The Effect of Social Comparison on Female Model's Body Image

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Abstract. Being female models are identical to have an attractive physical appearance such as a tall, thin and clean white skin, which this makes the models focus on their physical appearance. Furthermore, models have a tendency to compare themselves with others in order to fulfill the demands of the modeling industry. This study aims to determine whether there is an effect of social comparison on body image in the female model. The sample of this research is 275 female models with an age range of 18-30 years who are in Jakarta and are members of a modeling agency. Data were collected using social comparison and body image measurement tools. Social comparison was measured using Physical Appearance Comparison Scale-Revised (PACS-R) and body image measured using the Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire–Appearance Scales (MBSRQ–AS). The results of this study prove that social comparison has a significant effect on the body image of female models in Jakarta. The effective contribution of social comparison to body image is 46.3%. The Implications of the research could be the baseline for women's empowerment institutions in increasing knowledge for women so that they are able to accept their physical appearance as it is. Specifically, this research is actually a reflection for all model agencies in terms of represent beauty to people through products or brand.

Keywords: *Social comparison, body-image, female model, Jakarta, model agencies*

Introduction

Being a model always related to an attractive physical appearance such as a tall, thin and clean white skin. Those attractive physical appearance are believed will give extra value on a product promotion (Khasnudin, 2018). Related to that fact, society and industries create a stereotype that a model needs an attractive physical appearance in order to fulfil market's expectations. Hence, an attractive physical appearance becomes one of the terms demanded for a model in general. Models form US, Paris, London, and Milan demanded to have slim, beautiful body, also clean white skin to represent high end brand, even in Indonesia (Setyanti, 2013; Elia, 2017; Poerwadi, 2019). Virginiaputri (2017) added that models in Indonesia are also required to have clean skin, especially on their face.

The market's demands require models to have an attractive physical appearance such as having a thin body and clean white skin in the last 2-3 years have begun to shift

(Astuti & Hasibuan, 2017). This shift occurred because the market demanded that the model should have a better reflection of diversity in terms of physical appearance (Poerwadi, 2019). The new market's needs have made lots of brands interested in involving models with unusual physical requirements than before. Different big brands then started to hire plus-size models, striped skin (vitiligo) models, black skin models (Astuti & Hasibuan, 2017), and even acne-prone models' faces (Arungbudoyo, 2018) to represent real beauty. For example, Hunter McGrady is a famous plus size models that represents big brands in America (Athiraniday, 2017). She even becomes judge's team of American Next Top Models and started promoting about plus size models. Other examples are, Winnie Harlow is a Canadian striped skin (vitiligo) model; an acne-prones face model named Louisa Northcote from England; a black skin model Nyakim Gatwech which come from Sudan who represent big brands in all over the world (Priherdityo, 2015; Warner, 2019; Ngantung, 2020).

In fact, these shifts in the model's physical appearance do not necessarily change all the big brands' perspectives when they choose a model, but still more firmly attached than before (Sukardi, 2019). A model who is an icon of Indonesia Fashion Week 2020 said that the modelling world in Jakarta still pays attention to physical appearance such as body size, where she is required to have a thinner body (Sukardi, 2019). In addition to being thin, the image of a model with clean skin is still firmly attached. A founder one of modelling school in Jakarta said that female models in Jakarta are not only required to have a thin body, but also needs to have clean skin (Soekirno, 2016).

According to that fact, it means that physical appearance still becomes the first and the most important requirement in the modeling world which will increase the model's attention to focus on their 'perfect' physical appearance (Collison & Barnier, 2019). Models who have numerous attentions to physical appearance will have body image (Sugiono, 2014). Body image is defined as the attitude that a person has toward their size, shape, or physical appearance (Cash & Smolak, 2011). This attitude can be a form of positive or negative assessment depends on how the individual perceives their self. Individuals who have a positive attitude towards their size, shape, or physical appearance will be satisfied and accept their body as it is. Conversely, individuals who

have a negative attitude toward their size, shape, or physical appearance will be dissatisfied and unable to accept their body as it is (Cash & Smolak, 2011).

Researchers conducted a preliminary survey to determine the body image of female models in Jakarta. This preliminary survey was conducted on 20 female models in Jakarta aged 18-30 years who are members of a modeling agency. The results obtained regarding body image related to satisfaction with physical appearance found 30% of models were satisfied with their physical appearance (positive body image) and 70% of models were not satisfied with their physical appearance (negative body image). Cash and Smolak (2011) state that body image can be formed due to several factors, including social comparison. Social comparison is defined as the behavior of individuals in comparing themselves with others in terms of physical appearance (Schaefer, 2013). Jones (as cited in Nadina, 2019) mentions comparisons of physical appearances made by individuals with other people which include height, weight, body shape, and face. Fisher et al (as cited in Fitriyani, 2019) added that not a few individuals also compare their overall physical appearance with others.

Social comparison in physical appearance will tend to be carried out by models, considering that they have very focused and tough competition related to physical appearance. Festinger (as quoted in Setiawati, 2020) states that competition can trigger someone to do self-evaluation which made individuals tend to make social comparisons. The tendency of individuals to do social comparisons could make individuals develop a negative body image (Vartanian & Dey, 2013). Fardouly et al.'s (2015) research stated that individuals who compare their physical appearance with others will form a negative body image. The preliminary survey was conducted also to determine the tendency of social comparison in 20 female models in Jakarta aged 18-30 years who are members of a model agency. The results obtained regarding the tendency of social comparison related to comparing physical appearance with other people found that 40% of the models did not compare their physical appearance with others and 60% of the models compare their physical appearance with others.

According to Festinger (as cited in Pradana, 2021) individuals conduct social comparisons in two directions, upward and downward comparison. Upward comparison happened when individuals make comparisons with others who are considered better.

On the other hand, downward comparison happened when individuals make comparisons with others who are considered worse than themselves. Thogersen et al., (2017) mentioned that from both directions of comparison, individuals will be more likely to make upward comparisons, in which they're comparing their physical appearance with someone who is more attractive or ideal. This is in line with the research conducted by Sari and Suarya (2018) on 104 female students at the Faculty of Psychology, University of Surabaya (18-25 years) which found that 73.3% of female students compared their physical appearance upwards, which means they compared their physical appearance to other women who were more attractive. Social comparisons related to physical appearance are often carried out by individuals with other people to celebrities (Schaefer and Thompson, 2018). Some models from Jakarta said that they often compare some their body parts with others (especially senior models or celebrities) which make they feel not beautiful as others. Furthermore, Nurhayati (2017) mentioned that models from Philippines often compares her physical appearance with international actresses and made she does not feel beautiful. In addition, social comparisons related to physical appearance are also often done with friends or in their social environment (Nurhayati, 2017). Some American models admitted that they often compare their height with other models which in the end make them feel shorter than other (Flanagan & Perry, 2018).

According to those facts, researcher conducted interviews about social comparisons related to physical appearance and body image. The interview involved two female models who were in Jakarta. The results obtained regarding social comparison related to physical appearance and body image found that both of them often compare their physical appearance, (face, body shape, or height) with others. Both models said they made these comparisons to friends of fellow models, celebrities, or other people they saw or met. They also mentioned when they made comparisons, they would usually compare their physical appearance with more attractive or ideal people in terms of the physical appearance. Furthermore, they felt that their physical appearance still had a lot of flaws so they would correct these deficiencies, such as going on a strict diet or more physical's grooming so that their physical appearance matched those ideal people. They also mentioned that they often felt bad about their physical appearance after those repeated social comparisons.

The interview that has been conducted by researchers is in line with the research of Sunartio et al., (as cited in Rahmadiyanti and Munthe, 2020) which stated that after individuals compare their physical appearance with others, even more so when social comparisons are upward, then the individuals will feel that they have lots of bad flaws in themselves. Sunartio et al., (2012) added that individuals with a high level of social comparison can influence the emergence of a sense of dissatisfaction with their physical appearance (negative body image). Conversely, individuals with low levels of social comparison can influence the onset of satisfaction with their physical appearance (positive body image) (Sunartio et al., 2012). Based on previous research conducted by Fardouly et al., (2015) which involved 112 female students aged 17-25 years in England, the results found that social comparison had an effect on body image. Previous research was also conducted by Lewallen and Morawitz (2016) which involved 118 women aged between 18-64 years with the majority of participants (50.8%) aged between 25-34 years in the United States, the results found that social comparison had an effect on body image. Another study was conducted by Renee et al., (2014) on 224 adolescents in Australia, the results showed that there was an effect of social comparison on body image. Previous research in Indonesia was conducted by Prameswari (2020) which involved 150 late adolescent girls aged 18-21 years in the city of Malang, the results found that social comparison had an effect on body dissatisfaction (negative body image).

So far, researchers have not found research on the effect of social comparison on body image in female models in Jakarta. Previous research conducted by Prameswari (2020) only focused on late adolescents aged 18-21 years in the city of Malang. In addition, researchers found that some of previous studies were mostly carried out in the context of western culture, so this research needs to be carried out in a different context. Researchers would develop this research by conducting research on female models in the Jakarta area because there're still lots of demand to have 'perfect' physical appearance on the models. With the demands regarding physical appearance, it is known to make models have high competition related to physical appearance. Hence, the models will tend to do social comparisons. Based on previous studies that have been done, it states that social comparison affects a person's body image. Thus, researchers are interested in

conducting research on the effect of social comparison on body image in female models in Jakarta. The hypothesis in this study is:

Ha: There is a significant influence between social comparisons on female's models body image in Jakarta

Method

The population of this study are female models with an age range of 18-30 years who are in Jakarta and are members of a modelling agency. Based on an preliminary survey conducted by researchers regarding the description of the number of models joining modelling agencies in Jakarta, it was found that the population of female models joining modelling agencies in Jakarta are 1,307. Based on the table of Isaac and Michael, the required sample based on the population are 275 samples.

This study uses a quantitative method to measure social comparison and body image on female models in Jakarta. The first measurement instrument used is the Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire-Appearance Scales (MBSRQ-AS) which was developed by Cash which have been adapted by Swami et al., (2019) using the Malaysian language (Malay). This measuring tool uses a Likert scale where the favorable item has a score on the answer choices, score of 4 = Strongly Agree, score 3 = Agree, score 2 = Disagree, and score 1 = Strongly Disagree, whereas for unfavorable items it has the opposite score, which score 1 = Strongly Agree, score 2 = Agree, score 3 = Disagree, and score 4 = Strongly Disagree. The reliability of the MBSRQ-AS measuring instrument has a value of 0.981 with an item-rest correlation range of 0.470 – 0.917. The MBSRQ-AS blueprint shows as table 1 below:

Table 1. *Blue print of* MBRQ-AS

Aspect	*Favorable*	*Unfavorable*
Appereance Evaluation	1, 2, 3, 4	5, 6, 7
Appereance Orientation	15, 16, 18	8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 19
Body Area Satisfaction	20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28	-
Overweight Preoccupation	-	29, 30, 31, 32
Sekf-classified weight	-	33, 34

The second measuring instrument used is the Physical Appearance Comparison Scale-Revised (PACS-R) developed by (Schaefer, 2013). This measuring instrument uses the Likert scale where in favorable items have a score on the answer choice, score of 4 = Strongly Agree, score 3 = Agree, score 2 = Disagree, and score 1 = Strongly Disagree. The reliability of the Physical Appearance Comparison Scale-Revised (PACS-R) measuring instrument has a value of 0.950 with a range of item-rest correlation, namely between 0.594 – 0.876.   The blueprint of the PACS-R shows as table 2 below:

Table 2. *Blue print of* PACS-R

Aspek	*No of Item*
Body Size	1, 2, 3
Body Fat	4, 5
Weight	6, 7
Body Shape	8, 9
Physical Appereance	10, 11

The data collection technique in this study used descriptive statistical techniques. Descriptive statistical techniques are used to find out general images such as the age of the subject, domicile, and length of work as a model. The data analysis technique used is a simple linear regression test. Simple linear regression is performed by researchers aimed at testing research hypotheses. Before performing a simple linear regression test, researchers first test assumptions as a condition for continuing to use a simple regression test. The assumption test carried out in this study there is a normality test and a linearity test. The normality test was carried out to find out whether the data used was normally distributed or not using the Shapiro Wilk and Q-Q Plot tests. After the normality test, a linearity test is carried out which aims to determine the linear status of a distribution of research data. The Linearity test is performed using a residual vs predicted test. To be able to show how much influence between social comparison affects the body image in female models in Jakarta, it can be known by looking at the R^2 value.

Result

Researchers obtained as many as 275 female models in the study. The criteria for respondents have been determined by previous researchers, namely female models who

are members of agencies with an age range of 18-30 years and are domiciled in Jakarta. The following is an overview of the subject of this study:

Table 3. Overview of Research Subjects; N=275

Variable	Frequency	%
Age (in years)		
Late Teens (18-20)	54	20%
Early Adult (21-30)	221	80%
Duration of Working as a Model		
Junior (< 6 months to 6 months. ≤ 3 years)	181	66%
Senior (> 3 years - > 10 years)	94	34%

Table 3 shows that 80% of the subjects of this study were between the ages of 21 to 30 years and as many as 66% worked as junior models in terms of the length of time they worked as a Female model. Furthermore, a description of the research variables will be presented, namely as follows:

Table 4. Description of Research Variables; N=275

Variable	Theoretical Mean		Empirical Mean	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Body Image	85	17	84,38	13,37
Social Comparison	27,5	5,5	27,66	5,49

Based on the results in table 4, the body image variable obtains an empirical mean value that is smaller than the theoretical mean. Therefore, it can be concluded that the study respondents have a body image that tends to be low or negative. Furthermore, in the social comparison variable obtains an empirical mean value greater than the theoretical mean. Therefore, it can be concluded that the study respondents had a high level of social comparison. Furthermore, the categorization of the research subject will be presented on each variable.

Table 5. Research Subject Category; N=275

Variable	Body Image		Social Comparison	
	F	%	F	%
Tends to be low	139	50,55%	134	48,73%
Tends to be high	136	49,45%	141	51,27%

Table 5 shows that most 50.55% of Female models have a body image that tends to be negative. That is, most of the models in the study have a negative attitude and are dissatisfied with their size, shape or physical appearance. Furthermore, as many as 51.27% of female models have a social comparison that tends to be positive. That is, most of the models in this study tend to compare their physical appearance with the physical appearance of others.

Assumption tests are carried out in order to meet the requirements of a simple linear regression test. Therefore, researchers conducted an assumption test first before performing a simple liner regression test. The assumption test was performed using JASP 0.16.1.0. Some of the assumption tests used are normality tests and linearity tests. The results of the normality test conducted shows as table 6 below:

Table 6. Normality Test; N=275

	Body Image	*Social Comparison*
Shapiro Wilk	0,991	0,992
P-value Shapiro Wilk	0,105	0,179

Based on the analysis in table 6 which shows the normality test using Shapiro-Wilk, it shows the distribution of the body image variable score is normal (p = 0.179) and the social comparison is normal (p = 0.105) and for the variable). So, it can be concluded that the assumption of normality of data distribution is met. Furthermore, the researcher conducted a linearity test to prove that the variance of the two data was equivalent to looking at the presence or absence of certain patterns in the residual vs predicted test. If a certain pattern such as dots form a regular pattern (wave, widening then narrowing) then heteroscedasticity occurs (a violation of the homoscedasticity test). Here are the results of the linearity test:
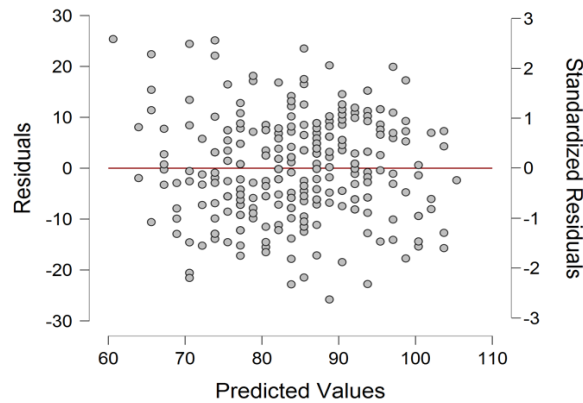
Figure 1. Linearity Test

Figure 1 shows the results of the linearity test, visible points spreading randomly, not forming a specific clear pattern. This means that the data taken in the study is said to be linear. Furthermore, the researcher conducted a hypothesis test with a simple linear regression technique because both test assumptions were met. Here are the results of the hypothesis test conducted:

Table 7. Linear Regression Test ANOVA; N=275

Type		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
H_1	Regression	22677,031	1	22677,031	235,233	< 0,001
	Residual	26317,878	273	96,402		
	Total	48994,909	274			

Table 7 shows that regression models with values of F (1.273) = 235.233, p = 0.001 can be used to predict body images in female models in Jakarta. In other words, the social comparison variable affects the body image in female models in Jakarta. This shows a significant influence between social comparisons on body image in female models in Jakarta. Thus, it can be concluded that H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. Furthermore, it will be explained the magnitude of the influence given social comparison on body image on female models in Jakarta, namely as follows:

Table 8. Summary of Social Comparison Effect on Body Image ; N=275

Type	R	R²	Adjusted R²	RMSE
H_0	0,000	0,000	0,000	13,372
H_a	0,680	0,463	0,461	9,818

Table 8 shows a summary social comparison model with a body image, it was found that the R Square number (coefficient of   determination) was 0.463 or equal to 46.3%. It can be known that the magnitude of the influence given by social comparison on body image on female models in Jakarta is 46.3% while the remaining 53.6% can be explained by other factors or not described in this study. Cohen (as cited in Gravetter et al., 2018) explains the criteria for the interpretation of valuesR^2, namely R^2=0.01 small effect, R^2=0.09 medium effect and R^2=0.25 large effect. With a valueR^2 = 0.463, the influence of social comparison on body image on female models in Jakarta can be said to have a big influence.

Discussion

The results of the analysis on the social comparison variables in this study obtained an empirical mean value greater than the theoretical mean so that it can be said that the female model in Jakarta has a level social comparison that tend to be high. Furthermore, the results of the analysis on the body image variable in this study obtained an empirical mean value that was smaller than the theoretical mean, so it can be said that the female model in Jakarta have a body image that tends to be low or negative. The results obtained in this study found that social comparisons have an effect on body image in female models in Jakarta. That is, most of the models in this study have compared their physical appearance with the physical appearance of others. The tendency of models to make social comparisons related to their physical appearance is triggered because of high competition related to physical appearance, so that the model will evaluate itself with a social comparison. This is in line with the results of research conducted by Vartanian and Dey (2013) which states that the tendency of individuals to do social comparison can make individuals develop image bodies negative.

Based on the results obtained regarding the social comparison variable with the body image variable above, it was found that the two had a negative relationship direction. This means that the higher the level of social comparison carried out by the model, the lower or negative the body image it has. On the other hand, the lower the level of social comparison carried out by the model, the higher or positive the body image it has. This finding is in line with the elite assessment conducted by Sunartio et al.,

(2012) who said individuals with a high level of social comparison can cause a sense of dissatisfaction (body negative image) to the physical appearance possessed. On the other hand, individuals with a low level of social comparison can cause a feeling of satisfaction (positive body image) to their physical appearance. This is contrary to   the results of previous research conducted by Hastuti (2018) where social comparison does not affect body dissatisfaction (negative body image). However, researchers also found the results of previous studies that were in line with those carried out by Fardouly et al., (2015) whose research results found that social comparisons affect body image.   Previous research which is also in line with this research was conducted by Lewallen and Morawitz (2016) whose results also found that social comparison affects body image.

The findings of the large contribution of the influence of social comparison on body image in this study were 46.3%.   The magnitude of the influence in this study is different from the previous research conducted by Husni & Indrijati (2014) on adolescent girls who are obese. The results of research by Husni & Indrijati (2014) obtained a contribution to the influence of social comparison onbody image, which was 33.4%.   It can be seen that the contribution of the influence of social comparison on body image in his study is much greater when compared to research conducted by Husni & Indrijati (2014). This can be because the characteristics of respondents involved in this study are more likely to do social comparisons, considering the work of a very competitive model related to their physical appearance so that its influence on the body image becomes greater.

Furthermore, the results of this study found that there are other factors that can affect the body image, namely 53.7%. Cash and Smolak (2011) mentioned that other factors that can affect body image include (a) the role of parents who have commented on their child's physical appearance, for example regarding their child's weight, the appearance of their child, or because their child does modeling from their parents who have diet behavior because they feel they have problems with weight his body, (b) peers who like to make comments such as often saying "fat", (c) mass media that often air someone with an attractive physical appearance, (d) occurs physical changes in the developmental phase, and (e) personality factors, for example individuals who have a positive self-concept will be able to develop a positive body image. Conversely,

individuals with low self-esteem can make individuals develop a negative body image. The other factors mentioned by Cash & Smolak (2011) have never been studied by other researchers so it cannot be known what percentage of effective donations are given by each of those other factors.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that there is an influence of social comparison on body image on female models in Jakarta. The value of the regression equation on the influence of social comparison on body image in female models found that each addition of one value to social comparison will reduce body image. Furthermore, it is known that social comparison and body image have a relationship with negative directions. That is, the higher the level of social comparison, the lower or negative body image you have. On the other hand, the lower the level of social comparison, the higher or positive the body image you have. The Implications of the research generally, this research could be the baseline for women's empowerment institutions in increasing knowledge for women so that they are able to accept their physical appearance as it is. Specifically, this research is actually a reflection for all model agencies in terms of represent beauty to people through products or brand. The fact that 'perfect' beauty is shifting nowadays need to be considered whenever the agencies choose the female models. Thus, female models will develop positive body image and decrease social comparison in physical appearances.

This research still has shortcomings as follows, the social comparison measuring instrument where the items only describe the comparison of physical appearance in general without knowing the direction of the comparison conducted by respondents. Festinger (as quoted in Pradana, 2021) mentioned that social comparisons made by a person can go through two directions, namely upward comparison and downward comparison. Upward comparison is an individual making a comparison with other individuals who are considered better. For this reason, this deficiency can be a suggestion as a consideration for subsequent researchers in order to include the direction of social comparisons made by respondents, upward comparison and downward

comparison on social comparison measuring instruments. This aims to better describe the

direction of comparison carried out by respondents.

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