Fitfluencers on GymTok

The Effect of Fitfluencers' Content on Body Satisfaction and Intention to Exercise, and the Role of Social Comparison and Wishful Identification

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Abstract

Fitfluencers frequently create fitspiration content, aiming to support a healthy lifestyle among social media users. The impact of fitspiration content has been investigated extensively, with several studies pointing out negative influences on social media users' body satisfaction and exercise behavior. However, the effects of specific fitspiration content types shared by fitfluencers on TikTok is never studied before. Therefore, this study examined the effect of fitfluencers' content on TikTok on body satisfaction and intention to exercise among Dutch young women and to what extent social comparison and wishful identification serially mediate these relationships. An online between-subjects experiment with three experimental conditions (exercise video vs. body video vs. non-fitspiration video) was performed among 178 Dutch women aged between 16 and 24. Two One-Way ANOVAs and three serial mediation analyses using Hayes' PROCESS macro v4.0 were conducted to assess the hypotheses. The results showed significant direct effects of the type of fitfluencers' content on body satisfaction and intention to exercise. In addition, it was found that social comparison with fitfluencers significantly affects young women's wishful identification. Finally, the results showed a partial serial mediation of social comparison and wishful identification on the relationship between the type of fitfluencers' content and body satisfaction. However, this result was not found for the relationship between the type of fitfluencers' content and intention to exercise. Based on these results, implications and suggestions for future research are formulated.

Keywords: Fitfluencers, Fitspiration, TikTok, Body satisfaction, Intention to Exercise, Social Comparison, Wishful Identification

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Individuals often use social media platforms as a source of knowledge and reinforcement for achieving fitness goals and an ideal body (Cataldo et al., 2021; Deighton-Smith & Bell, 2018). On platforms like Instagram and TikTok, individuals are frequently exposed to content shared by fitfluencers (i.e., fitness influencers; Durau et al., 2022). *Fitfluencers* are social media influencers who focus on sharing health and fitness-related content and therefore support healthy eating habits and exercise behavior among social media users (Cataldo et al., 2021; Duplaga, 2020). The content that fitfluencers share on social media is mainly considered idealized aesthetic images of athletic, muscular bodies (i.e., body imagery; Carrotte et al., 2017). However, besides this type of imagery, fitfluencers often share instructional fitness workouts (i.e., exercise imagery; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2018). These two content types are known as *fitspiration*, a social media movement that aims to motivate and inspire individuals to live a healthy lifestyle (Carrotte et al., 2017; Griffiths & Stefanovski, 2019). This popular social media movement emerged on Instagram almost ten years ago, with #fitspiration and #fitspo currently having over 94.5 million posts on this platform (Cataldo et al., 2021; Instagram, 2022). Fitspiration also appeared on TikTok, referred to as "GymTok," with these videos currently having two billion views on this platform (Hung, 2022; TikTok, 2022).

Among its users, TikTok is known to be more authentic compared to other social media platforms, such as Instagram, since its content features unfiltered videos instead of edited idealized photo images (Barta & Andalibi, 2021; Pedalino & Camerini, 2022). In addition, TikTok radiates the "just be you" attitude and is mainly consumed for entertainment or fun (Barta & Andalibi, 2021; Pedalino & Camerini, 2022). However, despite its focus on entertainment, TikTok is considered an essential platform for health communication by providing information in short and entertaining videos (Zhu et al., 2020). Fitfluencers can

contribute to health communication on TikTok, as they are considered health and fitness experts (Dureau et al., 2022). As 28.1% of Dutch young adults are overweight (CBS, 2022), they would benefit from fitfluencers' content as this encourages them to exercise. Moreover, the most prominent group active on TikTok in the Netherlands are people aged between 16 and 24 (Statista, 2022). Since sixty percent of this group is female (Doyle, 2022), they might have the most exposure to fitfluencers on TikTok. Therefore, examining the influence of fitfluencers' content on Dutch young women is essential.

Despite the popularity of fitfluencers' content on social media and their positive intent on social media users' health behaviors (Durau et al., 2022), several studies have shown that exposure to fitspiration content does not support healthy habits among individuals (Cataldo et al., 2021; Prichard et al., 2020). For instance, research suggests that exposure to fitspiration content negatively affects women's body satisfaction (Cataldo et al., 2021; Prichard et al., 2020; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015). Body satisfaction is a component of one's body image that mainly expresses contentment with one's appearance (Jarman et al., 2021; Stevens & Griffiths, 2020). On top of that, previous empirical studies do not show an increase in exercise behavior after exposure to fitspiration content (Holland & Tiggemann, 2017; Prichard et al., 2020; Robinson et al., 2017). These studies' findings raise doubts on whether exposure to fitfluencers' fitspiration content may inspire a healthy lifestyle. However, positive effects of fitspiration were found when focusing on an individual's intention to exercise instead of their exercise behavior (Sokolova & Perez, 2021). Given the conflicting results of the studies mentioned above, this study examines under which circumstances the negative effects of fitspiration can be avoided and still encourage social media users to engage in healthy behavior intentions (i.e., exercising).

A theory that can clarify the effects of fitfluencers' content on young women's body satisfaction and exercise behavior is the social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954).

According to this theory, individuals tend to compare their abilities to others to evaluate themselves better (i.e., social comparisons; Festinger, 1954). In addition, social media users often make comparisons based on physical appearance (McKee et al., 2013; Fardouly et al., 2017). As a result, when women are exposed to fitfluencers' content, they are likely to engage in comparisons with fitfluencers, and adjust their ideal perceptions to be like them (i.e., assimilation effects; Mussweiler et al., 2004). These assimilation effects could, in turn, lead to the effects of wishful identification, which refers to the desire to be like someone else (Tolbert & Drogos, 2019). For instance, women might desire to imitate fitfluencers' behavior and lifestyle after being exposed to their content, as being fit and healthy is considered suitable for one's health (Durau et al., 2022; Raggatt et al., 2018). However, social comparison's effects on wishful identification and these mediating effects on body satisfaction and intention to exercise have not yet been investigated in this context.

To date, little research has focused on the effects of specific types of fitfluencers' fitspiration content, as fitspiration is often examined as one content type (Carrotte et al., 2017; Cataldo et al., 2021). In addition, more research is needed to examine how fitfluencers can successfully affect healthy exercise intentions among social media users since primarily negative effects of fitspiration are investigated (see, e.g., Cataldo et al., 2021; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2018). Additionally, the effects of fitspiration content on the video-based social platform TikTok remains unclear since only a few studies related to this social media platform have been conducted (Montag et al., 2021). This study builds on these knowledge gaps by examining the effects of different fitfluencers' content types on TikTok on Dutch young women's body satisfaction and intention to exercise. Furthermore, this study will investigate the mediating effects of social comparison and wishful identification (in serial). The following research questions will be examined:

RQ1: *"What are the effects of different types of fitfluencers' content on TikTok*

(exercise video vs. body video vs. non-fitspiration video) on Dutch young women's (aged between 16 and 24 years) body satisfaction and intention to exercise?"

RQ2: *"To what extent are these relationships mediated by social comparison and wishful identification?"*

RQ3: *"To what extent does social comparison with fitfluencers affect young women's wishful identification?"*

Theoretical Framework

Social media influencers are known to share and promote products, services, and opinions to influence consumers' purchase intentions, a practice called influencer marketing (Campbell & Farrell, 2020; Dinh & Lee, 2021). However, according to various studies, social media influencers significantly influence their followers' lifestyle decisions and behaviors (Cataldo et al., 2021; Hudders et al., 2021). Social media influencers can impact their followers' behaviors mainly due to their authenticity (i.e., perceived realness) and expertise in a specific domain (e.g., fitness, fashion, food; Balaban & Szambolics, 2022; Hudders et al., 2021). Additionally, social media users often feel they have a close relationship with influencers (i.e., parasocial relationships), making them more trustworthy and influential than celebrity endorsers (Närvänen et al., 2020; Schouten et al., 2020). It is, therefore, critical to examine what type of content social media influencers share on social media, as this can significantly impact an individual's behavior and decision-making (Hudders et al., 2021).

Fitspiration content

Fitfluencers frequently create and share fitspiration content, which can take many forms, including inspiring quotes, images, and videos (Carrotte et al., 2017). Fitspiration has emerged as a countermovement to thinspiration, focusing on extreme thinness as the perfect appearance ideal (Talbot et al., 2017). As a result, fitspiration can be seen as the rise against nowadays 'perfect' thin ideals (Griffiths et al., 2018; Griffiths & Stefanovski, 2019). The

overarching ideology of fitspiration is encouraging individuals' fitness, strength, and empowerment to improve their health and well-being (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2018). The popularity of fitspiration is mainly due to the positive approach of promoting exercising and healthy eating habits instead of focusing only on physical appearance, which benefits users' health and emotional well-being (i.e., strong is the new skinny; Prichard et al., 2020). Therefore, fitspiration on social media platforms can be a valuable source of motivation and inspiration among social media users to improve their healthy lifestyles.

Several studies examined the content types within fitspiration on social media platforms (see, e.g., Carrotte et al., 2017; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2018). According to these content analyses, fitspiration focuses on three content elements: body images, workouts, and other fitspiration images. First, body images in fitspiration often portray females' fit, toned, and muscular bodies, whereas images of male bodies are less common (Cataldo et al., 2021; Talbot et al., 2017; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2018). The second element focuses on providing workouts and exercises, mainly to improve physical appearance, that can be done in the gym or at home (Deighton-Smith & Bell, 2018; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2018). Finally, other fitspiration images contain healthy food, diet recipes, positive quotes, and exercise clothing (Carrotte et al., 2017). However, research suggests that body images and workouts are the most shared fitspiration content types by fitfluencers on their social media pages (Durau et al., 2022; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2018).

These two main types of fitspiration content can be distinguished in aesthetic and instructional imagery. Aesthetic imagery in fitspiration often emphasizes fitfluencers' physical appearance, such as a toned body or attractive muscles, through regular exercising (Robinson et al., 2017). Additionally, aesthetic imagery often refers to visually appealing images that match the influencers' social media feeds (Sumter et al., 2022). Instructional imagery in fitspiration, on the other hand, shows images or videos that focus on providing

information to demonstrate, for instance, a particular exercise (Mulgrew et al., 2018). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, instructional videos have become more critical for individuals to engage in physical activity than aesthetic imagery (Godefroy, 2020). Since then, fitfluencers have often used instructional imagery to share their workouts or exercises (Cataldo et al., 2022). These videos are intended to inform and provide valuable information to viewers to improve their fitness levels (Mulgrew et al., 2018). In the remainder of this study, the term body video refers to aesthetic, posing imagery of fitfluencers, whereas the term exercise video refers to fitfluencers' instructional imagery, such as workouts.

Besides these two types of videos, fitfluencers often share content from their daily lives, such as daily vlogs or get-ready-with-me's (i.e., vlogs in which influencers show themselves when doing their hair, clothing, or makeup; Audrezet et al., 2020). This type of content ensures that influencers are seen as more authentic than celebrity endorsers, as people can identify with this content more (Audrezet et al., 2020; Schouten et al., 2020). However, when fitfluencers post vlogs of their daily lives, this content is not covered by fitspiration, as it does not explicitly represent exercise or body imagery. Therefore, this study adds daily vlogs and get-ready-with-me's (i.e., non-fitspiration videos) as a control condition, as exposure to non-fitspiration videos can affect women's body satisfaction or intention to exercise differently compared to fitspiration videos (see Prichard et al., 2020; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015). In sum, this study will focus on three content types (i.e., exercise videos, body videos, and non-fitspiration videos) shared by fitfluencers on TikTok.

The effects of fitspiration content on body satisfaction and intention to exercise

Several researchers argue that exposure to fitspiration content is harmful to one's well-being (i.e., body satisfaction, body image, and mood) despite the positive intent of this social media movement (see Cataldo et al., 2021; Fioravanti et al., 2021; Griffiths & Stefanovski, 2019). To date, only one study did not find an effect of fitspiration content on body

satisfaction when examining the effects of fitspiration content on TikTok (Pryde & Prichard, 2022). Several other studies show negative effects of fitspiration on body satisfaction (Cataldo et al., 2021; Prichard et al., 2020; Rounds & Stutts, 2021; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015). For example, empirical research by Tiggemann & Zaccardo (2015) among 130 female undergraduate students (aged between 17 and 30 years) showed that exposure to fitspiration content leads to increased body dissatisfaction and lower self-esteem compared to exposure to travel images (i.e., control group). Similar findings were found in a comparable experiment by Rounds & Stutts (2021), who investigated the effects of fitspiration imagery on body image and mood among 283 female students. They found that women's body satisfaction in the fitspiration condition, compared to the control condition, decreased significantly, while their negative mood increased (Rounds & Stutts, 2021).

The self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987) could explain some negative effects of fitspiration on young women's body satisfaction. This theory proposed that people have different self-representations: their ideal self (e.g., desired appearance), ought self (e.g., societal expectations), and actual self (e.g., actual appearance; Higgins, 1987). The difference between someone's actual self and their ideal self is the actual-ideal body discrepancy (Anton et al., 2000; Higgins, 1989). For instance, when a women's actual weight (80 kg) is higher than her ideal weight (60 kg), this creates an actual-ideal body discrepancy. Higgins (1989) suggested that individuals tend to eliminate discrepancies between their actual and ideal selves because these discrepancies can cause negative emotions. Research has shown that higher actual-ideal body discrepancy leads to lower body satisfaction and self-esteem (Tiggemann, 2005) or depression among women (Solomon-Krakus et al., 2017). Thus, it is likely that when women are exposed to fitspiration content, representing their ideal self (e.g., ideal bodies), this can affect their emotional states (e.g., body satisfaction).

In sum, most studies show negative effects on body satisfaction, whereas these studies

focused on fitspiration as aesthetic body imagery (i.e., one type of fitspiration content within this study; Prichard et al., 2020; Rounds & Stutts, 2021; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015). Based on these studies and the self-discrepancy theory, this study expects that these actual-ideal discrepancies will be more significant when exposed to fitfluencers' body videos compared to exercise and non-fitspiration videos, as fitfluencers' body videos explicitly emphasize fitfluencers' physical appearance (Robinson et al., 2017), resulting in lower levels of body satisfaction. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H1: Exposure to fitfluencers' body videos leads to lower body satisfaction compared to fitfluencers' exercise and non-fitspiration videos.

Next to the influence on body satisfaction, a few studies examined the effects of fitfluencers' fitspiration content on intention to exercise (Eng et al., 2022; Mulgrew et al., 2018; Sokolova & Perez, 2021). For instance, Sokolova & Perez (2021) examined through an online survey whether following fitfluencers on YouTube would lead to the intention to watch fitness videos and if this, in turn, resulted in higher intentions to exercise. The findings of this study show that watching videos from fitfluencers on YouTube is positively related to women's intention to exercise and attitude toward exercising. Similar findings were shown in an empirical study by Mulgrew et al. (2018), who examined the effects of viewing functionality-focused fitness campaigns on exercise intention among 595 women. They found that women's exercise intention increased when viewing functionality-focused fitness videos compared to the control condition (i.e., travel images). In addition, research by Eng et al. (2022) found that intention to exercise is positively related to exercise frequency, indicating that when a person intends to exercise (i.e., they plan to exercise), they are more likely to exercise more frequently than when they do not have such an intention. Thus, the findings of the mentioned studies indicate that when women are exposed to instructional exercise imagery, this increases their intention to exercise and, consequently, their exercise behavior.

The theory of planned behavior explains the effects of fitfluencers' videos on intention to exercise and exercise behavior (Azjen & Madden, 1986). According to this theory, people's intentions to engage in a specific behavior (e.g., exercising) are significant predictors of their actual behavior (Azjen & Madden, 1986). Performing a particular behavior can be influenced by three determinants: attitude toward the behavior (i.e., evaluation of the behavior), subjective norm (i.e., social influence of others), and perceived behavioral control (i.e., people's beliefs in their abilities; Ajzen & Madden, 1986). Especially perceived behavior control is of interest, as this determinant is related to self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy is an essential behavioral determinant related to people's ability to perform a specific activity (Bandura, 1977). Therefore, it is a significant predictor of behavior within this theory (Azjen & Madden, 1986). Individuals with high self-efficacy are likelier to attempt and persist in a particular task (Bandura, 1977; Kim, 2022). For instance, if a fitfluencers' video provides instructions on how to perform a specific exercise, this can increase women's confidence in their ability to perform the exercises successfully (i.e., raising self-efficacy) and therefore increase the intention to perform the same exercises (Bandura, 1977; Kim, 2022).

Based on the results of the above studies and the theory of planned behavior, this study expects that fitfluencers' exercise videos will lead to higher levels of intention to exercise compared to fitfluencers' body and non-fitspiration videos. Fitfluencers' exercise videos show various exercises and workouts that women can do in the gym (Deighton-Smith & Bell, 2018), which consequently increases women's self-efficacy and abilities to perform similar exercises (i.e., perceived behavioral control; Azjen & Madden, 1986). As a result, it is expected that this increases women's exercise intention (Ajzen & Madden, 1986; Eng et al., 2022). Therefore, the second hypothesis proposes the following:

H2: Exposure to fitfluencers' exercise videos leads to higher intentions to exercise compared to fitfluencers' body and non-fitspiration videos.

Social comparison

The social comparison theory developed by Festinger (1954) proposes that people desire to compare their abilities and thoughts (e.g., opinions) to those of others. People use these comparisons mainly to assess, develop and improve themselves (Gerber, 2018). For instance, people often make comparisons to evaluate what can be achieved based on the successes and abilities of others (Festinger, 1954). Social comparisons can be made in three directions: upward, downward, or lateral (Fardouly et al., 2017; Festinger, 1954). With upward comparisons, people compare and evaluate their thoughts and abilities to those perceived as better. Upward comparisons lead to negative consequences, such as lower self-esteem or self-evaluations (Gibbons & Gerrard, 1989; Vogel, 2014). Contrary to upward comparisons, downward comparisons refer to comparing and evaluating someone who is perceived as worse or incompetent (Festinger, 1954). In addition, people can also make lateral comparisons with someone perceived as the same in a particular domain (e.g., work). Both downward and lateral comparisons often produce more positive consequences, such as enhancement in self-esteem and higher levels of body satisfaction (Fuller-Tyszkiewicz et al., 2019; Gibbons & Gerrard, 1989).

Social media stimulates comparisons with others because these platforms are primarily used to share visual imagery (Hendrickse et al., 2021; McKee et al., 2013). Therefore, these comparisons are often based on physical appearance, known as appearance comparisons (Fardouly et al., 2017; McKee et al., 2013). As social media users often post ‘perfect’ images, this results in people thinking their lives or appearance (i.e., of the people who share perfect pictures) are better than theirs (Brown & Tiggemann, 2016; Hudders et al., 2021). Consequently, this causes social media users to engage more quickly in upward comparisons than downward or lateral comparisons. Empirical research by Vogel et al. (2014) shows that social media users use upward comparisons more frequently than downward comparisons on

social media platforms. Additionally, this research found that exposure to social media content featuring individuals who are perceived as more attractive or successful (i.e., upward comparison) leads to lower self-esteem and self-evaluations compared to content featuring people who are perceived as less attractive or successful (i.e., downward comparison; Vogel et al., 2014).

Exposure to fitspiration content also leads to social comparisons (i.e., upward comparisons), as women can have an underlying feeling of inadequacy when engaging with fitfluencers' content as this content explicitly focuses on a fit, toned appearance (Raggatt et al., 2018; Robinson et al., 2017). In addition, research suggests that when women are confronted with their ideal appearance, they tend to experience higher levels of social comparison (Clayton et al., 2017; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015). For instance, Tiggemann and Zaccardo (2015) presented 130 young women with travel and fitspiration imagery (i.e., body imagery in their study). The findings of this study show that fitspiration images elicited higher levels of social comparison (i.e., upward comparisons) compared to travel images, resulting in lower self-esteem and more body dissatisfaction (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015). Thus, when women are presented with fitfluencers' ideal fit and toned appearance, they are likely to engage in higher levels of social comparisons (i.e., upward appearance comparisons; Fardouly et al., 2017; Festinger, 1954).

Based on the social comparison theory and findings of the studies described above, it is expected that fitfluencers' fitspiration videos on TikTok lead to higher levels of social comparison, as women are exposed to a fitfluencer's fit and muscular appearance in those videos. Consequently, it is predicted that fitfluencers' body videos on TikTok lead to more social comparison compared to fitfluencers' exercise videos since the focus of fitfluencers' body videos is on physical appearance (Robinson et al., 2017), resulting in more social comparisons (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015). Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H3a: Fitfluencers' fitspiration videos lead to higher levels of social comparison compared to fitfluencers' non-fitspiration videos.

H3b: Fitfluencers' body videos (compared to workout videos) on TikTok lead to more social comparison.

Social comparison process leading to wishful identification

The outcome of the upward social comparison process can initiate two distinctive processes, assimilation (i.e., similarity) and contrast (i.e., dissimilarity; Mussweiler, 2001, 2004). Assimilation refers to the outcome where people judge that their standing is similar to others (Mussweiler, 2001). Consequently, through the assimilation process, people adjust their self-evaluations, beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors to be more like the comparison agent (Mussweiler, 2001; Suls et al., 2002). For instance, an individual may engage in excessive exercise and dieting or start using more makeup as a form of assimilation due to social comparison, to conform their appearance to that of other users on social media. On the other hand, contrary to assimilation, contrast refers to the outcome where people indicate that their standing is dissimilar to others (Mussweiler, 2001). Thus, contrast is the process by which people adjust their self-perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors to be less like the comparison agent (Mussweiler, 2001; Suls et al., 2002).

These outcomes of the upward social comparison process are related to attainability (Knobloch-Westerwick & Romero, 2011). For instance, when women engage in upward social comparisons, the attainability of the presented attainment (e.g., obtaining an ideal body) influences whether it inspires or deflates the viewer (Buunk et al., 1990; Knobloch-Westerwick & Romero, 2011). If the presented attainment appears attainable, this will result in self-improvement and inspiration (i.e., assimilation; Knobloch-Westerwick & Romero, 2011). On the contrary, if the presented achievement appears unattainable, it will lead to self-deflation (i.e., contrast; Knobloch-Westerwick & Romero, 2011). Consequently, when people

compare themselves to others, they may develop a strong desire to emulate or be associated with the person they are comparing themselves to (Suls et al., 2002).

The psychological process through which people strongly desire to be like someone or become a specific person is known as wishful identification (Hoffner, 1996; Tolbert & Drogos, 2019). According to Hoffner & Buchanan (2005), this desire may cause adopting similar perspectives as that specific person (i.e., thus striving to be like that person). Cohen (2001) states that wishful identification goes beyond simply liking a specific person, as it refers to the psychological attachment that develops between a viewer and a character that results in the viewer imagining themselves as that specific person (Tolbert & Drogos, 2019). In addition, wishful identification could exhibit a desire to imitate a specific person or character, resulting in a strong bond with that person or character (i.e., parasocial relationships; Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005). Previous research on the effects of wishful identification focused on television characters (Bond & Drogos, 2014; Hoffner, 1996; Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005). For instance, according to empirical research by Bond & Drogos (2014), young adults who identified with the personalities from the reality TV series Jersey Shore were more likely to have permissive sexual attitudes than those who did not identify with the show's personalities.

Social media influencers are often seen as more similar than television celebrities, resulting in higher (wishful) identification levels with influencers (Hudders et al., 2021; Schouten et al., 2020). Previous research found that when people perceive an influencer as more authentic and similar (e.g., same gender, age, characteristics), they tend to compare themselves more with the influencer than when the influencer is perceived as dissimilar (e.g., another gender, older; Fardouly et al., 2017; Schouten et al., 2020). In addition, social media users tend to adopt the characteristics of characters (e.g., influencers) who match their ideal self-image, which leads them to adjust their perceptions and behaviors (Hu et al., 2020; Ye et

al., 2021). Therefore, it is likely that women experience wishful identification when they compare themselves to fitfluencers on TikTok.

Based on the assimilation effects of the social comparison process leading to wishful identification and the findings described above, this study predicts that comparing with idealized fitfluencers leads to wanting to be like them (Hu et al., 2020; Ye et al., 2021). Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

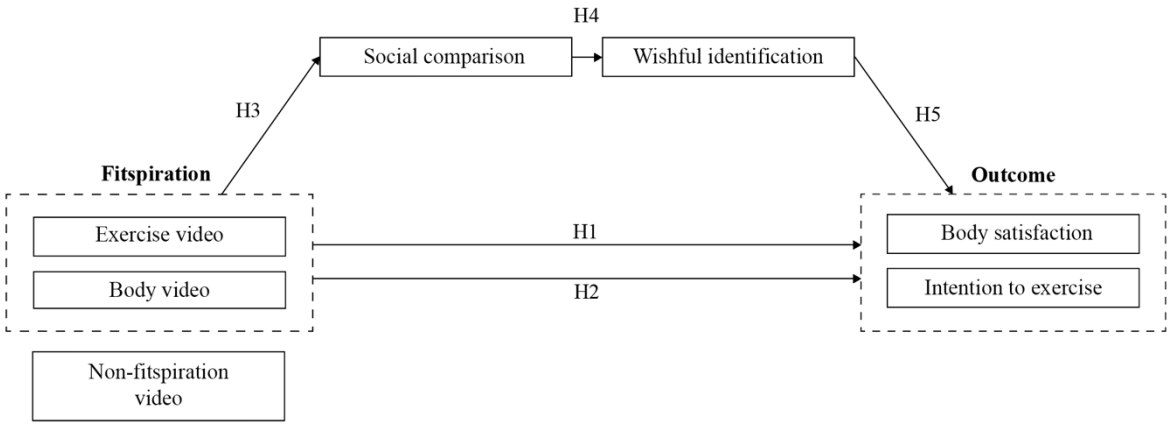
H4: Higher levels of social comparison with fitfluencers result in higher levels of wishful identification.

Previous research found that when women engage in more comparisons with ideal body imagery (e.g., fitfluencers' bodies), they adopt the characteristics of that person as they align with their desired self-image (Hu et al., 2020). However, this will result in lower body satisfaction because women doubt their appearance (Krcmar et al., 2008; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015). In addition, exposure to fitfluencers' fitspiration videos may be perceived as attainable and motivating (Knobloch-Westerwick & Romero, 2011; Sokolova & Perez, 2021). Thus, individuals may believe that by exercising and improving their physical appearance, they will become more like the fitfluencer they are attempting to imitate (Hu et al., 2020; Mussweiler, 2001). Based on this reasoning, it is expected that social comparison and wishful identification (serially) mediate the relationship between fitfluencers' content, body satisfaction, and intention to exercise, such that when both mechanisms are enhanced, this results in lower body satisfaction and higher intentions to exercise. Figure 1 presents the hypothesized conceptual model. The following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: The effect of fitfluencers' content on body satisfaction is serially mediated by social comparison and wishful identification, such that higher levels of social comparison and wishful identification lead to (H5a) lower body satisfaction and (H5b) higher intentions to exercise.

Figure 1

Hypothesized Conceptual Model



Method

Design

To examine the research questions, an online between-subjects experiment was conducted. The experiment contained three experimental conditions (content type: exercise video vs. body video vs. non-fitspiration video) to which the participants were randomly assigned. In addition, the dependent variables, intention to exercise and body satisfaction, were measured within subjects. Moreover, this experiment examined the mediating effects of social comparison and wishful identification (in serial).

Participants

An a priori power analysis using the G*Power program was conducted to determine the required number of participants for the experiment. This power analysis was run with a medium-sized effect $d = 0.50$ and a power of $\beta = 0.80$. The analysis revealed that a sample of 159 participants with three equal-sized groups ($n = 53$) was required.

In total, 204 participants completed the online experiment. However, 12 participants were excluded from this study, as they indicated they did not have a TikTok account. Additionally, nine participants identified themselves as men, and five participants fell outside

the age range of 16 and 24. Therefore, they were excluded from this study as well. The final sample consisted of 178 Dutch young females aged between 16 and 24 (M_{age} = 21.47, SD_{age} = 2.18).

Most participants (78.1%) exercised weekly (n = 139). Of the women who exercised weekly, 37 participants (26.6%) exercised only once a week, 62 participants (44.6%) exercised 2 to 3 times per week, and 37 participants (26.6%) exercised 4 to 5 times per week. Most participants had an HBO bachelor's degree (n = 49), followed by MBO secondary vocational education (n = 48). Besides, the average height of the participants was 169.74 cm (SD = 6.76), and the average weight was 65.10 kg (SD = 9.01). Consequently, the women's height and weight were used to determine the Body Mass Index (BMI), which had an average of 22.58 (SD = 2.81). Lastly, most participants used TikTok for 10 to 30 minutes (n = 48) or 30 to 60 minutes (n = 48) a day, whereas 34.3% of the participants used TikTok for more than 1 hour a day (n = 61).

Procedure

To conduct the experimental research and collect data from the participants, the online survey platform Qualtrics was used. The online experiment was carried out in Dutch and distributed between 21-11-2022 and 26-11-2022. Participants were recruited via convenience sampling using various social media platforms, such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

To begin the experiment, participants were asked to provide their informed consent to participate in this study. This informed consent contained an information letter explaining the study's research, length, and eligibility criteria. Furthermore, the informed consent contained information about confidentiality, the use of participants' data, and data storage. Additionally, participants were explained that participating in the experiment was entirely anonymous and voluntary and that participants could stop their participation at any time. The participants had

to give their permission by clicking the button ‘I consent to participate in this study’ before being able to continue with the research.

After accepting the informed consent, participants were asked whether they had a TikTok account. If their answer was no, they were directed to the end of the study. After this question, participants were asked about their demographics (i.e., age and gender). Participants outside the ages of 16 and 24 years, and participants who indicated they identified themselves as male, were also directed to the end of the study. After those two questions, other demographic questions were asked about their weight and height, current exercise behavior, and TikTok usage. Hereafter, the participants were shown instructions about the experiment. Subsequently, the participants were randomly assigned to one of the three conditions.

In all conditions, participants saw two TikTok videos from one female fitfluencer. After the exposure to the stimulus materials, participants answered statements and questions related to state social comparison, wishful identification, state body satisfaction, intention to exercise, and likeability towards the fitfluencer. Hereafter, the question: ‘What kind of TikTok videos from this fitfluencer did you just watch?’ was asked to perform a manipulation check. After completing all the experimental questions, participants were shown a debriefing. This debriefing informed the participants about the study’s purpose and manipulated conditions. In addition, participants were thanked for their participation and were asked not to share the information with others. The entire online experiment can be found in Appendix A (Dutch) and Appendix B (English).

Materials

The stimulus materials for this experiment were six videos taken from TikTok (two videos per condition). A female fitfluencer and TikTok videos were searched for based on several criteria. First, it was important that the fitfluencer was not Dutch and did not have a large following on TikTok since this may influence participants’ responses. To illustrate,

influencers who are familiar and with many followers are perceived as more appealing and likable (De Veirman et al., 2017), which might influence the effects of the type of content. Therefore, the materials did not include TikTok videos from mega-influencers (i.e., influencers with more than one million followers). Secondly, the fitfluencer chosen for the materials should have a large amount of fitspiration content and other types of content on her TikTok page (e.g., exercise workouts, progression videos, everyday vlogs). Finally, it was also crucial that the TikTok videos of the fitfluencer had the same look & feel or aesthetic (e.g., the same environment) to avoid confounding variables. In line with these criteria, TikTok videos from fitfluencer Brooke Böhning (@brookesworkout) were chosen. She is an American fitfluencer with almost 285 thousand followers on her TikTok account.

Regardless of the condition, each participant saw two TikTok videos from fitfluencer Brooke Böhning in the experiment. The exercise condition contained videos where the fitfluencer showed a fitness workout containing different exercises that can be done in the gym. The body condition contained videos where the fitfluencer explicitly showed her body, nothing else. Additionally, the non-fitspiration condition contained everyday situations videos where the fitfluencer shows imagery from her daily life, such as a daily vlog. All three conditions contained trending TikTok sounds. Besides, the fitspiration videos (i.e., exercise and body condition) contained the same environment (e.g., a gym) to create the same look and feel. Thus, the only difference between the conditions was the type of fitfluencers' content (i.e., the manipulation). Moreover, as TikTok features scrolling through a feed where consumers are exposed to different videos (Sharabati et al., 2022), showing several videos made the experiment more realistic than exposure to only one TikTok video. The videos preserved the TikTok environment to convey to the participants that they were viewing TikTok videos and no other short videos, for example, an Instagram reel. The stimulus materials can be seen in Appendix C.

Pre-test

Before conducting the experiment, a pre-test was conducted to examine whether all conditions were perceived in line with the manipulation and as enjoyable. This pre-test was conducted among 30 Dutch young women (M_{age} = 21.67, SD_{age} = 1.32) using a within-subject design. The participants were exposed to six TikTok videos from fitfluencer Brooke Böhning. For each video, participants were asked to rate this TikTok with the question: 'What kind of TikTok video from this fitfluencer did you just watch?', which could be answered on three Likert scales: workout video (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *totally*), body video (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *totally*), and everyday video (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *totally*). Thereafter, participants were asked to what extent they liked the TikTok video they just watched with the question, 'How much did you like that TikTok video?' which could be answered on a Likert scale (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *very much*). Lastly, the participants were asked about their familiarity with the fitfluencer. The pre-test can be found in Appendix D (Dutch) and Appendix E (English).

First, it was checked whether the videos aligned with the intended type of content. In general, the selected TikTok videos were in line with the manipulation (see Table 1 and Table 2). In addition, there were no significant differences between the two body videos (*Mdif* = -.03, $t(29) = -.21$, $p = .836$), the two exercise videos (*Mdif* = .03, $t(29) = 1.00$, $p = .326$) and the two non-fitspiration videos (*Mdif* = .07, $t(29) = 1.44$, $p = .161$). These results indicate that participants received the two videos per manipulation as the same type of content. Second, the results showed that workout videos from the fitfluencer were the most enjoyable (M = 3.87, SD = .87), followed by the everyday videos (M = 3.78, SD = .83), and body videos (M = 3.53, SD = .78). However, the differences between body videos and exercise videos (*Mdif* = -.33, $t(29) = -1.82$, $p = .079$), body videos and non-fitspiration videos (*Mdif* = -.25, $t(29) = -1.21$, $p = .237$), and exercise videos and non-fitspiration videos (*Mdif* = .08, $t(29) = .45$, $p = .657$) were not significant, indicating that each video in the pre-test was as equally enjoyable.

Lastly, the results showed that only one participant was familiar with the fitfluencer in the videos, suggesting that the fitfluencer is unknown to most Dutch young women. Based on these results, the stimulus materials were not adjusted.

Table 1

Paired Samples t-tests Pre-test Manipulation

	Comparison	*Mdif*	*t*(29)	*p (2-tailed)*
Video 1 Body video	Exercise video	3.37	-11.63	< .001
	Non-fitspiration video	3.64	23.41	< .001
Video 2 Exercise video	Body video	3.37	29.99	< .001
	Non-fitspiration video	3.77	40.93	< .001
Video 3 Non-fitspiration video	Exercise video	3.93	84.92	< .001
	Body video	3.87	37.07	< .001
Video 4 Body video	Exercise video	3.67	41.89	< .001
	Non-fitspiration video	3.73	45.46	< .001
Video 5 Exercise video	Body video	3.40	17.95	< .001
	Non-fitspiration video	3.83	55.93	< .001
Video 6 Non-fitspiration video	Exercise video	3.93	84.92	< .001
	Body video	3.70	43.48	< .001

Table 2

Means and St. Deviations Pre-test Manipulation

	Exercise video		Body video		Non-fitspiration video	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Video 1 Body	1.37	.96	**4.73**	**.79**	1.10	.40
Video 2 Exercise	**4.90**	**.40**	1.60	6.21	1.20	.48
Video 3 Non-fitspiration	1.07	.25	1.13	.57	**5.00**	**.00**
Video 4 Body	1.10	.31	**4.77**	**.43**	1.03	.18
Video 5 Exercise	**4.93**	**.25**	1.53	.86	1.10	.31
Video 6 Non-fitspiration	1.00	.00	1.23	.43	**4.93**	**.25**

Note. The highest scores are presented in **boldface.**

Measures

Body Satisfaction

State body satisfaction was measured based on the Body Appreciation Scale-2 (BAS-2) from Tylka & Wood-Barcalow (2015). In this study, the Dutch translations of this scale by Alleva et al. (2016) were used. Ten items were adjusted to fit the context of the study, whereas an example of an item was, 'Right now, I have a positive attitude toward my body.' The items were measured on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*), and the scale had excellent reliability ($\alpha = .93$). For the analyses, the mean scores of these items were used to examine participants' body satisfaction, with higher scores indicating higher levels of body satisfaction.

Intention to Exercise

Intention to exercise was measured using three items based on the study by Gomes et al. (2017). This scale determines whether participants intend to exercise in a specific setting (e.g., a gym), at a particular frequency (e.g., three times per week), and for a specific duration (e.g., next three months; Gomes et al., 2017). An example of an item was, 'I intend to exercise at least three times per week,' which was measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). The scale had good reliability (α = .80), and the mean scores of all items were used to measure the participants' intention to exercise, whereas higher scores represent a greater intention to exercise.

Social Comparison

Social comparison was measured using three items based on the State Appearance Comparison Scale by Tiggemann & McGill (2004) and were adjusted to fit the context of the study. This scale examines how much the participants thought about their appearance or compared their looks with the fitfluencer when viewing the TikTok videos. An example of an item was 'I think about my appearance while watching these TikTok videos.' The items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*), and the scale had excellent reliability (α = .91). For the analyses, the mean scores of the three items were used to examine participants' state social comparison, whereas higher scores represent higher levels of state social comparison.

Wishful Identification

Wishful identification was measured using four items adjusted from the study of Schouten et al. (2020), who based their items on Hoffner & Buchanan (2005). An example of an item was, 'I want to be like this fitfluencer', which was measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). The scale had good reliability (α = .84), and the scores for all items were averaged to examine participants' wishful identification, whereas

higher scores represent higher levels of wishful identification.

Likeability

To measure the likeability of the fitfluencer, nine items from the Reysen Likeability Scale were used (Reysen, 2005). This scale assessed likeability based on connection, relationships, physical attractiveness, and similarity (Reysen, 2005). An example of an item was, 'I would like to be friends with this person.' The items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*), and the scale had good reliability (α = .82). The mean scores of all items were used to measure participant's likeability of the fitfluencer, which was added as control variable in this study.

Demographic questions

Several demographic questions were asked to get an overview of the participants and to ensure that only suitable participants participated in the experiment. Participants were asked about their age, gender, height, weight, level of education, current exercise behavior, and TikTok use. The participant's height and weight were measured to calculate their Body Mass Index (BMI). BMI was calculated by the following formula: weight (in kg) / [height (m)]2. BMI and current exercise behavior were also added as control variables, as this could influence the effects of the type of content.

Data analysis plan

After collecting data using the Qualtrics program, the data of the 204 participants were converted to SPSS 27. Hereafter, the dataset was cleaned up (e.g., checking and deleting participants who fell outside the study's criteria). Subsequently, the dataset was structured and recoded to analyze the reliability of the different variables in this study. Next, the mean scores for body satisfaction, intention to exercise, social comparison, wishful identification, and likeability were calculated. After that, the manipulation checks and descriptives were examined, and the corresponding analyses were conducted.

Starting, the three conditions on both dependent variables were compared using a One-Way ANOVA. The corresponding assumptions, such as normality and homogeneity of variance, were checked before running the analysis. The first One-Way ANOVA was performed with the independent variable type of content and dependent variable body satisfaction. The second One-Way ANOVA was conducted with the independent variable type of content and dependent variable intention to exercise.

Next, to investigate whether the influence of fitfluencers' content on body satisfaction and intention to exercise can be explained by social comparison and wishful identification (see Figure 1), three serial mediation analyses (model 6) were performed using Hayes' PROCESS macro v4.0. Before conducting the analyses, multiple assumptions, such as normality, heteroscedasticity, linearity, and outliers, were checked. The first analysis examined the effects of independent variable type of content on dependent variable body satisfaction, with social comparison and wishful identification inserted as mediators. The second analysis examined the effects of independent variable type of content on dependent variable intention to exercise, inserting the same two mediators. Both analyses compared the exercise and body conditions to the non-fitspiration condition (coding system: indicator). However, a last additional mediation analysis compared the exercise and body condition (coding system: sequential), inserting the same variables and mediators. Additionally, current exercise behavior, BMI, and likeability of the fitfluencer were added in all three analyses as covariates.

Results

Manipulation check

A manipulation check using a One-Way ANOVA was conducted to determine whether participants perceived the fitfluencers' type of content as intended. This analysis showed that participants perceived exercise videos indeed as exercise videos (M = 4.88, SD =

.33), and not as body videos (M = 1.64, SD = .83) or non-fitspiration videos (M = 1.16, SD = .37). The differences between exercise videos and body videos ($Mdif$ = 3.24, 95% CI [3.71, 3.93], $p < .001$), and workout videos and non-fitspiration videos ($Mdif$ = 3.72, 95% CI [3.58, 3.84], $p < .001$) were both significant. In addition, the body videos were indeed perceived as body videos (M = 4.86, SD = .39), and not as exercise videos (M = 1.05, SD = .30) or non-fitspiration videos (M = 1.32, SD = .34). The difference between body videos and exercise videos ($Mdif$ = 3.81, 95% CI [2.98, 3.45], $p < .001$), and body videos and non-fitspiration videos ($Mdif$ = 3.54, 95% CI [3.22, 3.58], $p < .001$) were also both significant. The same results were found for the non-fitspiration condition, as these types of videos were perceived as intended (M = 4.87, SD = .34), and not as exercise videos (M = 1.16, SD = .42) or body videos (M = 1.46, SD = .62). Besides, there were significant differences between non-fitspiration videos and exercise videos ($Mdif$ = 3.71, 95% CI [3.57, 3.83], $p < .001$), and non-fitspiration videos and body videos ($Mdif$ = 3.41, 95% CI [3.35, 3.72], $p < .001$). To conclude, the participants perceived all three conditions as intended.

Descriptive analyses

Prior to conducting the Hayes analyses, a Pearson's correlation analysis was performed. The descriptives and Pearson's correlation coefficients can be seen in Table 3. The coefficients show that social comparison is significantly positively related to wishful identification (r = .43, $p < .001$), representing a moderate correlation. Body satisfaction is negatively related to both social comparison (r = -.22, p = .003) and wishful identification (r = -.23, p = .002), both of which represent a small correlation. Lastly, intention to exercise is positively related to wishful identification (r = .18, p = .016) and social comparison (r = .24, p = .002), which also represented a small correlation.

Table 3

Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson's Correlation Coefficients (N = 178).

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3
1. Social Comparison	3.93	1.75			
2. Wishful Identification	3.72	1.38	.425**		
3. Body Satisfaction	4.30	1.24	-.222**	-.231**	
4. Intention to Exercise	5.32	1.40	.235**	.181*	.111

Note. ** $p < .01$ (2-tailed); * $p < .05$ (2-tailed).

The effect of fitfluencers' content on body satisfaction and intention to exercise

The descriptive statistics for body satisfaction and intention to exercise across the conditions can be seen in Table 4. The first hypothesis proposed that exposure to fitfluencers' body videos leads to lower levels of body satisfaction compared to workout videos and non-fitspiration videos. Before running the analysis, the corresponding assumptions were checked. The data was normally distributed for all conditions, as no condition fell outside the range of -1.96 to 1.96. In addition, as Levene's Test revealed no significance, the assumption of homogeneity is also met. The ANOVA showed a significant effect of fitfluencers' content on body satisfaction, $F(2, 175) = 35.38$, $p < .001$, indicating that the type of fitfluencers' content does influence young women's body satisfaction. Post hoc comparisons revealed a significant difference between body videos and workout videos (*Mdif* = -1.49, 95% CI [-1.95, -1.03], $p < .001$), and between body videos and non-fitspiration videos (*Mdif* = -1.32, 95% CI [-1.77, -.87], $p < .001$). No significant difference between the exercise videos and non-fitspiration videos was found (*Mdif* = -.17, 95% CI [-.62, .29], $p = .665$). Thus, the data support H1, indicating that exposure to fitfluencers' body videos indeed lead to lower body satisfaction compared to exposure to exercise videos or non-fitspiration videos.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics across Conditions for the Dependent Variables

Condition	Body satisfaction		Intention to exercise	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Exercise (*n* = 58)	4.85	1.02	5.80	.12
Body (*n* = 59)	3.36	1.00	5.34	.18
Non-fitspiration (control) (*n* = 63)	4.68	1.12	4.83	.21

Another One-Way ANOVA was performed to test the second hypothesis, which assumes that exposure to fitfluencers' exercise videos leads to higher levels of intention to exercise compared to body videos and non-fitspiration videos. Assumption checks revealed that data was not normally distributed for the workout condition (*Zskewness* = -2.64, *Zkurtosis* = 2.53). In addition, Levene's Test showed significance ($F(2, 175) = 14.43$, $p < .001$), indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variance is not met. Following these assumption violations, bootstrapping was performed. The ANOVA showed a significant effect of fitfluencers' content on intention to exercise, $F(2, 175) = 7.57$, $p < .001$, indicating that the type of fitfluencers' content does influence young women's intention to exercise. Post hoc comparisons revealed no significant difference between exercise videos and body videos (*Mdif* = .46, 95% BCa CI [-.03, .93], $p = .159$), and body videos and non-fitspiration videos (*Mdif* = .50, 95% BCa CI [-.08, 1.09], $p = .106$). However, the analysis did reveal a significant difference between the exercise videos and the non-fitspiration videos (*Mdif* = .93, 95% BCa CI [.49, 1.45], $p < .001$). Based on these results, H2 is partially supported, indicating that exposure to fitfluencers' exercise videos resulted in higher intentions to exercise compared to the control condition, but not compared to the body condition.

The effects of fitfluencers' content on social comparison and wishful identification

The third hypothesis predicted that fitfluencers' fitspiration videos lead to higher levels of social comparison compared to fitfluencers' non-fitspiration videos, whereas body videos lead to more social comparison compared to workout videos. The analyses revealed a significant effect on social comparison when exercise videos were compared to non-fitspiration videos ($b = 2.54$, $SE = .22$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [2.11, 2.98]), and when body videos were compared to non-fitspiration videos ($b = 2.85$, $SE = .22$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [2.41, 3.28]). Exposure to non-fitspiration videos lead to the lowest level of social comparison ($M = 2.17$, $SD = .11$), with exposure to fitfluencers' body videos ($M = 5.01$, $SD = .18$) and exercise videos ($M = 4.70$, $SD = .17$) leading to higher levels of social comparison. However, when exercise videos and body videos were compared in the additional mediation analysis, the model showed no significant effect on social comparison ($b = .30$, $SE = .22$, $p = .181$, 95% CI [-.14, .74]), indicating that there is no significant difference between exercise and body videos on social comparison. Thus, while H3A is supported, H3B is not supported, suggesting that exposure to fitfluencers' fitspiration videos (compared to non-fitspiration videos) leads to higher levels of social comparison. However, body videos do not lead to more social comparison compared to exercise videos.

Moreover, the fourth hypothesis predicted that higher levels of social comparison lead to higher levels of wishful identification. The models showed a significant effect of social comparison on wishful identification ($b = .41$, $SE = .07$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.26, .55]). Therefore, H4 is supported, indicating that when respondents reported a high level of social comparison, they also were more likely to score high on wishful identification. Another significant effect was found of the covariate likeability on wishful identification ($b = .58$, $SE = .10$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.37, .78]). Thus, women who scored high on likeability, were also more likely to score high on wishful identification.

The effects of social comparison and wishful identification on body satisfaction

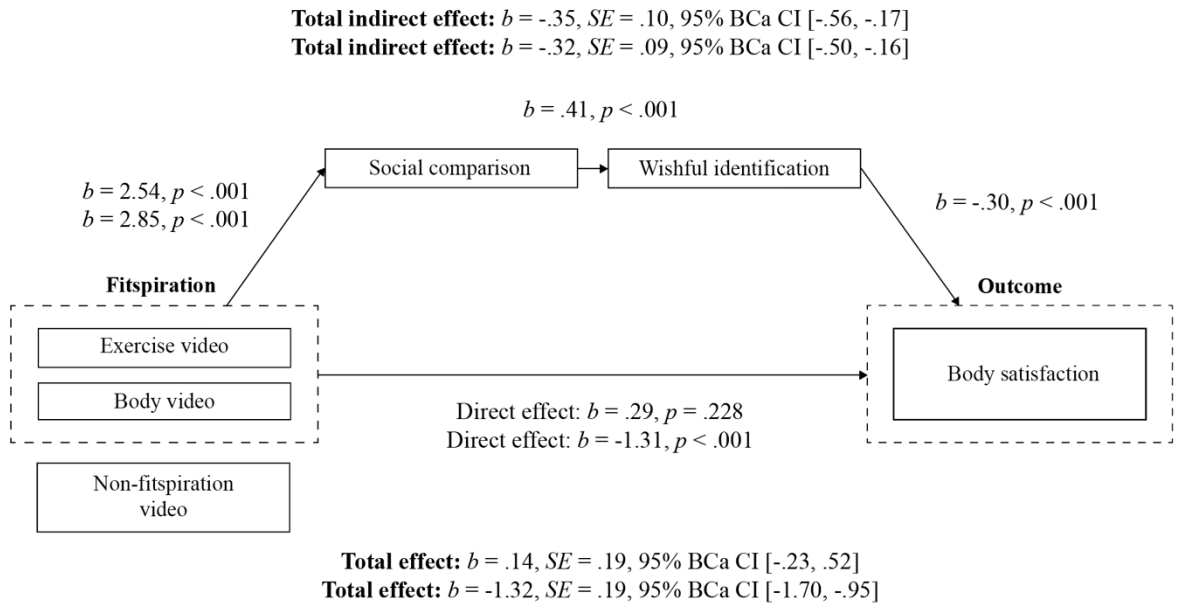
The assumptions for dependent variable body satisfaction were met (see Appendix F). The overall serial mediation model with the independent variable fitfluencers' content, and mediators' social comparison and wishful identification to predict the dependent variable body satisfaction was an improvement over the null model as it shows significance (R_2 = .33, $F(5, 172)$, $p < .001$). The model showed a significant effect of wishful identification on body satisfaction (b = -.30, SE = .06, $p < .001$, 95% BCa CI [-.43, -.18]), indicating that higher levels of wishful identification lead to lower levels of body satisfaction. In addition, a significant effect of covariate BMI on body satisfaction was found (b = -.09, SE = .03, p = .005, 95% BCa CI [-.15, -.04]). Thus, women who have higher BMI also tend to have lower body satisfaction.

The fifth hypothesis predicted that social comparison and wishful identification serially mediate the relationship between fitfluencers' content and body satisfaction, such that higher levels of social comparison and wishful identification lead to lower body satisfaction. There was no total effect on body satisfaction when exercise videos were compared to non-fitspiration videos (b = .14, SE = .19, p = .454, 95% BCa CI [-.23, .52]). However, a significant total effect was found when body videos were compared to non-fitspiration videos (b = -1.32, SE = .19, $p < .001$, 95% BCa CI [-1.70, -.95]). In addition, there was a significant direct effect when body videos were compared to non-fitspiration videos (b = -1.31, SE = .25, $p < .001$, 95% BCa CI [-1.81, -.81]), but not when exercise videos were compared to non-fitspiration videos (b = .29, SE = .24, p = .228, 95% BCa CI [-.18, .76]). In addition, the relationship between fitfluencers' content and body satisfaction can be indirectly explained by social comparison and wishful identification when exercise videos were compared to non-fitspiration videos (b = -.35, SE = .10, 95% BCa CI [-.56, -.17]), and when body videos were compared to non-fitspiration videos (b = -.32, SE = .09, 95% BCa CI [-.50, -.16]). The

confidence intervals for the mediators did not cross zero, indicating that the indirect effects are significant. Therefore, H5a is supported, as social comparison and wishful identification do mediate the relationship between fitfluencers' content and body satisfaction, and higher levels of wishful identification leads to lower body satisfaction. However, this represents a partial mediation, as the direct effects are still significant. The relationship is visually presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Serial Mediation Model (model 6) of Body Satisfaction with the Standardized Coefficients



The effects of social comparison and wishful identification on intention to exercise

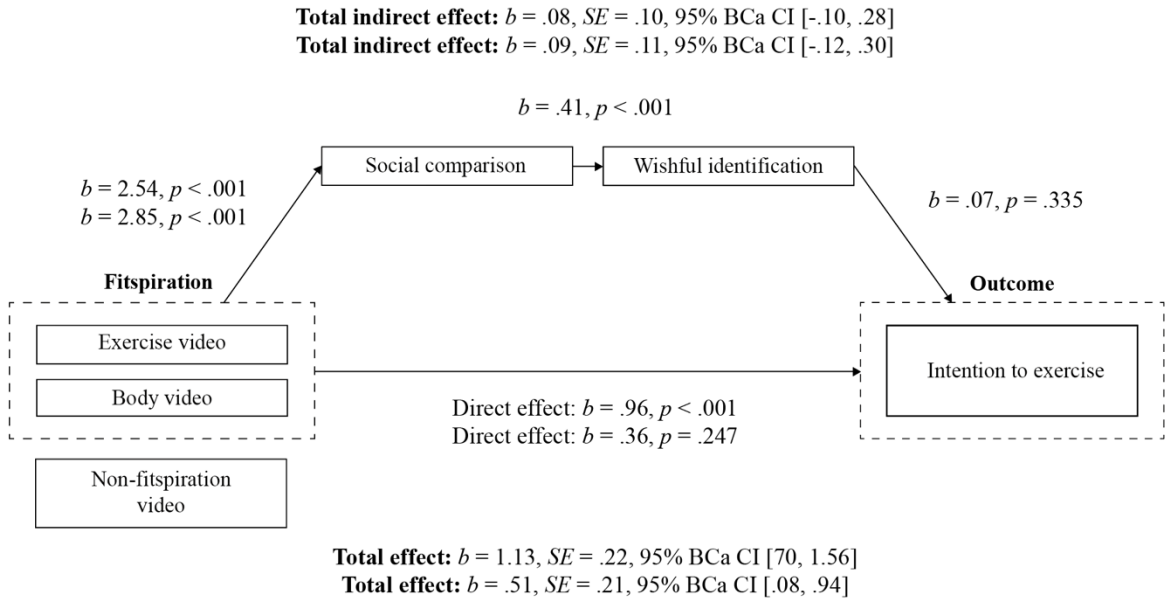
Since the assumption of normality for dependent variable intention to exercise was violated (see Appendix G), this is not a problem because the mediation analysis will be bootstrapped. The overall serial mediation model with the independent variable fitfluencers' content and mediators' social comparison, wishful identification to predict the dependent variable intention to exercise was an improvement over the null model as it shows

significance (R_2 = .31, F(5, 172), p < .001). The model showed no significant effect of wishful identification on intention to exercise (b = .07, SE = .08, p = .335, 95% BCa CI [-.10, .25]), indicating that higher levels of wishful identification do not lead to higher intentions to exercise. In addition, the model also showed a significant effect of covariate current exercise behavior on intention to exercise (b = .57, SE = .08, p < .001, 95% BCa CI [.37, .76]), indicating that women who exercised more frequently also had higher intentions to exercise.

The fifth hypothesis also predicted that social comparison and wishful identification mediates the relationship between fitfluencers' content and intention to exercise, such that higher levels of social comparison and wishful identification lead to higher intentions to exercise. There was a significant total effect on intention to exercise when exercise videos were compared to non-fitspiration videos (b = 1.13, SE = .22, p < .001, 95% BCa CI [.70, 1.56]), and when body videos were compared to non-fitspiration videos (b = .51, SE = .21, p = .020, 95% BCa CI [.08, .94]). In addition, there was a significant direct effect when exercise videos were compared to non-fitspiration videos (b = .96, SE = .29, p = .001, 95% BCa CI [.38, 1.54]), but not when body videos were compared to non-fitspiration videos (b = .36, SE = .31, p = .247, 95% BCa CI [-.25, .97]). However, the relationship between fitfluencers' content and intention to exercise is not indirectly explained by social comparison and wishful identification when exercise videos were compared to non-fitspiration videos (b = .08, SE = .10, 95% BCa CI [-.10, .28]), and when body videos were compared to non-fitspiration videos (b = .09 SE = .11, 95% BCa CI [-.12, .30]). The confidence intervals for the mediators crossed zero, indicating that the indirect effects are not significant. Thus, H5b is not supported, as social comparison and wishful identification do not mediate the relationship between fitfluencers' content and intention to exercise, and higher levels of wishful identification do not lead to higher intentions to exercise. This relationship can be seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Serial Mediation Model (model 6) of Intention to Exercise with the Standardized Coefficients



Discussion

This study examined the effect of fitfluencers' content on TikTok (exercise video vs. body video vs. non-fitspiration video) on body satisfaction and intention to exercise among Dutch young women through an online experiment. In addition, this research investigated the extent to which social comparison and wishful identification (serially) mediate these relationships.

First, the results of the current study indicate that exposure to fitfluencers' body videos leads to lower body satisfaction compared to fitfluencers' exercise and non-fitspiration videos. The self-discrepancy theory can explain this finding because fitfluencers' body videos emphasize their physical appearance (Robinson et al., 2017). This characteristic is essential to women's actual and ideal self-presentations (Higgins, 1987). As such, when women are exposed to those body videos, actual-ideal discrepancies may be more significant, as their actual appearance might differ from their ideal appearance (i.e., fitfluencer's body), resulting

in lower body satisfaction. The results of this study replicated the findings of Tiggemann & Zaccardo (2015), who found that when young women were exposed to fitspiration content, with a focus on body imagery that often expresses athletic and muscular bodies, it led to decreased body satisfaction. As most studies mentioned focused on fitspiration imagery on Instagram, the current study's findings have shown that this effect is similar to fitspiration imagery on TikTok.

Second, this study found that fitfluencers' content significantly affects young women's intention to exercise, as respondents were more likely to report a higher intention to exercise after being exposed to fitspiration content. However, contrary to the expectations, both fitfluencers' exercise and body videos led to higher intentions to exercise. In contrast to previous studies focusing on the negative effects of fitspiration content (Prichard et al., 2020; Robinson et al., 2017), this finding may be explained by the fact that women might feel motivated and determined to engage in exercise activities to change their ideal body to strong and healthy when exposed to fitfluencers' bodies (Raggatt et al., 2018). Additionally, as the fitfluencer in the TikTok videos was not exceedingly thin, this may also enhance physical activity outcomes (Wood & Pila, 2022). However, it is important to note that both types of fitspiration videos result in higher intentions to exercise, but that actual behavior is not measured. Future studies could focus on whether this behavior is performed by measuring actual exercise behavior using, for instance, a smartwatch.

Furthermore, the results of this study also showed that fitfluencers' exercise and body videos, compared to the control condition, led to higher levels of social comparison. This finding met the expectations of this study, as previous research found that exposure to fitspiration content leads to higher levels of social comparison (i.e., upward comparisons; Tiggemann & McGill, 2004; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015). However, there was no difference in social comparison between fitfluencers' workout and body videos, which could

be explained to some extent by the (self-)objectification theory (Prichard et al., 2018). The objectification theory illustrates how women are (sexually) objectified in society (i.e., viewing women as objects; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Exposure to appearance-based imagery on social media is often associated with objectifying women as objects, therefore objectifying themselves (i.e., self-objectification; Vangeel et al., 2018). With self-objectification, girls and women objectify themselves with an emphasis on appearance and less on competence and function (Daniels et al., 2020). Thus, when women compare themselves to the fitfluencer in the TikTok videos (i.e., social comparison), it is of no importance what the fitfluencer shows in those videos (e.g., her body or a workout) as the fitfluencer is still presented as an object. Therefore, women exposed to this content are more likely to objectify themselves (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Fardouly et al., 2017; Daniels et al., 2020).

One of the key findings of this study was that social comparison significantly impacts wishful identification. This finding entails that when women engage more in social comparisons to fitfluencers, this also leads to an increased desire and imagining themselves as that fitfluencer. The assimilation effects of the social comparison process (i.e., the process where individuals adjust their self-evaluations and perceptions to be like others) correspond to this result and could be explained by the fact that young women want to be like the comparison agent (i.e., the fitfluencer; Mussweiler, 2001).

Furthermore, social comparison and wishful identification were expected to serially mediate the relationship between fitfluencers' content and body satisfaction, in which higher levels of wishful identification would lead to lower body satisfaction. The results showed that higher levels of wishful identification indeed led to lower body satisfaction. However, a partial mediation was found for the relationship between fitfluencers' content and body satisfaction, indicating that social comparison and wishful identification do not fully explain the relationship between fitfluencers' content and body satisfaction. An additional reason for

this partial relationship could again be found in the self-objectification theory (Prichard et al., 2018). Fitfluencers often post objectifying content and therefore promote unrealistic appearance standards, which could result in feelings of inadequacy, leading to lower body satisfaction (Cataldo et al., 2021; Deighton-Smith & Bell, 2018). Future research may investigate whether self-objectification acts as a mediator in the effect of fitfluencers' content on TikTok, in addition to the serial mediation via social comparison and wishful identification.

Lastly, contrary to the expectations, the results revealed that social comparisons and wishful identification do not mediate the relationship between fitfluencers' content and intention to exercise. Additionally, the results showed that wishful identification does not affect young women's intention to exercise. A possible explanation for this might be that social comparison and wishful identification processes primarily lead to changes in self-evaluation (i.e., body satisfaction) while changing the extent to which one is inspired to model the behavior of the fitfluencer (i.e., exercising; Bandura, 1977; Mussweiler et al., 2004). However, future research could further investigate these theoretical explanations by integrating the social learning theory (Bandura, 1977). According to this theory, individuals can acquire new behaviors and attitudes by observing and copying others (Bandura, 1977).

Implications

The current study adds to the existing literature on fitspiration's positive and negative effects on social media, leading to several theoretical implications. First, this study provides insights into the effects of specific fitspiration content types, as most prior studies did not take into account the differences within types of fitspiration content and their effect on body satisfaction and exercise behavior (see, for instance, Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015). This study revealed that fitfluencers' exercise and body imagery on TikTok led to higher intentions to exercise, but fitfluencers' body imagery on TikTok led to lower body satisfaction. Second,

this study provides insights into the relationship between social comparison and wishful identification, thus contributing to the literature on social comparison process outcomes (i.e., upward comparisons). Specifically, this study confirmed that social comparison impacts upon wishful identification. This finding may help us understand how social comparison outcomes leading to the effects of wishful identification operate in terms of self-evaluation (Mussweiler et al., 2004). More specially, when social comparison and wishful identification are enhanced (i.e., more self-evaluation), this results in lower body satisfaction. Finally, while social comparison and wishful identification lead to more self-evaluation, the findings indicate that this is not the same for inspiration (i.e., exercising). Theoretically, this suggests that the mechanisms through which social comparison and wishful identification impact self-evaluation and inspiration may differ.

The findings of this study lead to several practical implications as well. The primary practical implication concerns fitfluencers sharing fitspiration content on TikTok. This study showed that young women's intention to exercise was equal when exposed to fitfluencers' exercise and body videos. However, fitfluencers' body videos lead to lower body satisfaction among young women than their exercise videos. Therefore, it is essential for fitfluencers to mainly share exercise videos on their TikTok pages to motivate women to exercise more frequently without negatively affecting their emotional well-being. Another practical implication is that health and fitness brands could benefit from these findings. Health and fitness brands often collaborate with fitfluencers to promote products and encourage healthy behaviors among individuals (Sokolova & Perez, 2021). Therefore, those brands can motivate their followers to exercise more often by sharing fitness workouts with fitfluencers on their social media pages or campaigns. In addition, collaborating with fitfluencers could improve brand perceptions toward health and fitness products (Gautam & Jaitly, 2021; Schouten et al., 2020). Finally, policymakers should prioritize initiatives with fitfluencers to tackle

overweight among young adults (CBS, 2022). Within this collaboration, they should specifically promote exercise imagery (e.g., several workouts and exercises).

Limitations and future research

The main strength of the current study was its experimental design, as this allowed to determine causality between fitfluencers' type of content on TikTok, body satisfaction, and intention to exercise among Dutch young women could be determined. Despite this strength, however, this study had several limitations. First, to maintain the ecological validity of this study, the fitfluencers' videos were presented in a TikTok-like environment, including the likes and captions it had on TikTok. As such, those differences between likes and captions might confound this study's results. Future researchers might consider including the framing of captions and messages within the TikTok videos, as message framing influences whether individuals see fitspiration as inspiring for health or physical appearance (Aubrey, 2010).

Second, this study relies on short-term exposure to fitfluencers' content on TikTok. A future study could assess the long-term effects of exposure to fitfluencers' content on TikTok through a longitudinal design. In this regard, focusing especially on wishful identification would be highly relevant since wishful identification can result in a strong long-term bond with that specific person (i.e., parasocial relationships; Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005). Previous research suggests that parasocial relationships with influencers influence one's well-being (Hoffner & Bond, 2022). Thus, a longitudinal study investigating wishful identification and parasocial relationships after exposure to fitfluencers' fitspiration content would be an interesting next step for future research.

Third, to measure wishful identification accurately, this study focused on only one female fitfluencer. This fitfluencer had an average clothing size (size M). However, there may also be differences between fitfluencers on TikTok. For instance, fitfluencers who are exceedingly thin and have a small clothing size (size S) and fitfluencers who have larger

clothing sizes (size L; Mulgrew et al., 2018). Future studies could focus on the effects of fitfluencers with different clothing sizes on TikTok to see how this affects young women's body satisfaction and intention to exercise.

Lastly, as the current study only investigated this relationship among Dutch young women, the outcomes of this study are only applicable to this target group. Therefore, although this was a well-supported decision, it might be interesting for future research to investigate these effects among other target groups for fitfluencers on TikTok. For instance, several researchers claim that men are understudied in the relationship between fitspiration, body constructs, and exercise behavior (Fatt et al., 2019; Peng et al., 2019). Therefore, conducting the same study to examine the effects of fitfluencers' content among different target groups would be interesting.

Conclusion

Despite fitfluencers' intention to encourage social media users to exercise, research has shown that exposure to fitspiration content can negatively impact users' mental well-being, particularly regarding body satisfaction. This study aimed to investigate how to promote healthy exercise intentions without causing these negative effects. The findings show that when young women are exposed to fitfluencers' exercise videos, this leads to higher intentions to exercise without negatively impacting their body satisfaction. Thus, this study implies that the positive effects of exposure to fitspiration are still possible. In addition, this study suggests that social comparison significantly affects wishful identification, which mediates the relationship between fitfluencers' content and body satisfaction. However, this was not the case for the relationship between fitfluencers' content and intention to exercise. Overall, this study reveals that fitfluencers can be a valuable tool to stimulate people to exercise, without negatively affecting their body satisfaction, if their content focuses on workouts and exercises.

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Appendix A

Online experiment Dutch

Informed consent

Hey, bedankt voor je interesse en deelname in dit onderzoek!

Met dit onderzoek wil ik meer inzicht verkrijgen in **de invloed van fitfluencers op TikTok op het welzijn van Nederlandse jonge vrouwen**. Fitfluencers (ook wel fitness influencers) zijn een type social media influencers die zich richten op het delen van gezondheids- en fitness gerelateerde content, waardoor ze een gezonde levensstijl willen promoten.

In dit onderzoek zal je TikTok video's van een vrouwelijke fitfluencer bekijken waarna je verschillende vragen zal beantwoorden. Voordat je de TikTok video's te zien krijgt, zullen er eerst demografische, persoonlijke en social media gerelateerde vragen worden gesteld.

Vandaag de dag is er heel weinig onderzoek gedaan naar de psychologische en fysieke effecten van het gebruik van TikTok. De resultaten van dit onderzoek zullen daarom een bijdrage leveren aan nieuwe kennis over TikTok gebruik onder Nederlands jonge vrouwen en over de effecten die fitfluencers mogelijk hebben op deze doelgroep.

Heb jij een TikTok account, identificeer jij je als vrouw en ben je tussen de 16 en 24 jaar? Dan kom je in aanmerking voor deelname aan dit onderzoek. Het maakt verder niet uit of je een fitfluencer volgt op TikTok. Het onderzoek zal ongeveer 5 tot 10 minuten duren en kan het beste op een smartphone of laptop worden uitgevoerd.

Nogmaals bedankt, ik waardeer je tijd en input enorm. Veel plezier en succes tijdens het onderzoek!

Voordat je met het onderzoek begint, wil ik vragen onderstaande informatie goed door te lezen.

Er zijn geen risico's verbonden aan deelname aan dit onderzoek. Alle dataverzameling is in overeenstemming met de AVG (Algemene Verordening Gegevensbescherming) regels. Daarnaast heeft Tilburg School of Humanities and Digital Sciences akkoord gegeven om dit onderzoek uit te voeren. Je gegevens en antwoorden zullen volledig anoniem worden verwerkt en vertrouwelijk worden behandeld. Ook kunnen deze gegevens nooit aan jouw identiteit worden gekoppeld. De geanonimiseerde data worden 10 jaar bewaard op een beveiligde server voor alleen onderzoeksdoeleinden. Na deze periode wordt alle data omtrent dit onderzoek gewist.

Daarnaast is je deelname aan dit onderzoek geheel vrijwillig. Je hebt het recht om je tijdens het onderzoek ten alle tijden terug te trekken zonder verdere gevolgen en/of uitleg. Ik wil je daarnaast vragen om de tijd te nemen om de vragen te beantwoorden. Ik ben vooral benieuwd naar jouw gedrag en meningen, er zijn dus geen goede of foute antwoorden, vul vooral in wat jezelf denkt.

Bij vragen of onduidelijkheden over het onderzoek, kan je contact opnemen met Manon van Drimmelen via het volgende e-mailadres: m.vandrimmelen@tilburguniversity.edu

Door op onderstaande knop te klikken, bevestig je:

- dat je de bovenstaande informatie goed hebt doorgelezen;
- dat je 16 jaar of ouder bent;
- dat je bewust bent dat je deelname geheel vrijwillig is en je op elk moment het onderzoek kan verlaten om welke reden dan ook;
- dat je geanonimiseerde data 10 jaar wordt opgeslagen en kan worden gebruikt door andere onderzoekers of voor vervolgonderzoeken.

Geef je toestemming om deel te nemen aan dit onderzoek?

- ✓ Ja, ik geef toestemming voor deelname aan dit onderzoek
- ✓ Nee, ik geef geen toestemming voor deelname aan dit onderzoek

---

Controle vraag

Allereerst wil ik graag weten of jij wel eens op TikTok zit.

- Heb je een TikTok account?
    - Ja
    - Nee (als dit antwoord is geselecteerd, wordt de deelnemer doorgelinkt naar het einde van het experiment)

Demografische vragen

Ik wil je daarnaast ook graag wat beter leren kennen. Deze onderstaande vragen gaan voornamelijk over jezelf (bijvoorbeeld je leeftijd en opleidingsniveau), over je sportgedrag, maar ook over je TikTok gebruik.

- Wat is je leeftijd? (in jaren) _____

    - (als het antwoord van de participant buiten 16 en 24 jaar ligt, wordt de participant doorgelinkt naar het einde van het experiment)

- Met welk geslacht identificeer jij jezelf?
    - Vrouw
    - Man (als dit antwoord is geselecteerd, wordt de deelnemer doorgelinkt naar het einde van het experiment)
    - Anders, namelijk: _____
    - Zeg ik liever niet

- Wat is je lengte? (in cm) _____

- Wat is je gewicht? (in kg) _____

- Wat is je hoogste opleiding die je momenteel volgt of hebt afgerond?
    - Basisschool
    - Middelbare school
    - MBO
    - HBO, bachelor
    - HBO, master
    - Universiteit, bachelor
    - Universiteit, master
    - PhD of hoger
    - Anders, namelijk: _____

- Hoe vaak sport je in de week? (gemiddeld)
    - Niet
    - Eén keer per week
    - 2 tot 3 keer per week
    - 4 tot 5 keer per week
    - 6 keer of meer per week

- Hoeveel tijd besteed je dagelijks aan TikTok? (gemiddeld)
    - Minder dan 10 minuten
    - 10 tot 30 minuten
    - 30 tot 60 minuten
    - 1 tot 2 uur
    - 2 tot 3 uur
    - Meer dan 3 uur

Instructie

Beeld je nu in dat je aan het scrollen bent op **TikTok**, waarbij je de volgende video's van een **fitfluencer** tegenkomt. Bekijk de TikTok video's hieronder goed voordat je doorgaat naar de volgende pagina.

Doe je dit onderzoek op je smartphone, dan is het belangrijk om op de video/play button te klikken om de gehele video goed te kunnen zien. Let op! Het kan even duren voordat de TikTok's zijn geladen.

de participant wordt hier blootgesteld aan de twee TikTok video's (de stimuli) van de fitfluencer, afhankelijk van de conditie

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Je hebt zojuist twee TikTok video's van fitfluencer Brooke Böhning (@brookesworkout) gezien. Met betrekking tot haar TikTok's wil ik je vragen om je mening te geven over de volgende stellingen.

Kies voor elk statement het antwoord die voor jou het beste van toepassing is door gebruik te maken van onderstaande antwoordopties.

Statements #1 (Social Comparison)

- Ik denk aan mijn eigen uiterlijk tijdens het bekijken van deze TikTok video's
    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens
- Ik vergelijk mijn lichaam met die van de fitfluencer in de TikTok video's
    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens
- Ik vergelijk bepaalde lichaamsdelen van mezelf met die van de fitfluencer in de TikTok video's
    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens

Statements #2 (Wishful Identification)

- Deze fitfluencer is het type persoon dat ik zelf wil zijn
    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens
- Soms zou ik willen dat ik meer als deze fitfluencer kon zijn
    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens
- Ik zou het soort dingen willen doen die deze fitfluencer doet

    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens
- Deze fitfluencer is iemand die ik graag na zou willen doen
    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens

Nu wil ik wat meer te weten komen over jouw **lichaamstevredenheid** op dit moment.

Kies voor elk statement het antwoord die voor jou het beste van toepassing is door gebruik te maken van onderstaande antwoordopties.

Statements #3 (Body Satisfaction)

- Op dit moment respecteer ik mijn lichaam
    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens
- Ik voel mezelf momenteel goed over mijn lichaam
    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens
- Ik vind dat mijn lichaam momenteel op z'n minst een aantal goede kwaliteiten bezit
    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens
- Op dit moment heb ik een positieve houding ten opzichte van mijn lichaam
    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens
- Ik besteed momenteel aandacht aan wat mijn lichaam nodig heeft
    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens
- Ik voel momenteel liefde voor mijn lichaam
    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens
- Ik waardeer momenteel de verschillende en unieke eigenschappen van mijn lichaam
    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens

- Uit mijn gedrag op dit moment blijkt dat ik waardering heb voor mijn lichaam; bijvoorbeeld; ik loop met een opgeheven hoofd en glimlach
    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens
- Ik voel me momenteel op mijn gemak in mijn lichaam
    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens
- Op dit moment vind ik mezelf mooi al zie ik er anders uit dan de beelden op social media van aantrekkelijke mensen (bijv. modellen, influencers)
    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens

Ook wil ik wat meer weten over je **intentie om te gaan sporten.**

Kies voor elk statement het antwoord die voor jou het beste van toepassing is door gebruik te maken van onderstaande antwoordopties.

Statements #4 (Intention to Exercise)

- Ik ben van plan om te gaan sporten in een sportschool
    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens
- Ik ben van plan om tenminste drie keer per week te gaan sporten
    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens
- Ik ben van plan de komende drie maanden regelmatig te gaan sporten
    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens

Ik wil je vragen om de volgende stellingen te beantwoorden om erachter te komen **hoe jij naar deze fitfluencer kijkt**. Kies voor elk statement het antwoord die voor jou het beste van toepassing is.

Statements #5 (Likeability)

- Deze persoon is vriendelijk
    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens
- Deze persoon is sympathiek
    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens
- Deze persoon is hartelijk
    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens
- Deze persoon is benaderbaar
    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens
- Ik zou deze persoon om advies vragen
    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens
- Ik zou graag bevriend willen zijn met deze persoon
    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens
- Deze persoon is fysiek aantrekkelijk
    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens
- Deze persoon lijkt op mij
    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens
- Deze persoon is deskundig
    - Likert scale, 1 = sterk mee oneens, 7 = sterk mee eens

Manipulatiecheck

Bedankt voor het invullen van de stellingen! Als laatste wil ik vragen wat voor soort TikTok video’s je van deze fitfluencer hebt gezien.

- Wat voor soort TikTok video's van deze fitfluencer heb je zojuist gezien?
    - Een workout video
        - Helemaal niet 0 0 0 0 0 Helemaal wel
    - Een body video
        - Helemaal niet 0 0 0 0 0 Helemaal wel
    - Een alledaagse video
        - Helemaal niet 0 0 0 0 0 Helemaal wel

Debriefing

Dit is het einde van het onderzoek. Nogmaals bedankt voor je deelname, door jou ben ik een stukje dichter bij mijn afstuderen. **Vergeet niet op onderstaande knop te klikken om je antwoorden te verzenden!**

Nu je alle vragen hebt beantwoord, kan ik wat specifieker zijn over het doel van dit onderzoek. Het doel van dit onderzoek is om te kijken hoe bepaalde **type content** die fitfluencers delen (ook wel bekend als fitspiration), effect heeft op de **lichaamstevredenheid** en **sport intentie** onder Nederlandse jonge vrouwen. Verschillende eerdere onderzoeken laten namelijk zien dat de content die fitfluencers delen in sommige gevallen negatieve effecten heeft op lichaamstevredenheid en lichaamsbeweging onder deze doelgroep. Echter zijn deze effecten alleen nog maar onderzocht op Instagram (een op foto's gebaseerd sociaal platform) en nog niet op het nieuwe social media platform TikTok (een op video's gebaseerd sociaal platform). Ook zijn binnen dit onderzoek de effecten van sociale vergelijking en wenselijke identificatie meegenomen en onderzocht.

De verschillende TikTok video's in dit onderzoek zijn **gemanipuleerd**, dit wil zeggen dat je

als deelnemer maar **één type video** hebt gezien, terwijl er in het onderzoek **drie typen video's** zijn gebruikt. Het kan dus zijn dat andere deelnemers ook andere TikTok video's van deze fitfluencer hebben gezien dan jij. De drie typen video's die zijn gebruikt in dit onderzoek zijn workout video's, lichaam video's, of alledaagse video's van fitfluencer @brookesworkout. Binnen dit onderzoek wordt verwacht dat er een verschil zit in het type video van deze fitfluencer op lichaamstevredenheid en sport intentie, maar ook dat dit effect wordt beïnvloed door sociale vergelijking en wenselijke identificatie. Ik hoop snel te kunnen vaststellen of dit ook het geval is, mede dankzij jouw deelname!

Ik wil je vragen om deze informatie niet te delen met anderen, aangezien dit hun antwoorden zouden kunnen beïnvloeden.

Heb je nog vragen of zijn er onduidelijkheden na het invullen van dit onderzoek? Neem dan contact op met Manon van Drimmelen via het volgende e-mailadres: m.vandrimmelen@tilburguniversity.edu. Ook als je je deelname toch wilt intrekken na het doel van dit onderzoek, kan je contact opnemen via dit e-mailadres.

Ik wil je nogmaals heel erg bedanken voor je deelname aan dit onderzoek.

Met vriendelijke groetjes,
Manon van Drimmelen

Appendix B

Online experiment English translations

Informed consent

Hey, thanks for your interest and participation in this research!

With this study, I want to gain more insight into **the influence of fitfluencers on TikTok on the well-being of Dutch young women**. Fitfluencers (also known as fitness influencers) are social media influencers who focus on sharing health and fitness-related content, therefore promoting a healthy lifestyle among individuals.

In this study, you will watch a few TikTok videos from a female fitness influencer, after which you will answer several questions. Before being shown the TikTok videos, you will be asked demographic, personal, and social media-related questions.

Today, very little research has been done on the psychological and physical effects of using TikTok. The results of this study will therefore contribute to new knowledge about TikTok use among Dutch young women and about the effects fitfluencers may have on this target group.

Do you have a TikTok account, identify as female, and are you aged between 16 and 24? Then you are eligible to participate in this study. It does not matter if you follow a fitfluencer on TikTok. The survey will take about 5 to 10 minutes and is best taken on a smartphone or laptop.

Thanks again, I really appreciate your time and input. Have fun and good luck during the research!

Before you begin the study, I ask you to read the information below carefully.

There are no risks involved with participating in this study. All data collection follows the AVG (General Data Protection Regulation) rules. In addition, Tilburg School of Humanities and Digital Sciences has agreed to conduct this research. Your data and answers will be processed entirely anonymously and kept confidential. Also, this data can never be linked to your identity. The anonymous data will be kept on a secure server for ten years for research purposes only. After this period, all data relating to this study will be deleted.

In addition, your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time during the study without further consequences and/or explanations. Please take the time to answer the questions. I am inquisitive about your behavior and opinions, so there are no right or wrong answers, just fill in what you think.

For questions or ambiguities about the survey, contact Manon van Drimmelen at the following e-mail address: m.vandrimmelen@tilburguniversity.edu.

By clicking the button below, you confirm the following:

- That you have read the above information carefully;
- That you are 16 years or older;
- That you are aware that your participation is entirely voluntary and that you can leave the study at any time for any reason;

- That your anonymized data will be stored for ten years and can be used by other researchers or follow-up studies.

Do you consent to participate in this study?

- ✓ Yes, I consent to participate in this study
- ✓ No, I do not consent to participate in this study

Control question

First, I would like to know if you are ever on TikTok.

- Do you have a TikTok account?
    - Yes
    - No (if this answer is selected, the participant will be linked to the end of the experiment)

Demographic questions

Also, I would like to get to know you a little better. These questions below are mainly about yourself (e.g., your age and education level), about your sports behavior, but also about your TikTok usage.

- What is your age? (in years) _____
    - (if the participant's answer is outside the age range of 16 and 24, the participant will be linked to the end of the experiment)

- What gender do you identify as?

  - Female
  - Male (if this answer is selected, the participant will be linked to the end of the experiment)
  - Other, namely: _____
  - I'd rather not say

- What is your height? (in cm) _____

- What is your weight? (in kg) _____

- What is your highest education you are currently attending or have completed?
  - Elementary school
  - High school
  - Middle-level applied education (mbo)
  - Bachelor's degree (hbo)
  - Master's degree (hbo)
  - University, bachelor’s degree
  - University, master's degree
  - PhD or higher
  - Other, namely: _____

- How often do you exercise during the week? (on average)
  - Not
  - Once a week
  - 2 to 3 times a week

- 4 to 5 times per week
- 6 times or more per week

- How much time do you spend on TikTok daily?
  - Less than 10 minutes
  - 10 to 30 minutes
  - 30 to 60 minutes
  - 1 to 2 hours
  - 2 to 3 hours
  - More than 3 hours

Instruction

Now imagine you are scrolling on TikTok, encountering the following fitfluencer videos. Watch the TikTok videos below carefully before proceeding to the next page.

If you are doing this research on your smartphone, it is important to click the video/play button to be able to see the entire video properly. Note! It may take a while for the TikTok's to load.

the participant here is exposed to the two TikTok videos (the stimuli) from the fitfluencer, depending on the condition

---

You have just watched two TikTok videos by fitfluencer Brooke Böhning (@brookesworkout). Regarding her TikTok's, I would like to ask you to give your opinion on the following statements.

For each statement, choose the answer that best applies to you by using the response options below.

Statements #1 (Social Comparison)

- I think about my appearance while watching these TikTok videos
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree
- I compare my body to that of the fitfluencer in the TikTok videos
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree
- I compare certain body parts of myself to those of the fitfluencer in the TikTok videos
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree

Statements #2 (Wishful Identification)

- This fitfluencer is the type of person I want to be like myself
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree
- Sometimes I wish I could be more like this fitfluencer
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree
- I'd like to do the kind of things this fitfluencer does
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree
- This fitfluencer is someone I would like to emulate
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree

---

Now I want to know a little more about your **body satisfaction** right now.

For each statement, choose the answer that best applies to you by using the answer options below.

Statements #3 (Body Satisfaction)

- Right now, I respect my body
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree
- I currently feel good about my body
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree
- I currently feel that my body has at least some good qualities
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree
- I feel that my body has at least some good qualities at this moment
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree
- Right now, I have a positive attitude towards my body
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree
- I currently pay attention to what my body needs
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree
- At this moment, I appreciate the different and unique characteristics of my body.
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree
- My current behavior reveals my positive attitude toward my body; for example, I walk holding my head high and smiling
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree
- I currently feel comfortable in my body
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree
- Right now, I feel like I am beautiful even if I am different from media images of attractive people (e.g., e.g., models, influencers).
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree

---

I also want to know a little more about your **intention to exercise**.

For each statement, choose the answer that best applies to you by using the answer options below.

Statements #4 (Intention to Exercise)

- I intend to exercise at a gym
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree
- I intend to exercise at least three times per week
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree
- I intend to exercise regularly in the next three months
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree

---

I want to ask you to answer the following statements to find out **how you see this fitfluencer**. For each statement, choose the answer that applies best to you.

Statements #5 (Likeability)

- This person is friendly
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree
- This person is likeable
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree
- This person is warm
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree
- This person is approachable
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree
- I would ask this person for advice
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree

- I would like to be friends with this person
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree
- This person is physically attractive
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree
- This person is similar to me
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree
- This person is knowledagble
    - Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree

---

Manipulation check

Thanks for filling out the statements! Lastly, I want to ask what kind of TikTok videos you've seen from this fitfluencer.

- What kind of TikTok videos from this fitfluencer did you just watch?
    - Exercise videos
        - Not at all 0 0 0 0 0 Totally
    - Body videos
        - Not at all 0 0 0 0 0 Totally
    - Everyday situation videos
        - Not at all 0 0 0 0 0 Totally

Debriefing

This is the end of the study. Thanks again for your participation, because of you I am a little closer to graduation. **Don't forget to click the button below to submit your answers!**

Now that you've answered all the questions, I can be a little more specific about the purpose of this study. The purpose of this study is to see how certain type of content shared by fitfluencers (also known as fitspiration) affects **body satisfaction** and **intention to exercise** among Dutch young women. Several previous studies show that the content shared by fitfluencers in some cases has negative effects on body satisfaction and exercise intention among this target group. However, these effects have only been studied on Instagram (a photo-based social platform) and not yet on the new social media platform TikTok (a video-based social platform). The effects of social comparison and wishful identification were also included and examined within this study.

The different TikTok videos in this study were **manipulated**, meaning that as a participant, you only saw **one type of video**, whereas **three types of videos** were used in the study. Therefore, other participants may also have seen different TikTok videos from this fitfluencer than you. The three types of videos used in this study are exercise videos, body videos, or everyday situation videos from fitfluencer @brookesworkout. Within this study, it is expected that there is a difference in the influence of fitfluencers' type of video on body satisfaction and intention to exercise, but that this effect is also influenced by social comparison and desirable identification. I hope to determine soon if this is the case, thanks to your participation!

I would ask you not to share this information with others, as it could influence their responses.

Do you have any questions or are there any uncertainties after completing this study? Please contact Manon van Drimmelen at the following e-mail address: m.vandrimmelen@tilburguniversity.edu. Also, if you still want to withdraw your participation after the purpose of this survey, you can contact me at this email address.

Once again, I would like to thank you very much for your participation in this study.

Kind regards,

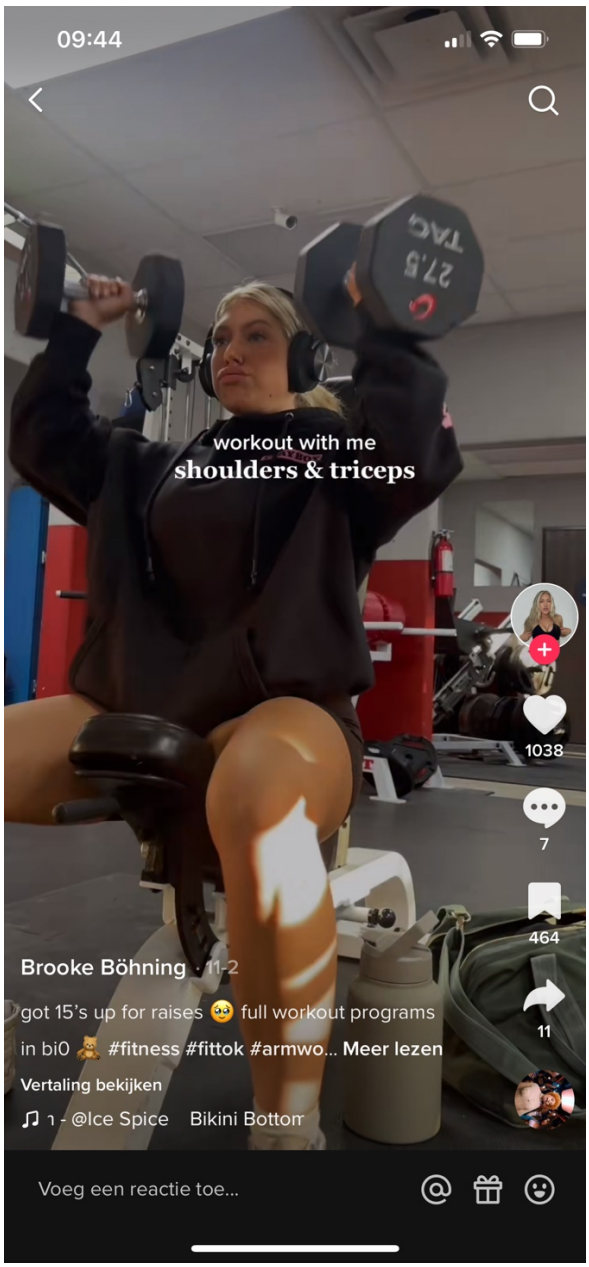
Manon van Drimmelen

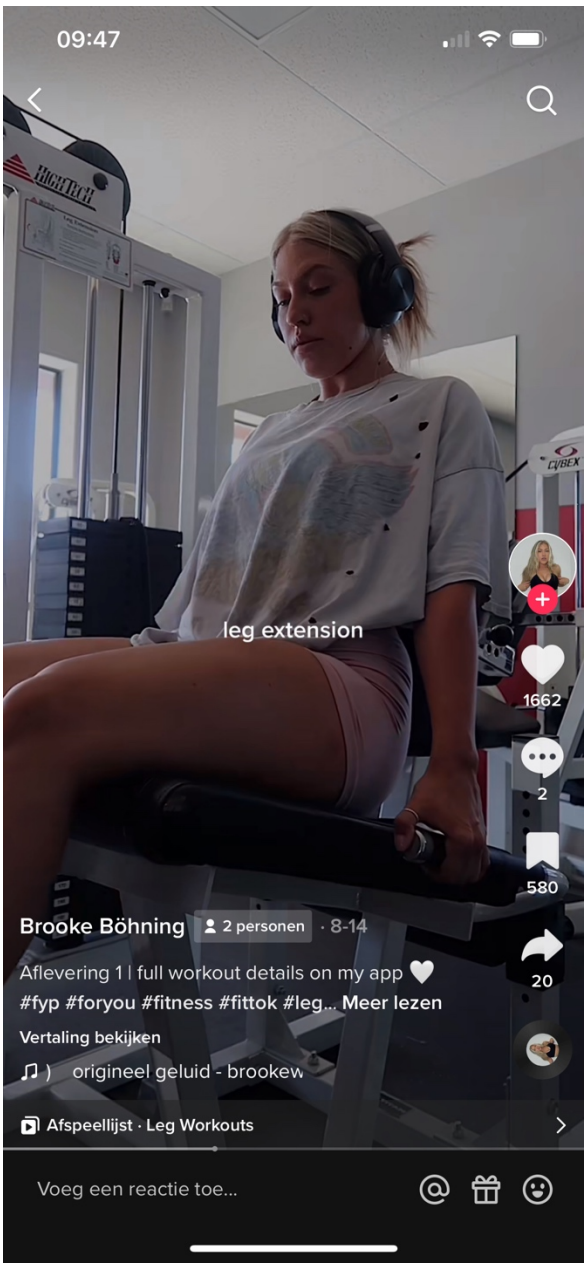
Appendix C

Stimulus materials

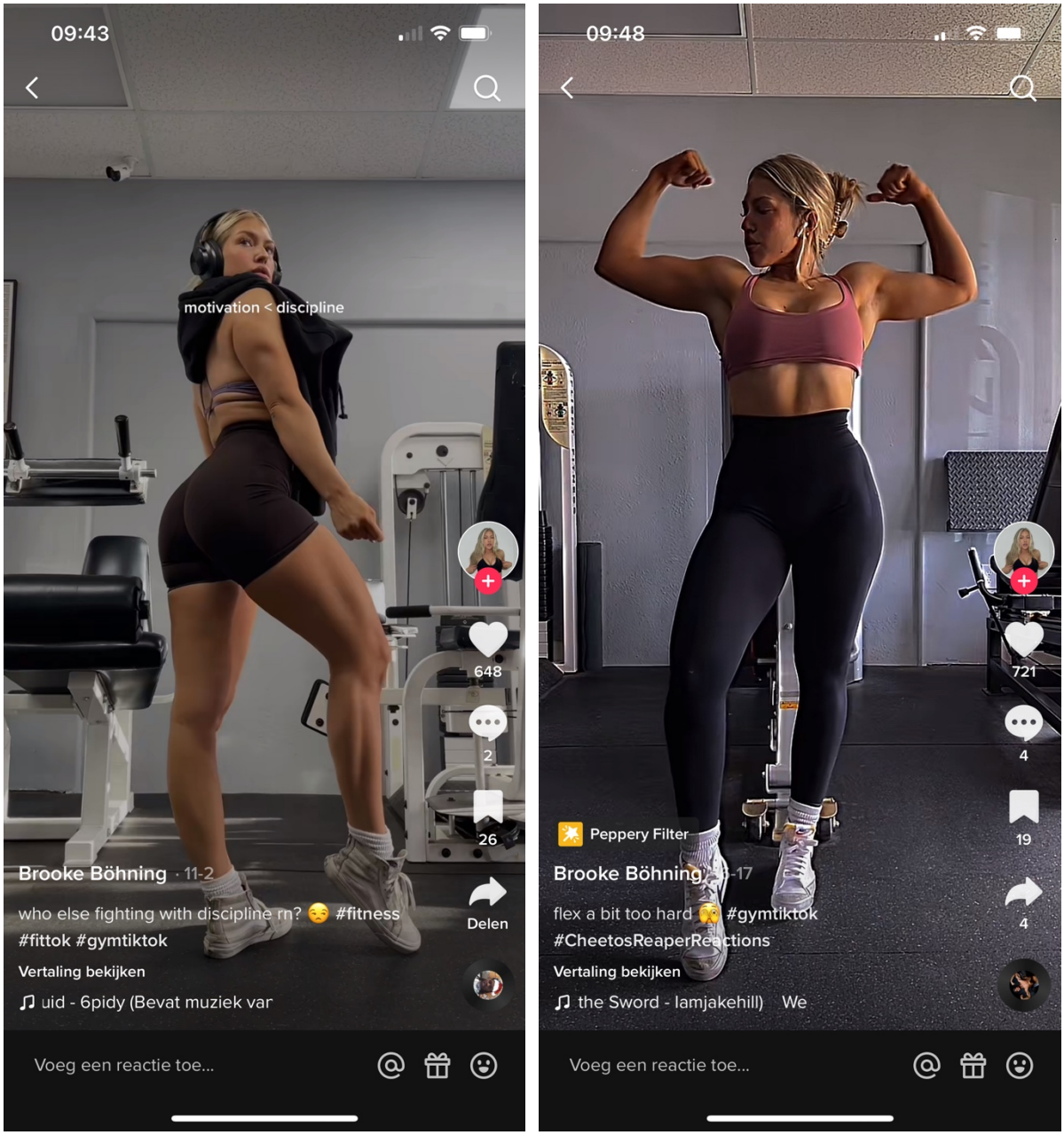
Since the stimuli materials are videos, screenshots of these videos from the experiment have been added.

Condition 1: Exercise videos

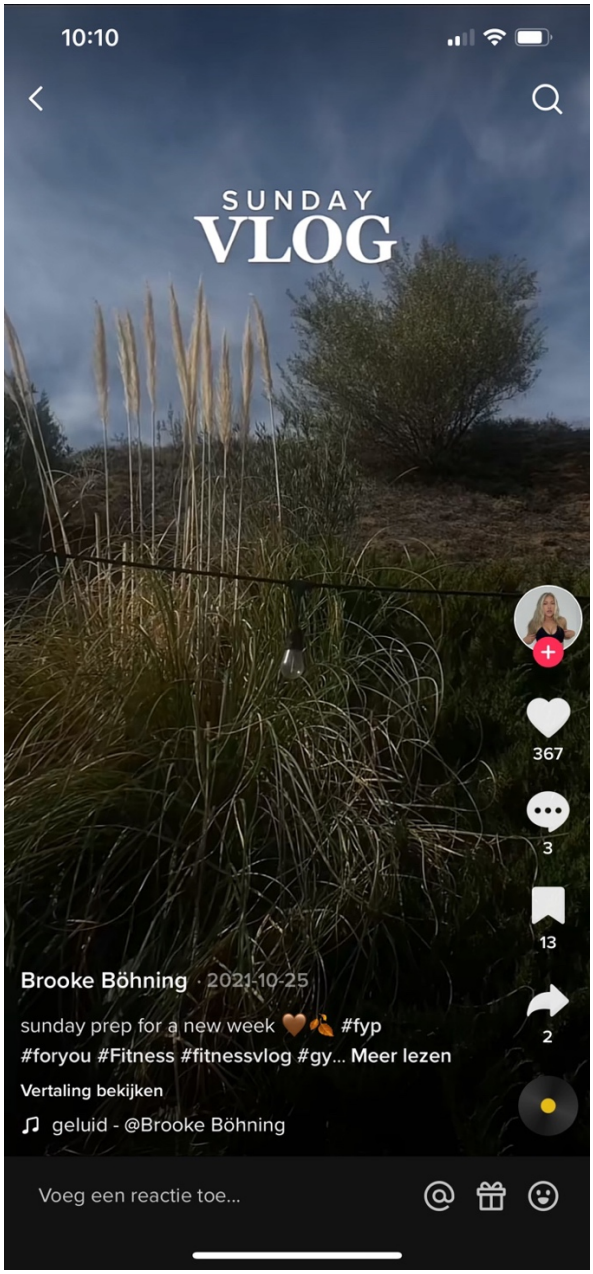


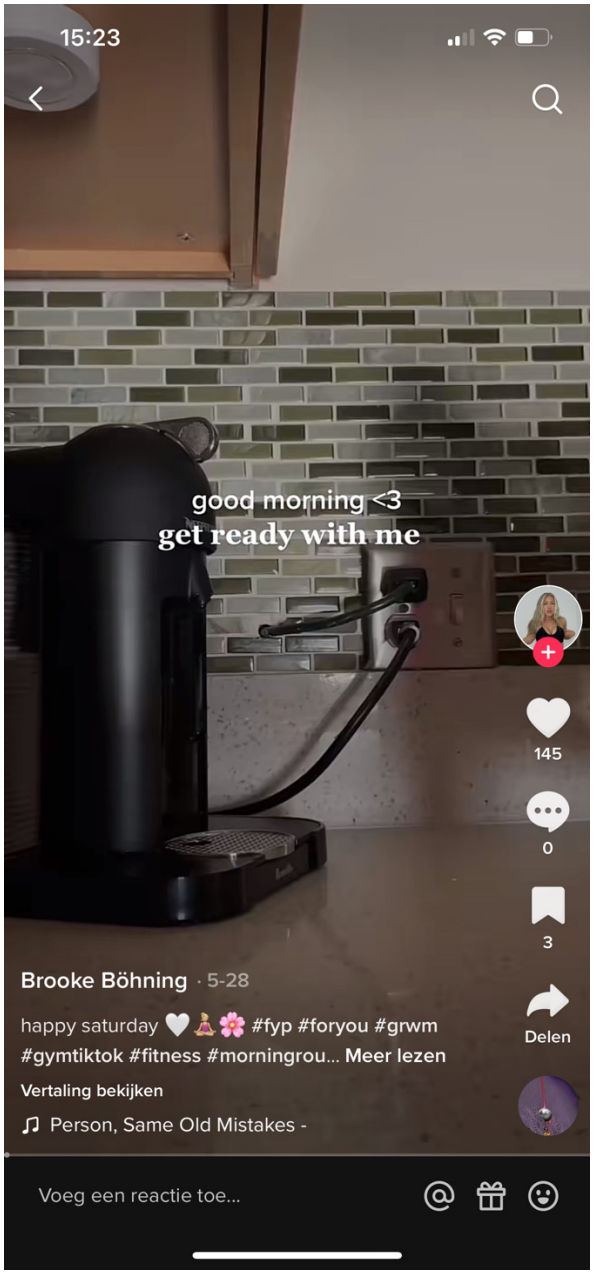


Condition 2: Body videos



Condition 3: Non-fitspiration videos (control condition)





Appendix D

Pre-test Dutch

Informed consent

Beste deelnemer,

Door middel van dit formulier wil ik je toestemming vragen om deel te nemen aan dit onderzoek. In dit onderzoek ga je verschillende TikTok video's beoordelen. Het is daarom belangrijk dat jij een TikTok account bezit om te kunnen deelnemen aan het onderzoek.

Je deelname is geheel vrijwillig. Als je instemt met deelname aan dit onderzoek, kun je je deelname te allen tijde intrekken zonder verdere gevolgen en/of uitleg. Daarnaast worden al je antwoorden anoniem verwerkt en kunnen deze niet aan jouw identiteit worden gekoppeld.

Het onderzoek duurt ongeveer 5 minuten en kan het beste worden uitgevoerd op een smartphone of laptop.

Bij vragen of onduidelijkheden over het onderzoek, kan je contact opnemen met Manon van Drimmelen via het volgende e-mailadres: m.vandrimmelen@tilburguniversity.edu

Alvast bedankt voor je deelname aan dit onderzoek!

Geef je toestemming om deel te nemen aan dit onderzoek?

- ✓ Ja, ik geef toestemming voor deelname aan dit onderzoek
- ✓ Nee, ik geef geen toestemming voor deelname aan dit onderzoek

---

Demografische vragen

Allereerst wil ik wat persoonlijke informatie over je weten.

- Heb je een TikTok account?
    - Ja
    - Nee

- Wat is je leeftijd? _____

- Met welk geslacht identificeer jij jezelf?
    - Vrouw
    - Man
    - Anders, namelijk: _____
    - Zeg ik liever niet

Uitleg onderzoek

In dit onderzoek ga je zes verschillende TikTok video's beoordelen. In deze video's staat een vrouwelijke fitfluencer centraal. Per video wordt er gevraagd wat voor soort video van deze fitfluencer je zojuist hebt gezien; een workout video, een lichaams video of een alledaagse video. Bekijk de video's goed voordat je een inschatting maakt wat voor soort TikTok video het is. Het is niet mogelijk om terug te gaan naar de vorige video.

Doe je dit onderzoek op je smartphone, dan is het belangrijk om op de video te klikken om de gehele video goed te kunnen zien.

Stimuli met vragen

Stimuli 1: body video

Bekijk de video hieronder goed voordat je doorgaat naar de volgende pagina.

- Wat voor soort TikTok video van deze fitfluencer heb je zojuist gezien?
    - Een workout video
        - Helemaal niet 0 0 0 0 0 Helemaal wel
    - Een body video
        - Helemaal niet 0 0 0 0 0 Helemaal wel
    - Een alledaagse video
        - Helemaal niet 0 0 0 0 0 Helemaal wel

- Hoe leuk vond je deze TikTok video?
    - Helemaal niet leuk 0 0 0 0 0 Heel erg leuk

Stimuli 2: workout video

Bekijk de video hieronder goed voordat je doorgaat naar de volgende pagina.

- Wat voor soort TikTok video van deze fitfluencer heb je zojuist gezien?
    - Een workout video
        - Helemaal niet 0 0 0 0 0 Helemaal wel
    - Een body video
        - Helemaal niet 0 0 0 0 0 Helemaal wel
    - Een alledaagse video

    - Helemaal niet 0 0 0 0 0 Helemaal wel

- Hoe leuk vond je deze TikTok video?
    - Helemaal niet leuk 0 0 0 0 0 Heel erg leuk

Stimuli 3: alledaagse video

Bekijk de video hieronder goed voordat je doorgaat naar de volgende pagina.

- Wat voor soort TikTok video van deze fitfluencer heb je zojuist gezien?
    - Een workout video
        - Helemaal niet 0 0 0 0 0 Helemaal wel
    - Een body video
        - Helemaal niet 0 0 0 0 0 Helemaal wel
    - Een alledaagse video
        - Helemaal niet 0 0 0 0 0 Helemaal wel

- Hoe leuk vond je deze TikTok video?
    - Helemaal niet leuk 0 0 0 0 0 Heel erg leuk

Stimuli 4: body video

Bekijk de video hieronder goed voordat je doorgaat naar de volgende pagina.

- Wat voor soort TikTok video van deze fitfluencer heb je zojuist gezien?
    - Een workout video
        - Helemaal niet 0 0 0 0 0 Helemaal wel

    - Een body video
        - Helemaal niet 0 0 0 0 0 Helemaal wel
    - Een alledaagse video
        - Helemaal niet 0 0 0 0 0 Helemaal wel

- Hoe leuk vond je deze TikTok video?
    - Helemaal niet leuk 0 0 0 0 0 Heel erg leuk

Stimuli 5: workout video

Bekijk de video hieronder goed voordat je doorgaat naar de volgende pagina.

- Wat voor soort TikTok video van deze fitfluencer heb je zojuist gezien?
    - Een workout video
        - Helemaal niet 0 0 0 0 0 Helemaal wel
    - Een body video
        - Helemaal niet 0 0 0 0 0 Helemaal wel
    - Een alledaagse video
        - Helemaal niet 0 0 0 0 0 Helemaal wel

- Hoe leuk vond je deze TikTok video?
    - Helemaal niet leuk 0 0 0 0 0 Heel erg leuk

Stimuli 6: alledaagse video

Bekijk de video hieronder goed voordat je doorgaat naar de volgende pagina.

- Wat voor soort TikTok video van deze fitfluencer heb je zojuist gezien?
    - Een workout video
        - Helemaal niet 0 0 0 0 0 Helemaal wel
    - Een body video
        - Helemaal niet 0 0 0 0 0 Helemaal wel
    - Een alledaagse video
        - Helemaal niet 0 0 0 0 0 Helemaal wel

- Hoe leuk vond je deze TikTok video?
    - Helemaal niet leuk 0 0 0 0 0 Heel erg leuk

Bekendheid met de fitfluencer

- Ben je bekend met de fitfluencer in de video's?
    - Ja
    - Nee

Debriefing

Bedankt voor je deelname aan dit onderzoek. In dit onderzoek heb je verschillende TikTok video's van een vrouwelijke fitfluencer beoordeeld.

Heb je nog vragen over het onderzoek of wil je je deelname intrekken? Neem dan contact op met Manon van Drimmelen via het volgende e-mailadres: m.vandrimmelen@tilburguniversity.edu

Appendix E

Pre-test English translations

Informed consent

Dear participant,

Through this form I would like to ask your permission to participate in this study. In this study you will review different TikTok videos. It is therefore important that you have a TikTok account to participate in this research.

Your participation is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate in this study, you can withdraw your participation at any time without further consequences and/or explanations. In addition, all your answers will be processed anonymously and cannot be linked to your identity.

The survey takes about 5 minutes and is best completed on a smartphone or laptop.

For questions or ambiguities about the survey, please contact Manon van Drimmelen at the following e-mail address: m.vandrimmelen@tilburguniversity.edu.

Thank you in advance for your participation in this study!

Do you consent to participate in this study?

- ✓ Yes, I consent to participate in this study
- ✓ No, I do not consent to participate in this study

Demographic questions

First, I want to know some personal information about you.

- Do you have a TikTok account?
    - Yes
    - No (if this answer is selected, the participant will be linked to the end of the experiment)

- What is your age? _____

- What gender do you identify as?
    - Female
    - Male
    - Other, namely: _____
    - I'd rather not say

Instructions study

In this study, you will review six different TikTok videos. These videos focus on a female fitfluencer. For each video, you will be asked what type of video from this fitfluencer you just watched, a workout video, a body video, or an everyday video. Watch the videos carefully before estimating what kind of TikTok video it is. It is not possible to go back to the previous video.

If you are doing this research on your smartphone, it is important to click on the video to see the entire video properly.

Stimuli with questions

Stimuli 1: body video

Watch the video below carefully before proceeding to the next page.

- What kind of TikTok video from this fitfluencer did you just watch?
    - An exercise video
        - Not at all 0 0 0 0 0 Totally
    - A body video
        - Not at all 0 0 0 0 0 Totally
    - An everyday video
        - Not at all 0 0 0 0 0 Totally

- How much did you like that TikTok video?
    - Not at all 0 0 0 0 0 Very much

Stimuli 2: exercise video

Watch the video below carefully before proceeding to the next page.

- What kind of TikTok video from this fitfluencer did you just watch?
    - An exercise video
        - Not at all 0 0 0 0 0 Totally
    - A body video
        - Not at all 0 0 0 0 0 Totally
    - An everyday video

        - Not at all 0 0 0 0 0 Totally

- How much did you like that TikTok video?
    - Not at all 0 0 0 0 0 Very much

Stimuli 3: non-fitspiration video

Watch the video below carefully before proceeding to the next page.

- What kind of TikTok video from this fitfluencer did you just watch?
    - An exercise video
        - Not at all 0 0 0 0 0 Totally
    - A body video
        - Not at all 0 0 0 0 0 Totally
    - An everyday video
        - Not at all 0 0 0 0 0 Totally

- How much did you like that TikTok video?
    - Not at all 0 0 0 0 0 Very much

Stimuli 4: body video

Watch the video below carefully before proceeding to the next page.

- What kind of TikTok video from this fitfluencer did you just watch?
    - An exercise video
        - Not at all 0 0 0 0 0 Totally

- A body video
    - Not at all 0 0 0 0 0 Totally
- An everyday video
    - Not at all 0 0 0 0 0 Totally

- How much did you like that TikTok video?
    - Not at all 0 0 0 0 0 Very much

Stimuli 5: exercise video

Watch the video below carefully before proceeding to the next page.

- What kind of TikTok video from this fitfluencer did you just watch?
    - An exercise video
        - Not at all 0 0 0 0 0 Totally
    - A body video
        - Not at all 0 0 0 0 0 Totally
    - An everyday video
        - Not at all 0 0 0 0 0 Totally

- How much did you like that TikTok video?
    - Not at all 0 0 0 0 0 Very much

Stimuli 6: non-fitspiration video

Watch the video below carefully before proceeding to the next page.

- What kind of TikTok video from this fitfluencer did you just watch?
    - An exercise video
        - Not at all 0 0 0 0 0 Totally
    - A body video
        - Not at all 0 0 0 0 0 Totally
    - An everyday video
        - Not at all 0 0 0 0 0 Totally

- How much did you like that TikTok video?
    - Not at all 0 0 0 0 0 Very much

Familiarity with the fitfluencer

- Are you familiar with the fitfluencer in the videos?
    - Yes
    - No

Debriefing

Thank you for your participation in this study. In this study, you reviewed several TikTok videos from a female fitfluencer.

Do you have any questions about the study, or would you like to withdraw your participation? Please contact Manon van Drimmelen at the following email address: m.vandrimmelen@tilburguniversity.edu

Appendix F

Assumptions mediation analysis fitfluencers' content and body satisfaction

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to test multiple assumptions. First, the assumption of influential cases was checked. Cook's distance showed that all values were lower than 1.00, with a maximum distance of .031, indicating that there is no cause for concern. Furthermore, the Centered Leverage value was investigated. The Centered Leverage value was .039 (6+1/178), with .102 as the largest value. This is no cause for concern, as this is still less than over three times the Centered Leverage value (.117). In addition, the Mahalanobis distance was checked. Since there are six predictors, the values must be lower than 12.59, according to the Chi-square distribution. The highest value of Mahalanobis distance was 18.03, with six cases higher than 12.59. However, these six cases did not have concerning Cook's distance or Centered Leverage values, so there is probably no cause for concern. Additionally, since the highest value was 18.03, this is also no cause for concern as this is still less than 25.

Second, it was checked whether there were any outliers within the sample. There were only eight outliers with a standardized residual above a value of 2.00 and no outliers with a standardized residual above a value of 3.00. This sample contains 178 participants, whereas eight outliers represent 4.5 percent of all data. This indicates no cause for concern as this value is still less than 5 percent. Additionally, the assumption of multicollinearity was checked. All VIF values were lower than 10, and all Tolerance scores were higher than 0.2 (> .55). However, the average VIF value showed no multicollinearity since this value was 1.36 and should not be substantially higher than 1 (e.g., higher than 1.5).

Moreover, the standardized residuals were normally distributed since the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test shows no significance for all conditions ($D(58) = .06$, $p = .200$, $D(59) = .07$, $p = .200$, $D(61) = .10$, $p = .195$). Visual inspection also showed that the

standardized residuals were normally distributed, indicating that the assumption of normality was met. In addition, the assumption of the independence of errors was checked. The Durbin-Watson test shows a value of 1.84, which means that errors are uncorrelated, since this value should be between 1.00 and 3.00. Thus, the assumption of independence of errors is also met. Lastly, the assumptions of heteroscedasticity and linearity were checked by visual inspection of the standardized residuals and predicted scores in the scatterplots. The scatterplots showed no funneling but a cloud of dots, indicating that there was no heteroscedasticity nor linearity.

Appendix G

Assumptions mediation analysis fitfluencers' content and intention to exercise

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to test multiple assumptions. First, the assumption of influential cases was checked. Cook's distance showed that all values were lower than 1.00, with a maximum distance of .054, indicating that there is no cause for concern. Furthermore, the Centered Leverage value was investigated. The Centered Leverage value was .039 (6+1/178), with .081 as the largest value. This is no cause for concern, as this is still less than over three times the Centered Leverage value (.117). In addition, the Mahalanobis distance was checked. Since there are six predictors, the values must be lower than 12.59, according to the Chi-square distribution. The highest value of Mahalanobis distance was 14.31, with three cases higher than 12.59. However, these three cases did not have concerning Cook's distance or Centered Leverage values, so there is probably no cause for concern. Additionally, since the highest value was 14.31, this is also no cause for concern as this is still less than 25.

Second, it was checked whether there were any outliers within the sample. There were only eight outliers with a standardized residual above a value of 2.00 and one outlier with a standardized residual above a value of 3.00. This sample contains 178 participants, whereas nine outliers represent 5 percent of all data. As this is only 5 percent of the data, this is no cause for concern. Additionally, the assumption of multicollinearity was checked. All VIF values were lower than 10, and all Tolerance scores were higher than 0.2 (> .55). However, the average VIF value showed no multicollinearity since this value was 1.36 and should not be substantially higher than 1 (e.g., higher than 1.5).

Moreover, the standardized residuals were not normally distributed since the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed significances for the body video condition ($D(59) = .12$, $p = .038$) and non-fitspiration video condition ($D(61) = .12$, $p = .032$). Visual inspection also

showed that the standardized residuals were not normally distributed, indicating that the assumption of normality was not met. In addition, the assumption of the independence of errors was checked. The Durbin-Watson test shows a value of 2.02, which means that errors are uncorrelated, since this value should be between 1.00 and 3.00. Thus, the assumption of independence of errors is met. Lastly, the assumptions of heteroscedasticity and linearity were checked by visual inspection of the standardized residuals and predicted scores in the scatterplots. The scatterplots showed no funneling but a cloud of dots, indicating that there was no heteroscedasticity nor linearity.