

# Swimmers' Bodies: How TikTok Users View Males and Females

Emily Weber and Isabel Garlough-Shah

University of Wisconsin- Madison- School of Medicine and Public Health, Department of Pediatrics



## Introduction

### What we know:

- Social media has suggested to have a negative impact on adolescents' body image, which may lead to depression
- Social media may increase negative self-talk about adolescents girls' bodies from 15 to 19 years old

### The gap:

- Few studies have explored the impact social media has on body image issues within athletes, specifically swimmers

### Purpose:

The purpose of this study was to compare & analyze the themes of comment sections under male-presenting and female-presenting swimmers to find if there is a pattern on how TikTok users engage and comment on athletes' bodies.

## Methods

**Design:** Content Analysis

**Subject Population & Setting:** 100 comments under videos showing male and female swimmers' bodies on TikTok

**Data Collection:** Searched "Swimmer Body" on TikTok, scrolling every 3rd video until getting 5 from each gender; 10 comments were selected from each video by scrolling to every 3rd comment. (Data collected from 3/1/2021-7/7/2024)

### Inclusion Criteria:

Comments must be in English, had to mention body type, replies were excluded, & videos had to contain 50 or more comments

### Video Variables:

- Number of views, comments, likes, & saves

### Comment Variables:

Variable/Category (Repeat one for females, one for males)	Coding Criteria Examples of Key Words/Phrases	Don't Include:
Negative body image of oneself	"I wish I looked like that", using words "I" and "My"	Negative comments if it doesn't involve the physical body (ex. eye color, hair, etc)
Positive body image of oneself	"I feel seen..." "You make me feel better..." "Less insecure"	Positive comments about body image if it doesn't relate to the physical body. (ex. eye color, hair, etc)
Negative body image of creator	"You look bad" or "Your body is gross..." or other negative words that insult the creator of the video.	Negative comments if it doesn't involve the physical body (ex. outfit, haircut, etc)
Positive body image of creator	"You look great!" or other positive words that reaffirm the creator's body type.	Positive comments if they aren't a part of their physical body.

**Analysis Method:** Descriptive statistics were used to compare the presence of variables in comment sections and to compare user engagement between male and female swimmers' videos

## Results

Posts: n=10, Comments: n=100

### Video Engagement:

Variables	Male	Female
# of views (mean)	2,440,940	2,608,760
# of comments (mean)	<b>1,258.80</b>	<b>709.6</b>
# of likes (mean)	300,729.20	320,180
# of saves (mean)	<b>22,839.80</b>	<b>12,256</b>

●
I'm a swimmer but am kinda insecure about how broad my shoulders are looking
Reply

Comment in female's video

●
Swimmers have the best physique (coming from a swimmer 🥰)
Reply

Comment in male's video

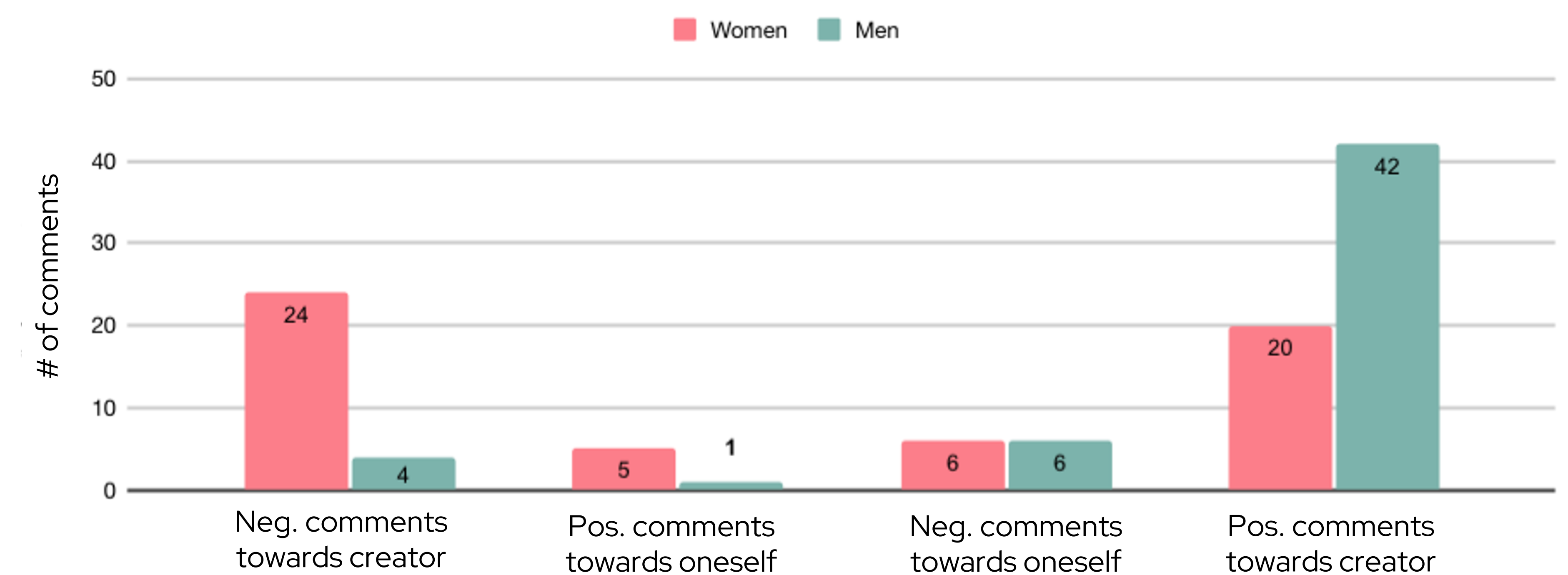
●
you're so beautiful! this is a DREAM honestly
Reply

Positive comment towards creator

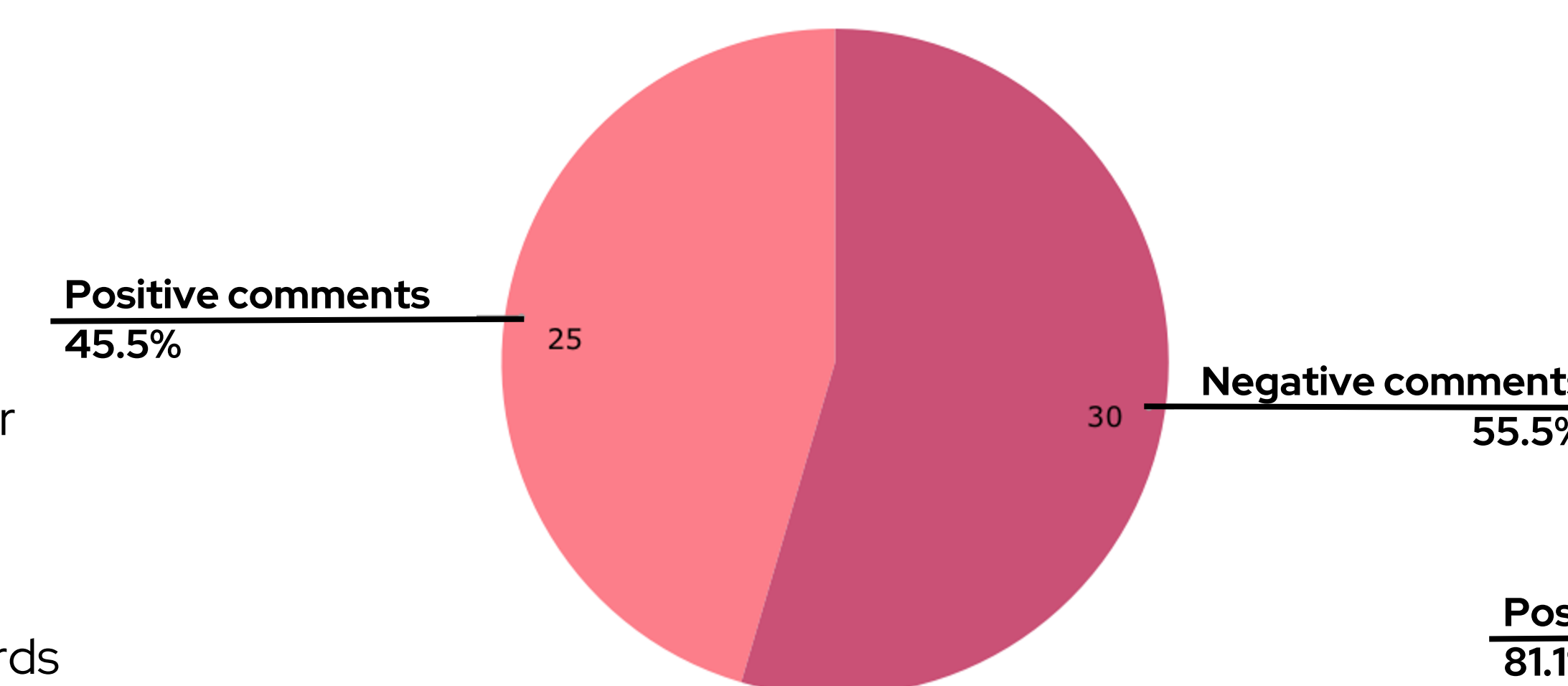
●
Roblox build
Reply

Negative comment towards creator

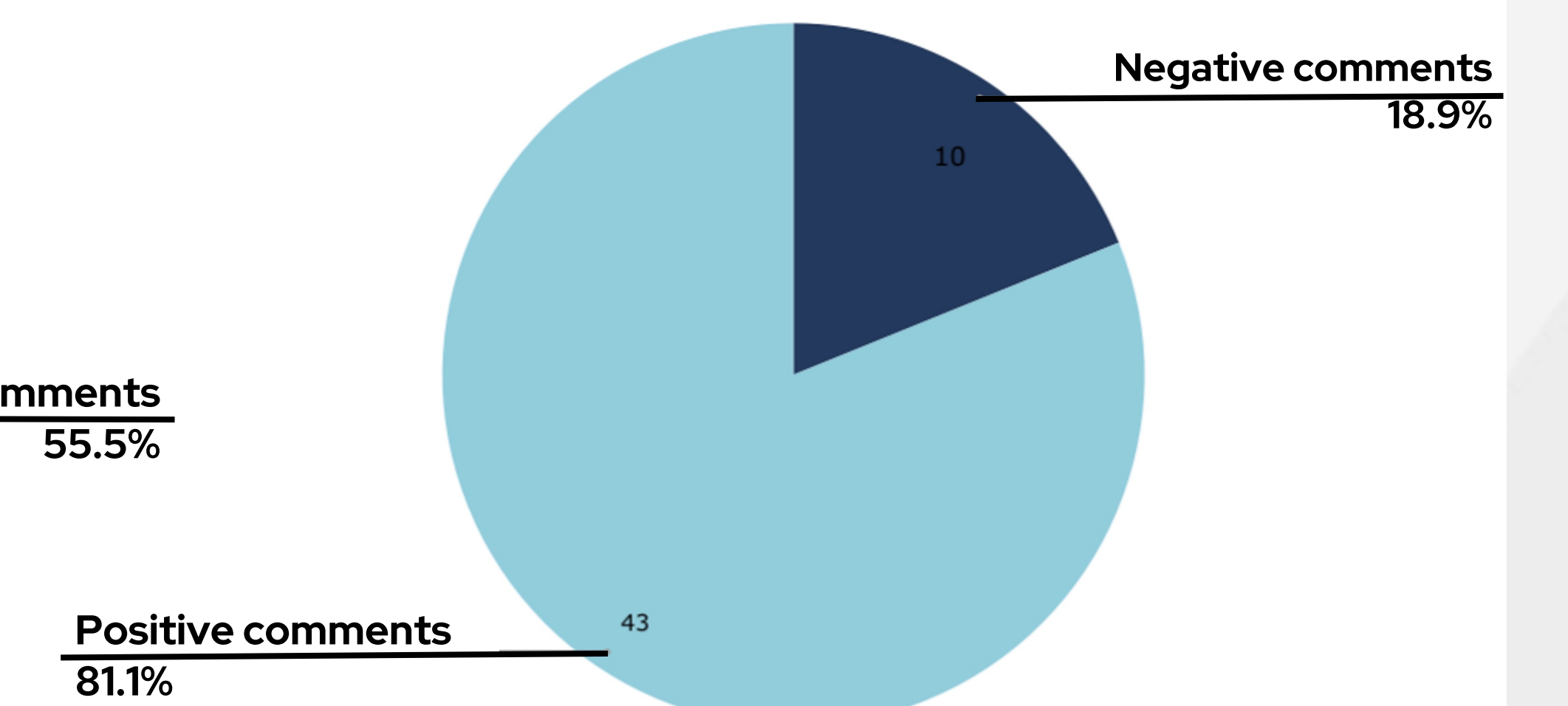
Female vs. Male's comments Under "Swimmer Bodies" TikTok Videos



Females' comment sections



Males' comment sections



## Conclusions

### Key Findings:

- Although males had less average views & likes, they had higher interaction with a higher average of comments and saves
- Males' comment sections had more than double the amount of positive comments towards the creator than females
- Females' comment sections had six times more negative comments towards the creator than males

### Limitations:

- This study excluded sexual comments as variables. Future research could explore the pattern of sexual comments between males and females
- A limitation is that only 10 comments were coded from each post

### Implications:

- Female swimmers tend to receive more negative comments on their athletic body types, which may impact their mental health and ability to perform their sport
- The notable increase in negative comments in females may come from the thinner body type that society has deemed "better" for females
- Future research could find how the different views of body image between males and females impact swimmers' mental health and their ability to perform well in their sport

## Acknowledgements

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## Contact us

Emily Weber  
emweber0830@gmail.com

