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Winter 2-4-2019

Using surveys to understand the dynamics of mother/daughter dyads on social networking sites

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Recommended Citation

Santarossa, S., & Woodruff, S. (2019). Using surveys to understand the dynamics of mother/daughter dyads on social networking sites. Retrieved from <https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/research-result-summaries/60>

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Research is broad on mother/daughter relationships as well as a mother's influence on her daughter's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors (Bergman & Fahey, 1997). If mothers serve as an important model for their daughters, then their daughters' behavior may be influenced by what they observe in their mothers. Potentially, mothers' SNS photographs may be a source of social comparison for children as parents' SNS posts/engagement (e.g, likes, comments, emojis) may convey societal standards and virtually support beauty ideals, leading to body dissatisfaction, low self-esteem, and/or unhealthy behaviours in their daughter. The current study aimed to understand the dyadic relationships, using an online survey, between SNS behaviours (i.e., use, photo activities, and interaction activities) and self-esteem, body satisfaction, societal and interpersonal aspects of appearance ideals, eating disorder symptoms/concerns, and physical activity behaviours among mothers and young adolescent daughters (born 2003-2007). 40 mother/daughter dyads completed the online survey. Dyadic analysis revealed that the greater photo activities/exposure on SNSs experienced by daughters was related to lower body satisfaction. Mothers who interact (i.e., comment, like, react) more with their daughter's photos/posts on SNSs have a lower physical activity frequency, however daughters who interact more with their mother's on SNSs have a higher physical activity frequency. Mothers' use of SNSs was related to the daughters' lower self-esteem, lower body satisfaction, higher internalization of beauty standards, and higher eating disorder symptoms and concerns. Furthermore, mothers' photo activity/exposure was related to the daughters' higher internalization of beauty standard, and higher eating disorder symptoms and concerns. Lastly, mothers' SNS interaction activities with daughters' was related to daughters' higher self-esteem and lower physical activity frequency. These results provide insight into the online mother/daughter relationship and future studies should aim to develop tools to assist mothers in their navigation of the online world.