FRAZER FACULTY OF EDUCATION | GRADUATE SHOWCASE 2026

WHEN A SNAP BECOMES SELF-WORTH

Peer Feedback and Body Image on Snapchat in Early Adolescence
A Narrative Literature Review

JOHANNE RAE MARINO | MASTER OF EDUCATION

SUPERVISOR: DR. JENNIFER LAFFIER

EXPLORE THE RESEARCH

DIGITAL WELLNESS BRIEF

Scan for research insights and practical resources.

SCAN WITH YOUR PHONE

WHY THIS MATTERS

Early adolescence brings heightened sensitivity to appearance and peer evaluation. Snapchat combines image-based self-presentation with private, rapid feedback cues that may carry meaning for belonging and self-worth (Choukas-Bradley et al., 2022; Burnell et al., 2022).

RESEARCH PURPOSE

To examine how peer feedback, filters, comparison, and responsiveness cues intersect with body image on Snapchat and comparable platforms—and identify protective supports for youth.

METHOD | NARRATIVE SYNTHESIS

01 IDENTIFY
Peer-reviewed English-language literature from 2021 onward.

02 ORGANIZE
Source characteristics and relevance documented in a literature matrix.

03 SYNTHESIZE
Compare evidence across platform contexts and three recurring themes.

04 MOBILIZE
Translate findings into an evidence-informed digital wellness brief.

SCOPE & LIMITATIONS

This is an interpretive narrative review, not a systematic review or causal experiment. Snapchat-specific evidence is limited; some studies involve other platforms or older youth. Findings are not effect-size estimates (Sukhera, 2022).

THE CENTRAL TAKEAWAY

**IT'S NOT JUST SCREEN TIME.
IT'S WHAT INTERACTIONS COME TO MEAN.**

The review connects peer-response cues, appearance comparison, and self-presentation with variable body-image experiences—not a single inevitable outcome.

Scholarly contribution: a conceptual link between platform cues, adolescent interpretation, and protective supports.

FIGURE 1 | THE DIGITAL FEEDBACK PATHWAY



Note. Conceptual illustration created by Johanne Rae Marino using ChatGPT's AI image-generation tool (OpenAI, 2026).

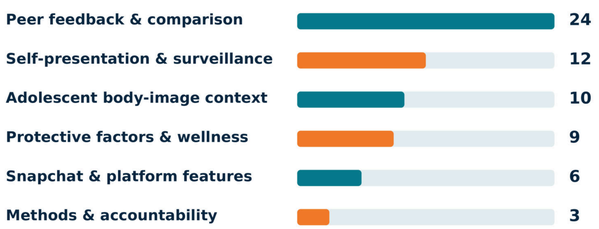
01 DIGITAL PEER CUES
Lenses, curated selfies, replies, read receipts, appearance comments.

02 MEANING-MAKING
Comparison, validation, monitoring, social acceptance or uncertainty.

03 VARIABLE EXPERIENCES
Body-image concerns, appearance pressure—or connection and belonging.

PROTECTIVE CONTEXT | Self-compassion | Body appreciation | Media literacy | Supportive relationships

FIGURE 2 | PRIMARY THEMES IN THE 64-SOURCE LITERATURE MATRIX



WHAT THE 64 SOURCES REVEAL

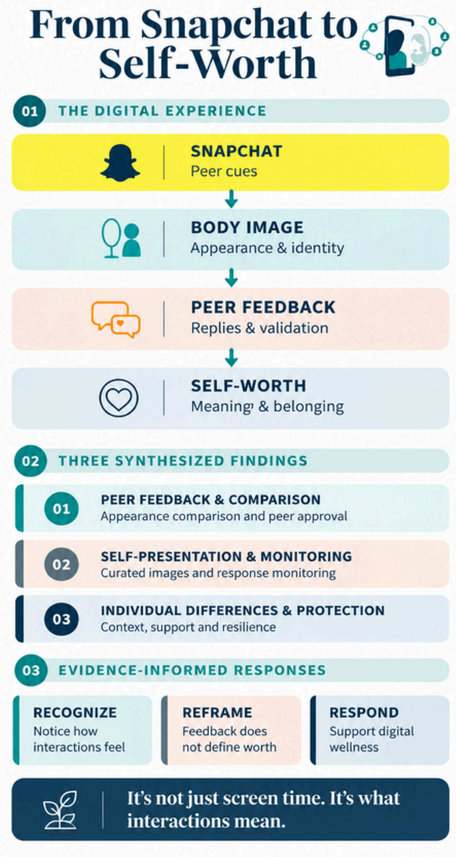
Bars map each source to its primary literature-matrix theme. They show the breadth of evidence reviewed—not how often adolescents experience these effects.

THE RESEARCH INSIGHT

Across themes, the meaning adolescents give to replies, comparison, and self-presentation matters. Snapchat-specific conclusions remain limited; context and protective supports are essential.

Source: Marino (2026), Appendix B, Table B1. Categories describe the project's literature matrix; this is not a systematic-review screening flow.

FROM SNAPCHAT TO SELF-WORTH



GUIDING RESEARCH QUESTION

What protective factors and digital wellness strategies may support healthier adolescent body image and social media engagement?

Protective factors · digital wellness · body image

THE CENTRAL TAKEAWAY

It is not just screen time. It is what online interactions mean to adolescents.

01 PEER FEEDBACK
Replies, reactions and silence

02 SELF-EVALUATION
Comparison and perceived validation

03 PROTECTIVE SUPPORTS
Relationships and digital literacy

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