

The Impact of Weight Pressures from Coaches on Female Aesthetic Athletes'

Thin-Ideal Internalization

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Introduction

Aesthetic Sports

- Place an emphasis on leanness
- Examples: gymnastics, ballet, cheerleading, synchronized swimming, diving, ice skating, dance
- Athletes in aesthetic sports experience pressure to embody a thin body type (Kantanista et al., 2018; Mancine et al., 2020; Veljković et al., 2020)
- Female athletes experience more body pressure than male athletes (Kristjánsdóttir et al., 2019)
- Coach communication can shape an athlete's body image and health choices and behaviors (Beckner et al., 2015)
- Moderators way influence this relationship

Hypotheses

- There will be a significant relationship between weight pressures from coaches and thin-ideal internalization.
- This relationship will be strengthened when the following are elevated in an athlete:
 - Social media use intensity
 - Maladaptive attitudes toward appearance on social media
 - Athletic identity

Method

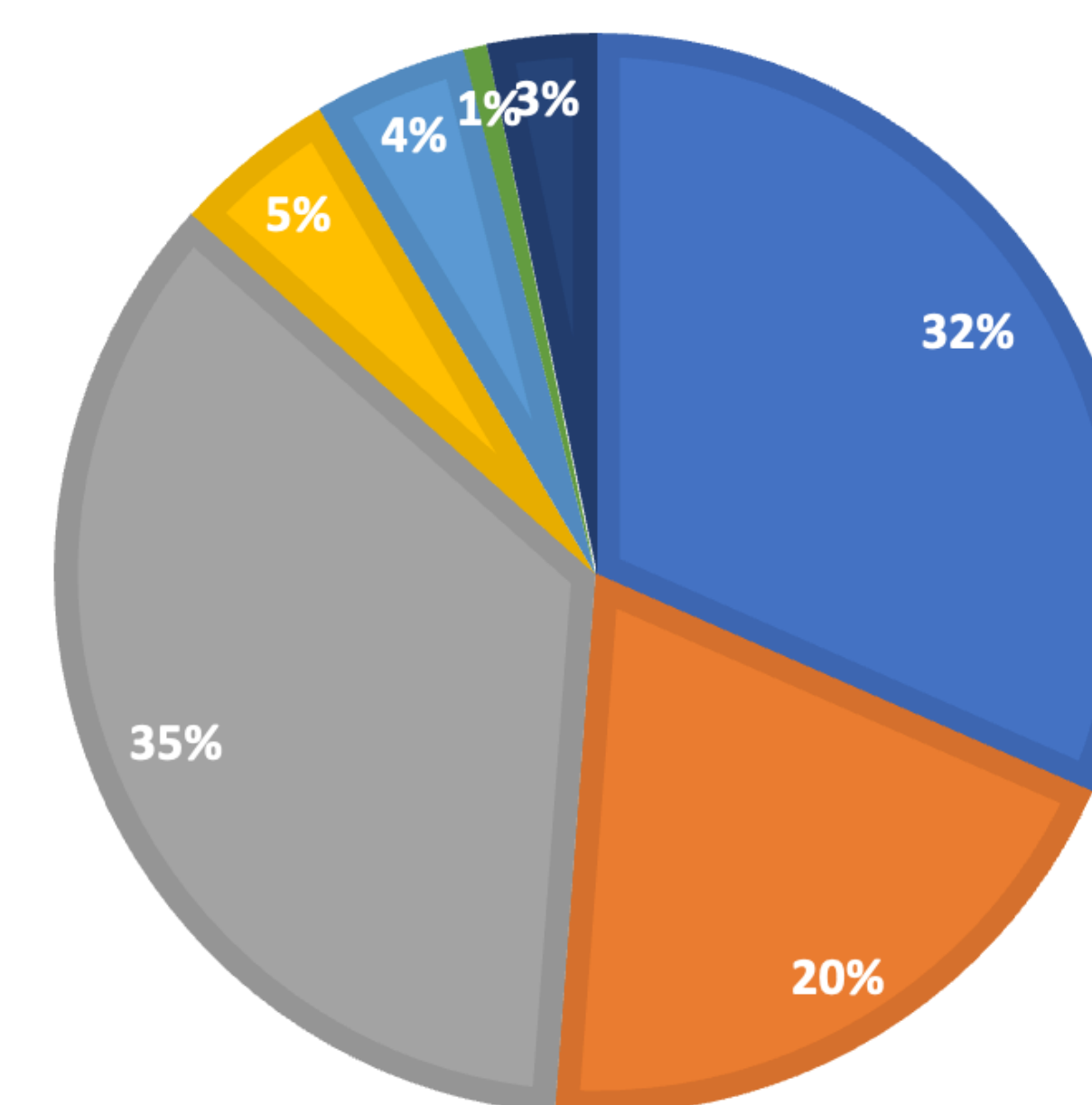
- Online 25-35-minute survey
- Eligibility criteria: ages 18-34, fluent in English, and currently participating in their aesthetic sport at a semi-elite or elite level

Method (cont'd)

- 285 female athletes recruited from a range of aesthetic sports
 - Mean years in sport was 15.4 years (5.7)
 - Mean age was 22.9 years (4.5)
 - 83% White (237), 7% mixed race (19), 6% Asian (18), 2% other (5), 1% Black/African American (4), 0.4% American Indian (1)
 - 49% collegiate/university athletes

SPORT TYPE

■ Figure Skating ■ Ballet ■ Dance ■ Gymnastics ■ Cheerleading ■ Diving ■ Synchronized Swimming

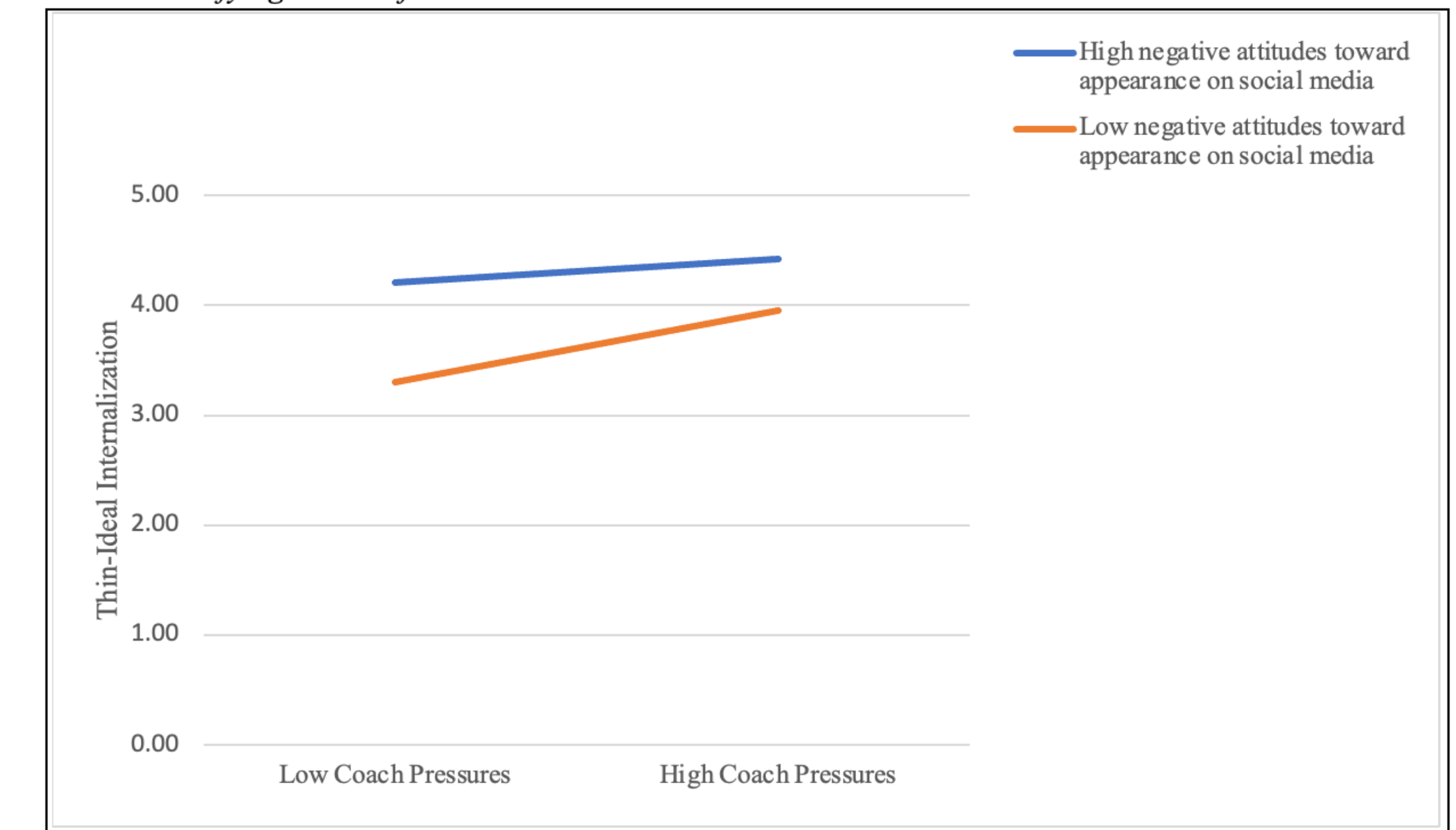


Results

- Weight pressure from coaches and thin-ideal internalization are positively correlated ($r = .37^{***}$)
- High overall levels of thin-ideal internalization
 - Mean 3.93 on 5-point scale
- Maladaptive attitudes toward appearance on social media correlated with:
 - Thin-ideal internalization ($r = .48^{***}$)
 - Weight pressures from coaches ($r = .36^{***}$)
- Weight pressure from coaches x maladaptive attitudes toward appearance on social media interaction was significant in identifying levels of thin-ideal internalization ($B = -.01, SE = .01, \beta = -.13, t(281) = -2.56$)

Figure 1

Interaction of Weight Pressures from Coaches and Negative Attitudes Toward Appearance on Social Media Identifying Levels of Thin-Ideal Internalization.



Note. High and low levels of the coach pressures and negative attitudes toward appearance on social media reflect +/- 1 standard deviations from the mean.

Discussion

- The present study showed that Weight pressures from coaches are associated with female aesthetic athletes' thin-ideal internalization
- Athletes perceiving high levels of weight pressure from coaches who also have negative attitudes toward appearance on social media had the highest levels of thin-ideal internalization
- Attitudes toward appearance on social media are also associated with thin-ideal internalization
 - Elite athletes are often expected to have a social media presence
- Should further investigate social media use in athletic populations
- The relationship between weight pressures from coaches and thin-ideal internalization should be replicated in a more racially diverse sample