Shaping Bodies, Shaping Futures: The Impact of Diet Culture on Women's Body Ideals and Life Chances

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Introduction:

Diet culture has perpetuated an unrealistic and often unattainable ideal body type for women, consequently influencing women's life chances by shaping their self-esteem, career opportunities, and access to social and economic resources. Throughout society, expectations are socially constructed through trends and cultures created by humans. The focus of my Personal Interest Project (PIP) is to explore and address the correlation between diet culture and the perception of the "ideal" female body type, and how this negatively impacts one's life chances. My Interest in this topic was sparked by my observation of an apparent obsession around eating habits and diet culture on Instagram. I wondered whether this was driven by society's constantly changing expectations regarding body image. In addition, I observed myself limiting my own life chances through the choices I made not to participate in certain activities, such as school swimming carnivals or going to the gym, out of fear for how my body may look. My micro experience prompted me to look at the bigger macro picture and broader societal impacts on women over time.

This investigation is of great relevance to society as it highlights the ways in which social norms, values, and power structures shape individual identity and life opportunities. It explores the role of socialisation and enculturation in reinforcing unrealistic body standards, demonstrating how institutions such as the media, fashion, and health industries perpetuate social control through the commodification of body ideals. The continuity of this issue over time can be seen, for example, in the continuation over multiple generations of the notion that dieting is considered normal, as well as thinness being considered ideal. Holding a multigenerational perspective allows for an analysis and emphasis on how beauty standards have evolved over time. Furthermore, change over time can be seen in the impact of resistance movements like body positivity and inclusivity campaigns. Additionally, a cross-cultural comparison of Generation X (1965-1980) and Generation Z (1997-2012) will be undertaken. Considering these two generations has allowed me to explore and compare how societies in different time periods have constructed beauty ideals and how increasing globalisation has contributed to the spread of Western diet culture worldwide. The concept of life chances is central to understanding how body conformity affects women's access to employment, relationships, and self-worth; exploring this concept reveals the structural inequalities embedded within social systems. My PIP aims to increase social and cultural

literacy and to encourage me to critically analyse and challenge the impact of diet culture, recognise bias, and advocate for a more inclusive and accepting society within my Personal Interest Project (PIP).

By using primary research methods such as questionnaires and focus groups with women from Generation X and Generation Z; personal reflection, interviews and secondary sources, I aim to critically assess the extent to which diet culture reinforces inequality and limits women's access to opportunities in different social and cultural contexts.

Log:

The personal interest project (PIP) topic was selected after I noticed my own and my peers' eating habits and attitudes surrounding food were being driven by the constantly evolving nature of diet culture. I started my research by gathering secondary information on the basics of diet culture and body ideals from journal articles, websites and social media. This enabled the formulation of primary research methods to build my understanding of how individuals are affected by this issue within society. Throughout the writing process of my PIP, I decided to readjust the focus of my third chapter. Chapter 3 was originally: What are the worldviews surrounding diet culture and body ideals? However, I decided to change from this question to: The future impacts of diet culture and organisations working to promote positive social change in the industry. Adjusting this question benefited the formulation of my PIP as it linked my topic more closely with current sociological issues and allowed for predictions and recommendations in the near future to be made.

For me, growing up in a Christian household and calling myself a "Child of God", and being made in his image whilst simultaneously struggling with body image and the effects of diet culture, provoked curiosity about the broader societal impacts among different cultures. I am known to be made "in the image of God"; however, when the effects of diet culture are so pervasive, it can lead me to question my faith, my worth and chances in life. Therefore, I had a keen personal interest in this topic and was able to formulate my investigation.

Once I commenced research, there was an overwhelming amount of information available regarding diet culture, body ideals, body image, life chances and resistance to change, from which I began to formulate themes and recognise concepts. These soon formed the basis of my PIP chapters, namely how 'popular culture and media drive the agenda of diet culture', 'sexual objectification of women and female empowerment', and 'the future impacts of diet culture and organisations that are working to promote positive social change in the industry'.

Through secondary research, my understanding of what primary research methods to utilise within my writing became evident, and I decided to integrate a focus group, questionnaire,

personal reflection and interview in order to adhere to the subjective requirements of my investigation.

The writing of my PIP, however, did not come without obstacles, limitations and new directions in order to adapt to evolving knowledge. My original plan to interview The Butterfly Foundation, deemed unsuccessful, In which I adapted and conduced an interview with a school counsellor with experience in the perspective field.

The process of writing my PIP has been extremely beneficial to my understanding of the complexity of society, which is built upon micro, meso and macro levels. It has helped me to build my social and cultural literacy as I have grown to be more understanding of others whilst also improving the depth of my writing and ability to conduct research.

Chapter 1: How popular culture and media drive the agenda of diet culture

Popular culture encompasses the widely accepted and commercially driven cultural practices and products of a society. Popular culture and media play a central role in perpetuating and driving the agenda of diet culture. The most powerful way this is done is by normalising beauty standards. The promotion of subtle mixed messages regarding weight, weight loss fads and ideas regarding what is considered unhealthy and healthy. These ideas seep into consumers' subconscious from a very early age. These ideas are not questioned or consciously evaluated, but are just accepted as a normal part of social media consumption, driven by the popular culture of the time. Diet culture is further driven through popular culture by being turned into a commodity.This commodification is largely driven by the fashion industry, which systematically reinforces unrealistic beauty ideals; ultimately turning insecurity into a product.

Over time, the shift from traditional media sources such as magazines, newspapers and television to social media has significantly transformed the way in which women are influenced by and conform to diet culture trends and the way they perceive themselves. From the 1980s to modern day society, diet culture has been extremely prevalent. "1980, the low-fat approach became an overarching ideology."[1] There has been a significant rise in social media consumption throughout this time frame due to the advancement of technology. For women belonging to Generation X, their main sources of media growing up involved magazines like "Dolly"[2], newspapers, television programs such as at-home workout videos and songs like "Let's Get Physical"[3] by Olivia Newton John. Magazines such as Dolly glamorised the toxic effects of diet culture, seen in the type of extremely skinny models they used such as body types like Kate Fisher's, glamorising of eating disorders in young teenage girls, leading women to feel "like a pig" "for eating an apple"[4]. Presently, social media

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[1] Berge, La, 'How the Ideology of Low Fat Conquered America' (2007) 63 Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences 139
<https://academic.oup.com/jhmas/article/63/2/139/772615 > accessed 19 May 2025
[2] Primary research, focus group
[3] (*Youtube.com*2025) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWz9VN40nCA> accessed 14 July 2025.
[4] L, Jade 'Teen Magazine Blows Its Cover in Search of Impossible Perfection' (*The Sydney Morning Herald*10 July 2012)
<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/teen-magazine-blows-its-cover-in-search-of-impossible-perfection-20120711-21us3.html> accessed 9 April 2025

platforms like TikTok and Instagram fill minds with thousands of messages within the span of five minutes. This creates an environment where our minds are subconsciously altered by the things we are viewing, creating "a false sense of reality"[5]

Primary research conducted in this PIP supported a correlation between diet culture and pursuit of the ideal body type, substantially driven by social media. Primary research revealed that diet culture, portrayed on social media, has led Generation Z women to feel "discontent and guilty"[6] due to the never ending unattainable diet expectations and body ideals they repeatedly view. Conversely, women from Generation X stated that social media has not caused them to alter their diet, as they were brought up in the 80s, protected by parental censorship, "diet was never mentioned in my household."[7] Previous media sources in the 80s were predominantly physical, allowing for parents to filter out toxic societal trends such as fad diets, and "1,200 calorie diets"[8] Now in the present day, due to the rise in social media and the online world, parental censorship; has become increasingly more intractable. Thus amplifying the disparity between Generation Z and Generation X respondents' views on how social media has affected their self worth and perception of themselves. It is clear that the progression from traditional media formats prevalent in the 1980s to modern digital platforms, particularly social media, has markedly intensified the propagation of diet culture and has increased the pressure for women to conform to unrealistic expectations, negatively impacting their sense of self.

Modelling in the 1960s to 1980s was not the same as what we know today. Millions of women find themselves lost within the popular culture of fashion, whilst this can be positive, it can also have negative consequences for women. Within the fashion industry, the limited diversity of different sized models remains a problem "The lack of inclusivity not only marginalises those who wear larger sizes but also subtly encourages the pursuit of weight

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[5] S. Thomas 'How Social Media Changes Our Perception of Reality' (*Insight Digital Magazine*7 October 2016) <https://www.thechicagoschool.edu/insight/from-the-magazine/a-virtual-life/> accessed 8 April 2025

[6] Primary research, focus group

[7] Primary research, focus group

[8] EV. Eikey, 'Effects of Diet and Fitness Apps on Eating Disorder Behaviours: Qualitative Study' (2021) 7 BJPsych Open <https://www.eatingwell.com/dieting-trends-that-need-to-be-retired-11681807> accessed 9 April 2025

loss."[9]Clothing is not a one size fits all, so the question remains, why are most clothing brands' products represented by size 6-8 models? Although there has been an increase in the diversity of differently sized models, there has not been a decrease in the amount of body image issues and eating disorders.

Fashion is constantly evolving and changing within society, making it hard for individuals to attain the ideal bodily figure "hourglass yet thin body, tanned 'flawless' skin and large lips"[10]. All Generation Z women who were a part of the focus group stated that the "hourglass body" is the "ideal body"[11] Then followed up by a significant number of women stating that they felt the need to attain this "ideal body" by eating healthy and working out, in order to keep up with society's expectations, so they can wear "revealing clothing"[12] whilst also looking good. This is where eating disorders start. Women look up to models with these ideal bodily figures, but what remains hidden is that "one fourth of all fashion models meet the criteria for anorexia"[13] Eating disorders are subtly promoted through popular culture right in front of us, clothing brands deliberately profit from women's insecurities. They turn body ideals and diet culture into a commodity, "turning one's body into the consumer platform, ready-to-wear clothing teaches us anxiety about our actuality."[14] Fashion industries are not only driving women's insecurities regarding the "ideal body" but also profiting off them. This fashion is part of the machine driving the toxic diet culture in present-day society. Encouragingly, there has recently been a substantial rise in plus sized models and a growing diversity within the fashion industry, creating a forum for positive societal change to occur for Generations to come.

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[9] E,Van 'Examples of How Diet Culture Is Toxic, and How to Rise above | Emily van Eck Nutrition & Wellness' (*Emily Van Eck Nutrition & Wellness*16 September 2023) <https://www.emilyvaneck.com/toxic-diet-culture-examples/> accessed 9 April 2025
[10] 'The Evolution of Female Body Image Ideals – Dietetically Speaking' (*Dieteticallyspeaking.com*2021) <https://dieteticallyspeaking.com/the-evolution-of-female-body-image-ideals/> accessed 19 May 2025
[11] Primary research, questionnaire
[12] Primary research, questionnaire
[13] E,Van 'Examples of How Diet Culture Is Toxic, and How to Rise above | Emily van Eck Nutrition & Wellness' (*Emily Van Eck Nutrition & Wellness*16 September 2023) <https://www.emilyvaneck.com/toxic-diet-culture-examples/> accessed 9 April 2025
[14] ABC Religion & Ethics, 'How Fashion Turned Consumers into Commodities' (*ABC Religion & Ethics*24 November 2022) <https://www.abc.net.au/religion/fashion-turned-consumers-into-commodities-robyn-ferrell/14108774> accessed 9 April 2025

Influencers shape society because they shape individuals. The term influencer refers to "an individual who can influence their audience in a perspective field"[15] Influencers fill media sources, specifically health and fitness platforms. They aim to help individuals become the best version of themselves. But behind all the filtered realities and editing in today's society, uncovering one's true self is extremely difficult. As a viewer, being able to determine what is real or fake, healthy or unhealthy proves extremely difficult. For women belonging to Generation X, Influencers existed in a different form. Role models like "Jane Fonda" and "Richard Simmons"[16] promoted at home aerobic workouts. Richard Simmons also encouraged and perpetuated diet culture in a positive way. He created his own book titled "Never Say Dieting." Richard positively drove the agenda of diet culture within society as his book included hundreds of realistic recipes aimed at managing weight success. However, influencers within today's society, such as Liv Schmidt, have large platforms with the ability to promote widespread messages. Liv Schmidt and other influencers like her glamorise eating disorders. She promotes being skinny as a "mindset" and creates a "market for thinspiration"[17] It is influencers like this in present day society that severely effect women's attitudes towards themselves. However, influencers like Bree Lenehan and Spencer Barbosa actively work to uncover filtered realities and promote body positivity. An interview with Spencer states that "It's unfair for young people to compare their bodies to someone else's perfectly posed body."[18] Through positive advocacy, influencers like Spencer advocate positively for diet culture by reshaping toxic societal norms around what a healthy body is and what a healthy body should look like, thus changing societal stereotypes and promoting change within society on a micro to macro level scale.

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[15] 'PLANOLY' (*Planoly.com*2025) <https://www.planoly.com/blog/should-you-consider-yourself-an-influencer-our-answer-might-surprise-you-planoly#:~:text=An%20influencer%20is%20simply%20an,truly%20as%20simple%20as%20that.> accessed 9 April 2025
[16] Primary research, questionnaire
[17] 'Inside Social Media's 'Skinny Club' – Run by Controversial Influencer Liv Schmidt' (*Cosmopolitan*11 October 2024) <https://www.cosmopolitan.com/uk/reports/a62577921/liv-schmidt-skinny-club/> accessed 9 April 2025
[18] ca.freelance, 'Q&a with Spencer Barbosa on Youth Empowerment and Body Positivity' (*Your Career Guide*19 June 2022) <https://www.yourcareerguide.ca/insights/insights-archive/qa-with-spencer-barbosa-on-youth-empowerment-and-body-positivity/> accessed 9 April 2025

Chapter 2: Sexual objectification of women and female empowerment

Sexual objectification and female empowerment are extremely prominent topics within today's society; they are also significantly connected to the ideas of diet culture and body ideals. If you were to ask a room full of women if they ever feel the need to look presentable, pretty, skinny, healthy, or put together i'm sure many would agree. One of the main contributing factors that forces women to conform in order to fit this mould is the male gaze. Male gaze " Describes a way of portraying or looking at women that empowers men, whilst sexualising and diminishing women."[19] The overt sexualisation of women is everywhere, in both traditional media and social media. This sexualisation, driven by the male gaze, has altered women's minds and the ways in which they perceive their own bodies and self worth leaving women reguarly feeling the need to recieve validation from men "I constantly find myself thinking, what man will want me if my stomach is not flat and my thighs touch"[20] The male gaze not only alters how women view their self worth, it reinforces and perpetuates diet culture as a whole. A Generation Z focus group participant stated, "My first boyfriend complimented me on how skinny I was. He monitored what I ate around him." Another stated, "I felt the need to wear revealing clothes to feel wanted and approved of by a man."[21] Whilst Gen X women stated that the focus was less on "bodily figure" but looking more polished, in which a respondent stated, "For a woman to feel acceptable to the world, there needs to be a polish."[22] Sexualisation of women in advertisements, merchandising and media can have serious implications on how toxic diet culture is perpetuated and can further lead to the entrenchment of stereotypes of what is considered to be the most attractive body. "Evidence shows that the sexualisation of young women and girls impacts them in a variety of domains" It impacts their mental health, leading to "eating disorders, low self-esteem, and depression"[23]. These psychological effects highlight the toll that unachievable beauty standards are taking on women. It is clear there is an increased need for the toxicity of diet culture and the objectification of women to be addressed, to break the multigenerational cycle

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[19] K, Oliver 'The Male Gaze Is More Relevant, and More Dangerous, than Ever' (2017) 15 New Review of Film and Television Studies 451
<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-the-male-gaze-5118422> accessed 25 April 2025
[20] Primary research, Personal reflection
[21] Primary research, focus group
[22] Primary research, Focus group
[23] The, 'Body Positive Alliance' (*Body Positive Alliance* 26 October 2021)
<https://bodypositivealliance.org/blog/the-male-gaze-puts-pressure-on-all-women> accessed 6 May 2025

and create a forum for positive change. The consistent portrayal of women's bodies through a sexualised lens encourages women to internalise the value of their body by someone else's belief of what is attractive; this is one of the factors that drives eating disorders and depression among young women "75% of people diagnosed with Anorexia Nervosa and 83% of people diagnosed with Bulimia Nervosa are between 12 and 25 years."[24] These statistics are rising and pose the question of what is contributing to this rise and shift in toxic diet culture? Societies' unattainable perception of the ideal body leads to women's internalised belief of what they "should look like". Society has created a forum in which women specifically feel objectified within the context of everyday life on a micro,meso and macro scale through agents of socialisation such as the media, peers and family. Objectification of women happens in most contexts of everyday life. It leads women to feel "utterly disgusted when it occurs, yet at the same time, there is a part of me that feels validated by the recognition from those who call out to me." [25] Many women sit with the issue of "feeling valued by this objectifying treatment"[26] but soon begin to realise "that the desire to appeal to men doesn't stem from my attraction to men but from societal pressures that I was previously unaware of."[27] It is pivotal that as a society we work to break this dangerous continuum and reinforce positive social change in order to break the poisonous cycle of diet culture's unrealistic, body ideals and objectification for future generations. In order for this to occur, these societal pressures need to be challenged and ultimately eradicated. This can be done through education within homes and schools to reshape traditional norms. Thus, it can be seen that within society, the objectification of women is extremely prevalent, normalised by the male gaze, leading to negative internalised beliefs of women's worth, further driving the agenda of diet culture among women.

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[24] 'Eating Disorder Statistics & Key Research | Eating Disorders Victoria' (*Eating Disorders Victoria*29 May 2024) <https://eatingdisorders.org.au/eating-disorders-a-z/eating-disorder-statistics-and-key-research/> accessed 30 April 2025

[25] The, 'Body Positive Alliance' (*Body Positive Alliance*26 October 2021) <https://bodypositivealliance.org/blog/the-male-gaze-puts-pressure-on-all-women> accessed 6 May 2025

[26] The, 'Body Positive Alliance' (*Body Positive Alliance*26 October 2021) <https://bodypositivealliance.org/blog/the-male-gaze-puts-pressure-on-all-women> accessed 6 May 2025

[27] The, 'Body Positive Alliance' (*Body Positive Alliance*26 October 2021) <https://bodypositivealliance.org/blog/the-male-gaze-puts-pressure-on-all-women> accessed 6 May 2025

Individuals within the film and sporting industries are constantly in the public eye; they are continually being critiqued in every way and can feel pressure to appeal to a stereotypical perfect figure. The term pretty privilege refers to the " cognitive bias that gives unearned advantages and preferential treatment to those perceived as attractive" [28] Pretty privilege is and has been an extremely prevalent issue within society. Professional big wave surfer Flick Palmateer was led into an eating disorder through the effects of pretty privilege " My contract kept getting upped. I was getting rewarded for being bulimic"[29] Can the focus of female athletes be their performance? Or is the focus their body? This example shows that pretty privilege is absolutely driving diet culture, whereby women feel the need to fit this "perfect" mould in every aspect of life. Additionally, actors such as Rebel Wilson and Sydney Sweeney have received major backlash in terms of their changing bodies. Sydney Sweeney, in one of her most recent films, was publicly humiliated and scrutinised for training and gaining weight in order to meet the physical requirements of the role of a professional boxer. With individuals stating, "She's preggo", "maybe an Ozempic candidate", "Great rack, total butterface", [30] In contrast, Rebel Wilson and Adele were slammed by the media for losing weight !! "It almost feels like a hero is no longer a hero", "skinny Adele feels like a betrayal" [31]. What can women do right? Women are criticised for gaining weight. Women are criticised for losing weight. Herein lies the destructive double standard of diet culture, which often impedes women's life chances and opportunities for success. It is clear that the

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[28] B, Fink and others, 'Facial Symmetry and Judgements of Attractiveness, Health and Personality' (2006) 41 Personality and Individual Differences 491 <https://www.verywellmind.com/pretty-privilege-8694834#:~:text=Pretty%20privilege%20is %20a%20form,attractive%2C%20according%20to%20societal%20norms.> accessed 8 May 2025

[29] ' Palmateer, Flick on Instagram: The Surf Industry Has Come a Long Way, and It's Empowering to See Athletes Being Valued for the Right Reasons. @Indeep.podcast Ep 8 LIVE NOW 🎧 #Indeeppodcast"' (*Instagram*2020) <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DFoIqMrzHcM/> accessed 27 July 2025

[30] M,Erickson 'Sydney Sweeney Shares Body-Shaming Comments That Came during Training to Play Boxer Christy Martin' (*MMA Junkie*22 December 2024) <https://mmajunkie.usatoday.com/story/sports/boxing/2024/12/22/sydney-sweeney-shares-bo dy-shaming-comments-that-came-during-training-to-play-boxer-christy-martin/77156861007 /> accessed 11 May 2025

[31] B, Greenfield 'Rebel Wilson and Adele Say Losing Weight Has Made Them Happy. But Some Fans Feel Angry and "Betrayed." Here's Why.' (*Yahoo Life*21 January 2022) <https://www.yahoo.com/lifestyle/rebel-wilson-adele-losing-weight-fans-angry-betrayed-192 915875.html> accessed 11 May 2025

connection between women's career-related success and society's "new era of beauty standards, that have no footing in reality",[32] is more prevalent than ever. If women focus on their looks, society perceives them as self-obsessed; whereas if they focus on building their career, every minute detail about them is analysed and commented on by society. A Generation X focus group participant stated, "One comment can make a whole change in someone's perspective and their job and role"[33] For change to occur, it is essential for society to realise the weight of their words and actions.

Female empowerment is a significant factor in breaking the continuum of toxic diet culture and creating a space for positive change. Female empowerment is a "fundamental human right that's also key to achieving a more peaceful, prosperous world."[34] Female empowerment is key to eliminating toxic diet culture on a micro, meso and macro level as it "is essential to the health and social development of families, communities and countries,"[35] where women can reach their full potential in terms of their successive careers, and understanding their self-worth. Above all, in order for women to reclaim their self worth in relation to body image, women need to stand together; a Generation X focus group participant stated " women need to focus more on the internal rather than the external"[36] suggesting that a mindset shift is what needs to be addressed and changed, whereas as a Generation Z respondent stated "physical awareness needs to be spread, women need to be bold and take action"[37]. Thus embodying a combination that, if women focus on internal beauty and bind together to redirect social norms. Positive societal change will begin to occur, improving women's sense

[32] 'Tomorrow Woman on Instagram: "for Young Women, the Notion of Body Image Is Brutal. Society Has Dreamed up a New Era of Beauty Standards That Have No Footing in Reality. Https://Pulse.ly/Ehwe0wtzv k . . "' (*Instagram*2020)
<https://www.instagram.com/p/DB5mnrEKaVF/?igsh=NWxkYzBnY2puaDJx&img_index=1> accessed 25 July 2025
[33] Primary research, focus group
[34] 'Womens Empowerment - Facts, Stories and How to Help | World Vision Australia' (*Worldvision.com.au*2025)
<https://www.worldvision.com.au/womens-empowerment?srsltid=AfmBOoohES-8aZSeWro kGypVZ3DR9O_5t_5Ft2uiYqzJAB_v9fy6jcEI> accessed 11 May 2025
[35] 'Womens Empowerment - Facts, Stories and How to Help | World Vision Australia' (*Worldvision.com.au*2025)
<https://www.worldvision.com.au/womens-empowerment?srsltid=AfmBOoohES-8aZSeWro kGypVZ3DR9O_5t_5Ft2uiYqzJAB_v9fy6jcEI> accessed 11 May 2025
[36] Primary research, focus group
[37] Primary research, focus group

of self-worth, lessening the impact of diet culture and improving women's perception of their bodies.

Chapter 3: The future impacts of diet culture and organisations that are working to promote positive social change in the industry.

Diet culture has reinforced a worldview that equates thinness with attractiveness and success. The rise of activism and social awareness has allowed for transformative efforts to be established. These efforts are rooted in dialectical change; with the opposing forces of society's dominant worldview which equates thinness with beauty, pitted against body positivity movements that push back against this notion. This tension is creating a forum for positive change, fostering new cultural norms as well as frameworks in society to support individuals. This dialectical change reprsents evolutionary change as Herbert Spencer's macro level theory suggests "that all human societies continually develop from simple to complex, and that all change is progress"[38]. Anti-diet movements were established "in the 1960s as a means to fight back against weight discrimination", [39] thus illustrating the implications of shifting perspectives, especially among younger generations who are increasingly distancing themselves from conventional ideas of health and beauty. Many people are challenging the value society places on thinness and the power structures that support these norms as a result of intersectional feminism. These new viewpoints support revolutionary social change as they aim to eliminate damaging cultural beliefs ingrained in corporate marketing, healthcare, and education systems. Many organisations work to diminish toxic diet culture and reframe cultural norms surrounding the body ideals of women. The Butterfly Foundation seeks to "prevent eating disorders and body image issues from occurring"[40] Through their charity, they deliver preventative services on a micro, meso and macro level through outpatient treatment programs, prevention programs for schools, sports clubs and workspaces as well as advocacy for systemic change, sector collaboration and coordination. In addition, counsellors are seen working against societal stigmas by working with individuals to reframe their outlook and perception of their body by implementing "CBT", "which stands for Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and is about looking at your core beliefs to identify truth behind thoughts

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[38]'Cambridge GO' (*Cambridge.org* 2025)
<https://www.cambridge.org/go/resources/Cambridge-Society-and-Culture-Stage-6>
accessed 6 July 2025

[39] 'The Anti-Diet Movement and Big Food' (*Doherty Nutrition* 24 July 2024)
<https://dohertynutrition.com/anti-diet-movement/> accessed 24 June 2025

[40] 'About Butterfly' (*Butterfly Foundation* 10 June 2025)
<https://butterfly.org.au/who-we-are/about-butterfly/> accessed 28 June 2025

and feelings"[41], thus contributing to the reformation of body ideals driven by diet culture. This is critical in regards to the future impacts of diet culture, seen in statistics which show that "Body dissatisfaction affects 4.1 million Australians, with more than half of teenagers reporting body dissatisfaction."[42] highlighting the growing impacts of toxic culture on Generation Z and the importance of promoting positive change for future generations to come.

Feminist theorists, such as Bartky (1993) and Bordo (1990), discuss dieting as a "gendered issue and position women who diet as self-policing agents"[43]. They present the argument that women diet to achieve a sense of femininity, which stems from patriarchal inequalities. Whereas Murnen and Smolak's (2009) study into the relationship between feminism and body attitudes found that "feminist identity may be more protective against internalisation of cultural messages around thinness".[44] thus outlining a potential generational shift overtime of gender norms vs feminist agency. Bartky (1993) and Bordo (1990) emphasise how dieting reinforces gender norms whilst Murnen and Smolak (2009) convey how leaning into a feminist identity can help foster body positivity and resilience against the toxicity behind diet culture, ultimately, reflecting how these opposing feminist theories work to promote dialectical change. Feminism originally arose in the context of the Enlightenment in the 17th and 18th Centuries, emphasising its Western roots and its close connection to Westernisation. In Murnen and Smolak's (2009) feminist theory, it can be seen that westernisation and the "western diet"[45] have changed individuals' worldview regarding how they perceive themselves and how they think about body image and what constitutes an ideal weight. This emphasises the necessity of creating a present and future society in which diet culture has less

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[41] Primary research, Interview

[42] 'About Butterfly' (*Butterfly Foundation* 10 June 2025)
<https://butterfly.org.au/who-we-are/about-butterfly/> accessed 28 June 2025

[43] L. O'Shea 'Diet Culture and Instagram: A Feminist Exploration of Perceptions and Experiences among Young Women in the Midwest of Ireland' (2020) 1 Dearcadh: Graduate Journal of Gender, Globalisation and Rights 2020
<http://www.nuigalway.ie/media/researchcentres/womensstudies/womenstudies2020/Dearcadh_2020_OShea.pdf>

[44] HM. Borowsky and others, 'Feminist Identity, Body Image, and Disordered Eating' (2015) 24 Eating Disorders 297 <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4999297/#R34> accessed 28 June 2025

[45] V. Rakhra, and others, 'Obesity and the Western Diet: How We Got Here' (2020) 117 Missouri Medicine 536
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7721435/#:~:text=Conclusion,and%20its%20long%2Dterm%20complications.> accessed 28 June 2025

control and influence over one's body image and life chances. Highlighting the importance of "challenging diet culture, as if not, it will unconsciously become a part of their belief system."[46] As a society, individuals should hope and expect to see this occur through evolutionary change, feminist movements, organisations, and activists all working together to promote positive change.

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[46] Primary research, Interview

Conclusion:

The agenda of diet culture has perpetuated an unrealistic and often unattainable ideal body type for women, consequently influencing women's life chances by shaping their self-esteem, career opportunities, and access to social and economic resources.

My PIP has shown the pervasive influence of diet culture on the body ideals of women and the impact on their life chances. It has been demonstrated how popular culture and media drive the agenda of diet culture, the importance of combating sexual objectification of women, and the need to increase female empowerment. Finally, this PIP has highlighted the future impacts of diet culture and the organisations that are working to promote positive social change in the industry.

My Primary research methods including focus groups, a questionnaire and a personal reflection have helped me interrogate my original investigation of <u>how has diet culture has influenced body ideals of women and therefore impacted their life chances?</u> The data gleaned from the research revealed that if diet culture continues to push unrealistic body ideals, many women may find their self-esteem lowered, feel excluded from opportunities, and face barriers to fully participating in social and economic life. It was also highlighted that Generation Z and X women strongly relate to the problem of diet culture and agree that it has a significant impact on their lives.

The majority of the secondary research conducted provided new insights into topics at hand, allowing me to synthesise across sources to further evaluate newfound knowledge effectively. Secondary research into factors driving diet culture and body ideals, such as popular culture and sexual objectification, conveyed the ways women's life chances are so significantly affected on a daily basis and elevated the need to initiate change, thus driving research into my third chapter.

Chapter One of my PIP illuminated the Society and Culture concepts of media and popular culture by showing how social media perpetuates self-concept, ideologies and conformity. Whilst Chapter Two highlights concepts of social cohesion, gender, female empowerment,

and stereotypes. Finally Chapter Three discusses the impacts of westernisation in driving feminist movements and social cohesion.

The subject matter of my PIP has enabled me to become more socially and culturally literate by increasing my awareness, empathy and understanding of others. Hearing the lived experience of my focus group participants made this issue real to me and emphasised the significant impact that diet culture has on women across generations. Additionally, I have been challenged to expand my knowledge and to think critically about the effects of diet culture on our society. I now think more critically about the content that I consume on social media and am aware of the commodification that lies behind seemingly innocent images. Incorporating a generational cross-cultural component to my PIP further expanded my understanding of how we are society is constantly evolving and changing over time. I am realising that it is essential to ensure positive change continues to occur for future generations as they grapple with the ongoing reality of diet culture, body ideals and life chances.

Resource list :

Secondary Sources:

La, F. 'How the Ideology of Low Fat Conquered America' (2007) 63 Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences 139
<https://academic.oup.com/jhmas/article/63/2/139/772615 > accessed 19 May 2025

This source examines how the "ideology of low fat conquered America" and was helpful in gaining background knowledge on the topic of Diet Culture. Whilst highlighting how it affects societies and cultures on a macro scale. It was useful within the first chapter of my central material, as it provided insight into how women from Generation X were affected by diet culture in their past societies in comparison to today's society. The scholarly nature of this source heightens its credibility and accuracy as it has been reviewed by the Oxford academic and is a part of the Journal of Medicine and Allied Sciences. Potential bias within this source seems to be limited as it is a factual source, basing its information on researched evidence. However, there is still room for potential bias to be included due to possible subjective implementations on the topic being included.

Newton John, O. Physical (Official Music Video)
(*Youtube.com*2025) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWz9VN40nCA> accessed 14 July 2025.

This source provides an insight into the forms of media throughout the 1965's to 1980's that perpetuated diet culture and body ideals. It was particularly useful in writing my chapter one as I was able to utilise it as an example alongside dolly magazines, highlighting the glamorisation of diet culture. This source is highly reliable and accurate as it is a originally sourced music video, published by the author and creator of the song itself. This source does not hold any inherent bias as it is made using humour, irony and satire to comment on fitness culture in the 1980s.

Jade L, 'Teen Magazine Blows Its Cover in Search of Impossible Perfection' (*The Sydney Morning Herald*10 July 2012)
<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/teen-magazine-blows-its-cover-in-search-of-impossible-perfection-20120711-21us3.html> accessed 23 April 2025

Sydney Morning Herald's article highlights the toxic side effects of popular culture materials on young women. It uses magazines like Dolly to represent how by only having an idolised norm of models within their magazines, they perpetuate diet culture and unrealistic body ideals. This source will be significantly useful in the creation of my chapter one, as it is a form of popular culture that was highly consumed by Gen X women. This source is valid due to its expert opinions, which support the writer's overall claims. It is also seen to be reliable due to the article being established from a credible and reputable publisher, as well as being written on a factual basis. Within this articl,e there is room for there to be potential bias due to it being written from the perspective of one side, and the lack of opposing viewpoints.

Thomas S, 'How Social Media Changes Our Perception of Reality' (*Insight Digital Magazine*7 October 2016)
<https://www.thechicagoschool.edu/insight/from-the-magazine/a-virtual-life/ > accessed 23 April 2025

This article notes how social media filters everything in which a false sense of reality is created and perfection is idolised. It conveys how as individuals we are always fighting the battle of comparison against filtered realities. This source will be specifically helpful within my chapter one as it explores how social media, being a form of popular culture, helps drive the agenda of body ideals through unrealistic and unattainable filtered videos. This source is considered valid and reliable within my research as it comes from a credible publisher, has expert contributions on the topic and supporting studies to increase its validity and reliability. This source does not appear to be biased, due to its

factual basis. However due to its mainly one sided argument there is room for potential bias.

Eikey EV, 'Effects of Diet and Fitness Apps on Eating Disorder Behaviours: Qualitative Study' (2021) 7 BJPsych Open <https://www.eatingwell.com/dieting-trends-that-need-to-be-retired-11681807> accessed 24 April 2025

This source explores how destructive diet trends can be on the human body. But also how to diet in a healthy way. It is reviewed by a dietician to increase its credibility and provide further insight into the effects of toxic diet culture on our health and wellbeing. It includes many different diets; in which their effect on the body is outlined. This source will be included throughout my chapter one as it will contribute well towards the background knowledge of my research and give specific examples which correlate directly to my focus on popular culture forms. This source is seen to be reliable as it is consistent with its established requirements and information, and reviewed/authored by experts. It is also valid as its finding and research is supported among other professionals' statements. This source is not biased as it is a factual article, written by professionals and expertise in this field.

Van E, 'Examples of How Diet Culture Is Toxic, and How to Rise above | Emily van Eck Nutrition & Wellness' (*Emily Van Eck Nutrition & Wellness* 16 September 2023) <https://www.emilyvaneck.com/toxic-diet-culture-examples/> accessed 24 April 2025

This source explores the toxicity behind diet culture and how we equate our worth with our weight in today's society. It talks about the stigmatisation of body types and the negative impacts on mental and physical health that this can lead to. It also conveys how forms of popular culture contribute to this toxicity. This source covers multiple aspects of information that will be essential to all three of my chapters. Its wide scope of information regarding diet culture, body ideals, and women equate for its contribution within all of my chapters. This source is reliable as its author Emily Van Eck holds a master in science of human nutrition and is also a registered dietitian. Emily also works in practice specialising in eating disorders, body image and intuitive eating, thus allowing her article to be consistent, relevant and reliable. This source is also considered valid as it is evidence based content, has a clear purpose and scope. However there is room for potential bias within this source as it has a perspective of anti diet culture perspectives. But this potential bias is informed, intellectual

and clearly communicated.

'The Evolution of Female Body Image Ideals – Dietetically Speaking'
(*Dieteticallyspeaking.com*2021)
<https://dieteticallyspeaking.com/the-evolution-of-female-body-image-ideals/ > accessed 19
May 2025

This article examines the changes in women's ideal bodies over time. It also highlights why
body image matters and the global variations in beauty standards. This source is of
significance throughout my Chapter One as it conveys specific ideal beauty standards that
women are expected to attain and the implications that this can have on women. This source
is known to be accurate and reliable as it was written and published by an accredited
Nutritionist and reviewed by a Dietitian. There is no evident bias within this source due to its
factual nature but there is room for potential bias within the authors generation.

ABC Religion & Ethics, 'How Fashion Turned Consumers into Commodities' (*ABC Religion
& Ethics*24 November 2022)
<https://www.abc.net.au/religion/fashion-turned-consumers-into-commodities-robyn-ferrell/1
4108774> accessed 24 April 2025

This source explores how Fashion industries are not only driving women's insecurities
regarding the "ideal body" but also profiting off them. It conveys how this negatively affects
women and drives toxic diet culture within society. It includes a historical approach and is
also written by a professor at the ANU in which her discussion is grounded in sociological
theories. This source will be of particular usefulness to my chapter one as it talks about the
popular culture of fashion and how it perpetuates the notion of toxic diet culture. This source
is valid due to the ABC being a credible publisher and its analytical depth in which the
source's validity is enhanced through it being a scholarly source. This source is also
considered to be reliable because of its consistency and established concepts. There is room
for potential bias within this source as it is less factual and more analytical, thus meaning that
not all viewpoints are covered.

'Inside Social Media's 'Skinny Club' – Run by Controversial Influencer Liv Schmidt' (*Cosmopolitan*11 October 2024) <https://www.cosmopolitan.com/uk/reports/a62577921/liv-schmidt-skinny-club/> accessed 24 April 2025

This article reflects inside insights into social media's effect on body image and diet culture. It focuses on factors that contribute to this like influencer Liv Schmidts social media page in which she promotes a "skinny club" ultimately doubling down on the fact that a 'skinny lifestyle' is the ultimate lifestyle. The example of influencer Liv Schmidt will be very useful in terms of my chapter 1 as I can use and zoom in on how social media works through influencers to project and perpetuate diet culture. This article is considered valid as it is published by a reputable outlet, increasing the sources credibility and also is relevant to contemporary issues within society. It is seen as reliable as it has expert opinions included and is consistent and clear within its purpose. There is room for potential bias however as the source has a substantial amount of subjectivity linked to it and there is a lack of factual information.

ca.freelance, 'Q&a with Spencer Barbosa on Youth Empowerment and Body Positivity' (*Your Career Guide*19 June 2022) <https://www.yourcareerguide.ca/insights/insights-archive/qa-with-spencer-barbosa-on-youth-empowerment-and-body-positivity/> accessed 24 April 2025

  This source provides a positive insight into social media influencers' affect on the perpetuation of body image and ideals within the online space. It provides a positive example of an influencer Spencer *Barbosa.* And provides insight into the how and why she empowers others and promotes positivity. This source will be particularly useful in the creation of my chapter one as it is a Positive example of social media being used as a tool for societal change. This source is seen to be reliable and valid as it is a Q&A with a well renowned social media body positivity influencer. However there is potential bias within this source as it is a one sided opinion based article.

Oliver K, 'The Male Gaze Is More Relevant, and More Dangerous, than Ever' (2017) 15
New Review of Film and Television Studies 451
<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-the-male-gaze-5118422> accessed 25 April 2025

This source provides a depth of insight into understanding what the male gaze is and its effects on women. This source explores all areas of the male gaze, unpacking its history, positive side effects, impact on mental health, as well as ways we could potentially change the gaze. This source has been helpful in the writing of my Chapter two as it has allowed me to deepen my understanding of the effects of male gaze and elevate my writing to address all areas of significance. This source is a highly reliable and accurate source as it is established in psychological research and has been reviewed by qualified experts. There is no evidently biased, however due to its one sided presentation focused on feminist critiques it may appear mildly biased.

'Eating Disorder Statistics & Key Research | Eating Disorders Victoria' (*Eating Disorders Victoria*29 May
2024)<https://eatingdisorders.org.au/eating-disorders-a-z/eating-disorder-statistics-and-key-research/ > accessed 30 April 2025

This source provides a summary of key statistics on eating disorders, highlighting their prevalence in Australia and outlining future directions of whether the statistics are improving or declining. It has been of usefulness to the writing of my Chapter Two as it has allowed me to effectively identify key insights into eating disorders, In which I have been able to integrate them into my writing. The reliability and accuracy of this source is high due to the article being published by a reputable organisation. The articles evidence based orientation and link to current statistics emphasise this notion. There is no bias in this source due to its factual presentation, and support from scholarly and government work.

The, 'Body Positive Alliance' (*Body Positive Alliance*26 October 2021)
<https://bodypositivealliance.org/blog/the-male-gaze-puts-pressure-on-all-women > accessed 6 May 2025

This source was of significant usefulness in the writing of my Chapter Two as it provided insights into the male gaze, and its affect on womens self worth and self concept. This source proved to be valid as it comes from an activist educational perspective and is grounded in feminist concepts.

Fink B and others, 'Facial Symmetry and Judgements of Attractiveness, Health and Personality' (2006) 41 Personality and Individual Differences 491 <https://www.verywellmind.com/pretty-privilege-8694834#:~:text=Pretty%20privilege%20is%20a%20form,attractive%2C%20according%20to%20societal%20norms. > accessed 8 May 2025

This source provides insight into understanding pretty privilege, and the psychology behind it. As well as its social, emotional, psychological, and professional impacts. The source unpacks pretty privileges ethical implications and how to overcome them and be confident in your skin. This source has been of significant usefulness in the incorporation of my Chapter Two, as it has gone into depth on the notion of pretty privilege, allowing for insight into the life chances sector of my topic. This source is reliable due to its expert review and reputable publisher. There is room for potential cultural bias within this source as Western beauty standards dominate the discussion.

Erickson M, 'Sydney Sweeney Shares Body-Shaming Comments That Came during Training to Play Boxer Christy Martin' (*MMA Junkie* 22 December 2024) <https://mmajunkie.usatoday.com/story/sports/boxing/2024/12/22/sydney-sweeney-shares-body-shaming-comments-that-came-during-training-to-play-boxer-christy-martin/77156861007/ > accessed 11 May 2025

This source explores the body shaming that Sydney Sweeney faced whilst training to suit her character in her upcoming film. It includes the comments of online trolls, highlighting the extent to which social media can be used as a driver of toxic diet culture on figures within the public eye. This article has been particularly helpful in providing examples in the writing of my Chapter Two on how life chances are affected, and the many negative impacts that the online space can have on individuals. This article is cross-referenced with other forms of media and is published by a reputable sports journalism, heightening the source's reliability.

However, this article establishes a secondary form of reporting based on Instagram and social media, potentially impacting this source's accuracy. Due to this article's framed and contextualised nature, there is room for potential bias.

Greenfield B, 'Rebel Wilson and Adele Say Losing Weight Has Made Them Happy. But Some Fans Feel Angry and "Betrayed." Here's Why.' (*Yahoo Life*21 January 2022) <https://www.yahoo.com/lifestyle/rebel-wilson-adele-losing-weight-fans-angry-betrayed-192915875.htm l> accessed 11 May 2025

This source highlights the constant criticism that women face in regards to how they look. The source highlights the weight loss of Rebel Wilson and Adele, and the backlash they have received from fans. It emphasises the point that no matter a woman's body, there will always be something criticised about it. This source was particularly useful in the writing of my Chapter Two as it highlights the extent to which women's bodies are objectified, providing useful quotes that I was able to utilise in order to emphasise this. This source appears to be reliable and accurate as information is factually sound and it is published by a reputable outlet. The lack of expert views in this source could create room for potential bias to occur within this source.

'Womens Empowerment - Facts, Stories and How to Help | World Vision Australia' (*Worldvision.com.au*2025) <https://www.worldvision.com.au/womens-empowerment?srsltid=AfmBOoohES-8aZSeWro

This source outlines what women's empowerment is, how it originated and how we can empower women to feel more confident in their bodies and sense of self. This source was helpful in the writing of my Chapter Three as it helped me understand the core principles behind women's empowerment, thus elevating my writing. This source is considered to be reliable as it is from a well-renowned organisation and is accurate due to its factual and informative structure. This source does not contain any known bias however, it may contain small amounts of organisational bias, as it emphasises success and moral engagement.

'The Anti-Diet Movement and Big Food' (*Doherty Nutrition* 24 July 2024)
<https://dohertynutrition.com/anti-diet-movement/ > accessed 24 June 2025

This source outlines anti-diet movements, when they originated, their effectiveness in providing resistance towards toxic diet culture and how it creates positive change in relation to body ideals and relationships with food. This source was helpful in the writing of my Chapter Three, as it is both useful for examples and quotes but also emphasised my understanding in order to elevate my writing. In terms of reliability and accuracy, this article is considered to be reliable as it was written by a registered dietitian; however,r due to its limited citations and no direct linkage to empirical studies, the accuracy of this source is not particularly strong.

'About Butterfly' (*Butterfly Foundation* 10 June 2025)
<https://butterfly.org.au/who-we-are/about-butterfly/ > accessed 28 June 2025

This source provides information about an organisation working to promote awareness and create positive change/ help concerning body image issues and eating disorders. This articles active resistance against diet culture has been particularly helpful in the writing of my Chapter Three as it helps promote positive future societal change highlighting its usefulness within my topic. The Butterfly foundation is a credible and reliable organisation in which their research is based off factual information and evidence, heightening its accuracy and reliability. There is no Bias in this source as it is a factual help line, providing support and information regarding eating disorders and body image.

O'Shea L, 'Diet Culture and Instagram: A Feminist Exploration of Perceptions and Experiences among Young Women in the Midwest of Ireland' (2020) 1 Dearcadh: Graduate Journal of Gender, Globalisation and Rights 2020
<http://www.nuigalway.ie/media/researchcentres/womensstudies/womenstudies2020/Dearcadh_2020_OShea.pdf >

This article provides insight into feminist theories, perceptions and experiences of young girls in relation to diet culture and instagram making it of high significance to my topic. It has been significantly useful in the writing of my Chapter Three, In which it has helped expand my knowledge of how feminism is utilised as a tool for resistance to change. This source is seen to be accurate and reliable as it is academically sound, methodologially clear and institutionally backed. There is room for potential bias within this source as it seeks to confirm its feminist framework, rather than explore a full spectrum of interpretations.

Borowsky HM and others, 'Feminist Identity, Body Image, and Disordered Eating' (2015) 24 Eating Disorders 297 <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4999297/#R34 > accessed 28 June 2025

This source explores feminist identity, body image, and disordered eating. It highlights a new found knowledge of gender norms vs feminist agency. Thus highlighting a resistance against diet culture. Throughout my Chapter Three this source has been specifically helpful in emphasising the correlation of feminism and body attitudes. This source has proven to be reliable and accurate as it includes a large representative sample, has been peer reviewed and published within a journal all whilst being accurate in context. Whilst this source is academically sound there is still room for potential bias within this source.

Varundeep Rakhra and others, 'Obesity and the Western Diet: How We Got Here' (2020) 117 Missouri Medicine 536 <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7721435/#:~:text=Conclusion,and%20its%20long%2Dterm%20complications. > accessed 28 June 2025

This source highlights the impact of westernisation of diet culture and body ideals, thus providing insights into potential ways to promote positive future change. This source was included in the Chapter Three of my Personal Interest Project as it provides information regarding westernisation and obesity rates linking to the current rise in body dissatisfaction that we are seeing today. Thus this sources accuracy and reliability is sound as it stems from valid sources, includes systematic analysis and is peer reviewed. This article may however appear to carry potential bias through its framing and selective sourcing.

PRIMARY RESEARCH ANNOTATIONS:

Focus groups: Generation X and Gen C

The focus group was of significant usefulness in the writing process of the PIP. Two focus groups were conducted, one with women from Generation Z, including 6 participants, and the other with women from Generation X, including five participants. Directing two separate focus groups extended the depth of qualitative information that could be applied to the writing of my PIP, and enhanced my knowledge of diet cultures' impacts on women across society. Questions such as: Have you ever altered the way you look to seek male approval? Revealed differences between women apart of Generations Z and Generation X, as women from Generation Z stated that they felt the need to change their physical appearance whilst women from Generation X stated that they felt an increasing need to look more polished rather than alter their physical appearance, helping to formulate a cross-cultural comparison within my PIP. Using the method of a focus group proved to be valid as it uncovered how opinions are shaped by society and cultures, and it also deepened my understanding of how generational beauty ideals shape individual pressures. Within this research method, there is room for social desirability bias as participants may alter what they say to what they think is acceptable or appropriate in a group setting. There is also room for potential researcher bias to influence participants through tone or facial expression.

Personal reflection:

The personal reflection incorporated as part of my primary research within this PIP allowed for qualitative depth of insight into the first hand affects of diet culture on women from both Generations Z and Generations X. Through observations I made of women throughout Generations X and my own personal connection and reflection on the topic, this research method has been of great usefulness to the formulation of my PIP. This source is considered to be valid as it complements other research methods as well as enabling a critical, introspective exploration into personal experiences of broader societal issues such as the toxic

effects of diet culture. Within this research method, there is bias due to the subjectivity and emotional connection to the topic at hand.

Questionnaire:

The questionnaire used within the writing of the PIP was significantly useful, specifically in my chapter 1, as it allowed for a broader knowledge of what women across societies think in regards to the agenda of diet culture and its impact on body ideals as well as life chances. With over 80 responses totalled and inclusion of both open and closed-ended questions, such as: does your diet correlate with your perception of your body, and the self-worth/value you hold? As well as, Do you believe that the media idolises diet culture and body ideals? By including a variety of open and closed-ended questions, I gained both qualitative and quantitative insight into information regarding diet culture and its effects on women. This research method has allowed research to stem from a smaller societal circle to women from many different societies across Australia, thus providing a more comprehensive data sample to contribute to the making of the PIP. This research method is known to be valid as it provides both quantitative and qualitative data from a range of participants, enabling social trends and personal attitudes related to the topic of diet culture to be identified. There is room for potential bias within this research method, as questions designed by the researcher may lead participants to a certain answer, or they may respond in a way that is socially desirable, not always truthful.

Interview: School counsellor, 15 questions

The interview conducted was of significant usefulness to my Chapter Three in highlighting the reformation of body ideals driven by diet culture, and also emphasised the importance of challenging diet culture. Conducting this Interview allowed for qualitative data to be included in the PIP. A total of eight questions were asked and questions such as: What strategies or therapeutic approaches do you use to help clients challenge negative body image or internalised beauty standards? Provided insight specifically into strategies such as Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) and the ways that they work to combat diet culture for individuals, directly linking to my PIP. This Research method was deemed to be valid and reliable as the school counsellor interviewed has over 30 years of experience in their perspective field.

Allowing the quality and validity of my research to be amplified. There may be room for potential bias in this research method, as the questions asked may lead the interviewee to a certain answer.