Body Image Issues and their Societal Roots

Name of Student

Name of Institution

Course Number and Name

Name of Instructor

Due Date

**Moving Beyond Individualization in Social Issues**

Reflection

I am interested in this topic because body image issues have become increasingly prevalent, particularly among young people. Moreover, it is often portrayed as an individual struggle rather than symptoms of broader societal pressures. The most common view seems to be that body image problems stem from personal insecurities, low self-esteem or even vanity. This is without acknowledging the role of societal beauty standards, media representation and systemic factors.

My current view is that while individual factors play an essential role, body image issues are heavily influenced by societal norms, expectations and narratives around body appearance. Social media, advertising and entertainment media perpetuate narrow beauty ideals, and these messages greatly impact self-perception and self-worth, especially for impressionable youth. Additionally, societal biases and discrimination based on appearance can reinforce these pressures.

However, it is essential to consider the potential influence of other factors, such as genetic predispositions, mental health conditions and personal experiences, which may interact with societal pressures to shape body image.

Research question

How do societal factors (such as media representation, beauty ideals and systemic biases) contribute to body image issues, and how can these issues be reframed as a societal problem rather than solely an individual struggle?

Background Research

In developing this research question, I consulted the following academic sources:

1. Grogan, S. (2021). Body image: Understanding body dissatisfaction in men, women and children. London: Routledge.
2. Puhl, R. M., & Heuer, C. A. (2009). The stigma of obesity: a review and update. Obesity (Silver Spring), Vol. 17(5), 941-964.
3. Tiggemann, M., & Zaccardo, M. (2015). "Exercise to be fit, not skinny": The effect of fitspiration imagery on women's body image. Body Image, Vol. 15, 61-67.

Research Strategy

To build out research on this topic, I will use keywords such as "body image," "societal factors," "media representation," "beauty ideals," "appearance stigma" and "sociocultural influences." I will consult library research guides on sociology, psychology and media studies to locate relevant academic sources. Specific guides, such as the "Body Image and Popular Culture", guide may be particularly useful. My strategy will focus on finding peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, and reputable reports from academic or professional organizations.

References

Grogan, S. (2021). *Body image: Understanding body dissatisfaction in men, women and children*. London: Routledge.

Puhl, R. M., & Heuer, C. A. (2009). The stigma of obesity: a review and update. *Obesity (Silver Spring), Vol. 17*(5), 941-964.

Tiggemann, M., & Zaccardo, M. (2015). "Exercise to be fit, not skinny": The effect of fitspiration imagery on women's body image. *Body Image, Vol. 15*, 61-67.