STONE, TRACY I. Ed.D. The Effect Of "Body Positive" and "Fit Body" #Fitspiration on Body Appreciation, Self-Efficacy, and Physical Activity Behavior. (2023)
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On Instagram, the hashtag #fitspiration or #fitspo, a blending of "fitness" and "inspiration," is a collection of content that members post to celebrate their accomplishments and inspire others to be more active. The purpose of this project was to determine if #fitspiration content influences young women's body appreciation, self-efficacy, and physical activity behavior and intention. Thirty-six college aged women were randomly divided into two groups to view assigned social media content (Fit-Body or Body Positive #fitspiration) and reported their levels of body esteem, task and scheduling self-efficacy, and physical activity (PA) behavior and intention, pre- and post-viewing. Each group was later given full access to compare and evaluate both #fitspiration types. Results of the Group by Survey (2x2) ANOVAs revealed no effects on the body esteem subscales of appearance, weight, or attribution. Group B, who viewed Body Positive content, reported significantly higher overall task self-efficacy, and scheduling self-efficacy than Group A, who viewed Fit-Body content. For both PA behavior and intention, results included a Group main effect where Group B reported higher overall scores. More importantly, there was a stronger Group by Survey interaction, with large effect sizes, where Group B scores increased, and Group A scores decreased slightly post viewing. On the final comparison and evaluation survey, participants from both groups rated body positive content to be more enjoyable and inspiring. Most notably, as the viewing time for this content was a total of two weeks, these findings suggest that even short-term exposure to Body Positive #fitspiration can increase women's task and scheduling self-efficacy, intention to be active, and PA behavior.

THE EFFECT OF "BODY POSITIVE" AND "FIT BODY" #FITSPIRATION ON BODY APPRECIATION, SELF-EFFICACY, AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BEHAVIOR

by

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DEDICATION

To my sister Pamela, losing you in 2019 was a crushing blow to my mental capacity to do anything, let alone begin a doctoral degree without you. But despite leaving this earth, you've never left me. You were in my writing, my planning, my research, and my ability to push through to this finish line. There is a hole in my life where you should be, but I will see you again. Love you, always.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation written by Tracy I. Stone has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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To my 2019 cohort, our bond is a special one that will last a lifetime. You are now a part of my family, and I am a part of yours (whether you like it or not). I look forward to our alumni Secret Santa exchange every year from here forward. To my Banks, Stone, Sherman, Smitherman, Hudson, Strickland, Williams, Tyiska family, thank you for your constant support and celebration of my journey to earn this degree. I love you all more than you know.

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CHAPTER I: PROJECT OVERVIEW

Consistent and adequate physical activity during young adulthood can lead to long-term health benefits (Van Dyck et. al., 2015). However, approximately 40-50% of students do not participate in an adequate amount of physical activity (PA) (Van Dyck et. al., 2015). Many college campuses work to combat this statistic by providing resources for students, such as fitness facilities with fees included in tuition or physical activity courses where students can be active while earning credit hours. Yet more is needed and using social media to enact positive behavior change is one approach that could help. Research showed that 58.7% of U.S. female college students report using social media for six or more hours weekly (Duffin, 2021). An effective social media campaign should reach a significant number of that population. Moreover, one way to ensure social media will be influential is to use hashtags that are "trending" (i.e., mentioned or reposted more than 1,000 times on social media in a short period of time). The popular hashtag #fitspiration, for example, has been trending on Instagram for almost a decade (Aslam, 2022). As a result, it provides an opportunity to reach a large audience. However, it has also been scrutinized in recent studies suggesting that #fitspiration can negatively shape health beliefs, putting an unrealistic expectation on consumers' ability to achieve one specific type of fit body, particularly for young women (Jong & Drummond, 2016).

Research studies have shown that for some women, exposure to fit-body fitspiration can lead to body dissatisfaction and negative mood (Prichard et. al., 2018). Therefore, after viewing this content, they may experience a level of body dissatisfaction that would tamp down their motivation to engage in exercise altogether (Prichard et. al., 2018). Alternatively, other studies have shown the potential for #fitspiration content to have a positive influence by promoting

exercise engagement rather than focusing on weight loss (Jong & Drummond, 2016; Raggatt et. al., 2018; Prichard et. al., 2020). Specifically, in the study by Raggatt and colleagues (2018), followers of #fitspiration reported the perks of having access to physical activity ideas and knowledge of health and nutrition from the comforts of their home (Jong & Drummond, 2016). This information provides a way for certain followers to overcome the perceived barrier of lack of knowledge to participating in physical activities. This study also showed that participants who followed #fitspiration content and certain influencer accounts on Instagram reported the posts inspired them to eat healthier and provided ideas for how to be more physically active (Raggatt et. al., 2018).

Despite the research on #fitspiration in general, there is still a need to determine if, why, and how #fitspiration may lead young women to engage in physical activity behavior. Two factors that influence physical activity, which #fitspiration may impact, are body appreciation and self-efficacy. Body appreciation is one of the key components of developing positive body image in females, and it has been shown that when appreciation levels are high, there is also a positive effect on self-efficacy for physical activity (Williamson & Karazsia, 2018). There is an abundance of research demonstrating self-efficacy as a strong predictor of increased physical activity behavior (Barz et. al., 2016). Therefore, if #fitspiration can increase both body appreciation and self-efficacy, then it can be better used to increase physical activity behavior in college aged females.

Background

Currently, over 4 billion people use social media worldwide, with over 1.3 billion using Instagram (Auxier & Anderson, 2021). As a result, Instagram has become the 4th ranked most used social media platform behind YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter (Aslam, 2022). Recently, it

has become more common for individuals to depend on social media as their preferred source of information on current events, politics, and even health and wellness. According to Instagram, its health and wellness content, commonly identified by hashtags (#), can include tips for improving health and nutrition, methods of self-care, and videos demonstrating exercise form or sample workouts. #Fitspiration has received a great deal of attention in research for the last decade (Carrotte et al., 2017), and searches for #fitspiration or the abbreviated #fitspo on Instagram will find over 19.1 million and 72.8 million posts, respectively (Instagram, 2022). The hashtag began "trending" (i.e., mentioned or reposted more than 1,000 times on social media) early in Instagram's history, and its primary purpose was to serve as a healthier alternative to the popular #Thinspiration or #Thinspo (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2018). The objective of #thinspiration was to provide content that praised the thin body ideal as a societal standard of beauty and inspire consumers to lose weight (Boepple & Thompson, 2016). Fitspiration portrays fit bodies (i.e., with visible muscle tone) and images of behaviors a person can implement to achieve health rather than thinness (Boepple & Thompson, 2016). Most importantly, studies have shown the potential for #fitspiration content to have a positive influence, particularly on the health and well-being of young women, by promoting exercise engagement rather than focusing on weight loss (Jong & Drummond, 2016; Raggatt et. al., 2018; Prichard et. al., 2020).

Fit-Body #Fitspiration

Despite the focus on fitness and health, Fitspiration images focus on physical appearance and emphasize looks over function or physical ability. Tiggemann and Zaccardo (2015) point out how the socially acceptable images of a female body still lean more toward toned-*and-thin*. Research has shown that for some women, exposure to fit-body fitspiration can lead to body dissatisfaction and negative mood (Prichard et. al., 2018). Therefore, after viewing this content,

they may experience a level of body dissatisfaction that would decrease their motivation to engage in physical activity altogether (Prichard et. al., 2018). The question remains then whether exposure to fit body #fitspiration motivates young women to be more active or discourages exercise behavior; and which factors determine if a young woman who consumes fit body #fitspiration content will become inspired or discouraged from physical activity behavior.

Body Positive #Fitspiration

Body positive #fitspiration is a new trend within social media that welcomes bodies of all sizes (Cohen et al., 2019). Body-positive social media posts have become popular, specifically on Instagram. A recent search on Instagram of the hashtags #bodypositivefitness and #bodypositiveyoga produced 104,341 and 63,983 posts, respectively (Instagram, January 2022). These hashtags include an assortment of images of full-bodied – or having a large body with little muscle tone (Cohen et. al., 2019) – women actively exercising or practicing yoga, accompanied by inspirational quotes to motivate the viewer. It seeks to redefine the definition of the "fit body" to show that a body does not have to be lean and slim to be fit (Cohen et. al., 2019). Additionally, many of these posts focus on what a person can do rather than how they look (see Appendix B). Several studies have found that young women have more positive responses about their bodies when viewing body positive #fitspiration compared to women who viewed fit-body #fitspiration or thin-ideal posts (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015; Prichard et al., 2018). In giving young women an alternative and pluralistic definition of beauty and encouraging a positive body image, body positive #fitspiration may offer a way to reduce body dissatisfaction, increase body appreciation, and thereby provide a more effective method of motivating exercise.

Body Appreciation

Body appreciation is defined as valuing the physical features, health, and function of one's body, rather than dwelling only on appearance (Tylka et al., 2015). This term is often used interchangeably with body esteem which includes the feelings, evaluations, and attitudes an individual holds about their body (Godin, 1986). Research demonstrates that increased body appreciation and esteem is linked with healthier eating patterns (Andrew et al., 2014), greater emotional, psychological, and social well-being (Andrew et al., 2016; Tylka, 2018), and increased exercise frequency (Homan & Tylka, 2014). Williamson and Karazsia (2018) found that when body appreciation levels are high, there is a positive effect on self-efficacy for physical activity as well, a strong predictor of increased physical activity behavior (Barz et al., 2016).

Self-Efficacy

The concept of self-efficacy was developed by Albert Bandura in the 1970's. Self-efficacy is defined as one's belief in their own ability to carry out the actions necessary to achieve a specific goal (Bandura, 1977). Bandura (1977) suggested that individuals tend not to engage in behaviors if they are not confident that they can succeed. Self-efficacy has a substantial impact on an individual's decision to act, and the level of effort they put into action. Low self-efficacy can cause someone to be tentative when beginning a new exercise program or prevent them from starting the program altogether (Barz et. al., 2016). Self-efficacy also affects the consistency and perseverance of the person to continue engaging in said behavior when barriers arise (Barz et al., 2016).

Research has shown self-efficacy to be a strong predictor of increased physical activity behavior (Pauline, 2013; Joseph et al., 2014; Barz et al., 2016; Farren et al., 2017). Physical activity interventions, especially among inactive college students, are more likely to succeed

when they increase the physical activity self-efficacy beliefs of the participants (Joseph et al., 2014). Vicarious experiences are one way that self-efficacy beliefs can be influenced, and social media may play a role by providing a model who is succeeding in a behavior (i.e., increased physical activity) (Barz et al., 2016). The more the participant relates to the observed model, the more the model's success may influence the participant. Therefore, the #fitspiration most likely to affect the behavior of its followers will include models who are, in various respects similar to those viewing the content. Additionally, interventions that focused on vicarious experiences to influence physical activity self-efficacy have shown significant positive effects (Lewis et al., 2016). Viewing #fitspiration content can then influence self-efficacy as a vicarious experience, which may then lead to increased physical activity.

Purpose and Aims

In a study by Raggatt and colleagues (2018), participants who followed #fitspiration content and certain influencer accounts on Instagram reported the posts that inspired them by providing ideas for how to be more physically active. Two additional studies concluded that viewing #fitspiration posts led to greater intentions to be active (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015; Prichard et al., 2018). However, very few studies have identified a direct connection between viewing #fitspiration and increased physical activity behavior. An abundance of research links self-efficacy (Pauline, 2013; Joseph et al., 2014; Barz et al., 2016) and increased body appreciation (Homan & Tylka, 2014; Farren et al., 2017; Williamson & Karazsia, 2018) to increased physical activity behavior. Thus, there is a need to investigate whether social media-based physical activity interventions increase the physical activity levels of young adult women, the population that most commonly uses social media (Duffin, 2021; Aslam, 2022). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine whether #fitspiration content influences young adult

women's body esteem and self-efficacy to be active, and whether this content influences their physical activity behaviors. The research aims were:

1. To determine the effects of Body Positive #fitspiration and Fit-Body #fitspiration on body appreciation and self-efficacy for physical activity.
2. To determine whether exposure to Body Positive #fitspiration and Fit-Body #fitspiration affects followers' physical activity behavior and intention.

Methods

A two-phase social media-based study using Body Positive and Fit Body #fitspiration was implemented over three weeks during the fall semester of 2022, using established survey measures pre- and post-viewing. The surveys assessed college females' body esteem, task and scheduling self-efficacy for physical activity, physical activity behavior, and behavioral intention pre- and post-exposure to one of two categories of #fitspiration. Participants were also asked to compare both types of #fitspiration and evaluate the content for its ability to inspire them to be more physically active.

Participants

Thirty-six women were recruited from a Kinesiology lecture course at a midsize public university in southeastern U.S. They reported demographic information including age, gender identity, race/ethnicity, time spent on social media, and baseline physical activity level. Ages of the participants were 19 (n=2), 20 (n=19), 21 (n=11), 22 (n=2), and 25 or older (n=2). Most participants were White/Caucasian (n=17) or Black/African American (n=12), and the remaining were Hispanic (n=5), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (n=1), or Asian (n=1). Social media use was high with many participants (n=25) reporting more than 60 minutes of use daily and others reporting 31 to 60 minutes (n=7), 10 to 30 minutes (n=3), or less than 10 minutes (n=1).

Baseline activity levels were collected using the Godin Leisure-Time Exercise Questionnaire (GLTEQ; Godin & Shephard, 1997) where a leisure-time activity score was calculated using the number of times a participant engaged in 15 minutes or more of strenuous, moderate, or mild activity per week. Participants with a score of 24 or higher were classified as active (n=28), moderately active (n=4) with a score of 14 to 23, or insufficiently active (n=4) with a score of less than 14, as suggested by Godin (2011).

Measures

Three surveys were developed and administered via Qualtrics. Each survey included established measures for body esteem, PA behavior and intention, and PA task and scheduling self-efficacy. Survey 1 (baseline) also asked participants for demographic information, daily social media use, and baseline physical activity level. Survey 2 (post-viewing) asked participants to report how often and for how long they engaged with their assigned social media content, and to rate its level of inspiration. The final Survey 3 asked participants to evaluate the social media content in both categories using ratings and open-ended questions. All surveys are located in Appendix A.

Body Appreciation

Body appreciation was measured using the Body Esteem Scale for Adolescents and Adults (Mendelson & Mendelson, 1997). The scale includes 23 items assessing three elements of body esteem: general feelings about one's body, perception of others' evaluations of one's body, and weight satisfaction. This scale was originally used in a sample (n=131) of college students who were also retested three months post-survey (Mendelson & Mendelson, 1997). The first factor, general feelings about appearance, consists of 10-items and these items showed high internal consistency: Cronbach's α = .92 (Mendelson & Mendelson, 1997). The second factor (5-

item perception of others' opinions of one's body) and third factor (8-item overall weight satisfaction) scored α = .81 and α = .94 respectively (Mendelson & Mendelson, 1997). Each of the three subscales asked participants how frequently they agree with each of the 23 statements on a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from 0 (Never) to 4 (Always) with negative items reverse-scored and higher scores indicating a higher level of body esteem (Mendelson & Mendelson, 1997).

Task and Scheduling Self-Efficacy for Physical Activity

Self-efficacy was measured with six items focusing on task (3 items) and scheduling (3 items) self-efficacy developed by Rogers et al. (2002). The 3-item task efficacy portion asked participants to indicate level of confidence that they can accomplish tasks pertaining to their exercise behavior: pacing themselves to avoid over exertion, performing all required movements, and following directions from an instructor (Rogers et al., 2002). The 3-item scheduling efficacy portion asked for participants' confidence that they will be able to overcome obstacles that prevent them from exercising regularly, make up times they have missed, and exercise regularly no matter what. Confidence is rated on a 0-10 confidence scale (0 = "no confidence" and 10 = "completely confident") with higher scores indicating greater task and scheduling self-efficacy for physical activity. The Cronbach's alphas were .71 and .80 for the task and scheduling self-efficacy scales respectively (Rogers et. al., 2002).

Physical Activity Behavior and Behavioral Intention

Physical Activity Behavior and Behavioral Intention were assessed using items suggested by Godin et al. (1986) and used by Rogers et al. (2002) prior to and following the social media exposure. The PA Behavior item asked how often they engaged in physical activity over the last week using a 5-point Likert scale (0=not at all, 1=less than once per week, 2=1-2 times per week,

3=3-4 times per week, 4=more than 4 times per week). Behavioral Intention asked how often they intend to be physically active over the next week using the same scale. Cronbach's alphas for PA behavior and intention were 0.79 and 0.72 respectively (Rogers et al., 2002)

Content Engagement and Evaluation

Survey 2, which was completed after viewing their assigned content type for one week, included items on engagement and evaluation of the media content. Participants were asked to report how many times they engaged with the content using a 4-point Likert scale (1: never, 2: 1-2 times, 3: 3-5 times, 4: more than 5 times) and for how long each time (1: 1-2 minutes, 2: 3-5 minutes, 3: 6-10 minutes, 4: more than 10 minutes).

Survey 2 also asked participants to evaluate their assigned content by rating how much the images and videos inspired them to be physically active. Responses ranged from "not at all inspirational" to "extremely inspirational" on a 4-point Likert scale.

In the last week of the study, participants were given access to both #fitspiration types and asked to compare and rate the level of inspiration for both types on the final Survey 3. Participants indicated which of the two types they enjoyed more, and whether one type was more inspirational than the other using a 4-point Likert scale (1=definitely content A, 2=both types equally, 3=definitely content B, 4=neither content type).

Open-ended follow-up questions were included to gain a deeper understanding of the responses. Participants were asked to describe how/what they felt while viewing each content type, and describe what was and was not inspirational and why.

Procedures

After obtaining IRB approval from the University, participants were recruited in the fall of 2022 from an upper-level Kinesiology course. The study began with baseline surveys that

included demographics and measures of body appreciation, task and scheduling self-efficacy for physical activity, and physical activity behavior and intention. Participant responses were anonymous and coded by self-selected I.D. number. Participants were randomly assigned to group A (fit body) or B (body Positive) and given a link to a Google Site to access assigned social media content and survey measures according to the schedule in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution Schedule of Surveys and Social Media Content

	Group A	**Group B**
Week 1	Completed Survey 1 (Baseline)	Completed Survey 1 (Baseline)
Week 2	Viewed **Fit Body #fitspiration** instagram content for one week.	Viewed **Body Positive #fitspiration** instagram content for one week.
	Completed Survey 2 (Post-viewing)	Completed Survey 2 (Post-viewing)
Week 3	Given access to both **Body Positive** and **Fit Body #fitspiration**	Given access to both **Body Positive** and **Fit Body #fitspiration**
	Completed Survey 3 (Content Evaluation)	Completed Survey 3 (Content Evaluation)

Content was curated by the primary investigator of this study from public Instagram accounts for each category of #fitspiration and embedded into one of two Google Sites. Fit Body #fitspiration content was defined as images and videos of people who were thin and visibly toned, engaging in physical activity and exercise (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015) and Body Positive content images and videos were of bodies of all shapes and sizes, with little to no visible muscle tone, engaging in physical activity and exercise (Cohen et al., 2019). All images, quotes, and videos came from the hashtags #fitspiration, #fitspo, and #fitnessinspiration for the Fit Body category of content, and #bodypositivefitness, #bopofitspiration, and #bopofitness for the Body Positive category.

Data Analysis

Surveys data were downloaded from Qualtrics into SPSS version 28, and descriptive statistics were calculated for all measures. First, an independent *t*-test was run on each of the variables to test for differences between Groups at baseline (Survey 1). Then the main analyses, Group by Survey (2x2) ANOVAs, were run on each body esteem subscale (appearance, weight, and attribution), task and scheduling self-efficacy, and PA behavior and intention. Content evaluation data, including participant ratings of inspiration level, and responses to the open-ended questions, were organized and themes that emerged from the responses were grouped together and classified as positive, negative, or neutral (Patton, 2015). Response frequencies for each category were then reported.

Results

The primary aims of this study were to determine the effects of viewing Body Positive #fitspiration and Fit-Body #fitspiration on body appreciation, self-efficacy for physical activity, and physical activity behavior and intention. First, at baseline (Survey 1) an independent t-test on each of the variables indicated no statistically significant differences between the Groups. Table 2 shows the scores on all variables for Groups A (Fit) and B (Pos) at Survey 1 and Survey 2.

Body Appreciation

As seen in Table 2, the results of the Group by Survey (2x2) ANOVA on the main variables revealed no effects on the body esteem subscales of appearance, $F(1,34)=.035$, $p>.05$, $\eta^2=.001$, weight, $F(1,34)=.203$, $p>.05$, $\eta^2=.006$, or attribution, $F(1,34)=.389$, $p>.05$, $\eta^2=.011$.

Task and Scheduling Self-Efficacy

The results of the ANOVAs on the self-efficacy scores suggested some media influence in line with expectations. The task self-efficacy Group main effect was significant, $F(1,34)=$

5.60, p=.024, η^2=.141. Overall, Group B had higher scores, but the interaction was not significant, and neither group changed much over time, as Table 2 shows. The ANOVA on scheduling self-efficacy revealed a significant Group main effect, F(1,34)=4.47, p=.042, η^2=.116, with Group B reporting higher overall scheduling self-efficacy. The Group by Survey interaction here was not statistically significant, F(1,34)= 3.75, p=.061, η^2=.099, but the effect size was large, and trends were in line with expectations. As seen in Table 2, as Group B scores went up at Survey 2, Group A scores went down.

Table 2. Group A (Fit) and B (Pos) Scores on Main Variables at Surveys 1 & 2

	Survey 1 Mean (SD)	Survey 2 Mean (SD)
Body-Esteem_Appearance (0-4)		
Group A	1.92 (.70)	1.86 (.83)
Group B	2.13 (.98)	2.24(.98)
Body-Esteem_Weight (0-4):		
Group A	1.99 (.98)	1.82 (.79)
Group B	2.00 (.91)	2.05 (.96)
Body-Esteem_Attribution (0-4):		
Group A	2.08 (.56)	2.04 (.64)
Group B	2.19 (.76)	2.08 (.67)
Task_Self-Efficacy (0-10):		
Group A	7.49 (1.60)	7.27 (1.93)
Group B	8.26 (1.34)	8.37 (1.36)
Scheduling_Self-Efficacy (0-10):		
Group A	6.05 (2.08)	5.59 (2.30)
Group B	6.70 (1.93)	7.58 (2.22)
Physical Activity_Behavior (1-5):		
Group A	3.06 (.82)	2.53 (.94)
Group B	3.11 (.80)	4.16 (1.02)
Physical Activity_Intention (1-5):		
Group A	3.29 (.58)	3.12 (.48)
Group B	3.37 (.68)	4.47 (.61)

Physical Activity Behavior and Intention

The ANOVA results on the physical activity behavior and intention scores show clearer interaction effects. Physical activity behavior results included a Group main effect,

$F(1,34)=10.21$, $p<.05$, $\eta^2=.231$, and a stronger Group by Survey interaction, $F(1,34)=28.09$, $p<.001$, $\eta^2=.452$. Group B reported more PA than Group A, but as Table 2 shows, Group A scores dropped while Group B scores increased at Survey 2. Similarly a Group main effect, $F(1,34)=16.15$, $p<.001$, $\eta^2=.322$, and a stronger Group by Survey interaction, $F(1,34)=48.85$, $p<.001$, $\eta^2=.590$, were observed for PA intention. Again, Group B participants reported higher intention to be active, and their intention scores increased while Group A scores decreased at Survey 2.

Content Engagement and Evaluation

The majority of participants engaged with their assigned content 1-2 times ($n=24$) or 3-5 times ($n=12$). The length of viewing time varied with most participants spending 3-5 minutes ($n=16$) or 6-10 minutes ($n=14$) with their content, and the remaining spent more than 10 minutes ($n=3$) or only 1-2 minutes ($n=6$).

Table 3. Response frequency for level of inspiration from assigned content.

	Group A	Group B
Not at all inspirational	1 (5.9%)	0 (0%)
Somewhat inspirational	9 (52.9%)	8 (42.1%)
Very inspirational	6 (35.3%)	9 (47.4%)
Extremely inspirational	1 (5.9%)	2 (10.5%)
No Response	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total	17	19

Participants from both groups largely reported their content to be “somewhat inspirational” or “very inspirational” on Survey 2. Few members of either group reported content to be “extremely inspirational” and even fewer found the content “not at all inspirational,” as reported in the frequency Table 3.

Comparison of Media Types

At Survey 3, with access to both types of content, the majority of participants in Group A (*n*=8, 47.0%) reported enjoying either the Body Positive content or both the Fit-Body and the Body Positive content. In Group B, the majority of participants (*n*=10, 52.6%) reported enjoying the Body Positive content alone and the remaining participants were split between enjoying both types (*n*=5, 26.3%) and enjoying the Fit-Body content alone (*n*=3, 15.8%). Response frequencies can be found in Table 4.

Table 4. Response Frequency for Social Media Content Participants Enjoyed Viewing.

	Group A	Group B
Fit-Body Content (A)	0 (0%)	3 (15.8%)
Body Positive Content (B)	8 (47.0%)	10 (52.6%)
Both Types	8 (47.0%)	5 (26.3%)
Neither Type	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
No Response	1 (5.9%)	1 (5.3%)
Total	17	19

Table 5. Social media content participants felt was most inspirational.

	Group A	Group B
Fit-Body Content (A)	2 (11.8%)	3 (15.8%)
Body Positive Content (B)	8 (47.0%)	12 (63.2%)
Both Types	4 (23.5%)	3 (15.8%)
Neither Type	2 (11.8%)	0 (0%)
No Response	1 (5.9%)	1 (5.3%)
Total	17	19

As seen in Table 5, the majority of Group A participants (*n*=8, 47.0%) reported the Body Positive content alone to be inspirational, while only a couple participants (*n*=2, 11.8%) found the Fit-Body content alone to be inspirational. The remaining participants either felt inspiration from both types, or did not feel inspired by either type. Among Group B participants, most found inspiration from the Body Positive content alone (*n*=12, 63.2%). Very few (*n*=3, 15.8%) reported

Fit Body content alone to be most inspirational, and equally as many found both types to be inspirational.

Open-Ended Feedback: General Feelings

There was a mix of positive, negative, neutral, or no response to the open-ended questions that asked participants about their general feelings while viewing the Fit-Body content. Positive comments were similar in theme and included the perception of being inspired to work out harder, feeling the need to go to the gym immediately, being excited to try new exercise ideas viewed in the content, and having a desire to look like the people in the posts. Negative comments included concern about the level of expectation to push to the limit or do nothing, dislike of quotes perceived as insensitive and harsh, the perception of zero tolerance for bodies that do not fit a certain look, and feeling a sense of despair that they will never look like the people in the posts. Participants that responded with neutral opinions agreed that the Fit-Body content made them feel neither uplifted nor discouraged.

Table 6. Response frequencies of general feelings of both types of content.

	Fit-Body Content (A)	Body Positive Content (B)
Positive feedback responses	15 (41.7%)	25 (69.4%)
Negative feedback responses	12 (33.3%)	1 (2.8%)
Neutral feedback responses	7 (19.4%)	8 (22.2%)
No Response	2 (5.6%)	2 (5.6%)
Total	36	36

General feelings about the Body Positive content were also a mix, with a large majority being positive, only a few negative, some neutral, or no response. Members from both groups found the Body Positive content to be inspirational, uplifting, encouraging, diverse, inclusive, realistic, surprising, attainable, and motivating. Some participants felt this content did not portray

healthy habits, encouraged complacency, and did not motivate them to work harder because their level of fitness was higher than those in the posts. As with the neutral responses to the Fit-Body content, some participants did not feel uplifted, nor were they discouraged by the Body Positive content. See Table 6 for response frequencies of general feelings on both types of content.

Open-Ended Feedback: Most- and Least-Inspirational Posts

The majority of the posts viewed as most-inspirational (*n*=12, 63.2%), as reported in Table 5, came from the Body Positive content. Participants mentioned many of the same quotes posted as their favorites, including "An athlete lives inside every single one of us", "Strength looks different everyday", "Happiness isn't size specific", "Feeling beautiful has nothing to do with what how you look", and "A flower does not think of competing with the flower next to it, it just blooms". Participants also reported being inspired by videos portraying "people like me doing exercises I did not think I could do", the overall focus on accepting oneself for who they are, striving for improvement not perfection, and working to improve performance not appearance. For example, one participant stated, "Content B challenged the everyday stereotype of what it means to be fit." Another participant commented, "When I viewed social media content B I felt really empowered and more confident in myself and what I can do."

From the Fit-Body content, positive responses centered on the quotes that did not allow them to make excuses, such as "You said 'Tomorrow', yesterday", and "What you eat in private will show up in public." The most favorite quote was "Someone busier than you is working out right now". Participants who liked this post felt it was a wake-up call for them not to use 'lack of time' as an excuse. Participants who reported this as their least-liked quote stated they "felt attacked". In general, many participants (*n*=12, 33.3%) felt the quotes and content in the Fit-

Body category aimed to make them feel guilty for not being active and they did not feel this tactic was inspirational.

Discussion

Previous research suggested that #fitspiration can put an unrealistic expectation to achieve one specific type of fit body, especially for young women (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015; Boepple & Thompson, 2016; Prichard et al., 2018), which could also lead to body dissatisfaction and a decrease in motivation to engage in physical activity (Prichard et al., 2018). However, other studies suggested that body positive posts reduce body dissatisfaction and provide more effective motivation for physical activity (Jong & Drummond, 2016; Raggatt et. al., 2018; Cohen et. al., 2019; Prichard et. al., 2020). Although previous research has explored the effects of Fit Body and Body Positive #fitspiration separately, this study sought to compare the effects of both #fitspiration types on body appreciation and self-efficacy for physical activity, and whether exposure to either type of #fitspiration increases followers' physical activity behavior and intention. The expected outcome was that Body Positive #fitspiration would be more successful at increasing body appreciation and self-efficacy as well as increased physical activity and intention to be active.

Findings

Despite previous studies that observed exposure to body positive social media can result in an increase in body appreciation and esteem (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015; Prichard et al., 2018), the positive effect on body esteem was not observed in the present study. However, neither was there a significant negative effect, even among the Group A participants who viewed the Fit Body #fitspiration content. This conflicts with studies that warn exposure to this type of

#fitspiration can lead to body dissatisfaction and negative mood (Carrotte et al., 2017; Prichard et. al., 2018; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2018)

The results of this study did indicate that viewing Body Positive #fitspiration had a significant impact on self-efficacy, physical activity behavior, and intention, and Survey 3 responses suggested that the Body Positive content was perceived as more inspirational and enjoyable to view. This falls in line with several past studies that indicated young women respond more positively to social media content that exhibits a more diverse and inclusive view of an active body (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015; Prichard et. al., 2018; Cohen et. al., 2019). Body positive #fitspiration was defined by Cohen et al. (2019) as images that promote body acceptance and love, inner positivity, adaptive investment in body care, and protective filtering of information.

Body Acceptance and Love

It was important for participants to see bodies similar to their own in order to relate to the content they were viewing, therefore the videos and images in this study displayed a spectrum of active individuals that represented variety in race, culture, size, and age. For example, some videos portrayed Hispanic women dancing to Spanish style music and other videos portrayed women, whose faith required modest attire, exercising in a hijab. Participants that commented on seeing "people like me doing exercises I did not think I could do" were often directly referring to videos such as these, where participants were able to imagine themselves accomplishing what they viewed. The quotes in the Body Positive content were chosen for the specific theme of self-love. Only a few participants (n=7, 19.4%) chose quotes, as opposed to videos or images, as their favorite posts and most (n=5, 13.9%) cited examples from the Body Positive quotes. Furthermore, these same participants indicated plans to use quotes similar to these in their own

posts on social media. These elements of the study could account for the increase in PA intention reported by the Body Positive Group (B), as a large majority of this group (*n*=12, 63.2%) reported these posts to be the most inspirational.

Inner Positivity

A number of the Instagram accounts used in this study (i.e., @moritsummers, @biancapaigefit, @caliafitness, @fitfatandallthat) were chosen because of their dedication to body positivity. The videos posted on these accounts typically included an inspirational voice-over by the author, or a message in the post itself, that encouraged a positive view of self and ability. For example, in @moritsummers' video, we hear her state "We make progress by staying consistent. Not every week is perfect, but every week is an opportunity to grow.", and @caliafitness posted "Even during the busiest time of the year, remember to take a moment to #ChooseYou" and "Exercise because you love your body, not because you hate it." Participants mentioned these accounts specifically and expressed an interest in following these profiles for future motivation. Messages like these may have had the influence necessary for those in Group B to report higher scheduling self-efficacy; specifically when reporting their level of confidence on item 4, stating they could "Overcome obstacles that prevent you from exercising regularly", and item 6, "Exercise regularly no matter what".

Adaptive Investment in Body Care

Several elements of the images and videos in the Body Positive content addressed common factors that might have once served as barriers to exercise for some participants. For example, in one video a woman mentions the head wrap she uses to protect her hairstyle from sweat while exercising, a common concern for African American women. As mentioned before, one of the Instagram profiles featured a woman exercising in Nike © Hijab Sportswear ("Nike

Pro Hijab Goes Global," 2017), which could address a concern over whether culturally appropriate clothing is available for exercise. This speaks to certain added investment that may be necessary for women of certain cultures to increase their PA behavior.

Protective Filtering of Information

The messaging in the Fit Body content (Group A) focused on a "no excuses" approach to motivation with quotes such as "You said 'tomorrow', yesterday.", "What you eat in private will show up in public.", and "Someone busier than you is working out right now. What's stopping you?" In contrast, the overall theme in the Body Positive content was to encourage viewers to "Do as little or as much as you can to be active, because doing *something* is progress". Both types of content portrayed high intensity exercise and impressive feats of strength, but as the Body Positive posts focused on how "Anyone can be strong", captions on the Fit Body posts spoke more about accomplishments acquired with discipline and rigid programming. As participants compared the two types of #fitspiration in Survey 3 of the study, many (n=12, 33.3%) criticized the unrealistic ideals of the Fit-body content, citing it as harmful and ineffective at motivating them to be active, while others (n=25, 69.4%) expressed greater affinity for, and internalization of, the Body Positive messaging.

Implications

There is a great amount of attention on the negative effects of #fitspiration on body image, particularly when focused on toned and thin bodies. However the results of the present study provide further evidence that Body Positive #fitspiration can have the opposite effect. Notably, the viewing period in the current study was only two weeks, suggesting that even brief exposure can be beneficial. Therefore, it is important that kinesiology professionals continue to educate college students that there is not one definition of a fit body, and all bodies are capable

of being active. Courses that cover the history, psychology, and sociology of exercise can foster deeper discussions on the evolution of 'a fit body' through the ages, and how contemporary views on body positivity can be used to reach more of our inactive population. Social media can then be used as an assignment platform for dissemination of this information, and as a way for Kinesiology students to create their own body positive content, with the goal of encouraging more students to be active. For example, if students document their PA on social media, using a body positive themed hashtag (#), this could contribute to the growing social media trend. The students creating the content are recording their own exercise performance accomplishments, a factor that is known to have a strong influence on future exercise behavior and adherence (Bandura et al., 1977). Furthermore, the content can help to create vicarious experiences that can influence the self-efficacy beliefs of others (Lewis et. al., 2016) and specifically effect college women's intention to be active (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015; Prichard et al., 2018; Cohen et al., 2019), which could further result in their increased participation in physical activity (Pauline, 2013; Joseph et. al., 2014; Barz et. al., 2016; Farren et. al., 2017).

Limitations and Future Directions

The results of this study contribute to research highlighting the positive face of #fitspiration, however limitations should be considered. The short timeframe of the study may account for the lack of effect on body esteem. A longitudinal study of six months or more may be more appropriate to study effect on body esteem over time. Regarding PA behavior, the participants were Kinesiology majors taking a course on physical activity and society, which could have had a major impact on the results of this study. Their awareness of the importance of physical activity may account for the reported increase in physical activity behavior and intention. Students from a general education course might have a different view of the

importance of physical activity, and consequently may have a different response to each type of #fitspiration. Furthermore, most participants (n=28) reported being active at baseline, a factor that is common among Kinesiology majors. Recruiting from a general education course may result in more insufficiently active participants in the sample. This would provide more insight into the level of enjoyment and inspiration gleaned from each #fitspiration category. Research exploring level of inspiration for inactive students is needed to progress our understanding of the effect of body positive media. Finally, participants used a subjective measure to report physical activity behavior and intention. As a result, a certain level of response bias may have resulted in inflated reporting of days active or intention to be active, especially given the educational background of the participants and their knowledge of the minimum recommended amount of weekly physical activity. Future research should incorporate an objective measure of physical activity, participant pedometer/accelerometer data that would be directly collected from the device itself, rather than a self-report. An objective measure of physical activity would also be useful to determine other important activity data such as frequency, duration, heart rate zones for intensity, and type of activity.

Overall, the current study has demonstrated that even short-term exposure to Body Positive #fitspiration can inspire followers to increase self-efficacy, physical activity behavior and intention to be active. Increasing participants' exposure to the body positive trend on social media and finding ways to use this type of #fitspiration, such as in marketing for campus recreation or fitness centers, could prove to be a step in the right direction in the effort to motivate others to be more active.

CHAPTER II: DISSEMINATION

The plan for dissemination is to present my findings via PowerPoint to relevant administrative staff at campus recreation and to share ideas for Body Positive marketing initiatives and physical activity interventions that can improve activity levels of inactive women on campus.

Presentation Details

This script of the presentation is written in first-person, and subheadings are outlined by topic and slide. The complete PowerPoint presentation can be found in Appendix C.

Introduction and Background (Slides 1 to 8)

Hello and thank you for allowing me to share my recent research on "The Effect of 'Body Positive' And 'Fit Body' #Fitspiration on Body Appreciation, Self-Efficacy, and Physical Activity Behavior." I am Tracy Stone, doctoral candidate at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG), and the program director for Kinesiology and Exercise & Sport Science at Calumet College of St. Joseph (CCSJ) in the Chicagoland area. My interest in how fitness is portrayed on social media began 10 years ago during my participation in the Under Armour® What's Beautiful fitness campaign. The focus of this campaign was to highlight the "everyday athlete" by encouraging women of all shapes and sizes to compete in fitness challenges and post their performance on a social platform created by Under Armour® and linked to Facebook. The purpose was to increase awareness that all bodies can exercise and portray athleticism in a variety of ways. This campaign proved to be the most successful at motivating me to be active for 3 years straight, before it was discontinued. Fast forward a decade and I decided to investigate the current state of inspirational fitness content on social media and its effectiveness.

The population I was interested in targeting is college-aged women. I felt this would be good because 90% of adults aged 18-25 use social media (Auxier et. al., 2021), 58.7% of young adult women report using social media for six or more hours per week (Duffin, 2021), and the favorite platform is Instagram (Auxier et. al., 2021) – a platform in which I am familiar. The inspirational fitness content was easily found using the hashtag #fitspiration. Hashtags are often used as bookmarks for posts and this one is tied to images, videos and inspirational quotes celebrating fitness accomplishments and other content to inspire others to be active. On Instagram, if you search using this hashtag, the results topple over 100 million posts uploaded mostly by the general public, but also certified fitness professionals. #Fitspiration has become a trend whose intention is to inspire or celebrate, however, research has shown it can have negative effects. Many studies report that #fitspiration may cause increased body dissatisfaction and a negative body image, which may also decrease self-efficacy and motivation to exercise (Prichard et al., 2018; Prichard et al., 2020).

At first, I was disheartened by the abundance of damaging research on #fitspiration, until I discovered the variety in the posts online and noticed much of the literature focused on one trend; posts that portrayed people who were thin and visibly toned engaging in exercise. Tiggemann and Zaccardo (2015) defined this category as the "Fit Body Ideal". Examples can be seen in Slide 6. However, another common trend called "Body Positivity" was intermingled within the #fitspiration media and I discovered research on this movement to be much more positive. Cohen et. al. (2019) defines Body Positive #fitspiration as content that portrays images and videos of bodies of all shapes and sizes, with little to no visible muscle tone, engaging in exercise. Examples can be seen in Slide 8. I decided to create a study that would compare these

two categories of #fitspiration and investigate whether either (or both) would inspire a group of undergraduate women to be more active.

Purpose and Aims (Slide 9)

The purpose of my study was to determine the effects of body positive #fitspiration and fit body #fitspiration on body appreciation and self-efficacy for physical activity, and determine whether exposure to these types of #fitspiration affect followers' physical activity behavior and intention.

Methods (Slides 10 to 13)

My participants were 36 undergraduate women (aged 19-25+) who were recruited from a Kinesiology lecture course and reported 60 minutes or more of daily social media use. Content was curated from public Instagram accounts for each category of #fitspiration and embedded into one of two Google Sites. All images, quotes, and videos came from the hashtags #fitspiration, #fitspo, and #fitnessinspiration for the Fit Body category of content, and #bodypositivefitness, #bopofitspiration, and #bopofitness for the Body Positive category. The study began with a baseline survey for all measures that included demographics and activity level. Participants were then randomly assigned to group A (fit body) or B (body Positive) and given a link to a Google Site to access assigned social media content and survey measures. They viewed their assigned content for one week and then completed Survey 2, which repeated the baseline questionnaire without demographics. The next week, both groups were given access to both types of #fitspiration and given Survey 3 to evaluate the content.

I wanted my participants to report how long they engaged with the content provided and evaluate each type of #fitspiration content for level of inspiration and enjoyment. To gain more insight, I followed up with four open-ended questions that asked about their general feelings

while viewing the content, what they felt was most- and least-inspirational, what were their favorite posts and what posts they disliked.

Results (Slides 14 to 22)

I expected an increase in body appreciation/esteem, especially in the Body Positive Group (B), but no main effect was observed. There was, however, an effect on task and scheduling efficacy. Task self-efficacy was higher in Group B than in Group A. The same was found for scheduling self-efficacy, but even more interesting was that as Group B scores increased, Group A scores decreased. This same trend was seen in both the PA Behavior (7-day recall) and Intention (7-day Intention) results. Furthermore, the effects on PA variables were much larger than the other variables.

When evaluating the content participants from both groups largely reported their content to be “somewhat inspirational” or “very inspirational.” Few members of either group reported content to be “extremely inspirational” and even fewer found the content “not at all inspirational”. When comparing the two media types, the majority of Group A participants reported the Body Positive content alone to be inspirational, while only a few participants found the Fit-Body content alone to be inspirational. Among Group B participants, most found inspiration from the Body Positive content alone. Very few reported Fit Body content alone to be most inspirational, and equally as many found both types to be inspirational. General feelings about the Fit Body content were a mix with some positive and some negative feedback. However, the Body Positive content received mostly positive feedback and only a few negative comments. Members from both groups found the Body Positive content to be inspirational, uplifting, encouraging, diverse, inclusive, realistic, surprising, attainable, and motivating.

Examples of feedback can be seen in Slide 20. Slide 21 includes the Body Positive quotes listed as most-inspirational and Slide 22 shows what was mentioned as least-inspirational.

Discussion (Slides 23 to 26)

The results of this study indicated that viewing Body Positive #fitspiration had a significant impact on self-efficacy, physical activity behavior, and intention. Although previous research suggests that an increase in body appreciation and esteem would lead to an increase in self-efficacy and physical activity behavior (Barz et. al., 2016; Williamson & Karazsia, 2018), the findings of this study showed an increase in self-efficacy and physical activity despite no change in esteem. Survey 3 responses suggested that the Body Positive content was perceived as more inspirational and enjoyable to view. The viewing timeframe in the current study was only one week, suggesting that even brief exposure can be beneficial.

Implications for the Field (Slides 27 to 31)

Kinesiology professionals wanting to make an impact on the physical activity of college aged women should embrace the Body Positive movement, use this content in marketing campaigns, and as the foundation for longer-term physical activity interventions and programs. Using social media as the platform for this information can be an effective way to encourage more undergraduate women to be improve their physical activity habits. Exposing them to body positive social media content helps to create vicarious experiences that can influence their self-efficacy beliefs (Lewis et. al., 2016) and result in increased participation in physical activity (Pauline, 2013; Joseph et. al., 2014; Barz et. al., 2016; Farren et. al., 2017). When marketing physical activity on college campuses, a focus on body positivity can have a positive effect on college women's intention to be active, resulting in increased recreation center usage and participation in active events on campus. Additionally, physical activity programming that

encourages participants to document their activity on social media, using a body positive themed hashtag (#), will contribute to the growing body positivity trend.

The Under Armour® What's Beautiful campaign is what I imagine recreation and fitness centers could use to develop Body Positive marketing. This can turn into a physical activity program when you ask the participants to provide the content (themselves) that would be used in the marketing. It would require them to be active in order to create posts that would be posted on the recreation center's social media pages. Challenges can be created by the center to give participants ideas for exercises, entire workouts, or other physical activity to capture and post. Winners of challenges could become large scale advertising on the institution's website and eye-catching posters that they could keep after a certain display time in a well-traveled area on campus. The benefit would be three-fold; student-centered advertising for the recreation center and physical activity resources on campus, a new initiative to encourage more students (particularly women) to be active, and an increase in Body Positive content on social media.

Questions (Slide 31)

Thank you! I would like to open the floor for questions.

CHAPTER III: ACTION PLAN

My plan is to continue to explore the Body Positive movement across social media platforms to develop tips for using this content immediately for marketing in fitness and campus recreation facilities, and eventually as a foundation for longer-term physical activity interventions and programs.

Initial Goals

As my institution does not yet have a campus recreation center, it will be best to develop my initial ideas in partnership with an established facility. The first step in my dissemination plan will be to share my study findings with key Campus Recreation staff to discuss the Body Positive trend in #fitspiration and get their thoughts on the potential to pilot a marketing campaign and a social media focused fitness intervention. The marketing campaign would involve students providing images and videos of themselves working out at the recreation center or doing something active on campus and this content would be posted on the campus recreation social media accounts. The fitness intervention would involve participants of all activity levels who will provide images and videos of themselves accomplishing a series of challenges such as performing a specific exercise, an entire workout, or participating in an outdoor activity. The intervention would run several times a semester to reach as many new participants as possible. The theme will involve a slogan that highlights the purpose of the Body Positive trend; the fact that any ‘body’ can be active, and fitness does not have a specific look.

A second option is to develop the fitness intervention within my institution’s physical activity course, a new course I will be teaching Spring semester 2023. This course is open to all students, so it will have a broader reach than traditional Kinesiology courses. The intervention

will still include student created content, but the challenges will involve more outdoor activities in the absence of a dedicated fitness facility on campus. The challenges will serve as assignments that count toward their grade, but the goal will be to make this an enjoyable way to increase physical activity participation outside of class. Once the course has ended, submitted content can be used as marketing on the CCSJ Kinesiology Program page on the institution's website, and by other relevant departments such as the Office of Student Life.

Long-Term Focus

While my primary goal is to use social media to increase physical activity on campus, I would like to also educate students and Kinesiology professionals on best practices for creating and conducting inspiring social media-based fitness interventions that will reach inactive individuals both on and off campus. I will begin by creating a senior project in my Senior Seminar course that requires students to create a social media fitness campaign and recruit classmates outside of the course as participants. The goal will be to give them experience conducting something they can reuse or recreate in the field after graduation. Part of the curriculum for this course will include discussion on body positivity and the benefits of celebrating performance over appearance, and inspiring through grace, not guilt; a few of the themes from my current research. The hope is to help the new generation of fitness professionals begin to change how people view fitness on social media in a way that will inspire more of our inactive population to initiate an active lifestyle.

To reach current professionals, I plan to package my short- and long-term initiatives into a workshop I can present at future conferences such as the NAKHE annual conference in January and the NIRSA annual conference in March. The workshop will also include a summary of research I intend to complete before the Fall semester of 2025.

My ongoing professional research plan is to add to the studies on Body Positivity by conducting a longer study on the effects of exposure to Body Positive fitness media on the body appreciation and activity level of inactive college-aged women. Although there were no significant effects on body appreciation in my current study, I am interested in pursuing this topic with a longer timeframe and different measures. This study will only use Body Positive #fitspiration content and quotes, and physical activity will be measured objectively using a pedometer or accelerometer. The goal will also be to recruit a larger sample size that is a mix of students who major in Kinesiology and those who do not, to determine if there is a significant difference observed in the behavior of the students who are not immersed in the world of fitness. I feel research of this kind fits the aims and scope of the journal *Body Image,* whose focus is several aspects of body image including physical appearance, embodiment (how one's body image engages with the world), and body functionality (Body Image, 2023). My study will fit well with the journal's weight-inclusive focus and their emphasis to submit articles that center minoritized populations. My research will involve my initial and long-term marketing and intervention ideas, which I plan to implement at my institution and beyond for the foreseeable future.

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APPENDIX A: STUDY SURVEYS

Social Media & Physical Activity: Survey 1

Consent UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN PARTICIPANT

Project Title: Social Media and It's Influence on Physical Activity
Principal Investigator and Faculty Advisor: Tracy Stone & Dr. Diane Gill

What are some general things you should know about research studies?
You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your participation in the study is voluntary. You may choose not to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future. There may not be any direct benefit to you for being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies. If you choose not to be in the study or leave the study before it is done, it will not affect your relationship with the researcher or the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Details about this study are discussed in this consent form. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study.

You will be given a copy of this consent form. If you have any questions about this study at any time, you should ask the researchers named in this consent form. Their contact information is below.

What is the study about?
This is a research project. Your participation is voluntary. This study will investigate how social media influences your physical activity behavior.

Why are you asking me?
The principal investigator is interested in the influence of social media on the physical activity behavior of undergraduate students.

What will you ask me to do if I agree to be in the study?
You will be asked to view curated social media content and complete surveys. Surveys will occur before the study begins, midway through the study, and once the study concludes. The entire study will be conducted over the course of 2 weeks, however the time spent on each component of the study will vary.

Viewing social media content
You will be asked to view one type of social media content several times over the course of week 1, then you will be given 2 types of social media content to compare.

Completion of surveys
There are three surveys, one each that will be completed at the beginning of Week 1, the end of Week 1 and then the end of Week 2. Each survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

What are the risks to me?
The Institutional Review Board at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro has determined that participation in this study poses minimal risk to participants. If you have questions, want more information, or have suggestions, please contact:
Principle Investigator: Tracy Stone, 312-529-0784 or tistone@uncg.edu
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Diane Gill, dlgill@uncg.edu

If you have any concerns about your rights, how you are being treated, concerns or complaints about this project or benefits or risks associated with being in this study please contact the Office of Research Integrity at UNCG toll-free at (855)-251-2351.

Are there any benefits to society as a result of me taking part in this research?
If it is found that a certain type of fitspiration is motivational to college students, this information may be used to create/expand campus recreation social media campaigns that aim to encourage more students to be physically active.

Are there any benefits to me for taking part in this research study?
There are no direct benefits to participants in this study.

Will I get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything?
All students in KIN 330 will have the opportunity to receive extra credit. Those who participate in the study will receive the extra credit for completing all components of the study. Those who do not participate in the study may complete a non-research assignment for the same amount of extra credit. There will be a link provided for each option. Those who do not choose to participate in the study, but are interested in extra credit, will be given the non-research assignment to complete within the same time frame of the study (2 weeks).

There are no costs to participants of the study.

How will you keep my information confidential?
Participants will remain anonymous with their data coded by self-selected I.D. number. Participant responses to survey questions will not be shared with the instructor of the course and will remain anonymous to the principal investigator. All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. Absolute confidentiality of data provided through the Internet cannot be guaranteed due to the limited protections of Internet access. Please be sure to close your browser when finished so no one will be able to see what you have been doing.

Will my de-identified data be used in future studies?
Your de-identified data will be kept indefinitely and may be used for future research without your additional consent. All of our participants' de-identified data will be kept indefinitely and

will be posted to an on-line repository so other scientists can analyze the data and check our results.

What if I want to leave the study?
You have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw at any time, without penalty. If you do withdraw, it will not affect you in any way. If you choose to withdraw, you may request that any of your data which has been collected be destroyed unless it is in a de-identifiable state.

The investigators also have the right to stop your participation at any time. This could be because you have had an unexpected reaction, or have failed to follow instructions, or because the entire study has been stopped.

What about new information/changes in the study?
If significant new information relating to the study becomes available which may relate to your willingness to continue to participate, this information will be provided to you.

Voluntary Consent by Participant:
By participating in the study-related procedures, you are agreeing that you read, or it has been read to you, and you fully understand the contents of this document and are openly willing and consent to take part in this study. All of your questions concerning this study have been answered. By participating in the study-related procedures, you are agreeing that you are 18 years of age or older and are agreeing to participate, in this study described to you by Tracy Stone.
Check Yes, I consent below to continue with the study. Check No, I do not consent to exit the survey

- ○ Yes, I consent
- ○ No, I do not consent

Skip To: End of Survey If Consent = No, I do not consent

Intro SOCIAL MEDIA & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: SURVEY #1

The following survey includes several sections and should take about 5-10 minutes to complete. Please answer all questions - there are no right or wrong answers.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:
Please create a 5-digit unique ID# that is easy to remember. (For example, you may choose to use last 5 digits of your phone number.) You will enter this ID# at the beginning of each survey.

ID Please enter your unique 5-digit ID# here.

_____

Demog Please complete the following demographic information by choosing the most appropriate choice from those provided.

Age Please indicate your age:

- ○ 18
- ○ 19
- ○ 20
- ○ 21
- ○ 22
- ○ 23
- ○ 24
- ○ 25+

Gender Please indicate your Gender:

- ○ Male
- ○ Female
- ○ Non-binary / third gender
- ○ Prefer not to say

Race Please indicate your Race or Ethnic Identity (check all that apply)

- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black/African American
- ☐ Hispanic/Latinx
- ☐ Native American
- ☐ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- ☐ White/Caucasian
- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Media How much time do you spend on social media each day?

- ○ Less than 10 minutes
- ○ 10-30 minutes
- ○ 31-60 minutes
- ○ More than an hour

Body Please review the following statements and indicate how frequently you agree with each statement regarding your body.

B1 1. I like what I look like in pictures.

- ○ 0 = never
- ○ 1 = seldom
- ○ 2 = sometimes
- ○ 3 = often
- ○ 4 = always

B2 2. Other people consider me good looking.

- ○ 0 = never
- ○ 1 = seldom
- ○ 2 = sometimes
- ○ 3 = often
- ○ 4 = always

B3 3. I'm proud of my body.

- ○ 0 = never
- ○ 1 = seldom
- ○ 2 = sometimes
- ○ 3 = often
- ○ 4 = always

B4 4. I am preoccupied with trying to change my body weight.

- 0 = Always
- 1 = Often
- 2 = Sometimes
- 3 = Seldom
- 4 = Never

B5 5. I think my appearance would help me get a job.

- 0 = never
- 1 = seldom
- 2 = sometimes
- 3 = often
- 4 = always

B6 6. I like what I see when I look in the mirror.

- 0 = never
- 1 = seldom
- 2 = sometimes
- 3 = often
- 4 = always

B7 7. There are lots of things I'd change about my looks if I could.

- 0 = Always
- 1 = Often
- 2 = Sometimes
- 3 = Seldom
- 4 = Never

B8 8. I am satisfied with my weight.

- 0 = never
- 1 = seldom
- 2 = sometimes
- 3 = often
- 4 = always

B9 9. I wish I looked better.

- 0 = Always
- 1 = Often
- 2 = Sometimes
- 3 = Seldom
- 4 = Never

B10 10. I really like what I weigh.

- 0 = never
- 1 = seldom
- 2 = sometimes
- 3 = often
- 4 = always

B11 11. I wish I looked like someone else.

- 0 = Always
- 1 = Often
- 2 = Sometimes
- 3 = Seldom
- 4 = Never

B12 12. People my own age like my looks.

- 0 = never
- 1 = seldom
- 2 = sometimes
- 3 = often
- 4 = always

B13 13. My looks upset me.

- 0 = Always
- 1 = Often
- 2 = Sometimes
- 3 = Seldom
- 4 = Never

B14 14. I'm as nice looking as most people.

- 0 = never
- 1 = seldom
- 2 = sometimes
- 3 = often
- 4 = always

B15 15. I'm pretty happy about the way I look.

- 0 = never
- 1 = seldom
- 2 = sometimes
- 3 = often
- 4 = always

B16 16. I feel I weight the right amount for my height.

- 0 = never
- 1 = seldom
- 2 = sometimes
- 3 = often
- 4 = always

B17 17. I feel ashamed of how I look.

- 0 = Always
- 1 = Often
- 2 = Sometimes
- 3 = Seldom
- 4 = Never

B18 18. Weighing myself depresses me.

- 0 = Always
- 1 = Often
- 2 = Sometimes
- 3 = Seldom
- 4 = Never

B19 19. My weight makes me unhappy.

- 0 = Always
- 1 = Often
- 2 = Sometimes
- 3 = Seldom
- 4 = Never

B20 20. My looks help me to get dates.

- 0 = never
- 1 = seldom
- 2 = sometimes
- 3 = often
- 4 = always

B21 21. I worry about the way I look.

- 0 = Always
- 1 = Often
- 2 = Sometimes
- 3 = Seldom
- 4 = Never

B22 22. I think I have a good body.

- 0 = never
- 1 = seldom
- 2 = sometimes
- 3 = often
- 4 = always

B23 23. I'm looking as nice as I'd like to.

- 0 = never
- 1 = seldom
- 2 = sometimes
- 3 = often
- 4 = always

GLTE During a typical 7-Day period, indicate how many times on the average that you do the following kinds of exercise for MORE THAN 15 minutes during your free time.

(For example, if you jogged for 45 minutes on 2 days and practiced yoga for 30 minutes on 3 days, you would choose ‘2’ for STRENUOUS exercise and ‘3’ for MILD exercise. If you did not participate in MODERATE exercise, you would choose ‘0’.)

Ex1 Average 7-day Exercise Participation

STRENUOUS EXERCISE (HEART BEATS RAPIDLY) (e.g., running, jogging, hockey, football, soccer, squash, basketball, cross country skiing, judo, roller skating, vigorous swimming, vigorous long-distance bicycling)

How many times on average do you perform STRENUOUS exercise for more than 15 mins in a 7-day period?

- 0 times
- 1 time
- 2 times
- 3 times
- 4 times
- 5 times
- 6 times
- 7 times

Ex2 MODERATE EXERCISE (NOT EXHAUSTING) (e.g., fast walking, baseball, tennis, easy bicycling, volleyball, badminton, easy swimming, alpine skiing, popular and folk dancing)

How many times on average do you perform MODERATE exercise for more than 15 mins in a 7-day period?

- 0 times
- 1 time
- 2 times
- 3 times
- 4 times
- 5 times
- 6 times
- 7 times

Ex3 MILD EXERCISE (MINIMAL EFFORT) (e.g., yoga, archery, fishing from riverbank, bowling, horseshoes, golf, easy walking)

How many times on average do you perform MILD exercise for more than 15 mins in a 7-day period?

- ○ 0 times
- ○ 1 time
- ○ 2 times
- ○ 3 times
- ○ 4 times
- ○ 5 times
- ○ 6 times
- ○ 7 times

Conf Using a scale of 0-10 (0 = not confident at all; 10 = completely confident) indicate how confident you are that you could accomplish each of the following statements concerning your exercise behavior.

S-E Using a scale of 0-10 (0 = not confident at all; 10 = completely confident) indicate how confident you are that you could accomplish each of the following. How confident are you that you can:

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.Pace yourself to avoid over-exertion	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2.Perform all the required movements	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
3. Follow directions from an instructor	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
4.Overcome obstacles that prevent you from exercising regularly	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
5.Make up times you missed	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
6.Exercise regularly no matter what	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

PA The following items ask about your previous and intended physical activity. Using the scale provided, please answer each question.

PA1 How often did you engage in physical activity over the last 1-2 weeks?

- ○ not at all
- ○ less than once per week
- ○ 1-2 times per week
- ○ 3-4 times per week
- ○ more than 4 times per week

PA2 How often do you intend to engage in physical activity over the next 1-2 weeks

- ○ not at all
- ○ less than once per week
- ○ 1-2 times per week
- ○ 3-4 times per week
- ○ more than 4 times per week

Q42 Thank you so much for completing this survey! The link to your assigned social media content will be sent via email on Sunday, October 2nd. If you have any questions, feel free to email Tracy Stone at tistone@uncg.edu.

Social Media & Physical Activity: Survey 2

Q31 SOCIAL MEDIA & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: SURVEY #2

After viewing your assigned social media content a couple times this week, take 5-10 minutes to complete this survey. This survey will be open from now until Sunday, October 9th at 11:59p. Be sure to use the same unique ID# that you used for survey 1.

On Wednesday, October 12th you will be given access to both types of social media content to compare, and the link to the final survey (#3) for the study.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please email Tracy Stone at tistone@uncg.edu

ID Please enter the same ID# you used for survey 1 to begin.

_____

View During the past week, how many times did you view the social media content presented?

- 1 = never
- 2 = 1-2 times
- 3 = 3-5 times
- 4 = more than 5 times

Time How long on average did you spend viewing the content each time?

- 1 = 1-2 minutes
- 2 = 3-5 minutes
- 3 = 6-10 minutes
- 4 = more than 10 minutes

Insp How inspirational were the images; how much did the quotes and videos presented motivate you to be physically active this week?

- 1 = not at all inspirational
- 2 = somewhat inspirational
- 3 = very inspirational
- 4 = extremely inspirational

Social Media & Physical Activity: Survey 3

Q36 SOCIAL MEDIA & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: SURVEY 3

You have made it to the final survey for the study! Thank you so much for all of your help so far. For Survey #3, remember to use the same ID# that you used for both survey's 1 & 2. (most likely that is the last 5 digits of your phone number)

In Survey #3, you will answer some similar questions as previous surveys, and then there are 4 short answer questions at the end for you to compare and share your opinion of the two types of social media content you just viewed. I have provided the links to each type of content so you can go back and review them as you add detail to your short answer responses.

Once you complete this survey, including answers to the last 4 questions, the survey will direct you to the form to fill out (provide your name) so that Dr. Berg can award you extra credit.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please email Tracy Stone at tistone@uncg.edu

ID Please enter the same ID# you used for survey's 1 & 2 to begin. (most likely the last 5 digits of your phone number)

_____

Q40 Over the last few weeks, you were presented with one type of physical activity content (each group had one type - A or B). Now - you have the links to the type you reviewed and also the link to the other type. Please review each type (links provided below) so that you can compare them and answer the following questions.

Social Media Content A (Your Group A was assigned this last week)
Social Media Content B (Group B viewed this last week)

Q35 Which type (A or B) of content did you enjoy viewing more?

- 1 = Definitely social media content A
- 2 = Both types equally
- 3 = Definitely social media content B
- 4 = Neither type of content

Q34 Please review each type (A and B) again and answer the final questions below.

Which type of content did you feel was most inspirational to you?

- ○ 1 = Definitely social media content A
- ○ 2 = About the same for both types
- ○ 3 = Definitely social media content B
- ○ 4 = Neither type of content was inspirational

Q37 Please describe how/what you felt while viewing social media content A (the content you were assigned last week).

_____

Q38 Please describe how/what you felt while viewing social media content B.

_____

Q39 Thinking of the content that was most inspirational, please describe what was inspirational to you and why. (Please mention specific posts and why they were inspirational.)

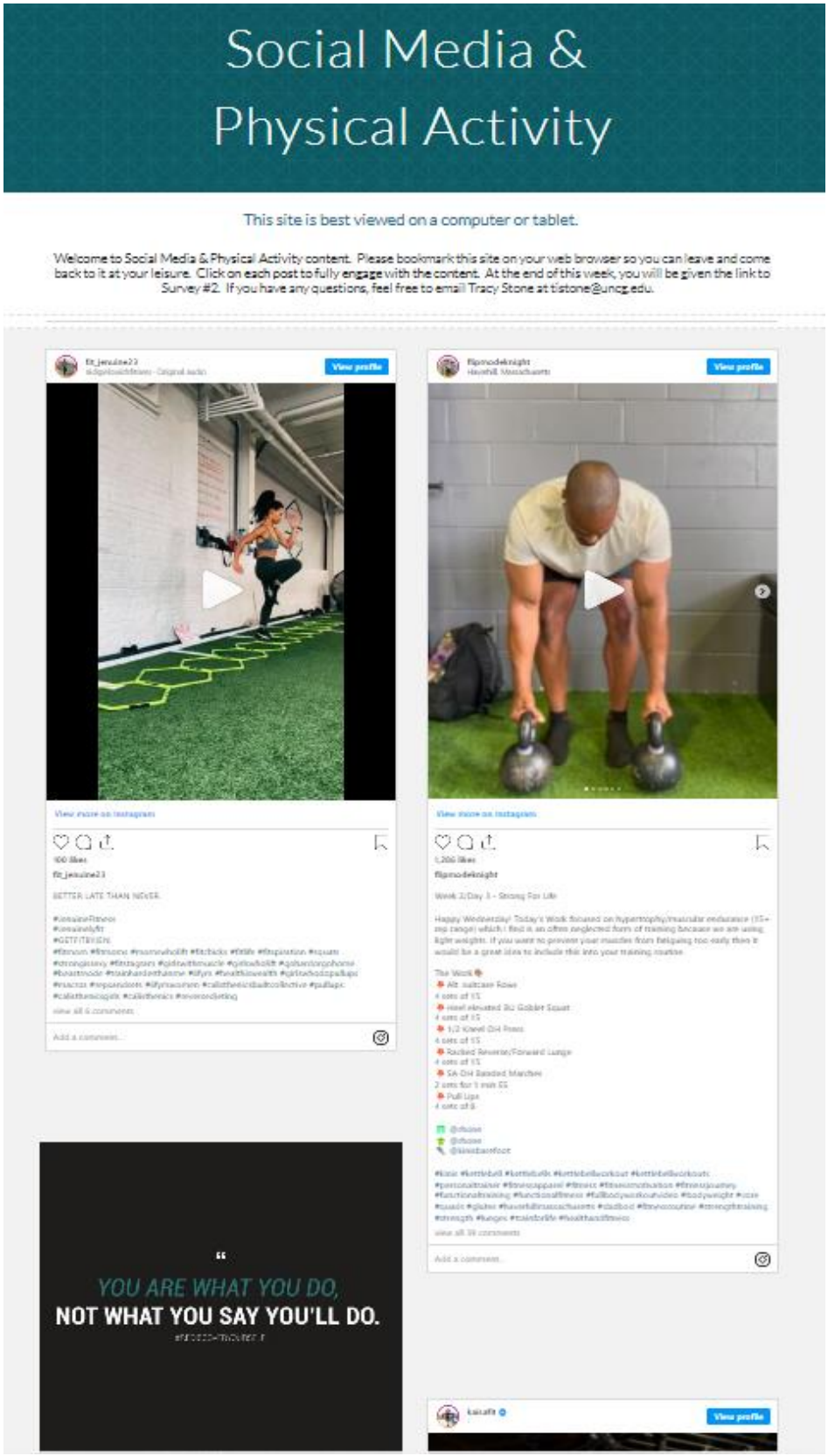
_____

Q40 Thinking of the content that was NOT inspirational, please describe specific images and/or videos that come to mind that you disliked and explain why.

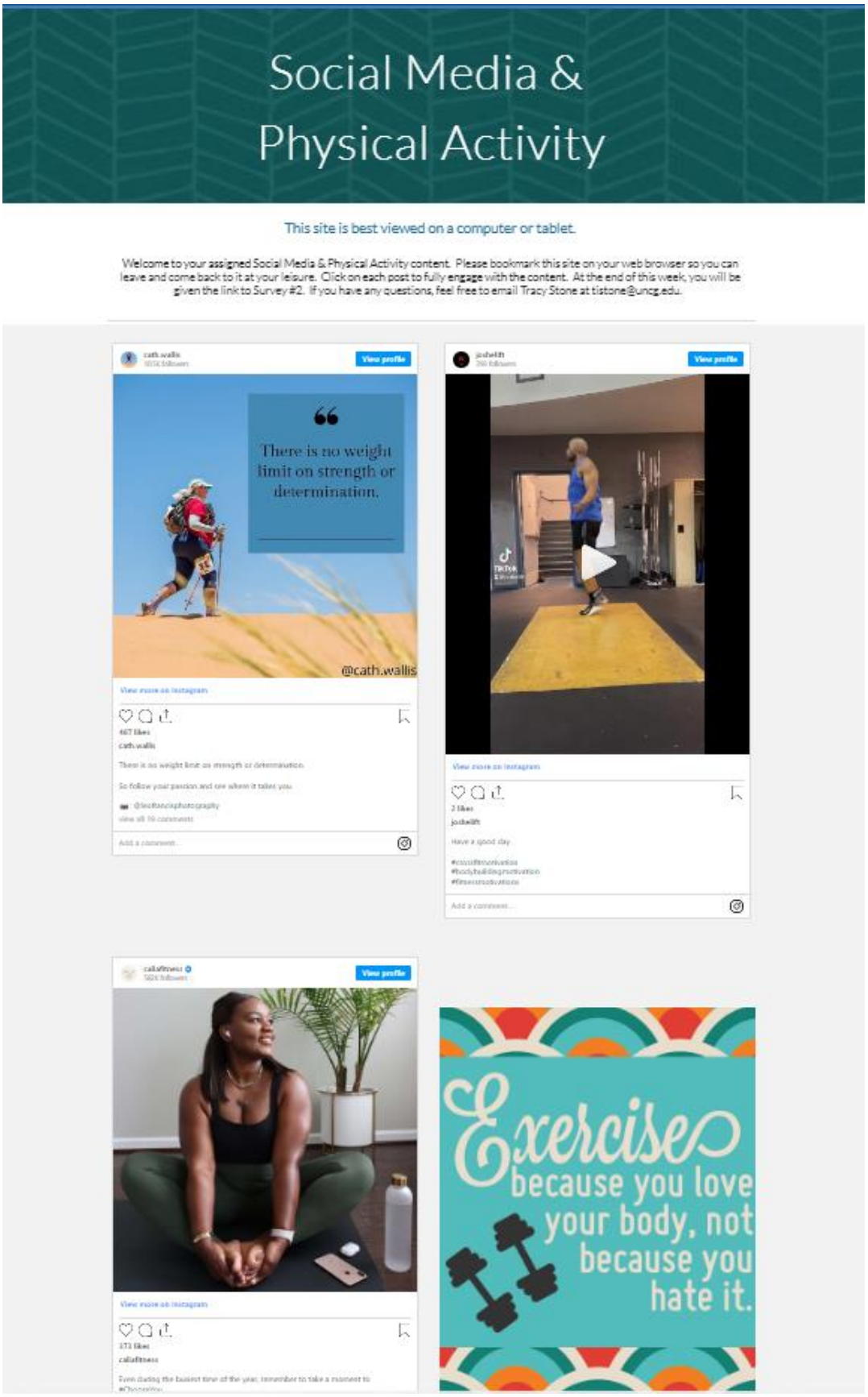
_____

APPENDIX B: MEDIA CONTENT

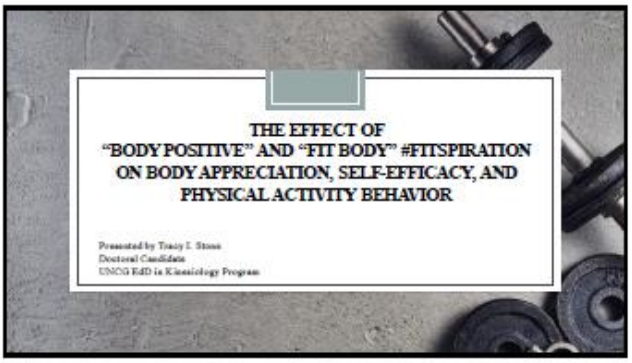
Content A: Fit Body #fitspiration



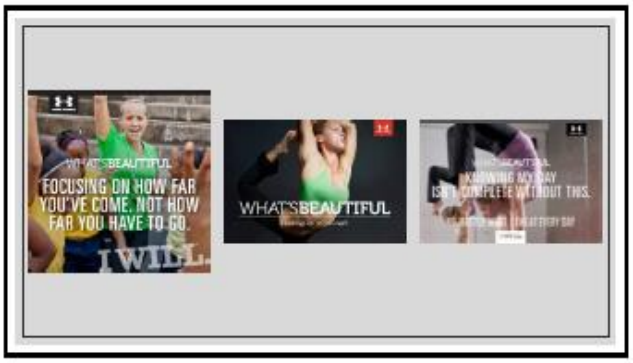
Content B: Body Positive #fitspiration



APPENDIX C: PRESENTATION



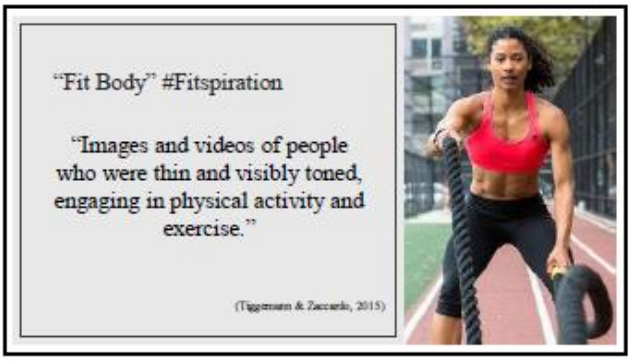
1



2

3

4



5

6

"Body Positive" #Fitspiration

"Images and videos were of bodies of all shapes and sizes, with little to no visible muscle tone, engaging in physical activity and exercise."

(Cohen et al., 2019)

7

8

THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY:

To determine the effects of body positive #fitspiration and fit-body #fitspiration on body appreciation and self-efficacy for physical activity.

To determine whether exposure to body positive #fitspiration and fit-body #fitspiration affects followers' physical activity behavior and intention.

9

Participants

- 36 undergraduate women
- Kinesiology lecture course
- Aged 19-25+
- Daily social media use: 60 mins+

10

Measures

- Body Esteem Scale for Adolescents and Adults (BESAA)
  - (Mendelson & Mendelson, 1997)
- Task & Scheduling Self-efficacy for PA
  - (Rogers et. al., 2002)
- PA 7-day Recall
  - (Godin et. al., 1986)
- PA 7-day Intention
  - (Godin et. al., 1986)

11

Measures

- Level of engagement
- Level of inspiration
- Open-ended questions

12

13

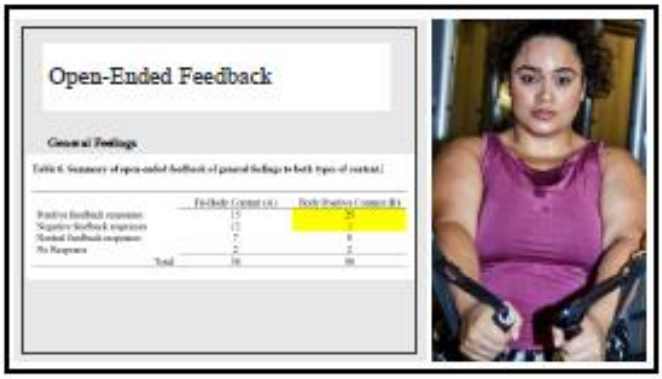
14

15

16

17

18



19

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24

The results of this study indicated:

Although previous research suggests that an increase in body appreciation and esteem would lead to an increase in self-efficacy and physical activity behavior (Barr et. al., 2016; Williamson & Karanzia, 2018), the findings of this study showed an increase in self-efficacy and physical activity despite no change in esteem.

25

The results of this study indicated:

The viewing timeframe in the current study was only one week, suggesting that even brief exposure can be beneficial.

26

27

Implications

Use social media as a platform to increase awareness that there is not one definition of a fit body, and all bodies are capable of being active.

Exposure to body positive social media content

- helps to create vicarious experiences that can influence self-efficacy beliefs of college women (Lewis et. al., 2016)
- result in increased participation in physical activity (Pauline, 2013; Joseph et. al., 2014; Barr et. al., 2016; Farren et. al., 2017)

28

Implications

Market physical activity on college campuses with a focus on body positivity

- can have a positive effect on college women's intention to be active, resulting in increased recreation center usage and participation in active events on campus.

Social media-based physical activity programming that encourages participants to document their activity on social media, using a body positive themed hashtag (#)

- will contribute to the growing body positivity trend.

29

30

31

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