to assess well-being it is difficult to draw succinct conclusions on this relationship (Huang, 2010).

Exposure to specific online content has also been found to have consequences for users psychological functioning. Consuming other people's vacation photographs has been associated with feelings of envy, resentment, and loneliness, which in turn has detrimental effects on life satisfaction (Krasnova et al., 2013). As indicated in chapter one mixed findings have been reported with regard to exposure to "fitspiration" content (Prichard et al., 2018; Slater et al., 2017; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015). Exposure to celebrity and peer images has been associated with increased negative mood and body dissatisfaction relative to travel images (Brown & Tiggemann, 2016). Online social comparison has often been found to mediate the negative effect of SNSs on mood, well-being and body satisfaction (Bessenoff, 2006; Hanna et al., 2017; Jang, Park, & Song, 2016; Tiggemann & McGill, 2004; Tiggemann & Polivy, 2010; Tiggemann, Polivy, & Hargreaves, 2009). Thus, online social comparison was identified as an important construct to investigate in the current study.

SNSs have also been identified as having positive effects on one's life. Facebook use has been associated with increased social contact and social capital (Ellison et al., 2007; O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011; Valkenburg & Peter, 2007b) and increased self-esteem (Gonzales & Hancock, 2011). Actively posting content has been associated with lower rates of loneliness (Deters & Mehl, 2013). Receiving more likes and comments on one's status has been associated with greater happiness and increased self-esteem (Zell & Moeller, 2018). Number of Facebook friends and presenting favourable self-representations online has been associated with higher levels of well-being (Kim & Lee, 2011). Also, using SNSs for social engagement as opposed to entertainment is associated with increased well-being (Wang, Jackson, Gaskin, & Wang, 2014). As SNSs have been used as mobilising tools for social justice, this may have positive consequences for feelings of empowerment and well-being (Keller et al., 2016; Khoja-Moolji, 2015). Thus, depending on how SNSs are used, they can have significant positive effects on people's lives. This body of research supports the contention that there are several motives for using SNSs and both positive and negative consequences with its use. For this reason, both trait well-being and state depression were assessed and several SNS behaviours such as photo-

based behaviours, time spent on SNSs, passive and active use were evaluated in relation to these aspects of psychological functioning.

2.1.3. Materialism

From a critical feminist perspective it was important to consider how not only institutions such as the media influence self-surveillance, but also broader social constructs, as often the media is simply an instrument for the expansion of consumerist, materialist ideals (McCracken, 1986). As Westernised societies are characterised by consumerism and materialism, the extent that individuals have developed a materialistic value system will be assessed as a potential contributory factor to self-surveillance, trait well-being and state depression.

2.1.3.1. Self-objectification/self-surveillance and materialism.

Materialism can be defined as a value system which emphasises the importance of material possessions and their acquisition (Richins & Dawson, 1992). Individuals who hold such values often perceive that the acquisition of goods will lead to happiness and success, and that their self-worth is linked to the possessions they own (Belk, 1985; Richins & Dawson, 1992). It has been argued that objectification contributes to the commodification of the body as when the body is objectified it is evaluated based on its observable properties as opposed to its functionality (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Materialists may be at particular risk of self-objectification as by living in objectifying societies they are encouraged to think of themselves and their bodies as a commodity which can be improved upon through the acquisition of goods.

The relationship between materialism and body image concerns has also been investigated. Jankowski (2015) provides evidence for the harm living in a materialistic society causes for psychological well-being and body satisfaction. Slater and Tiggemann (2016) found that maternal self-objectification and materialism influence body image and appearance concerns in daughters. Teng et al. (2016, 2017) found that holding materialist values increased women's likelihood to regard sexual attractiveness as social capital and increased the tendency for women to have appearance contingent self-worth which predicted their self-objectification and self-surveillance. Furthermore, Chen (2016) found that objectification moderates the relationship between materialism and attitudes towards transactional sex. Together these results suggest that materialism may be an important construct to investigate in relation to objectification and therefore participants' materialist values were assessed in this study.

2.1.3.2. Psychological functioning and materialism.

Research has also established an association between holding materialist values and psychological functioning. High levels of materialism have been found to be associated with lower levels of self-esteem (Kasser, Cohn, Kanner, & Ryan, 2007; Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996) and decreased happiness and life satisfaction (Belk, 1985; Nickerson, Schwarz, Diener, & Kahneman, 2003; Richins & Dawson, 1992). Kasser and Ryan (1993) found that individuals who viewed financial success as a life goal and had high central financial aspirations were associated with lower rates of self-actualisation and higher rates of depression and anxiety.

Fromm (1976) described humans' orientation in life as either "having" which is a consummatory orientation or "being" described as an experiential orientation to life. Ryan and Deci's (2000) Self-Determination Theory describes extrinsic motivation as "the performance of an activity in order to attain some separable outcome" and intrinsic motivation as "doing an activity for the inherent satisfaction of the activity itself" (p.71). They argue that at a primitive level, human beings are naturally intrinsically motivated to seek out novelty, explore, and learn. Thus, those who are more extrinsically orientated or those who are more concerned with "having" than "being" may experience more negative consequences regarding their psychological health and well-being as their concern with material rewards may distract from actualisation (Fromm, 1976; Maslow, 1954; Ryan & Deci, 2000). There is a suggestive body of research that indicates that materialism may have a negative impact on an individual's psychological health and well-being. Participants' materialist values were important to assess with regards to self-surveillance and psychological functioning as they indicate the extent to which individuals have internalised societal ideals and by assessing this construct a socio-political perspective can also be considered.

2.1.4. Ecological Momentary Assessment

Collectively, the research outlined so far has provided evidence for relationships between the constructs of interest, namely SNS use, self-surveillance, surveillance of others, well-being, depression and materialism. However, limited research has explored the specific aspects of SNS use that contributes to self-surveillance and surveillance of others, and inconclusive results have been reported regarding the relationship between SNS use, well-being and depression. In general, research has investigated the antecedents and consequences of self-objectification at trait level, but less is known of these relationships at state level. The current study aimed to expand on existing research to investigate

predictors of self-surveillance at both trait and state level. State experiences are crucial to explore, as it is our momentary, lived experiences that configure our lives (Swim, Cohen, Hyers, & Ferguson, 2001). Retrospective questionnaires can only tell us about participants' *tendencies* to engage in specific behaviours. The use of EMA methods in this study, help to capture valid and reliable data on behaviours and experiences as they unfold (Shiffman et al., 2008). Through an investigation of state experiences, we can better understand how contextual factors and proximal processes such as using SNSs can contribute to experiences of self-surveillance in participants' daily lives.

"Ecological Momentary Assessment (EMA) methods are defined by repeated collection of real-time data in subjects' real-world environments" (Shiffman, 2014, p.76). EMA methods can measure individual differences, contextual associations, temporal sequences and state level variables. They can provide information on behavioural trends and experiences across time and contexts (Ehlers et al., 2016). In relation to the current study, the ability to collect several responses and target times at which individuals may be, or very recently have been using SNSs, as well as the ability to measure contextual associations and temporal sequences, i.e., whether or not participants had been using SNSs and the recency with which they had been using SNSs, were particularly relevant in helping to answer the research questions.

EMA research has often been conducted using modern technologies. Participants are prompted via beepers or smartphones at intervals over a specific period of time; known as device prompted or signal contingent design. A strength of this is that behaviours, feelings and contexts can be recorded as they unfold while using technologies participants are intimately familiar with. Research suggests that high mobile survey completion is associated with device familiarisation and ease of use (Ehlers et al., 2016). The result is improved data collection feasibility and validity. Given these advantages, participants were prompted via their smartphones in the current study.

There are several advantages to EMA methods over cross-sectional retrospective questionnaires and experimental research designs. EMA is useful as participants are asked to report responses in real time, reducing the capacity for recall bias, a noted limitation of retrospective questionnaires (Schwarz, 2007). Unlike experimental research which often lacks ecological validity, EMA methods are considered ecologically sound as participants are asked to respond to surveys in their natural environment. Furthermore, unlike cross-sectional designs which generally record one assessment of the construct of interest, EMA

methods collect a variety of assessments from each participant, facilitating a more holistic or typical impression of individuals experiences (Shiffman et al., 2008). While there is some evidence of a decline in the quality and quantity of EMA responses over time (Fuller-Tyszkiewicz et al., 2013), in general, EMA methods are not reported as overly burdensome on participants (Wegner et al., 2002).

Research suggests EMA measures can be used to assess real-world body image experiences without causing a reactive effect on participants' perception of their body image (Heron & Smyth, 2013). This is important as the purpose of employing EMA is to try to extrapolate an honest representation of participants' experiences without causing undue harm or influencing responses. EMA methods are also reported as being reliable and valid for measuring media use and health outcomes (Rich, Bickham, & Shrier, 2015). Together these studies suggest that EMA methods are reliable for measuring real-time SNS use, appearance constructs and state psychological experiences. In the current study, everyday experiences of SNS use will be explored and assessed in relation to how SNSs influence participants' self-surveillance, surveillance of others and depressed mood.

2.1.4.1. EMA and objectification.

EMA methods have only recently been employed by objectification researchers (e.g., Breines et al., 2008; Fitzsimmons-Craft, Bardone-Cone, et al., 2016; Holland, Koval, Stratemeyer, Thomson, & Haslam, 2017). EMA allows for the investigation of the prevalence and psychological impact of objectification in daily life. Research has varied in relation to the prevalence of objectifying experiences, as participants in Swim et al.'s (2001) (study 3) reported an average of 1.38 experiences of objectification per week, while Holland et al. (2017) found that women were targeted on average once every two days by objectifying events and witnessed the objectification of other women more than once per day. Their results support the finding that both experiencing and witnessing objectification leads to increased rates of self-objectification. Regardless of the specific number of objectifying experiences, research suggests that the accumulation of objectifying experiences is associated with trait self-objectification/self-surveillance (Hill & Fischer, 2008; Kozee et al., 2007; Moradi et al., 2005).

On the psychological impact of momentary experiences of objectification Breines et al. (2008) found that although most women experienced decreased well-being when self-objectifying, some received a boost. Participants who reported high levels of self-esteem as well as high levels of appearance contingent self-worth reported increased well-being

when they self-objectified. Swim et al. (2001) found that particularly for women, experiences of sexist incidences, including objectification, had negative ramifications for well-being, including decreased levels of comfort, greater experiences of anger, anxiety, depression, and lower state self-esteem. Furthermore, Fitzsimmons-Craft et al. (2016) found that at state level a myriad of appearance related processes (i.e., body, eating, and exercise comparisons, self-surveillance) are associated with body dissatisfaction, and that these processes could be involved in the maintenance of body dissatisfaction on a daily basis. These findings provide evidence for the importance of examining state experiences and the potential role of state self-surveillance in contributing to psychological functioning.

Such examples of EMA and objectification research suggest that objectification occurs often and that experiencing and witnessing objectification can have consequences for individual's self-surveillance, well-being and body satisfaction. Although these examples have contributed to our understanding of the pertinence and extent of objectification in women's lives, they have failed to explore men's experiences and have not considered the role of specific situational and contextual factors such as using SNSs. Furthermore, EMA objectification research is yet to explore the relationship between self-surveillance and depression on a momentary basis. Thus, the current study aims to extend EMA objectification research by exploring the relationship between SNS use, self-surveillance and the mood state of depression in female and male participants.

2.1.4.2. EMA and SNSs.

There have been mixed findings in relation to EMA research on SNS use and its potential psychological consequences. George, Russell, Piontak, and Odgers (2018) conducted EMA research with 151 adolescents at risk of mental health problems. They found time spent on SNSs and the number of daily text messages sent were associated with increased same day attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and conduct disorder symptoms. Sending more texts was associated with fewer anxiety and depression symptoms and on days where they had spent more time online, participants reported fewer anxiety symptoms. These findings are consistent with Valkenburg and Peter's (2009) review article which reported that some adolescents may be using their time online in positive ways. EMA research with young adults has also found that greater average weekly Facebook use predicted increased depressive symptoms and lower life satisfaction (Kross, Verduyn, Demiralp, Park, and Lee, 2013). Steers et al.'s (2014) EMA research found that engaging in online comparisons mediates the relationship between amount of time spent on SNSs and depressive

symptoms. Unlike George et al. (2018) these examples of research focused specifically on Facebook use in a non-clinical population. The findings suggest that in a non-clinical sample extensive Facebook use and engaging in online comparisons contributes to lower mood and life satisfaction over time. It is evident that the relationship between SNS use and psychological functioning is complex. The use of EMA methods can help to facilitate the acquisition of ecologically valid and reliable research on this topic.

2.1.5. The Present Study

This study will be the first to examine objectification and SNSs in women and men using an EMA methodology to examine both trait and state experiences of self-surveillance, and the predictors and consequences of such experiences.

2.1.5.1. Rationale.

The literature presented has indicated that there exists a relationship between SNS use and self-objectification/self-surveillance (e.g., Manago et al., 2015; Tiggemann & Slater, 2013; Vandenberg & Eggermont, 2012). Prior research suggests it is certain aspects of SNS use such as engagement in photo-based behaviours and photo-based sites, such as Instagram, that contribute to self-surveillance (Fardouly et al., 2018). Further research is needed to extrapolate the qualities of SNSs that are particularly salient in contributing to self-surveillance at both trait and state level. For this reason, several variables pertaining to aspects of SNS use will be explored. These include, engagement in photo-based behaviours, monitoring attractive peers online, time spent on SNSs, and the type of SNSs used. It is hypothesised that more time spent on SNSs, greater use of image-based platforms, engaging in photo-based behaviours and monitoring attractive peers online will contribute to self-surveillance at trait and state level.

Body shame (e.g., Calogero, 2004; Noll & Fredrickson, 1998; Slater & Tiggemann, 2002; Tylka & Hill, 2004) and social comparison (Fardouly et al., 2015a, 2018) are frequently cited as significant correlates of self-surveillance. In particular, research suggests the relationship between SNS use and body image concerns are mediated by engagement in appearance comparisons (Fardouly et al., 2015a; Fardouly, Diedrichs, Vartanian, & Halliwell, 2015b; Fardouly & Vartanian, 2015). The current study will therefore investigate whether body shame and online social comparison mediate the relationship between photo-based behaviours and self-surveillance at trait and state levels.

Given the tendency within psychology to focus on pathology and the limited research on objectification and well-being (e.g., McKinley, 1999; Mercurio & Landry, 2008; Sinclair

& Myers, 2004), at trait level the relationship between self-surveillance and well-being will be investigated. In this study eudemonic and hedonic aspects of well-being, including both feeling and functioning associated with trait well-being were assessed. A relationship between self-surveillance and trait levels of depression have been established (e.g., Carr & Szymanski, 2011; Hurt et al., 2007). Less is known about the relationship between these variables at state level and thus, state levels of depression were investigated. An investigation of state depression also facilitated an examination of the effects of SNSs on mood in real time. Furthermore, there is a paucity of objectification research on the role of societal influences such as materialism on self-surveillance. Therefore, participants' materialist values were investigated as a predictor of self-surveillance and psychological functioning.

Certain demographic variables have been found to influence self-objectification/self-surveillance. These include being female (Aubrey, 2006; Fredrickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn, & Twenge, 1998; Moradi & Huang, 2008; Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005), having a higher Body Mass Index (BMI; Knauss, Paxton, & Alsaker, 2008; Thompson, Van Den Berg, Roehrig, Guarda, & Heinberg, 2004) being from a Western country (e.g., Aubrey, 2006; Moradi & Huang, 2008), being younger (e.g., Tiggemann & Lynch, 2001), and for men being homosexual (Engeln-Maddox et al., 2011; Martins et al., 2007). Therefore, the current study will control for BMI, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation in respect of SNS use, objectification, state depression and well-being.

Objectification research has tended to employ retrospective cross-sectional (e.g., Cohen et al., 2018; Manago et al., 2015) and/or experimental (e.g., Fardouly et al., 2015a ; Fredrickson et al., 1998; Hebl et al., 2004a) designs, focusing predominantly on women's experiences of objectification (see Moradi and Huang (2008) and Calogero et al. (2011) for reviews). There has been limited research on momentary experiences of objectification in daily life, and of the momentary research that exists the focus has been on women's experiences (e.g., Breines, Crocker, & Garcia, 2008; Fitzsimmons-Craft et al., 2016; Holland, Koval, Stratemeyer, Thomson, & Haslam, 2017). To the author's knowledge, no momentary objectification research to date has investigated the role of SNS use as a contributor to self-surveillance on a momentary basis, nor has the relationship between self-surveillance and depression been explored on a momentary basis. For these reasons, the current study aims to employ EMA methods to investigate both women and men's experiences of state self-surveillance. EMA methods will be used to target times when participants are likely to have been using SNSs in order to explore whether SNS use

contributes to self-surveillance, and EMA will be used to investigate the relationship between self-surveillance and depression on a momentary basis.

Trait self-surveillance refers to individuals' general tendencies to monitor their physical appearance and think about their body in terms of how it looks (McKinley & Hyde, 1996), whereas state self-surveillance refers to whether or not individuals monitor their physical appearance in a specific moment (Holland, Koval, Stratemeyer, Thomson, & Haslam, 2017). Research suggests there can be differences between the consequences and correlates of trait and state variables (Fitzsimmons-Craft et al., 2016), but that an examination of both provide a more holistic perception as to the experiences of objectification and thus, self-surveillance was investigated at both trait and state level.

Few examples of objectification research have explored the objectification of others (e.g., Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005), and of those, state surveillance of others has not been explored. Thus, the current study will assess the extent to which individuals engage in the surveillance of others of their own gender on a momentary basis. It is expected that women will be more likely to engage in the surveillance of other women compared to the extent that men will engage in the surveillance of other men, as women are socialised to think of themselves as sexual objects (Bartky, 1990; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). To date the relationship between SNS use and the surveillance of others of the same gender has not been explored. It can be argued that the environment and behaviours that individuals engage in online may contribute to a culture of objectification, thus it is expected that engagement with SNSs will not only predict self-surveillance but also the surveillance of others of the same gender on a momentary basis. Furthermore, in order to examine the hypothesised circle of objectification (Lindner et al., 2012; Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005b), self-surveillance, the surveillance of others and social comparison were assessed in this study.

Research shows the relationship between SNS use and well-being and SNS use and depression is complex (Brandtzaeg & Nov, 2011; Ellison et al., 2007; Oberst et al., 2016; Sagioglou & Greitemeyer, 2014; Steinfield et al., 2008; Woods & Scott, 2016). Further research is required to better understand the relationship between these factors. Valkenburg and Peter (2013) suggest that media rarely exert simple main effects that act in isolation but interact with the context or individual susceptibility variables to have an effect on individuals' cognitive and emotional functioning. Thus, not only will specific media-based behaviours be assessed in relation to psychological functioning (i.e., time spent on SNSs,

passive and active SNS use), but also constructs pertaining to participants' value systems (i.e., materialism), cognitions (i.e., online social comparison), emotions (i.e., body shame), and body monitoring behaviours (i.e., self-surveillance). This study will investigate factors that influence both trait and state levels of self-surveillance as well as factors that influence state surveillance of others of the same gender, state levels of depression and trait levels of well-being. An overview of the outcome variables investigated is presented in Table 2.

Table 2.

Trait and state outcome variables measured.

Variable	Trait	State
Self-surveillance	X	X
Surveillance of others		X
Well-being	X	
Depressed mood		X

2.1.5.2. Aims and Research Questions.

This study aimed to examine a component of objectification theory, in particular the relationship between self-surveillance, body shame and state depression. This research sought to extend the objectification framework by integrating research on SNSs, objectification and psychological functioning at trait and state levels using novel methods with both female and male samples. Importantly, several aspects of SNS use (i.e., photo-based behaviours, monitoring attractive peers online, type of SNSs used, time spent on SNSs, and recency of SNS use) was explored in relation to objectification, trait well-being and state depression. Furthermore, this research aimed to explore under-researched constructs as potential contributors (i.e., materialism) and consequences (i.e., well-being) of self-surveillance at trait level. Given these aims and rationale the following research questions (RQs) were addressed:

- *RQ 1a:* Does SNS use (i.e., photo-based behaviours, monitoring attractive peers online, time spent on SNSs, type of SNSs used), body shame, online social comparison and materialism contribute to self-surveillance at trait level when controlling for self-esteem, BMI, gender, and age? (See Figure 3).

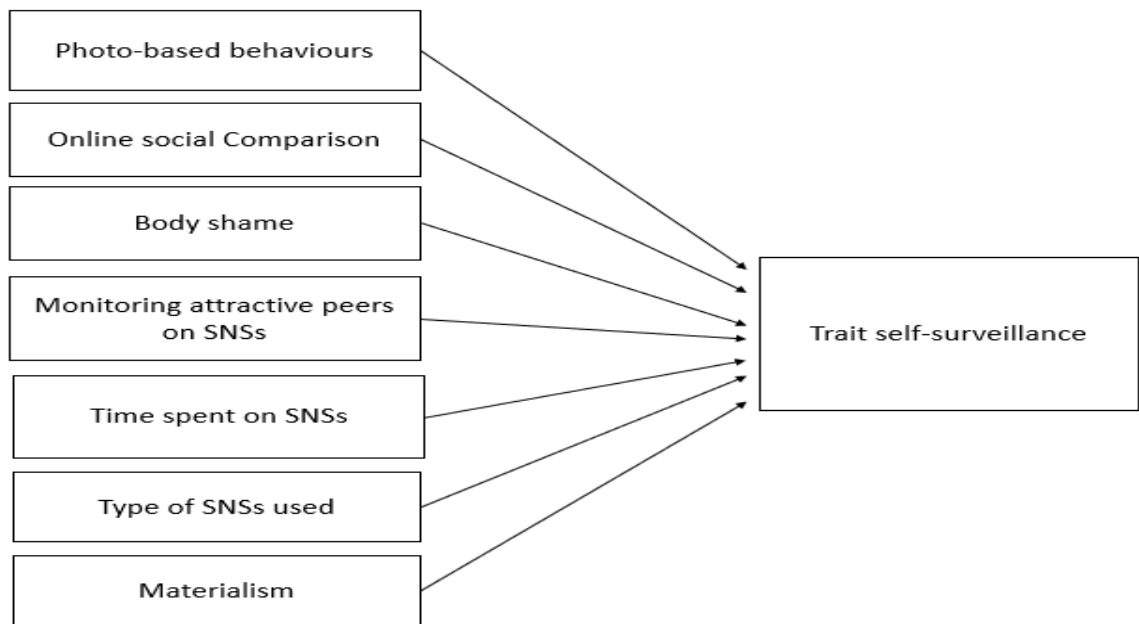


Figure 3. Hypothesised model for predictors of trait self-surveillance.

- *RQ1b*: Does SNS use (i.e., photo-based behaviours, monitoring attractive peers online, time spent on SNSs, recency of SNS use) body shame, online social comparison and materialism contribute to self-surveillance at state level when controlling for time of day, self-esteem, BMI, gender, and age? (See Figure 4.)

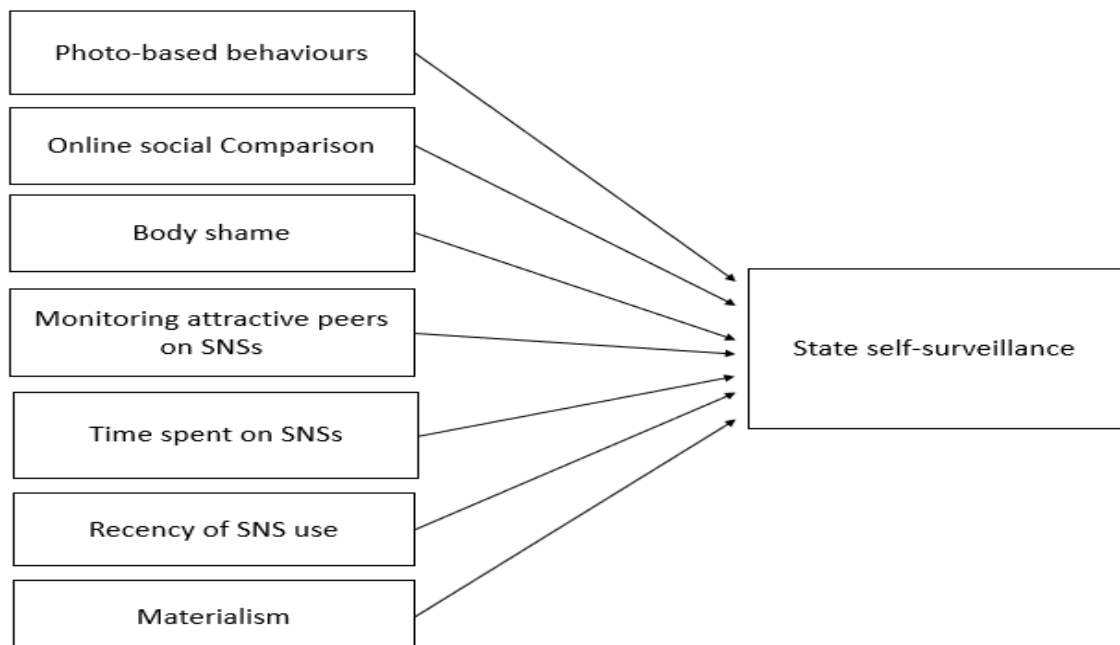


Figure 4. Hypothesised model for predictors of state self-surveillance.

- *RQ 1c*: Does body shame and online social comparison mediate the relationship between photo-based behaviours and self-surveillance at trait and state levels? (See Figure 5.)

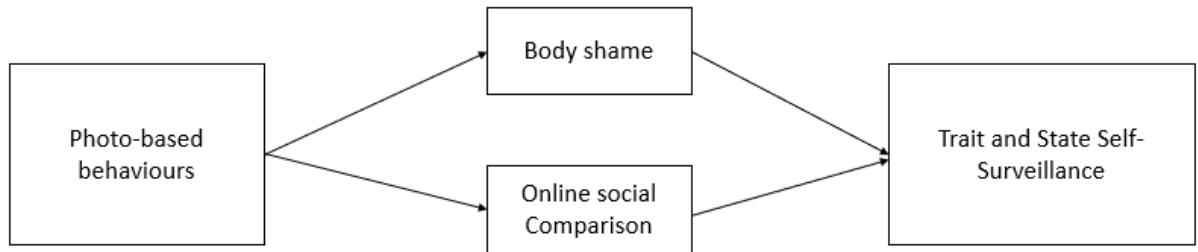


Figure 5. Hypothesised mediation model for the relationship between photo-based behaviours and trait and state self-surveillance.

- *RQ 2*: Does SNS use (i.e., photo-based behaviours, monitoring attractive peers online, time spent on SNSs, recency of SNS use) body shame and online social comparison contribute to state levels of the surveillance of others when controlling for time of day, gender and age? (See Figure 6.)

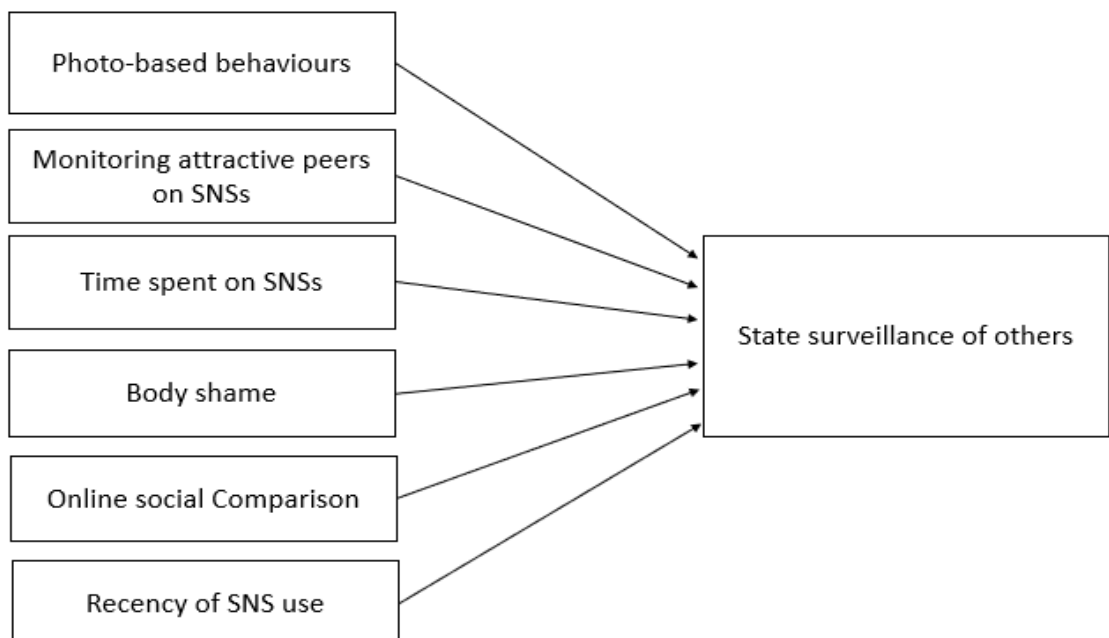


Figure 6. Hypothesised model for predictors of state surveillance of others.

- *RQ 3*: Does a relationship exist between self-surveillance, surveillance of others and online social comparison at trait and state level?
- *RQ 4a*: Does SNS use (i.e., online social comparisons, time spent on SNSs, passive SNS use, active SNS use), self-surveillance, body shame and materialism contribute to trait well-being when controlling for gender and age? (See Figure 7.)

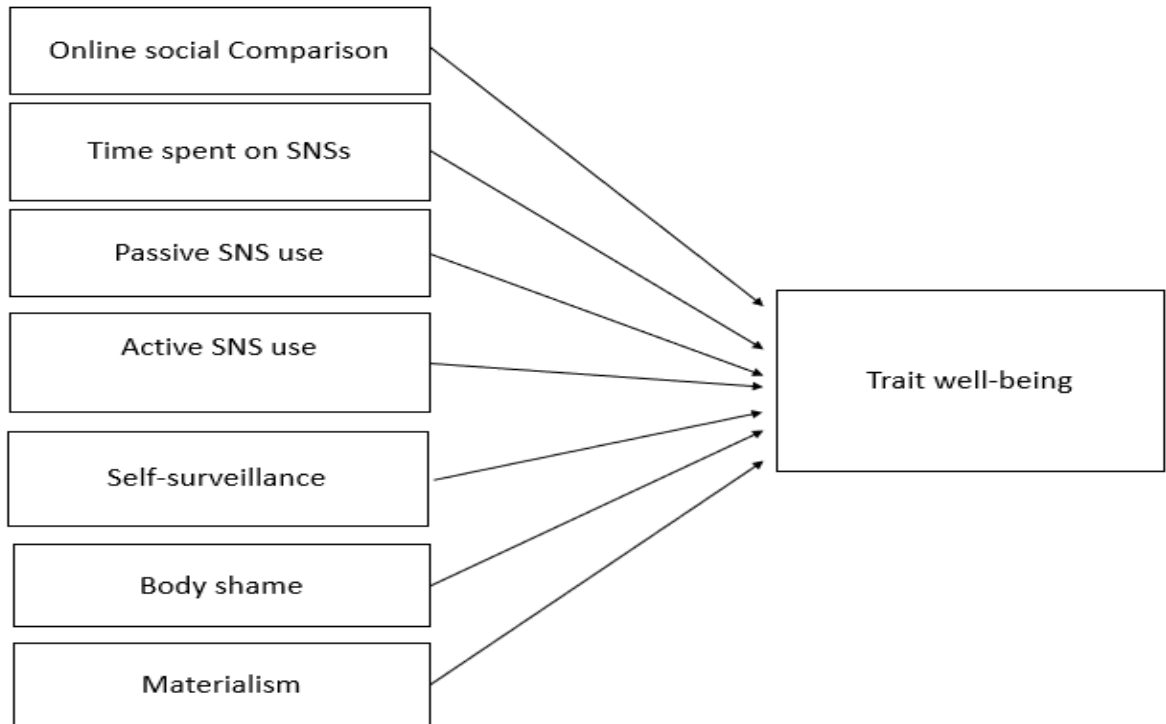


Figure 7. Hypothesised model for predictors of trait well-being.

- *RQ 4b*: Does body shame mediate the relationship between self-surveillance and well-being at trait level? (See Figure 8).

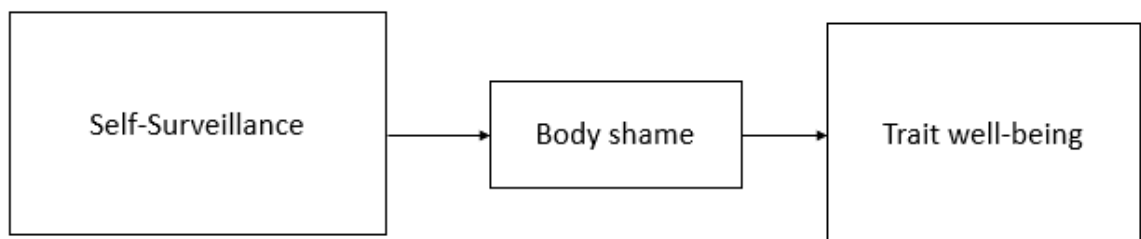


Figure 8. Hypothesised mediation model for self-surveillance and trait well-being.

RQ 5a: Does SNS use (i.e., online social comparisons, time spent on SNSs, passive SNS use, active SNS use), self-surveillance, body shame, and materialism predict state levels of depression when controlling for recency of SNS use, time of day, age and gender? (See Figure 9.)

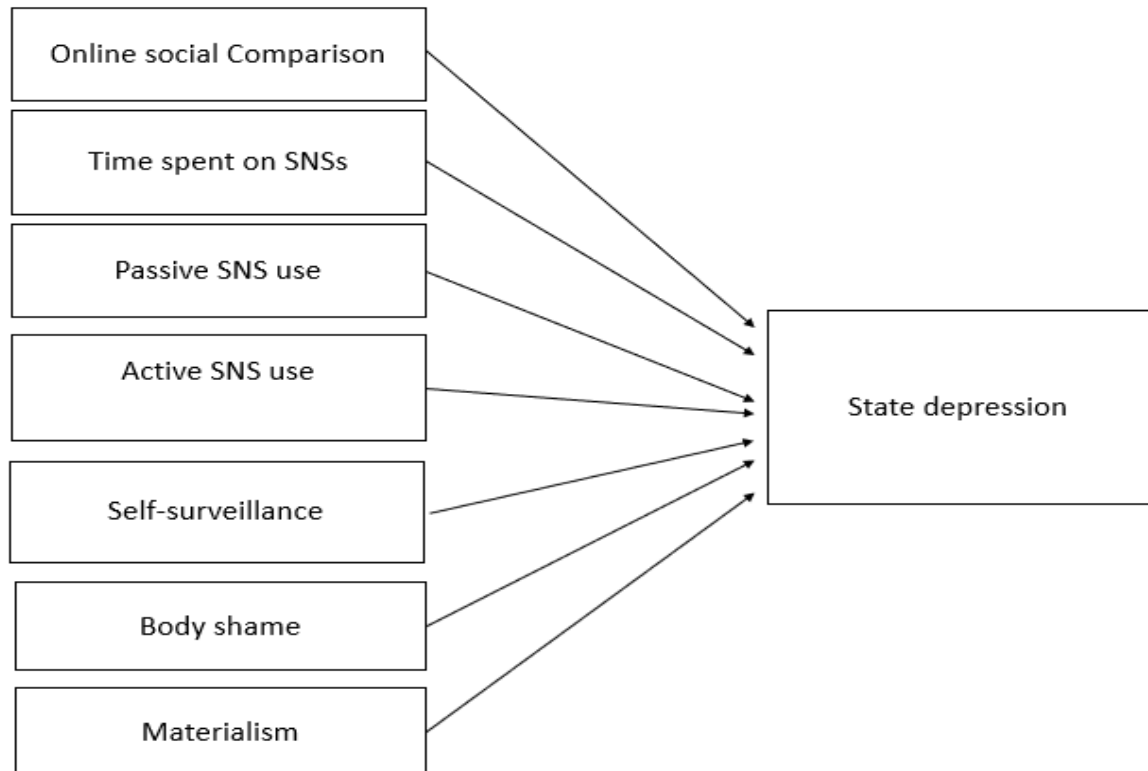


Figure 9. The hypothesised model for predictors of state depression.

- *RQ 5b:* Does this research support Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) model regarding depression? (i.e., does self-surveillance predict depression and does body shame mediate that relationship?) (See Figure 10).

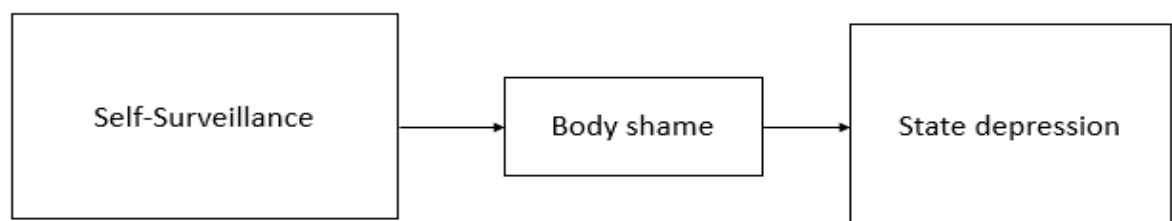


Figure 10. Hypothesised mediation model for the relationship between self-surveillance and state depression.

2.2. Method

2.2.1. Research design.

A quantitative correlational research design was employed in this study through the use of online questionnaires. Baseline (trait) and EMA (state) assessments were collected using *Qualtrics*, a data collection software. At the baseline assessment participants were asked to provide their mobile phone number and respond to a series of demographic questions as well as questions to ascertain their level of self-surveillance, surveillance of others, SNS use, materialism and well-being. Then, at a later date, participants were prompted via their smartphones nine times over the course of one week to complete the EMA online assessments. At each prompt time participants completed measures on their momentary experiences of SNS use, self-surveillance, surveillance of others, and depression (more specific details are provided below). This study received full ethical approval from Dublin City University ethical review committee (See Appendix B).

2.2.2. Participants

The sample included 243 participants and was predominantly female (79.42%), heterosexual (87.65%) and quite homogenous with regards to ethnicity (White Irish, 91.77%). A large non-student population participated (43.21%) and a quarter of participants were over the age of 30 (25.93%). An overview of participants' demographic information is provided in Table 3.

Table 3.

An overview of participants' demographic information.

Demographic information	Number of participants	Percentage of participants
<u>Gender</u>		
Female	193	79.42%
Male	49	20.16%
Did not report select gender option male or female	1	0.41%
<u>Sexual Orientation Identification</u>		
Heterosexual	213	87.65%
Bisexual	19	7.82%
Homosexual	8	3.29%
Did not report	3	1.23%

Student status

Student	138	56.79%
Non-student	105	43.21%

Age range

Participants aged between 18-23 years	114	46.91%
Women	102	41.98%
Men	12	4.94%
Participants aged between 24-29 years	66	27.16%
Women	43	17.70%
Men	23	9.47%
Participants aged between 30-68 years	63	25.93%
Women	49	20.16%
Men	14	5.76%

Ethnicity

White Irish	223	91.77%
From any other white background	11	4.53%
Other including mixed background	4	1.65%
Asian or Asian Irish-any other Asian background	2	0.82%
White Irish Traveller	1	0.41%
Black or Black Irish-African	1	0.41%
Asian or Asian Irish-Chinese	1	0.41%

2.2.3. Procedure

2.2.3.1. Recruitment procedure.

Participants were recruited via university contacts and personal contacts. Personal contacts refer to individuals who received information regarding recruitment via the researcher's personal social media platforms. Recruitment began on March 15th 2018 and ran for 3 weeks (see Appendix C Table 4. for breakdown of groups and assessment weeks). Recruitment posters were distributed across the university campus (see Appendix D for poster). Students received a recruitment email via their university email accounts. In some

cases, the researcher was given permission to visit class groups to discuss the research process prior to recruitment. Snow-ball sampling was also employed as the recruitment poster was posted on the researcher's personal Facebook account which was made public to facilitate online sharing.

Within the literature, frequently participants attend an initial training session to understand EMA reporting procedures (Breines et al., 2008; Fitzsimmons-Craft et al., 2016; Holland et al., 2017). Training, providing feedback and using check-ins is reported as being beneficial in terms of compliance (Shiffman, 2009). In the current study it was not feasible to ensure all participants received initial training as snow-ball sampling methods were employed and participants could initiate participation online. To address this, detailed information on EMA methods was included in the Plain Language Statement (PLS) (see Appendix E.) and participants received reminder information regarding the completion of surveys at each prompt time. On the occasions where the researcher was given permission to visit class groups, information was provided on the study in general, and on the EMA methodology in particular and the recruitment poster was distributed.

2.2.3.2. Baseline procedure.

All assessments were completed online. Participants initially read the PLS (Appendix E.) which outlined what involvement would entail. They had to complete an informed consent form to participate (Appendix F.) and could then progress to the baseline survey. Questionnaires were presented in the following order: demographic questions, general time spent on SNSs, active SNS use, passive SNS use and photo-based behaviours, self-surveillance, body shame, surveillance of others, online social comparison, monitoring attractive peers on SNSs, self-esteem, well-being, material values and state depression measure.

2.2.3.3. EMA procedure.

EMA was used to target times when participants were likely to have been using SNSs therefore participants were prompted at different time points to optimise the likelihood they had recently used SNSs. Using the phone number provided at the baseline assessment participants were prompted via their smartphones to answer nine prompt surveys. *Neon SMS*, an online software that manages mobile messaging, was used to prompt participants at each time-point. At each prompt, participants received a text message regarding their continued participation e.g., "Thank you for your participation. This is the last survey you

will be asked to complete today”. Each text message included a link to the relevant online survey.

2.2.3.3.1. Timing of prompts.

Given the nature of the RQs, it was considered important to target participants at times when they were likely to have used or be using SNSs. Research suggests that people are spending increasing amounts of time on SNSs (e.g., Frith, 2017; Ofcom, 2016). A recent PEW Report (Smith & Anderson, 2018) found that 74% of Facebook users, 63% of Snapchat users and 60% of Instagram users visit these platforms daily. However, there appears to be peak times of use as there is extensive information as to the optimal times to post content to maximise feedback. According to a report by CoSchedule (a marketing software company) (Baer et al., 2016), in which they compared the data from 10 sources of research; Facebook engagement peaks in the afternoons (from 1p.m. to 4 p.m.), while Twitter is busiest between 12p.m. and 3p.m., and at 5p.m. and Instagram audiences appear to be consistently engaged throughout the week with no specific optimal time for posting reported.

Participants were prompted on nine occasions over the course of one week. All participants were prompted on Tuesday and Thursday at 8.30 a.m., 1p.m. and 9 p.m., and on Sunday at 10.30 a.m., 3.30 p.m. and 9.30 p.m. These times were selected in light of Baer et al.'s (2016) findings and also in consideration of participant burden as it was felt that these times would not overly interfere with participants' daily activities. Participants were advised to only respond to messages when it was safe to do so. Questionnaires were closed 30 minutes prior to the next prompt. This amount of time was allocated in order to optimise response rates. Once questionnaires were closed participants could not return to these surveys.

2.2.3.3.2. Participation and excluded data.

Three rounds of recruitment were completed accumulating in data collection from 275 participants. Any assessment with less than 32% completion was removed. This percentage was selected as it ensured all participants had completed the demographic information and at least one of the questionnaires. This resulted in the exclusion of 16 responses. Although it is suggested that at least 50% completion should be the cut-off point (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2014), 32% completion was deemed appropriate in order to maximise the number of participants who would be prompted and receive the additional assessments as retention was a concern. As a result, 259 responses were recorded and these 259 phone

numbers received each prompt assessment. Of the 259 participants who were prompted, 243 participants were the final cohort included in the baseline and prompt analyses, 16 responses were excluded from analyses as they had completed less than 44% of the baseline measures and none of the prompt surveys.

Including both the baseline and nine prompt time observations, the maximum number of observations was 2430 ($N=243 \times 10$). These observations refer to the number of baseline and prompt surveys that were completed. Fifty percent (1207) of observations were completed. Not including the 243 observations recorded at the baseline, 964 prompt observations were completed (see Appendix G. Table 5. for breakdown of prompts completed). Ten percent of participants completed all ten assessments, while nineteen percent only completed the baseline assessment (see Table 6. for full breakdown of number of prompt assessments completed). Although a significant attrition rate, this is not an uncommon limitation of EMA methodology (Shiffman et al., 2008).

Table. 6.

Numbers of assessments completed and percentage of participants who completed them.

Number of assessments completed	Number of participants who completed the assessment	Percentage of participants who completed the assessment
10	23	9.5%
9	21	8.6%
8	23	9.5%
7	14	5.8%
6	15	6.2%
5	27	11.1%
4	33	13.5%
3	21	8.6%
2	20	8.2%
Baseline assessment (1)	46	18.9%
Total	243	100%

2.2.4. Measures

The measures used to examine the constructs of interest were chosen based on the following considerations:

- Whether the measures had been used in previous objectification research.
- The validity and reliability of the measures.
- How accessible and time consuming the measures were in relation to EMA methods.

2.2.4.1. Baseline measures.

2.2.4.1.1. Demographics.

Participants detailed their age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, height, weight, and student status. They also reported their mobile phone numbers to facilitate the prompting procedure (See Appendix H). For questions on gender, sexual orientation, height and weight participants were provided with the option “I’d prefer not to answer”, as this may be information participants prefer not disclose or they may not have felt the options provided corresponded with their identity.

2.2.4.1.2. Trait self-surveillance.

The Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS) (McKinley & Hyde, 1996) features three subscales pertaining to self-surveillance, body shame and control. The Self Surveillance Subscale of the OBCS (McKinley & Hyde, 1996) was used to measure the extent to which individuals habitually monitor their body or their trait level of self-surveillance which is considered the behavioural manifestation of self-objectification¹ (See Appendix I). The scale consists of eight items (e.g., “I rarely think about how I look”) rated on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). As recommended by McKinley and Hyde (1996) “neither agree nor disagree” items were coded as “missing data”. McKinley and Hyde (1996) reported alpha levels of 0.76, for middle aged women, and 0.89 for undergraduate women and a test re-test reliability of 0.79. Validity for this scale has been supported by exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis and by correlating the OBCS with measures of disordered eating, social anxiety and body esteem (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). This measure can also be used successfully to measures men’s

¹ The Self-Objectification Questionnaire (SOQ) (Noll & Fredrickson, 1998) and Male Assessment of Self-Objectification (MASO) (Daniel et al., 2014) were also included in the study design. However, the SOQ did not demonstrate adequate construct validity in this study as it was not significantly correlated with self-surveillance or body shame. For this reason, and given the advantages of the Self-Surveillance subscale, the SOQ and MASO were not included in the analysis, but self-surveillance was the construct investigated (for further rationale see Appendix A).

self-surveillance. It has shown acceptable internal reliability in cohorts of gay men ($\alpha=.76$ to $.90$; Martins et al., 2007; Michaels et al., 2013; Wiseman & Moradi, 2010), and heterosexual men ($\alpha=.79$ to $.84$; Martins et al., 2007; McKinley, 1998; Michaels et al., 2013). In general research has reported lower self-surveillance scores for men than for women and men's self-surveillance score is not as strongly linked to negative outcomes as it is in women (Calogero, 2009; Grabe et al., 2007; McKinley, 1998; Slater & Tiggemann, 2010). However, Tiggemann and Kuring (2004) found a strong relationship between self-surveillance and negative outcomes among men. Higher scores are associated with greater self-surveillance.

2.2.4.1.3. Trait body shame.

Body shame was measured by the Body Shame Subscale of the OBCS (McKinley & Hyde, 1996) (See Appendix J). This is an eight-item scale which measures how badly a person feels if they do not meet cultural standards of beauty (e.g., "I feel ashamed of myself when I haven't made the effort to look my best"). Items are scored on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), "neither agree nor disagree" items were coded as "missing data". This scale has good internal reliability as McKinley and Hyde (1996) reported alpha levels of $.84$ and $.70$ for undergraduate and middle-aged women. Body shame has shown acceptable internal consistent reliability in gay men ($\alpha=.81$ to $.87$; Martins et al. 2007; Michaels et al. 2012; Wiseman and Moradi 2010) and heterosexual men ($\alpha=.70$ to $.73$; McKinley 1998; Michaels et al. 2012). The control subscale of the OBCS was not included as it is most frequently cited as being associated with disordered eating pathology (e.g., Becker, Hill, Greif, Han, & Stewart, 2013; Mazzeo, Trace, Mitchell, & Gow, 2006) and that is not the focus of the current study.

2.2.4.1.4. Surveillance of others of the same gender.

The surveillance of others of the same gender was assessed using a modified version (e.g., Lindner et al., 2012; Zurbriggen et al., 2011) of the Self-Surveillance subscale of the OBCS (McKinley & Hyde, 1996) (See Appendix K). Previous research used the measure to assess the extent that women engage in the surveillance of other women (Lindner et al., 2012) and that men and women engage in the surveillance of their partner's appearance (Zurbriggen et al., 2011). Items were administered including a slight modification from the instructions that appear with the original OBCS Self-Surveillance subscale (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). In the current study questions were modified so that "women" was replaced with "men" or "people" depending on the gender of the participant. This meant that men were asked to what extent they objectify other men, women were asked the extent

they objectify women and those who chose not to report their gender were asked to what extent they objectify other people. Participants responded to the five items on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). Higher scores reflect greater surveillance of others and the items reflect the extent to which participants notice the appearance of those of their own gender in their daily life. It is possible that this measure also has the potential to be modified to assess the extent that men objectify women and women objectify men however that was beyond the scope of the current research. Internal consistency of 0.77 (Lindner et al., 2012) and between 0.67-0.84 (Zurbriggen et al., 2011) have been reported for this measure. The validity of the measure is supported by the positive correlations between this scale and the Objectification of Others scale (Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005b), ($r=.35$, $p<.01$; Lindner et al., 2012), and the Self-Surveillance Subscale of the OBCS (McKinley & Hyde, 1996), ($r=.54$, $p<.01$; Lindner et al., 2012).

2.2.4.1.5. Online social comparison.

Fardouly and Vartanian (2015) developed a Facebook Appearance Comparison measure modified from Thompson, Heinberg, and Tantleff's (1991) Physical Appearance Comparison Scale. There are three items in the Facebook Appearance Comparison scale (e.g., "When using Facebook, I compare my physical appearance to the physical appearance of others"). This scale measured participants' tendency to compare their appearance to others on Facebook. Fardouly and Vartanian (2015) reported good internal reliability ($\alpha=.75$) for the scale.

One item of this scale was employed in the current study. This item was modified to investigate appearance comparisons on SNSs in general as opposed to Facebook specifically (i.e., "When using Social Network Sites, I compare my physical appearance to the physical appearance of others"). A second item was included to assess the extent that individuals compare their lifestyle with others online ("When using Social Network Sites, I compare my lifestyle to the lifestyle of others") (See Appendix L). The extent that individuals compare their lifestyle with others was assessed given, the negative effects of general online comparisons and participants psychological functioning (Hanna et al., 2017; Jang et al., 2016). Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a 5-point scale from 1 (definitely disagree) to 5 (definitely agree). In accordance with Fardouly's recommendation (from email communication) "Neither Agree nor Disagree" receives a score of three. Mean scores were computed to ascertain an overall Online Social Comparison score.

2.2.4.1.6. Monitoring attractive peers on SNSs (MAPSNSs).

Monitoring Attractive Peers on SNS (MAPSNSs) (Vandenbosch & Eggermont, 2015) was used to measure the extent to which participants monitored attractive peers online (See Appendix M). This is a four-item scale. The scale was modified for the current study to include only three items. The item (“When an attractive but unfamiliar boy or girl asks to add me to his or her network on Facebook/Netlog, I accept the request.”) was removed as it had a lower factor loading (.76) than the other items and was considered to be quite similar to one of the other items of this scale (i.e., “When I think a boy or a girl is fun and attractive, I add the person as a friend on Facebook/Netlog”, factor loading (.83)). Wording was changed so that Facebook and Netlog was modified to Social Network Sites. Possible responses ranged from “I totally disagree” (1) to “I totally agree” (5). Good internal reliability was reported ($\alpha=.83$) (Vandenbosch & Eggermont, 2015). They found that the use of SNSs to monitor attractive peers stimulated self-objectification and self-surveillance over time.

2.2.4.1.7. Self-Esteem.

Self-Esteem was measured using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) (Rosenberg, 1965) (See Appendix N). Participants completed ten items with potential responses ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (4). Scores can range from 10-40, with higher scores indicating a higher level of self-esteem. This measure has good test-retest reliability ($r = .85$) and good internal consistency, with alpha coefficient ranges from .76 to .87 (Rosenberg, 1989).

2.2.4.1.8. Mental well-being.

Mental well-being was assessed using the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (SWEMWBS) (Tennant et al., 2007) (See Appendix O). This measure assesses both feeling and functioning associated with trait well-being. Originally a 14-item questionnaire, a shortened version was used in the current study. Spearman correlations between the 14-item measure and the SWEMWBS have been reported as being above 0.95 (Ng Fat et al., 2017). The robust measurement properties and brevity make the SWEMWBS preferable to the 14-item measure (Stewart-Brown et al., 2009). The short scale presents a more restricted view of mental well-being, with more items reflecting psychological and eudemonic well-being, and fewer items regarding hedonic well-being. A sample question is “I’ve been thinking clearly”. Stewart-Brown et al. (2009) reported that the “7 item version of WEMWBS was found to satisfy the strict unidimensional expectations of the Rasch model, and be largely free of bias” (p.1). The SWEMWBS has

demonstrated good internal consistency in Swedish ($\alpha = .86$) and Norwegian ($\alpha = .84$) samples (Haver, Akerjordet, Caputi, Magee, & Furunes, 2015). Participants were asked to respond to the seven items and select the option that best describes their experiences over the past two weeks. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale from “None of the time” (1) to “All of the time” (5). Responses were converted from raw scores to metric scores based on the recommendations of Stewart-Brown et al., (2009). Scores range from 7-35. Higher scores indicate higher levels of mental well-being.

2.2.4.1.9. Materialism.

Materialism was assessed using the Material Values Scale (Richins, 2004) (See Appendix P). According to Richins and Dawson (1992) materialism refers to a value system defined by “a set of centrally held beliefs about the importance of possessions in one's life” (p. 308). They suggest material values can be conceptualised in three domains. The first refers to success; assessing possessions to judge the success of oneself and others. The second is centrality; the importance of possessions in a person's life, and the third refers to happiness; a belief that possessions and their acquisition will lead to life satisfaction and happiness. Originally an 18-item measure, Richins (2004) developed several shorter versions. The 9-item version was employed in the current study. Alpha levels of 0.82 have been reported for the 9-item version (Richins, 2004). The scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Higher scores represent individuals who endorse material values more strongly.

2.2.4.1.10. General amount of time spent on SNSs.

General amount of time spent on SNS was assessed by asking participants to report in general the average amount of time spent using SNSs each day. Option responses included “less than 10 minutes per day” (1), “10-30 minutes per day” (2), “30-60 minutes per day” (3), “1-2 hours per day” (4), “2-3 hours per day” (5), and “3 hours or more per day” (6). Scores ranged from 1-6 with higher scores indicating greater amount of time spent on SNS (See Appendix Q). This was scored as a categorical variable.

2.2.4.1.11. Type of SNSs most frequently used.

Participants were asked to rank seven SNSs from most frequently used (rank 1) to least frequently used (rank 7) (See Appendix R). The various SNS platforms were categorised as image or text-based sites as research has indicated that it is engagement with photo-based features of SNSs (Cohen et al., 2018; Meier & Gray, 2014) that are salient in contributing to objectification. Sites were categorised according to the dominant type of

content (image or text) or most important type of content considered a critical feature of the site. Categorisation was informed by a review of the literature and deliberation with supervisors. Depending on the site participants selected as most frequently used they would either be categorised as image-based or text-based. Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, and dating sites were categorised as image-based and WhatsApp and Twitter were categorised as text-based. Although it could be debated whether Facebook is predominantly an image or text-based site it was categorised as image-based due to the variety of image-based behaviours that occur on Facebook such as viewing photos of peers and celebrities and the ability to post selfies (e.g., Cohen et al., 2018; Meier & Gray, 2014). Dating sites were also categorised as image-based as research has found that attractiveness and other positive qualities from photos are strong predictors of overall profile attractiveness on dating sites (Fiore, Taylor, Mendelsohn, & Hearst, 2008, as cited in Prieler & Kohlbacher, 2017).

2.2.4.1.12. General passive SNS use, General active SNS use and General photo-based behaviours.

A modified version of Frison and Eggermont's (2015) Multidimensional Scale of Facebook Use (MSFU) was used to assess general passive SNS use, general active SNS use, and general photo-based behaviours. The current study modified the questions to inquire about more global SNS use as opposed to focusing on Facebook. Usually a seven-item measure, five items were included in the current study. Two items were excluded as it was considered there was a certain amount of repetition between items (i.e., "posting a picture" and "posting a photo", and "chatting with someone" and "sending a private message").

An additional ten items were developed by the researcher, informed by the measures employed in previous research (e.g., Mabe et al., 2014; Manago et al., 2015). These items were included in order to examine the diverse range of online behaviours to be assessed. These items were categorised into passive and active use, using the following definitions provided by Frison and Eggermont (2015); Active Public use is defined as relating to the interaction between the user and online friends in a public setting (i.e., status updating, photograph posting), Active Private to interactions between the user and online friends in a private setting (i.e., instant messaging), and Passive Use as consuming and monitoring online content without direct engagement with other users. Active Public use and Active Private use were consolidated to an overall Active use score in the current study as only one Active Private use item was assessed. A new category of Photo-based behaviours was created which included items pertaining to photo-based activities online. A total of 15 items were included to evaluate SNS behaviours (eight Active SNS use items, seven

Passive SNS use items and five items were also categorised as Photo-based behaviours; see Table 7. below for SNS behaviour categorisation and question source) (See Appendix S for questionnaire layout). Participants were asked to rate on a 6-point Likert scale from never (1) to several times per day (6), how often they engage in each of the behaviours. Mean scores were computed for each category.

Table 7.

Categorisation of SNS behaviours and origin of questions.

Question	Active SNS use	Passive SNS use	Photo-based behaviour	Origin of question
1. How often do you post a message on your own page?	X			Modified from MSFU
2. How often do you post a photo on your own page?	X		X	Modified from MSFU
3. How often do you send someone a personal message?	X			Modified from MSFU
4. How often do you visit a friends/follower's profile?		X		Modified from MSFU
5. How often do you visit a profile of someone that does not belong to your friends/followers list?		X		Modified from MSFU
6. How often do you check your recent posts for updates?		X		Newly developed
7. How often do you state your opinion/engage in discussion on public posts?	X			Newly developed
8. How often do you look through other people's photos?		X	X	Newly developed
9. How often do you look through your own photos?		X	X	Newly developed

10. How often do you scroll through your own newsfeed?		X		Newly developed
11. How often do you use check ins?	X			Newly developed
12. How often do you look at business/company pages?		X		Newly developed
13. How often do you comment on or “like” status updates?	X			Newly developed
14. How often do you comment on or “like” photos?	X		X	Newly developed
15. How often do you change your profile picture?	X		X	Newly developed

2.2.4.2. EMA measures.

Participant burden was of concern in relation to the prompt EMA procedure. Visual Analog Scales (VAS) (Hayes & Patterson, 1921) are often used in EMA research as they are quick to complete and easy to administer and demonstrate sensitivity to change when measuring body image (Heinberg & Thompson, 1995; Mabe et al., 2014). VAS consist of a horizontal line in which participants can move a cursor along the line indicating their response between two end points. VAS have been used in similar investigations to the current study evaluating mood and body satisfaction following media exposure; and VAS have been found to be a reliable measure in examining these variables (Brown & Tiggemann, 2016; Fardouly et al., 2015a; Tiggemann & Slater, 2003). EMA research also supports the use of single item measures for assessing body image and social comparisons (Fitzsimmons-Craft et al., 2016; Holland et al., 2017; Myers & Crowther, 2007). For these reasons, several shortened scales and VAS were used in the assessment of constructs at prompt times. All EMA prompt measures and the order in which these measures were presented are outlined in Appendix T.

2.2.4.2.1. Demographics.

For identification purposes participants phone numbers were recorded at each prompt time. Participants were also asked their gender as this would affect the version of the Surveillance of Others Scale they were presented with.

2.2.4.2.2. Time of day.

A time of day variable was scored by categorising responses from the morning, afternoon and evening. It was not predicted that time of day would influence participants' responses but as EMA methods emphasise the potential of recording temporal changes, it was deemed important to control for time of day in the analysis.

2.2.4.2.3. Self-surveillance (state).

Self-surveillance (state) was measured using one item from the Self-Surveillance subscale of the OBCS (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). State self-objectification refers to temporary experiences in which people view themselves as objects in response to environmental or situational cues (Fredrickson et al., 1998). Holland et al. (2017) used the SOQ to assess trait self-objectification and adapted a question from the OBCS Self-Surveillance subscale to measure state Self-Surveillance. However, they found that there was a lack of correlation between trait and state levels of self-objectification and suggest this may be due to measurement differences and that future research should use more similar measures. For this reason, the complete OBCS Self Surveillance subscale was included at the baseline assessment and one item from this measure adapted and used at prompt assessments as was used in the Holland et al. (2017) study. Participants were asked "Since the last survey have you been thinking how you look to other people?" This question was scored using a VAS in which participants could slide a cursor from "Not at all" (0) to "Very much so" (100).

2.2.4.2.4. Body shame (state).

Body Shame (state) was measured by asking a question on whether or not the participant had experienced feelings of shame regarding their body since the previous survey (i.e., "Since the last survey have you felt like a bad person because you don't look as good as you could?"). This question was adapted from the OBCS Body Shame Subscale and was selected as it had the highest factor loading from the Body Shame Subscale (.85) and translated well into measuring state body shame (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). The question was assessed using a VAS in which participants could slide a cursor from "Not at all" (0) to "Very much so" (100).

2.2.4.2.5. Surveillance of others of the same gender (state).

Surveillance of others of the same gender (state) was assessed using a modified version (e.g., Lindner et al., 2012; Zurbriggen et al., 2011) of the Self-Surveillance Subscale of the OBCS (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). A further modification was made by including the

phrase “Since the last survey...” prior to each item. Participants responded to the five items on a 7-point Likert scale from (1) Strongly Disagree to (7) strongly Agree. These questions were modified so that “women” was replaced with “men” and “people” depending on participants’ self-reported gender. Higher scores indicate greater surveillance of others since the previous survey.

2.2.4.2.6. Monitoring attractive peers on SNSs (MAPSNSs) (state).

Monitoring Attractive Peers on SNSs (MAPSNSs) (state) was assessed using a modified version of the MAPSNSs scale (Vandenbosch & Eggermont, 2015). As with the baseline measure, three of the four items were included and questions referred to more general SNS use as opposed to Facebook specifically. Items were modified so that statements began “Since completing the last survey...” Participants responded to these items on a Likert scale with responses ranging from “Totally agree” (5) to “Totally disagree” (1).

2.2.4.2.7. Online social comparison (state).

Online social comparison (state) was measured using a modified version of the two items from the baseline measure for online social comparison. Both items were modified to assess real time comparisons. Thus, items began “When I was last using SNSs, I compared...” These items were derived from Fardouly and Vartanian's (2015) Facebook Appearance Comparison measure. Items were scored from (1) definitely disagree to (5) definitely agree. A mean score for online social comparison (state) was computed.

2.2.4.2.8. Depressed mood.

A Visual Analog Scale (VAS)² (Hayes & Patterson, 1921) was used to measure depressed mood. The scale consists of a 100 mm horizontal line. Participants were asked to rate how depressed they were feeling in that moment by placing a vertical mark along a horizontal line with end points labelled “not at all” (0), and “very much” (100). Responses were scored to the nearest millimetre, ranging from 0-100mm, with higher scores indicating greater rates of depression. VAS are often used to measure mood and have repeatedly been reported to have good internal validity ($\alpha = .71$) (Fardouly et al., 2015a). Depressed mood is reported as a symptom associated with the prodromal and residual phase of depression (Iacoviello et al., 2010). VAS for depressed mood has been found to significantly correlate with valid and reliable depression inventory such as Hamilton Depression Rating scale ($r = .63$) and the Beck Depression Inventory ($r = .65$) (Davies, Burrows, & Poynton, 1975,

² Five VASs were used to measure mood, these dimensions included: anxiety, depression, anger, confidence and happiness. For the purpose of this study only depression was analysed as this was the particular variable of interest.

see Ahearn, 1997 for review), and has been found to successfully predict relapse for depression (van Rijsbergen et al., 2012).

2.2.4.2.9. Recency of SNS use.

Recency of SNS use was assessed by asking participants when they were last using SNSs and which sites they were using. Potential responses included “Directly before beginning this questionnaire” (1), “Within the last 30 minutes” (2), “Within the last 31-60 minutes” (3), “Within the last one to two hours” (4), “More than two hours ago” (5) and “I have not used this SNS today” (6). Lower scores indicate that participants have been using SNSs more recently. This question also involved asking participants which SNSs they had last been using. It was not possible however to analyse the data in relation to the SNS platform most recently used as participants reported more than one type of SNS used at a time. Recency of SNS use was scored as a categorical variable.

2.2.4.2.10. Amount of time spent when last using SNSs.

Participants were asked when they were last using SNSs, for how long had they been using each site. Possible responses included “10 minutes or less” (1), “11-30 minutes” (2), “31-60 minutes” (3), “One to two hours” (4) and “Two hours or more” (5). There was also the option to select “I have not used this SNS today” which received a score of 0. This variable was computed by selecting the highest value or greatest amount of time a participant had spent when they were last online regardless of which SNS they had selected. As above the type of SNS could not be computed as participants could have reported spending time on more than one SNS. This was scored as a categorical variable.

2.2.4.2.11. Active SNS use (state), Passive SNS use (state) and Photo based behaviours (state).

Participants were presented with a list of 15 behaviours pertaining to Active SNS use, Passive SNS use and Photo-based behaviours (outlined in Table 7.). The items were modified to include the text “When you were last using SNSs...”. Participants could tick as few or as many behaviours as they had last engaged and separate variables were computed for passive, active and photo-based behaviours. These were scored as dichotomous variables. For each variable, passive, active and photo-based behaviour, if they engaged in that behaviour, they received a score of one, and if they did not they received a score of zero.

2.2.5. Analytic Strategy

Analyses of the data involved the following steps:

1. Descriptive statistics for predictor and outcome variables were computed to establish an overview of the participant sample and measures.
2. Correlations were calculated for all baseline and prompt variables to assess the covariance between variables. Correlational analysis was also used to assess RQ 3; to investigate the relationship between self-surveillance, the surveillance of others and online social comparison.
3. Eleven regressions were carried out to assess RQ 1a, 1b and 1c; predictors of trait and state self-surveillance, RQ 2; predictors of state surveillance of others, RQ, 4a and 4b; predictors of trait well-being and RQ, 5a and 5b; predictors of state levels of depression. In accordance with (Field, 2009) all assumptions for regression analyses were met including assumptions of collinearity, independent error and heteroscedasticity for each of the regressions. An overview of the analytic strategies employed for each regression is included in Appendix U.

2.2.5.1 Analysis of EMA data.

Linear regression analysis was the chosen analytical method used in this study. The RQs under investigation aimed to identify the various potential predictors of self-surveillance at trait and state levels, surveillance of others at state level, state levels of depression and trait levels of well-being. Stepwise linear regression modelling enabled assessment of several potential predictors of the chosen dependant variable. Variables included at each step were selected based on consideration of theoretical assumptions and informed by the RQs. For an overview of the analytic plan employed to assess each RQ see Appendix U. Furthermore, the purpose of using EMA methods was to assess whether using SNSs and engaging in certain online behaviours would affect participants level of self-surveillance, surveillance of others and rate of depression *in that moment*. For this reason, participants were prompted at times when they were likely to have used SNSs. The study did not hypothesise that participants level of self-surveillance, surveillance of others or rate of depression would change across time; but that using SNSs would influence self-surveillance, surveillance of others and depression in that moment thus, as this research did not seek to assess longitudinal effects, linear regression models were effectively used to assess the RQs. Time of day was controlled for in each regression model evaluating state outcomes.

A variety of analytic methods can be used to analyse EMA research. Schwartz and Stone, (1998) outline that as multiple assessments are retrieved in EMA research a nested design can be employed with two sources of variation (person and moment). Shiffman (2014)

states that EMA datasets can be used to answer a range of RQs and that it should be the RQ driving the analysis and informing the statistical models employed. Thus, although hierarchical or multilevel analysis may be useful for examining between and within person variations (e.g. Breines et al., 2008; Fitzsimmons-Craft, Bardone-Cone, et al., 2016), given the RQs and consistent with previous research analytical methods (e.g. Williams et al., 2016; Zunker et al., 2011), linear regression analysis was employed in the current study.

2.3. Results

2.3.1. Descriptive statistics.

The means, ranges, and standard deviations for continuous predictor and outcome variables were computed and are reported in Table 8. and Table 9. below. At trait level participants reported mid to high range levels of self-surveillance, the surveillance of others and online social comparison. Forty-one percent of participants reported that they generally spend two or more hours on SNSs a day, 40% between 30-90 minutes and 19% reported spending between 1-30 minutes.

Table 8.

Means, ranges and standard deviations for predictor and outcome variables at baseline assessment

Variable	M	SD	N	Range	Possible range
Self-Surveillance	4.05	.99	228	1.29-6.00	0-6
Body shame	2.99	1.02	226	1.00-6.00	0-6
Online Social Comparison	3.55	1.20	227	1.00-5.00	1-5
Surveillance of others	3.98	1.04	226	1.20-6.00	0-6
Photo-based behaviours	3.02	.83	243	1-5.20	1-6
MAPSNSs	3.11	1.10	227	1-5	1-5
Well-being (summed)	21.63	3.11	227	13.33-29.31	7-35
Self-esteem	28.81	5.54	227	12-40	10-40

Materialism	25.60	6.38	227	10-44	9-45
(summed)					

At state level participants did not report particularly high levels of self-surveillance, body shame or depression. With regards to the amount of time participants had spent when they were last using SNSs, 82.6% reported spending between 1-30 minutes on SNSs, 11.6% greater than 30 minutes and 5.8% reported that they had not used SNSs today. With regards to recency of SNS use, 45.1% reported using SNSs directly before the prompt, 22% within the last 30 minutes, 16.1% within the last 30-120 minutes and 16.8% of participants reported that they had used SNS greater than 2 hours ago/had not used SNSs today. Seventy-eight percent reported having actively used SNSs when they were last using SNSs. Eighty-two percent reported passively using SNSs when they were last using SNSs and 56.8% reported engaging in photo-based behaviours when they were last using SNSs.

Table 9.

Means and standard deviations for predictor and outcome variables at prompt assessments

Variable	M	SD	N	Actual range	Possible range
Self-Surveillance	31.34	30.49	956	0-100	0-100
Body shame	19.10	27.27	956	0-100	0-100
Online Social Comparison	2.83	1.34	949	1-5	1-5
Surveillance of others	3.18	1.29	935	1-6	0-6
MAPSNSs	1.72	.93	952	1-5	1-5
Depressed Mood	12.30	20.23	947	0-100	0-100
Time Spent on SNSs	1.48	.84	960	0-4	0-5

Given the mixed gender and diverse age range of participants, the means, ranges and standard deviations for pertinent predictor and outcomes variables were explored for

females and males (see Table 10. and Table 11.) and emerging adults (EAs) and older adults (see Table 12. and Table 13.).

The findings indicate that female participants reported higher levels of self-surveillance at trait and state level (trait $M = 4.2$, $SD = 0.91$, state $M = 34.11$, $SD = 31.25$) than male participants (trait $M = 3.45$, $SD = 1.09$, state $M = 18.76$, $SD = 23.34$), and also higher rates of body shame (females (trait) $M = 3.10$, $SD = 1.00$, (state) $M = 21.33$, $SD = 28.35$; males (trait) $M = 2.54$, $SD = 0.96$, (state) $M = 9.60$, $SD = 19.23$). Similar means were reported for female and male participants on well-being (females $M = 21.66$, $SD = 3.12$; males $M = 21.54$, $SD = 3.16$), self-esteem (females $M = 28.64$, $SD = 5.57$, males $M = 29.36$, $SD = 5.39$) and materialism measures (females $M = 25.50$, $SD = 6.50$; males $M = 25.98$, $SD = 5.60$). Although both genders reported low levels of depressed mood, female participants reported higher levels ($M = 13.07$, $SD = 21.41$) than male participants ($M = 9.07$, $SD = 13.38$).

Table 10.

Means, ranges and standard deviations for predictor and outcome variables at baseline and prompt assessments for female participants

Variable	M	SD	N	Range	Possible range
Self-Surveillance (trait)	4.20	0.91	182	1.50-6.00	0-6
Body shame (trait)	3.10	1.00	181	1-6	0-6
Online Social Comparison (trait)	3.76	1.11	181	1-5	1-5
Surveillance of others (trait)	4.16	0.90	181	1.75-6.00	0-6
Photo-based behaviours (trait)	3.16	0.78	193	1.00-5.20	1-6

MAPSNSs (trait)	3.15	1.07	181	1-5	1-5
Well-being (summed)	21.66	3.12	181	13.33-29.31	7-35
Self-esteem	28.64	5.57	181	12-40	10-40
Materialism (summed)	25.50	6.50	181	10-43	9-45
Self-surveillance (state)	34.11	31.25	782	0-100	0-100
Body Shame (state)	21.33	28.35	782	0-100	0-100
Online Social Comparison (state)	3.00	1.30	777	1-5	1-5
Surveillance of others (state)	3.32	1.24	766	1-6	0-6
MAPSNSs (state)	1.76	0.94	779	1-5	1-5
Depressed Mood (state)	13.07	21.42	775	0-100	0-100
Time Spent on SNSs (state)	1.49	21.42	786	0-4	0-5

Table 11.

Means, ranges and standard deviations for predictor and outcome variables at baseline and prompt assessments for male participants

Variable	M	SD	N	Range	Possible range
Self-Surveillance (trait)	3.45	1.09	45	1.29-5.38	0-6
Body shame (trait)	2.54	0.96	44	1-5	0-6
Online Social Comparison (trait)	2.76	1.17	45	1-5	1-5
Surveillance of others (trait)	3.23	1.25	44	1.20-6	0-6
Photo-based behaviours (trait)	2.47	0.82	49	1-5	1-6
MAPSNSs (trait)	2.91	1.20	45	1-5	1-5
Well-being (summed)	21.54	3.16	45	14.75-28.13	7-35
Self-esteem	29.36	5.39	45	17-40	10-40
Materialism (summed)	25.98	5.60	45	12-44	9-45
Self-surveillance (state)	18.76	23.34	165	0-81	0-100
Body Shame (state)	9.60	19.23	165	0-100	0-100
Online Social Comparison (state)	2.10	1.19	163	1-5	1-5

Surveillance of others (state)	2.48	1.31	160	1-6	0-6
MAPSNSs (state)	1.59	0.88	164	1-4	1-5
Depressed Mood (state)	9.07	13.38	163	0-59	0-100
Time Spent on SNSs (state)	1.42	0.82	165	0-4	0-5

The age groups explored were categorised into emerging adults (EAs, aged 18-29) and older adults (aged 30-68). The findings indicate EAs engage in greater levels of self-surveillance at trait and state level (trait $M = 4.29$, $SD = 0.81$; state $M = 37.24$, $SD = 30.22$) than older adults (trait $M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.10$; state $M = 17.52$, $SD = 26.42$), as well as greater levels of body shame at trait (EAs $M = 3.04$, $SD = 0.98$; older adults $M = 2.81$, $SD = 1.12$) and state levels (EAs $M = 22.76$, $SD = 27.91$; older adults $M = 10.53$, $SD = 23.64$). Both age cohorts reported similar levels of well-being (EAs $M = 21.15$, $SD = 3.02$; older adults $M = 23.03$, $SD = 2.98$) and self-esteem (EAs $M = 28.11$, $SD = 5.27$; older adults $M = 30.84$, $SD = 5.84$), while EAs reported higher levels of depressed mood ($M = 13.86$, $SD = 19.93$) than older adults ($M = 8.68$, $SD = 20.48$).

Table 12.

Means, ranges and standard deviations for predictor and outcome variables at baseline and prompt assessments for participants aged 18-29

Variable	M	SD	N	Range	Possible range
Self-Surveillance (trait)	4.29	0.81	170	2-6	0-6
Body shame (trait)	3.04	0.98	169	1.00-5.88	0-6

Online Social Comparison (trait)	3.94	0.90	169	1-5	1-5
Surveillance of others (trait)	4.16	0.95	169	1.50-6.00	0-6
Photo-based behaviours (trait)	3.27	0.73	181	1.40-5.20	1-6
MAPSNSs (trait)	3.48	0.88	169	1-5	1-5
Well-being (summed)	21.15	3.02	169	13.33-29.31	7-35
Self-esteem	28.11	5.27	169	12-39	10-40
Materialism (summed)	26.50	6.35	169	10-44	9-45
Self-surveillance (state)	37.24	30.22	670	0-100	0-100
Body Shame (state)	22.76	27.91	670	0-100	0-100
Online Social Comparison (state)	3.26	1.19	663	1-5	1-5
Surveillance of others (state)	3.45	1.21	654	1-6	0-6
MAPSNSs (state)	1.96	0.98	666	1-5	1-5
Depressed Mood (state)	13.86	19.93	662	0-100	0-100
Time Spent on SNSs (state)	1.55	0.81	676	0-4	0-5

Table 13.

Means, ranges and standard deviations for predictor and outcome variables at baseline and prompt assessments for participants aged 30-68

Variable	M	SD	N	Range	Possible range
Self-Surveillance (trait)	3.33	1.10	58	1.29-6	0-6
Body shame (trait)	2.81	1.12	57	1.17-6	0-6
Online Social Comparison (trait)	2.41	1.24	58	1-5	1-5
Surveillance of others (trait)	3.42	1.12	57	1.20-5.60	0-6
Photo-based behaviours (trait)	2.30	0.71	62	1.00-3.6	1-6
MAPSNSs (trait)	2.01	0.92	58	1-4	1-5
Well-being (summed)	23.03	2.98	58	15.84-29.31	7-35
Self-esteem	30.84	5.84	58	12-40	10-40
Materialism (summed)	22.98	5.77	58	10-33	9-45
Self-surveillance (state)	17.52	26.42	286	0-100	0-100
Body Shame (state)	10.53	23.64	286	0-100	0-100

Online Social Comparison (state)	1.81	1.09	286	1-5	1-5
Surveillance of others (state)	2.54	1.25	281	1-6	0-6
MAPSNSs (state)	1.18	0.45	286	1-5	1-5
Depressed Mood (state)	8.68	20.48	285	0-97	0-100
Time Spent on SNSs (state)	1.30	0.86	284	0-4	0-5

2.3.1.1. SNSs most frequently used.

Most frequently used SNSs were reported (see Table 14). WhatsApp was the most frequently used SNS with 34.6% of participants ranking it as their most frequently used ($n=84$). Instagram ($n=48$) and Facebook ($n=48$) were the next most popular sites; both accounted for 39.6% of participants most frequently used sites. Overall 41.7% of participants selected a text-based site as the site most frequently use. The text based-sites were WhatsApp, Twitter, Tumblr, LinkedIn, Reddit and Facebook Messenger. Fifty-eight percent selected an image-based site as being the site they most frequently used. These were Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat and Dating Sites.

Table 14.

Percentages of SNS platforms most frequently used by participants

SNSs	Percentage	Number of participants
WhatsApp	34.6%	84
Instagram	19.8%	48
Facebook	19.8%	48
Snapchat	15.2%	37
Twitter	5.3%	13
Dating Sites	3.3%	8
<u>Other</u>	2%	5

Tumblr		1
LinkedIn		1
Reddit		2
Facebook		1
Messenger ³		
Total	100%	243

2.3.2. Correlational analysis.

Correlation statistics were run to assess the relationship between the baseline variables measured (see Appendix V for entire baseline measures correlations, Table 15). Specific correlations of interest from both baseline and prompt assessments are outlined in Table 16 (baseline assessment) and Table 17 (prompt assessment) below. Assumptions of multicollinearity were met for all regressions as there was no correlation between two variables reported as above .8 included in the models.

Of particular interest in relation to RQ3 was the moderate-strong significant correlation between trait levels of self-surveillance and the surveillance of others ($r=.58, p<.01$) as well as the moderate-strong correlation with online social comparison ($r=.61, p<.01$). The surveillance of others was also moderately-strongly correlated with online social comparison ($r=.57, p<.01$). Moderate-strong correlations were also found for these variables at state level. State self-surveillance was moderately-strongly correlated with state levels of the surveillance of others ($r=.59, p<.01$), and state levels of online social comparison ($r=.58, p<.01$). State levels of the surveillance of others was also moderately-strongly correlated with state levels of online social comparison ($r=.64, p<.01$).

This data found a moderate correlation between trait self-surveillance and body shame ($r=.51, p<.01$), and a moderate correlation with self-esteem ($r=-.45, p<.01$). Furthermore, trait self-surveillance was significantly moderately correlated with photo-based behaviours ($r=.49, p<.01$). Similar findings were also reported at state level. State self-surveillance and state body shame were strongly significantly correlated ($r=.69, p<.01$). State self-surveillance was also significantly correlated with state photo-based behaviours ($r=.30, p<.01$), however this relationship was not as strong as at trait level.

³ Participants had the ability to select “Other” and were provided with a text box to outline the site they were referring to. This participant differentiated between the Facebook site and the Facebook Messenger App and chose to categorise Facebook Messenger as “Other”.

Correlations were also run for gender and age. Gender was positively correlated with trait self-surveillance ($r_s = .27, p < .01$), trait body shame ($r_s = .22, p < .01$), trait online social comparison ($r_s = .33, p < .01$), trait surveillance of others ($r_s = .33, p < .01$) and trait photo based behaviours ($r_s = .23, p < .01$). At state level gender was also significantly correlated with several of the predictor and outcome variables. The strongest positive correlations found at state level were between gender and passive SNS use ($r_s = .24, p < .01$), surveillance of others ($r_s = .25, p < .01$) and online social comparison ($r_s = .26, p < .01$).

Age was significantly correlated with a number of predictor and outcome variables measured at the baseline assessment. Moderate negative correlations were found between age and trait self-surveillance ($r = -.42, p < .01$), and age and type of SNS used ($r_s = -.43, p < .01$) and strong negative correlations between online social comparison ($r = -.56, p < .01$), time spent on SNSs ($r_s = -.53, p < .01$), monitoring attractive peers online ($r = -.63, p < .01$) and age. Age was positively correlated with well-being ($r = .25, p < .01$) and self-esteem ($r = .27, p < .01$). At state level age was positively correlated with happiness ($r = .24, p < .01$) and confidence ($r = .37, p < .01$) and was strongly negatively correlated with online social comparison ($r = -.50, p < .01$), and moderately negatively correlated with several variables including active SNS use ($r_s = -.26, p < .01$), photo-based behaviours ($r_s = -.38, p < .01$), self-surveillance ($r = -.28, p < .01$), body shame ($r = -.21, p < .01$), MAPSNSs ($r = -.34, p < .01$) and surveillance of others ($r = -.27, p < .01$).

Table 16.

Correlations for predictor and outcome variables measured at baseline assessment.

Measures	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.
1. Self-surveillance	-												
2. Body shame	.51**	-											
3. Online Social Comparison	.61**	.41**	-										
4. Surveillance of others	.58**	.34**	.57**	-									
5. Photo-based behaviours	.49**	.26**	.58**	.48**	-								
6. Well-being	-	-	-	-.13	-.10	-							
	.32**	.26**	.31**										
7. Self-esteem	-	-	-.37	-	-	.67**	-						
	.45**	.55**		.20**	.20**								
8. Materialism	.26**	.17**	.34**	.25**	.30**	-	-.20**	-					
						.18**							
9. Type of SNSs (image/text)	.17**	.17*	.21**	.11	.25**	-.06	-.15*	.19**	-				
10. General amount of time spent on SNSs	.33**	.15*	.42**	.20**	.52**	-	-	.22**	.28**	-			
						.25**	.25***						
11. MAPSNSs	.40**	.20**	.52**	.32**	.55**	-	.30**	.32**	.31**	.43**	-		
						.30**							
12. Gender	.27**	.22**	.33**	.33**	.23**	.03	-.04	-.01	.04	.11	.08		
13. Age	-	-.13*	-	-	-	.25**	.27**	-	-	-	-	-	-
	.42**		.56**	.27**	.34**			.26**	.43**	.53**	.63**	.16*	

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$;

Note: Items in black depict Pearson's correlations and items in blue depict Spearman's correlations.

Table 17.

Correlation of predictor and outcome variables at prompt assessments.

Measures	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.
1. Recency of SNS use	-														
2. Time spent on SNSs	-.20**	-													
3. Passive SNS use	-.12**	.08*	-												
4. Active SNS use	-.09**	.15**	-.22**	-											
5. Photo-based behaviours	-.16**	.13**	.24**	.35**	-										
6. Self-surveillance	-.17**	.10**	.18**	.16**	.30**	-									
7. Body shame	-.09**	.09**	.14**	.10**	.24**	.69**	-								
8. MAPSNSs	-.16**	.07*	.21**	.14**	.29**	.35**	.28**	-							
9. Surveillance of others	-.18**	.12**	.14**	.14**	.28**	.59**	.48**	.41**	-						
10. Online Social comparison	-.23**	.18**	.22**	.17**	.40**	.58**	.53**	.47**	.64**	-					
11. Anxious	-.13**	.10**	.08**	.18**	.21**	.46**	.54**	.24**	.31**	.36**	-				
12. Happy	.07*	-.07*	-.05	-.09**	-.06	-.28**	-.38**	-.10**	-.19**	-.26**	-.41**	-			
13. Confident	.13**	-.10**	-.11**	-.12**	-.17**	-.38**	-.47**	-.13**	-.27**	-.37**	-.47**	.74**	-		
14. Angry	-.07*	.08*	.01	.14**	.10**	.24**	.27**	.15**	.14**	.15**	.45**	-.35**	-.22**	-	
15. Depressed	-.09**	.14**	.08**	.12**	.13**	.34**	.46**	.15**	.21**	.23**	.54**	-.53**	-.46**	.50**	-

16. Gender	.00	.04	.24**	-.06	.12**	.21**	.20**	.09**	.25**	.26**	.10**	-	-	-	.04
17. Age	.25**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.16**	.23**	.09**	
		.17**	.18**	.26**	.38**	.28**	.21**	.34**	.27**	.50**	.22**	.24**	.37**	-	-
														.12**	.13**

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Note: Items in black depict Pearson's correlations and items in blue depict Spearman's correlations.

2.3.3. Regression analyses.

2.3.3.1. Regression analysis for RQ 1a; assessing predictors of trait self-surveillance.

A stepwise multiple regression analysis was employed to predict trait Self-Surveillance (See Table 18. for results from step one to six). The final fully adjusted model included the variables for Photo-Based Behaviours, Monitoring of Attractive Peers on SNSs, Type of SNSs Most Frequently used, General Amount of Time Spent on SNSs, Body Shame, Online Social Comparison, Self-Esteem, Materialism, BMI, Gender and Age. This model was statistically significant ($F(12, 164) = 15.86, p < .001$) predicting 53.7% of the variance in trait Self-Surveillance. Although variables pertaining to online behaviours such as engaging in Photo-Based Behaviours and Monitoring Attractive Peers on SNSs did predict trait Self-Surveillance in the unadjusted models, when controlling for all variables in the model these behaviours no longer predicted trait Self-Surveillance. Higher rates of Body Shame ($\beta = .29, p < .001$) and Online Social Comparison ($\beta = .24, p < .01$), as well as lower rates of Self-Esteem ($\beta = -.20, p < .01$) significantly predicted trait Self-Surveillance in the final fully adjusted model. (See Figure 11. for significant predictors of trait Self-surveillance)

Table 18.

Summary of stepwise linear regression for variables predicting trait Self-Surveillance (n=243).

Predictor Variables	B	SE B	β	R ²	F
<u>Step 1</u>				.24	71.29
Photo-Based Behaviours	0.59	0.07	.49***		
<u>Step 2</u>				.27	40.32
Photo-Based Behaviours	0.47	0.08	.37***		
Monitoring Attractive Peers on SNSs	0.17	0.06	.19**		
<u>Step 3</u>				.27	26.84
Photo-Based Behaviours	0.45	0.08	.38***		
Monitoring Attractive Peers on SNSs	0.17	0.06	.19**		
Type of SNSs Most Frequently Used	0.05	0.12	.02		
<u>Step 4</u>				.27	16.43
Photo-Based Behaviours	0.42	0.09	.35***		
Monitoring Attractive Peers on SNSs	0.15	0.07	.17*		

Type of SNSs Most Frequently Used	0.01	0.13	.01		
<u>General Amount of Time Spent on SNSs</u>					
Greater than 2 hours	1.00				
Less than 30 minutes	-0.26	0.20	-.10		
Between 30-120 minutes	-0.06	0.13	-.03		
<u>Step 5</u>				.48	28.72
Photo-Based Behaviours	0.17	0.08	.14*		
Monitoring Attractive Peers on SNSs	0.05	0.06	.06		
Type of SNSs Most Frequently Used	-0.04	0.11	-.02		
<u>General Amount of Time Spent on SNSs</u>					
Greater than 2 hours	1.00				
Less than 30 minutes	-0.16	0.17	-.06		
Between 30-120 minutes	-0.06	0.11	-.03		
Body Shame	0.30	0.05	.31***		
Online Social Comparison	0.30	0.06	.36***		
<u>Step 6</u>				.54	15.86
Photo-Based Behaviours	0.07	0.09	.06		
Monitoring Attractive Peers on SNSs	-0.06	0.07	-.06		
Type of SNSs Most Frequently Used	0.10	0.12	.05		
<u>General Amount of Time Spent on SNSs</u>					
Greater than 2 hours	1.00				
Less than 30 minutes	-0.23	0.21	-.09		
Between 30-120 minutes	-0.01	0.12	-.01		
Body Shame	0.28	0.07	.29***		
Online Social Comparison	0.21	0.07	.24**		
Self-Esteem	-0.03	0.01	-.20**		
Materialism	0.01	0.01	.05		
BMI	0.01	0.01	.08		
Gender	0.24	0.15	.10		
Age	-0.01	0.01	-.13		

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

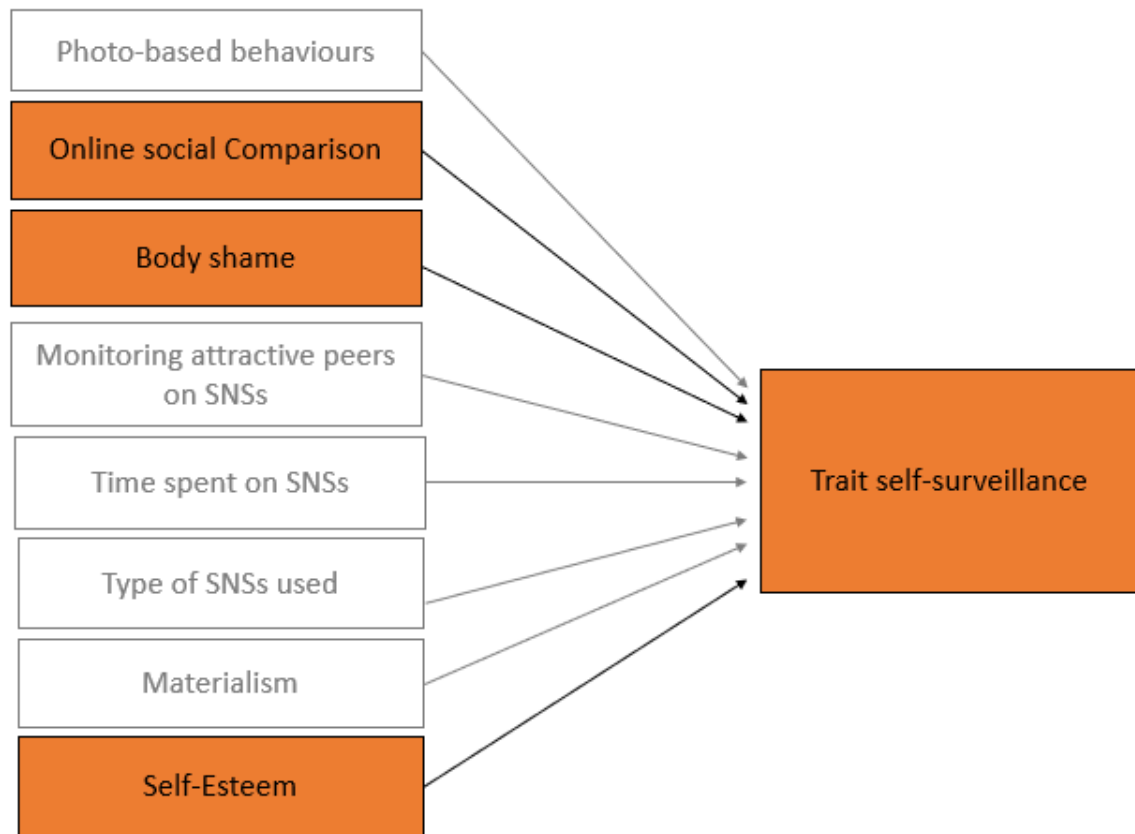


Figure 11. Significant predictors of trait Self-surveillance.

2.3.3.2. Regression analysis for RQ1b; assessing predictors of state self-surveillance.

A stepwise multiple regression analysis was employed to predict Self-Surveillance at state level (See Table 19. for results from steps one to five). Photo-Based Behaviours, Monitoring Attractive Peers on SNSs, Time Spent on SNSs, Body Shame, Online Social Comparison, Recency of SNS use, Time of Day, Self-Esteem, Materialism, BMI, Gender and Age were included in the final fully adjusted model. This model predicted 55.7% of the variance in state Self-Surveillance ($F(16,680) = 53.44, p < .001$). Higher levels of engagement in Photo Based Behaviours ($\beta = .09, p < .01$), Monitoring Attractive Peers on SNSs ($\beta = .08, p < .01$), Body Shame ($\beta = .50, p < .001$) and Online Social Comparison ($\beta = .24, p < .001$) were significantly predictive of higher rates of state Self-Surveillance. Compared to those using SNSs directly before completing the questionnaire, those using SNSs between 30-120 minutes prior to the prompt were significantly negatively correlated with state Self-Surveillance ($\beta = -.06, p < .05$). Compared to prompts in the Morning, prompts in the Evening were significantly negatively correlated with state Self-Surveillance ($\beta = -.08$

$p < .05$). Gender was also a significant predictor with female participants more likely to engage in state Self-Surveillance than men ($\beta = .06$, $p < .05$). See Figure 12. for an overview of significant predictors of state Self-surveillance.

Table 19.

Summary of stepwise linear regression for predictors of Self-Surveillance (state) (n=964)

Predictor variables	B	SE B	β	R ²	F
<u>Step 1</u>				.09	90.70
Photo-Based Behaviours	18.19	1.91	.30***		
<u>Step 2</u>				.17	96.13
Photo-Based Behaviours	13.62	1.89	.22***		
Monitoring Attractive Peers on SNSs	9.68	1.01	.29***		
<u>Step 3</u>				.18	50.24
Photo-Based Behaviours	13.23	1.90	.22***		
Monitoring Attractive Peers on SNSs	9.66	1.01	.30***		
<u>Time Spent on SNSs</u>					
Used SNSs for greater than 30 mins	1.00				
Not used SNSs today	-10.68	4.62	-.08*		

Used SNSs	-3.25	2.86	-.04		
between 1- 30 mins					
<u>Step 4</u>				.55	197.18
Photo-Based	5.07	1.48	.08***		
Behaviours					
Monitoring	2.96	.81	.09***		
Attractive					
Peers on					
SNSs					
<u>Time Spent</u> <u>on SNSs</u>					
Used SNSs	1.00				
for greater than 30 mins					
Not used	-1.54	3.47	-.01		
SNSs today					
Used SNSs	3.24	2.15	.04		
between 1- 30 mins					
Body Shame	.58	.03	.52***		
Online	5.42	.66	.24***		
Social					
Comparison					
<u>Step 5</u>				.56	53.44
Photo-Based	5.31	1.82	.09**		
Behaviours					
Monitoring	2.75	.95	.08**		
Attractive					
Peers on					
SNSs					
<u>Time Spent</u> <u>on SNSs</u>					

Used SNSs	1.00		
for greater			
than 30 mins			
Not used	-6.64	4.39	-.05
SNSs today			
Used SNSs	3.63	2.52	.05
between 1-			
30 mins			
Body Shame	.54	.04	.50***
Online	5.59	.85	.24***
Social			
Comparison			
<u>Recency of</u>			
<u>SNS use</u>			
Used	1.00		
directly			
before			
prompt			
Used within	-1.85	2.06	-.03
30 mins			
Used	-5.09	2.32	-.06*
between 30-			
120 mins			
ago			
Used greater	2.00	2.70	.02
than 2 hours			
ago			
<u>Time of Day</u>			
Morning	1.00		
Afternoon	-3.78	2.05	-.06
Evening	-4.80	2.00	-.08*
Self-esteem	-.15	.17	-.03
Materialism	-.03	.13	-.01
BMI	.11	.12	.03

Gender	4.80	2.25	.06*
Age	.08	.08	.03

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *** $p \leq 0.001$

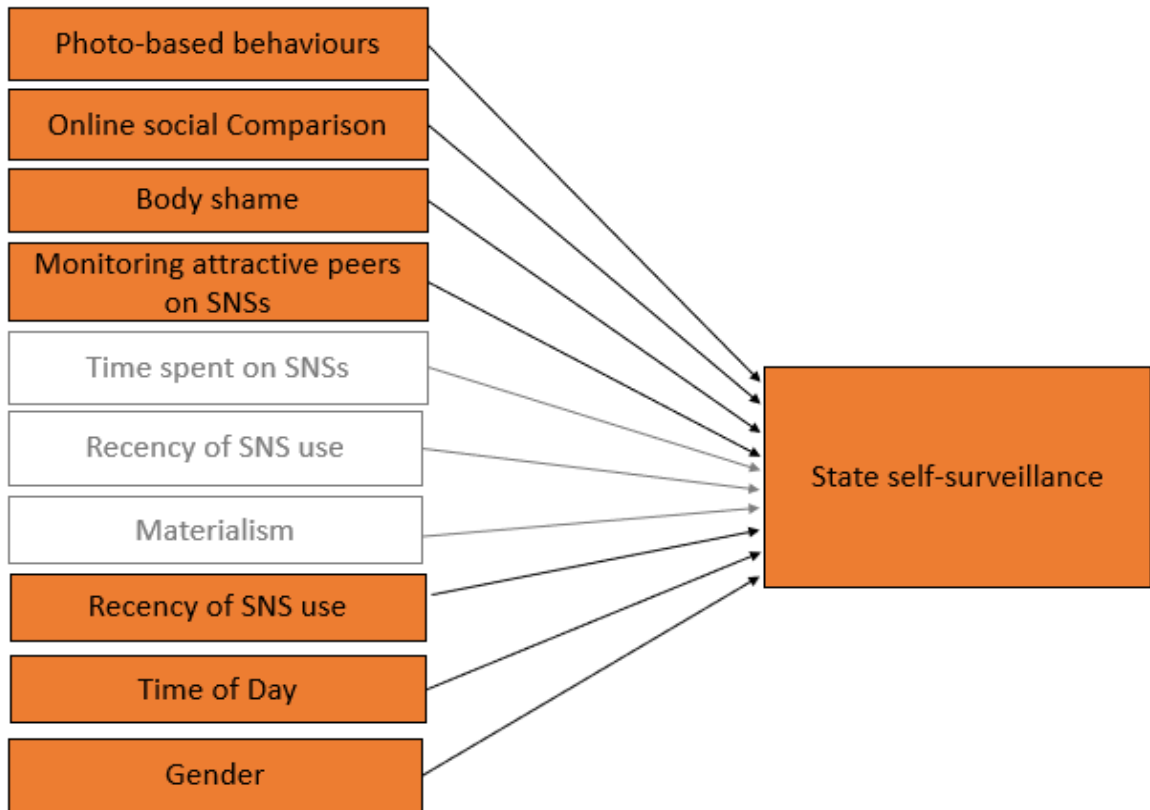


Figure 12. Significant predictors of state self-surveillance

2.3.3.3. Regression analyses for RQ 1c; assessing mediators of trait and state Self-Surveillance.

2.3.3.3.1. Online social comparison as mediator of the relationship between self-surveillance and photo-based behaviours.

Two stepwise linear regressions assessed the extent Online Social Comparison mediates the relationship between Self-Surveillance and Photo-Based Behaviours at state and trait level (Table 20.).

At trait level, Photo-Based Behaviours were included at step one in the model. This explained 24% of the variance in trait Self-Surveillance ($F(1, 226) = 71.29, p < .001$). Higher rates of engagement in Photo-Based Behaviours were associated with higher rates of trait Self-Surveillance ($\beta = .49, p < .001$). In step two, Online Social Comparison was included in the model. At trait level this model explained 40.1% of the variance in Self-

Surveillance ($F(2,224) = 74.87, p < .001$). Higher rates of Online Social Comparison were associated with higher rates of trait Self-Surveillance ($\beta = .49, p < .001$). Photo-Based Behaviours continued to be a significant predictor of trait Self-Surveillance ($\beta = .21, p \leq .001$) therefore Online Social Comparison was not a mediator of this relationship.

At state level, Photo-Based Behaviours were included at step one. Engagement in Photo-Based Behaviours predicted 8.7% of the variance in state Self-Surveillance ($F(1, 947) = 90.70, p < .001$). Higher rates of engagement in Photo-Based Behaviours were associated with higher rates of state Self-Surveillance ($\beta = .30, p < .001$). In step two, Online Social Comparison was included in the model. At state level these variables explained 34.1% of the variance in state Self-Surveillance ($F(2,939) = 242.89, p < .001$). Higher rates of Online Social Comparison were associated with higher rates of Self-Surveillance at state levels ($\beta = .54, p < .001$). Engagement in Photo-Based Behaviours continued to be a significant predictor of state Self-Surveillance ($\beta = .09, p \leq .001$). Online Social Comparison was not a mediator of this relationship.

Table 20.

Summary of mediation model for Photo Based Behaviours, Online Social Comparison and Self-Surveillance at trait and state levels

Variables	Trait ($n = 243$)					State ($n = 964$)				
	B	SE	β	R ²	F	B	SE	β	R ²	F
<u>Step 1</u>				.24	71.29				.09	90.70
Photo-Based Behaviours	0.59	0.07	.49***			18.19	1.91	.30***		
<u>Step 2</u>				.40	74.87				.34	242.90
Photo-Based Behaviours	0.25	0.08	.21***			5.64	1.76	.09***		
Online Social Comparison	0.41	0.05	.49***			12.41	0.66	.54***		

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p \leq .001$

2.3.3.3.2. *Body shame as mediator of the relationship between self-surveillance and photo-based behaviours.*

Two stepwise linear regressions were conducted to assess the extent that Body Shame mediates the relationship between Self-Surveillance and engagement in Photo-Based Behaviours (Table 21.).

At trait level Photo-Based Behaviours were included at step one. This explained 24% of the variance in trait Self-Surveillance ($F(1, 226) = 71.29, p < .001$). Higher rates of engagement in Photo-Based Behaviours were associated with higher rates of trait Self-Surveillance ($\beta = .49, p < .001$). At step two, Body Shame was added to the model. This model predicted 38.7% of the variance in Self-Surveillance at trait level ($F(2, 223) = 70.52, p < .001$). Higher rates of Body Shame were associated with higher rates of trait Self-Surveillance ($\beta = .41, p < .001$). Photo-Based Behaviours continued to significantly predict trait Self-Surveillance ($\beta = .37, p < .001$), therefore Body Shame did not mediate the relationship between Photo-Based Behaviours and trait Self-Surveillance.

For state Self-Surveillance, Photo-Based Behaviours were included at step one. Engagement in Photo-Based Behaviours predicted 8.7% of the variance in state Self-Surveillance ($F(1, 947) = 90.70, p < .001$). Higher rates of engagement in Photo-Based Behaviours were associated with higher rates of state Self-Surveillance ($\beta = .30, p < .001$). Body Shame was added at step two of the model. This model predicted 49.7% of the variance in Self-Surveillance at state level ($F(2, 946) = 467.01, p < .001$). Higher rates of Body Shame were associated with higher rates of Self-Surveillance at state level ($\beta = .65, p < .001$). Photo Based Behaviours continued to significantly predict state Self-Surveillance ($\beta = .16, p < .001$) which meant that Body Shame did not mediate this relationship.

Table 21.

Summary of mediation model for Photo Based Behaviours, Body Shame and Self-Surveillance at trait and state levels.

Variables	Trait ($n=243$)					State ($n=964$)				
	B	SE	β	R ²	F	B	SE	β	R ²	F
<u>Step 1</u>				.24	71.29				.09	90.70
Photo-	0.59	0.07	.49*			18.19	1.91	.30*		
Based			**					**		
Behaviours										
<u>Step 2</u>				.39	70.52				.50	467.01

Photo-Based Behaviours	0.45	0.07	.37*	10.03	1.45	.16*
			**			**
Body Shame	0.40	0.05	.41*	0.73	0.03	.65*
			**			**

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

2.3.3.4. Regression analysis for RQ2; assessing predictors of state surveillance of others.

A stepwise linear regression examined whether certain online behaviours predict state Surveillance of Others (See Table 22. for results of steps one to five). Photo-Based Behaviours, Monitoring Attractive Peers on SNSs, Time Spent on SNSs, Body Shame, Online Social Comparison, Recency of SNS use, Time of Day, Gender and Age were included in the final fully adjusted model. This model explained 47.9% of the variance in the state Surveillance of Others ($F(13, 899) = 63.633, p < .001$). Monitoring Attractive Peers on SNSs ($\beta = .10, p < .001$), Body Shame ($\beta = .20, p < .001$), Online Social Comparison ($\beta = .50, p < .001$), and Gender ($\beta = .08, p < .01$) were all significant positive predictors of state Surveillance of Others. Compared to those who had been using SNSs directly before completing the prompt assessment, those who had been using SNSs greater than two hours or more before the prompt were significantly negatively correlated with state Surveillance of Others ($\beta = -.06, p < .05$). Compared to prompts in the Morning, prompts in the Evening were significantly negatively correlated with state Surveillance of Others ($\beta = -.08, p < .01$). See Figure 13. for significant predictors of state surveillance of others.

Table 22.

Summary of stepwise linear regression for predictors of the Surveillance of Others (state) (n=964).

Predictor variables	B	SE B	β	R^2	F
Step 1				.06	55.62
Photo-Based Behaviours	.62	.08	.24***		
Step 2				.15	79.50

Photo-Based Behaviours	.41	.08	.16***		
Monitoring Attractive Peers on SNSs	.44	.04	.31***		
Step 3				.16	42.29
Photo-Based Behaviours	.40	.08	.15***		
Monitoring Attractive Peers on SNSs	.43	.04	.31***		
<u>Time Spent on SNSs</u>					
Greater than 30 mins	1.00				
SNSs not used	-.43	.20	-.08*		
Used SNSs between 1-30 mins	-.29	.12	-.09*		
Step 4				.45	122.61
Photo-Based Behaviours	-.02	.07	-.01		
Monitoring Attractive Peers on SNSs	.14	.04	.10***		
<u>Time Spent on SNSs</u>					
Greater than 30 mins	1.00				

SNSs not used	.06	.17	.01		
Used SNSs between 1-30 mins	-.06	.10	-.02		
Body Shame	.01	.00	.20***		
Online Social Comparison	.48	.03	.49***		
<u>Step 5</u>				.48	63.63
Photo-Based Behaviour Monitoring	-.04	.07	-.02		
Attractive Peers on SNSs	.14	.04	.10***		
<u>Time Spent on SNSs</u>					
Greater than 30 mins	1.00				
SNSs not used	.05	.18	.01		
Used SNSs between 1-30 mins	-.06	.10	-.02		
Body Shame	.01	.00	.20***		
Online Social Comparison	.49	.03	.50***		
<u>Recency of SNS use</u>					
Used directly	1.00				

before			
prompt			
Used within 30 mins	-.12	.08	-.04
Used between 30-120 mins ago	-.16	.09	-.04
Used greater than 2 hours ago	-.21	.10	-.06*
<u>Time of Day</u>			
Morning	1.00		
Afternoon	-.07	.08	-.02
Evening	-.22	.08	-.08**
Gender	.26	.09	.08**
Age	.01	.00	.05

* $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

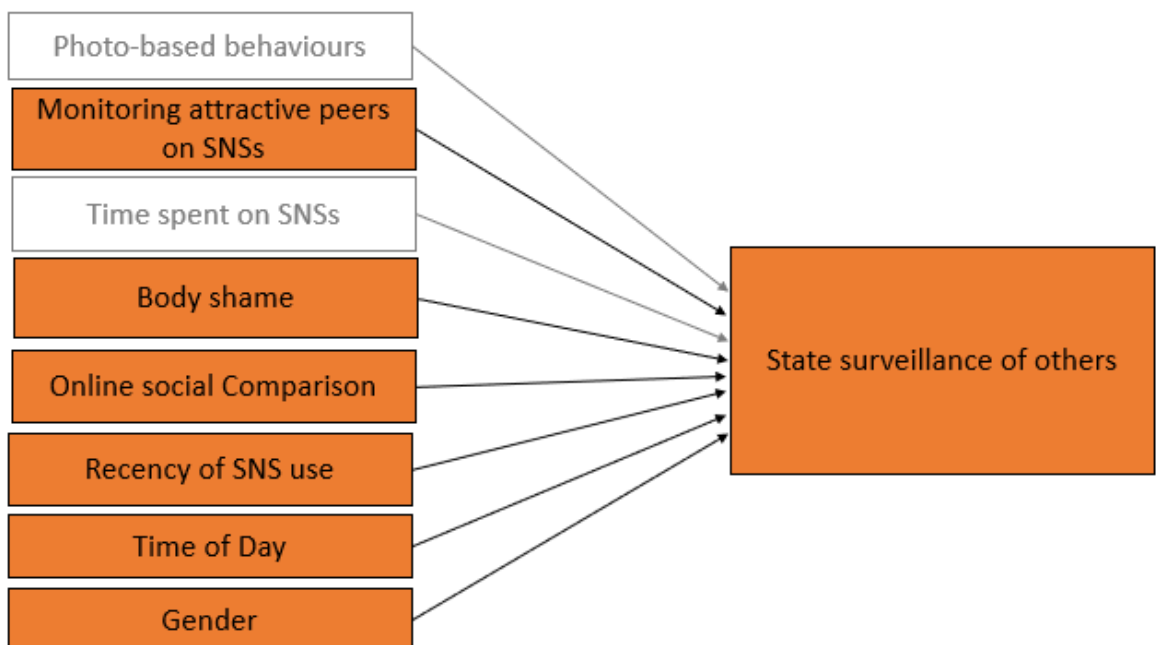


Figure 13. Significant predictors of state Surveillance of Others.

2.3.3.5. Regression analysis for RQ4a; assessing predictors of trait well-being.

A stepwise linear regression was conducted to assess the factors that predict trait Well-Being (See Table 23. for the results of steps one to four). Online Social Comparison, General Amount of Time Spent on SNSs, Passive SNS use, Active SNS use, Self-Surveillance, Body Shame, Materialism, Gender and Age were included in the model. Although Online Social Comparison did predict Well-Being in the unadjusted models, when controlling for all variables in the final fully adjusted model, Online Social Comparison no longer predicted Well-Being. The final model was statistically significant and predicted 20.6% of the variance in Well-being ($F(10, 214) = 5.54, p < .001$). Higher Passive SNS use ($\beta = .23, p \leq .01$) was associated with higher rates of Well-Being. Lower rates of Self-Surveillance ($\beta = -.19, p < .05$) and Body Shame ($\beta = -.16, p < .05$) were associated with increased trait Well-Being. Online Social Comparison, General Amount of Time Spent on SNSs, Materialism, Gender and Age were not significant predictors. See Figure 14. for significant predictors of trait well-being.

Table 23.

Summary of stepwise linear regression for predictors of Well-Being (Trait) (n=243)

Variable	B	SE B	β	R ²	F
<u>Step 1</u>				.09	23.05
Online Social Comparison	-0.79	0.17	-.31***		
<u>Step 2</u>				.11	9.01
Online Social Comparison	-0.63	0.19	-.24***		
<u>General Amount of Time Spent on SNSs</u>					
Greater than 2 hours	1.00				
Less than 30 minutes	1.19	0.62	.15		
Between 30-120 minutes	0.48	0.44	.08		
<u>Step 3</u>				.12	7.80
Online Social Comparison	-0.81	0.21	-.31***		

General Amount of
Time Spent on SNSs

Greater than 2 hours	1.00		
Less than 30 minutes	1.58	0.65	.20*
Between 30-120 minutes	0.61	0.44	.10
Passive SNS Use	0.55	0.28	.16*

Step 4

.21 5.54

Online Social Comparison	-.42	.25	-.16
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General Amount of
Time Spent on SNSs

Greater than 2 hours	1.00		
Less than 30 minutes	1.30	.68	.16
Between 30-120 minutes	.63	.44	.10
Passive SNS Use	.81	.33	.23**
Active SNS Use	.03	.15	.02
Self-Surveillance	-.62	.27	-.19*
Body Shame	-.49	.23	-.16*
Materialism	-.03	.03	-.06
Gender	.87	.53	.11
Age	.03	.02	.11

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$

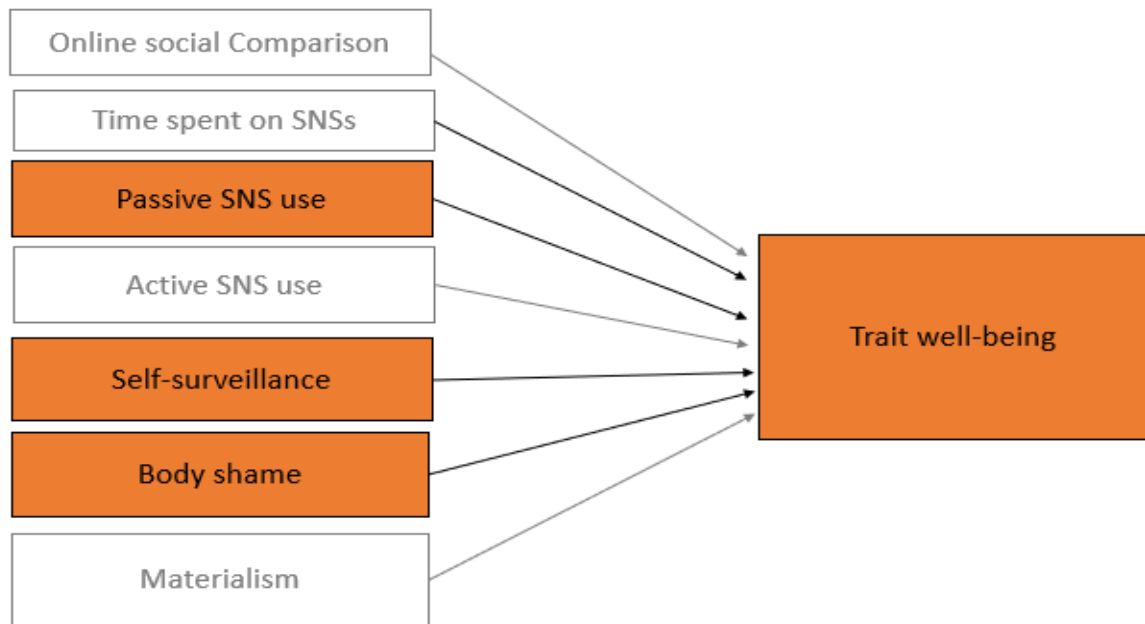


Figure 14. Significant predictors of trait Well-being

2.3.3.5.1. Regression analysis for RQ4b; body shame as mediator between self-surveillance and well-being.

A stepwise linear regression was run to examine whether Self-Surveillance predicts participants' Well-Being, and whether Body Shame mediates that relationship (Table 24.). At step one, Self-Surveillance was included in the model. This model predicted 10.4% of the variance in Well-Being ($F(1, 225) = 26.14, p < .001$). Lower rates of Self-Surveillance ($\beta = -.32, p < .001$) were associated with higher rates of Mental Well-Being. Body Shame was included at step two. This model was significant ($F(2, 223) = 15.36, p < .001$) and predicted 12.1% of the variance in trait Well-Being. Self-Surveillance remained a significant predictor ($\beta = -.27, p < .001$), with lower rates of Self-Surveillance being associated with higher rates of Well-Being. Body Shame was not a significant predictor of trait Well-Being and therefore was not a mediator of this relationship.

Table 24.

Summary of mediation model for Self-surveillance, Body Shame and Well-Being (n=243).

Variable	B	SE B	β	R ²	F
<u>Step 1</u>				.10	26.14

Self-surveillance	-1.02	0.20	-.32***		
Step 2				.12	15.36
Self-Surveillance	-0.85	0.23	-.27***		
Body shame	-0.38	0.22	-.13		

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

2.3.3.6. Regression analysis for RQ5a; assessing the predictors of state depression.

A stepwise multiple regression analysis was employed to assess the factors that predict state levels of Depression (See Table 25. for results of steps one to four). Online Social Comparison, Time Spent on SNSs, Passive SNS use, Active SNS use, Self-Surveillance, Body Shame, Materialism, Recency of SNS use, Time of Day, Gender and Age were included in the final fully adjusted model. This model was significant, predicting 23.3% of the variance in state levels of Depression ($F(15, 901) = 18.258, p < .001$). Higher rates of Body Shame ($\beta = .42, p < .001$) were associated with higher rates of state Depression. Compared to participants who used SNSs for greater than 30 minutes when they were last using SNSs, those who used between 1-30 minutes of SNSs were significantly negatively correlated with state Depression ($\beta = -.15, p < .001$). See Figure 15. for significant predictors of state Depression.

Table 25.

Summary of stepwise linear regression for predictors of state Depression (n=964)

Predictor variables	B	SE B	β	R ²	F
Step 1				.06	55.19
Online Social Comparison	3.56	.48	.24***		
Step 2				.08	26.64
Online Social Comparison	3.38	.48	.22***		

Time Spent
on SNSs

Greater than 1.00
30 mins

SNSs not -6.43 3.25 -.08*
used

Used SNSs -9.24 2.01 -.17***
between 1-
30 mins

Step 3

.08 19.87

Online 3.34 .49 .22***
Social
Comparison

Time Spent
on SNSs

Greater than 1.00
30 mins

SNSs not -6.16 3.28 -.07
used

Used SNSs -9.16 2.02 -.17***
between 1-
30 mins

Passive SNS 1.03 1.68 .02
use

Step 4

.23 18.26

Online -1.16 .65 -.08
Social
Comparison

Time Spent
on SNS

Greater than 1.00
30 mins

SNSs not -6.07 3.32 -.07
used

Used SNSs between 1- 30 mins	-8.19	1.93	-.15***
Passive SNS use	.30	1.75	.01
Active SNS use	.77	1.56	.02
Self- surveillance	.04	.03	.06
Body Shame	.31	.03	.42***
Materialism	.08	.09	.03
<u>Recency of SNS use</u>			
Used directly before prompt	1.00		
Used within 30 mins	-1.63	1.55	-.03
Used between 30- 120 mins ago	2.39	1.76	.04
Used greater than 2 hours ago	-1.39	1.98	-.03
<u>Time of Day</u>			
Morning	1.00		
Afternoon	1.16	1.52	.03
Evening	.89	1.48	.02
Gender	.44	1.67	.01
Age	-.10	.06	-.05

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

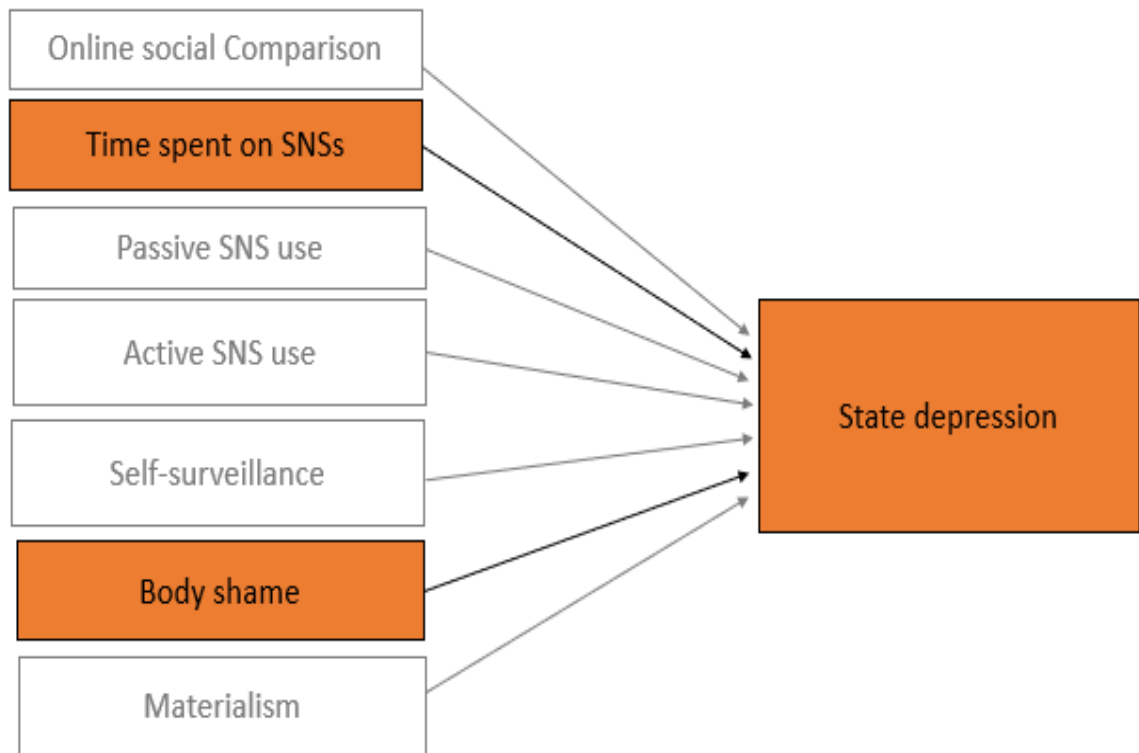


Figure 15. Significant predictors of state Depression.

2.3.3.6.1. Regression analysis for assessing RQ 5b; body shame as mediator between self-surveillance and state depression.

A stepwise linear regression was conducted to assess an aspect of Fredrickson's and Robert's (1997) model; specifically, whether Self-Surveillance predicts Depression and whether Body Shame mediates that relationship (Table 26.). Step 1, Self-Surveillance was included in the model. This model was statistically significant ($F(1, 945) = 121.41, p < .001$) and predicted 11.4% of the variance in state Depression. Higher levels of Self-Surveillance ($\beta = .34, p < .001$) were associated with higher levels of state Depression.

In step two, Body Shame was added to the model. This model was significant ($F(2, 944) = 127.71, p < .001$), predicting 21.3% of the variance in state Depression. Higher rates of Body Shame ($\beta = .43, p < .001$) were associated with higher levels of state Depression. Body Shame was found to be a mediator of this relationship as Self-Surveillance was no longer a significant predictor of state Depression.

Table 26.

Summary of mediation model for Self-Surveillance, Body Shame and Depression (n=964).

Variables	B	SE B	β	R ²	F
<u>Step 1</u>				.11	121.41
Self-surveillance	0.22	0.02	.34***		
<u>Step 2</u>				.21	127.71
Self-surveillance	0.03	0.03	.04		
Body shame	0.32	0.03	.43***		

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

2.4. Discussion

This study sought to examine the objectification theory framework, and expand the scope and line of enquiry of objectification research. This was achieved by examining self-surveillance and state depression, assessing the relationship between SNS behaviours and self-surveillance, assessing under-researched potential contributing factors to self-surveillance (i.e., materialism), under-researched consequences of self-surveillance (i.e., well-being), by assessing contributing factors to the surveillance of others, by including men and by employing a novel methodology, namely EMA. The relationship proposed by the original objectification framework (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) i.e., the relationship between self-surveillance, body shame and depression was supported. The findings also provide support for the relationship between various SNS variables, and objectification, and some of the processes underlying this relationship. This research provided evidence of similar and differing variables that influence trait and state levels of self-surveillance. The findings provide strong support for the models predicting trait and state self-surveillance and state levels of the surveillance of others. In particular, the consistent role of body shame and online social comparison in contributing to both self-surveillance and surveillance of others was identified. This research contributes to the integration of SNS, well-being and objectification research, and suggests that SNS behaviours have consequences for psychological functioning and objectification, and that objectification constructs have consequences for individuals' psychological functioning. An overview of the findings relating to each of the outcome variables follows.

2.4.1. Findings of RQ1a, 1b and 1c; predictors and mediators of trait and state self-surveillance.

With regards to factors that influence self-surveillance, the models were particularly strong, predicting a substantial amount of the variance in both trait and state self-surveillance. The combined findings from both trait and state assessments of self-surveillance suggest that body shame, online social comparisons, self-esteem, engaging in photo-based behaviours, and monitoring attractive peers online as well as the time of day, recency of SNS use and being a woman are significant factors that influence self-surveillance. In particular, these findings indicate it is participants' cognitions (i.e., comparisons) and feelings (i.e., body shame) about themselves that most strongly contribute to self-surveillance. Neither body shame nor online social comparison were found to mediate the relationship between photo-based behaviours and self-surveillance, which indicates that photo-based behaviours remain an important predictor with body

shame and online social comparison to predict self-surveillance. At both trait and state level, the extent that participants engage in body shame was the strongest predictor of the extent that they monitored their own appearance. Findings pertaining to predictors of both trait and state self-surveillance are discussed below.

The model examining the predictors of trait self-surveillance found that body shame, online social comparison and self-esteem are significant predictors of trait self-surveillance. The findings are consistent with previous research as body shame is most often cited as a pertinent correlate of self-surveillance (e.g., Calogero, 2004; Noll & Fredrickson, 1998; Slater & Tiggemann, 2002; Tylka & Hill, 2004), and engagement in online comparisons are often associated with greater engagement in self-objectification (Fardouly et al., 2015a, 2018). Furthermore, self-objectification has been found to be associated with decreased self-esteem in previous studies (e.g., Breines et al., 2008; Impett et al., 2011; Strelan et al., 2003).

This study, was the first to employ EMA methods to assess the relationship between SNS use and state self-surveillance. Engaging in photo-based behaviours, monitoring attractive peers on SNSs, experiencing body shame, engaging in online social comparisons, recency of SNS use, time of day and gender predicted state self-surveillance. With regards to recency of SNS use, compared to participants who had been using SNSs directly before the prompt, those using SNSs between 30-120 minutes prior were less likely to engage in self-surveillance. Compared to responses in the morning participants who responded in the evening were less likely to engage in self-surveillance. Results also suggest that women are more likely to engage in state self-surveillance than men. These findings suggest that aspects of SNS use, such as engaging in photo-based behaviours and monitoring attractive peers on SNSs are associated with self-surveillance at state, as opposed to trait level, and also provide evidence that women engage in more frequent state experiences of self-surveillance than men. Thus, both women and men may have similar tendencies to engage in self-surveillance, but on a momentary basis, women more frequently engage in this behaviour. This finding provides strong evidence in support of the use of EMA measures to assess self-surveillance, and support for the assessment of momentary SNS behaviours and momentary engagement in self-surveillance.

It is evident from these findings that aspects of SNS use did not significantly affect participants' level of trait self-surveillance. Perloff (2014), and Valkenburg and Peter (2013) suggest that media very rarely exert main effects but interact with the context or

individual susceptibility variables to have an effect on individuals' functioning. This explanation is supported by the current trait findings as direct media influence such as general amount of time on SNSs and type of SNSs used were not significantly predictive of self-surveillance, but it was the individual psychological characteristics such as self-esteem and the extent that a person experiences body shame and compares themselves with others that contributed to trait levels of self-surveillance. SNS use may be a medium for objectification but these findings suggest it is the underlying psychological constructs that facilitate the development of trait self-surveillance.

In contrast, at state level this research found that SNS usage influence state self-surveillance. In particular, this research found that it was not simply the recency of time spent on SNSs but engagement with image-based functions that contribute to state self-surveillance. Previous research supports this finding as it has been reported that engagement in photo-based activities and usage of image based sites is associated with greater self-surveillance and body related constructs than general SNS use (Cohen et al., 2018; Fardouly et al., 2018; Manago et al., 2015; Meier & Gray, 2014). The image-based functions potentially contribute to increased self-surveillance as images online frequently depict women in particular, as sexualised objects. (Bailey et al., 2013; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2016). Individuals often learn about cultural beauty standards from the media they are exposed to (Bartky, 1990; McRobbie, 2009; Tiggemann, 2014). Exposure to objectifying media content has been associated with greater endorsement of westernised beauty ideals and greater engagement in self-surveillance (Vandenbosch & Eggermont, 2012, 2015), when combined with the production of image-based online content this is associated with increased self-objectification (De Vries & Peter, 2013; Meier & Gray, 2014). The current study is the first to specifically evaluate and provide evidence that engagement with photo-based behaviours on SNSs is associated with increased levels of *state* self-surveillance. These findings indicate that the photo-based content that individuals are exposed to, and engage with on SNSs promotes monitoring one's physical appearance in that moment. Posting and looking at photos may encourage people to think about their appearance and potentially be used as a way of gauging adherence to cultural beauty norms.

This research extended on Vandenbosch and Eggermont's (2015) research, and found that when individuals use SNSs to monitor the appearance of attractive peers this contributes to experiences of state self-surveillance. Monitoring attractive peers on SNSs was not found to predict self-surveillance at trait level, but did significantly predict self-

surveillance at state level. Perhaps the experience of using social media to monitor someone perceived as attractive may contribute to a heightened awareness of physical appearance in that moment and thus contribute to increased state self-surveillance. This finding suggests that individuals may actively use SNSs to seek out and follow peers they deem attractive but the consequence of using SNSs in this way is that it may contribute to thinking about oneself in relation to appearances on a momentary basis.

At both trait and state level body shame was found to be the strongest significant predictor of self-surveillance. Shame is experienced when one evaluates oneself against a cultural or internalised ideal and finds oneself coming up short (Brown, 2007). Women, in particular, are socialised from a young age to value their physical appearance above other qualities and are taught the rewards of beauty (Berggren et al., 2009; Langlois et al., 2000). The process of engaging in self-surveillance facilitates checking in with societal beauty norms. If someone feels as though their appearance is inadequate, they may experience shame. As cultural beauty ideals by their very nature are unrealistic and often unattainable, the result is a continuation of body shame and body-checking (Bartky, 1990; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Wolf, 1991). Thus, the current study supports the objectification framework and provides evidence of the relationship between body shame and self-surveillance at both trait and state levels.

This study's findings suggest that a consequence of online social comparison is increased self-surveillance at both state and trait levels. Images seen online are often viewed as examples of cultural beauty standards to which individuals should aspire, in particular peer images have been identified as being influential (Manago et al., 2008). As SNSs can be used for impression management (Goffman, 1956; Siibak, 2010) individuals tend to portray favourable aspects of the self-online and edit their online images (Chae, 2017; Fox & Vendemia, 2016). Facebook users often underestimate the extent to which peers modify their self-representations online (Chou & Edge, 2012). Individuals may use SNSs to forecast social norms regarding appearance and lifestyle. When they are presented with predominantly favourable material posted by others and compare this to their own lives, they may see their lives as less desirable. Online social comparison was one of the strongest predictors of trait and state self-surveillance. It is possible that in order to engage in comparison one must first evaluate one's own status, and also following a comparison one may choose to check in, and attempt to fix or moderate aspects of the self in an attempt to strive for the ideal. Thus, this research supports the findings of Lindner et al. (2012) and

Strelan and Hargreaves (2005) who suggest that the experience of engaging in self-surveillance and in comparisons with others are fundamentally linked.

Gender was a significant predictor of state but not trait self-surveillance. At state level women were more likely to engage in self-surveillance than men. Previous research suggests that men also self-objectify (Hebl et al., 2004; Manago et al., 2015), however findings generally indicate that self-surveillance and self-objectification occur more frequently in women (e.g., Aubrey, 2006; Fredrickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn, & Twenge, 1998; Hebl, King, & Lin, 2004; McKinley, 1998; Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005). Women and men may both experience general self-surveillance but in their daily lives, women, as a result of their socialisation, may be more conscious of their appearance and thus engage in more frequent state self-surveillance than men. The finding that women were more likely to engage in state self-surveillance than men supports the original tenets of the objectification framework (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). The original theory was developed as a way to document experiences and psychological difficulties that appeared to be predominantly female. Throughout history women have been reduced to and valued in relation to their appearance and have long been socialised to view themselves outwardly (Bartky, 1990). Women receive narratives and social scripts with tropes of female naivety, passivity and vulnerability (e.g., Glick & Fiske, 2001); they are taught to value and adhere to beauty ideals and are encouraged to comment on both their own and other women's appearances (Jones et al., 2014). Throughout their development women learn their self-worth is synonymous with their appearance and are provided with examples as to the rewards of achieving beauty ideals such as social and financial success (Berggren et al., 2009; Langlois et al., 2000). Thus, quite often women more than men are oppressed as they are more likely to firstly experience pressure to conform to cultural beauty ideals and as a result habitually monitor their physical appearance, diligently attempting to conform to achieve these standards (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). The fact that gender did not have an effect at trait level may be indicative of the increased objectification of men (Rohlinger, 2002). However, within their daily lives women may continue to experience greater opportunities for self-surveillance.

This study found that participants were less likely to engage in self-surveillance in the evening compared to the morning. As there is limited EMA objectification research this finding cannot be substantiated. Although Holland et al. (2017) report prevalence statistics for targeted and witnessed objectification, they do not report rates at different times of day. Breines et al. (2008) also did not report the time of day of retrieval of responses. This

finding could be explained by contextual factors, such as who the participant was with or what they were doing at the time of assessment. Objectification research has established that situational factors (Calogero, 2004; Fredrickson et al., 1998; Roberts & Gettman, 2004) contribute to self-objectification. Social psychologists such as Deaux and Major (1987) suggest that gender-related phenomena such as self-objectification or self-surveillance are more likely to occur when gender is considered a salient component of the environments or individuals perceptions of the context. Furthermore, Gardner (1995) suggested that women are most likely subject to commentary pertaining to their bodies in situations that are unstructured, public and mixed-sex. Together these examples of research suggest that situational factors play a significant role in contributing to objectification. Perhaps the possibility to experience a sexualised gaze, or to be in public, unstructured, mixed sex environments were more likely to occur in the morning than in the evening. Furthermore, as the morning is the time of day usually associated with preparing oneself for outward presentation (i.e., getting dressed/brushing hair/putting on make-up), together with the anticipation of others' gaze could lead to increased self-surveillance. This finding may also be the result of the specific times and days that participants were prompted, and thus more varied prompting in future research could further examine this finding. This is a novel finding which suggests that self-surveillance behaviours may be more salient at certain times of day.

Prompting participants to respond to questionnaires and measuring state levels of self-surveillance can be conceived as measuring short-terms effects. Through SNS use individuals can be exposed to a myriad of content including advertisements, blogs, music videos, celebrity and peer content etc. Considering the average daily amount of time participants spend using SNSs they may be exposed to a plethora of objectifying content. Harrison and Fredrickson (2003) suggest that in relation to judging media influence on self-objectification, it is not how long the media induced state of self-surveillance lasts but how frequently it is induced. As recency of SNS use was found to predict state self-surveillance, this finding suggests that following SNS use individuals are at heightened risk for experiences of self-surveillance. Roberts and Gettman (2004) found that mere exposure to objectifying media can significantly contribute to the initiation of state self-objectification as well as its associated psychological consequences for women. Aubrey (2006) found that consistent exposure to objectifying media moves beyond state self-objectifying experiences to the development of trait self-objectification. Thus, if exposure to objectifying content on SNSs have the potential to continuously activate self-

surveillance, then these findings suggest that individuals who engage in frequent photo-based behaviours and monitoring of attractive peers online may experience chronic, trait like self-surveillance and self-objectification over time.

It was hypothesised that materialism would be positively correlated with self-surveillance. A medium positive correlation was found in the initial correlational analysis between trait self-surveillance and materialism. Research suggested these two factors are related as materialism contributes to individuals feeling as though their physical appearance can be used as a form of capital to gain positive life experiences (Richins & Dawson, 1992). When controlled for in the final regression models however, materialism was not found to significantly predict trait or state self-surveillance. This suggests that other factors such as body shame and online social comparison for example, are factors that are more influential in shaping a person's level of self-surveillance and account for any variance that may have initially been found for materialism. Participants' value system may not be as significant as the way that they feel about themselves in terms of body shame, or how they think they compare with others or their overall evaluation of their self-worth.

2.4.2. Findings of RQ2a; predictors of state surveillance of others of the same gender.

This study found that engaging in online social comparison, monitoring attractive peers online, and experiencing body shame positively significantly predict the surveillance of others of participants' gender. This model was particularly strong and predicted a considerable amount of the variance in participants' state surveillance of others. Women were significantly more likely to engage in the surveillance of other women compared to men of other men. Findings also showed participants were significantly more likely to engage in the surveillance of others in the morning than in the evening. Participants who had used SNSs more recently were also significantly more likely to have engaged in the surveillance of others. This research provides evidence of the overlap between self-surveillance and surveillance of others given the similarities between the significant predictor variables (i.e., monitoring attractive peers on SNSs, online social comparisons, body shame, time of day and gender).

Online social comparison was the strongest predictor of the surveillance of others. A potential explanation of this finding could be that these constructs are similar and may be tapping into the same broader concept. In order to engage in a comparison one must complete an evaluation of the target of the comparison, thus the process of engaging in the

surveillance of others is almost fundamental to engaging in appearance comparison. Lindner et al. (2012) stress that constructs of objectification and social comparison should be explored in tandem as they ultimately may be “two parts of the same process” (p.223). In recent years research has documented the interconnected nature of self-objectification and social comparison (Fardouly et al., 2015b; Hanna et al., 2017), but there remains a paucity of research on the surveillance or objectification of others and social comparison. The current study’s findings provide empirical evidence that supports that these factors are significantly related.

Body shame was also identified as a significant predictor of the surveillance of others. Those who experience body shame may have a general tendency to be body-conscious and body-focused, given the association between self-objectification and body shame (e.g., Noll & Fredrickson, 1998), and therefore may have a greater tendency to monitor the appearance of others. Body shame is often preceded by comparisons with beauty ideals from the media or another person (Miner-Rubino et al., 2002). The relationship between engaging in the surveillance of others and experiencing body shame may be indicative of the extent that individuals have internalised beauty ideals and compare themselves with others; however, given the correlational nature of these findings the direction of this relationship cannot be inferred. Research has consistently reported the relationship between self-objectification/self-surveillance and body shame (e.g., Calogero, 2004; Noll & Fredrickson, 1998; Slater & Tiggemann, 2002; Tylka & Hill, 2004) and between self-objectification and the objectification of others (Lindner et al., 2012; Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005b). In terms of extending research on the objectification framework, this study provides evidence that body shame is not only significantly associated with self-surveillance but also the surveillance of others.

Consistent with findings for predictors of state self-surveillance, monitoring attractive peers online was a significant predictor of state surveillance of others. This suggests that those who use SNSs to monitor people they consider attractive are also more likely to engage in the surveillance of others in general. This indicates that people who are appearance focused, are often appearance focused in several contexts including online and in public. SNSs may be used as an environment that facilitates thinking about others as objects rather than as complex, dynamic individuals with agency as features of SNSs provide the opportunity to monitor attractive others. Previous research has reported the relationship between monitoring attractive peers online and engagement in self-objectification and self-surveillance (Vandenbosch & Eggermont, 2015). The current study

is the first to report a relationship between monitoring attractive peers online and engaging in the surveillance of others on a momentary basis.

This study extended upon objectification literature to assess the extent to which individuals engage in the surveillance of others of their own gender. The extent that men objectify women and women objectify men was beyond the scope of this study. Previous research has found that men are more likely to objectify women than to objectify other men; and also that men objectify women more often than women objectify women and that overall men are much less likely to be objectified by either women or men (Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005). The current study found that women were significantly more likely to engage in the surveillance of other women than men were of men. From a socio-cultural perspective this may be due to the fact that women are socialised to value appearance and bond with one another over appearance related issues (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Jones et al., 2014; Kaschak, 1992; Thompson, Heinberg, Altabe, & Tantleff-Dunn, 1999; Tiggemann, 2014). In contrast men are socialised to bond in their ability to objectify women (Calogero et al., 2011; Flood, 2008), and as a result perhaps do not frequently engage in the objectification of men. This finding should be considered in light of the sample, as approximately 80% of the sample were female and 20% male.

As with findings for predictors of state self-surveillance, the results revealed that participants were less likely to engage in the surveillance of others in the evening compared to the morning. Prior objectification research has not reported whether time of day may be a contributory factor to objectification and very little research has explored whether situational factors contribute to the surveillance or objectification of others. Research has however, found that exposure to objectifying media contributes to the surveillance of partners (Zurbriggen et al., 2011). Social psychological research has also indicated that situational and contextual factors can stimulate gender or appearance related cognitions (Deaux & Major, 1987). Perhaps the type of behaviours participants engaged in in the morning were more conducive to initiating appearance related cognitions and thus contributing to the surveillance of others. This research provides evidence that time of day may influence the extent to which individuals monitor the appearance of others. Further research is needed to extrapolate a specific explanation for this.

This study also found that recency of SNS use was associated with higher rates of surveillance of others. This implies that after having used SNSs recently participants are more inclined to think about others in terms of their physical appearance. Zurbriggen et al.

(2011) found that exposure to traditional media contributes to partner surveillance. Furthermore, research suggests that it is not how long the media induced state of self-surveillance occurs but how frequently that has the greatest impact on self-surveillance (Harrison & Fredrickson, 2003). As this research did not find that amount of time spent on SNSs was predictive of the surveillance of others, it may be more so that there is a direct effect of using SNSs that triggers thinking about the physical appearance of others. This is consistent with Roberts and Gettman's (2004) findings regarding self-surveillance, as it indicates that mere exposure, and consistent recent use of SNSs, regardless of the amount of time that was spent online, may be particularly salient in contributing to thinking about people in terms of their appearance.

Collectively, these findings extend research on objectification theory to examine the under-researched aspect of the objectification of others (Lindner et al., 2012; Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005b). The findings suggest that there is clear overlap between the predictors of state self-surveillance and state surveillance of others, providing evidence that individuals may develop a general tendency to engage in physical surveillance of the self and others. Factors such as monitoring attractive peers on SNSs, engaging in online social comparisons, body shame, time of day and gender were found to facilitate the development and maintenance of this outlook.

2.4.3. Findings of RQ3; does a relationship between self-surveillance, the surveillance of others and online social comparison exist?

There was a strong significant correlation found between self-surveillance and surveillance of others. Strong correlations were also reported between self-surveillance, surveillance of others, and online social comparison. These correlational findings provide tentative support for the hypothesised circle of objectification (Lindner et al., 2012; Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005b). However, future longitudinal research is warranted to examine this further.

2.4.4. Findings of RQ4a and 4b; predictors and mediators of trait well-being.

At trait level this study found that engaging in self-surveillance and experiencing body shame negatively predicted well-being. Furthermore, passive SNS use was associated with higher levels of well-being. Research has explored whether specific behaviours or ways of using SNSs have different effects on well-being. Some research has reported the benefits of SNS use for increasing social contact and social capital (Brandtzaeg & Nov, 2011; Ellison et al., 2007; Nabi et al., 2013; Steinfield et al., 2008; Valenzuela et al., 2009).

Research has also reported that participants have higher rates of self-esteem after making changes to their own profiles (Gonzales & Hancock, 2011) and that positive self-presentations are associated with improved well-being (Kim & Lee, 2011). Others have found that passive SNS use negatively effects well-being and is associated with feelings of stress and lower self-esteem (Kalpidou, Costin & Morris, 2011), as well as loneliness and depression (O’Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011; Sagioglou & Greitemeyer, 2014; Twenge et al., 2017). Contradictory to these findings, the current research found that passive use was predictive of improved well-being, albeit with a small correlation coefficient. Perhaps this could be explained by the content participants were passively viewing. Research has found that observing an emotion in others, activates the neural representation of that emotion in the observer (Wicker et al., 2003). As a result, exposure to online content in which others appear happy may trigger a positive emotive response. Furthermore, as social media can serve a pedagogical function and be used as a tool for societal change (Keller et al., 2016; Khoja-Moolji, 2015), perhaps participants may have been passively reading content that they are passionate about or researching topics of interest.

The positive association between passive SNS use and well-being could also potentially be explained by the feedback participants received online. SNSs are considered a medium for impression management as they facilitate opportunities for positive self-presentation through status updates and photo uploads (Gonzales & Hancock, 2011), as well as through the “likes” function providing instant positive feedback (Zell & Moeller, 2018). Research has found that a positive self-presentation online is associated with higher well-being (Kim & Lee, 2011) and that receiving more likes and comments is associated with higher self-esteem (Rosen, Whaling, Rab, Carrier, & Cheever, 2013; Zell & Moeller, 2018). Thus, participants may passively scroll through their own positive self-presentations and monitor their online feedback resulting in higher levels of well-being. Research has established that individuals are motivated to use SNSs to stay in contact with friends, relieve boredom and pass the time (e.g., Steinfield et al., 2008). Perhaps passive SNS use achieves these goals and the resulting consequence is positive well-being. Given these findings, future research may need to investigate not only passive and active use, but also the feedback and content participants are exposed to.

The current study found that self-surveillance negatively predicts well-being. Although Fredrickson and Robert’s (1997) original model does not refer to aspects of psychological well-being, researchers have demonstrated that it may be a valuable construct to explore

(e.g., Breines et al., 2008). These current findings provide evidence to suggest that consistently monitoring one's physical appearance infringes on one's ability to achieve and maintain positive affect and life satisfaction. This finding is consistent with previous objectification and well-being research (e.g. Breines et al., 2008; Sinclair & Myers, 2004). Miner-Rubino et al. (2002) investigated personality traits and objectification and noted "that trait self-objectification accounts for a significant amount of variance in negative affectivity above and beyond other personality influences" (p.147). Perhaps the experience of self-surveillance is particularly contributory to the development of negative affect. Well-being literature suggests that individuals are likely to have unique criteria for a good life (Pavot & Diener, 1993). Within consumerist societies the good life is often characterised by the acquisition of material possessions and the perfect body (Dittmar, 2008). As beauty standards are ubiquitous and often one-dimensional, the pressure to achieve a good life by adhering to these standards may be omnipresent and difficult to achieve, contributing to negative affect. The current finding indicate that the objectification model can be used successfully to examine participants' levels of well-being.

The finding that body shame negatively contributes to well-being further substantiates the use of the objectification framework to better understand well-being. Mercurio and Landry (2008) found that body shame and self-esteem mediate the relationship between self-objectification and life-satisfaction. Although the current study did not find that body shame mediated the relationship between self-surveillance and well-being it did find body shame to be a significant predictor of women and men's well-being and that both together are important factors for predicting well-being. Shame tends to be experienced when individuals consider that they have failed in some way and they attribute this failure to a personal, internal characteristic (Tracy & Robins, 2004). Brown (2007) discusses shame as being one of the most harmful emotions as it corrodes our ability to think positively about the self. Thus, the experience of shame may preclude individuals from the experience of positive emotions.

It was hypothesised that online social comparison, amount of time spent on SNSs and materialism would predict participants' well-being however, this was not the case. The extent individuals are concerned with their own bodies and engage in self-surveillance and body shame are more significant in affecting participants' well-being than the online comparisons they engage in, perhaps as they may engage in both upward and downward comparisons online. Furthermore, perhaps it is the way participants use SNSs (i.e., passively), rather than the amount of time they spend on SNSs that influences their level

of well-being. This suggests that the specific behaviours individuals engage in on SNSs are important to explore when investigating the relationship between SNSs and psychological functioning. Materialism did not significantly predict well-being. The findings suggest that individuals' emotions (i.e., body shame) and behaviours pertaining to the self (i.e., self-surveillance) have greater weighting for well-being than their value system.

2.4.5. Findings of RQ5a and 5b; predictors and mediators of state depression.

Participants' immediate or state level of depression was captured using Visual Analog Scales at each prompt time. A model assessed the predictors of state depression and found that higher levels of time spent when last using SNSs and higher levels of body shame significantly predicted participants' low mood state of depression. Body shame was the strongest predictor of state depression. It was also identified as mediating the relationship between self-surveillance and state depression. These findings provide significant support for Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) model, and suggest the relationship between these variables exists at a state level. The relationship between shame and depression may be particularly interconnected as shame is considered to be associated with deficiencies of the self, an internal flaw and thus is likely to be associated with sustained feelings of depression and regret (Buss, 1980). This finding implies that state experiences of body shame are associated with state experiences of depression. If throughout the day individuals consistently feel their appearance is not good enough, they are more susceptible to experience momentary depressed mood. Given that the mood state of depression is a symptom and predictor of clinical depression (Iacoviello et al., 2010; van Rijsbergen et al., 2012), this finding indicates that the propensity for experiences of body shame can contribute to more persistent negative psychological consequences and perhaps the development of sustained or clinical depression.

Amount of time spent on SNSs positively predicted participants' state levels of depression. This is consistent with previous correlational research (e.g., Twenge et al., 2017; Wright et al., 2013) and EMA research (Kross et al., 2013; Steers et al., 2014) that has found that increased time spent on SNSs is associated with higher levels of depression. Furthermore, experimental research has documented a relationship between SNS use and depression (Sagioglou & Greitemeyer, 2014). As this research is correlational in design, it cannot be concluded whether engagement with SNSs contributed to participants' state feelings of depression, or whether individuals who often feel depressed spend extensive time on SNSs. Some possible explanations for this finding are that extensive SNS use may detract from

engagement in more pro-social activities (Twenge, Joiner, Rogers, & Martin, 2017; Kraut et al., 1998; Nikkelen, Valkenburg, & Huizinga, 2014), may facilitate negative comparisons (Steers et al., 2014), or may contribute to negative feelings as users perceive SNS use as a waste of time (Sagioglou & Greitemeyer, 2014). Conversely, individuals with pre-existing mental health difficulties may be more likely to spend increased time on SNSs to compensate for a lack of interpersonal skills (Valkenburg & Peter, 2007b; Widyanto & Griffiths, 2006), or individuals with vulnerability characteristics may gravitate towards SNSs seeking validation and reassurance (Perloff, 2014). Furthermore, perhaps participants engage in forecasting error (Sagioglou & Greitemeyer, 2014), whereby they expect SNSs to enhance their mood but in fact, as indicated by the current findings, by spending extensive time on SNSs their mood is decreased.

Online social comparison, passive SNS use, active SNS use, self-surveillance, and materialism were also investigated as predictors of state depression, but were not found to significantly do so. As body shame and time spent on SNSs were the factors that predicted depression perhaps increased time spent on SNSs may facilitate greater opportunities to experience shame and this in turn contributes to depression. Or perhaps individuals who have higher tendencies to experience the emotional state of depression also experience higher rates of body shame and gravitate towards SNSs for social support. The correlational design limits our ability to infer the direction of this relationship. However, these findings support and extend the objectification framework as body shame was found to mediate the relationship between self-surveillance and state levels of depression. These findings also provide support for the integration of research on SNSs and objectification constructs in understanding psychological functioning as time spent on SNSs was also found to predict depression.

2.4.6. Strengths, limitations and suggestions for future research.

A strength of this study was the integration of SNS, objectification and well-being and depression variables. This study provides strong empirical support for an original aspect of the objectification model, namely the relationship between self-surveillance, body shame and depression at state level, as well as support for the assessment of several SNS variables, and positive aspects of psychological functioning in relation to objectification. In particular the findings provide evidence for the integration of online social comparison in the objectification framework. The findings also support the application of the objectification framework in understanding the correlates and consequences of

objectification for both women and men, students and non-students, across a diverse age range.

This study is the first to employ EMA methods to investigate the relationship between self-surveillance and SNS use. The use of EMA countered the limitations of traditional methods, such as recall bias and facilitated the acquisition of responses in the moment so that recent use and specific daily SNS activities could be assessed to predict self-surveillance, the surveillance of others and depression. The ability to capture momentary experiences is a major strength of this study as the findings illustrate there may be subtle differences in the factors that influence trait and state self-surveillance. By employing EMA methods this study also was able to identify that time of day may influence both self-surveillance and the surveillance of others. A notable limitation of the EMA method however was the significant attrition rate. Although a common limitation of this method (Fuller-Tyszkiewicz et al., 2013) findings should be considered in light of the EMA response rate.

This study has also contributed to a growing body of research exploring both women and men's experiences of self-surveillance. In particular, the findings suggest that investigating trait and state variables may be particularly salient in understanding women and men's experiences of objectification, given the gender differences reported for state self-surveillance and state surveillance of others. This study extends our understanding of the factors that contribute to the surveillance of the physical appearance of people of the same gender in real time. Findings illustrated that on a momentary basis aspect of SNS use contributes to the surveillance of others. Participants were not asked the extent to which they objectify members of the opposite sex. Future research could investigate such relationships.

The correlational findings and descriptive statistics outlined highlight the gender and age differences and similarities associated with objectification and psychological functioning variables. These findings indicate that women are more body conscious and may engage in more frequent body focused behaviours such as experiencing body shame, the surveillance of the self and others and engaging in more frequent comparisons with others and engagement in greater photo-based behaviours than men. This is consistent with previous research findings (e.g., Fox & Vendemia, 2016; Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005) and suggests that gender is a significant factor associated with objectification and specific SNS behaviours.

A major strength of this study was the exploration of objectification and SNS use with a diverse age sample, of students and non-students. With regards to age, the findings indicate that younger participants were more appearance focused and experienced greater levels of self-surveillance and body shame. The correlational findings indicated that age was positively correlated with well-being, self-esteem, happiness and confidence. Although the descriptive statistics did not indicate major differences between the age groups for well-being and self-esteem, they did indicate a difference between reported mood state of depression. As a stable sense of identity is associated with positive psychological outcomes (Higgins, 1987) and adolescence and emerging adulthood are times associated with identity development (Arnett, 2006; Erikson, 1968), the development of a more stable sense of self over time could contribute to improved psychological experiences. Furthermore, increased feelings of wellness may be associated with reduced concern for engaging in comparison and for increased body consciousness as younger participants reported higher levels of online social comparison, self-surveillance, monitoring of attractive peers online and engagement in photo-based behaviours. These findings indicate that there are differences in relation to age cohorts' experiences of objectification and SNS use. Although age was not a significant predictor in the regression analyses, the correlational and descriptive statistic findings provide a source for future investigation regarding developmental changes and the experiences of different age groups. The exploration of experiences with these samples provides a novel contribution to empirical research on objectification.

Research suggests ethnicity and sexual orientation may also influence an individual's experiences of self-surveillance (Hebl et al., 2004; Kozee & Tylka, 2006; Martins et al., 2007; Moradi & Huang, 2008). The current sample was quite homogenous with regards to ethnicity and sexual orientation. Of 243 participants 213 identified as being heterosexual and the next largest group identified as being bisexual (19 participants). Furthermore, 91.77% of participants identified as being White Irish. Due to the homogeneity of the sample these factors were not included in the regression models. Consistently objectification research, and psychological research in general is criticised for being heteronormative, and focused predominantly on white, college students' experiences (Fox et al., 2009). The broad age range and proportion of non-student participants assessed within an Irish context in this study has expanded the scope of objectification research. Future research could further extend on this and take an intersectional approach specifically assessing the experiences of minority groups within Ireland.

The current study extends on SNSs research and its psychological consequences of use. Passive use was identified as a positive contributor to trait well-being. Perhaps future research could examine the specific type of content an individual is passively consuming and this could help to extrapolate and extend this finding. The results also reflect the complexity of the relationship between SNS use and psychological functioning, as passive use was associated with increased well-being, while extensive use was associated with increased state depression. Thus, it is imperative to be cautious regarding assertions of the effect of SNS use on psychological functioning.

As a result of the structure of the questions pertaining to when SNSs had last been used and which sites last used, SNS type could not be computed at state level as participants potentially reported using several sites recently. Although ecologically valid, perhaps had the question be structured differently the type of SNS, as well as the recency of use could have been examined. Type of SNSs could be a factor to explore in future research.

Sagioglou and Greitemeyer (2014) note that individuals frequently engage in forecasting error when using social media, which may explain why SNSs are so frequently used even when their use is often associated with decreased mood and body satisfaction. A limitation of regression analysis is that the direction of relationships cannot be inferred. The current study's findings however, provide evidence that mutually reinforcing relationships exist between several of the variables explored. Experimental research could help to clarify the relationship between these factors in future.

2.5. Conclusion and Implications of Findings

The findings of this study have several implications for theory. The findings support the integration of SNS, objectification and psychological functioning constructs. This research provides empirical evidence that aspects of SNS use influence the extent that individuals engage in self-surveillance, and participants' psychological functioning (i.e., depression and well-being). Aspects of SNSs such as photo-based behaviours, monitoring attractive peers, and engaging in online social comparisons contributed to increased self-surveillance. SNSs are saturated with images of idealised bodies (e.g., Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2016). The current findings suggest that the consequence of constructing, consuming and comparing image-based content and using SNSs to monitor attractive peers can have damaging effects on individuals' daily lives as it promotes engagement in habitual body monitoring and spending extensive time on SNSs contributes to the mood state of depression. This is not to say that SNSs always have negative effects as this

research found that passive use is associated with improved well-being. These findings highlight the complexity of SNS use and the consequences for psychological functioning. The findings provide evidence for the importance of identifying and acknowledging the specific aspects of SNS use that contribute to different aspects of psychological functioning. It is imperative to identify the complexities in these relationships in order to sustainably live in an ever increasing technologically advanced world. SNSs are not just a communications platform, but are an integral part of people's lives having an effect on their mood states and behaviours pertaining to their bodies.

The dominant finding of this study was the significant role of online social comparison for contributing to self-surveillance and the role of body shame in contributing to both negative psychological functioning (i.e., depression and well-being) and body monitoring behaviours. We are not born with shame; our culture teaches us about shame (Brown, 2007; Lewis, 1997; Tangney et al., 1996; Tracy & Robins, 2004). The fact that body shame was consistently identified as a significant predictor of negative objectification outcomes and negative psychological functioning illustrates that when people do not feel as though they can be their authentic selves but are concerned about their appearance and allow their self-worth to be synonymous with their appearance this is extremely detrimental. Although shame can be perceived as an adaptive strategy to facilitate the implementation of group norms (e.g., Lewis, 1997), the propensity to make people feel ashamed of their appearance, something they have often relatively little control over and something that does not actually function for the greater good, is a maladaptive mechanism that needs to be challenged.

The overwhelming finding from this study is that the experience of body shame has extensive consequences for a multitude of aspects of our functioning, with regards to how we think about our physical appearance and the physical appearance of others as well as our psychological well-being and depressive mood states. These findings support the need to foster compassion and self-care in order to combat instances of shame. Individual acceptance and an understanding of the elements that unite us in our humanity need to be emphasised to reduce the damaging effects of experiences of shame.

This research extended and enhanced our understanding of the objectification model in numerous ways. It has extended on the model through the integration of the examination of SNS use, objectification, and psychological functioning. The findings indicate it is specific SNS behaviours that have consequences for self-surveillance and psychological functioning. Thus, this research provides strong evidence for the complexity of evaluating

the effects of SNS use and the need to evaluate several aspects of SNS use to better understand these relationships. It has provided support for the objectification model as body shame was found to mediate the relationship between self-surveillance and state depression, and extended research on this aspect of the model as these results suggest this relationship is significant at state level. This research has also extended research on the model and provided support for the relationship between self-surveillance and well-being, indicating that positive aspects of psychological functioning could be fruitful avenues for inclusion in the objectification framework.

Furthermore, this study extended objectification research to consider factors that contribute to the surveillance of others at state level. It provides evidence that similar constructs may underlie the extent that individuals engage in self-surveillance and the surveillance of others such that monitoring attractive peers on SNSs, body shame and online social comparison were the most significant predictors of the surveillance of others. The findings also support the tenets of the original model as women were found to engage in higher levels of self-surveillance and higher levels of the surveillance of others than men. This study has provided substantial quantitative evidence in support of the objectification framework. The following chapter includes a qualitative investigation of the relationship between SNS use, objectification and psychological functioning.

Chapter 3. A Qualitative Evaluation of Social Network Site Use, Objectification and Psychological Functioning with Emerging Adults

3.1. Introduction

This study sought to examine the objectification theory framework as it relates to SNS use for Emerging Adults (EAs). In particular, this research aimed to investigate whether EAs perceive SNSs as objectifying environments, and to explore the potential psychological and appearance related consequences associated with SNS use. A critical, qualitative analysis of SNSs was considered an important mode of inquiry in understanding the social construction of gender norms and objectification as the media provides a platform from which social scripts and norms of femininity and masculinity can be created and expressed (Manago et al., 2008). The use of qualitative methods provided an opportunity to explore the nuanced ways SNSs are used and interpreted by EAs. Given the paucity of research on objectification with men, another aim of this research was to explore men's, as well as women's, experiences and perceptions of objectification. Thus, this research employed focus groups with both male and female EAs.

Presented below is an overview of previous qualitative objectification and body image research, followed by an outline of the methodology used. Subsequently, the themes and research findings of this study are discussed. Analysis of the findings are integrated in the discussion, which concludes this chapter.

3.1.1. Qualitative research on objectification and the media.

Research exploring objectification theory has been predominantly quantitative in design (see Moradi & Huang, 2008, for a review). Moffitt and Szymanski (2011) suggest that there is a dearth of qualitative research exploring objectifying experiences and evaluating environments that function, promote, and perpetuate the objectification of women. They stress that although quantitative methods have established the psychological correlates associated with objectification, they cannot fully illustrate the multifaceted nature of objectification and call for further qualitative research to delve deeper into these issues. Qualitative research allows for the exploration of individual differences and the identification of individuals' value systems and the role of social structures in an exploratory way (Smith, 2008). Qualitative research on objectification is therefore useful in helping to understand the experiences, environments, and perceived consequences of objectification in people's lives.

Qualitative research suggests that individuals are aware that norms of objectification and gender roles are replicated in the media (Diedrichs, Lee, & Kelly, 2011; Holmqvist & Frisé, 2012; Ruggerone, 2006). Ruggerone's (2006) research found that women were critical of fashion photography and reported that depictions of "normal" female body types were interpreted as respectful, while objectifying images of women in advertising were perceived as transgressive, harmful and unrealistic. Ruggerone (2006) argued that companies have a corporate responsibility of care to consumers. Consistent with Dittmar (2008), she stated that these images go beyond advertising clothing and accessories to promoting an idealised life conditional on ownership of these products. Furthermore, Diedrichs et al.'s (2011) focus group research with 17-25 year old women and men found that there is dissatisfaction with regards to the restricted range of bodies presented in the media and the objectification of women. Although participants discussed a desire for change and a positive response to average size models in advertising, they also expressed concern regarding the promotion of obesity. Research suggests that often perceptions of health and beauty are conflated and motivations to achieve appearance ideals are influenced by perceived psychological and social benefits associated with the ideal (Kwan, 2009). Thus, individuals may encourage the use of more varied bodies in the media, but still engage in a certain level of policing of the body.

Qualitative research with adolescents has reported the role of the media in the development of appearance ideals (Romo, Mireles-Rios, & Hurtado, 2016; Tiggemann, Gardiner, & Slater, 2000; Vares, Jackson, & Gill, 2011). Tiggemann, Gardiner, and Slater's (2000) focus group research with 16-year-old girls, in Australia, explored why girls aspire to be thinner. The media was found to be the strongest influence, followed by a desire to be more attractive and receive greater attention. Participants showed critical awareness of the media, recognising the images presented were often manipulated and unrealistic. They found that despite understanding the value of personality characteristics over physical attractiveness, the volume of idealised images in the media led them to value the thin ideal. Vares, Jackson, and Gill's (2011) focus groups and video diaries with girls aged 11-13 in New Zealand reported similar findings. Both studies suggest that young girls can be critical readers of media content while still experiencing the pressure to conform to ideals. Holding feminist attitudes can act as a buffer against appearance pressures and objectification (Rubin, Nemeroff, & Russo, 2004). However, this is a complex relationship. Although holding feminist beliefs provided participants with an alternative interpretation of societal norms of appearance, Rubin, Nemeroff, and Russo (2004) found that participants were not

immune to this pressure and often experienced conflicting thoughts with regards to their beliefs and own appearance.

3.1.2. Objectification and SNSs.

Qualitative research has also explored the relationship between SNS use and gender roles. Manago, Graham, Greenfield, and Salimkhan's (2008) focus group research found that EAs use SNSs for identity exploration, often portraying idealised versions of the self online and engaging in online comparisons. Their findings suggest that gender norms are replicated online, as sexualised female self-presentations were prevalent and it was considered normative for women to express concern for their appearance, while both men and women were uncomfortable when men expressed such concern. This finding is consistent with previous qualitative research with men which suggests that hegemonic presentations of masculinity prevail (Allen, 2005; Grogan & Richards, 2002). Hegemonic masculinity refers to power relations and the way specific expressions of masculinity are valued and legitimised to maintain certain men in power (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Grogan and Richards (2002) found men were reluctant to discuss their appearance in terms of their aesthetic properties but rather in relation to function (i.e., fitness and athleticism), and reported that worrying about appearance was perceived as a feminine pastime.

Bailey, Steeves, Burkell, and Regan (2013) conducted semi-structured interviews and a focus group with young women aged between 18-22 years to explore their perceptions of a fictitious Facebook profile and how it compared with their own profiles. The results showed the complex narratives and expectations of women. They found that individuals are selective about the content they post in order to present a certain persona. Ringrose and Harvey (2015) conducted focus groups and interviews with thirteen- and fifteen-year olds to ascertain their gendered performativity online. Their results reveal how SNSs are an environment where gender is enacted through digital images and, in particular, how sexual double standards prevail on SNSs. Girls' images were heavily policed while boys' were held in high esteem for the possession of certain images of girls. This is consistent, with research by Allen (2005), that found that objectification of women was a way for men to assert masculinity. Collectively these findings indicate that existing stereotypes continue to restrict women's engagement and influence their online performances.

A recent report submitted by Ringrose (2017) for "Evidence for the Youth Select Committee 2017: Inquiry into Body Image", consolidates qualitative findings on

sexualisation, gender, sexuality, and body image perceptions of young people. The report suggests that prevalent gender ideals serve to ostracise those who do not conform to these ideals and maintains gender power relations. SNSs were identified as environments that facilitate the expansion and transmission of gender ideals. The report documents the varying levels of blaming, shaming and policing of girls' online content (Ringrose & Harvey, 2015). Ringrose's (2017) report suggests that, although SNS content is predominantly consistent in presenting content conforming to traditional gender norms, there are examples of online campaigns promoting body positivity and using SNSs as platforms for challenging oppressive norms (Keller et al., 2016). SNSs have been facilitatory in highlighting the oppression and harassment women experience on a daily basis (Bates, 2014; Mendes, 2015). These examples of qualitative research reveal that traditional gender roles and gender-typed behaviour is consistently enacted within society (Bem, 1981; Haines, Deaux, & Lofaro, 2016). The findings indicate that aspects of both traditional media and SNSs facilitate the maintenance of gender roles and objectification of women. The current research will examine whether SNSs also facilitate objectification of men, and the potential psychological consequences of this.

3.1.3. The present study.

This study sought to explore whether EAs perceive SNSs as environments for objectification, and to investigate the consequences of SNS use for psychological functioning and body image. Individuals share diverse interpretations of objectifying environments (Moffitt & Szymanski, 2011). Szymanski, Moffitt, and Carr (2010) outline features that create sexually objectifying environments. These include environments in which traditional gender roles are enacted, a focus on women's physical appearances or bodies, a male gaze is normalised and or promoted, women have little power and there is a high probability of male contact. Moradi (2011) suggests that in a patriarchal society these five characteristics exist to some degree in many contexts, and suggests that research explore the extent they do so in different environments. The current research was explorative in nature and thus did not ask about a specific SNS but sought to investigate the general characteristics and features of SNSs that could facilitate and cultivate an environment for objectification and influence participants' psychological functioning, which has been requested by previous researchers (Frison & Eggermont, 2016; Lup et al., 2015; Perloff, 2014).

3.1.3.1. Aims and research questions.

Given the dearth of objectification research with men, this study aimed to explore both women and men's experiences of objectification and perceptions of objectification. This research sought to investigate whether EAs perceive SNSs as environments for objectification, and if so, to explore the aspects of SNSs that facilitate objectification. In accordance with objectification theory, this research also aimed to explore the psychological consequences of self-objectification and investigate the consequences of SNS use for EAs psychological functioning and body image. This research sought to answer the following research questions:

- Do EAs perceive SNSs as objectifying environments? If so, what aspects of SNSs facilitate this?
- What are EAs perceptions of SNSs and the consequences of their use for psychological functioning?
- Do EAs perceive that SNSs influence how they feel about their own and others' bodies and appearance? If so, in what way and how?

3.2. Methodology

3.2.1. Focus groups.

Focus groups are group discussions intended to explore individuals perceptions on a specific topic (Kitzinger, 1994). Krueger and Casey (2015) note that due to their explorative nature, focus groups are useful for understanding individuals' needs and feelings about an issue, an idea, behaviours, or products from the perspective of the specific group of interest. Group interaction or synergy is often considered the defining feature of focus groups (Barbour, 2007; Kitzinger, 1994). Kitzinger (1994) emphasised that the group dynamic facilitates varied communication. Group interaction such as brainstorming, debating, laughing, boasting, sharing anecdotes etc. all function to stimulate interaction and contribute to the development of ideas. This is the synergistic effect; where new ideas borne out of the group process are developed which may not have been explored or uncovered in an individual interview or written questionnaire. Kitzinger (1994) acknowledged that in this way focus groups facilitate the collection of data on group norms.

An examination of group interactions also facilitates an increased understanding as to how individuals theorise their own perspective. Allen (2005) states that the focus group

methodology is beneficial as it “provides a public forum for the presentation of self” and facilitates “identity work” for participants (p. 53). Research suggests participants may be more comfortable discussing certain topics in groups. For example, Grogan and Richards (2002) found that boys and men preferred to discuss the topic of body image in a group than individually.

Focus groups can also illuminate how power is enacted. Group dynamics can filter and censor participants from sharing opinions if they deviate from the group norm. Group interactions such as facial expressions, body language, or disagreement can inhibit participants from disclosing their experiences and perceptions. The nature of engaging in the research process may cause individuals to doctor responses as there may be differences in what individuals feel comfortable discussing with their peers, and with a researcher (Kitzinger, 1994). Although these features may cause participants to inhibit or alter responses, these behaviours are interesting in and of themselves as once acknowledged they can provide insights into social norms, power relations and groups dynamics.

The current study aimed to assess the applicability of the objectification framework to EAs experiences, in particular to assess whether objectification occurs and is facilitated by SNS environments. A focus group methodology was chosen as focus groups could provide evidence as to group norms regarding SNS use and gender dynamics. Focus groups also facilitated the direct observation of gender dynamics, as groups were comprised of either all male, all female or mixed groups. Furthermore, it was identified that participants may be more comfortable discussing appearance-related topics in groups than individually (Grogan & Richards, 2002). Focus groups are employed as they are explorative and facilitate the researcher developing a better understanding of the topic of interest from the cohort of interests’ perspective (Calder, 1977). In this case, the researcher could broadly explore how SNSs are used, the perceived consequences of their use, and whether EAs consider that SNS use contributes to objectification.

3.2.1.1. The role of the researcher in focus group research.

Given the transactional/subjectivist epistemological stance adopted in this study it is important to acknowledge the influence of the researcher in the research process. Characteristics of the researcher can influence participants’ responses in qualitative research. Allen (2005) provides an overview as to how her gender may have influenced both “soft” and hegemonic displays of masculinity by male participants. She argues that participants’ ability to reveal “softer” sides of their masculinity, were not so much the

result of her being female, but to a greater extent the result of her investigative style as she demonstrated sensitivity and interest in what each participant had to say, and spoke about the topic seriously creating a space in which participants could speak freely. Male moderators using this investigative approach have found similar representations of masculinity as Allen's (2005) study (e.g., Redman, 2002; Barker, 2000; O'Donnell & Sharpe, 2000 as cited in Allen, 2005). Thus, although it is important to acknowledge gendered relations in the research process, the investigative style of the researcher may have greater influence than their gender. With regards to this study, it was recognised that aspects of my own identity as a female feminist emerging adult, could influence responses, and some participants actively expressed that had the focus groups been moderated by a male they may have responded differently. Thus, these dynamics were considered in the analysis.

In acknowledgement of the potential effects of the investigative style of the researcher, efforts were made to cultivate an environment of respect and interest by engaging with each participant, making eye contact, using prompting questions and showing sensitivity to participants' responses. Thus, my role was one of researcher and moderator, as I actively asked questions and engaged with the participants during the focus group discussion. For clarification purposes my role will be referred to as researcher-moderator throughout this chapter.

A female, emerging adult, psychology masters graduate was the assistant-moderator and present at all of the focus groups. As recommended by Krueger (2002) the assistant-moderator had the following roles; "help with equipment and refreshments, arrange the room, welcome participants as they arrive, take notes throughout the discussion, operate recording equipment, do not participate in the discussion, debrief with moderator, give feedback on analysis and reports" (p.5). Thus, the assistant-moderator did not actively participate or ask questions during the focus groups, but played an observational role taking notes throughout. Her presence at the focus groups, may also have had an influential role on participants' responses.

3.3. Method

3.3.1. Participants.

EAs were recruited to participate as they have developed contemporaneously with SNSs and have been found to dominate SNSs (Smith & Anderson, 2018). Given that Facebook was launched in 2004 and participants were born between 1992 and 1999, they are a

particularly salient sample to investigate as their formative years correspond with the exponential growth of SNSs. Identity development and questions of identity are central to emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2006; Erikson, 1968). Research suggests the exploration of SNSs could be useful in helping to understand the ways that individuals navigate two important developmental tasks associated with emerging adulthood; identity development and the cultivation of relationships (Ellison et al., 2007; Manago et al., 2008; Subrahmanyam et al., 2008). As Arnett (2010) proposed that emerging adulthood is not merely generational but expected to be a permanent addition of the life course, this may be a particularly relevant stage of development to assess for future generations.

Thirty-two university students (14 female and 18 male) participated in seven focus groups. Participants ranged in age from 18-25 years ($M=21.71$, $SD=2.22$). Twenty-six participants identified as being White/Irish, four as being Indian, one as Nepalese and one as Nigerian. Students were drawn from diverse university faculties. Fields of study included business, management, education, health and sociology. Thirteen participants were undergraduates, 18 were masters students and one a doctoral student. All participants were SNS users. For an overview of the SNSs used by the participants see Appendix W. Table 27.

3.3.2 Procedure.

3.3.2.1. Recruitment procedure.

Participants were recruited within a university setting. Class groups received a recruitment email via their university email accounts and recruitment posters were placed on campus (see Appendix X. for recruitment email/poster). Due to difficulty recruiting male participants, an updated recruitment poster was developed. It specifically requested for men to participate.

3.3.2.2. Ethical considerations.

This study received full ethical approval from the DCU research ethical committee (REC) (Appendix Y). In accordance with Sherriff, Gugglberger, Hall, and Scholes (2014) recommendations, the following steps were taken to ensure participants felt psychologically and physically comfortable. Rooms were checked prior to focus groups to ensure they were spacious, comfortable, bright environments, and chairs were positioned in a circle to create an egalitarian and welcoming atmosphere. Participants were offered refreshments on arrival.

All questions were approved by the DCU REC. As a way of minimising risk to participants, the purpose of the focus groups was made explicit at the outset. Furthermore, consent was

received prior to the commencement of the focus groups and participants were informed they did not have to answer any question and had the right to withdraw at any point. The groups were moderated in a democratic way so that all opinions were respected while still maintaining sensitivity to opinions which could create discomfort or conflict. In recognition of ethical concerns, it was also considered important that the assistant-moderator was present at all of the focus groups, to provide support should a participant become distressed. This, however did not occur in any of the focus groups. All participants were thanked for their involvement and received a debriefing form (see Appendix Z.). Participants were informed of a variety of support services they could contact if any issues arose. Contact details for the researcher, the research supervisors, and the REC were also provided on the debriefing form. A follow up email was sent to participants to check in and thank them for participating. Furthermore, in line with ethical guidelines any hard copy identifying information such as consent forms were kept securely locked on the university campus, and any identifying soft copy information password protected and stored on a password protected computer. Participants' responses were anonymised, and participants received an identification number, indicating their gender and the focus group they attended (e.g., Martha who took part in the first focus group, her responses was coded as F1.1 etc).

Consideration was also given to my own psychological well-being and that of the assistant-moderator. Prior to engagement in the focus groups I had shared the questions with the assistant-moderator and we discussed potential responses. This process allowed us to reflect on any potentially upsetting responses that could emerge. We also debriefed following each focus group, discussing any salient information and how we felt. The research supervisors were also frequently updated and contacted in relation to any issues.

3.3.2.3. Focus group procedure.

Seven focus groups were conducted on the university campus. Prior to the commencement each participant was asked to read a Plain Language Statement (PLS) (Appendix AA.) outlining what involvement would include and what the purpose of the study was. The researcher-moderator discussed this information and participants were given an opportunity to ask questions. Participants were then asked to complete a consent form (Appendix BB.) and a short demographic questionnaire (Appendix CC.). Each focus group was audio recorded. All focus groups were moderated by the researcher (female, aged 25). An assistant-moderator (female, aged 25) was also present at all focus groups.

The investigative style was in line with that of Allen's (2005) as I sought to demonstrate sensitivity and interest in what each participant had to say. Sessions were conducted in a relaxed manner with minimal intervention from the researcher-moderator. Although never passive, I was conscious to ensure groups were participant-led as far as possible. Kitzinger (1994) explains that an over active moderator could create an interventionist style session, creating debate and discussion beyond what would have naturally occurred. I was conscious of the hierarchical relations that can arise between the researcher and those being researched. However, by being in a group of peers participants may have felt more confident to assert positions and negotiate meanings through interactive discussion (Kitzinger, 1994). As a female feminist EA, I came to each focus group with my own beliefs and expectations. Attempts were made to maintain an un-intrusive demeanour, however, in light of my presence I in some way had a role to play in shaping the group dynamics.

3.3.2.3.1. Focus group schedule.

The focus groups ranged from 27 minutes to 42 minutes in duration. Questions and discussion focused on participants' attitudes and perceptions of SNSs, how they use SNSs and how their use makes them feel about themselves and others (for a complete list of the question schedule see Appendix DD.). The questions were developed based on the examination of existing literature on SNS use, which suggested that SNS use has consequences for psychological functioning (e.g., Sagioglou & Greitemeyer, 2014), and that particular sites and features of SNSs have consequences for body image and objectification (Brown & Tiggemann, 2016; De Vries & Peter, 2013; Manago, Ward, Lemm, Reed, & Seabrook, 2015; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015).

Eleven questions were asked in each session. The sequencing and style of questions were derived from Krueger's (2002) guidelines, the initial question served to situate the discussion as pertaining to participants SNS use, thus participants were asked direct questions regarding the SNSs they use and how they use them. More direct questions were used initially to encourage engagement. Subsequent questions were more exploratory and pertained to the research questions under investigation (i.e., participants were asked whether they perceived SNS use affected how they feel about themselves and their bodies, and how SNS use influences their perceptions of others). A definition of objectification was provided and participants were asked whether they felt any specific sites contributed to objectification. Participants were also asked a retrospective question pertaining to the perceived impact SNSs had/would have had on how they feel about themselves or others

during adolescence. Given that research suggests that the media affects adolescents' body image (Slater & Tiggemann, 2014; Tiggemann & Slater, 2013, 2014) and psychological functioning (Frison & Eggermont, 2016; Valkenburg et al., 2006), this question aimed to explore whether participants perceived SNS use had/or could have had consequences for them during their adolescence. There are however, limitations to retrospective questions as memory is fallible and reflections are influenced by the storage and retrieval of the information (Schacter, 1999). As such, analysis of this question was interpreted in light of such limitations.

Consistent with Krueger's (2002) recommendations, questioning concluded by asking participants if they had anything further to add and what they felt had been the most important aspect of discussion. The researcher-moderator provided a summary of what had been discussed. All participants received a debriefing form (Appendix Z.) and a follow up email. Both the researcher-moderator and assistant-moderator took notes, regarding specific topics that were discussed or group dynamics, and debriefed when each focus group was completed to consolidate and verify their perceptions of the session.

3.3.2.3.2. *Focus group composition.*

The composition and an overview of interpretations of the focus groups are presented below (Table 28). Kitzinger (1994) argued that instead of generalising about the effects of a group, it is important to consider the composition and how features of the group may influence what is said. Furthermore, Allen (2005) provided a description of the different cohorts from which she recruited as a way to contextualise her focus groups. The interpretations of the current focus groups were developed from my experience moderating and observing the groups as well as from my own and the assistant-moderator's notes regarding the focus groups, debriefing about the focus groups, and maintaining analytic memos.

Table 28.

An overview of focus group composition and demographic variables.

Focus Group (FG) Number	Number of participants	Age range and mean age	Number of male participants	Number of female participants
FG1	4	18 (Mean=18)	1	3
FG2	2	18-23 (Mean=20.50)	0	2

FG3	7	19-25 (Mean=20.70)	0	7
FG4	6	21-25 (Mean=23.50)	6	0
FG5	4	22-23 (Mean 22.75)	4	0
FG6	4	22-23 (Mean 22.75)	4	0
FG7	5	22-25 (Mean=22.80)	3	2

The following sections will provide an overview of my interpretations of the focus groups. Factors such as gender, ethnicity and the size of the group were considered in relation to the group dynamics. Other than focus group one and seven, the groups were homogenous with regards to the gender of the participants. With regards to ethnicity, focus groups four, six and seven, included heterogenous ethnic samples.

- Focus group one: This group appeared to be very forthcoming about their personal experiences and shared many anecdotes throughout. Kitzsinger (1994) emphasised the power of the group in discussing topics that can be difficult to discuss. There was evidence of this as participants discussed personal experiences and perceptions regarding SNSs and mental health difficulties including experiences of cyberbullying, witnessing evidence of eating disorders, and self-harm. This group appeared engaging and comfortable with one another perhaps as a result of them being in the same year and class group. There seemed to be good group cohesion as evidenced by the continuous flow of conversation and interspersed laughter throughout. Upon reflection this group demonstrated the greatest cohesion and may have been particularly forthcoming in their responses as a result.
- Focus group two: This group was comprised of two women who were in different age groups and stages within the completion of their degrees. To my understanding, they were unknown to each other. Given that the group was comprised of two participants, I was cautious that they may feel a pressure to respond and conscious of my potential role in influencing the group, however, this was one of the most fluid groups. Their experiences and views often seemed to contrast which may have facilitated an interest and motivation to explain and better understand one another. They appeared reflective and forthcoming in responses, and seemed to have a genuine interest in the topics of discussion and one another's opinions.

- Focus group three: This group was comprised of female participants from the same course but differing year groups. Perhaps due to the larger size (7 participants) of this group or the friendship dynamics involved, some participants seemed reserved in their engagement while others spoke quite frequently.
- Focus group four: My understanding of this focus group, was that four of the participants were acquaintances from the same course, while two participants were strangers from different courses. Although participants seemed reluctant to discuss their feelings in any great detail, they also seemed enthusiastic, reflective and critical in their responses. Following completion of the focus group, two of the participants contacted me asking if they could complete a focus group on the topic on my behalf as they felt having a male moderator could yield different results. This response suggests that the participants perceived that they themselves and their peers, were not as forthcoming as they may have been if the group had been moderated by a man. During the focus group, it seemed that one participant perceived that the others were not being forthcoming in their responses. M4.2 expressed how he would negatively perceive men taking photos of themselves but would appreciate *“a picture of a good-looking girl”*. Following this he asked *“Am I the only one who’s going to say it?”* Perhaps he had shared conversations with group members in other contexts and they had reported similar views, or perhaps he was relying on gender stereotyped beliefs, but he seemed to feel participants were withholding their opinions. The lack of response could be evidence of a shift in perception as to what is acceptable behaviour in terms of men gazing on female bodies or alternatively in what they will explicitly state. It may also have been a consequence of the gender dynamics between participants and researcher.
- Focus group five: This group comprised of male participants from the same class group. They appeared to be comfortable with one another as there was a fluid progression of conversation throughout. Participants seemed to share personal views and opinions on topics freely. Two participants seemed to encourage one another in expressing their frustration with SNS use. In particular, they seemed notably annoyed as evidenced by cursing when reflecting on what they perceived

as political correctness and SNS use. Some of the participants also suggested that they may have been more forthcoming with a male moderator.

M5.2: If there were girls here, I'd probably, well people, I knew I'd kind of be a bit more reserved I'd say. I'd say I probably might have been to an extent even just because you two are girls like, I'd probably say a little less...

- Focus group six: This group was also comprised of all male participants from the same class group. They seemed intimately familiar and comfortable with one another and were willing to challenge and reflect on one another's claims.
- Focus group seven: The last group, from my perspective, seemed the least comfortable, cohesive and forthcoming. Perhaps this was a result of the heterogeneity of the group as this group was the most diverse with regards to gender and ethnicity. The group was comprised of three male participants and two female participants. The male participants identified as being Irish and were from the same class group. They appeared to be comfortable with one another, often reinforcing one another's opinions. The two female participants identified as being international students who were also from the same class group as each other and seemed to be comfortable with one another. To some extent when one participant voiced an opinion the rest of the group tended to nod in confirmation indicating a social desirability. The lack of cohesion within the group may have stunted some participants' responses. Thus, homogeneity of the sample may be particularly salient in promoting focus group discussion.

3.3.3 Analytic Strategy

Qualitative research aims to provide rich descriptive data on a topic of interest (Pietkiewicz, & Smith, 2012). A number of different qualitative methodological approaches exist, each with specific theoretical underpinnings and guidelines for conducting research. Thematic Analysis (TA) as outlined by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke was the method employed to analyse the current data.

3.3.3.1. Rationale for thematic analysis.

TA was chosen for several reasons: TA is not affiliated to any particular research paradigm. Conducting mixed methods research meant this research was not conducted from a strictly post-positivist or strictly critical paradigm, which created challenges for choosing methodologies and analytic approaches. TA was considered particularly appropriate when

conducting mixed methods research due to its flexibility and applicability to diverse and converging research paradigms. TA was chosen over Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith & Osborn, 2008), as the purpose of this study was to assess objectification theory and develop an understanding of gendered norms and SNS use as opposed to understanding specific phenomenon on a case-by-case basis. Although, the current study sought to explore societal influences and social processes, the focus was not to generate a novel theory but test a pre-existing theory and thus TA was considered more appropriate than Grounded Theory (GT) (Glaser & Strauss, 2006). Given that the focus of this research was not on examining the language used nor the individual stories told, Discourse Analysis (DA) (Gee, 1999) and Narrative Analysis (NA) (Sahlstein Parcell & A Baker, 2017) were not considered appropriate analytic approaches. This research sought to assess the applicability of the objectification theory framework; however, it was also considered imperative to not be reductive and to be informed by the data. As TA lends itself to both data driven and theory driven analysis this was seen as a major strength.

3.3.3.2. Thematic analysis.

Thematic analysis is defined as a method used to identify, analyse and interpret patterns of meaning in qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013). Braun and Clarke's (2006) specific version of TA was employed in this study. They suggest that as there are many different forms of TA, the researcher should clearly locate and outline their particular approach. They set out important decisions to be made prior to its use. These include outlining one's ontological and epistemological position, selecting what counts as a theme and the level of analysis to be employed. Each of these decisions was considered and a discussion of each is presented below.

Ontology refers to the nature of reality and what can be known (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). A realist stance assumes an objective reality whereby the experiences and meanings the participant shares is taken at face-value and data are considered as reflecting how things really are. Whereas the relativist position assumes that an objective reality does not exist, rather there are multiple social realities that are the products of human interactions with the social world (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Willig, 2013). Willig (2013) explains there is a number of positions between these two standpoints, one of which is the critical realist approach (Bhaskar, 2008). A critical realist position was adopted in the current study as it holds that the real world does exist and knowledge, although subjective, can provide an understanding of what is "really" happening in the world. TA can be used as a critical realist method as it "works both to reflect reality and to unpick or unravel 'reality'" (Braun

& Clarke, 2006, p.81). Thus, this research was analysed from a perspective that acknowledges a real material world exists, and that individuals make meaning of their experiences and that these meanings are often influenced by socio-cultural contexts.

The epistemological question refers to how reality can be known (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The epistemology of critical theory is transactional and subjectivist. Knowledge is developed through the transactional process between the researcher and those researched and is always influenced by the values of the researcher (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The current research and interpretations were influenced by my biases and the dynamics and interactions between the participants and myself; the questions posed, and my analytical approach.

Braun and Clarke (2006) define a theme as “capturing something important about the data in relation to the research question” (p.82). They note that it is important to consider what counts as a theme, they suggests that “more instances does not necessarily mean the theme itself is more crucial” (Braun, & Clarke, 2006, p.82). The relationship between a theme and the research question is more important than the prevalence of a theme. The prevalence of a theme can be reported as occurring within each data set (i.e., within each focus group) or at a participant level (i.e., how many participants made reference to the theme) or at an individual occurrence (i.e., how many times a theme was mentioned across all focus groups). With regards to the current study, themes were reported and discussed based on their ability to answer the research questions. Prevalence was reported at the data set and participant level (see Table 29 in the results section). The extent that participants discussed each theme varied by group and person, with some participants simply answering the question asked and others going into detail or raising topics associated with the themes prior to any questions being asked about them.

In taking a critical feminist approach to analysing this data, there was a focus on themes that were relevant to the investigation of SNS use and objectification. A detailed account of specific themes or groups of themes was discussed as opposed to a rich description of the entire data set. Braun and Clarke (2006) distinguish between theoretical TA and inductive TA. Theoretical TA involves a detailed analysis of a specific aspect of the data and is driven by the researcher’s theoretical interest. In contrast, inductive TA is entirely data driven, no attempts are made to fit the data to a pre-existing framework. As this research was driven by the investigation of objectification theory, the analysis of this study was more theoretical than inductive.

Data can be analysed at a semantic or latent level. With a semantic approach themes are developed from an interpretation of what the participant has said, derived from the explicit and surface level data generated. Braun and Clarke (2006) outline the latent approach as one which goes “beyond the semantic content of the data, and starts to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualisations and ideologies that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data” (p.84). In this way broader contexts and structures are theorised as underpinning what has been articulated by participants. Within the current study, data was predominantly analysed at a latent level. The focus of analyses was on evaluating societal structures and how they influence participants’ responses. For example, when participants spoke of appearance pressure or dissatisfaction with their appearance, these responses were not interpreted as residing within the participants but were interpreted in light of wider social influences.

3.3.3.2.1. Process of thematic analysis.

Analysis was conducted in line with the six phases and guidelines outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). These included:

1. Familiarising yourself with your data.
2. Generating initial codes.
3. Searching for themes.
4. Reviewing themes.
5. Defining and naming themes.
6. Producing the report.

1. Familiarising yourself with your data.

Having conducted the focus groups myself, I reflected on what was said both during and after the groups had been completed. Myself and the assistant-moderator took notes throughout and debriefed when each focus group was completed to consolidate and verify our perceptions of the session. These notes were typed up and stored as analytic memos. Analytic memos were kept to store ideas pertaining to exploration of the research questions, potential codes, relevant concepts, categories and potential themes, relevant theories, any problems that arose and ideas for future directions, as suggested by Saldaña (2016). These memos encompassed how I related to the research and any ideas I had throughout this research process. They also encompassed the notes and ideas of the assistant-moderator.

I transcribed the content of each focus group. Braun and Clarke (2013) note that a transcription can only be a representation of a focus group, as the researcher influences what is recorded regardless of intentionality. Sessions were transcribed verbatim. The words participants used were the focus of the transcription. If something was emphasised or deemed of particular interest it was highlighted. Anything inaudible after multiple play backs was transcribed as (inaudible), laughter was transcribed as (laughs). This is in line with the procedure employed by Jankowski (2015) and deemed an acceptable approach when conducting TA (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Following transcription, the documents were read through whilst listening to the recordings and any errors were rectified. The process of actively moderating the groups and the attention required when transcribing was an experience I enjoyed and was motivated to engage in as it afforded an opportunity to become intimately familiar with responses (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Following the anonymisation of data, all transcripts were printed. I read through each transcript in its entirety. As I was reading, I was actively engaged, noting any sequence of discussion or topics that seemed particularly relevant, and recording ideas that were triggered from reading of participants' responses. These ideas were included in the analytic memos. Physically reading the printed transcripts, highlighting and including hand written comments on the transcripts was an engaging process.

2. Generating initial codes.

Boyatzis (1998) refers to codes as being “the most basic segment or element of the raw data” (p.63). A common feature of a weak TA is using the data collection questions as themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This was avoided as the entire data set was coded and codes were examined across the entirety of each data set. I read through the printed transcripts line by line. I wrote phrases and words as codes beside quotes throughout the entire data set. Examples of codes included: “Beauty Ideals”, “Cyberbullying”, and “Self-Control”. Endeavouring to be true to the data, I thought that to take a solely theoretical and latent approach at this initial phase of analysis could cause important data to be overlooked. Furthermore, Braun and Clarke (2006) advise that researchers should code for as many patterns as possible at this phase. For this reason, the initial round of coding was predominantly data-driven, coded at a semantic and latent level to develop a thorough understanding of the entire data set.

Transcripts were re-read and additional codes developed. The focus was on the development of latent codes and codes informing the research questions. Thus, analysis

moved from an initial mainly descriptive, semantic level to a more interpretative, latent level as informed by the research questions. This is consistent with previous TA analysis (e.g., Kennedy, 2018). In considering participants' responses, I reflected on societal and contextual factors, group dynamics and relevant theoretical perspectives. The research question sought to extrapolate participants' perspectives of SNS usage, in particular, whether or not the use of SNSs contribute to objectification and if so, what are the features of SNSs that contribute to this experience. Thus, data was coded with consideration of objectification literature.

The coding was performed manually as it was felt that such an approach would provide me the opportunity to develop a more thorough understanding of the data, and the process of coding and developing themes, as recommended by Krueger and Casey (2015) and Saldaña (2016). Diverse opinions exist regarding the use of software for qualitative data storage and analysis. Dollah, Abduh, and Rosmaladewi (2017) reported researchers' diverse perceptions of the use of a qualitative data software NVivo. The authors suggest that although there are benefits to NVivo it must be acknowledged that the support NVivo provides regarding thematic classification of data is based on key words. They argue whether it is sufficient to identify common key words in documents and classify these words into categories and clustering these key words into themes. Thus, the use of software such as NVivo may be more useful for researchers employing a semantic as opposed to a latent analytic approach, as was the approach adopted in the current study.

As this research was conducted at a latent level and the focus was on understanding social norms regarding SNS use and objectification, the ability to work closely with the original transcripts facilitated the exploration of group dynamics and the contextualisation of the data. Throughout the analytic process I consistently referred back to the transcripts. This afforded an opportunity to reflect on the context of how something was said or how conversation evolved. Thus, working manually with the data was a way of developing a better understanding of the data, the group dynamics and ways that norms were enacted.

Once all data was coded, the full list of codes was typed up and included in the analytic memos. Following this, a Microsoft Word document was created; quotes were extracted from the transcripts and the corresponding code(s) designated to the quote (see Table 30; coding round one for an example).

3. Searching for themes.

In creating the Word document and reading through the quotes, I generated initial ideas for how the codes could be categorised. I grouped codes into categories and potential themes using visual mind maps (Appendix EE). Braun and Clarke (2006) note that “data within a theme should cohere together meaningfully, while there should be clear and identifiable distinctions between themes” (p.91). This was considered when developing initial candidate themes and during revision of themes throughout the analytic process.

I began writing up my interpretation of the data by outlining the initial candidate themes (Appendix EE), for example, “Identity Development and Pervasiveness of SNSs”, and including the relevant coded quotes underneath. These candidate themes were discussed with my supervisors. At this stage I had a sense of the significance of the different themes and was conscious that some were more relevant to my research questions.

4. Reviewing themes.

In line with a critical realist approach and in accordance with Braun and Clarke (2006, 2013) inter-rater reliability was not explicitly sought. This is in acknowledgement that the process of collecting and interpreting data is always subjective, in some way shaped by the researcher themselves. However, as the assistant-moderator had been present at each of the focus groups and had contributed feedback regarding the groups through note taking and debriefing sessions her interpretation of the themes was sought “as an additional layer of reflection” (Tebbe, Moradi, Connelly, Lenzen, & Flores, 2018, p.5). Accordingly, I sent the coded data extracts to the assistant-moderator. She read through this document and developed her own candidate themes (Appendix FF). We met and discussed the faithfulness of the coding to the data and how these codes could be categorised and combined to form overarching themes. We reflected on the candidate themes we had each developed and whether or not candidate themes should be combined or subthemes developed. This process supported the refinement and clarification of themes and facilitated greater reflection on themes that fit the specific research questions.

Concurrently I had begun reading back through the coded extracts, recoding the extracts for the second time, in an attempt to tease out any potential ways that the data could be coded and as a way to clarify codes as I went through the transcripts (See Table 30; coding round two). Braun and Clarke (2006) explain that “analysis is not a linear process” but that “movement is back and forth as needed” (p.86). As this phase involved “reviewing themes” I wanted to return to the coded data extracts prior to “defining” themes. The original codes and second round of codes were amalgamated to form a finalised list. From this a mind

map was developed with similar codes cohering around certain ideas and connections identified between codes and categories (see Appendix GG). It was evident that some of the original candidate themes and categories were similar to those developed at the second round and there was also overlap between the candidate categories and themes developed by myself and those of the assistant-moderator, for example she had identified the candidate theme of “Impact of SNSs on the self” and I had identified a theme “The role of SNSs on identity development”. Developing a process of grouping codes and categories together facilitated the identification of pertinent subthemes within themes. Following consultation with my supervisors, there was agreement regarding the general conceptualisation of the themes but it was acknowledged that the themes at this juncture required further refinement as per phase five of the TA process.

Table 30.

An example of data extracts and codes

Data extract	Code (Round one)	Code (Round two)
<i>M4.4: I know people who post something up and if they don't get likes, or a certain amount of likes they'll have to delete it</i>	Self-conscious	Importance of likes
	Likes (validation)	Self-control over posts
		Validation from SNSs

5. Defining and naming themes.

Having coded the data and read the original transcripts several times, I was confident the themes provided an “accurate representation” of the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006; p.91). Phase five involved defining and refining themes. Writing about themes and discussing themes facilitated this process. Following round two of coding, three themes were identified “The role of SNSs on identity development”, “Pervasiveness of SNS use” and “Concern regarding SNS use”. Themes were amalgamated or dropped if they were not related to the research questions. This process is consistent with previous research that used TA (e.g., Jankowski, 2015; Tebbe et al., 2018). For example, it became apparent that the theme “Concern regarding SNS use” was actually a component of some of the other themes and was amalgamated into them.

Braun and Clarke (2006) outline that “It is important not to try and get a theme to do too much or to be too diverse and complex” (p.92). This was taken into consideration and it

was decided that the theme “The role of SNSs on identity development” consisted of several important components that could stand alone as their own themes. Therefore, “The role of SNSs on identity development” was divided into three themes; “SNS use and the cultivation of an ideal self”, “SNS use, body image and gender dynamics” and “SNS use and psychological functioning”. Thus, the final four themes included “SNS use, body image and gender dynamics”, “SNS use and psychological functioning”, “SNS use and the cultivation of an ideal self” and “Pervasiveness of SNSs”. Within the themes, several subthemes were identified and will be discussed in detail in the findings and analysis.

6. Producing the report.

The final phase involved the production of this document. Consistent with Braun and Clarke (2006) careful consideration was given to the quotes included. Quotes were selected on their ability to illustrate the issue being discussed and in particular on their ability to inform the research questions.

3.3.3.3. Methodological rigour.

Krueger and Casey (2015) suggest that verification in analysis is critical and that in order for findings to be verified there must be sufficient documentation to establish a trail of evidence. Field notes were maintained from the focus groups and debriefing sessions with the assistant-moderator. Analytic memos were kept throughout the research process. Transcripts were reported verbatim. The trail of coding is evidenced by the initial codes written across the printed transcripts. These codes were then written into a journal. A word document of extracts and their assigned codes was developed, the second round of coding was conducted and these codes were added to that document. Both the first and second round were amalgamated and a finalised list of codes developed. Using this list hand written mind maps were developed and scanned so a softcopy could be maintained. The assistant-moderator also developed handwritten mind maps which were also scanned and stored softcopy. These documents have been maintained for verification purposes.

As recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2013) inter-rater reliability was not explicitly sought. Although attempts were made to consolidate themes and discussions were held between the researcher-moderator, assistant-moderator and supervisors, there are potentially several interpretations of the data. The analysis of this data is subjective and was influenced by the theoretical perspectives discussed below.

3.3.3.4. Theoretical influences on analysis.

The analysis drew broadly upon feminist research (e.g., Bartky, 1990, Kaschak, 1992) and in particular on the specific feminist theoretical framework, objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). As in Ellison, Heino, and Gibbs (2006) study, this research neither represents a technologically deterministic approach which emphasises the characteristics of the technologies, nor a socially deterministic approach that focuses on user behaviour, but takes a social shaping perspective (e.g., Dutton, 1996, as cited in Ellison et al., 2006). Social shaping of technology approach emphasises that SNSs both shape and are shaped by social factors.

3.4. Results

The findings pertaining to four themes and their subthemes are presented below (See Table 31. for an overview of themes and subthemes that will be discussed). Quotes will be included throughout the findings and are annotated with the gender of the participant and an identification number pertaining to the participants group membership (e.g., Martha who took part in the first focus group, her responses will be coded F1.1 etc).

Table 31.

Final themes and subthemes.

Theme:	Subthemes:
SNS use, body image and gender dynamics	Objectification and SNSs SNSs and the socialisation of women's appearance ideals SNSs and the socialisation of men's appearance ideals "Fitspiration" and consequences for body image Self-control and appearance ideals SNSs and sexualisation and appearance pressure on young people
SNS use and psychological functioning	Consequences of online social comparison for psychological functioning Consequences of receiving likes and comments on psychological functioning Consequences of SNS content exposure on psychological functioning SNS use and being in the moment SNS use as a waste of time Privacy concerns and anxiety

SNS use and the cultivation of an ideal self	Authenticity on SNSs
	Conformity on SNSs
Pervasiveness of SNSs	Purposes and reasons for SNS use
	Monitoring behaviours and policing of online content

An example of a theme, subthemes and their corresponding codes are presented in Table 32. (for a full overview of all themes, subthemes and codes see Appendix HH Table 33. to Table 36.).

Table 32.

Example of a theme, subthemes and corresponding codes.

Theme 2.	Subtheme/Codes:	Code:
Ideal self on SNSs	Authenticity on SNSs	Difference between online and offline behaviours
		Falseness of SNSs/Falseness of representations on SNSs/ Superficial feedback from others on SNSs
		SNSs fosters narcissism
		Ability to edit content
	Conformity on SNSs	Pressure to conform
		Viral trends
		Judging others on SNSs
		Self-brand and SNSs

Prevalence was reported at the data set and participant level (Braun & Clarke, 2006) (See Table 29).

Table 29.

Prevalence of themes across focus groups and participants

Theme	Prevalence within each data set (i.e. within each focus group).	Prevalence across participants
Theme 1: SNS use, body image and gender dynamics	7	31

Theme 2: SNS use and psychological functioning	7	30
Theme 3: SNS use and the cultivation of an ideal self	7	31
Theme 4: Pervasiveness of SNS	7	32

All themes will be outlined, however a particular focus on the theme “SNS use, body image and gender dynamics” will be presented and discussed in the greatest detail as this theme in particular, informed the aims of this study. The interpretation and analysis of the findings will be presented in the results and discussion sections of this chapter.

3.4.1. Theme 1: SNS use, body image and gender dynamics.

This theme reflected socialisation regarding appearance ideals that occur online. SNSs were identified as environments where individuals learned about appearance ideals and where participants reported they compared their appearances with peers and celebrities. Both women’s and men’s appearance ideals were identified and the pressure to conform to these ideals was expressed by female “...*watching Beauty Guru’s being like Oh my God they’re amazing and being like why can’t I do my make-up like that or like why can’t I look like that...*” (F1.2), and male participants “*I’d be more actually a bit jealous....see a fella in good shape*” (M6.4). The way that participants spoke about sexualisation, appearance pressure and objectification was indicative of gendered experiences. The subthemes of “Objectification and SNSs”, “SNSs and the socialisation of women’s appearance ideals”, “SNSs and the socialisation of men’s appearance ideals”, “fitspiration and consequences for body image”, “self-control and appearance ideals” and “SNSs and sexualisation and appearance pressure on young people” are outlined. Of note is the gendered experiences as several of these subthemes were discussed predominantly by, and relate to, female participants’ experiences.

3.4.1.1. Subtheme: Objectification and SNSs.

SNSs were acknowledged as a space in which objectification can occur; however, the extent to which participants discussed examples of objectification varied within the groups.

Examples of objectification included the objectification of women, the objectification of men, as well as self-objectification. Different aspects and components of SNSs were deemed to contribute to objectification. Predominantly the photo-based aspects of sites and image-based sites such as Instagram, “*Instagram 100%*” (M6.4), Snapchat “*Snapchat because Snapchat is constant photos*” (M4.4), dating sites “*any dating ones, Tinder would be number one*” (F3.5), and Facebook, “*Facebook, yeah actually all of them*” (F1.1) were reported as contributing to objectification. The advertising components of SNSs were also identified as contributory factors.

M5.4...click bait it might be a misleading headline or it might just be a photo of a girl or whatever you know selling that way, or even for promoting events ... they show this like one video objectifying, showing good looking people dancing or whatever it's like, it just seems that it literally goes into the idea that sex sells

SNS use was also reported as facilitating the formulation of impressions and the objectification of others “*I know my girlfriend she'd be looking at, if girls went on nights out, she'd check out their clothes and stuff...she creates an impression of someone based on their photos...*” (M 5.4).

Participants discussed the importance of appearance in attracting a partner online.

M4.3: I'd say it's completely based on objectification because like when you search for people, you're not, they're not looking at their personality, looking at what they're wearing, what they look like, what type of figure they have, that's what is of concern and if that doesn't fit what you're looking for you're not going to be interested

M6.4: Tinder as well because you only get 5 or 6 photos to kind of portray yourself, you know to try get a date I suppose and it's like you only get a short little bio and it's all down to the photos ...Tinder is definitely, like that's what it's there for. That's the purpose of it.

Participants were critical of dating sites such as Tinder and Grindr for being over reliant on image “*Like you are literally swiping based on a person's picture*” (F3.5). By predominantly focusing on users' image these sites may facilitate and propagate the message that image is a reflection of self-worth and ability to attract a partner. These SNSs were identified as contributing to the commodification and objectification of people as users browse pages looking for a potential image they like.

M 5.3: ...on Grindr as well like when you sign up you have to choose what type of person you belong to because in the gay community there's a few body types... if you don't fit into any of them then it's just like where do I go..., on profiles, there's quite a lot of racism as well, like you can just say out-front like no blacks, no Asians, no fems, no fat

The consequences of the categorisation of bodies appears to contribute to feelings of a loss of identity. There is research to support that gay men are more likely to experience objectification than heterosexual men (Engeln-Maddox et al., 2011; Martins et al., 2007), and that Grindr may facilitate increased objectification of men (Anderson et al., 2018). Typically, dominant appearance ideals reflect heteronormative appearance ideals and those who do not meet these norms may experience negative consequence (Ringrose & Renold, 2010). Within gay culture, it seems that power relations prevail as specific body types are deemed more attractive. Furthermore, it seems that seeing people in terms of how they can be categorised goes beyond body “types” and contributes to thinking about people in terms of all aspects of their appearance or their perceived attitudes, beliefs, or personality. This function on dating sites may contribute to stereotyping and promote and accept the articulation and expression of racist and discriminatory attitudes.

The findings suggest that dating sites may be used for homosocial male bonding “*Like Tinder's just a shop window...when you think of people sitting with their mates and like “aw yeah she's grand, aw no she's rotten” that's what it is like...*” (M5.2). This is consistent with previous research that suggests a characteristic of hegemonic masculine identity expression is engaging in the sexual objectification of women and discourses which promote heteronormative sex (Allen, 2005; Flood, 2008). Conceptualising Tinder as a “*shop window*” (M5.2) is indicative of the commodification and objectification of bodies on these sites.

Participants' responses suggested that SNSs contribute to self-objectification as they actively engaged in reflecting on an observer's perspective of the self “*Yeah probably wouldn't post anything unless I thought I looked half decent in it...*” (M6.4), “*I'd be worrying what people think of me by what I upload*” (F2.1). Both female and male participants discussed examples of monitoring their physical appearance upon contemplation of posting online.

M5.3: I actually have struggled with body issues in the past...I was doing a little trip around Europe... I went into the lake for a little swim... I came out and I was

like “Aw you know what this would be a great selfie”, just me, the lake and the mountains in the back but then I’d just come out of the lake so obviously I was wearing my trunks and stuff but I got really self-conscious about myself and was just like what angle do I go at? ... I’m obviously not wearing a lot of clothes and I don’t want to show off too much of my body because I’m not really confident about my body

This is a clear example of how SNS use or contemplation of SNS use, may facilitate increased experiences of self-objectification. From M5.3’s response, it seems that only upon considering posting a selfie, did he become body-conscious. Perhaps reflection of posting a selfie may have contributed to him thinking how his image would be received and how he would appear to others, thus contributing to self-objectification.

Participant M5.3, also discussed how SNSs contribute to the objectification of men and perpetuate specific appearance ideals for men which could contribute to the development of an unhealthy relationship with one’s body.

M 5.3: ... there’s stuff like “oh look at his abs, you can grate cheese off them” and that creates like a very refined image of what a man should be and that causes a lot of body issues for maybe guys who are skinny or guys who are maybe a little bit chubby and it’s like, Oh I’m not desirable because I’m not tall and I don’t have a rippling chest or something so I think on both sides of the coin there’s objectification of some sort but I think it’s, it’s even more tolerated with men because it’s almost like Oh lets objectify men to like cancel out the objectification of women... it’s just creating a whole new problem

He raises an interesting point that perhaps the objectification of men has been accepted as objectification in general is so pervasive in society. Research suggests there are increased rates of the objectification of men in the media (Rohlinger, 2002). Male participants also reported experiencing a sexualised gaze by women and were conscious of their appearance online as a result “... you are kind of trying to put up pictures of yourself and girls are kind of judging you on your appearance” (M4.2).

One participant considered a gender-based analysis of experiences of objectification. F3.1’s response suggests that through women’s own experiences of self-objectification, a heightened concern and awareness of appearance may be developed, and women may engage in increased objectification of others.

F3.1: I think it's worse for boys as well, like one of my cousins... he's always like girls, and complaining like girls have such like shallow expectations and stuff and I don't know I think it affects boys pretty seriously as well... it's kind of talked about towards women all the time but I think that it's pretty bad for men as well

Objectification being considered “worse for boys” highlights the socialisation and implicit gender stereotypes in society as it is normalised that women should be concerned with appearance but unusual and perhaps as a result deemed worse when men express appearance pressure. The framing of this statement is another example of the discourse of policing and blaming that women experience.

Men's objectification of women also emerged from the data.

M4.2: ...say if your mate got stuck into some bird there last week, and he's talking about how great she is, you're just gonna pop, well you might just pop on to her Facebook and have a creep through all her photos and like is she as good as he says. You know like say you're going on a date, somebody's going to creep through their Facebook photos... Facebook is a bit more of a creeping tool

This quote is indicative of the objectification of women, as the woman is discussed as an object to be viewed and judged. The language used, i.e., “you're gonna” presents this “creeping” behaviour as normative. The use of the term “some” suggests that she is one of many, indistinct and devoid of personal agency, while the use of the term “bird” serves to dehumanise and objectify her. In this example, the woman is viewed as an extension of the man by saying “is she as good as he says” which suggests that the man deserves validation if this woman adheres to M4.2's standards of beauty. The nature of SNSs provides the opportunity for individuals to “creep on” others undetected. The conceptualisation of Facebook as a “creeping tool”, sounds sinister; however, this could be identified as a colloquial term used by individuals to describe the monitoring behaviours that they engage in online (Muisse, Christofides, & Desmarais, 2014).

Male participants reported that while they judged other men as arrogant or egocentric for posting photos of themselves, they appreciated women's photos.

M4.2: When it comes to other lads I suppose like if you see just a picture of them, lads taking photos of themselves, I'd just think ah they're just full of themselves, but if you see a picture of a good-looking girl and she's looking well, you'd be like ahh yeah, yeah, she's looking well

M5.1: If we're being brutally honest here, I'll say that when I see as I was saying your man in whatever, he's constantly doing that, I just think you're an eejit, but then again there's girls I know and I see them doing the same thing and I'm like, yeah, she's nice like you know. But that kind of thing like I'd say there definitely is like objectification there for me, and it's biased you know, but I suppose I can't really help that

These responses may be indicative of the normalisation of the objectification of women. The response “*I can't really help that*”, may be indicative of the internalisation and acceptance of gender norms. Some responses suggested that the posting of certain content would contribute to the objectification of women.

M5.2: ... I have a friend and she'll post these gym pictures and it's just like there, like aw I got new shorts but like come on!

(laughs)

M5.2: I think some look for likes and I don't know what's the word, like what's the word I'm looking for?

M5.4: you're selling yourself almost

M5.2: yeah

Research suggests that “fitspiration” content often depicts individuals in objectified ways (Deighton-Smith & Bell, 2018) and that SNS users receive more likes for posting objectifying content (Bell, Cassarly, & Dunbar, 2018). Thus, this individual may have been following trends and engaging in this behaviour for validation purposes. However, the use of the phrase “*selling yourself*” is potentially indicative of the assumption that women's posts are directed for men and thus that women should expect to be objectified. Consistent with Ringrose and Harvey's (2015) findings, this is an example of the policing women experience around their clothes, bodies and appearance.

This study also provided examples of the subjugation of women. Kitzsinger (1994) suggests it is important to examine anecdotal evidence and to consider the function of stories participants tell. A particular anecdote stood out to me given the current cultural climate of challenging sexual harassment through SNSs (Bates, 2014; Keller et al., 2016; Mendes, 2015). In this extract two male participants discussed a situation that occurred between a female and male student in the canteen of a university.

M5.4: ... I was watching one yesterday about this girl, this lad is getting interviewed and the girl asks him what's his name and he tells a joke and he looks at her and says "hugh munghous"

(laughs)

M5.4: She goes ballistic, but she starts, she's on camera right so she's just making a scene for other people in the canteen to see and she's like "aw now you're pointing", she's narrating, she's not actually narrating the facts she's just, she's narrating saying "aw now you're pointing at your body and say hugh munghous", she's insinuating that he's pointing at his genitals but he's not even pointing at anything but yet, like that people will actually latch on to that argument online, once they realise that someone's been offended by this and now there's a load of people looking at this when it's posted online, just it could definitely gain momentum

M5.2: Everything's just twisted like, it might not be about that but it's going to get twisted ...

M5.4: Like that's a bad joke

M5.2: Yeah, most people wouldn't even take that seriously, you'd just be like haha whatever, creepy maybe but you're not going to be like "Aw that offends me as a woman"

M5.4: Yeah, well she was claiming sexual harassment in that video

M5.2: Yeah that's fucking ridiculous like

M5.4: ... she hasn't got a clue what sexual harassment is like. Through that kind of social media has been able to kind of trivialise big issues like that, I think the social justice warrior thing is a big element of that and even some of the LGBT stuff like

The frustration expressed by the participants through their tone of voice, body language, and comments may be indicative of their attitudes around sexual harassment. The general rhetoric was that the woman was being over-dramatic, unfair to the man involved, potentially over-sensitive or not able to take a joke and that she did not understand what sexual harassment was. The emotive language used to describe her, i.e., "*she goes ballistic*", implies she is irrational and emotional. Theorists have argued that the perception

of women as irrational is a way to maintain the oppression of women (Beard, 2017; Kaschak, 1992).

M5.2 and M5.4s' responses could also be indicative of the fear some men experience from the rise in feminist discourse online (Banet-Weiser & Miltner, 2016). In-keeping with intergroup threat theory (Stephan, Ybarra, & Morrison, 2009), the participants seemed sympathetic and defensive of the man's behaviour and perhaps in order to defend their group membership, justified his behaviour. It is true SNSs have brought to light challenges regarding trustworthiness of content; however, what is of interest is the participants' responses to this woman. In this scenario the participants policed her response and also her feelings, "you're not going to be like *"this offends me as a woman"*" concluding that she *"hasn't a clue what sexual harassment is"*. Research suggests that sexual harassment can range from suggestive or discriminatory comments to sexual coercion (Pina, Gannon, & Saunders, 2009), and that women are more likely than men to experience both sexual violence and harassment (Pina et al., 2009).

3.4.1.2. Subtheme: SNSs and the socialisation of women's appearance ideals.

Participants were aware of the role of the media in eliciting messages regarding appearance ideals. The data suggests that the magnitude of these messages made it difficult to avoid the pressure to conform and normalised these ideals so participants had internalised them as their own.

F3.1: ... I don't really buy into, like I don't think anyone is perfect, regards image but like you still, from seeing it all the time you still kind of every now and then feel like everyone should live up to that and you kind of see, yeah that does look better than a lot of people but I still would completely disagree with it you know, so you kind of think it subconsciously but I always try to force myself to stop thinking like that but it's kind of a thing that like the media has ingrained in people

Bartky (1990) refers to the fashion-beauty complex whereby women are encouraged by the media, beauty industries, and society to invest in their appearance. This participant seems aware of the industry selling an ideal, an ideal that she does not *"really buy into"* but is aware of and has internalised as she does agree that it *"does look better"*. Potentially due to extensive exposure to this ideal *"the media has ingrained in people"*, she discusses the effort needed to avoid succumbing to appearance pressure *"I always try to force myself to stop thinking like that"*.

Participants discussed the appearance ideals they perceived as being perpetuated within Irish society. The female appearance ideal participants reported was of a slim, toned physique *“it’s all about you know having a good ass and all that...you’re kind of shunned if you don’t have a fit body”* (F3.5). Participants spoke of using media as a basis for understanding their bodies and how they should appear *“... I’d be looking at other pictures and being like Oh that’s how I should look and that’s how skinny I should be...”* (F2.1), *“A lot of social media sites promote thinness that like then younger ones would think it’s alright to do because you see everyone else doing it”* (F1.3). It was reported that young girls *“imitate”* beauty role models such as *“the Kardashians”* (M7.3), *“I’m kind of obsessed with the Kardashians”* (F1.2). M7.5’s response suggests that one feature which is considered important to current appearance ideals is to have voluptuous lips as influenced by *“the Kardashians”* (7.3), *“I remember there was that, my friend’s sister, that lip thing... she was like 9 or 10 when she did it and really injured herself...”* (M7.5). This suggests that young girls may engage in beauty strategies that create an appearance ideal but could have damaging effects.

Participants reported using features of SNSs such as filters and apps to create a favourable appearance *“Even when they’re taking a selfie, to get the best angle and the filters...”* (M4.3), *“if you’re taking a selfie like you know what way looks good... what lighting...you’ve different editing apps that make you look different”* (F1.2). Elias and Gill (2018) suggest that using beauty apps may contribute to a preoccupation with appearance and body monitoring.

Engagement in online appearance comparisons was frequently associated with negative self-appraisals and experiences of body shame for female participants *“When I look at the pictures that I have against the pictures that they have I do not look as good as them”* (F2.2), *“constantly like comparing...if I’m in a bad mood and then I go on, that’s it like I feel rotten...”* (F3.7). The following extract is evidence of the toned, slim ideal that is persistent within society and the negative consequences of engagement in comparison with this ideal.

F1.2:... there’s a girl on Instagram...she posted a picture like yesterday saying “Oh I’m happy to be fluffy” but this girl’s like muscle, skinny and like completely for most people like you wouldn’t be able to get there and she was like “I’m happy being fluffy” and I like sent it to my friends and I was like if she’s fluffy, I’m obese (laughs)

F1.2: She's like tiny, but like just say that like if they think they're like fat and then you see yourself you're like oh if they're fat, I'm fat

F1.1: It's like what am I?

Facilitator: Would anyone agree with that or

Everyone: Yeah

F1.1: There's one girl and she keeps putting up pictures of herself, just in like a little crop top and she's like Oh my God, so fat need to lose weight, and I'm literally sitting there like Okay one if you're that conscious and you're putting it up, and two you are not fat so like Jesus Christ what do you think of me?

(laughs)

F1.1: Cause they're just like so skinny and stuff but they'd still be putting it up like for attention and then that would kinda, like other people would be like thinking then on themselves, so they're little attention, ends up, people feeling self-conscious...

This interaction suggests that these two young women can relate to one another and have shared experiences in relation to the effects of online content exposure. Exposure to this content seemed to have negative consequences for how they viewed their own bodies. From this discussion, it appears that exposure to SNS posts that refer to people's weight and size may prime individuals to think about their own appearance and compare themselves with others. This is consistent with previous research which suggests "fat talk" and engagement in comparisons has negative consequences for individuals' relationships with their bodies (Fardouly et al., 2015a, 2018; Fox & Vendemia, 2016; Hanna et al., 2017; Jones et al., 2014). These participants compared themselves with these bloggers and experienced body shame as a result. They were prompted by these images to ask "*What am I?*" Their responses are consistent with persistent societal norms regarding appearance and weight (Nichter & Nichter, 1991).

The current study's findings indicated that the pressure to adhere to appearance ideals and characteristics of femininity were not only learnt from the media but a reflection of some of the discourse shared by men about women. One male participant spoke of seeing girls' photos online and thinking "*she's looking well*" (M4.2) while another soon after commented that "*two girls take a selfie and they look absolutely, like they're having the*

best time of their lives... the reality then, they just go back on the phones...they're very dull in reality" (M4.3). It is interesting to hear this judgement as on the one hand M4.2 is saying he appreciates attractive photos of women online and on the other M4.3 argues that some of these depictions can be false and the girls are viewed as "very dull in reality". The pressure for women to adhere to appearance ideals seems to be a complex balancing act. Participants suggested that portraying an idealised appearance "*might be important for like Tinder*" (F1.2), while they also acknowledged the importance of authenticity.

F1.1: ...one of my friends... she only takes pictures of like her face and like edits them and then she goes out to boys and they're like Oh God, and like she's always really upset but like she keeps lying about what she looks like

This exemplifies the challenges women face in trying to maintain an idealised appearance with ease. It also implies that women are reduced to their image when attracting a partner and that it is acceptable for a man to be dissatisfied if a woman does not live up to his expectations. Collectively these findings are indicative of the balancing act women experience as the quotes indicate the requirement to look attractive but also real and have a great personality. This is consistent with research which suggests women frequently experience sexual double standards (Bailey et al., 2013; Ringrose & Harvey, 2015).

The expectation for women to always appear flawless was evident as individuals spoke of being seen without make-up online as a significant event.

F2.1: ... when I first started Facebook, I'd always wear make up on Facebook... then that cancer selfie thing came out with no make-up and that was the first picture I'd ever put up without make up on Facebook and people were like "Oh my God you look so different" like it literally put me down so much that I had to wear make-up then

This is supportive of Bartky's (1990) fashion-beauty complex whereby women are compelled to use beauty product as their self-worth has become so closely tied to appearance. This extract is indicative of the consideration some women engage in with regards to their appearance and may be reflective of this participant having high levels of appearance contingent self-worth (Noser & Zeigler-Hill, 2014). Some participants suggested that the need to wear make-up online was a sign of a person's insecurities.

F3.5: having to actually go and change your face before putting it up onto a social media site now kind of suggests something a lot more sinister ...if I was to go and do that it would mean oh I'm feeling really bad about myself...

F3.3: I think it shows a lot about a person's confidence when they use things like filters and other photoshops, it shows their insecurities

Within feminist literature there is contention as to the role of make-up with some perceiving make-up as being a subtle form of oppression (e.g., Bartky, 1990), and others as a tool for expressing femininity, a creative and empowering art form (Baumgardner & Richards, 2004). Both perspectives considered, it appears as though wearing make-up can provide a confidence boost for women; however, the urgency with which they need to wear make-up indicates that it may be restrictive and become a necessity for their self-esteem. Elias and Gill (2018) argue that beauty apps and filters may serve to heighten appearance pressure for women, so that not only in their daily lives do they feel the need to wear make-up but also experience pressure to present a modified version of the self online. Thus, SNS features may facilitate additional appearance pressure given the availability of appearance modification apps.

Female participants were at times critical of the content other women posted.

F2.2: To be honest when I see these pictures I think less of people (laughs) I know that's a bad thing

F2.1: (laughs)

F2.2: I think less of someone...

F2.1: Don't add me on Facebook!

(laughs)

F2.2:... just to put so much emphasis on how you look..., I just think that they should just be more confident in themselves, you know like exercise their confidence in healthier ways than that... rather than sitting at home and obsessing over make-up and then which picture they're going to use and then you know putting it up and then, I don't know why they're doing it as well, sometimes I think is it to attract boys you know which makes me think even less of them (laughs) but it's probably not I don't know...

This excerpt is interesting from a feminist perspective. F2.2's belief that women can "*exercise their confidence in healthier ways*", may reflect feminist beliefs, which has been identified as a protective factor against appearance pressure (Feltman & Szymanski, 2018; Hurt et al., 2007; Myers & Crowther, 2007; Rollero & De Piccoli, 2017; Rubin et al., 2004). Her negative evaluation of women who conform to this behaviour may be evidence of the challenge's individuals face in confronting social norms regarding appearance pressure, and may be an expression of her own frustration in confronting the status quo.

This excerpt also provides evidence of the policing of bodies and the criticism and sexual double standards women experience, as F2.2 reports that she would think "*less of*" someone for engaging in appearance focused behaviours. Her response that "*sometimes I think it is to attract boys which makes me think even less of them*" is particularly salient as women are socialised to attract a partner, become a wife and mother (Kaschak, 1992) and are then criticised for this behaviour. F2.1 suggested that she identified with these women saying "*don't add me on Facebook!*" In this way it seemed that she was confronting F2.2 and saying that she can relate to these women's experiences. Consequently, F2.2 reflected on what she had said and considered why individuals might behave in this way. This sequence of discussion resulted in both participants suggesting that SNSs may perpetuate and create an environment that encourages people to believe their image, and how they are perceived is of critical importance.

F2.1: ... I suppose they're putting up things and comparing themselves off other people and then everyone's just comparing each other and it's just a huge circle of comparison and feeling shit...

F2.2: yeah

F2.1: you're right

F2.2: Yeah, it's probably not really fair to think less of them because, being sucked into...

F2.1: ...this world of comparison and body shaming and everything

F2.2: yeah...

Facilitator: Yeah

F2.1: ... I suppose I wouldn't think less of them, but if it's what they want to do, but I suppose at the end of the day it's their own life like they can lead it how they want and I can lead mine and you can lead yours, the way you want like

The response that SNSs contribute to engagement in “*a huge circle of comparison and feeling shit...*”, is consistent with previous research findings which report that women often feel worse after online comparisons. (Fardouly et al., 2017; Fox & Vendemia, 2016). Furthermore, the suggestion that SNSs facilitates a “*circle of comparison*” may provide support that SNSs contribute to the proposed circle of objectification whereby individuals engage in a perpetuating cycle of self-objectification, social comparison and objectification of others (Lindner et al., 2012; Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005b). F2.1's response that “*they can lead it how they want and I can lead mine*” may be indicative of current postfeminist discourse which emphasises autonomy and agency in women's lives (Baumgardner & Richards, 2004).

Male participants also acknowledged the appearance pressure and negative consequences of comparative online behaviour for women. Media literacy was identified as a preventative mechanism against this. The extract, is another example of the discourse of policing, and critiquing women's experience, as M6.3 suggests women “*should be more literate*”.

M6.3: It definitely corrupts the minds of some people, mostly women to some extent, for example there was a report by American Psychological Association that nowadays when women see other women posting the body pics and all, they see themselves as a sex object so that destroys their normal healthy life, it leads to like depression,... there are now a number of problems they face, so it's just because of their posts in the social media and they start to compare themselves with other women so that's not good ...they should be much more literate and understanding that everyone is not the same

3.4.1.3. Subtheme: SNSs and the socialisation of men's appearance ideals.

Participants responses indicated that a toned and muscular physique is the ideal male physique, however, several male participants reported that this was not of particular concern or did not particularly engage in discussion regarding men's appearance. Of those who did discuss this topic, it seemed that male participants appreciated a functionally strong body and often discussed the body in relation to exercise, strength and fitness. Research suggests that the physical attributes men desire, may both coincide with

capability as well as appearance (Daniel, Bridges, & Martens, 2014; Grogan & Richards, 2002; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2016), however for some male participants they suggested that they were more concerned with what their bodies can do than how they look.

M 4.6: ... my newsfeed would be full of like men with really disciplined bodies who are boxers and MMA fighters so, you know there's a big thing about men and their bodies, you know being ripped and stuff but another aspect is like their bodies are very functional you know and that's kind of the way I always see my own body, in a way that what can it do and not what does it look like

Participants' responses suggested the psychological consequences associated with exposure to appearance ideals. M1.4's response is indicative that there was interaction and overlap between the perceived consequences of SNS use for body image and psychological functioning as engaging in online social comparison contributed to negative appearance appraisals which in turn had negative consequences for his self-esteem.

M1.4: ...someone that I'd be like really interested in, like fitness and stuff on like Instagram and I'd be looking through and I'd be like maybe angry cause I'd see all these people like "Oh I want to look like that" but like they're all full of steroids and like I'd see friends and stuff as well and I'd be like, it would give me motivation for a bit and then like it would make me feel like pretty shit about myself

This extract illustrates the challenges young men face as they navigate their understanding and formation of their own identity with societal norms. His response suggests an awareness of the ideal and his experience of appearance pressure. The anger mentioned may be a response to the pressure exerted upon men, contributing to them ingesting synthetic hormones in efforts to attain the appearance ideal. His frustration may reflect a discomfort between wanting to conform to appearance ideals, and an awareness that ideals are often unrealistic and the behaviours of people trying to attain them unsafe. Frequently participants reported feelings of frustration but M1.4 is the first to label the feeling of anger. It appears as though this anger is not externally expressed but internalised causing him to feel negatively about himself. It appears as though he may not only be experiencing body shame but more global negative assessments of the self as a result of engaging in online comparisons.

Another male participant, M5.1, reported comparing himself with others and looking at images and videos of men representing the image he would like to achieve:

M 5.1: I'm very competitive with stuff like that to be honest like I'd say when I see, even on Instagram when I see these lads doing these particular exercises, I'd be like I want to try that, I want to be in that shape, I'd definitely say I would kind of, it's definitely kind of a motivation for me

These findings suggest men are exposed to male muscular physiques online. For some they interpret this as evidence of their body's capabilities, for others this is perceived as aspirational and how they themselves would like to appear. In this way SNSs can foster appearance comparisons for men as they measure their own appearance against those they see online and set goals to diminish the discrepancy. Male participants may have framed their responses in a way so as to maintain their masculinity by referring to their concern with their physique as being a component of their "competitive" nature.

M5.1: I think as a country lad kind of coming from a farming background I'd like to say it doesn't have any impact but it does, it definitely does like for me even, boxing was always kind of my main sport and some of the training I adopted then from social media was completely... like why do I squat or bench? It's definitely, it has no actual improvement factors for boxing, it's just I hate to admit it...

M5.1's hesitance could reflect his awareness of hegemonic masculine stereotypes as he seemed ashamed to "admit" his engagement in appearance related behaviours. Predominantly the discourse around male appearance ideals online and appearance pressures was either something that was not of concern to the male participants or a topic they seemed to avoid.

M4.4: I wouldn't say that it would for me anyway

M4.2: It wouldn't affect me, I'd say maybe when I was 16 and had Bebo

(laughs)

M4.2: At the same time, back then you had the popped collar you know all the cool kids had that going on but like now it's nice I don't really care as much it's not as though I really put photos on Facebook anyway and anybody who does, like you know the people who just say take loads of selfies and all that crap it's just, like I'm not really too bothered, I don't care

Facilitator: Yeah, anybody else?

M4.5: Me personally I never had a thing where I'm conscious about myself say online

Participant M4.2 acknowledged that it may have affected him when he was younger but even then, he was more concerned with his image of appearing “cool” as opposed to his physique. His response regarding those who post “*loads of selfies and all that crap*”, may function as a way of asserting his masculine identity and may also serve to censor the group. Consistent with previous research, this response may also reflect a dislike for narcissistic posts (Choi, Panek, Nardis, & Toma, 2015) and selfie behaviour (Krämer et al., 2017).

Male participants seemed aware of masculine stereotypes; however, they may have been reluctant to acknowledge a concern for their appearance in fear of being ostracised or criticised by their male peers. Some participants expressed frustration with men who are overtly concerned with their appearance.

M5.1: ... a friend of mine, and I've definitely distanced myself from him since he started using Instagram...he takes pictures of himself every day topless or whatever in his boxers, posting and writes a thing about how he's a motivation, you know that kind of thing I suppose makes you think, there's a lot bigger issues in the world than your boxers...

While others defined body image concerns as being “*more of a girl thing*” (M7.5) and were reluctant to acknowledge it was of any concern to them.

M7.4: But lads definitely

M7.5: We wouldn't...

M7.4: Yeah

M7.5: pass much heed to it like

M7.4: No

M7.5: That's my opinion anyway

M7.3: No, I wouldn't bother

One participant however, expressed confidence in his appearance and discussed an enjoyment of engagement in self-expression online. This response provides evidence that individual susceptibility characteristics, such as self-esteem may influence the effects of

SNSs on psychological functioning as suggested by Perloff (2014), and Valkenburg and Peter (2013).

M6.3: ... if you feel beautiful from inside you have a confidence level, to an extreme level so it doesn't affect that what people think about my body or how I look, it's like I love posting up my pics whether or not people want to see or not, if they don't want to see they can just unfollow me or stop watching my posts.

3.4.1.4. Subtheme: Self-control and appearance ideals.

Both female and male participants often expressed an opinion that the acquisition of appearance ideals was something within their control “... some girls are like aw she's so skinny that's not realistic, I'd be like it is, but you obviously work for it...” (M5.2).

F2.1: ... it's not like I've accepted it but I'm like, I'm content with it ...back then I was definitely body comparing and wanting to be skinnier, wanting to be better and more perfect and be at a standard that people wanted me to be at but now I'm I don't really care as much cause I'm lazier (laughs)

M5.4: you'd see gym videos or someone who is in great shape and you'd think well they must have worked or obviously, you know what the trade-off is like (laughs), go to the gym, eat less like, if you want to put yourself through that like that's the reward you get for looking that good.

M6.4: ... I'm just too lazy to do it... if you actually put a bit of effort in you could you end up attaining that but then again it all has to come down to yourself and who you actually are and I just don't have that in me to go and you know achieve the perfect body I suppose

Referring to being “*lazier*” is indicative of neo-liberal discourse and the belief that if you work hard appearance ideals can be achieved. Critiques of neo-liberal discourse (Elias & Gill, 2018; Gill, 2012; McRobbie, 2009) suggest that these beliefs have the potential to contribute to increased experiences of shame, as those who do not strive to attain the perfect body are perceived as lacking in self-control and moral discipline (Bartky, 1990; Crandall, 1994; Nichter & Nichter, 1991).

Participants made reference to engaging in body surgery to achieve appearance ideals.

M6.2: ... I stopped comparing myself to how other people look. I can't change my face so, unless I'm really rich and can afford plastic surgery, what I can do is hit

the gym and probably build the muscles up or something like that but I gave up on that a long time ago

F2.1 also discusses “*body surgery*” as a way of changing her appearance. Discussion regarding “*body surgery*” is indicative of the pressure individuals experience to adhere to appearance ideals, the commodification of the body as something that can be altered, constructed and modified, and the normalisation of body work to achieve these ideals. Again, these responses are indicative of neo-liberal discourse.

Participants responses suggested that they believed it was within their control to resist appearance pressure, and that this required a strong mindset “*There’s only the few people that can actually be strong enough to be like no I’m fine the way I am*” (F2.1).

F1.2: I think it can kinda like encourage eating disorders and stuff like that which isn’t great but em I think you have to have like a stronger mindset being like I can’t let myself be like that like it’s not healthy to look like that, ... more regulated on Instagram now but there used to be this hashtags for like anorexic people and they used to like post it and like kind of like promote ... I think you have to have a strong state of mind to be like no I can’t look at that, no that’s bad, but like they need help

This is suggestive of “thinspiration” content on SNSs (Ging & Garvey, 2018), and the perceived negative consequences of exposure to it. Participants indicated that they could prevent themselves from experiencing appearance pressure if they modified the content they followed.

F3.5: I think it’s kind of my own fault, I follow specific things that are going to make me feel bad...it depends on my own mood, sometimes I would be really happy with my body and others times you’d be like not happy at all...People telling me why don’t you go on body positive websites instead

This is reductive and places the onus on the individual as against the content creators. Socio-cultural researchers have challenged this perspective and documented the role of corporations in contributing to appearance dissatisfaction (e.g., Jankowski, 2015; McRobbie, 2009).

Some participants actively sourced body positive websites as a way to counteract the dominant appearance pressure “*Body positive websites...I look at them a lot because like they’re kind of uplifting and stuff*” (F3.2). Research suggests that exposure to body-acceptance messages (Betz & Ramsey, 2017), self-compassion quotes (Slater et al., 2017)

and body positive content on SNSs (Cohen et al., 2019) are associated with improved outcomes pertaining to body image constructs.

3.4.1.5. Subtheme: Fitspiration and consequences for body image.

In relation to how SNSs might influence how participants felt about their bodies, they discussed exposure to “fitspiration” (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015), and the current “*gym craze at the moment...everyone going taking selfies in the gym*” (M7.4). Participants noted the propensity of transformation photos online “*Like how many transformation photos have we seen online!*” (M5.1). This is suggestive of the emphasis and value SNS culture places on appearance and indicates the extent to which individuals are exposed to idealised bodies and dieting/fitness behaviours online. With regards to these transformation photos, participants were sceptical of the images depicted “*...healthy living pages portrays like kind of a false body image like there was one I saw... it was like fat to fit and I was kind of like what? The first photo was fine like...*” (F3.7). F3.7’s response that “*the first photo was fine*” suggests an awareness of the unhealthy appearance pressure placed on women to achieve appearance ideals. Participants felt that exposure to this content could contribute to “*people not eating*” (M7.5), but that the premise of this content “*can be good as well like it gets people into health...but sometimes people can take it too far*” (M7.5).

3.4.1.6. Subtheme: SNSs and the sexualisation and appearance pressure on young people.

All participants were EAs, however they reflected on their own adolescence and their perceived experiences of adolescents. Participants suggested that appearance pressure had intensified since they were adolescents “*I wouldn’t have looked anything like what people look like, or people that are like 15 or 16 look like now*” (F3.2) and that young people may attempt to look older online “*...I’ve a niece whose twelve and if you go on her Instagram she looks about 16 or 17...*” (F1.3).

With regards to SNSs and potential effects on body image participants discussed how SNSs affected them during their adolescence “*it wouldn’t affect me; maybe when I was 16 and had Bebo*” (M4.2), “*...maybe when I was younger in my pre-teens like that would have affected me but I feel like I’m more confident in myself now...especially with body image*” (F3.3) “*I would of cared more when I was younger*” (F2.2). The responses reflected that participants perceived a change in their relationship with SNSs and its effects on their body image over time. In particular the responses suggest that increased confidence and maturity may influence the relationship between SNS use and appearance pressure. F2.1 reported

SNSs influenced her relationship with her body and that she has become more confident with age.

F2.1: it did affect me with my eating when I was younger and how I looked at myself but in recent years I've gotten more confident in how I look and how I feel about myself so I wouldn't be always comparing... unless I go and get like body surgery of some sort I can't change it

F2.1 discussed the effects of engaging in appearance focused comparisons at age 11 years.

F2.1: ...I just got Facebook when I was like 11 and I was constantly comparing myself to everyone so I lost an extreme amount of weight because I was so body conscious, and so self-conscious that there was people better than me, skinnier than me, prettier than me and it made me feel so horrible so like I've always been a person that's like Oh I want to be better

The above extract indicates that this participant used SNSs as a source for appearance comparisons and perceived the appearances she saw as goals to pursue; the result was “extreme” weight loss. The finding that SNSs were associated with increased body related and eating concerns in adolescence is consistent with previous research investigating the media and its effects on body image during adolescence (Slater & Tiggemann, 2014; Tiggemann & Slater, 2013, 2014, 2017). Adolescence is often conceptualised as a time for identity exploration (Erikson, 1968). With the increase in access to information young people often attempt to create and adhere to media informed ideals from a young age (Bailey et al., 2013). From examining the data, SNSs were also identified as a platform from which young people can engage in identity development and can explore expressions of sexuality.

F1.2. ... my sister, she's twelve ... she is always on Snapchat and she is like oh “like for like” and “follow for follow” or like shouting out your friends and being like, it's kind of inappropriate for her age but like “repost me cause I'm sexy” and I was like you're twelve! Please, like you shouldn't be like using words like that

Facilitator: So, what, could you just explain that a little bit more, so I just...

F1.2. It's like if you send them a Snapchat and be like post me on your story cause I'm sexy but these are like eleven and twelve-year-old boys and girls so it's a bit inappropriate for her to be posting pictures like that

This extract is an example of the ways SNSs can support commodification of the female body and objectification of girls at an early age. SNSs provide the ability for young people to post sexually objectified content, as well as the ability to be validated for these posts. Research suggests young people receive more likes for posting objectified content (Bell et al., 2018), thus the validation young people receive from posting this content may re-enforce such behaviour. This extract also indicates that SNSs facilitate expressions of popularity as young people are encouraged to like or follow one another if their own post is liked or they are followed in return.

Within this focus group, F1.1 also expressed concern for the type of content young people post “...*My little sister’s year in secondary school are horrible for like, the pictures they put up like can be like inappropriate and loads of people commenting so much horrible stuff on them...*” Given the anonymity, persistence and replicability of online content (boyd, 2008; Slonje & Smith, 2008), the consequences of objectification (e.g., see Moradi & Huang, 2008 for review), and the consequences of receiving negative feedback for self-esteem and well-being (Valkenburg et al., 2006) this concern is not unfounded. Research, however, has also criticised research trends for expressing a consistent protectionist view regarding young people as SNS users, and found that young girls can critically engage with the media and are not destined to adhere to the sexualisation they are exposed to (Vares et al., 2011).

3.4.2. Theme 2: SNS use and psychological functioning.

Participants discussed the perceived consequences of SNS use for several dimensions of their overall functioning and development of the self. Several subthemes were identified and were discussed at length within the groups. These included “the consequences of online social comparison for psychological functioning”, “the consequences of receiving likes and comments on psychological functioning”, “SNS use and being in the moment”, “SNS use as a waste of time”, “consequences of SNS content exposure on psychological functioning,” and “privacy concerns and anxiety”.

Participants acknowledged that being consistently accessible and spending extensive time consuming online content may contribute to mental health difficulties experienced today “*I think the consumption of it, because I don’t think you would have all these issues if it wasn’t after becoming this big global thing*” (M6.4). Furthermore, participants recognised that they may not want to feel as though SNSs affect them, but as it plays such a significant role in their lives they suggested it is bound to have some effect “*I think in relation to*

feelings it has to affect you subconsciously ...whether we want to admit that or not”. (M4.3). Participants seemed conscious of the complex relationship SNS use could have on their psychological functioning and recognised the potential strengths and limitations of its use *“Like it can benefit you but it can also be incredibly terrible for like, it can make you feel horrible about yourself”* (F2.1). Maturity and confidence were considered factors countering potential negative effects of SNSs. This is supportive of hypotheses that suggest individual susceptibility characteristics influence the relationship between SNS use and psychological functioning (Perloff, 2014; Valkenburg & Peter, 2013). Participants reported that living in a culture dominated by SNSs was challenging for them as EAs, and may have been more challenging during adolescence.

F3.2: If I was on like Instagram and stuff at the age of maybe 15 or 16 it would have been a lot worse... I think confidence is a big thing if you're kind of sure of yourself you can easily brush it off but I know at 15 or 16 I definitely wasn't so I would have taken everything to heart.

SNSs facilitate accessibility to information, and communication can occur with great ease (boyd & Ellison, 2007). With these developments, however, participants reported an overwhelming feeling *“...it just felt kind of energy draining and not real”* (F3.1), as well as concern for privacy and how content can be used *“I'd just be afraid in a couple of years' time it would come back to bite you”* (M4.3). Feeling overwhelmed by SNSs is consistent with previous EA research on internet use (McMillan & Morrison, 2006).

3.4.2.1. Subtheme: The consequences of online social comparison for psychological functioning.

The extent to which people compared themselves with others was identified as the main contributing factor to negative psychological functioning. SNSs were identified as an environment to engage in comparisons regarding, appearance, lifestyle, achievements etc. with a global network of individuals *“It's total comparison, comparing constantly, comparing my life.... it's kind of hard not to when you're like scrolling”* (F3.7).

On days when individuals may already be feeling negative about themselves, SNSs were discussed as contributing to negative mood and comparative thinking *“yeah like I find it like some days like when I'm having like a bad day, I can't go on it because I find it really hard, like I find it like it's just pressuring...”* (F2. 1), *“constantly like comparing...If I'm in a bad mood and then I go on, that's like it, I feel rotten”* (F3.7). M1.4 discussed how he felt following engagement in comparisons with fitness images on Instagram.

M1.4: ... I go through it for ages and it just makes me feel a bit shitty but then at the same time it makes me feel good like “Aw I want to be like that” so like gives me kind of a goal to work for but at the same time you see so much of it that it just, sometimes it gets a bit much

The pervasiveness of SNS content and ability to return to this content and “go through it for ages” (M1.4) had consequences for participants’ mood, “I think Instagram affects my mood the most because you’re constantly seeing like people’s lives and like their perfect body image and all their healthy food and how they go on all these great holidays (F3.7). The accessibility of content also contributed to individuals feeling overwhelmed, “it gets a bit much” (M1.4), “it’s just pressuring” (F2.1). Research suggests that passively consuming the photos and content of others may have negative consequences as it facilitates rumination (Frost & Rickwood, 2017).

The data suggests that engagement in online comparisons can have consequences for well-being (Pavot & Diener, 1993), including consequences for affect, “might feel jealous” (M6.1), “make bad moods worse” (3.2) and life satisfaction “make you feel as though your own life isn’t as good” (M4.2), “If you see someone in like Dubai or somewhere like that, while we’re here, they’re living the life (M7.5). In general, participants acknowledged that this experience is prior mood dependant, that is, if their life is going well, they are less likely to have a negative outlook, whereas if experiencing their own difficulties SNSs can heighten the negative effects. Participants engaged in specific strategies including a complete avoidance of SNSs to prevent negative consequences “To keep reminding yourself it’s not real, like so much of it is not real like you can enjoy your life without comparing yourself to these fake things on social media.” (F3. 3).

F3.5: I have banned myself from using them at certain times, like depending on my mood ... there would be times when life isn’t so great and you go onto Facebook and you see like what everyone, either people enjoying their lives or giving out about their lives and it’s very easy to kind of be comparing yourself or even just to be negative, like I’d be judging people... I know myself that at certain times I need to be wary of social media...

Negative appearance comparisons had consequences for participants' psychological functioning “... if you’re having a low self-esteem, low confidence day, like if you’re on like Instagram or Twitter and you see celebrities it kinda makes you feel a bit like Oh I’m not like them” (F1.2). Engagement in appearance comparison had the potential to

contribute to shame as F1.2 reflected *“Why can’t I look like that?”*, she seemed aware of the negative consequence of this type of thinking as she continued *“Try not to think too much about it”*.

Comparisons were not only appearance but also lifestyle focused.

M6.3: It’s not because I’m jealous of the way that they look, it’s like... I wish I could be at that place; I wish I could live that moment...

M6.4: I would agree with that you know being like that but then I’d also I’d be more actually a bit jealous of certain things you know... you go to the beach or whatever and you just see a fella in good shape and he has a good-looking girlfriend and stuff like that and you’d kind of be like oh that would be nice wouldn’t it

Participants described how the ability to compare their own lives with the lives of others online may serve to enhance self-critical behaviour and contribute to feelings of guilt.

F3.2: I think it makes it a lot easier to be harder on yourself as well because you’re constantly having, there’s so many different lives that you’re comparing like a part of yours to just from a picture and then you know if you see people doing more than you’re doing then you feel guilty and stuff. I think it’s easier to be harder on yourself.

For some, media literacy moderated the effects of SNSs. However, this also might be an indication of social desirability in the group *“I suppose like if I see people doing great things it’s not as though I ever get jealous of them because you know people are just putting up these pictures themselves... it wouldn’t really bother me”* (M4.2).

3.4.2.2. Subtheme: The consequences of receiving “likes” and comments on psychological functioning.

SNSs were recognised as environments for impression management (Goffman, 1956) as participants suggested that *“a lot of people use Facebook and Instagram as kind of validation”* (F3.7). Participants indicated they post content in the hope of receiving positive feedback *“...the “likes” system... kind of makes you want to put up something that will be liked”* (M4.6). They were reflective as to why individuals post favourable content *“Even for say the likes of Facebook...it’s easier to abide by the societal norms than be different because if you’re different you leave yourself open to people being hard on you”* (M4.1).

Consequently, participants reported that their mood fluctuates in accordance with the feedback received *“if you have a negative comment on your posts or something that destroys your mood, so it’s better to take some time off”* (M6.3).

M6.4: It does feel good though when you get a like on a post, there’s no way to deny it

(laughs)

M6.4: There isn’t though! And it doesn’t matter how much likes or retweets you get you still always want more... sometimes you would think that you put a good post up and it may not get as much traction as you thought it would and you know you might be a bit down on yourself, I know deep down you shouldn’t be but that’s just the way I think the world is going. And then sometimes you could put one up and it does fantastically well and you feel great about yourself.

This finding is consistent with previous research which suggests that positive feedback on SNSs is associated with enhanced self-esteem and well-being, and negative feedback with decreased self-esteem and well-being (Valkenburg et al., 2006; Zell & Moeller, 2018). Some participants suggested the desire for validation is never fulfilled *“It’s like boosting your ego but your ego doesn’t ever get boosted it just gets put down”* (F2.2). Participants commented that the validation received online could fluctuate, with consequences for psychological functioning *“Yeah if you weren’t getting the likes on Facebook how would you feel then like?”* (F3.5).

Consistent with previous research (Zell & Moeller, 2018), the indication is that self-esteem may fluctuate dependant on likes received. Participants developed expectations of the number of likes they should receive *“Like if I got like 30 likes I’d be like, pat on the back”* (F2.2), *“I’m the opposite like if I don’t get a hundred like I’d be like what?”* (F2.1). Participants also spoke of comparing the number of likes received *“if I was scrolling through like and you see someone put up like a new profile picture and they’re like getting like 300 and something likes on it and you have like 50, you’re like okay (laughs)”* (F1.1). For some participants engaging in this type of comparison had negative consequences for psychological functioning:

F2.1: the whole pressure of having to get a certain amount of likes, if you don’t get 100 ... it’s not good enough...I find that would be quite hard because people would be looking at your picture and being like ‘Oh you didn’t make it to 20’”

M4.4 acknowledged that individuals will “*crave*” more likes and that for those who do not receive many, when they compare themselves with others, the consequences can be negative for self-perception.

M4.4: ...like if you're that person whose getting all the likes, getting say 150 likes for a post, I think you would crave that no matter what... if you're someone who didn't get it, I guess you know you'd feel crap,

The source of likes was also important “...*my sister, younger sister so I see her, she checks comment or likes and then she'll start saying Oh this friend didn't do this the like or didn't comment...*” (M6.1).

The energy that individuals invest in monitoring their content and efforts for approval online indicate the cognitive resources used spending time thinking and constructing ideal posts, checking feedback, and reflecting on how others might respond to your content. For some participants this was perceived as “*tiring*”.

M6.2: ... I used to be a big fan of social media sites but after 7 or 8 years it's just burnt out, it's a real overload at the moment and the constant seeking validation from everybody else...you keep comparing you know what other people are doing to what's happening in your life and so it gets a bit tiring

Several participants discussed strategies young people went to, to maximise feedback on SNSs “...*she was so desperate that she got her older sister to post onto her own page just to make her page look like it was more populated*” (M4.2).

F1.1: ...my little sister gets really upset, she won't put up pictures cause she's, if she doesn't have enough likes on her photo she doesn't like putting them up and like she'd actually text us all to like her pictures, my mam and my dad

Individuals may be self-conscious as to the number of likes received, and protect their self-esteem by removing posts without enough likes “*I know people who post something up and if they don't get likes, or a certain amount of likes they'll have to delete it*” (M4.4).

Participants also discussed features of SNSs such as notifications and the receipt of friend requests that were associated with improved mood.

M7.4: ...when you haven't looked at it in a while you're kind of, well not look forward to it but you're kind of like looking at it just to see what's going on and if

you've a few notifications or something you like seeing what's there like if you've a friend request who is it like

3.4.2.3. Subtheme: Consequences of SNS content exposure on psychological functioning.

Exposure to specific content was found to have consequences for participants' psychological functioning. Some of the male participants reported that their mood tends to stay the "same as before" (M4.4), while others reported content exposure as a contributory factor to their mood "I think it depends on what I've been looking at" (M5.4).

M4.5: ...my mood generally doesn't feel much different like. I suppose it depends on what content you see when you're there but even at that though there's never anything that really strikes you like you're not going to do anything about it, it's just social media, so you're just kind of like Yeah, it's there but...Nothing lasts, it doesn't last, just in that moment

Participants' responses indicated that by filtering and monitoring content, SNS companies could mediate the effects of SNS content on mood "I just think the whole things filtered now that every time you go on there, you're getting the same content that they want you to see, so you end up roughly the same mood every time..." (M4.1).

Participants suggested the type of content shared online can sometimes be more emotive than interpersonal discussions "People are more aggressive on social media than they are in real life that's the other thing, that's a big factor" (M5.1). Exposure to this content could be distressing; one participant spoke of the frustration he experienced following exposure to cyberbullying.

M5.1: ...I always get really annoyed when I see things like, you know that catch me outside girl, going around like I get annoyed that people feel they can comment so severely about someone that's 14 years old or 15 ... it's not something you'd do if you knew the girl or if you were face to face with the girl maybe, that's my issue with it

Participants' responses suggested that SNSs may foster disinhibition, as it was identified that some comments are "very hurtful and it doesn't matter who you are you could take offence to it" (M7.5). This type of behaviour was considered something "they wouldn't do it then in person" (M7.3), but that online people feel as though "They can hide behind it" (M7.3). Cyberbullying was described as a reason for not using SNSs "... I would have got

bullied on it ... I was kind of reluctant to be using SNSs” (F 1.3). Thus, exposure to offensive content and experiences of cyberbullying had negative consequences for participants psychological functioning.

Participants also spoke of “*keyboard warriors*” (M5.3) and “*social justice warrior*” (M5.4), as people who engaged in debates and attempt to protect and uphold the rights of minorities. However, their responses suggest that often exposure to this type of content was a source of frustration.

M5.2: they just jump into arguments that have nothing to do with them, like there’s people, white people jumping into arguments about black people and you’re like it’s not really your fight, obviously you should stick up for other people and all but on fucking, on like Facebook, is there, what’s it going to do? It’s not going to achieve anything

The ability of SNS members to post distressing or harmful content was a cause for concern. For example, participants reported that although SNSs could facilitate greater “*awareness*” (F1.3) on mental health, they also reported that they had witnessed distressing content and were concerned exposure to this content could have negative consequences for viewers. This is consistent with dominant discourse around online safety (boyd et al., 2009; Ging & Garvey, 2018).

F1.1: ...I actually had a friend that used to put up pictures of like her scars on her arm and everything but didn’t put any captions or anything so it was literally just to tell people that she does it, so it was probably kinda like a bit grim to see ...like my little sister scrolling through it, it’s all like at that age I kinda got kinda worried for her

F1.3. self-harming is as well like there is people that put up pictures like there’s ones that put it up that say like awareness as well but then there’s people that take it in the wrong way inside like, that they should maybe try do it even though it’s not a good thing

Participants were also conscious that the content they were exposed to can have positive effects on their mood. They spoke of the positive emotions experienced when seeing friends’ lives unfold online.

F3.3: ...sometimes if I see pictures of friends that I haven’t seen in years that are living in a different country its actually nice to see that, it actually makes me happy

to see how their lives are getting on and things, I might even contact them and see like Oh how are you like

The suggestion that exposure to others content can facilitate connection “*I might even contact them*”, is consistent with previous research that suggests that online engagement can enhance and contribute to the development of social connections (Ellison et al., 2007; Valkenburg & Peter, 2007a, 2009). Participants also reported that exposure to content that made them feel a sense of connection to their home, had a positive impact.

M6.2: I'm from India, if there's a festival going on in India, and the people are snapchatting and they're using posts on Instagram or something, I would rather like to watch that thing so It'll feel like home... so that would be a positive thing for me

Furthermore, participants expressed enjoyment of exposure to certain content and reported that SNS use could facilitate the development of positive feeling about others: “...*Simon Zebo ... through watching him on social media I feel like he's a funny fella, or good craic or someone you'd like to be around*” (M7.3), “*It doesn't even have to be celebrities like, just judging peoples Instagram you'd be like ah he's very funny from Instagram...*” (M7.5).

3.4.2.4. Subtheme: SNS use and being in the moment.

Achieving a sense of “flow” and maintaining the ability to fully immerse oneself in a given task has been associated with increased happiness and life satisfaction (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988). Although several participants perceived SNSs as infringing on their ability to be in the moment, “...*it sorts of ruins the experience for you when you're trying to show other people, Oh look how much fun I'm having and it really, you're kind of distracted*” (M6.2), “*you're not really enjoying the thing that's happening, but just keep putting stories on Snapchat*” (F7.2), some considered that the positive feedback afforded from online engagement, may outweigh the satisfaction of being in the moment.

M6.4: But do you think then that people would prefer to get the you know say, their experience through social media rather than through enjoying the event? Say like they go to a concert and instead of actually enjoying the person who's on stage they prefer to see, you know ten thousand views on their Instagram post of somebody singing

SNS use was also identified as potentially diminishing the significance of an experience.

F2.2: ... I almost feel sometimes like when you tell people about something on Facebook, when you broadcast it, it almost takes away the significance to you...

F2.1: It makes it less important

F2.2: It does and that's what I feel and that's why when people do all these like RIP granddad ...like that is important, you're taking away the importance of it...

These responses suggest that some participants perceived that certain posting behaviours on SNSs may serve to detract from significant life events. This is interesting as it is reflective of the embodiment of emotions, as she continues saying “...it's like letting everyone in to the deepest feeling that you have” (F2.2). This response suggests that F2.2 does not perceive SNSs as a space for intimate self-disclosure or for being vulnerable. This is indicative of the different ways that SNSs are used and perceived with regards to self-disclosure (Valkenburg & Peter, 2007b; Widyanto & Griffiths, 2006).

3.4.2.5. Subtheme: SNS use as a “waste of time”.

The perception of SNS use as being a “waste of time” (M5.4), “It's really a time waster” (7.4), and distraction was shared across the focus groups. The ways that participants perceived SNS use appeared to influence their mood states following its use “mindlessly scrolling through stuff and then I'm like Oh my God I'm wasting my life, so I kind of feel bored and useless” (F2.2), “If I'm on it for too long I just feel like I've wasted loads of time when I could be doing something else...just like scrolling through nothing really” (F3.6). Participants took measures to reduce their SNS use.

F3.1: It always kind of when I'm on Facebook it makes me feel crap because I feel really unproductive

F3.2: yeah, I was just going to say I go through phases of deleting them just for a few days just cause if I know myself that I'm not going to be in the best of moods, that they kind of make it worse sometimes and it's good to just like ignore it for a while, so I would like delete them for a while because I do think that they tend to make bad moods worse

F3.3: I can feel really anti-social after using them

These responses suggest that SNSs are perceived as having negative consequences when they detract from engagement in more social or productive behaviours. The ease of access to SNS content contributed to it being a source of distraction “..it's a major distraction

actually that's why it actually annoys me, if I'm meant to be studying that but I feel like I'm missing out on news or like it's so accessible, just click a new tab" (M5.4). This is consistent with previous research which suggests that passive SNS use “*mindlessly scrolling*” (F2.2), “*scrolling through nothing really*” (F3.6), and the perception of SNS use as meaningless has negative consequences for individuals’ mood (Frison & Eggermont, 2016, 2017; Sagioglou & Greitemeyer, 2014).

3.4.2.6. Subtheme: Privacy concerns and anxiety.

The inability to control content and the concern regarding how content could be used and manipulated facilitated increased expressions of anxiety.

M4.1: ... Watch what you do with that information, the decisions you make, like Facebook has all our information now and if you search through it deep enough you will find something that they can make you tick with and it's whoever controls that can also manipulate your decision...

There are specific features of SNSs that prevent privacy from being maintained. For example, as the information is not confined by physical space, it can be shared and forwarded multiple times, content is persistent and can be easily replicated (boyd, 2008; Valkenburg & Peter, 2011). These properties, created concern for participants “*even a picture in a private message to a friend can be screenshot, sent around and there's just no control over it...*” (F1.1). They were aware that others could have “*copied it for their own use*” (M4.1). As a result, individuals emphasised the importance of “*Trying to just control your own information*” and cautioned that people “*need to be very very careful how you use it, you wouldn't be putting any private family stuff on it*” (M7.4).

This is consistent with research that suggests young people conceptualise online privacy as the ability to control the situation, environment and content that they share (Marwick & boyd, 2014) and often engage in self-censorship as a protective strategy (Vitak & Blasiola, 2015). Participants spoke of the ease of access to post content that may potentially have negative repercussions, “*On nights, out as well it's dangerous, those Snapchat stories are dangerous...*” (M7.4) “*Looking back the next morning like Oh... Could get you in trouble*” (M7.5). These types of experiences could facilitate increased feelings of guilt and shame.

3.4.3. Theme 3: SNS use and the cultivation of an ideal self.

Participants consistently referred to SNSs as environments in which users cultivate and edit content in order to present an ideal version of the self. The process of creating and

maintaining an ideal-self brought issues of authenticity and conformity to light and these are the subthemes that will be discussed.

Participants responses indicated a social norm exists regarding SNS users' tendency to edit, filter and selectively portray positive attributes online. Participants described Facebook as a platform that acts "*like your online CV*", a space to "*present the best side of yourself, you make up who you want to be and you present it*" (F2.2). In contrast it was considered a "*big deal*" to not use filters or not wear make-up online "*I mean like not having a filter is like a big deal, it's like no filter, this is me in my raw form*" (M5.3). The function of creating an ideal self can be considered a facet of impression management (Ellison et al., 2006; Goffman, 1956).

One participant reported that she "*would never look like this in my profile picture*" (F1.2). F1.2's response is suggestive of the contrast between online and offline portrayals and the use of apps and filters to cultivate an ideal self "*Even like if you're taking a selfie like you know what way looks good...what lighting...You've different editing apps that make you look different, so it's a lot different to in person...*" (F1.2). Participants' responses indicated that extensive attention and planning is required when presenting an idealised self.

F3.2: My sister, she just turned 17 and even when her and her friends are over before they go out...the amount of control that goes into planning what's going to go up ... there's so much planning and things that have to go into even just thinking about what picture is going to go up

The ability to create and post a perfect photo was discussed as an important component of a social event.

M6.4: ... my friends would be like this when they're going out, the girls especially would be actively looking for that perfect photo...so people can't just enjoy going out for a few drinks or whatever, that kind of aspect has to come into it

These examples indicate that posting on SNSs are an important part of social interactions. Based on these responses it seems posts should portray people looking their best and engaging in social activities. The responses are indicative of the role of SNSs in young people's interactions, a component of the preparation for a night out and a feature of behaviour when socialising with friends. Consistent with previous research (Fox & Vendemia, 2016) both female and male participants suggested that women were more likely to engage in modifying and editing behaviours "*The filter is a good point actually*

because you'd want to see how I look on my girlfriend's Instagram than my Instagram... I wouldn't recognise myself sometimes like... you wouldn't have any imperfections..." (M5.1). It is also interesting to note, that participants tended to report how others such as friends and family members engage in these behaviours.

3.4.3.1. Subtheme: Authenticity on SNSs.

Participants suggested that through the use of SNSs individuals redefined themselves and were not always authentic *"you're not even sure if that's the person you know because they're done up...I suppose it's the image they want to show"* (3.6). They suggested that individuals engaged in these behaviours in order to *"fit in"*, *"Yeah that's a big one people acting, acting differently not acting like themselves kind of living someone else's life like to fit in like"* (M7.4).

The cultivation of an ideal self, referred not only to physical appearance but an idealised lifestyle.

M1.4...you see people putting false information about how their life actually is, like all happy and they put up pictures of them smiling all the time and actually like when you see them in person they're always down and they never actually seem happy...that's not actually how they live...

As a result of the attempts to create an ideal-self online, people were perceived as *"not as nice in real life"* (M7.4) and it was mentioned that *"You often hear the phrase aw they look nicer in pictures"* (M7.5). These sentiments reflect the emphasis on appearance when making judgements about others and the difference between online and offline self-presentations. Filters that can be used on SNSs, may serve to create a further discrepancy between online and offline depictions, as waistline, skin tone, teeth, hair, etc can all be modified using beauty apps and filters (Elias & Gill, 2018), which may contribute to this discourse regarding people looking *"nicer in pictures"* (M7.5).

Participants reported that in an attempt to portray an idealised self, individuals may emphasise their own positive qualities or accomplishments. Consistent with previous research (Choi et al., 2015), this type of behaviour was not received favourably *"I feel like people brag a lot and it's just like it's like a platform for people to feed their egos and I don't like that"* (F2.2).

Participants seemed to value authenticity, and although they recognised it is the norm to use SNSs to portray an idealised self, they reported that individuals should not greatly

differ from their offline selves “*you have to be authentic, the way you act in the real world should be replicated online*” (M4.3).

M4.6: ... I'd say for some people it makes them lose all respect for others when they see them being, posting real performing statuses or put up what is obviously for approval especially if in real life they're not really like that... for me it's just changing my view on their character I guess if they're so desperate to be liked

It seemed that authenticity may be difficult to portray online given the different roles people play and the various online audiences.

F3.1: ... I'm friends with my mom and like people, a lot of adults who I would feel judge me a bit more than my friends would...they'd know me on a different level... you're always kind of cautious who is going to see this, I need to edit all my words to suit the audience so it's kind of in that way a bit false...

These findings are indicative of the complex ways identity is enacted online, as although a social norm may be to present an idealised self, authenticity is valued. The ability to differentiate between authentic and idealised content was identified as a protective factor against some of the pressure and potential negative consequences from exposure to idealised lives online. Participants' level of maturity was seen as supporting the ability to differentiate between content.

F3.7: ... I think until the age of 16 it was all negative, then I kind of copped on a little bit and thought aw like this is all fake and people alter their photos, they only put up what they want us to see,

F2.2:...you were 11... I would have got it when I was like...18 or 19 or so maybe I was a bit more developed when I got this stuff in my face

F2. 1: yeah where as I was just thrown at it and I had to deal with it

In relation to developing an ability to differentiate between authentic and idealised content, participants recognised a need for support in relation to SNS use and young people, “*it's really important for parents and teachers to let kids know that what they see on social media isn't always the truth...*” (F3.6). There was the general discourse that “*...parents aren't equipped to inform them... because they haven't gone through it themselves*” but that there is “*...information on how to speak to a child*” (F3.5). Their responses showed a significant concern for young people and SNS use, and that adults have a responsibility of

care to young people in navigating SNS use “...it’s our responsibility as well to be careful about what we post because younger people will eventually see it” (F1.1). In this way participants seemed to acknowledge their own responsibility to portray an authentic self on SNSs.

3.4.3.2 Subtheme: Conformity on SNSs.

A feature of cultivating an ideal self was the development of a self that will be liked and accepted by others. Participants’ motivation for creating an ideal self and for conforming to trends appeared to stem from a desire for acceptance “You don’t want to be judged, you just want to fit in” (F2.1), “say the likes of Facebook sometimes I’d say for posts, it’s easier to abide by the societal norms than be different because if you’re different you leave yourself open to people being hard on you” (M4. 1), “I felt like I had to live up to like a certain representation of everyone else” (F1.1). SNSs may serve a socialisation function as participants spoke of the efforts made to fit in with their peers online.

F1.1...you feel like you had to do stuff to fit in ... like the pages they were liking and if loads of people were talking about this you’d have to go look at it or like if there was a link up you could click on to it or like see what everyone else was doing.

Participants described SNSs such as Twitter as an “echo chamber” (M5.3) and reported that SNSs can facilitate the assimilation and propagation of specific ideas and trends “it’s kind of funny the way things echo on social media so quickly as well when you think of how things go viral or trends, like what people are raving about, the whole mob mentality that cultivates online”(M5.4). Participants suggested that the structure of SNSs may facilitate conformity.

M4.6: It’s even encouraged I would say, by the “likes” system. To say what is liked, just the fact that it is set up actually for you to be liked, it kind of makes you want to put up something that will be liked

Participants spoke of posting specific content when following online trends. For example, male participants discussed the posting of coffee and healthy food. They suggested that people would not post food from McDonalds. It seems it is not the fact this person drinks coffee, but the location and status associated with the restaurant/café which is important. This is indicative of advertising strategies that associate products with social status (Fitzmaurice & Comegys, 2006; McCracken, 1986) and may be associated with users materialist values. Research suggests predominantly Instagram photos are “selfies” or images with friends; however, a significant proportion are also of food, gadgets, and

inspirational quotes (Hu, Manikonda, & Kambhampati, 2014). Thus, these responses are consistent with image trends reported on Instagram.

M7.3: ... one of the lads just posted a picture of coffee out and I just asked why would you do that like?...

M7.4: Yeah

M7.5: I don't even know the answer just, I do it as well it's just following trends, I suppose isn't it like?

M7.3: Yeah following what's popular, it's gone mad now, like every day is like Instagram stories someone out, a picture of a coffee, where they are...

M7.5: Or salad or something like that, they never put on a McDonalds or anything like that

3.4.4. Theme 4: Pervasiveness of SNSs

This theme relates to the important role and extensive presence of SNSs in people's lives "my Instagram is like "me" it's like what I'm doing on a daily basis, not on a daily basis probably but like a weekly basis" (F1.2). Participants reported feeling "compelled to watch" (M4.4) online content and spoke of addiction to it "but you need it though, it's like a drug!" (F2.1). For some the addictive nature and pervasiveness of SNSs created a resistance and they reported that they have "banned" (F3.5) themselves from using SNSs. Even when participants reported a dislike of SNSs they often acknowledged the potential benefits of their use and continued to use them.

F2.2: I generally don't like them that's why I only have Facebook but, I didn't have Facebook before because I didn't want it but then I just found it so hard not to have it... I held my ground for as long as I could... begrudgingly I have it! I do find it useful to find out about events and stuff...

The subthemes "Purposes and reasons for SNS use" and "Monitoring behaviours and policing of online content" are presented.

3.4.4.1. Subtheme: Purposes and reasons for SNS use.

SNSs were discussed as a means for daily interaction and communication and a fundamental part of people's lives, "keeps you in touch and connected with everyone and everything" (F2.1). Participants spoke of using SNSs in the morning, evening, when idle, when travelling; a tool for daily and global communication. They acknowledged that

increasingly younger age groups are using SNSs “... 8 and have Instagram like age 8 is ridiculous for Instagram” (3.7). Also raised was the ease of access to the internet for adolescents, compared to when they were growing up “... you kind of had to sit at home and like purposely go on it but now it’s on your phone” (F3.2). Participants seemed to perceive that they had “*escaped the madness of it*” (F3.7).

For those who were living in a foreign country it provided a source of comfort and connection to their home “... if there’s a festival going on in India, and the people are snapchatting and they’re using posts on Instagram or something, I would rather like to watch that...” (M6.2)

Frequently participants spoke of either private active use to facilitate communication, or engagement in passive use, consuming others content to a greater extent than creating their own, “*Pretty much just use it for communication, I don’t know when I last post anything, months ago so it’s mostly just talking to people*” (M4.5). Participants reported that the use of SNSs can lead to miscommunication as messages can be misconstrued and misinterpreted “... maybe they’ll say something mean and then they won’t reply and it’ll be like twenty minutes and you’re just like are they being serious this time? ...You don’t know how to feel about it” (M1.4).

Participants discussed SNSs as being used for maintaining, and building new connections and interests “...contacting people as well that I wouldn’t normally see like even if they’re in a different country like I’m able to keep in contact with them and then like groups like societies or committees, sports groups and things like that” (F3.3). Participants also suggested that SNS use can detract from face-to-face interaction, “...I find like in groups, people usually just sit on their phones there’s no like actual communication between people” (M1.4). It was acknowledged that online communication has altered how individuals engage with friends “... the relationship you have with them turns into an online relationship instead of a tangible real relationship” (M4.5) and influenced the cultivation of new relationships “... you’re not really having as much conversations as you probably would if you were off them so you’re not really actually getting to know people as well.”(F1.1) This is consistent with previous research which suggests that increased mobile phone use in social interactions is associated with lower quality interactions (Brown, Manago, & Trimble, 2016).

SNSs were also used to unwind and relax; a tool for escapism “... *people kind of mindlessly look through them and a nice way to switch off your brain ... it kind of takes you, it makes you just forget about your own life for a while and that can be nice*” (M4.6).

Participants also spoke of using SNSs in a dating capacity “*people are using it more like to kind of I don’t know I suppose to talk to girls the whole time and try to pick up people*” (M4.2).

SNSs were viewed as a valuable educational resource, “*you get to know and learn a lot of things* (M6.3). They were perceived as a space to learn, express and share interests.

M6.3: Mostly to see what people in the different parts of the world and in other countries are doing, see their blogs, see their posts, information, their culture, tradition... I also post my pics or I retweet the fashion blogs by the famous designers so that if someone is following me, they too...can get a better knowledge of it

Participants were conscious of the capabilities that can be afforded through self-promotion on SNSs, with adolescents being perceived as being “*copped on*” (M6.4) to the potential of SNSs through the acquisition of followers. SNSs were viewed as a space for possibilities to become realities, an environment where individuals could share their talents and reach a global community “*I think for most of the people this could be an opportunity, social media, for example, you’d say YouTube, a lot of Youtubers have gotten the opportunity to show their talents...*” (M6.1), “*people are creating their own brands of themselves*” (M4.6).

3.4.4.2. Subtheme: Monitoring behaviours and policing of online content.

SNSs were identified as environments that facilitate judgement making “*I wouldn’t judge people which I do right now, I wouldn’t have done that if social media wasn’t there...*” (M6.1), and the monitoring of others, as participants described SNSs as a “*creeping tool*” (M4.2) and reported that they provide the ability to “*secretly stalk someone*” (M6.3). Although these are colloquial terms used to describe common SNS behaviours (Muis et al., 2014), they are insightful as to the capacity of individuals to monitor others online undetected. The use of SNSs to monitor others may be a normative behaviour, as participants acknowledged “*everybody has done it once, you can’t say you haven’t!*” (M6.4).

Responses indicated that there were social norms regarding acceptable SNS posting. Research suggests that individuals may experience an online disinhibition effect (Suler, 2004) and be more likely to share personal information or display more intense behaviour online than offline. Extensive online disclosures however, were often negatively perceived by participants.

F2.1: ... like I did the Concern fast last week, ... I raised €412 in 24 hours and I wouldn't have without Facebook

...

F2.1: ..., there's one girl and she like is on my Facebook and she had anorexia and since she was like 11 or 12 but the fact she posts about it all the time makes me feel... like everyone goes through something everyone has a mental health problem but you don't need to tell the entire world to like know that you're okay

F2.2: Yeah

F2.1: ... even my friends at home say it like she shouldn't be putting that up like it's kind of personal so I think like certain things are personal and important to yourself whereas other things can be out there like if you're going to a party or if you're going on a mad night...

F2.2: That just sounds like someone's looking for attention

We learn about participants' expectations of online etiquette through this conversation. It appears that SNSs are more appropriate for campaigning and sharing information regarding social activities as opposed to self-disclosures. The individual under discussion is identified as having an eating disorder and the perception of her online behaviour is that she is “*looking for attention*”. Acknowledging mental health difficulties is perceived as something too personal to share online. This may relate to individuals' tendencies to want to perceive the world as a just place (Furnham, 2003; Lerner & Miller, 1978), or reflect concern and fear regarding mental health visibility online (boyd et al., 2009; Ging & Garvey, 2018), but also indicates that shame and stigma around mental health prevails (Kennedy, 2018) and that unlike previous research (Moreno et al., 2011), online mental health disclosures do not necessarily yield favourable responses. This could also be indicative of individual differences of perceptions in online disclosures as although these participants did not perceive this behaviour favourably, others may engage in this

behaviour to express themselves and seek social support (Hood et al., 2018; Valkenburg & Peter, 2007b; Widyanto & Griffiths, 2006).

Participants reported a dislike of over sharing online and were critical of those who do so “... people just post their whole life on it and I don’t care really...” (M5.2) “Some people are so obsessed with themselves that daily on Instagram they have to put up two or three posts” (F7.2), “...use Facebook as a diary...that annoys me quite a lot” (M5.3) “people constantly taking selfie... it gets irritating after a while” (M6.2).

With respect to SNSs capacity to contribute to societal change, some participants did not perceive them as a vehicle for social change and were critical of users’ engagement with SNSs in this regard “Yeah, they just jump into arguments that have nothing to do with them...what’s it going to do? It’s not going to achieve anything” (M5.2). Others suggested that SNSs can be misused “... educated people are abusing the way they’re using it, they are literate but they use it to discourage people or create fights or negative thoughts around society...” (M6.3). Thus, participants had expectations as to how SNSs should and could be used.

Participants also discussed monitoring their own content. Some said they “...cringe or whatever when I see my old Facebook posts...” (M6.2) and that their prior use of SNSs “like a diary” (F1.1) was a cause for embarrassment. As a result, participants policed their use of SNSs and engaged in self-preservative behaviours “ ...I wouldn’t post anything on Facebook anymore like I’d maybe share a video now and then but that’s about it but like I used to post constantly all the time but now I like delete everything...” (M1.4). Participants were aware of being judged by others and with this awareness were more self-conscious and cautious regarding posts “People not posting in general is probably a safety mechanism in a sense that they’re not ready to put themselves out there... you’re uncomfortable with being reviewed by your peers” (M4.3).

3.5. Discussion

The aim of this research was to investigate whether female and male EAs perceive SNSs as environments that facilitate objectification and, if so, the manner in which it occurred. This research also sought to understand the consequences of SNS use for psychological functioning and body image. SNSs were identified as environments in which objectification occurs. In particular specific sites such as dating sites were seen as contributing to objectification. Participants responses suggested that there is an emphasis

on image and the portrayal of an ideal self online which contributes to people developing increased body consciousness and engaging in self-objectification.

The findings also suggest that SNSs can be characterised as spaces for increased monitoring and surveillance. The extensive policing and monitoring behaviours individuals engaged in online are indicative of the development of maintaining an observer's perspective of the self, as proposed by objectification theory. Thus, SNSs may not only contribute to self-objectification but contribute to a cultural climate characterised by the monitoring of the self and others.

This research provides evidence that both women and men self-objectify and experience objectification through online engagement. Consistent with objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), the findings provide evidence that women are often objectified by others and that they may experience increased self-objectification as a result of the policing and appearance pressure they experience, as evidenced through the theme "SNS use, body image and gender dynamics". Furthermore, this research provides support for the proposed circle of objectification (Lindner et al., 2012; Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005b), as participants discussed engaging in frequent comparisons with others which contributed to their engagement in self-objectification and the objectification of others.

The findings provide support for the integration of objectification and SNSs constructs in understanding EAs psychological functioning. In particular the findings indicate that individual susceptibility characteristics may play an influential role in this relationship as participants frequently referred to their self-confidence, maturity and current mood as influencing the effects of SNSs on body image and psychological functioning. This finding is supportive of hypotheses which suggest that research investigate individual differences when exploring the relationship between media use and psychological functioning (Perloff, 2014; Valkenburg & Peter, 2013).

With regards to the original objectification framework, the findings provide evidence in support of the inclusion of social comparison in the model (Moradi & Huang, 2008; Tylka & Sabik, 2010). SNSs were identified as spaces which facilitate ample appearance and lifestyle comparisons which in turn contributed to increased self-objectification as indicated in the theme "SNS use, body image and gender dynamics". The existence of, the frequent exposure to, and the pressure to conform to online appearance ideals was identified as having damaging consequences for how participants felt about themselves and their bodies. For example, F2.1 reported "*...I just got Facebook when I was like 11*

and I was constantly comparing myself to everyone so I lost an extreme amount of weight because I was so body conscious". Extending on the original objectification framework, this research suggests that the process of engaging in self-objectification and online comparisons facilitates experiences of shame as following engagement in self-objectification and comparisons participants frequently reported they felt their own appearances were inadequate. The findings suggest that engagement in both appearance and lifestyle comparisons online has negative consequences for EAs well-being and body satisfaction. Thus, this research provides strong support for the role of social comparisons in influencing individuals psychological functioning.

Furthermore, this study found that SNS use can influence mood on a momentary basis, as participants suggested that their mood could fluctuate depending on the feedback received and/or as the result of the content they were exposed to online. This study found that SNSs are pervasive in EAs' lives, that their use contributes to the cultivation of an ideal self, and that SNSs are spaces which facilitate the enactment of gender norms. The findings provide support that engagement with SNSs have consequences for both female and male EAs body image and psychological functioning.

3.5.1. Body image findings.

This research found that SNS use has consequences for the development of appearance ideals, it facilitates appearance comparisons, and promotes engagement in self-objectification as individuals develop an observer's perspective of the self when contemplating how their content will be perceived. Participants learned about appearance ideals from SNSs. Festinger (1954) proposed that exposure to beauty ideals primes individuals to engage in social comparison. This assertion is supported by the current findings, as one of the strongest aspects of discussion was the extent to which individuals compared themselves with others and the volume of potential comparisons facilitated by SNSs. Participants consistently referred to engaging in comparisons with others online and referred to the constant availability of comparison sources. Engaging in comparisons was identified as contributing to negative evaluations regarding one's own body.

With regards to objectification theory, this research provides support for the relationship between social comparison and objectification (Fardouly et al., 2015a, 2018; Tylka & Sabik, 2010). It was through the process of engaging in comparisons that participants' attention was concentrated on the appearance of others and their own appearance, thus substantiating the circle of objectification (Lindner et al., 2012; Strelan & Hargreaves,

2005b). This study's findings suggest that the process of engaging in objectification is inextricably linked to social comparison.

Participants responded that several different sites and site functions facilitate objectification. The current results indicate that it is engagement with image-based functions of SNSs that facilitate frequent appearance comparison and self-surveillance which in turn contributes to negative body evaluations. This is consistent with research which has found that following appearance focused accounts on Instagram is associated with thin ideal internalisation, self-surveillance and a drive for thinness (Cohen et al., 2017) and that engaging in appearance comparisons is associated with negative self-appearance evaluations (Fox & Vendemia, 2016).

Exposure to "fitspiration" content was identified as a current cultural trend which could have negative consequences as the documented "fit" body was often considered unattainable and unrealistic, however, the association with promoting exercise and health was considered as potentially beneficial. With regards to female participants' experiences it was found that exposure to slim women and "fat talk" content by bloggers had negative consequences for participants' reflections on their own body images. Following exposure to this content they themselves engaged in "fat talk" with peers and when they compared their bodies to this content, were left feeling dissatisfied. Male participants discussed that exposure to fitness content contributed to engagement in comparisons which often led to negative affect. This is consistent with research which found that exposure to fitness content is associated with negative body talk and that this relationship is strongest in those who compare themselves to this online content (Arroyo & Brunner, 2016). Previous research has reported mixed findings concerning the effects of exposure to "fitspiration" content on mood and body image (Slater et al., 2017; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015). The current findings did not yield strong results regarding the effects of "fitspiration" content, but participants did acknowledge this is a popular online trend, and suggested due to the restricted appearances presented in this content, this could have negative consequences, but given the association with promoting health and fitness it was also considered it could have positive consequences.

Although few participants discussed engagement with body positive sites, those who did reported improved mood and more positive feelings about their bodies. Research suggests that exposure to self-compassion quotes and body positive content online is associated with greater body satisfaction and improved mood (Cohen et al., 2019; Slater et al., 2017). Thus,

although few participants discussed engaging with body positive content, exposure to this type of content could provide individuals with alternative ways of conceptualising beauty ideals and attractiveness, which could subsequently have positive outcomes for mood and perceptions of their own bodies.

Although participants expressed a critical awareness of SNS content, the findings suggest that participants were not immune to the pressure of exposure to appearance ideals as they discussed actively deleting or taking time off SNSs as a way to alleviate appearance pressure. The ideal female physique participants were exposed to online was of a slim and toned body, while the male ideal was toned and affiliated with going to the gym which suggests muscularity is important. In accordance with gender role theory (Eagly, 1987), women are encouraged to appear beautiful while men to be physically strong having connotations with bravery and power. With regards to the subtheme “SNSs and the socialisation of women’s appearance ideals”, participants’ responses indicated that although a physically strong physique is now promoted for women, the focus is still on being thin and appearing beautiful, as indicated through participants discussion of make-up and using filters for online images. The current findings suggest that although men may be reluctant to acknowledge a concern for their physical appearance, they are aware of the male ideal as being associated with going to the gym and having a defined and muscular physique “*you’d see gym videos or someone who is in great shape*” (M5.4) “*...my newsfeed would be full of like men with really disciplined bodies who are boxers and MMA fighters so, you know there’s a big thing about men and their bodies, you know being ripped...*” (M 4.6). Some men used SNSs to learn about appearance ideals and compared themselves to others online and through this process were motivated to develop a muscular physique “*...hit the gym and probably build the muscles up*” (M6.2).

Participants responses indicated that with regards to their body image, men were not only concerned with functionality but also their physical aesthetic, as for example M5.1 stated that he engaged in certain exercise routines not necessarily for his technique or sport benefit but for his appearance. The focus on muscularity for men is consistent with previous qualitative research findings (Grogan & Richards, 2002; Ridgeway & Tylka, 2005). Furthermore, research has found that exposure to male appearance ideals in the media as well as engaging in comparisons with these ideals is associated with an increased drive for muscularity (Leit et al., 2002; Morrison et al., 2003). It is suggested that men’s concern for muscularity has contributed to the development of new trends of gym use and steroid intake (Brewster et al., 2017), which is consistent with the current findings as

participants discussed the gym and steroids as ways to achieve the ideal physique. Female participants also referred to the use of the gym to achieve appearance ideals, indicating the emphasis on the use of the gym to achieve current appearance ideals.

Consistently participants discussed appearance ideals as potentially achievable if worked hard enough for. The use of the gym and exercise was referred to as a tool for the achievement of these appearance ideals by both genders. The fitness and beauty industries reinforce a belief that individuals have control over their fitness and health (Bartky, 1990). These responses are consistent with neo-liberal discourse which suggests that anyone can achieve success if they work hard enough (Baumgardner & Richards, 2004). This discourse of the body fails to acknowledge body diversity (Orbach, 2010). The current study's findings are consistent with moral discourse on weight and fitness. This rhetoric of "control" and "agency" about the body contributes to self-surveillance as fitness and thinness come to represent morality and self-discipline. Some participants responses indicated that achievement of the appearance ideal was considered within a person's will power and self-control. Furthermore, a physically ideal body was perceived as rewarding. This reflects the ideology that a "perfect" body can be used as a tool for empowerment and liberation (Pylypa, 1998). For both men and women, this mentality translates to experiences of shame and guilt as indicated through the current findings.

There is evidence of gender typing in the current findings as it seems as though women have acquired the values, motives and behaviours viewed as appropriate to their gender as they were more likely to discuss concern and behaviours associated with their appearance, such as taking "selfies" and using filters. Several male participants spoke of appreciating the consumption of this content. Thus, the maintenance of traditional gender roles, women as having to upkeep an attractive appearance and men as gazing on women's appearance, was replicated through online engagement. This is consistent with previous findings that suggest gender stereotypes are replicated online (Bailey et al., 2013; Manago et al., 2008; Ringrose, 2017). Individuals come to use SNSs with an awareness of social scripts and norms and enact gender roles in this virtual space.

Male participants frequently avoided questions on body image perceiving it as a topic of more concern to women. Perhaps their responses are a result of the ingrained gender typed cognitions they possess as gender schema theory (Bem, 1981), proposes sex typing occurs in part as a result of schematic processing, "sex typing derives...from a generalised readiness to process information on the basis of the sex linked associations that constitute

the gender schema” (Bem, 1981, p.354). The fact that some of the male participants automatically responded to a question regarding SNSs and appearance by saying “*That’s more of a girl thing*” (M7.5) may be indicative of the readily available gender typed schemas these participants hold. Consistent with previous qualitative research (Allen, 2005; Grogan & Richards, 2002), male participants may have been reluctant to discuss appearance pressure to preserve their masculinity.

Women and men were subject to and engaged in varying levels of shaming and policing of both their own and others’ online content. As a result, it seems participants appropriate norms of femininity and masculinity into their online self-presentations. Men were criticised for posting appearance content. However, it was women’s self-expression that received the greatest scrutiny by both women and men, which is an indication of the constraints for women’s online participation. Women were criticised for posting “*attention seeking*” posts, for expressing experiences of sexual harassment, for striving to create the perfect photo, for engaging in editing of content, and for not being authentic. These incidences reflect the values of a patriarchal society and the oppression of women.

Women appear to experience a paradox in that they persistently experience social cues which emphasise the rewards of beauty while at the same time are aware of the criticism they will receive for appearing overly-sexualised. The findings from the subtheme “SNSs and the socialisation of women’s appearance ideals” indicated that women were criticised by other women for conforming to appearance ideals and engaging in online modification and image-based behaviours. For example, one participant discussed that she would “*think less*” of someone for engaging in appearance related behaviours and others felt that the need to wear make-up was a reflection of someone’s self-confidence. These findings support those of Bailey, Steeves, Burkell, and Regan (2013) which emphasised the negotiation and complex navigation young girls have to traverse in expressing themselves online. Feminists maintain that objectification is a form of social control as it is a way of minimising women’s mobility both physically and socially by valuing their outward appearance above their subjective being (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). The current findings are evidence of the policing and social control women experience as they were extensively critiqued for their posting behaviour, the results are also evidence of the consideration and energy women invest in cultivating an attractive appearance. Thus, the findings regarding SNS use, body image, and gender dynamics provide support for the contention that women continue to experience social control and as a result are vigilant with regards to how they present themselves.

The findings of this study provide evidence for the original tenets of objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), that women are frequently objectified by men and experience the male gaze. The results regarding objectification reveal that hegemonic masculine discourse prevails within society, and serves to maintain appearance pressure for women. For example, when one male participant shares that if a woman is going to post certain pictures i.e., of her wearing a pair of new shorts, she is bound to be objectified. These findings suggest that a component of homosocial interactions is the objectification of women i.e., participants made reference to discussing women on dating sites with friends and “creeping” on women’s photos. This is consistent with Allen's (2005) findings that men assert masculinity by expressing an interest and engaging in the objectification of women.

Collectively these findings provide support for objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). They suggest that men and women often objectify women. They indicate that women, more so than men, are vigilant about their appearance and engage in self-surveillance. The findings are evidence that SNSs provides a platform for the socialisation of appearance ideals for both women and men. Furthermore, these findings suggest that through the process of engaging in online appearance comparisons, individuals self-objectify and experience negative consequences in regard to mood and appearance satisfaction as a result. Thus, this research proposes that SNSs are environments which propagate and facilitate objectification for both women and men and that a vital component of this process is exposure to appearance ideals and engagement in social comparisons. Given the ubiquity of SNSs, and the negative consequences of objectification, these findings provide evidence on the need for intervention with regards SNSs maintenance and proliferation of objectification.

3.5.2. Psychological functioning findings.

Participants reported several consequences of SNS use for their psychological functioning. In particular, their responses indicated that engagement in online comparisons had the greatest influence on their psychological functioning. Online comparison contributed to increased feelings of envy and low mood, lower levels of life satisfaction, and decreased body satisfaction. This finding suggests social comparison plays a critical role in the relationship between SNS use and psychological outcomes. This is consistent with previous research (Chou & Edge, 2012; de Vries et al., 2018; Fardouly et al., 2015a, 2018; Fox & Vendemia, 2016; Hanna et al., 2017; Steers et al., 2014). In contrast, some participants reported that SNSs did not influence their psychological functioning, while

other participants discussed the potential effects it could or does have on others. These responses may suggest that SNSs are considered another part of daily life, or could reflect participants' reluctance to express their own experiences in the group.

The current findings suggest that the relationship between SNS use and well-being is multifaceted as exposure to specific content of friends or events contributed to positive affect, whereas the extent that individuals engaged in upward comparisons contributed to negative affect. The feedback received from others was identified as impacting on well-being. Participants reported feeling happy and good about themselves when they received a certain number of likes. Participants' responses indicated they had developed expectations as to the number of likes they should receive, and reflected on the negative feelings when insufficient likes are received. Thus, the content participants are exposed to and the feedback they receive can have positive consequences for well-being.

Passive SNS use and the perception of SNS use as being a waste of time was identified as having negative consequences for mood. This is consistent with previous research which found that the interpretation of SNS use as being meaningless or time consuming had negative effects on mood (Sagioglou & Greitemeyer, 2014) and that passive use has been found to exacerbate envy (Krasnova et al., 2013). Participants reported that they often felt "*unproductive*" and "*anti-social*" after having used SNSs for extended periods of time. Research suggests that SNS use may have negative consequences for individuals as it detracts from engagement in more social behaviours which, in turn, potentially contribute to increased feelings of loneliness and depression (Twenge et al., 2017). When SNS use was perceived as detracting from more productive and social engagements it tended to have negative effects for mood.

This study's findings indicate the complexity of SNS use and its influence on psychological functioning. Consistent with Frost and Rickwood's (2017) systematic review of mental health outcomes associated with Facebook use, the findings suggest the multitude of components that could influence users' mental health. Influential factors included participants' mood prior to SNS use, the content exposed to online and the feedback received from others. Furthermore, individual vulnerability factors such as self-esteem were also identified as having a significant role in this relationship. SNSs provided ample opportunity for comparison and participants reported that engagement in comparisons contributed to negative self-evaluations and low mood. Some participants engaged in strategies to reduce the risks, including deleting their profiles. The findings

indicate a tendency to focus on negative consequences associated with SNS use which is consistent with dominant discourse on the topic (boyd et al., 2009). This is not to say there are not positive associations with its use however, participants responses tended to focus on either the pragmatics of SNS use or the perceived negative consequences of its use.

Participants reflected that due to the content and feedback they were exposed to online, their mood could fluctuate on a momentary basis. Research has illustrated that the type of feedback individuals receive impacts on self-esteem and well-being (Valkenburg et al., 2006; Zell & Moeller, 2018). Furthermore, participants were aware that exposure to cyberbullying or violent content could have negative consequences for themselves and others. Research suggests that the type of bullying that occurs online can be of greater cruelty than face to face bullying (Notar, Padgett, & Roden, 2013). Suler (2004) describes an online disinhibition effect whereby people are more likely to share personal information or display more intense behaviour than they would offline, including anti-social behaviour such as aggressive language and harsh criticisms. Exposure to this type of content was a source of frustration and of concern to participants.

The current study provides evidence that the relationship between SNS use and psychological functioning is multifaceted. This is consistent with Frost and Rickwood's (2017) systematic review. The findings indicate that engaging in online social comparisons has negative consequences for mood and life-satisfaction. Perceiving SNS use as meaningless or a waste of time was associated with frustration. The findings indicate that SNS use may influence self-esteem and that feelings of self-worth and validation were influenced by online feedback. Furthermore, this research provides evidence that on a momentary basis SNS use can influence a person's mood as mood fluctuated depending on participants' mood prior to use, the content they were exposed to, and the feedback received. Collectively these findings indicate that the potential effects of SNS use are complex. Both the way individuals use SNSs, their interpretation of use, the type of feedback they receive and individual vulnerability characteristics were identified as having consequences for psychological functioning.

3.5.3. Ideal-self findings.

Participants' responses suggest that individuals tend to portray the most favourable aspects of the self online. Participants were conscious that in order to be perceived in a favourable way, they and others have a tendency to post content reflecting the most positive aspects of their lives, such as holidays, achievements, images of attractive bodies, etc. Their

responses potentially indicated social desirability as they more frequently discussed friends and family members cultivating an ideal self online, as opposed to themselves. Perhaps these responses came from an awareness of social norms regarding authenticity online, which was also discussed. It was reported that online self-portrayals should not greatly deviate from the actual self. Our understanding of the self is often derived from our public behaviour and feedback we receive from others (Baumeister, 1986). Festinger (1954) outlined that in situations where physical reality is ambiguous (such as SNSs), individuals tend to rely on the consensus of others. Thus, the validation individuals seek online may serve to verify aspects of their authentic or idealised identity. Likes and comments may serve to validate the success to which individuals have portrayed an idealised self. They may also serve a pedagogical function with regards to policing of content and norms of posting. With regards to presenting an ideal self, participants' responses indicated that it is the strong, well self that should be posted about, as vulnerable disclosures regarding grief and mental health were looked on negatively.

SNSs were discussed as environments for impression management in the current study. According to impression management theory (Goffman, 1956) people often engage in activities to moderate and present a flattering self-presentation, and control or influence others perceptions of the self. These findings indicated participants were conscious of their audience and engaged in processes to accentuate or censor aspects of the self, depending on contextual factors. Participants discussed that they themselves and their peers modified, edited, or deleted posts if they had not received sufficient positive feedback. This is consistent with previously reported impression management behaviours online (Fox & Vendemia, 2016; Manago et al., 2008; Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008). Goffman (1956) suggests that generally, individuals tend to present the aspects of the self that conform to the group norms and ideals. Participants showed their knowledge of social norms as they engaged in conforming behaviour through their online self-presentations by posting content that adheres to current societal trends. Participants suggested that SNSs facilitate conformity to trends and that this often stems from a desire for acceptance. In an attempt to be viewed favourably participants recognised there is a tendency to post content that depicts them in a favourable way.

Participants policed others' content and were particularly critical of those who posted content that greatly differed from their offline self. It was evident participants were aware of this criticism and as a result made efforts to balance their own presentation of an ideal self with an authentic-self online. This finding is consistent with Ellison et al.'s (2006)

qualitative research that participants' online impression management frequently involves coordinating a presentation of an authentic-self with an ideal-self.

Self-development is an important task for EAs (Arnett, 2006) and self-presentation an important element of self-development (Baumeister, 1986). Manago et al. (2008) suggest that SNSs may facilitate the development of an integrated self as individuals attempt to select and portray a version of the self that is appropriate to a wide audience of followers. It was evident participants grappled with their self-presentation, as they valued authenticity and expressed a belief that online and offline self-representations should complement one another, while also acknowledging that they would monitor and control their own content and tend to post flattering content online. Thus, the ability to develop an integrated sense of self through SNSs may be complex and involve considering how the self is perceived by a myriad of others.

Through the media we learn about topics that society values and learn how to adhere to societal norms. Participants' responses did not reflect a positive association between SNS use and societal issues, but were often critical of individuals engaging in online debates. Although SNSs can be used to facilitate mass communication and support the development of progressive campaigns (Bates, 2014; Mendes, 2015), participants did not report engaging with SNSs in this way and were critical of "keyboard warriors" for example.

3.5.4. Pervasiveness findings.

The findings are evidence of the fundamental role SNSs play in EAs lives. EAs development has occurred contemporaneously with the proliferation of SNSs so that they have been integrated as an important part of their lives. SNSs were reported as being used throughout the day as a form of daily and global communication. Participants used SNSs for communicating with friends or seeking information as opposed to posting public content. This is consistent with previous research findings which suggests that individuals tend to use SNSs to bridge social capital (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). Furthermore, it was recognised that SNSs have altered our interactions with existing and potential friends.

Notably, SNSs were perceived as environments for monitoring others. It was considered a normative behaviour to police and monitor others' posts, with language such as "creep on" and "stalk" being used to describe this behaviour. These terms are frequently used when discussing SNS monitory behaviours (Muisse et al., 2014) and are indicative of the extent of the information individuals can gather from using SNSs. Furthermore they are

suggestive of some of the distinguishing characteristics of SNSs including the features of searchability, replicability and invisible audiences (boyd, 2008). These properties bring to light issues of consent and privacy (Marwick & Boyd, 2014). Objectifying experiences involve the feeling of being watched and judged, based on physical appearance. The ability to “creep on” or “stalk” someone online is suggestive of this type of objectifying behaviour. Appearance anxiety refers to individuals concern about when and how their bodies will be judged (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). The invisibility of audiences and potential to “creep on” or “stalk” others suggests SNSs facilitate objectifying behaviours and subsequently could contribute to increased experiences of anxiety. Participants were aware of the capabilities of SNS content to be shared and used in ways unbeknown to the creator. Participants were conscious of this, and engaged in behaviours to protect their information. With regards to objectification theory, the capacity to monitor and be monitored by others, may serve to heighten the potential for objectification.

The findings also indicate the extent to which SNSs can be a space to disclose all aspects of one’s life. SNSs were described as being used “*like a diary*” (F1.1). Participants’ responses indicated that online self-disclosures were not perceived favourably “...*use Facebook as a diary...that annoys me quite a lot*” (M5.3). This may be indicative of the different ways that SNSs are used and perceived with regards to self-disclosure (Valkenburg & Peter, 2007b; Widyanto & Griffiths, 2006). Individuals were criticised for demonstrating narcissistic or ego displays “*Some people are so obsessed with themselves that daily on Instagram they have to put up two or three posts*” (F7.2). These are characteristics which are often critiqued and policed within society. Prior research suggests that individuals often disengage with narcissists online (Choi et al., 2015). This was consistent with the current findings as participants spoke of feeling frustrated about egocentric posting and thinking less of others for engaging in it. The current study found that self-disclosures, aggressive expressions or narcissistic posts were often perceived negatively as being “*attention seeking*”. This suggests there are specific social norms as to appropriate online behaviour. Furthermore, participants seemed aware of norms regarding the negative perception of online self-disclosure as they discussed feeling embarrassed at their self-disclosures on SNSs during their adolescence. Participants actively deleted or attempted to control this content (Marwick & boyd, 2014).

Individuals were also criticised for publicly sharing information regarding mental health difficulties. By describing this behaviour as attention seeking, individual responsibility for mental health problems is assumed. This is consistent with a medicalised view of mental

health as opposed to a social constructivist perspective. In this way the onus is removed from society and placed on the individual, and this may serve to reinforce experiences of loneliness and isolation.

There are several potential explanations as to the extensive policing of online content that occurred pertaining to authenticity, vulnerability, grief, mental health difficulties etc. These behaviours could reflect participants maintenance of the idea of a just world (Furnham, 2003; Lerner & Miller, 1978), or reflect concern and fear regarding mental health visibility online (boyd et al., 2009; Ging & Garvey, 2018). However they are also indicative of shame and stigma that prevails around mental health (Kennedy, 2018), and the everyday sexism and double standards women experience (Bailey et al., 2013; Bates, 2014; Ringrose & Harvey, 2015).

SNSs were described as being addictive by many participants. In line with Howard's (2004) overview of SNSs, it seemed participants recognised the capacities and constraints of SNS use and engaged in circumvention (Ellison et al., 2006). Participants spoke of following specific pages, e.g., body positive pages, or deleting SNSs at specific times, these behaviours were examples of circumvention. Overall these findings provide evidence for the pervasiveness of SNSs in EAs lives, they suggest that EAs often conform to specific trends online while also attempting to present an authentic self on SNSs.

3.5.5. Strengths and limitations.

This research was the first to employ qualitative methods to explore both male and female EAs perceptions of the relationship between SNS use and objectification. By employing the use of focus groups, norms regarding SNS use could be identified. Furthermore, this research afforded the opportunity to investigate EAs perceptions of objectification and SNSs which may be indicative of levels of media literacy, and potentially increase critical awareness of objectification.

Predominantly the findings illustrate the potential negative consequences of SNS use. This may be a result of several factors including societal discourse regarding the dangers of SNS use (boyd et al., 2009) which may have been internalised and expressed by the participants. Or this tendency may be the result of the questions asked in the focus groups and the research questions addressed in this study given the focus of this study was to investigate the objectification theory framework which was established to assess pathology. Participants did discuss many motives for SNS use and emphasised their usefulness in facilitating communication, however, as these responses did not reflect their

psychological functioning or relate to objectification theory, they were not the focus of the research presented.

3.6. Conclusion

This research suggests that objectification occurs within SNS environments. The findings indicate that gender norms do not dissipate on SNSs, but rather are propagated, enacted and maintained on SNSs (Fox & Vendemia, 2016; Manago et al., 2008; Ringrose, 2017). Thus, SNSs are another environment that facilitate experiences of self-objectification and the objectification of others. Objectification theory sought to document the mental health outcomes associated with experiences of objectification. The current study found that engaging in online comparisons had the greatest influence on psychological functioning. Thus, the findings provide strong support for the inclusion of social comparison in the objectification model (Moradi & Huang, 2008; Tylka & Sabik, 2010). Participants often compared themselves against very specific idealised bodies, slim and toned for women, and muscular for men. Idealised appearances originally portrayed by advertising, have now been internalised and are often replicated and portrayed online. Participants' responses supported the hypothesised circle of objectification (Lindner et al., 2012; Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005) as frequently they discussed engaging in comparisons with others, which caused them to reflect and objectify both their own and others bodies. This experience had consequences for their psychological functioning, as often participants reported feeling negatively about themselves following comparisons and reflection on their own bodies. These findings provide support for the role of social comparison in extrapolating the relationship between objectification and mental health risks.

As objectification theory predicts, both women and men were found to frequently objectify women, and women more often engaged in self-objectification than men. This is consistent with previous research (Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005b). In accordance with objectification theory, women who self-objectified and engage in frequent appearance comparisons tended to feel more negatively about the self and their appearance. Although some male participants were reluctant to discuss concern regarding their appearance, others discussed appearance pressure and engagement in self-objectification. Furthermore, for the male participants who did self-objectify or engage in appearance comparisons, they demonstrated negative outcomes similar to those of female participants, including body dissatisfaction and negative self-evaluations. This finding provides evidence for the use of objectification theory to understand men's objectification experiences as well as women's. Pressure to conform to hegemonic expressions of masculinity may have influenced male

participants' responses. Thus, consideration should be given to gender typed behaviour when analysing gender differences in objectification research.

In support of the model, the findings also indicated that pressure to adhere to appearance ideals may contribute to experiences of body shame. Participants' discussion of self-control and the belief that appearance ideals could be achieved, often contributed to negative self-evaluations. Both male and female participants reflected on their own appearance and felt as though they did not work hard enough or were too lazy to achieve the appearance ideal which contributed to the resultant experience of shame. This finding provides support for the relationship between self-objectification and body shame among both women and men, and the critique of neo-liberal discourse (McRobbie, 2009).

A consistent aspect of discussion within all focus groups was of using SNSs as an environment to monitor others, learn about others, and compare the self with others. Participants were conscious that not only do they themselves engage in these behaviours but that others would also judge the content produced. Both engagement in comparisons, and concern of being compared with, was the most dominant aspect of discourse which was integrated into all of the themes. This evaluative behaviour caused individuals to develop an observer's perspective of the self and self-objectify.

This research sought to investigate the perceived consequences of SNS use for EAs psychological functioning and body image. The findings indicate that SNS use has implications for many aspects of the development of the self: the ideal self, the physical self and the psychological self. Features of SNSs such as the likes function, feedback and image-based content, the socio-cultural norms that are enacted on SNSs, and participants' appraisals of their use of SNSs collectively have consequences for their development. This research indicates that SNSs are environments in which identity exploration occurs. This is particularly salient as emerging adulthood is characterised as a time of identity exploration and construction (Arnett, 2004). The findings suggest that young people use SNSs as spaces to present an idealised version of the self while also being conscious of authenticity online. Furthermore, participants often engage in policing of content in order to monitor and judge both their own and others' content.

This research supports the relationship between self-objectification, shame and anxiety as participants were anxious about how their appearance would be evaluated, and experienced shame as a result of not adhering to appearance ideals. This research provides support for the original tenets of objectification, that men often objectify women, however it also

extends the use of this framework to suggest that this framework may also be useful for understanding men's experiences of objectification. The most pertinent finding with regards to the objectification framework, is the critical role of engagement in social comparison which facilitates the relationship between SNS use, objectification and psychological functioning. Thus, although this research supports aspects of the original model, it also provides evidence for extension of the model to include social comparison. This chapter provided an overview of the qualitative study. Chapter four will now present a discussion of the integrated findings and implications of findings from both the quantitative and qualitative studies.

Chapter 4: Discussion

4.1. Research Summary

The overall aim of this research was twofold. Firstly, to investigate whether SNSs cultivate objectifying environments and contribute to objectification and secondly to explore the consequences of SNS use and objectification for psychological functioning. Mixed research methods, comprising Ecological Momentary Assessment (EMA) methods and focus groups, were employed to achieve this. The research sought to evaluate whether SNSs facilitate an environment for objectification and if so to explore the consequences for psychological functioning, as outlined by the objectification framework (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). The particular aspect of the framework assessed in this research was the relationship between self-objectification, body shame and depression. The aim was also to extend the model by examining constructs such as SNSs and well-being. This research contributes significantly to objectification theory as through the use of mixed methods, results provide support for the application of the framework with females and males, students and non-students, spanning a wide age range (18-68 years).

This research provides evidence that objectification occurs and is facilitated by SNSs. The findings indicate that SNS use contributes to objectification and has consequences for psychological functioning. Findings provide support for the integrated relationship between SNS use, objectification and psychological functioning and the utility of the objectification framework for understanding both women and men's experiences of objectification, across the life-course. The key findings highlight the significant role of online social comparison and body shame in influencing self-objectification and psychological functioning. Specific SNS behaviours, such as engagement in photo-based behaviours and comparing oneself with others online were found to have significant consequences for both female's and male's psychological functioning, self-objectification, and objectification of others. The findings provide support for the original model with respect to the relationship between self-objectification, body shame and depression (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), and also for the integration of social comparison in objectification research (Fardouly et al., 2015a, 2018; Tylka & Sabik, 2010). An overview of the methods employed, a discussion of the integrated findings, the implications of findings and suggestions for future research, policy, and intervention now follow.

4.1.1. Quantitative study.

The quantitative study used a correlational research design, employing retrospective and EMA methods through the use of online questionnaires. This study sought to assess and

expand the objectification framework by examining models to assess the predictors of state and trait self-surveillance, state surveillance of others, state levels of depression and trait levels of well-being. Data was collected from 243 female and male, student and non-student participants aged 18-68 years.

The use of EMA was a major strength as it provided an opportunity to assess participants' SNS use, mood, self-surveillance and surveillance of others in real time. The findings provide strong support for the models predicting trait and state self-surveillance and state surveillance of others. In particular, body shame and online social comparison, as well as SNS behaviours such as photo-based behaviours and monitoring attractive peers online, were strong predictors of self-surveillance and surveillance of others.

A further strength was the integration of SNSs, objectification, well-being and state depression variables. Objectification variables such as self-surveillance and body shame and passive SNS use predicted well-being, while the objectification variable body shame and greater time spent using SNSs predicted the mood state of depression. The results provide strong support for the integration of objectification and SNS variables in understanding psychological functioning.

4.1.2. Qualitative study.

The qualitative study employed the use of focus groups with 32 female and male Emerging Adults (EAs) (aged between 18-25). The aim was to investigate whether EAs perceive SNSs as objectifying environments, and whether they perceive SNSs as influencing their psychological functioning and feelings about their own and others' bodies. By asking EAs about their experience and perceptions regarding SNSs, the nuanced ways SNSs are used and the consequences of their use were explored. Four themes were identified using Thematic Analysis (TA); "SNS use, body image and gender dynamics", "SNS use and psychological functioning", "SNS use and the cultivation of an ideal self" and "Pervasiveness of SNSs". The findings indicate that EAs do perceive objectification occurs and is facilitated by SNSs and that gender norms are replicated online as women more so than men were found to be objectified and policed for their online appearance portrayals. The findings also provide strong support for the role of social comparison in contributing to negative consequences for psychological functioning and body image constructs including self-objectification and objectification of others.

4.2. Principal Findings

Using novel and mixed methods this research found that objectification continues to exist and is cultivated online. The evidence substantiates the objectification framework. In particular, the relationship between self-objectification, body shame and depression were supported for both women and men. Five principal findings were identified and will be discussed in more detail:

1. SNSs facilitate self-objectification and objectification of others.
2. SNS use has consequences for psychological functioning; this relationship is multifaceted, dependant on inter alia time spent on SNSs, content exposure, online behaviours, feedback received and type of SNS use.
3. SNSs facilitate extensive social comparisons which has consequences for objectification and psychological functioning.
4. Shame has negative consequences for objectification and psychological functioning.
5. Gender stereotypes are replicated on SNSs.

4.2.1. Finding 1: SNSs facilitate self-objectification and objectification of others.

Based on the research findings, SNSs were identified as environments that facilitate objectification. The findings suggest that it is specific features of SNSs that contribute to objectifying experiences. Participants indicated that engagement with image-based sites such as dating sites, Instagram and Facebook contribute to objectification and, in particular, engagement in photo-based behaviours and using SNSs to monitor others were associated with increased self-objectification. This concurs with previous research (Cohen et al., 2017, 2018; Fardouly et al., 2018; Vandenberg & Eggermont, 2015). SNSs may be particularly influential environments for objectification given the extensive image-based functions and their pervasiveness in everyday life. Unlike traditional media, SNS use involves both the consumption and production of content. Consistent with previous research (De Vries & Peter, 2013; Vandenberg & Eggermont, 2012) the findings indicate that individuals often internalise appearance ideals seen online and attempt to portray the most favourable aspects of the self on SNSs contributing to increased self-objectification.

The qualitative findings suggest that SNSs generate a culture of surveillance as participants frequently discussed the monitoring behaviours they engaged in. They reported the consideration that went into posting, and that they would reflect on how their content

would be perceived. Social norms regarding online posting were apparent as participants discussed policing both their own and others' content. The invisibility of audiences and ability to "creep on" or "stalk" others was also indicative of the capacity of SNSs to facilitate objectification, and contribute to increased self-objectification as individuals were conscious of the gaze of others online. Thus, SNSs are tools from which others can be viewed, scrutinised and objectified. In this way SNSs have also provided an environment from which users can scrutinise and objectify the self. Collectively these findings suggest that SNSs facilitate objectification through features such as invisible audiences, and most significantly, their image-based functions.

4.2.2. Finding 2: SNS use has consequences for psychological functioning.

The use of mixed methods facilitated the examination of the multifaceted impacts of SNSs on psychological functioning. Both studies provide evidence that fluctuations in self-objectification, objectification of others and mood states are dependent on aspects of momentary SNS usage. For example, the consequences of SNS use were often dependent on content exposure and the feedback received online. The results reflect the complexity of the relationship between SNS use and psychological functioning, as passive use was associated with increased well-being, while extensive use was associated with increased state depression. The findings show the importance of investigating the specific types of content, types of behaviours and participants' mood in real time, to develop a better understanding of the dynamic ways SNS use interacts with psychological functioning.

The results suggest there are positive and negative consequences to SNS use. The qualitative findings indicated that participants' moods fluctuated depending on the feedback received from others, often feeling good about themselves following the receipt of likes, but not receiving enough likes had negative consequences for mood. Several also mentioned how their mood altered depending on the content they were exposed to. Participants reported that SNSs could make a bad mood worse and that the consequences depended on their mood prior to its use. Maturity and self-confidence were also identified as influencing the effects of SNS use on body image and psychological functioning. The quantitative findings indicated that extensive SNS use contributed to depressed mood and engaging in photo-based behaviours and online social comparisons contributed to self-surveillance and the surveillance of others on a momentary basis.

Positive use of SNSs was also raised including using SNSs to build social capital, communicating with friends and for dating opportunities. These motives for use are

consistent with previous research (An, Namsu, Kerk, & Kee, 2009; Brandtzæg & Nov, 2011; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Ellison et al., 2006; Gonzales & Hancock, 2011; Nabi, Prestin, & So, 2013; Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009; Steinfield, Ellison, & Lampe, 2008). Passively using SNSs was associated with improved trait well-being in the quantitative study. Thus, SNS use was identified as having both positive and negative effects. The findings provide evidence for the multitude of factors that need to be considered to understand the relationship between SNS use and psychological functioning, including content exposure, how SNSs are used, and the feedback received.

Consistent with previous research (Steers, Wickham, & Acitelli, 2014; Twenge, Joiner, Rogers, & Martin, 2017; Woods & Scott, 2016; Wright et al., 2013) the findings indicate that spending extensive time on SNSs contribute to low mood. The qualitative findings show that this may be due to participants' perceived experience of spending extensive time on SNSs as a waste of time, which led to increased feelings of unsociability and unproductivity. This explanation is consistent with the findings of Sagioglou and Greitemeyer (2014). Furthermore, those who had spent more time on SNSs reported increased state depression in the quantitative study. This is a salient finding given that measures of state depression have been found to predict relapse for depression. Thus, consistent experiences of depressed mood could accumulate to the development of clinical levels of depression over time (Iacoviello et al., 2010; van Rijsbergen et al., 2012). However, these are correlational findings which means that we cannot infer the direction of this relationship and further experimental research is required to establish causality.

The findings on passive SNS use and well-being are indicative of the complexity of interpreting the effects of SNS use. The qualitative findings suggest that passive SNS use could have both positive and negative effects on mood. Some participants discussed "*mindlessly scrolling*" (F2.2) as contributing to the feeling of unproductivity whereas others associated watching videos or looking at pictures of friends with increased positive mood. The quantitative findings provided further evidence for this positive relationship between passive SNS use and well-being. This is a novel finding, in contrast to previous research which reported a negative relationship (Verduyn et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2018). Taking these findings together, it may be that exposure to positive content of friends or family invokes positive emotions. Research has found that observing an emotion in someone else activates the neural representation of that emotion in the observer (Wicker et al., 2003). Perhaps exposure to content in which friends and family members appear happy, triggers the same emotive response and thus participants report feelings of

happiness. Consistent with Frison and Eggermont (2016), this research recommends future research to assess the content participants were exposed to, as well as passive and active use, in understanding the relationship between SNS use and psychological outcomes.

4.2.3. Finding 3: SNSs facilitate extensive social comparisons which has consequences for objectification and psychological functioning.

The findings suggest individuals engage in frequent online comparisons with negative consequences for their body image, including self-objectification, and psychological functioning. Therefore, it is suggested social comparison be included in the objectification model. Consistent with previous research (Feltman & Szymanski, 2018), the qualitative findings provide evidence that it is the extent that individuals internalise appearance ideals and compare themselves with these ideals that links SNS use to self-objectification. Participants discussed exposure to the thin female ideal and muscular male ideal online, and through exposure and comparison with this ideal, they evaluated and engaged in self-objectification.

Consistent with Hanna et al. (2017), this study found that it is the process of engaging in comparison and experiencing self-objectification that plays an important role in the relationship between SNS use and psychological functioning. Following online appearance comparisons and self-objectification, participants reported feeling negatively about the self and experiencing low mood. The findings suggest that the process of engagement in comparisons and self-objectification may be particularly salient in understanding the relationship between SNS use and psychological functioning.

Online social comparison was one of the strongest predictors of self-surveillance within the models examined in the quantitative study. The findings also reported strong correlations between self-surveillance, social comparison and the surveillance of others. Both studies provide support for the proposed circle of objectification (Lindner et al., 2012; Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005b) and the necessity for research to investigate objectification and social comparison as co-constructs (Moradi & Huang, 2008; Tylka & Sabik, 2010). It can be concluded from the findings that the process of objectifying others, engaging in social comparison and self-objectification are inextricably linked. Consistent with previous research (Fardouly et al., 2015a, 2018; Tylka & Sabik, 2010) this research provides strong support for the integration of objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) and social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) as a fruitful lens for understanding SNSs and their influence on psychological functioning.

Social comparison theory proposes people engage in comparisons in order to achieve an understanding of their role and place in the world (Festinger, 1954). SNSs have brought the capacity to do so to new levels. Features of SNSs facilitate popularity, appearance, and lifestyle comparisons as users can, and participants reported that they do, monitor the likes and comments they and others receive. Participants noted that individuals tend to portray the most favourable aspects of themselves on SNSs; this is consistent with previous research (Chae, 2017; Ellison, Heino, & Gibbs, 2006; Fox & Vendemia, 2016). Although online social comparison was not found to significantly predict well-being in the quantitative study, the qualitative findings provide evidence in support of the relationship between these factors. Participants reported that when they engaged in comparisons, they often compared themselves with the most flattering aspects of others, which resulted in negative mood and diminished life satisfaction. These findings provide further evidence for the integration of social comparison and objectification constructs to be investigated in tandem when understanding the relationship between SNS use and psychological functioning.

4.2.4. Finding 4: Shame has negative consequences for objectification and psychological functioning.

The findings indicate body shame is particularly salient in contributing to objectification and negative psychological functioning. In support of Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) original model, body shame was found to mediate the relationship between self-surveillance and state depression in the quantitative study. Body shame was one of the strongest predictors of self-surveillance, the surveillance of others, well-being and state depression. At trait and state level, the degree to which participants engaged in body shame was the strongest predictor of self-surveillance. The qualitative findings provide tentative support for the relationship between shame, self-objectification, social comparison and the objectification of others. Through the process of engaging in online comparisons, participants reported that they often engaged in body monitoring behaviours, and experienced shame and negative mood as a response to their inability to adhere to appearance ideals. Taken together the findings indicate that body shame plays a significant role in the relationship between SNSs, objectification and psychological functioning.

Several participants expressed the belief that the ideal appearance can be achieved if they work hard enough. This is consistent with current neo-liberal discourse (Baumgardner & Richards, 2004; McRobbie, 2009; Orbach, 2010). F3.5's statement that "*you're kind of shunned if you don't have a fit body*", is evidence of the social and moral standards that

dictate bodies. Appearance has become associated with morality and status, such that those who do not maintain their appearance are considered lazy, while those who attempt to adhere to the ideal must invest a substantial amount of care and income into the upkeep and maintenance of their appearance (Bartky, 1990; Nichter & Nichter, 1991; Orbach, 2010). Both female and male participants discussed the use of the gym to achieve appearance ideals. References to the use of the gym, cosmetic surgery, laziness, and having given up on trying to achieve appearance ideals reflected a belief that the body is something that can and should be worked on, and that failure to do so, is an individualistic problem, thus the resultant experience of shame. These responses are concerning as they indicate the inequalities that exist regarding bodies that are valued in society, and frame the body as a commodity to be improved upon (Gill, 2012; McRobbie, 2009; Orbach, 2010).

Appearance ideals are often unattainable, given their limited depictions and changing characteristics across time (Calogero, Boroughs, & Thompson, 2007). Participants' efforts to adhere to gender stereotypes regarding the male and female ideal contributed to experiences of shame. Brown (2007) suggests that striving to live up to stereotypes contributes to shame and detracts from our ability to be authentic. Responses indicated the challenges women face in portraying an idealised and authentic self. Persistently faced with sexual double standards women may be at increased risk for shame. These findings indicate that shame is pervasive and contributes to a variety of negative consequences including, increased self-objectification, decreased well-being and increased depressed mood. Thus, the negative consequences of shame cannot be understated as it appears to infringe on a multitude of aspects of individual's lives.

4.2.5. Finding 5: Gender stereotypes are replicated online.

The qualitative findings indicate that traditional gender stereotypes of women and men still prevail (Haines et al., 2016). The findings suggest gender stereotypical behaviour is re-enacted online. Both female and male participants stated that women would frequently post appearance related content, engage in selfie behaviour, use filters, edit, and monitor their online content more so than men. Female participants were also more likely to discuss and express concern for their appearance, whereas male participants were reluctant to do so and were critical of men who do. Some male participants discussed enjoyment of the consumption of female appearance content. This is consistent with current research on gender differences in online behaviour (Manago et al., 2008; McAndrew & Jeong, 2012). Furthermore, consistent with Bailey, Steeves, Burkell, and Regan's (2013) findings, this

research suggests that SNS use serves to replicate gender norms as opposed to developing new ones.

The current findings suggest that SNSs are another environment in which gender stereotypes, and therefore power dynamics, can be maintained. Although women often experience the most harm from sexism, sexism and gender stereotypes are destructive for everyone. Consistent with previous research (Bailey et al., 2013; Ringrose & Harvey, 2015; Tolman, 2018), participants' responses reflected the sexual double standards that women experience. Responses indicated the policing and complex balancing act women experience in presenting an authentic and beautiful self-presentation. This pressure could have negative ramifications for psychological functioning. Male participants, perhaps in order to maintain a hegemonic masculine presentation, were often reluctant to discuss their emotions and concern for body image, which may have negative consequences for their psychological functioning. Research suggests that experiences of sexism are associated with decreased well-being for both women and men (Swim et al., 2001), and norms of men as objectifier and women as objectified are associated with decreased relationship intimacy and satisfaction (Moffitt & Szymanski, 2011; Zurbriggen et al., 2011), and attitudes supportive of violence against women (Bock & Burkley, 2019; Wright & Tokunaga, 2016). Thus, the ability of SNSs to propagate and maintain gender stereotypes, could contribute to negative consequences for interpersonal relationships and psychological functioning.

Participants raised the issue of exposure to appearance ideals online. The appearance ideals cited were of a slim and toned physique for women and a muscular physique for men. These are consistent with current gender ideals represented online (Slater et al., 2012; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2016). Also raised was the overwhelming pressure to conform to these ideals as a result of the sheer magnitude of exposure to this type of content. Appearance ideals may be represented to a heightened extent on SNSs as not only are they presented by advertisers (Slater et al., 2012), but also by celebrities and peers (Bailey et al., 2013). In accordance with the "mere exposure effect" (Raft Kunst-Wilson & Zajonc, 1980), exposure to extensive appearance ideals may normalise these ideals and contribute to the development of a preference for that appearance. Furthermore, research suggests that when appearance norms are clearly defined and strictly enforced, efforts to adhere to these norms increase (Madan, Basu, Ng, & Lim, 2018). The qualitative findings suggest women often experience double standards with regards to appearance. A potential contributing factor may be the mixed messages presented by advertising companies.

Research suggests advertisements often portray objectifying and empowering content simultaneously which may serve to re-enforce these double standards as women are encouraged to be both confident and strong and maintain a beautiful appearance (Couture Bue & Harrison, 2019; McRobbie, 2009; Tolman, 2018). Participants' responses indicated an awareness, normalisation and internalisation of appearance ideals and a pressure to strive to achieve these appearance goals.

4.3. Research Implications

4.3.1. Implications and contributions to theory.

Within the context of objectification literature this research provides several important contributions. It shows that SNS use contributes to experiences of objectification and SNSs are environments where objectification is facilitated and propagated. The findings provide support for the investigation of objectification within the context of SNSs, and that these environments require further attention. This research found that using SNSs to monitor others and the use of image-based functions on such sites contributes to self-objectification, and therefore it is suggested that future research investigating this relationship explore the nuanced ways SNSs are used in order to better understand how they contribute to objectification. Notably, this research suggests that media effects do not act in isolation but in tandem with emotive, cognitive and behavioural responses (i.e., body shame and social comparison) to influence self-objectification and psychological functioning and thus these constructs should be included when investigating the relationship between objectification and SNSs.

This research extended on SNS use and objectification research (e.g., De Vries & Peter, 2013; Manago, Ward, Lemm, Reed, & Seabrook, 2015) to examine the specific SNS behaviours, as well as the momentary experiences of SNS use and their consequences for momentary self-surveillance and surveillance of others. Engagement in photo based-behaviours, and using SNSs to monitor and compare the self with others was found to contribute to increased self-objectification and the objectification of others. Given the role of image-based behaviours in contributing to self-objectification, an investigation of the use of filters and beauty apps may be a particularly salient avenue for future research. Furthermore, in light of the extensive time and frequency with which people use SNSs, it can be argued that over time, these forms of SNS use could contribute to the development of trait self-objectification and a generalised objectified outlook. This research provides support for the use of EMA methods to assess the correlates and consequences of self-

objectification. Future research could employ a longitudinal approach to further explore the relationship between state and trait constructs.

Not only does this research support the application of objectification theory in understanding the consequences of SNS use, but it also provides strong support for the co-application of social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954). Engagement in online social comparison was one of the strongest predictors of objectification and psychological functioning. Festinger (1954) suggested that individuals will engage in comparison with those seen as similar to themselves, however, the findings of this research suggest that individuals engage in extensive comparison with a multitude of others. Research suggests that the direction of comparisons has consequences for body image and psychological functioning (Fardouly et al., 2017; Tiggemann & Polivy, 2010). Thus, future research could explicitly explore the consequences of engaging in upward and downward comparison for objectification and psychological functioning.

This research provides support for the utility of the objectification framework in assessing men as well as women's experiences and consequences of objectification. The findings suggest that both genders experience self-objectification and objectification by others, but the experience is more pervasive for women. On men's experiences of self-objectification, the qualitative findings indicated a reluctance to discuss a concern for their appearance potentially to preserve their masculine identity. Similar to women's experiences of self-objectification, the male participants who did discuss appearance pressure and concerns, also reported negative mood following appearance comparisons and self-objectification. The findings provide evidence for the need to investigate both state and trait experiences of objectification in women and men, as the consequences of SNS use for state self-surveillance were more prevalent for women.

Szymanski, Moffitt, and Carr (2011) called for further research regarding women who objectify other women. This research went a step further to explore how both women and men objectify others. The qualitative findings suggest that both women and men objectify women more than men. The quantitative study found that women were more likely to objectify women than men were likely to objectify men. Together these findings support the original proposition of objectification theory, that we live in a culture where women are frequently objectified (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). This is consistent with previous research (Flood, 2008; Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005; Vaes, Paladino, & Puvia, 2011; Zurbriggen, Ramsey & Jaworski, 2011).

This thesis extended research on the objectification of others to explore *state* experiences of the objectification of others. It was found that similar processes are responsible for both self-objectification and the objectification of others on a momentary basis. In particular, body shame and social comparison were identified as playing a significant role for both genders. This research provides support for the proposed circle of objectification between self-objectification, social comparison and objectification of others (Lindner et al., 2012; Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005b), and has provided scope for future research on the objectification of others.

The particular aspect of the objectification framework investigated was the relationship between self-objectification, body shame and depression (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Support for this aspect of the framework is provided by the findings and has extended research on this relationship in several ways. The findings show the application of this relationship across the lifespan, as well as supporting that this relationship exists for both women and men, students and non-students. The findings also indicate that this relationship exists at state level. Strong support for the application of this component of the model is provided.

This research investigated the relationship between objectification and well-being in response to calls for objectification research to explore objectification beyond pathology (Lindner et al., 2012). Findings support the use of the framework for understanding well-being as increased self-objectification and body shame were associated with decreased well-being, as measured by eudemonic and hedonic well-being (Pavot & Diener, 1993). Thus, this research provides support that experiencing objectification not only contributes to low mood but may diminish one's ability to experience positive psychological functioning. Therefore, the inclusion of well-being in the model is supported.

The quantitative study advanced research on objectification experiences in non-student, and adult samples, as nearly half (n=105) of the participants were not students, and over a quarter (n=63) were aged between 30-68 years. Age was controlled for in the analyses of the data and was not found to significantly influence results. This finding suggests that certain types of SNS behaviours have consequences for self-surveillance and the surveillance of others, and SNS use and objectification constructs have consequences for psychological functioning, across the lifespan. The effects of SNS use for female and male populations across the lifespan may be a valuable trajectory for future research given the pervasiveness of SNSs in people's lives.

Given the findings of this research the following framework is proposed for future investigation. This is an explorative framework which proposes SNSs as environments that have implications for objectification and psychological functioning. The model includes the integration of the circle of objectification and well-being as correlates and consequences of self-objectification (Figure 16.).

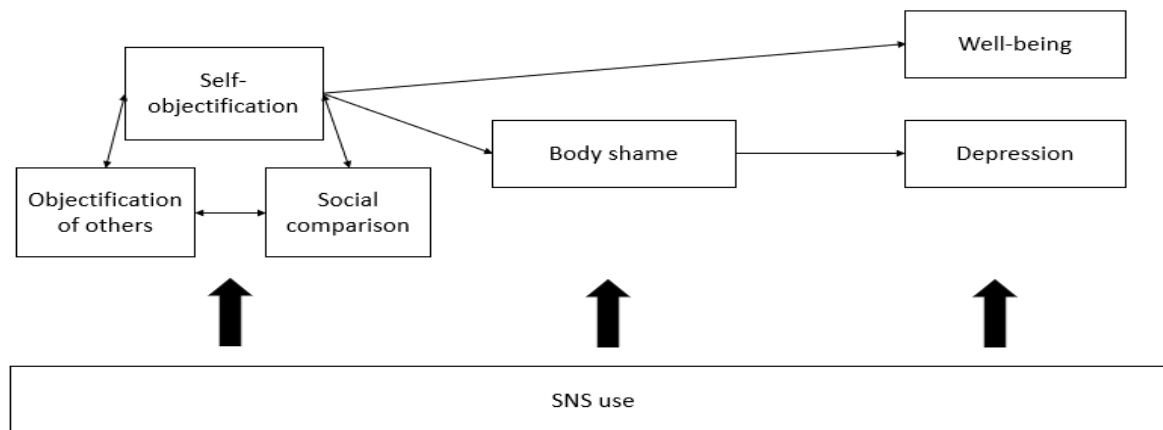


Figure.16. Proposed SNS, objectification and psychological functioning model.

4.3.2. Strengths, limitations, and implications for future research.

The use of mixed methods was a major strength and facilitated the triangulation of the findings to give a comprehensive account of objectification and SNS use, as quantitative data was collected at trait and state levels and qualitative data also collected. An innovative method, namely EMA facilitated the collection of naturalistic data regarding participants SNS use, state self-surveillance and mood in real time. EMA facilitated the acquisition of responses in the moment so that recent use and specific daily SNS activities could be assessed to predict self-surveillance, the surveillance of others and mood in real time. The ability to capture momentary experiences is a major strength as the findings illustrate there may be subtle differences in the factors that influence trait and state self-surveillance, for example momentary experiences of engaging in photo-based behaviours and monitoring attractive peers online significantly predicted self-surveillance at state but not trait level. Furthermore, by employing EMA methods this study was able to distinguish that time of day may influence whether individuals engage in both self-surveillance and the surveillance of others. This research provides strong support for the investigation of trait and state variables, future longitudinal research could examine how these variables interact.

The use of focus groups was also a strength. Through the process of conducting focus groups, the multifaceted ways that SNSs are used and the consequences of SNS use were teased out and explored in greater detail. Empirical evidence has reported the extent of objectifying content online (e.g., Deighton-Smith & Bell, 2018), however by asking EAs about their own perceptions, a better understanding of their media literacy and critical engagement with this type of content was assessed, and their interpretations of SNSs as objectifying environments identified. Furthermore, by asking EAs about objectification and SNSs this may serve a pedagogical function with regards to highlighting issues of objectification within society.

The investigation of objectification with a broad age group (18-68 years) of students and non-students in the quantitative study and the almost even distribution of female and male participants in the qualitative study was a major strength of the research as predominantly objectification research has focused on female university samples (Moradi & Huang, 2008). With regards to ethnicity and sexual orientation however, the sample were relatively homogenous which suggests that future research would potentially need to specifically target minority groups. The recruitment procedure employed in the qualitative study provides evidence to support this as initially it was difficult to recruit male participants and as a result an updated targeted recruitment poster was developed. This response may reflect some men's perception of objectification as a "women's issue", and thus is indicative that recruitment of specific groups may need to be targeted, particularly if the target group perceive the topic as irrelevant to them. The homogeneity of the sample in relation to stated ethnicity and reported sexual orientation, is a common issue in psychological research (Fox, Prilleltensky, & Austin, 2009; Moradi & Huang, 2008) and limits the generalisability of the results. Thus, this thesis supports the call for future research to explore diverse experiences of objectification in minority populations (Heimerdinger-Edwards et al., 2011; Moradi & Huang, 2008). As objectification is deemed a subtle form of social control (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), an intersectional approach may be particularly salient in order to better understand how this form of oppression interacts with other forms of oppression.

Findings should also be considered in light of their limitations. Although EMA facilitated the collection of data in real time which was a strength of this study, the responses were self-reported, and as a result susceptible to report bias and social desirability (Schwarz, 2007). For example, although not to the same degree as retrospective cross-sectional surveys, it still may have been difficult for participants to make judgements regarding the

amount of time they had been using SNSs. This research collected an extensive amount of data (n=1,207), but there was a notable attrition rate which is consistent with reported challenges associated with EMA research (Fuller-Tyszkiewicz et al., 2013). In order to promote improved participation, future research could employ the use of training or orientation sessions regarding EMA (Breines et al., 2008; Fitzsimmons-Craft et al., 2016; Holland et al., 2017), as well as providing feedback and using check-ins (Shiffman, 2009). The use of focus groups also has limitations as the smaller sample size limits the generalisability of findings, and it has been noted that in some cases specific individuals dominate the conversation (Kitzinger, 1994). Although focus group methods are considered more naturalistic than interview assessments, responses are influenced by the specific questions asked and by characteristics of the researcher-moderator (Allen, 2005; Kitzinger, 1994; Krueger, 2002). Mixed methods were employed to minimise the limitations of each method and develop a more holistic understanding of the relationship between SNSs, objectification and psychological functioning.

There are also strengths and limitations to the analysis employed. A limitation of regression analysis is that the direction of relationships cannot be inferred. The current findings however, provide evidence that mutually reinforcing relationships exist between SNSs, objectification and psychological functioning. Experimental research could help to clarify the relationship between these factors in future. Furthermore, thematic analysis, has limitations as unlike grounded theory for example, the interpretation of findings was influenced by the exploration of a specific theory, namely objectification theory (Glaser & Strauss, 2006).

With regards to the research findings and analysis negative consequences of SNS use were most extensively discussed and presented. This may be the result of a combination of factors. As this research sought to investigate the objectification theory framework which was developed to assess the negative consequences of living in objectifying environments, experiences of shame and depression were investigated as outlined by this model, and therefore were discussed in detail throughout. By explicitly asking individuals about objectification, they may be primed to discuss and focus on negative consequences for body image and psychological functioning. Furthermore, societal discourse regarding SNSs tends to be on the risks of use (boyd et al., 2009). Participants may have internalised this and thus when asked whether they perceive SNSs impact their psychological functioning and body image they may have concentrated on the potential negative effects.

Also, given the tendency within psychology to focus on pathology, when asked about psychological functioning individuals may perceive this question as referring to negative aspects of functioning. Efforts were made to consider the positive effects of SNS use, as well-being was assessed. Within the focus groups, participants discussed SNSs as an integral part of their lives and discussed many motives for its use. However, given the questions asked in the focus groups and the research questions addressed in this study, these aspects were not the focus. Future research could investigate alternative models that address issues of connection regarding SNS use, however with regards to the current study judgements can only be made on what was measured and evaluated, and as this research sought to assess the objectification framework, implications for body image, shame and depression were central.

With regards to areas for future research, given the extensive negative consequences of experiences of shame, the development of interventions and ways to counteract and reduce experiences of shame would be a worthwhile area for investigation. Shame is experienced when people feel isolated and unworthy of acceptance (Brown, 2007; Tolman, 2018). Research and interventions promoting connection may be useful in counteracting shame and as SNSs can be employed to build connection (e.g., Subrahmanyam, Reich, Waechter, & Espinoza, 2008), future research could explore the positive ways that SNSs can be used to reduce shame and promote connection. SNSs have also been identified as serving a pedagogical function with regards to feminism (Keller et al., 2016), participants however, did not discuss engaging with SNSs in this way in the current study, further exploration could investigate the extent that young people engage with SNSs in this regard. Given the extensive findings regarding the policing and sexual double standards women experience, strategies to build connection and promote feminist awareness, engagement and activism could provide fruitful avenues for future investigation.

4.3.3. Implications for policy and suggestions for interventions.

This research supports the need for systemic interventions in tackling issues relating to objectification. Slater et al., (2012) argue that “the portrayal of women in the media is an important public health issue, as unrealistically thin ideals undoubtedly contribute to the widespread body dissatisfaction observed among women and girls” (p.339). Moradi (2011) argues for interventions that directly reduce objectification experiences, stating that such interventions move from a focus on the intrapersonal to the contextual and interpersonal. Jankowski (2015) also advocates for interventions that target the role of societal and economic structures in cultivating body dissatisfaction. This research similarly suggests

that interventions must be multifaceted in order for sustainable change to occur, given the strong associations found in this study between intrapersonal constructs (i.e., body shame), interpersonal dynamics (i.e., social comparison) and institutions such as SNSs on body image and psychological functioning.

Various studies highlight the need for media literacy programmes (McLean, Paxton, & Wertheim, 2016; Tiggemann & Slater, 2014), and relationship and sex education programmes (Ringrose, 2017) to inform young people about online appearance ideals and the potential consequences of SNS use for body image and psychological functioning. Given the pervasiveness of SNSs (Smith & Anderson, 2018), the increase in online feminist movements (Keller et al., 2016), alongside the intensification of misogynistic online rhetoric (Ging & Siapera, 2018; Massanari, 2017), and the potential benefits and risks of SNS use for body image and psychological functioning (e.g., Frison & Eggermont, 2016; Tiggemann & Slater, 2017) the curriculum and education young people receive needs to develop in conjunction with these societal changes.

In an Irish educational context, the findings have implication for Social Physical and Health Education (SPHE) which has seen the integration of *Well-being* as a core component of the post-primary curriculum (Grogan et al., 2013). The findings support the integration of well-being within the curriculum and suggest that educational support should be provided regarding the potential benefits and risks associated with SNS use for well-being and body image. Given the strong findings regarding shame and social comparison, an emphasis on developing acceptance, respect, and empathy as a way to combat the negative effects of social comparison and shame should be encouraged and may require specific attention within the curriculum.

The findings also have implications for the Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) curriculum in Ireland. At present an Objective Sex Education Bill has been proposed (Provision of Objective Sex Education Bill, 2018) and the development of a new RSE curriculum is underway. The current research provides evidence for the negative consequences of gender stereotyping and experiences of objectification. The qualitative findings provide evidence of the multiple roles women are socialised to uphold, including maintaining a perfect appearance, while also being fun, social and authentic. The findings suggest that men continue to be socialised to objectify women. Consistent with Dobson and Ringrose's (2016) suggestions, this research advocates that RSE should challenge gender assumptions which promote the policing and shaming of women's bodies and the

normalisation of heteronormative hegemonic masculinity as these norms serve to promote victim blaming and normalise rape culture. The curriculum should promote discussion on the diverse ways gender is and can be enacted in online and offline contexts.

Studies have found that holding feminist beliefs can buffer against the negative effects of appearance pressure (Feltman & Szymanski, 2018; Hurt et al., 2007; Myers & Crowther, 2007; Rollero & De Piccoli, 2017; Rubin et al., 2004). Thus, the development of feminist interpretations of gender and power should be promoted as they facilitate the development of a more compassionate outlook and promote collectivist action. Discussion regarding SNSs should explore the positive ways that SNSs can be used as well as reflection on the potential risks. Furthermore, this research has documented the critical awareness displayed by EAs with regards to SNSs, as they discussed both the potential benefits and risks of SNS use, and engaged in policing and privacy behaviours as a result. Education approaches regarding SNS use should respect young people's awareness of issues and recognise, encourage, and support their critical skills regarding SNSs, gender and sexuality. Media literacy and feminist advocacy may provide critical thinking strategies for individuals to employ on a daily basis and should be promoted as part of a systemic and holistic approach towards tackling sexism.

Interventions, however, need to move beyond media literacy as these techniques may over-emphasise the role of the individual in their use and comprehension of SNS content (Gill, 2012). Although women and men can engage critically with the content they are exposed to, this does not eradicate the potential effect of content exposure. Participants in the qualitative study expressed both an awareness and criticality of exposure to appearance ideals, while also discussing experiences of shame and dissatisfaction about their appearance as a result of exposure to, and comparison with, this content. The stance shared by participants was one of self-control. They perceived that they could control the content they were exposed to and that they should show a strength of will to resist online appearance pressure. They also acknowledged, however, that due to the magnitude of this type of content, it was particularly challenging to resist the pressure to try conform to the ideal. Research suggests that exposure to feminist discourse (Keller et al., 2016), body acceptance and self-compassion quotes (Betz & Ramsey, 2017; Slater et al., 2017) and humorous body-positive content (Slater et al., 2019) could to some extent counteract these negative effects. However, engagement with this content may rely on individual choice. Thus, self-control and media literacy measures may be unsustainable and place too great a burden on the individual and therefore a broader contextual approach is required.

Not only should interventions teach people skills to resist self-objectification (Impett, Henson, Breines, Schooler, & Tolman, 2011), but to challenge the very foundations from which experiences of objectification are derived. Hemmings (2012) discusses the concept of “affective solidarity” as a tool for progressive feminist change. She suggests that transformative change will occur out of the experience of discomfort, including feelings of rage and frustration. Gill (2012) asks of feminists “Have we given up on changing the world, to focus only on tweaking our critical orientations to it?” (p. 741). The focus on media literacy directs attention away from the cultural and socio-political context in which objectification is consistently replicated (Gill, 2012). It is imperative that institutions such as social media, advertising and marketing companies for example, take responsibility for the content they promote. Furthermore, governments should ensure all policies, including education policies, promote gender equality and tackle sexism. Strict adherence to gender norms and objectification has negative consequences for everyone. Thus, this research calls for a systemic response to combat sexism and gender norms.

Specific features of SNSs may facilitate the propagation of cultural and societal norms. The implications of engagement with image-based features of SNSs contribute to increased self-surveillance as indicated by the quantitative findings, and may serve to normalise this behaviour. The qualitative findings indicate that the “likes” system may function to establish a social hierarchy and serve a pedagogical function, teaching users about social norms. Researchers have suggested that the “likes” system can be used to discourage people from posting content (Choi et al., 2015), as can scores on Reddit facilitate anti-feminist and misogynistic activism (Massanari, 2017). Thus, SNS features can implicitly incentivise and facilitate the development of specific cultures and social norms. Massanari (2017) suggests that “disentangling the community’s norms from the ways those norms are shaped by the platform and administrative policies becomes difficult in a space such as Reddit, as they are co-constitutive of one another” (p. 336). Thus, SNSs may be a forum for objectification, and given their pervasiveness serve to intensify the effects of objectification. Although SNS companies are not the direct creators of the content, they are complicit in facilitating the propagation of certain messages and thus should play a vital role in developing a solution.

Debate continues regarding the interpretation of SNSs on people’s psychological functioning. Some researchers have discussed the potential for technology to make visible, rather than create mental health problems (boyd et al., 2009; Ging & Garvey, 2018). This is interesting in light of the findings regarding gender stereotypes and gender norms; it is

not that SNSs have contributed to the development of new gender norms but SNSs are an environment in which engendered experiences are enacted and replicated. From this perspective, online objectification, is a symptom of larger global gender disparities and unequal distributions of power. boyd et al. (2009) proposed that it may be easier for society to blame SNSs, rather than contend with what we see on SNSs. SNSs shed light on the magnitude of objectification within our society. Given that the appearance portrayals online are often idealised or replicative of gender stereotypes (Bailey et al., 2013; Deighton-Smith & Bell, 2018; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2016), and that exposure to sexualised and idealised content is associated with increased self-objectification (Karsay et al., 2018), SNSs may increase the likelihood for self-objectification experiences, but it is the gender and cultural norms in society that are the core issue and need to be challenged. This is not to say that SNSs are exempt from playing a role, but it would be reductive to suggest that objectification and the negative consequences of objectification occur in a vacuum on SNSs, when in fact they are the result of cultural norms.

This research advocates for a balanced view when assessing SNSs as the findings were indicative of both the risk and benefits of SNS use. With regards to intervention, a systemic approach is recommended. Systems theorists advocate that development is bi-directional and multifaceted, such that the individual has the potential to shape society and the society has the capacity to influence the individual (Lerner & Castellino, 2002). Ging and Siapera (2018) outline the multifaceted approaches that can be used to tackle online misogyny, including the use of hashtag campaigns, legal interventions, revising platform development and reforming policies and protocols. These interventions are informative as to how a systemic approach could be taken. Consistent with previous researchers (Ging & Siapera, 2018; Jankowski, 2015; Moradi, 2011; Slater et al., 2012), this research advocates for the need to develop interventions that support intra and interpersonal change regarding gender norms and stereotypes, training that supports the development of critical engagement with online content, and interventions that challenge institutions which replicate, profit from and propagate gender norms.

4.4. Conclusion

This thesis provides evidence that objectification occurs and is facilitated by SNSs. The findings suggest SNSs are environments in which gender norms and stereotypes are enacted, replicated and propagated. The use of SNSs has consequences for self-objectification, the objectification of others, and psychological functioning for individuals across the lifespan. In particular, this research suggests that it is engagement with image-

based functions, and exposure to image-based content, that contributes to objectification. Thus, this research provides strong support for the integration of SNSs in the investigation of objectification.

This research provides evidence for the complex and multifaceted ways that SNSs can influence psychological functioning. SNS use can have both positive and negative effects, but this research suggests that it does have implications for mood and well-being. On a momentary basis SNSs can influence a person's mood and although the consequences may be short lived, the accumulation of such experiences when we consider the amount of time spent on SNSs and the pervasiveness of SNSs, suggests that there could be long-term consequences. SNSs are not homogenous environments (Gill, 2012). The findings are evidence for the need to investigate several aspects of SNS use, including online behaviours, content exposure and feedback received in order to understand the relationship between SNS use and psychological functioning.

The key findings of this research pertain to the role of shame and online social comparison as contributing to negative psychological functioning and objectification. Shame is often experienced as a consequence of individuals' attempts to achieve the ideal. The quest for perfection is unyielding and exhausting. The inability to attain beauty ideals leaves individuals feeling inadequate. Social expectations to conform to beauty standards cause individuals to spend their lives managing expectations, creating edited versions of the self, hiding struggles in an attempt to avoid experiences of shame, criticism and blame. Yet our struggles and imperfections are the very aspects that unite us in our humanity. Shame is universal. We all experience it to varying degrees from living in a society that glorifies perfection and validates individuals for fitting in. The human condition promotes us to strive to feel worthy and accepted, however when we exert such energy into meeting the expectations of others, including on appearance, we can neglect important aspects of our lives, including the authentic self.

With regards to social comparison, although SNSs could provide ample opportunities for exposure to diverse bodies, the stereotypical depiction of idealised bodies prevails online. The multitude of accessible sources of comparison online may facilitate priming body-based thoughts and behaviours and serve to increase the potential for extensive comparisons with idealised images. On an individualistic level, media literacy may be salient in protecting against the negative effects of online comparisons. However, from a critical perspective, it is vital to not overlook the corporations who consistently depict an

ideal life with the perfect body (Dittmar, 2008). In order for these effects to be reduced individuals need to be exposed to heterogeneous bodies. Corporations involved in SNSs and advertisers need to take responsibility for the psychological damage they cultivate through their production of idealised body images.

This research provides evidence for the ways in which self-objectification and objectifying cultures can diminish human well-being. Thus, this research calls for individual, societal and systematic change in order for women and men to be liberated from restrictive gender norms and have the ability to be and develop their authentic selves.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Rationale for the assessment and analysis of self-surveillance using the Self-Surveillance subscale of the OBCS.

With regards to the current study the Self-Surveillance subscale of the OBCS was employed to measure self-surveillance (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). The Self-Surveillance subscale is the most frequently used subscale of the OBCS (McKinley & Hyde, 1996) to measure self-objectification and self-surveillance as it is conceptualised as the behavioural manifestation of self-objectification and captures the extent to which individuals habitually monitor their appearance. This measure has successfully been employed to assess self-surveillance in a variety of female samples (Carr & Szymanski, 2011; Cohen et al., 2018; Kozee & Tylka, 2006) and is reported as successfully measuring men's self-surveillance (Martins et al., 2007; McKinley, 1998; Michaels et al., 2013; Wiseman & Moradi, 2010). Some researchers argue that this scale has significant advantages over the SOQ as the measure demonstrates good reliability and validity and asks more global statements as opposed to specific body attributes which may make the measure more applicable to a variety of populations such as men and ethnic minorities (Lindner, 2014). Furthermore, fewer authors report difficulties with missing data compared to the SOQ (Calogero, 2011). Given these benefits self-surveillance as measured by the Self-Surveillance subscale of the OBCS (McKinley & Hyde, 1996) was the selected variable of interest analysed in the current study.

Participants completed the SOQ, Male Assessment of Self-Objectification (MASO)(Daniel et al., 2014) and Self-surveillance subscale of the OBCS. Self-surveillance as measured by the Self-surveillance subscale was included in the analysis for several reasons. In this study, the SOQ was not significantly correlated with the Self-Surveillance subscale of the OBCS. The MASO was significantly correlated with the Self-Surveillance subscale ($r=.41, p<.001$). The MASO and SOQ could not be correlated as male participants did not complete the SOQ and female participants or those who did not report their gender completed the SOQ. The SOQ was not significantly correlated with constructs that are well established as being correlated with self-objectification or self-surveillance such as body shame and self-esteem. Whereas the Self-Surveillance subscale of the OBCS was strongly positively correlated with these constructs (see Table 1.).

Table 1.

Self-objectification and self-surveillance measure correlations.

Measures	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. SOQ	-	-			
2. MASO	-	-			
3. Self-surveillance(trait)	.11	.41**	-		
4. Body Shame	.14	.20	.51**	-	
5. Self-esteem	-.03	-.09	-.45**	-.55**	-

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

With regards to correlational findings pertaining to self-objectification and self-surveillance measures, the findings indicate that the SOQ and Self-Surveillance subscale are not significantly correlated. This may be a result of these constructs being empirically and conceptually different (e.g., Calogero, 2011). Research has indicated it is possible that someone can value their physical appearance over competence-based attributes but that these individuals can habitually monitor their body to differing degrees (Calogero et al., 2009). However, the fact that the MASO and Self-Surveillance subscale are significantly correlated could indicate that it is the structure of the SOQ rather than what the measure represents that may be the cause of the lack of correlation between these items. Calogero (2011) outlined that “it is possible that the SOQ and the Surveillance Subscale would be more strongly related if measurement error in the SOQ was reduced or if the response formats were the same” (p.32). Furthermore, Calogero (2011) argues that because of these ongoing issues it cannot be concluded whether these scales represent the same or distinct constructs. The MASO is similar to the SOQ in that it asks participants to indicate the importance of image and competence-based attributes to self-concept, but different from the SOQ as it uses a Likert scale as opposed to rank order. As the MASO was significantly correlated with self-surveillance scores, this suggests that potentially had the SOQ employed the use of a Likert scale as opposed to rank order, responses may have been more strongly correlated with Self-Surveillance. Although this debate is ongoing, it is agreed that both self-objectification and self-surveillance exist as a result of living in a culture where individuals are objectified and valued based on their physical appearance.

Appendix B: Ethics Approval Letter (Study One)

Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University



Ms Aisling Costello
School of Human Development

19th June 2017

REC Reference: DCUREC/2017/072

Proposal Title: An Investigation of the Relationship between
Objectification, Social Network Site use and Mood

Applicant(s): Ms Aisling Costello, Dr Ashling Bourke, Dr Catherine
Maunsell


Dear Aisling,

Further to expedited review, the DCU Research Ethics Committee approves this research proposal.

Materials used to recruit participants should note that ethical approval for this project has been obtained from the Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee.

Should substantial modifications to the research protocol be required at a later stage, a further amendment submission should be made to the REC.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Dónal O'Gorman'.

Dr Dónal O'Gorman
Chairperson
DCU Research Ethics Committee



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Appendix C: Recruitment Source and Dates

Table 4.

Overview of participants and dates of rounds of recruitment

Group	Source of recruitment	No. of entries excluded (less than 32% completion)	No. of participants included in prompting	Date of initiation and completion of recruitment
Group 1	University sample	15	80	March 15th-March 19 th
Group 2	University sample Personal contacts via social media (snow-ball sampling)	30	152	March 20 th -March 26 th
Group 3	University sample Personal contacts via social media (snow-ball sampling)	1	27	March 27 th -2 nd April

Appendix D: Recruitment Poster (Study One)

**Social Network Site use
& Objectification**

Are you over 18 and use Social Network Sites like Facebook, Instagram Snapchat etc?

Then you may be interested in participating in this research on objectification and Social Media, and be in with a chance of winning

A €100 one4all voucher!

STAGE 1:


You will be asked to complete a 15-20 minute online questionnaire. You will be asked your phone number and demographic questions. You will also be asked questions regarding your social network use, mood and feelings about yourself and your body.

STAGE 2:

Using the phone number you provide you will receive a text message from SNSRESEARCH three times daily on three days over the course of one week. The text will include a link to a 3-5 minute online questionnaire. These questions will also relate to your social network use, mood and feelings about yourself, your body and others.

If you would like to participate please follow this link or scan the QR code:

https://dcusnhs.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bezMRcdUleoAbVb



♥ 💬 📍

To find out more about this research contact the researcher at aisling.costello24@mail.dcu.ie

Your participation would be greatly appreciated!

Many thanks, Aisling Costello

Appendix E: Plain Language Statement (Study One)

An Investigation of Objectification Theory, Social Network Site Use and Mood.

Introduction to the study: My name is Aisling Costello and I am a doctoral student at Dublin City University investigating the relationship between Social Network Site (SNS) use, Objectification and Mood. Objectification refers to the way that people often judge others based on their physical appearance.

What involvement in this study will require: You must use SNSs (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat etc.) and be over 18 years of age to participate in this study. There are two stages to this study.

Stage 1: You will be asked to complete a 15-20 minute online questionnaire (provided below). You will be asked to provide your phone number and demographic information. You will also be asked questions regarding your SNS use, mood and feelings about yourself, your body and feelings about others.

Stage 2: Using the phone number you provided you will receive a text message three times daily (morning, afternoon and evening) on three days over the course of one week. The text will prompt you to complete a 3-5 minute online questionnaire and the sender name will be "SNSRESEARCH". These questions will also relate to your SNS use, mood and feelings about yourself, your body and others. You are encouraged to complete the questionnaire as soon as you receive the text as long as it is safe to do so. You will not have the opportunity to complete this questionnaire once you are prompted to complete the subsequent questionnaire.

You will be asked to indicate whether you agree or disagree with a series of statements. For example:

1. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
2. I rarely think about how I look.

What are the potential risks of involvement? Aspects of this study may cause some participants to feel uncomfortable in relation to reflecting on their SNS use, mood, and perceptions about body image. Although you are unlikely to experience any distress, if you do, please do not hesitate to contact one of the support services below. Involvement in this study will include receiving text messages prompting you to respond to the questionnaire. Sending and receiving text messages carries with it a specific risk of

distraction of the recipient, e.g. causing the person to look at their phone while driving. For your safety and the safety of others you are warned not to send or read a text while driving.

What are the potential benefits of involvement? By completing all of the questionnaires you will be in with a chance of winning a €100 One4All voucher! You will also be helping to improve our understanding of factors that impact on well-being.

How is my confidentiality protected? Confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations. Data will not be made available to anyone outside the research team unless legal requirements are made to do so. You will not be required to provide your name and your responses will be assigned a randomised number. The data will be stored in a password protected folder on the researcher's computer for a maximum of ten years. All data will be destroyed following this ten-year period.

Is participation voluntary? Participation is completely voluntary. You will not be penalised in any way if you do not wish to participate. Participants have the right to withdraw and can do so by exiting the site at any point. Participants can also contact the researcher should they wish to have their information removed. After all data has been collected, it will be anonymised and it will not be possible for individual data to be deleted after this time.

To contact the research student or the project supervisor:

Aisling Costello (research student): aisling.costello24@mail.dcu.ie

Dr. Ashling Bourke (project supervisor): ashling.bourke@dcu.ie

Dr. Catherine Maunsell (project supervisor): catherine.maunsell@dcu.ie

Support Services:

www.bodywhys.ie Phone: 1890 200 444

www.niteline.ie Phone: 1890 793 793

www.aware.ie Phone: 1890 303 302

If you are a student of DCU you can contact counselling at: Email: counselling@dcu.ie
Phone: (01) 7005165 If you wish to access some national support services outside of DCU, a list of contact details of counsellors and therapists is available from the

Psychological Society of Ireland at <http://www.psychologicalsociety.ie/find-a-psychologist/>.

This project has obtained ethical approval from the Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee.

Appendix F: Consent form (Study One)

The doctoral researcher is investigating the relationship between objectification and social network site use. Objectification refers to the way that people often view and treat others primarily based on their appearance. If you would like to participate please complete the following consent form. Confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations. Your data will not be made available to anyone outside the research team unless legal requirements are made to do so.

- I confirm that I am aged.18 years or older.
Yes ☐ No ☐

- I confirm that I use Social Network Sites.
Yes ☐ No ☐

- I confirm that I have read the attached Plain Language Statement and that I have been given sufficient time ask questions and understand the information provided therein.
Yes ☐ No ☐

- I understand that the data collected for this study will be kept confidential and is to be used as the basis for a doctoral student's research.
Yes ☐ No ☐

- I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and I will not be penalized for not participating.
Yes ☐ No ☐

- I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time, without penalty, by exiting the online program.
Yes ☐ No ☐

Appendix G: Ecological Momentary Assessment Surveys Completed

Table 5.

An overview of EMA surveys completed.

Survey Totals	Assessment time	Number of participants who responded	Percentage of participants who completed each assessment
	Baseline	243	10.0
	Prompt time 1	108	4.4
	Prompt time 2	120	4.9
	Prompt time 3	153	6.3
	Prompt time 4	103	4.2
	Prompt time 5	99	4.1
	Prompt time 6	112	4.6
	Prompt time 7	90	3.7
	Prompt time 8	83	3.4
	Prompt time 9	96	4.0
Total:		1207	49.7
Missing:		1223	50.3
Potential Total:		2430	100.0
Number of participants who completed all 10 surveys:		23	

Appendix H: Demographic Information (Study One)

Please provide your mobile phone number (In the format 0XXXXXXXXX please do not use spaces): _____

Please complete the following demographic questions.

Age: _____

Gender: Male/Female/Non-binary/I'd prefer not to answer

Sexual orientation: Heterosexual/Homosexual/Bi-sexual/I'd prefer not to answer

Are you a student? Yes/No

Height (feet/inches): _____/I'd prefer not to answer

Weight (stone/pounds): _____/I'd prefer not to answer

Ethnicity: White Irish/ White Irish traveller/ Any other white background/ Black or black Irish-African/ Black or black Irish- Any other black background/ Asian or Asian Irish-Chinese/ Asian or Asian Irish-any other Asian background/ Other including mixed background

Appendix I: Self-Surveillance Subscale of the OBCS.

Please select how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

I rarely think about how I look

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor
Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

I think it is more important that my clothes are comfortable than whether they look good
on me

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor
Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

I think more about how my body feels than how my body looks

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor
Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

I rarely compare how I look with how other people look

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor
Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

During the day I think about how I look many times

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor
Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

I often worry about whether my clothes I am wearing make me look good

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor
Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

I rarely worry about how I look to other people

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor
Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

I am more concerned with what my body can do than how it looks

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor
Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

Appendix J: Body Shame subscale of the OBCS

Please select how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

When I can't control my weight, I feel like something must be wrong with me.

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor
Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

I feel ashamed of myself when I haven't made the effort to look my best

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor
Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

I feel like I must be a bad person when I don't look as good as I could

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor
Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

I would be ashamed for people to know what I really weigh

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor
Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

I never worry that something is wrong with me when I am not exercising as much as I should

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor
Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

When I'm not exercising enough, I question whether I am a good enough person

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor
Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

Even when I can't control my weight, I think I'm an okay person

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor
Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

When I'm not the size I think I should be, I feel ashamed

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor
Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

Appendix K: Surveillance of others Questionnaire

The pronoun included in each statement varied dependant on the participant's gender such that women were asked about their surveillance of other women, men were asked about their surveillance of other men and those who chose not to disclose their gender were asked the extent they engage in the surveillance of other people.

This was assessed at both trait and state level. At state level questions were written in the present tense and began "Since the last survey..."

Please select how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements.

I rarely pay attention to how other women look.

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor
Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

When I am talking with another woman, I pay no attention to her appearance.

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor
Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

During the day, I think many times about how the women around me look.

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor
Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

I pay attention to whether the clothes other women are wearing make them look good.

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor
Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

I am more concerned with what other women's bodies look like than with what other women's bodies are able to do

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor
Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

Appendix L: Online Social Comparison Questionnaire

These questions were asked at both trait and state levels. At state level questions were written in the past tense and began “When I was last using Social Network Sites...”

When using Social Network Sites, I compare my physical appearance to the physical appearance of others

Definitely Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree ☐ Agree ☐
☐ Definitely Agree ☐

When using Social Network Sites, I compare my lifestyle to the lifestyle of others.

Definitely Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree ☐ Agree ☐
☐ Definitely Agree ☐

Appendix M: Monitoring of Attractive Peers on SNS Questionnaire

These questions were asked at both trait and state assessments. At state assessment, sentences were written in the present tense and began “Since completing the last survey...”.

Please respond whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

When I think a person is good looking after a first meeting, I search for their profile on Social Network Sites.

Totally Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Totally disagree ☐

When I think a person is fun and attractive, I add the person as a friend on Social Network Sites

Totally Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Totally disagree ☐

Sometimes I search through the photo albums of an attractive person on Social Network Sites.

Totally Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Totally disagree ☐

Appendix N: Self-Esteem Questionnaire

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

2. At times I think I am no good at all.

Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.

Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

6. I certainly feel useless at times.

Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.

Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.

Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.

Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

Appendix O: Well-Being Questionnaire

Below are some statements about feelings and thoughts. Please mark the box that best describes your experience of each over the last 2 weeks

I've been feeling optimistic about the future

None of the time ☐ Rarely ☐ Some of the time ☐ Often ☐ All of the time ☐

I've been feeling useful

None of the time ☐ Rarely ☐ Some of the time ☐ Often ☐ All of the time ☐

I've been feeling relaxed

None of the time ☐ Rarely ☐ Some of the time ☐ Often ☐ All of the time ☐

I've been dealing with problems well

None of the time ☐ Rarely ☐ Some of the time ☐ Often ☐ All of the time ☐

I've been thinking clearly

None of the time ☐ Rarely ☐ Some of the time ☐ Often ☐ All of the time ☐

I've been feeling close to other people

None of the time ☐ Rarely ☐ Some of the time ☐ Often ☐ All of the time ☐

I've been able to make up my own mind about things

None of the time ☐ Rarely ☐ Some of the time ☐ Often ☐ All of the time ☐

Appendix P: Material Values Questionnaire

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

My life would be better if I own certain things I don't have.

Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐
Strongly disagree ☐

The things I own say a lot about how well I'm doing.

Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐
Strongly disagree ☐

I'd be happier if I could afford to buy more things.

Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐
Strongly disagree ☐

It bothers me that I can't afford to buy things I'd like.

Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐
Strongly disagree ☐

Buying things gives me a lot of pleasure.

Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐
Strongly disagree ☐

I admire people who own expensive homes, cars, clothes.

Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐
Strongly disagree ☐

I like to own things that impress people.

Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐
Strongly disagree ☐

I like a lot of luxury in my life.

Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐
Strongly disagree ☐

I try to keep my life simple, as far as possessions are concerned.

Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐
Strongly disagree ☐

Appendix Q: General amount of time spent on SNS

In general, how much time do you spend on Social Network Sites each day?

Less than 10 minutes per day	10-30 minutes per day	30-60 minutes per day	1-2 hours per day	2-3 hours per day	3 hours or more per day
1	2	3	4	5	6

Appendix R: Type of SNSs most frequently used Questionnaire

Which Social Network Sites do you use most frequently?

You do not have to use all of the Social Network Sites listed but please rank the Social Network Sites you do use, from most frequently used (rank=1) to least frequently used (e.g rank =7).

- _____ Facebook
- _____ Snapchat
- _____ Instagram
- _____ WhatsApp
- _____ Twitter
- _____ Dating sites
- _____ Other (please specify: _____)

Appendix S: General Passive SNS use, General Active SNS use and General Photo-based behaviours Questionnaire.

How often do you post a message on your own page?

Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Frequently ☐ Everyday ☐ Several times per day ☐

How often do you post a photo on your own page?

Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Frequently ☐ Everyday ☐ Several times per day ☐

How often do you send someone a personal message?

Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Frequently ☐ Everyday ☐ Several times per day ☐

How often do you visit a friends/follower's profile?

Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Frequently ☐ Everyday ☐ Several times per day ☐

How often do you visit a profile of someone that does not belong to your friends/followers list?

Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Frequently ☐ Everyday ☐ Several times per day ☐

How often do you check your recent posts for updates?

Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Frequently ☐ Everyday ☐ Several times per day ☐

How often do you state your opinion/engage in discussion on public posts?

Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Frequently ☐ Everyday ☐ Several times per day ☐

How often do you look through other people's photos?

Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Frequently ☐ Everyday ☐ Several times per day ☐

How often do you look through your own photos?

Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Frequently ☐ Everyday ☐ Several times
per day ☐

How often do you scroll through your newsfeed?

Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Frequently ☐ Everyday ☐ Several times
per day ☐

How often do you use check ins?

Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Frequently ☐ Everyday ☐ Several times
per
day ☐

How often do you look at business/company pages?

Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Frequently ☐ Everyday ☐ Several times
per day ☐

How often do you comment on or "like" status updates?

Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Frequently ☐ Everyday ☐ Several times
per day ☐

How often do you comment on or "like" photos?

Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Frequently ☐ Everyday ☐ Several times
per day ☐

How often do you change your profile picture?

Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Frequently ☐ Everyday ☐ Several times
per day ☐

Appendix T: Ecological Momentary Assessment Prompt Measures

EMA demographic information:

Please provide your mobile phone number for verification purposes:
(In the format 0XXXXXXXXX please do not use spaces) _____

Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐ Non-binary ☐ I'd prefer not to answer ☐

Recency of SNS use

When were you last using Social Network Sites and which Sites were you using?

Facebook

- Directly before beginning this questionnaire ☐
- Within the last 30 minutes ☐
- Within the last 31-60 minutes ☐
- Within the last 1-2 hours ☐
- More than 2 hours ago ☐
- I have not used this Social Network Site today ☐

Instagram:

- Directly before beginning this questionnaire ☐
- Within the last 30 minutes ☐
- Within the last 31-60 minutes ☐
- Within the last 1-2 hours ☐
- More than 2 hours ago ☐
- I have not used this Social Network Site today ☐

Snapchat:

- Directly before beginning this questionnaire ☐
- Within the last 30 minutes ☐
- Within the last 31-60 minutes ☐
- Within the last 1-2 hours ☐
- More than 2 hours ago ☐
- I have not used this Social Network Site today ☐

Text-Based Sites (i.e., WhatsApp and/or Twitter):

- Directly before beginning this questionnaire ☐
- Within the last 30 minutes ☐
- Within the last 31-60 minutes ☐
- Within the last 1-2 hours ☐
- More than 2 hours ago ☐
- I have not used this Social Network Site today ☐

Dating sites:

- Directly before beginning this questionnaire ☐
- Within the last 30 minutes ☐
- Within the last 31-60 minutes ☐
- Within the last 1-2 hours ☐
- More than 2 hours ago ☐
- I have not used this Social Network Site today ☐

Other (please specify): _____

- Directly before beginning this questionnaire ☐
- Within the last 30 minutes ☐
- Within the last 31-60 minutes ☐
- Within the last 1-2 hours ☐
- More than 2 hours ago ☐
- I have not used this Social Network Site today ☐

Time Spent When Last on SNSs:

When last using Social Network Sites, how long were you using them for?

Facebook:

10 minutes or less ☐ 11-30 minutes ☐ 31-60 minutes ☐ 1-2 hours ☐ More than 2 hours ☐ I have not used this Social Network Site today ☐

Instagram:

10 minutes or less ☐ 11-30 minutes ☐ 31-60 minutes ☐ 1-2 hours ☐ More than 2 hours ☐ I have not used this Social Network Site today ☐

Snapchat:

10 minutes or less ☐ 11-30 minutes ☐ 31-60 minutes ☐ 1-2 hours ☐ More than 2 hours ☐ I have not used this Social Network Site today ☐

Text Based Sites (i.e., WhatsApp and/or Twitter):

10 minutes or less ☐ 11-30 minutes ☐ 31-60 minutes ☐ 1-2 hours ☐ More than 2 hours ☐ I have not used this Social Network Site today ☐

Dating Sites (i.e., Tinder, Grindr etc.):

10 minutes or less ☐ 11-30 minutes ☐ 31-60 minutes ☐ 1-2 hours ☐ More than 2 hours ☐ I have not used this Social Network Site today ☐

Other (Please specify): _____

10 minutes or less ☐ 11-30 minutes ☐ 31-60 minutes ☐ 1-2 hours ☐ More than 2 hours ☐ I have not used this Social Network Site today ☐

Questionnaire for Passive, Active and Photo-based behaviours at EMA Assessment

When you were last using SNS did you engage in any of the following behaviours? (Please select as few or as many behaviours as you engaged in)

Posted a message on your own profile ☐

Posted a photo on your own profile ☐

Sent someone a personal message ☐

Visited a friends/follower's profile ☐

Visited a profile of someone that does not belong to your friends/followers list ☐

Checked your recent posts for updates ☐

Stated your opinion/engaged in discussion on a post ☐

Looked at other people's photos of people ☐

Looked at other people's photos of objects/places ☐

Looked at your own photos of people ☐

Looked at your own photos of objects/places ☐

Scrolled through your newsfeed []

Used check ins []

Looked at business/company pages []

Commented on or “liked” status updates []

Commented on or “liked” photos []

Other (Please specify:_____)

State Self-surveillance Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions:

Since the last survey have you been thinking about how you look to other people?

Not at all (0) Very much so (100)

State Body Shame Questionnaire

Since the last survey have you felt like a bad person because you don’t look as good as you could?

Not at all (0) Very much so (100)

Monitoring Attractive Peers on SNSs (state)

Please respond whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Since completing the last survey, I met a person who I thought was good looking and searched for their profile on a Social Network Site.

Totally Agree [] Agree [] Neither agree nor disagree [] Disagree [] Totally disagree []

Since completing the last survey, I thought a person was fun and attractive and added them as a friend on a Social Network Site.

Totally Agree [] Agree [] Neither agree nor disagree [] Disagree [] Totally disagree []

Since completing the last survey I searched through the photo albums of an attractive person on a Social Network Site

Totally Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Totally disagree ☐

Surveillance of Others of the same Gender

The pronoun included in each statement varied dependant on the participants' gender such that women were asked about their surveillance of other women, men were asked about their surveillance of other men and those who chose not to disclose their gender were asked the extent they engage in the surveillance of other people.

Please select how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements.

Since the last survey, I have rarely paid attention to how other women look.

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

Since the last survey, when I was talking with another woman, I paid no attention to her appearance.

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

Since the last survey, I have thought many times about how the women around me look.

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

Since the last survey, I have paid attention to whether the clothes other women are wearing make them look good.

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

Since the last survey, I have been more concerned with what other women's bodies look like than with what other women's bodies are able to do

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

Online Social Comparison (State) Questionnaire:

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

When I was last using Social Network Sites, I compared my physical appearance to the physical appearance of others

Definitely Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree ☐ Agree ☐
☐ Definitely Agree ☐

When I was last using Social Network Sites,, I compared my lifestyle to the lifestyle of others.

Definitely Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree ☐ Agree ☐
☐ Definitely Agree ☐

Depressed Mood State Questionnaire:

Please indicate how you feel right now by placing a vertical mark along the horizontal line.

Depressed:

Not at all (0) Very much (100)

Appendix U: Analytic Plans for Research Questions

Analytic plan for assessing RQ1a:

A stepwise linear regression was conducted to examine RQ1a. At the first step general photo-based behaviours was entered into the model. This aspect of SNS use was considered the aspect most likely to contribute to self-surveillance and for this reason was the first item entered. Monitoring of attractive peers was included at step 2. This type of online behaviour was also hypothesised as contributing to experiences of self-surveillance. Type of SNS (image/text based) was included at the next step as it was predicted that engagement with image-based aspects of SNSs would likely predict self-surveillance and therefore more time spent on image-based platforms was expected to contribute to self-surveillance. General amount of time spent on SNSs was included at the fourth step. A dummy variable was computed for this, three categories were created a) 30 minutes or less online, b) 30-120 minutes online a day or c) greater than 2 hours a day. Spending more than two hours a day on SNSs was used as the comparative group as it was hypothesised that extensive use would significantly affect self-surveillance. The final step involved including variables that have been identified as potential mediators in the relationship between SNS use and self-surveillance (i.e., online social comparison and body shame), and controlling for other variables that could influence this relationship. Thus, online social comparison, body shame, self-esteem, materialism, BMI, gender and age were included in the final fully adjusted model.

Analytic plan for assessing RQ1b:

A stepwise linear regression was run to assess RQ1b; the factors that contribute to self-surveillance (state). This construct was assessed by one item from the OBCS (Holland et al., 2017; McKinley & Hyde, 1996). Photo-based behaviours (state) was included at the first step. Monitoring of attractive peers was included at the second step as these two measures assess the type of SNS behaviours participants may have engaged in that were hypothesised as predicting self-surveillance. Amount of time spent on SNSs was included at the next step as this is expected to be predictive of self-surveillance. This was computed as a dummy variable and three categories were created a) SNSs not used today b) SNSs used between 1-30 minutes or c) greater than 30 minutes. Spending more than 30 minutes on SNSs was used as the comparative group as it was hypothesised that extensive use would significantly affect self-surveillance. Body shame and online social comparison

were included at the next step. Recency of SNS use, time of day, materialism, self-esteem, BMI, gender and age were controlled for in the final step.

Analytic plan for assessing RQ1c:

Following the regressions conducted to assess RQ 1a and 1b, four regressions were conducted to assess potential mediators of the relationship between photo-based behaviours and self-surveillance. Two regressions were run to assess the extent engagement in online social comparison mediates the relationship between engagement in photo-based behaviours and self-surveillance at trait and state level. Two regressions were also conducted to examine whether body shame mediates the relationship between photo-based behaviours and self-surveillance at both state and trait levels. Photo based behaviours were chosen as the predictor variable as this aspect of SNS use is predicted as being the main aspect of SNSs that contributes to self-surveillance. For both regressions, photo-based behaviours were included at step one. To examine body shame as a mediator between photo-based behaviours and self-surveillance, body shame was included at step two. To assess online social comparison as a mediator between photo-based behaviours and self-surveillance, online social comparison was included at step two.

Analytic plan for assessing RQ2.

A stepwise linear regression was conducted to assess the factors that predict the surveillance of others. Photo-based behaviours was the first variable included. Monitoring of attractive peers was included in the next step as these two online behaviours are hypothesised as the main behaviours contributing to the surveillance of others. Amount of time spent on SNSs was included at the next step. As above a dummy variable was computed for this, three categories were created a) SNSs not used today b) SNSs used between 1-30 minutes or c) greater than 30 minutes. Spending greater than 30 minutes on SNSs was used as the comparative group as it was hypothesised that extensive use would significantly predict the surveillance of others. Online social comparison and body shame were included at the next step as these are also hypothesised as predicting the surveillance of others. Recency of SNS use, time of day, gender and age were controlled for in the final fully adjusted model.

Analytic plan for assessing RQ3.

Pearson correlation statistics were run to assess RQ3. As this RQ was exploratory in nature no direction was predicted and so correlation statistics were used to assess the relationship between self-surveillance, the surveillance of others and online social comparison.

Analytic plan for assessing RQ4a.

A stepwise linear regression was conducted to assess RQ4a; the factors predicting trait levels of Well-Being. Research has suggested that engaging in online social comparison can affect participants' mental well-being (e.g., Hanna et al., 2017). For this reason, online social comparison was included at the first step. It was hypothesised that spending excessive time on SNSs would negatively impact a person's well-being and thus general amount of time spent on SNSs was included at the next step of the model. A dummy variable was computed for general amount of times spent on SNSs. Categories were a) 30 minutes or less online, b) 30-120 minutes online a day or c) greater than 2 hours a day. Spending greater than two hours or more a day on SNSs was used as the comparative group. Passive SNS use has been found to be associated with decreased psychological well-being (Kalpidou et al., 2011; O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011; Sagioglou & Greitemeyer, 2014; Verduyn et al., 2015). For this reason, general passive SNS use was included at the next step. Active SNS use (Frison & Eggermont, 2016), self-surveillance, body shame (Mercurio & Landry, 2008; Sinclair & Myers, 2004) and materialism (e.g., Belk, 1985; Nickerson et al., 2003; Richins & Dawson, 1992) have also been associated with components of well-being and thus active SNS use, trait self-surveillance, trait body shame and materialism were included at the final step. Gender and age were also controlled for in the final step.

Analytic plan for assessing RQ4b.

A stepwise linear regression was run to assess RQ 4b; whether self-surveillance predicts well-being and whether body shame mediates the relationship between self-surveillance and well-being. Self-surveillance was included at step one and body shame was included at the second step.

Analytic plan for assessing RQ5a.

A stepwise linear regression was conducted to assess RQ5a; the factors that predict state levels of depression. The literature (e.g. Hanna et al., 2017; Jang et al., 2016) has indicated that online social comparison significantly contributes to negative psychological functioning. For this reason, engagement in online social comparison was included at the

first step. Research also suggests that extensive time spent on SNSs is associated with depression (Twenge et al., 2017; Woods & Scott, 2016; K. B. Wright et al., 2013). Time Spent on SNSs was included at the second step. A dummy variable was computed and three categories created a) SNSs not used today b) SNSs used between 1-30 minutes or c) greater than 30 minutes. Spending greater than 30 minutes on SNSs was used as the comparative group as it was hypothesised that extensive use would significantly affect state Depression. In relation to the type of use that could contribute to depression, research suggests that it is passive use in particular that contributes to low mood (Kalpidou et al., 2011; O’Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011; Sagioglou & Greitemeyer, 2014) and so state passive SNS use was included in the next step. In line with Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) model research has also indicated that self-surveillance and body shame predict depression (Sagioglou & Greitemeyer, 2014). Therefore, self-surveillance, body shame and materialism (which has also been found to be predictive of depression; Kasser & Ryan, 1993) and active SNS use (Frison & Eggermont, 2016) were included in the final step. Recency of SNS use, time of day, gender and age were controlled for in the final model.

Analytic plan for assessing RQ5b.

A stepwise linear regression was conducted to assess RQ5b; whether self-surveillance predicts depression and if body shame mediates that relationship. This regression assessed a mediation model as part of the original objectification theory framework (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Self-surveillance was included at step one and Body Shame at the final step.

Appendix V: Correlation Table for all prompt variables and Correlation Table for all Baseline Variables

Table 15.

Correlations for baseline variables

Measures	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8	9.	1	11.	12.	13	14.	15.	16.	17.	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
								.		0			.					8.	9.	0.	1	2	3.	4	5
1.SOQ	-	-																							
2.MASO	-	-																							
3.Self-surveillance(trait)	.11	.41**	-																						
4.Body shame (trait)	.14	.20	.51**	-																					
5.General frequency of SNS use	.17*	.30*	.33**	.15*	-																				
6.Well-being	-.04	-.19	-.32**	-.26**	-.25**	-																			
7. Anxious	.13	.05	.31**	.30**	.16*	-.53**	-																		
8. Happy	.01	-.04	-.29**	-.26**	-.22**	.60**	-.42**	-																	
9. Confident	-.01	-.14	-.46**	-.38**	-.30**	.60**	-.48**	.74**	-																

10. Angry	-.02	- .19	.06	.02	- .02	- .33 **	.38 **	- .24 **	- .10	-								
11. Depressed	.03	.11	.16 *	.18 **	.09	- .59 **	.57 **	- .61 **	- .54 **	.46 **	-							
12.Active SNS use(trait)	.22* *	.33 *	.36 **	.14 *	.53 **	- .13	.19 **	- .11	- .18 **	.00	.1 5 *	-						
13.Passive SNS use(trait)	.15* *	.44 **	.50 **	.32 **	.53 **	- .11	.16 *	- .07	- .17 *	.01	. 0 4	.64* *	-					
14. Surveillance of others	.13	.64 **	.58 **	.34 **	.20 **	- .13	.23 **	- .09	- .24 **	.00	.0 6	.32 **	.50 **	-				
15.Social comparison	.13	.58 **	.61 **	.41 **	.42 **	- .31 **	.31 **	- .22 **	- .35* *	- .00	.1 6 *	.39 **	.57 **	.57 **	-			
16.MAP- SNS	.08	.27	.40 **	.20 **	.43 **	- .30 **	.16 *	- .20 **	- .25 **	.10	.1 9 *	.49 **	.55 **	.32 **	.52 **	-		
17.Self- esteem	-.03	- .09	- .45 *	- .55 **	.25 **	.67 **	- .46 **	.57 **	.68 **	- .26 **	- .5 6 *	- .19 **	- .24 **	- .20 **	- .37	.30 **	-	
18. Materialism	-.01	.41 **	.26 **	.17 **	.22 **	- .18 **	.12	- .08	- .16 *	.05	.1 2	.18 **	.34 **	.25 **	.34 **	.32 **	- .20 **	-

Appendix W: Focus Group Participants' SNS use


All participants were SNS users. Participants were asked to report the SNS they use. They self-selected when reporting the SNSs and thus responses may not reflect the correct number of SNSs participants actually used, for example some participants may not have perceived WhatsApp as a SNS and therefore did not report its use (See Table 27).

Table 27.

Self-selected SNSs used by participants.

Self-selected SNSs	Number of participants who used SNS
Facebook	32
Instagram	28
Snapchat	25
Twitter	20
WhatsApp	6
LinkedIn	5
Pinterest	2
Tinder	2
Reddit	1
YouTube	1
Bumble	1

Appendix X: Recruitment Poster (Study Two)



Focus Group
“Social Network Sites and Objectification”

Are you...

- aged between 18-25 years old ✓
- and a user of social network sites (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat etc.) ✓

**Then you may be interested in participating in a focus group on
objectification and social media!**

Location: Glasnevin Campus, DCU.

Duration: One hour (approximately).

What's involved: you will be asked your opinion on topics such as social media, mood, objectification and body image.

**If you would like to get involved and find out more about the focus groups
please email aisling.costello24@mail.dcu.ie**

Your participation would be greatly appreciated!

**Many thanks,
Aisling Costello**

Appendix Y: Ethics Approval Letter (Study Two)



COLÁISTE PHÁDRAIG
ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE
DROIM CONRACH | DRUMCONDRA

The project entitled:

'An investigation of objectification theory within the context of Facebook'

involving the following supervisor(s)/investigator(s):

Dr Ashling Bourke (Primary Supervisor),
Dr Catherine Maunsell (Auxiliary Supervisor)
and
Ms Aisling Costello (MPhil by Research Student)

has been reviewed by the St Patrick's College Research Ethics Committee, a sub-committee of the Research Committee, in accordance with the College's protocols and procedures.

The Research Ethics Committee is satisfied that the application complies with its ethical standards.

If in the opinion of the lead investigator(s)/supervisor(s), the application undergoes significant alteration during the course of the study, or if additional instruments are added, the applicant will be obliged to re-submit the application for further review.

Signed:

Dr Patricia Flynn
Chairperson, Research Ethics Committee
St Patrick's College, Drumcondra

Date:

26th May 2016

Appendix Z: Debriefing Form (Study Two)



Student: Aisling Costello
Principal Investigator: Dr. Ashling Bourke

An investigation of Objectification Theory and Social Network use.

Thank you for your participation in this focus group!

Purpose: The purpose of the focus group was to generate ideas about the way young people use social network sites and how it makes them feel about themselves and their bodies and how it makes them feel about others’.

Hypothesis: This was an exploratory process and although it is expected that social media has a role to play in objectification, the purpose of the focus groups was to discuss and develop the hypothesis to be tested in the next stage of the project.

Confidentiality/Anonymity: As you know your names were not required for the focus groups, you were assigned numbers. The information you provided will only be used for the current research project. The data collected will be kept in a password locked folder for up to ten years and will then be destroyed.

To contact the research student or the project supervisor:

Dr. Ashling Bourke (Project supervisor) ashling.bourke@dcu.ie

Dr. Catherine Maunsell (Project supervisor) catherine.maunsell@dcu.ie

Aisling Costello (research student) aisling.costello24@mail.dcu.ie

Support services:

www.bodywhys.ie Phone: 1890 200 444

www.niteline.ie Phone: 1890 793 793

www.aware.ie Phone: 1890 303 302

SPD counselling service: Aida.Keane@spd.dcu.ie

Phone: 01 8842281

If you wish to access some national support services outside the college, a list of contact details of counsellors and therapists is available from the Psychological Society of Ireland at <http://www.psychologicalsociety.ie/find-a-psychologist/>.

If participants have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and Innovation Support, Dublin City University, Dublin 9.

Tel 01-7008000, e-mail rec@dcu.ie

Appendix AA: Plain Language Statement (Study Two)



Student: Aisling Costello

Principal Investigator: Dr. Ashling Bourke

An investigation of Objectification Theory and Social Network use.

Introduction to the study:

I am a doctoral student at Dublin City University. As part of my research I want to investigate the relationship between Social network site use and objectification.

Objectification refers to the way that we view and treat others not as a whole person but primarily based on their appearance.

What involvement in this study will require:

Participation in this study will involve engaging in an hour long focus group at DCU Glasnevin Campus. You will be asked to give your age, gender, and ethnicity. You will be asked your opinion on topics such as Social Network site use, mood, objectification, and body image. You must use social network sites (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat etc.) and must be between 18-25 years of age to participate.

What are the potential risks of involvement?

Aspects of this study may cause some participants to feel uncomfortable in relation to discussing online experiences, mood, and perceptions about body image. Although you are unlikely to experience any distress, if you do, please do not hesitate to contact one of the listed researchers or support services below.

What are the potential benefits of involvement?

A potential benefit of this study is that it may increase your awareness of objectification and as a result encourage investigation into other feminist issues. It may also help to support people to challenge dominant perceptions of beauty and promote gender equality. It may also elicit an awareness of participants' media consumption. You will also be helping to contribute to a research study which could have interesting results.

How is my confidentiality protected?

If you agree to take part in this study, all information collected will be anonymised as you will be assigned a number as opposed to using your name. However anonymity cannot be guaranteed due to the size of the sample. Pseudonyms will be used in the write up of this project. The data will be stored in a password protected folder in my computer on St. Patrick's College campus for a maximum of ten years. Data will not be made available to anyone outside the research team unless legal requirements are made to do so. All data will be destroyed following this ten year period.

Is participation voluntary?

Involvement in this study is completely voluntary. You will not be penalised in anyway if you do not wish to participate. Participants have the right to withdraw and can leave the focus groups at any stage. You can also withdraw your data following the completion of the focus group by emailing the researcher requesting to do so. Participants do not have to answer all questions asked.

The study has received full ethical clearance from St. Patrick's College, a college of Dublin City University, Research Ethics Committee.

To contact the research student or the project supervisor:

Dr. Ashling Bourke (Project supervisor) ashling.bourke@dcu.ie

Dr. Catherine Maunsell (Project Supervisor) catherine.maunsell@dcu.ie

Aisling Costello (research student) aisling.costello24@mail.dcu.ie

Support services:

www.bodywhys.ie

Phone: 1890 200 444

www.niteline.ie

Phone: 1890 793 793

www.aware.ie

Phone: 1890 303 302

SPD counselling service:

Aida.Keane@spd.dcu.ie

Phone: 01 8842281

If you wish to access some national support services outside the college, a list of contact details of counsellors and therapists is available from the Psychological Society of Ireland at <http://www.psychologicalsociety.ie/find-a-psychologist/>.

If participants have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and Innovation Support, Dublin City University, Dublin 9.

Tel 01-7008000, e-mail rec@dcu.ie

Appendix BB: Consent Form (Study Two)



Student: Aisling Costello

Principal Investigator: Dr. Ashling Bourke

An investigation of Objectification Theory and Social Network use.

I am conducting my doctoral research investigating the relationship between objectification and social network site use. Objectification refers to the way that often people view and treat others not as a whole person but primarily based on their appearance. Participation in this study will involve engaging with a focus group, discussing your opinions and feelings about social network sites, objectification, mood and body image. Participants must use social network sites (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat etc) and be between 18-25 years of age to be eligible to participate.

Involvement in this study is completely voluntary. You will not be penalised in anyway if you do not wish to participate. Participants have the right to withdraw and can leave the focus groups at any stage. You can also withdraw your data following the completion of the focus group by emailing the researcher requesting to do so. Data will not be made available to anyone outside the research team unless legal requirements are made to do so. All data will be destroyed following a ten year period.

If you would like to participate please complete the following consent form.

Have you read or had read to you the Plain Language Statement? Yes/No

Do you understand the information provided? Yes/No

Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study? Yes/No

Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions? Yes/No

Are you between the ages of 18-25? Yes/No

Do you understand that you have the right to withdraw at any stage? Yes/No

Do you use social network sites? Yes/No

Dr. Ashling Bourke (Project supervisor) ashling.bourke@dcu.ie

Dr. Catherine Maunsell (Project Supervisor) catherine.maunsell@dcu.ie

Aisling Costello (research student) aisling.costello24@mail.dcu.ie

If participants have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and Innovation Support, Dublin City University, Dublin 9.

Tel 01-7008000, e-mail rec@dcu.ie

I have read and understood the information in this form. The researchers have answered my questions and concerns, and I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project

Participant's signature:

Name in Block Capitals:

Witness:

Date:

Appendix CC: Demographic Information Form (Study Two)



Student: Aisling Costello

Principal Investigator: Dr. Ashling Bourke

An investigation of Objectification Theory and Social Network use.

Demographic Questions

Age:

Gender:

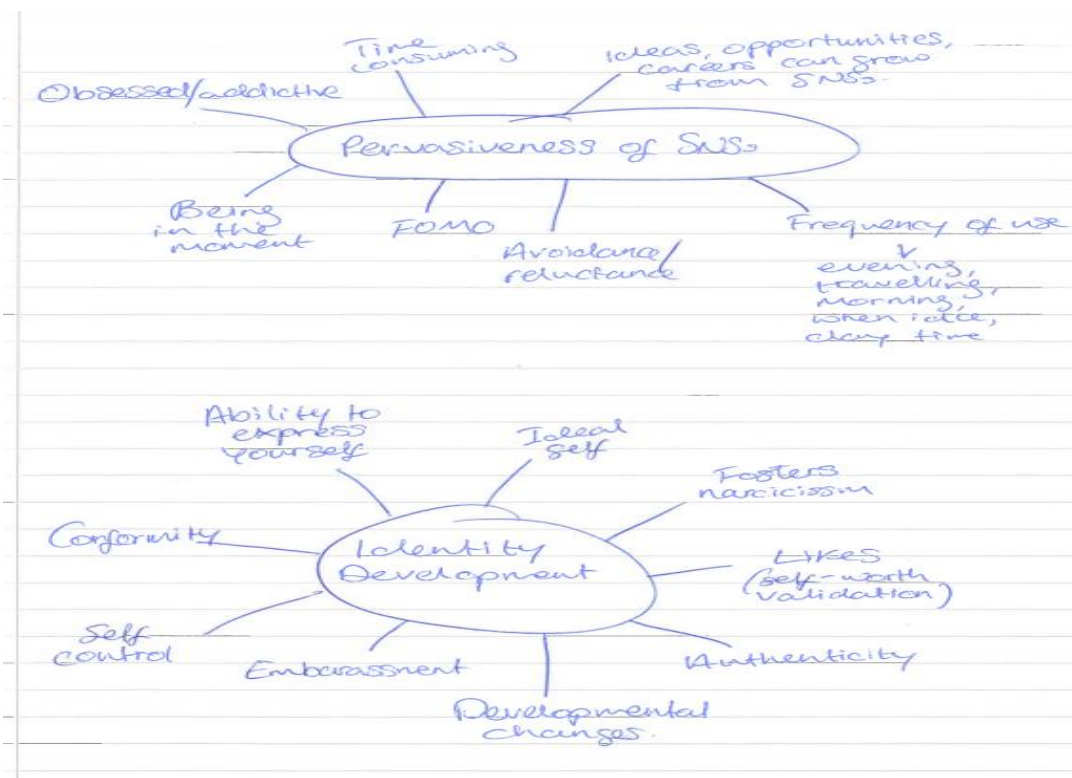
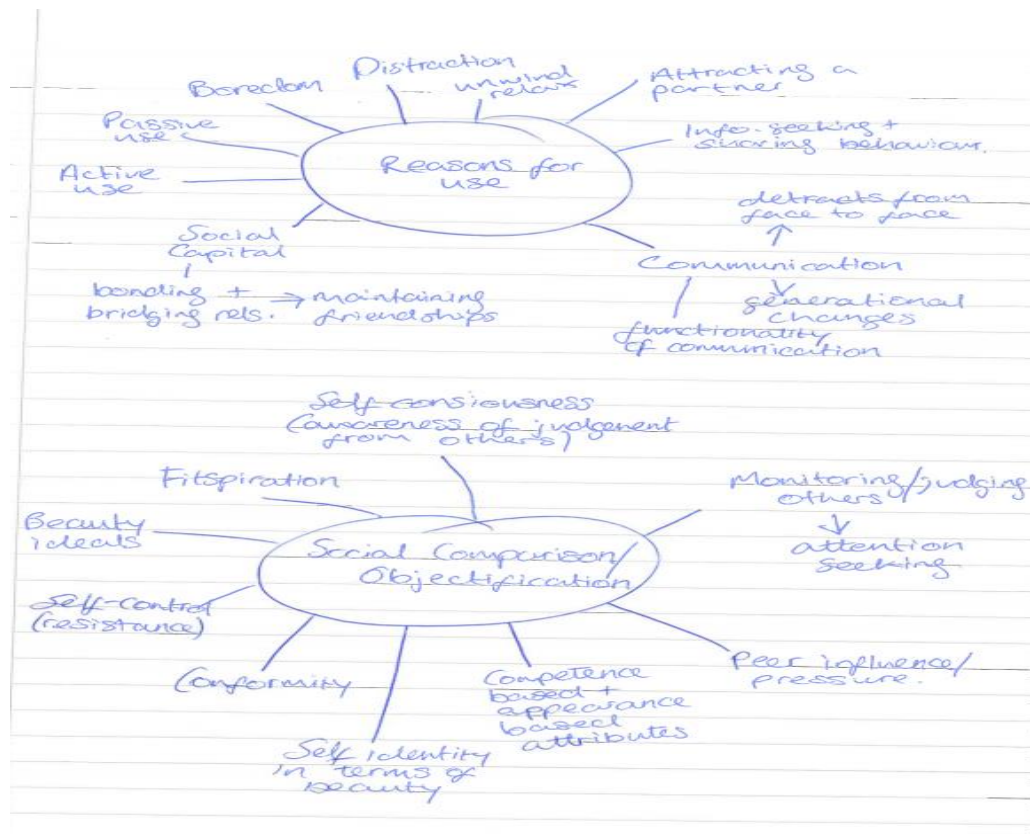
Ethnicity:

Please list the social network sites that you use:

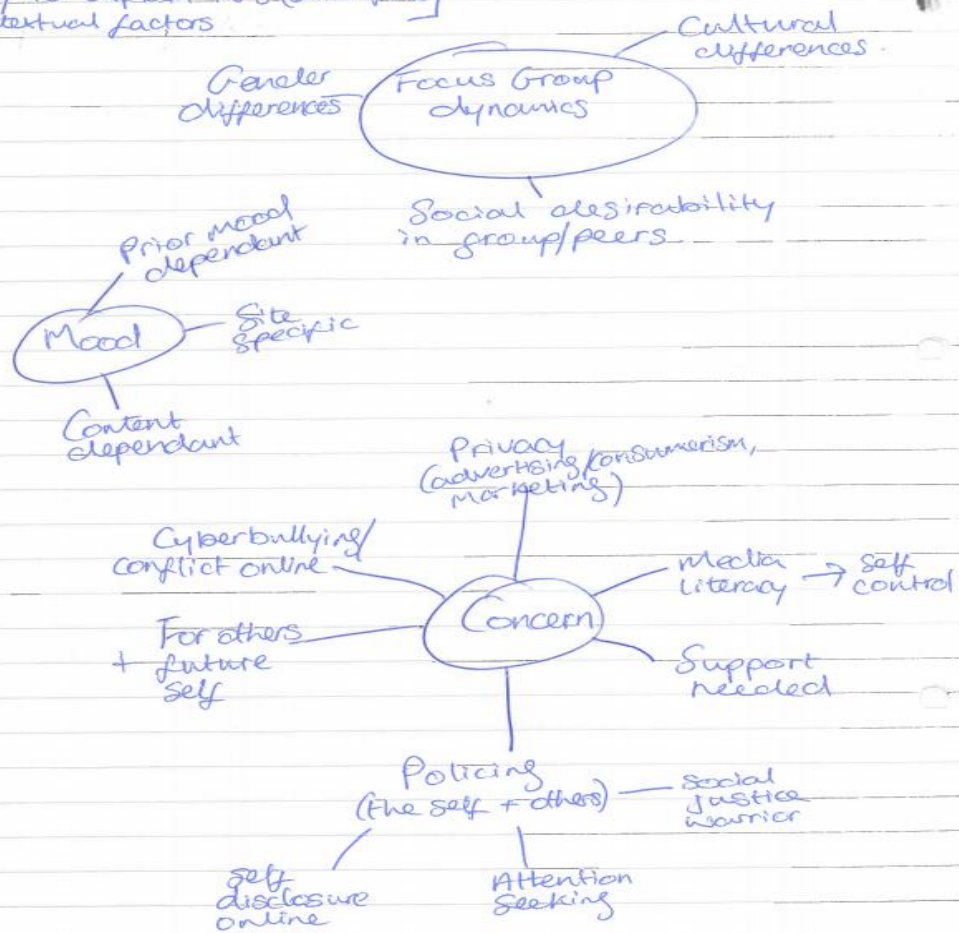
Appendix DD: Focus Group Question Schedule

1. I would like to begin by going around the group and asking what SNSs do each of you most frequently use?
2. When/at what time of day or what days would you most often use SNSs?
3. In what way do you use/ or what do you do on SNSs? (behaviours/purpose)
4. What are your thoughts and feelings about SNSs? (Pros? Cons?)
5. How do you generally feel after having used SNSs like Facebook, Instagram etc?
6. How do you generally feel about yourself, the way you look/your body after having used SNSs like Facebook?
7. How do you generally feel about others and how they look after having used SNSs?
8. Which SNSs do you think would most likely contribute to objectification?
9. Looking back on your adolescence, what impact do you think SNSs like Facebook had/would have had on how you feel about yourself and others?
10. Is there anything else you would like to say about how you use SNSs and how they make you feel about yourself and others?
11. Of all the things we've talked about, what is most important to you?

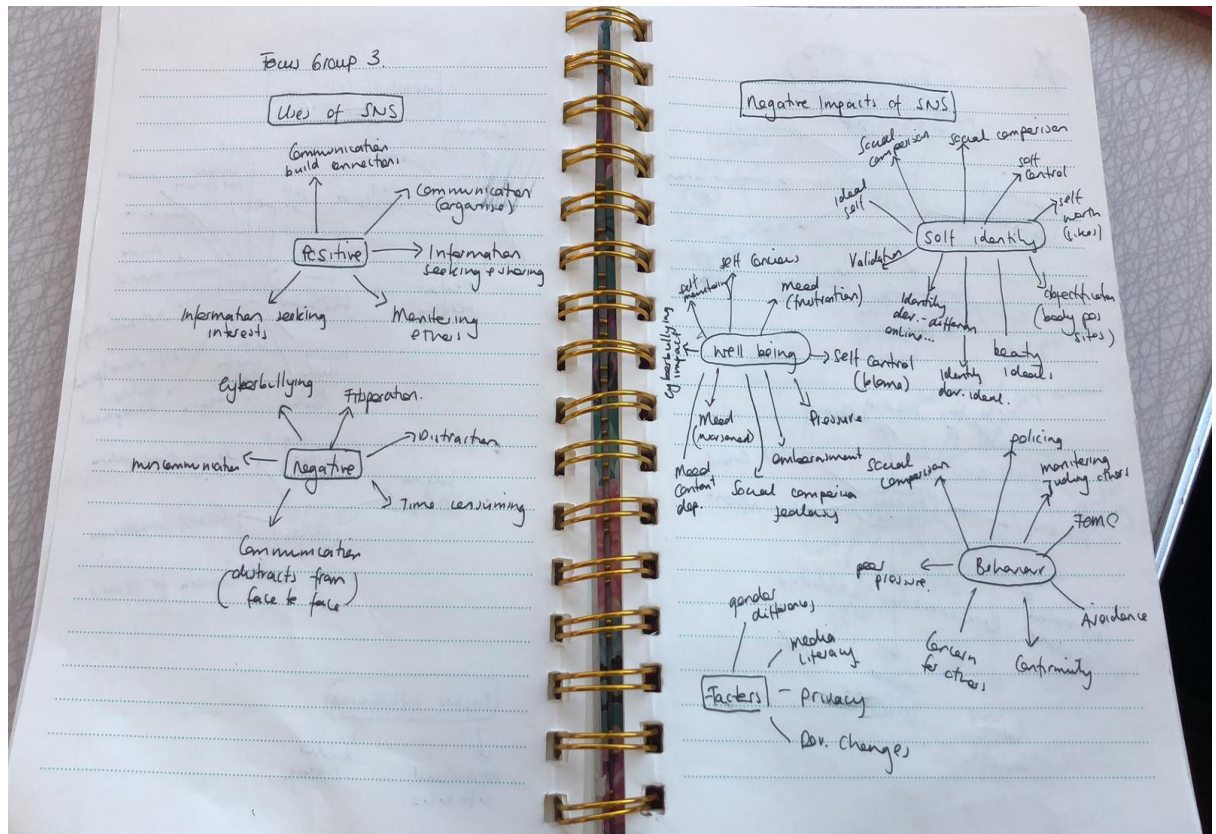
Appendix EE: Initial Candidate themes



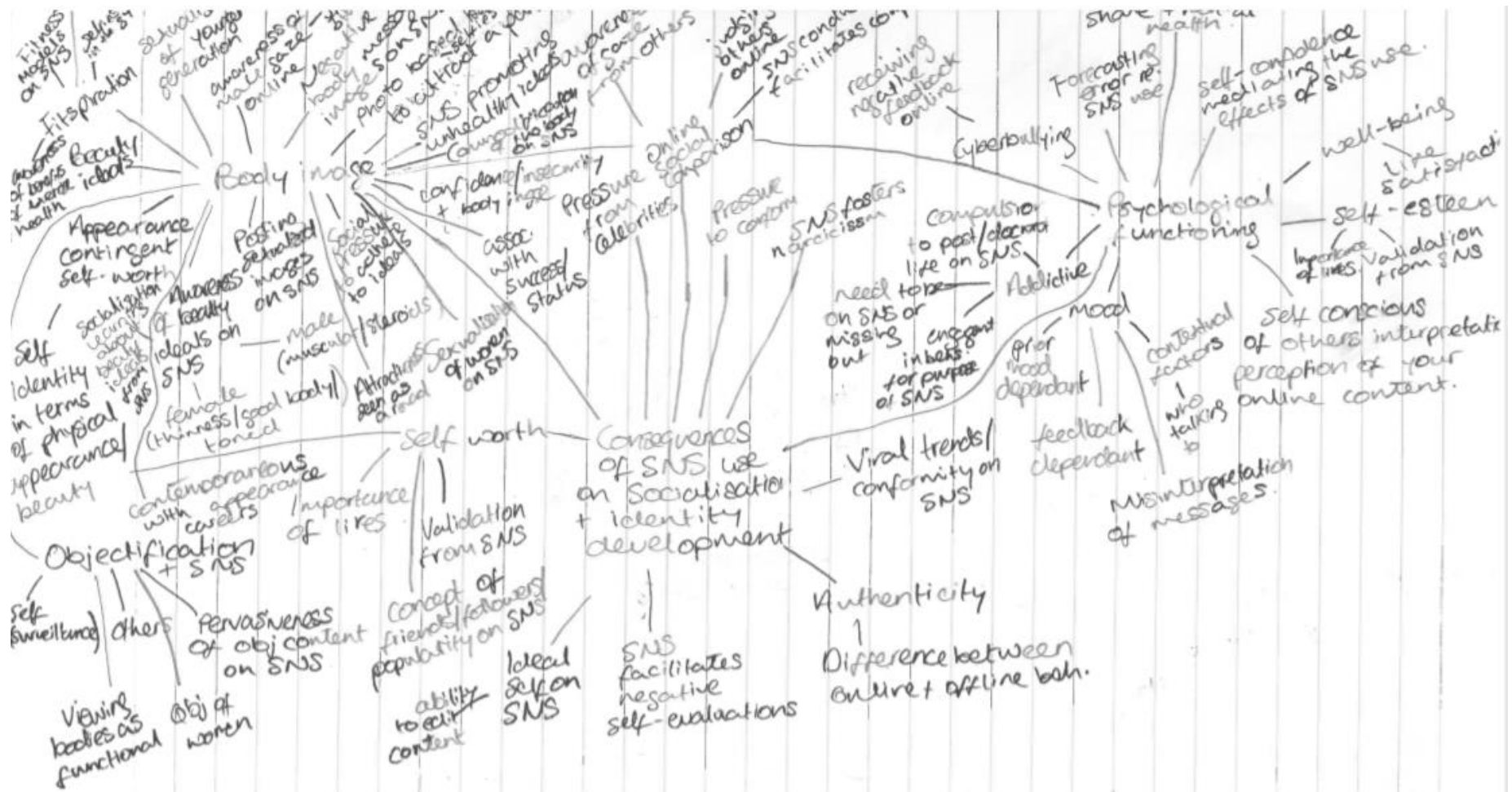
[way to explain Fg's (descriptive)]
[Contextual factors]

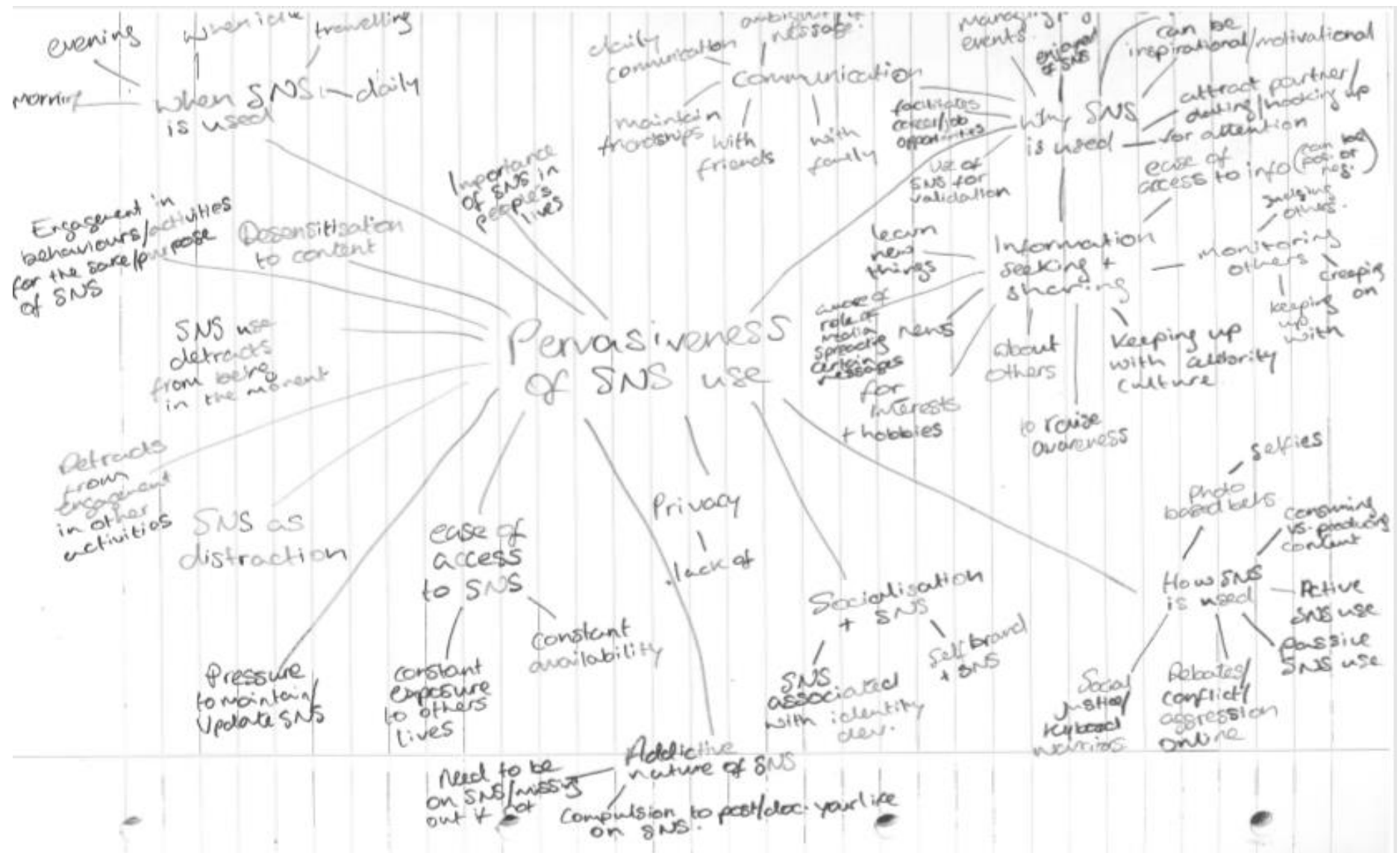


Appendix FF: Assistant-Moderator's Candidate Themes



Appendix GG: Final Candidate Themes







Appendix HH: Final themes and subthemes

Table 33.

SNS use, body image and gender dynamics: subthemes and codes.

Themes.	Subtheme:	Codes:
SNS use, body image and gender dynamics	SNS use and the sexualisation and appearance pressure on young people	Online social comparison
		Beauty ideals
		Self-identity in terms of body image/beauty
		Concern for younger generations
		Sexualisation/adultification of younger generation
		Posting sexualised images on SNSs
		Awareness of beauty ideals on SNSs
		Pressure from celebrities
		Commodification of the body on SNSs
		Negative body messages/images on SNSs
		Awareness of gaze of others
		Socialisation/learning about beauty ideals from SNSs
	Fitspiration and consequences for body image	Selfies in the gym
		Body transformation posts on SNSs
		Fitness models on SNSs
Self-control and appearance ideals		Awareness of benefits of exercise and health
		SNS use can be inspirational/motivational
		SNS promoting unhealthy appearance ideals

	Appearance associated with status/success
	Attractiveness seen as a reward
	Appearance contingent self-worth
	Self-control
SNS and the socialisation of women's appearance ideals	Online social comparison
	Pressure from celebrities
	Awareness of beauty ideals on SNSs
	Socialisation/learning about beauty ideals from SNSs
	Female (thinness/toned/good body)
	Sexualisation of women on SNSs
	Women's image/appearance as representation of the self
SNSs and the socialisation of men's appearance ideals	Awareness of beauty ideals on SNSs
	Male (muscularity/steroids)
Objectification and SNS	Self-objectification (surveillance)
	Viewing bodies as functional
	Objectification of others
	Objectification of women
	Pervasiveness of objectifying content on SNSs
	Awareness of gaze of others

Table 34.

SNS use and psychological functioning; subthemes and codes.

Themes:	Subthemes:	Codes:	Codes:
SNS use and psychological functioning	The consequences of online social comparison for psychological functioning	Online social comparison	
		Well-being (life satisfaction)	
		Prior mood dependant	
		Self-conscious of others	Awareness of gaze from others on SNS
		perception/interpretation of your content	
		Importance of likes	
		Validation from SNS	
		Concept of friends/followers/popularity on SNS	
		Self-confidence mediating the effects of SNS	
		Engagement in behaviours/activities for the purpose of SNS	
SNS use and being in the moment		Feeling as though people need to be on SNS or they're missing out	
		Compulsion to post/document life on SNS	
		FOMO	
		Communication (detracts from face to face interaction)	
SNS use as a waste of time		Passive SNS use	

	SNS use as time consuming (Waste of time)	
	SNS as distraction	
Consequences of SNS content exposure on psychological functioning	Prior mood dependant	
	Feedback dependant	
	Misinterpretation of messages	
	Contextual factors	
	Forecasting error regarding SNS use	
	Cyberbullying	Receiving negative feedback online
Privacy concerns and paranoia		

Table 35.

SNS use and the cultivation of an Ideal self; subthemes and codes

Themes:	Subthemes:	Codes:
---------	------------	--------

SNS use and the cultivation of an Ideal self	Authenticity on SNS	Difference between online and offline behaviours Falseness of SNS/Falseness of representations on SNS/ Superficial feedback from others on SNS SNS fosters narcissism Ability to edit content
	Conformity on SNS	Pressure to conform Viral trends Judging others on SNS Self-brand and SNS

Table 36.

Pervasiveness of SNSs; subthemes and codes.

Themes:	Subthemes:	Subthemes within a category of subtheme:	Codes:
Pervasiveness of SNSs	Temporality/timing of SNS use	N/A	Morning Evening When idle Travelling

Personal rationale/explanation for SNS use	Communication	Daily With family With friends Maintains/Disrupts friendships Daily communication Miscommunication/ambiguity of message
	Information seeking and sharing behaviours	Learn new things Aware of role of media spreading certain messages News SNS for interests and hobbies Information seeking about others SNS use to raise awareness Keeping up with celebrity culture Ease of access to information (can be positive or negative)
	Facilitates career/job opportunities	
	Use of SNS for validation	
	Managing/organising events	
	Enjoyment of SNS	
	SNS to unwind/relax	

How SNSs are used	Can be inspirational/motivational	
	SNS used to attract	
	partner/dating/hooking up	
	SNS use for attention	
	Photo based behaviours	Selfies
	Consuming vs. producing content	
Monitoring behaviours	Active SNS use	
	Passive SNS use	
	Debates/conflict/aggression online	
	Cyberbullying	
	Social justice/keyboard warriors	
	SNS use for monitoring others	Judging others
		Creeping on
		Keeping up with others

	Self-monitoring behaviours	Online Social Comparison Cautious of posts Self-conscious of others perceptions/interpretations of your online content Policing of online content
Addictive nature/Investment in SNS	Compulsion to post/document your life on SNS Need to be on SNS/missing out if not FOMO Pressure to maintain/update SNS SNS as distraction Detracts from engagement in other activities Detracts from being in the moment Engagement in behaviours/activities for the sake/purpose of SNS Importance of SNS in people's lives Constant availability	
Ease of access to SNS	Constant exposure to others lives	

