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Gender Differences in the Effects of Viewing Body Positive Content on Instagram

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Gender Differences in the Effects of Viewing Body Positive Content on Instagram

Abstract

The present study has been developed to expand upon the work of Cohen et al. (2019) by exploring ways in which viewing different feeds or posts (body-positive posts, body-ideal posts, and neutral posts) on Instagram influence not only women's but men's body image and self-esteem. We hypothesize that body image and self-esteem will increase in both men and women after viewing body-positive and neutral content on Instagram. In addition, as no studies have examined the influence of body positive posts in men, we wanted to assess whether there might be gender differences in post type on body image and self-esteem. Participants were administered online surveys and were assigned to one of three viewing conditions depending on their gender: body positive, ideal body, or neutral. We found that neither self-esteem, nor body satisfaction, increased following any of the experimental conditions. In addition, there was no effect of gender on either self-esteem or body satisfaction. However, we did find a gender and experimental condition effect on participants' satisfaction with their weight and face. Future studies should attempt to replicate this study in a laboratory setting to control participants' attention to the experimental condition.

Gender Differences in the Effects of Viewing Body Positive Content on Instagram

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INTRODUCTION

The present study has been developed to expand upon the work of Cohen et al. (2019) by exploring ways in which viewing different feeds or posts (body-positive posts, body-ideal posts, and neutral posts) on Instagram influence not only women's but men's body image and self-esteem.

PURPOSE

Since body-positive posts on Instagram were shown to increase mood and body image in women, we hypothesize that body image and self-esteem will increase in both men and women after viewing body-positive and neutral content on Instagram (Cohen et al., 2019). In addition, as no studies have examined the influence of body positive posts in men, we wanted to assess whether there might be gender differences in post type on body image and self-esteem.

RESULTS: Hypothesis 1

We first hypothesized that body image and self-esteem would increase in both men and women after viewing body-positive and neutral content on Instagram. However, neither self-esteem, $F(1, 342) = 2.10$, nor body satisfaction, $F(1, 317) = .25$, increased following any of the experimental conditions.

Sample Body Positivity Post for Men



METHOD

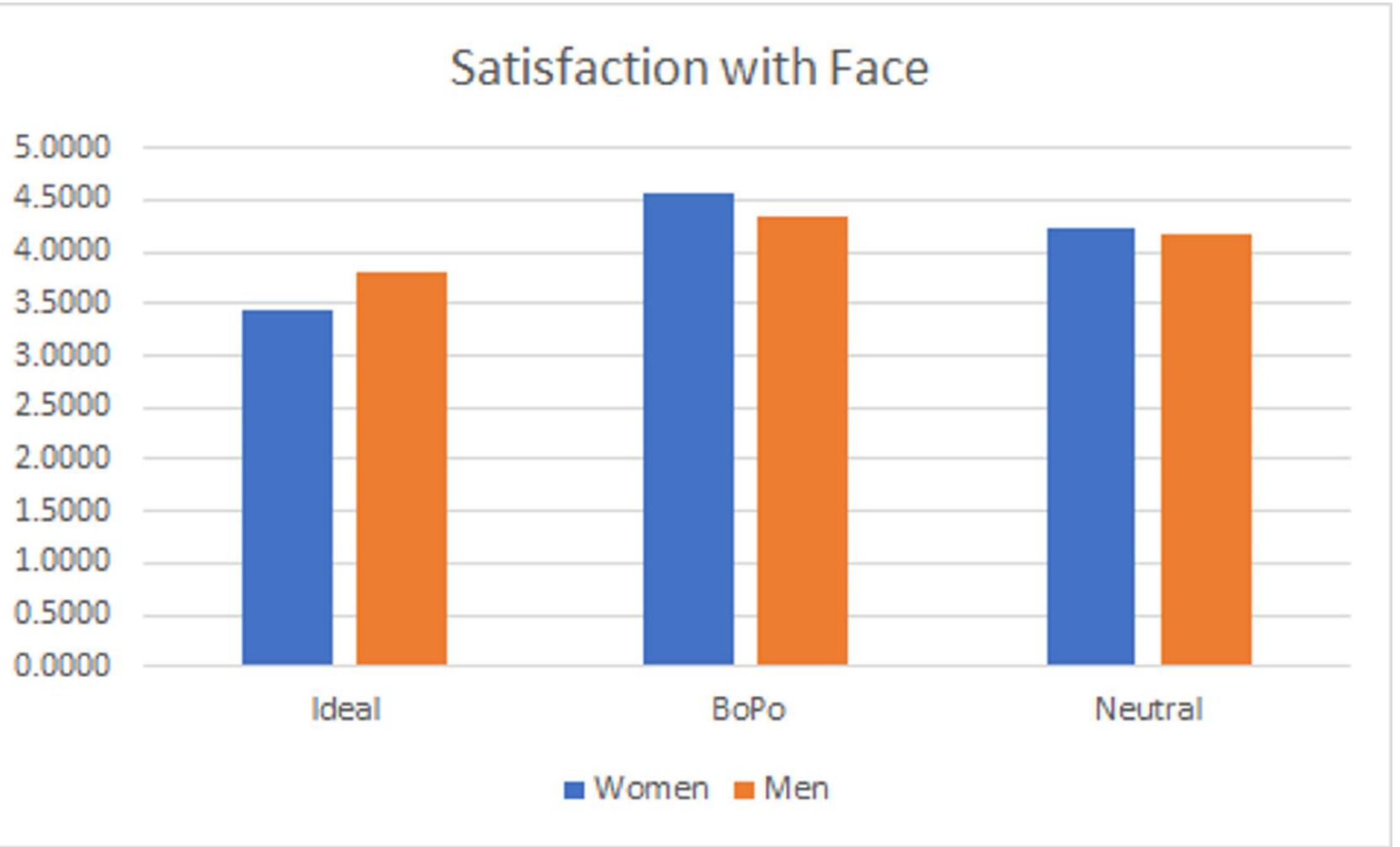
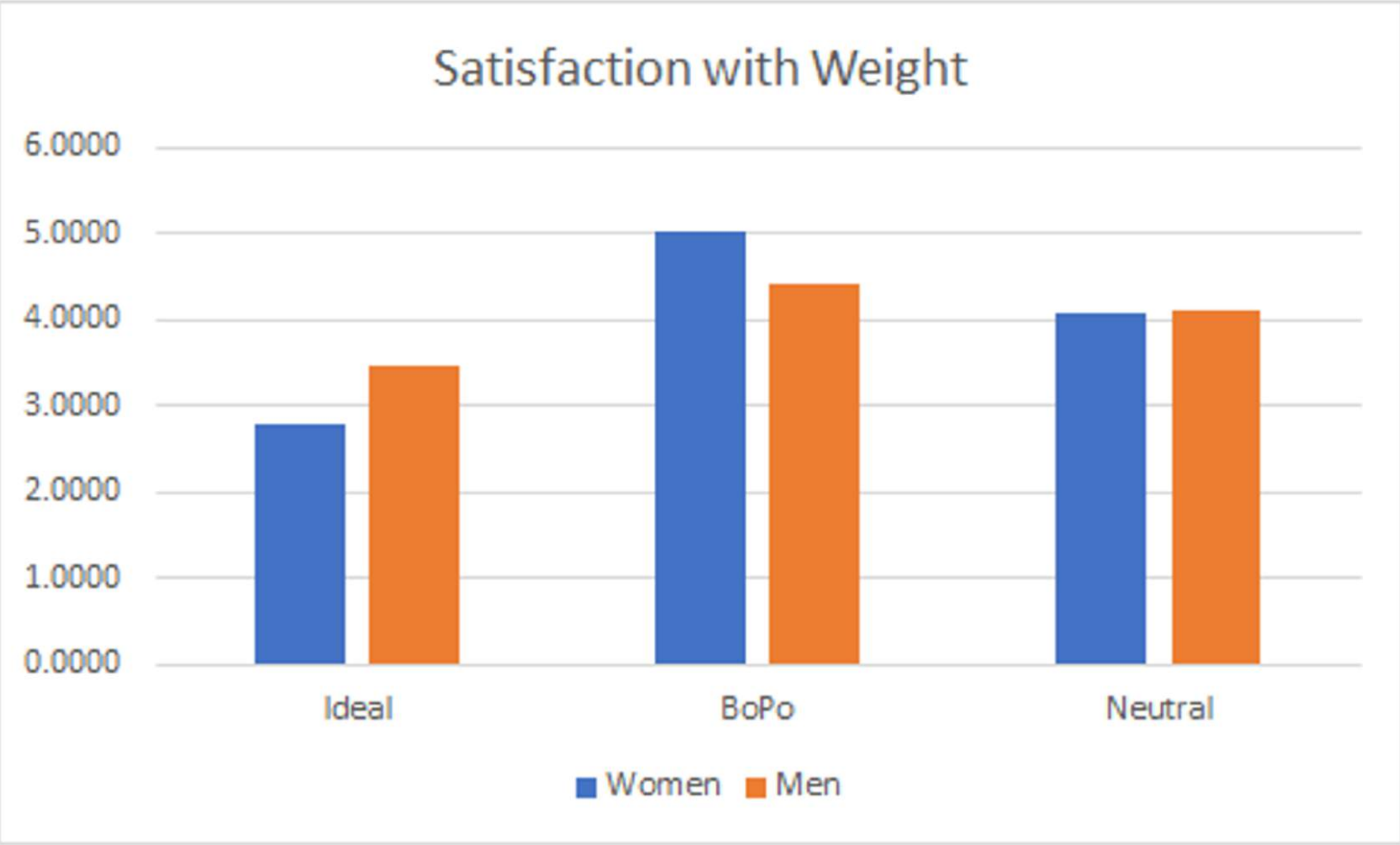
351 participants (214 female, 137 male) completed an omnibus survey including:

- Body Satisfaction
- Self-esteem
- Drive for Thinness
- Drive for Muscularity
- Gender role self-concept
- Internalization of societal standards of beauty
- Perceived Effects of Media Exposure (Weight and Face)
- Body appreciation
- Attitudes toward body positive accounts

Participants were randomly assigned to one of three viewing conditions depending on their gender: body positive, ideal body, or neutral.

RESULTS: Hypothesis 2

We wanted to assess whether there might be gender differences in post type on body image and self-esteem. There was no effect of gender on either self-esteem, $F(1, 342) = 1.18$, or body satisfaction, $F(1, 317) = .10$. However, when participants were asked about their satisfaction with their weight and face following the experimental manipulation, we found an interaction effect of gender and experimental condition on both satisfaction with weight and body, $F(4, 682) = 6.84, p < .001$.



CONCLUSION

This study was the first of its kind to conduct an experimental manipulation of Instagram body-related content on body image and self-esteem in male and female college students. Although we failed to fully replicate the Cohen et al. (2019) study on the influence of Instagram on female college students, this is likely because we had to conduct our experimental manipulation through an on-line survey and thus, could not control participants' attention to the experimental condition. Nevertheless, we did find a gender * experimental condition effect on participants' satisfaction with their weight and face. Future studies should attempt to replicate this study in a laboratory setting.

Sample Body Positivity Post for Women

