

Female College Students' Instagram Use and Body Image: A Thematic Analysis

Maira Naveed^a

Abstract

In today's media-saturated world, the way women perceive their bodies is increasingly shaped by unrealistic and idealized images portrayed across digital platforms. As the gap between real bodies and media-driven beauty standards widens, feelings of dissatisfaction and self-criticism have become more common among young people. Research consistently shows that frequent exposure to such images, especially on highly visual platforms like Instagram, can intensify body-related anxiety, encourage unhealthy comparisons, and lead to behaviours such as disordered eating or excessive exercise. While women are often considered more vulnerable to these pressures, recent evidence suggests that men are also significantly affected, highlighting the widespread influence of media on body image. This study explores how young women experience and interpret body-related content on social media, with a particular focus on the role of social comparison in shaping their perceptions. At the same time, it acknowledges that social media is not entirely negative; it can also promote healthier lifestyles and positive body attitudes when used constructively. By examining how young women navigate these mixed influences, this research seeks to better understand their attitudes toward body image. Ultimately, it aims to contribute to a more balanced conversation about social media's psychological impact and to support efforts to promote healthier and more realistic self-perceptions.

Keywords: Instagram, Body Image, Social Comparison, Social Media

Article history:

Received on: January 11, 2026

Revised on: March 23, 2026

Accepted on: March 25, 2026

Published on: March 31, 2026

^a Consultant, RTS, Karachi, Pakistan | email: myra.im7@gmail.com

How to Cite

Naveed, M. (2026). Female College Students' Instagram Use and Body Image: A Thematic Analysis. *Journal of History and Social Sciences*, 17(1), 97–112. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19798863>

INTRODUCTION

As the real shape and size of women's bodies diverge from the media's current notions of beauty, it's unsurprising that people have negative feelings about their bodies. Numerous psychological studies find that frequent media stories are connected to young people's body image issues and promote unrealistic ideals of beauty that have a profound negative effect on women. The media touches on every part of a person's life, continuously portraying women in unrealistic and impossible ways. Certain studies indicate that women are more dissatisfied with their bodies than men; yet, some estimations indicate that males are as concerned about their bodies, with approximately 80.7 percent of males expressing concern about their bodies (Baker et al., 2019). In today's young people, having a negative body image and being terrified of growing obese are two difficulties that are becoming increasingly commonplace. Influencers are having an impact on both the male and female populations, which may be contributing to an increase in body image dissatisfaction and fatphobia, according to some research (Brown & Tiggemann, 2020).

According to the findings of a meta-analysis of 77 correlational and experimental research studies, exposure to mass media images of idealised bodies is connected with an increase in women's body-related anxiety. In a similar vein, researchers discovered in two independent meta-analyses of 25 studies that males' incorrect perceptions of their own bodies were significantly associated with media pressure. Typically, low self-esteem and bad behaviour, such as constant body surveillance and eating disorders, as well as excessive exercise in both men and women, are the result of such beliefs, according to research (Bue, 2020). Every day, according to a recent estimate, over 80 million photographs are uploaded to the Instagram social media platform. Instagram is an image-based social media platform with 700 million members and an estimated 80 million active users, according to the most recent figures. Given that social media has surpassed all other media platforms as the dominant source of information consumption, we can begin to understand the potential repercussions of this societal predicament for both current and future generations (Butkowski et al., 2019).

The Study's Scope

Over time, self-contradictory psychological theories can be used to explain the media's distortion of pictures of the female form. It is considered that when women watch models on television or in tabloids, they frequently participate in the social comparison process) and media images. This is because body image research is frequently conducted using quantitative approaches, such as questionnaires, which obscure the complexities of the experience and interactions. Because people can have both negative and positive mindsets, keeping both contradicts weight loss. Through social media, examine the experiences of young women who are unsatisfied with their bodies. 2) Examine the attitudes toward women's bodies that influence their body image. 3) Examine young women's attitudes around body image. Social media can benefit your body image in a variety of ways. Certain shoppers may find inspiration in health and wellness, exercise, and plant-based bills. Social media users can retain a healthy and good attitude toward their bodies as a result of these arrangements.

LITERATURE REVIEW

When it comes to manipulating their own self-esteem on social media, celebrities have been extensively criticised, but there are strong reasons to investigate the influence of edited images on "ordinary" Instagram users. Social comparative literature shows that social factors (such as personality and IQ) as well as physical attributes (such as weight, height, and physics) have enhanced public expectations (Jones, 2001). In general, people like to make social comparisons with others who are in a similar situation to themselves. Furthermore, peer comparisons might have an impact on their body image in the same way that the media has an impact on it. One reason for this could be that peers are perceived to be more comparable to themselves than celebrities, making them more appropriate for comparison.

Theoretical Basis of the Argument

Body dissatisfaction can be caused by media use in two ways, as illustrated by the sociocultural image of the body model. First, the ideal internalisation of socially acceptable beauty can occur, and second, the urge to compare one's own appearance to that of other people can occur. Insiderization is the degree to which individuals accept aesthetic ideas as own meaningful thoughts and ambitions, rather than as notions and goals that have been established by society as a whole. In this article, the basic premise is that, while the vast majority of people grasp social standards of beauty, not everyone interprets them in the same way, and those who internalise social norms are more likely to suffer from physical dissatisfaction and nutritional deficiencies (Chang et al., 2019). According to the second viewpoint, people have an intrinsic urge to compare themselves to others in order to determine their growth and status in all parts of life (perhaps including physical appearance), and that these comparisons are both attainable and helpful (Cohen et al., 2017). When compared to other individuals who are deemed superior (bottom-up comparison) or inferior (top-down comparison) (top-down comparison). While bottom-up comparisons might have bad implications (for example, increasing one's discontent with one's physical appearance), downhill comparisons can have advantageous consequences (for example, dissatisfaction with the body; research shows that people are generally more dissatisfied with the body). Comparing oneself to others (or anything else) has the potential to have detrimental results (Chang et al., 2019).

Body Image

It has been established that media exposure varies and is connected with higher unhappiness with one's body image. Previous research has indicated that media exposure to fine and beautiful media images might have a negative impact on women's images and emotions. This is also true for guys, who exhibit increased feelings of muscle dissatisfaction after viewing ideal masculine photos (Faelens et al., 2021). "The mental picture of the body, the attitude toward the body, attractiveness, and health" is how body image is defined. Body image refers to not just how people see themselves, but also how others see them, and it has a direct impact on self-esteem. Disapproval, or unhappiness with one's body image, is known as "body image disorder," "body dissatisfaction," or "body image anxiety" in the literature. These phrases are used interchangeably to indicate poor body image perceptions. Body image is a significant part of consumer identity, according to Dittmar (2007). It has the potential to influence not only how a person treats himself, but also how he behaves. Body image is important for self-esteem and can have an impact on mental health and behaviour. A positive body image, which is often linked to self-esteem, boosts self-esteem and

overall well-being, whereas unfavourable assessments can lead to negative thoughts, depression, and anxiety. We present an overview of the conventional and digital media literature on fitness consumers' body image and behaviour in the following paragraphs.

Influence of Media on Men's Ideas About the Ideal Body

In Western postmodern countries, the media plays an important role in transmitting information, influencing decisions, and setting social ideals for physical beauty. The media is believed to have a considerable impact on viewers' ideas about their bodies, according to scientists, for example, Men are generally portrayed as strong, slim, and slender in the media, and women are frequently portrayed as healthy and skinny in the media as well. Because of this, women are rumoured to be concerned about gaining weight, whereas males prefer to be leaner or more muscular in appearance. When it comes to body image, men and women have different ideas about what constitutes a good look. For men, a V-shaped physique with a large chest (and shoulders) is ideal; for women, the ideal body is extremely slim with small buttocks (and legs); and for children, the ideal body is an hourglass figure. According to Cafri et al. (2002), the average male participant in their study desired to acquire "14.96 pounds" of muscle mass, whereas the typical male participant in their study desired to gain "14.96 pounds" of muscle mass. Due to the goal of the media to obtain an ideal figure, men suffer bad thoughts about their bodies and are under intense pressure to achieve that ideal figure as rapidly as possible, according to the study. When researchers looked at the relationship between male body image and media exposure, they discovered that media stress can contribute to body dissatisfaction, low self-esteem, psychological stress (such as depression), and behavioural consequences (such as eating disorders and substance addiction) (eg excessive exercise).

Having a perfect physique can lead to young individuals having a negative self-image and engaging in a variety of tactics aimed at improving body image, such as using muscle-building tablets or steroids, exercising excessively, or undergoing plastic surgery to improve their appearance. Body. To the best of our knowledge, all of these activities are considered to be markers of muscle abnormalities or dysfunction in the literature. It is common for people to be unhappy with and/or misjudge the level of disease in their native muscle tissue, which is characterised by anomalies of this type. People who suffer from muscle dysmorphia, according to Pope et al., are pathologically concerned with their overall look (1997, 548). They are preoccupied with the fact that they are not large or powerful enough; weightlifting, dieting, and other similar activities have taken over their daily life. Muscle anomalies are associated with a great deal of anxiety about how their bodies would appear in public, disruption of social and professional functioning, and the excessive use of anabolic steroids and other drugs without considering the long-term consequences. Because male muscle is expected to be larger than female muscle, despite the fact that the illness affects women, males are more typically diagnosed with it than women.

Body Image and Social Media

Young customers' behaviour and life decisions are heavily influenced by social media. In terms of body perception, there is limited study on the effects of social media exposure and body image anxiety on young consumers in the extant literature. Body image research and social media can be separated into two sorts: (a) content analysis studies that look at the types of photos that are published, and (b) experimental studies that look at how social media affects people's impressions

of their bodies. The initial set of studies looked at Instagram photographs and examined the content to see what the most popular topics were. Tiggemann and Zaccardo (2015), for example, studied the content of 600 fitness photographs and discovered that the majority of images of women feature only one body type, slender and healthy, and that the majority of images contain objectification characteristics. According to a web analysis of #fitspiration messages on Twitter, they are largely about appearances and weight loss, feature adverts frequently, and have a large viewership.

Body perception and behavior appear to be linked to social media activity. Farduli and Vartanian (2015) investigate how women who compare their looks report more negative emotions and inconsistencies in their face, hair, and skin when they spend time on Facebook. Brown and Tigeman (2016) found that participants who saw weight loss photographs had considerably higher degrees of body dissatisfaction than those who saw neutral vacation pictures in an experiment. Ahadzade et al. (2017) studied 273 Malaysian students (62 percent of whom were women) and discovered that Instagram use is linked to body dissatisfaction (e.g., higher internalization of weight loss ideals, body observation, and desire to lose weight) and poorer self-esteem. Furthermore, they discovered that those who are more concerned about their appearance have a larger gap between their genuine and desired features. The detrimental effects of using Instagram on body satisfaction are tempered by continual self-esteem and self-doubt, according to a subsequent study by Ahadzade et al. (2017). (i.e., the negative effects are stronger for users with lower self-esteem). Hendrix et al. (2017) found that posting photos on Instagram positively predicts body weakness and dissatisfaction through an intermediary comparative variable of female user appearance in a study of 185 female students from the United States, implying that female users who participated in more Instagram photos had more body weakness and dissatisfaction. On Instagram, comparisons of looks reveal increased degrees of body dissatisfaction. Pritchard et al. (2017) investigate the impact of several motivating images on the image of the female body (photos with and without text, exercise, and body position). Watching fitness photographs diminishes body satisfaction and promotes negative feelings, regardless of appearance or the presence of text, according to the findings. Individual differences in diverse activities such as Instagram, as well as the frequency of such conduct, as well as the desire to use Instagram as a mediator, are investigated by Dumas et al. (2017).

The Emergence of Fitness Hashtag Communities on Instagram

In Instagram, users who have public accounts can tag images and videos with a hashtag (#), allowing other users to see the tags and eventually follow the user who created them. Before uploading an image, users can make changes to it, such as changing the colour, resolution, or contour of the human body. As a result of this type of filter manipulation, Instagram users are more likely to be exposed to other people's idealised portrayals. The photo-based social network Instagram is perceived to be more intimate than Twitter or Facebook since it is a more personal platform. The reasons why people create Instagram accounts are varied. They include satisfying their social interactions, observing people, recalling memories, becoming more popular, expressing their identities through social media platforms, and developing their creativity, such as by showcasing their photographic abilities. Individuals and their bodies are analysed and critiqued by others based on their online appearance, as a result of this phenomenon. Due of these differences between Instagram and previously researched social media platforms such as Facebook, a full investigation of user interactions with Instagram is required.

Body Image and Social Media

Women's body images are negatively influenced by idealised images displayed in traditional media forms such as fashion magazines and television, according to a number of studies, particularly in the case of women who have been paying attention to their bodies for a lengthy period of time (e.g., pregnant women). According to the findings of a recent but expanding study, exposure to social media (most notably Facebook) can have detrimental consequences that are comparable to those of traditional media exposure (Fardouly et al., 2018). On the other hand, social media differs from traditional media in that the great majority of content is created and shared by third-party collaborators, as opposed to traditional media formats. Through social media platforms, individuals can not only create their own profiles and publish photographs and information, but they can also "watch" and interact with the messages of other users (Grogan et al., 2018). Two activities that are widely considered to be particularly beneficial for people who struggle with body image and eating disorders are the publication of images and participation in viewing activities (Hendrickse et al., 2017).

A number of related studies discovered that women's unhappiness with their bodies as well as physical inspection were correlated with Instagram use (Mackson et al., 2019). According to the available scientific evidence, over exposure to idealised photographs on Instagram (when compared to control images) has also been proven to have a negative impact on women's physical satisfaction (McComb & Mills, 2021). The negative impact of social networks, as well as traditional media, is often associated with the process of social comparison, just as it is with traditional media. Social networks, like traditional media, are a good example of this. Indeed, some experts believe that social comparison is particularly important for social media because the vast majority of the objects of comparison are individuals of the same age rather than models from fashion magazines, as these experts assert. According to these experts, the vast majority of the objects of comparison are individuals of the same age rather than models from fashion magazines (Prichard et al., 2020). Social comparison is defined as the process through which people seek comparisons with others who are similar to themselves rather than with people who are different from themselves in order to boost their self-confidence. When it comes to uploading their "best" photographs on Instagram, on the other hand, users are more likely to select images that have been carefully captured and selected for their maximum attractiveness before being further enhanced with filters and other alterations (Roeza et al., 2021).

Instagram and the Real World

Like we previously stated, while some Instagram content is created by colleagues and may therefore be beneficial, the vast bulk of it is fabricated and artificial. People spend a significant amount of time adjusting lighting, obtaining the finest viewpoints, taking a large number of shots, and applying filters or Photoshop to their photographs in order to best represent themselves. Therefore, the Instagram world looks to be dominated by people who appear to be unlike the viewer, with apparently ideal bodies, lifestyles, and relationships, as opposed to the rest of the world (Stein et al., 2021). As more and more people see (and get frustrated with) the fact that much of Instagram's content is impractical, the platform is forced to tackle the facts of the matter (Tiggemann & Anderberg, 2020).

There will be two images of themselves submitted side by side: the perfect Instagram version with excellent lighting and posture (such as firm abdominal muscles) to demonstrate their best, more natural condition, and the second image of themselves side by side to demonstrate their best, more natural condition. Options utilising more natural body positions are possible (eg visible tummy tuck). The utilisation of camera angles, lighting, posture, and muscular flexing are all employed to demonstrate how perceptions of weight and appearance may be significantly influenced by a wide range of variables. A number of experimental investigations have been carried out to study the effect of viewing images on Instagram on the processing of social comparisons in order to disrupt this processing. A study conducted by Farduly and Rapi (2019) examines the impact of three makeup artists' idealised cosmetics and selfies without makeup on their subjects (more natural). When taking self-portraits alone, they discovered that taking fewer selfies without makeup and more selfies with makeup can help to counteract the negative effects of using bad facial cosmetics when taking selfies alone (Modica, 2020).

In addition to potentially protecting against physical dissatisfaction, watching Instagram and real images can increase physical acceptance, which is an indicative of a healthy body image. Watching Instagram and real photographs A positive body image is a complex structure that is linked to feelings of love, respect, and acceptance for one's own body, and may include characteristics that are in opposition to social and cultural standards (Verrastro et al., 2020). In order to understand that this is more than a lack of negative body image, it is necessary to recognise that More than one study supports this idea, finding that physical appraisal is connected with many positive outcomes (such as self-esteem, adaptive eating, and self-help) (in addition to physical satisfaction or unhappiness) (beyond physical satisfaction or displeasure) (Celia, 2021).

METHODOLOGY

Information and Variables

This study is qualitative in character. I am capable of communicating directly with the participants. Following the interview, this boosted my confidence and prompted me to improve interpersonal abilities that I may apply to my employment or future studies. Additionally, data collection is straightforward because all six participants consented to participate in the interview on the agreed-upon date. Mood issues, low self-esteem, and inappropriate methods of weight loss are all variables. In the spring semester of February 2022, students from Karachi based universities were selected to participate in this study. Age, gender, and social media use are the sole exclusion criteria, which means that only women aged 18-24 who actively use Instagram are eligible to join.

Six young ladies hired by Manchester Metropolitan University will be included in the sample. Participants were chosen from a pool of candidates who satisfied the selection criterion of being female between the ages of 18 and 25, and having used social media. Assure anonymity by assigning each participant an alias. We studied the photographs in this qualitative study until theoretical saturation was attained. Instagram-rated photographs are images of fitness models' bodies uploaded on the social media platform (usually women). Numerous ladies in this category advocate for fitness and attempt to persuade others to reduce weight and maintain a healthy lifestyle. The lead author (Hong Kong) created an Instagram account for this study and utilises the analysis app's mobile version.

RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

Analysis & Discussion

The key difficulties were addressed by a study of the participants who were visible in the dataset, which revealed some interesting findings. The purpose of these four key challenges is to have a better knowledge of young women's body image experiences and viewpoints through the usage of social media platforms. This section seeks to provide a response to the following research question: "How do young women perceive their bodies in connection to their use of social networking sites?"

Theme 1 - Digital Altered Images

Because many participants expressed concern that the photos they see on the internet are damaging to their body image, digitising photographs has emerged as a popular topic of discussion. This gives others a negative impression of you, which leads them down a path of self-destruction. Despite this, they are well aware that these physical objectives are unpleasant and difficult to fulfil. Participant's awareness of resized images, which are commonly shared on social media, as well as editing tools are demonstrated by each participant (especially Photoshop). Some filters can be misleading and distort the face greatly, so be cautious while using them (eg clean skin, no fine wrinkles, no bags under the eyes, smooth makeup, thinning). When it comes to unrealistic body ideals, picture retouching, altered digital media, and growing popularity, research has shown that women are negatively affected by comparisons to these unattainable body ideals, as indicated by their reaction.

"People utilize filter programs, and I would believe they alter body image. I suppose they are there to let you know, to make the images look more glamorous or to distort how they look in terms of faces. I suppose it's more related to the idea that such a filter will make a person look better merely because you know the face, not the appearance." – P1

"You understand that just gazing at images is not genuine. In truth, people don't look that way. Nowadays, especially when you have access to technologies like Photoshop, anything may happen. " (Jada, which limits authenticity since modifying tools are highly powerful." – P2

People, as Ayesha points out, have the potential to enhance and edit photos in the same way that media professionals do for magazines and other forms of media (Marwick, 2015):

'For example, Britney Spears bares her genuine body in front of the camera and acknowledges that she has cellulite.' However, the editors have managed to conceal it in her photographs. – P3

The hypothesis of spontaneous divergence is linked to the concept of "number modification" (Higgins, 1987). When idealized media pictures are viewed, the gap between the real self and the real self widens, according to the hypothesis. As a result, giving the impression to others that a person is working to obtain the appearance that society wants of him leads to bad behaviour. Imani, on the other hand, discusses how digitizing images can lead to an unhealthy obsession with skin tone in general, not only in certain areas of the body. This is because light skin tones and white facial characteristics have long been associated with great attractiveness and beauty.

Theme 2 – Third Person Perspective of Self-Image

Family, friends, peers, and partners' opinions can have a favourable or negative impact on body image. Participants discussed their moms' judgments of their appearance, which can influence the development of a poor body image, high expectations, and destructive eating behaviour. The majority of the comments are regarded unfavourable and unpleasant because people interpret them personally, causing them to have a bad perception of their bodies because they feel "big," "ugly," and "insecure." The moms of P3 and P4 are concerned about their daughters' weight:

“Yes, I was obese as a child. My mum pointed out my weight and suggested I would wear loose clothes. So that became stuck in my head ever since and I started to lose weight. ” – P3

Yes, as my mother constantly reminding me, I'm becoming big and I have no words. It makes me feel insecure and makes me feel like I have to go to the gym as frequently as possible – P4

The three-part model of body image influence can be used to explain the reasoning behind the decision. Several variables, including parents, the media, and peers, are identified in the model as having an impact on subsequent development of body image (Thompson et al., 1999). An individual's quality of life can be significantly diminished if they have a negative body image, which can result in mental health concerns, low self-esteem, and unhealthy weight loss behaviours. Safia, on the other hand, stated that the statements made by her family had no effect on her. Due to the fact that she has a group of friends who are not critical of her appearance, she has been able to achieve this. Despite the fact that she is highly aware of her body image, she is not influenced by media and social media portrayals of the ideal figure. Not all women subscribe to and accept unreasonably high ideals of physical beauty.

"I truly didn't take people's thoughts into account. I looked at myself and understood that I was not the perfect type of body that the media stated I was. Fine ideas are presented in an unrealistic fashion, and I do not believe at all. It's all about working for myself and growing. That's why I don't take people's opinions into account. You know, since I know I can see with my own eyes what I have to do My buddies, I really don't have any difficulties with them, you know. They did support the trip, but as you know, some individuals in the family may be very negative about this type of problem. Yes, that disappoints you, but I don't. " – P1

Theme 3 – Positive Effects of Social Media

It has been shown that different viewpoints exist on how social media can help enhance body image. The premise is supported by a number of participants, who talk about how social media influences and encourages them to be physically active and strong, to visit the gym, to consume a healthier food, and to live a healthier lifestyle in general. Yes, these celebrities get up early in the morning, go to the gym, have breakfast in the morning, and get plenty of sleep. We have the ability to do the same if we so choose. The lines 459-460 of Aisha provide an example. Yes, I agree with you, but in a negative way. The only thing that comes to mind is that it is encouraging women to go to the gym in order to lose weight. In addition, maintain a balanced and healthy lifestyle. Shahida is a young woman who lives in the United States.

The only advantage is that it serves to motivate women to avoid being overweight and severely ill as a result of their lifestyle choices. This may lead to you joining a gym or setting up a home gym.

This resulted in me losing a significant amount of weight. I don't go to the gym anymore, but I'm in good shape and I'm more satisfied with my appearance. To be really honest, the photographs from the trainings that I find on the Internet provide me with a great deal of motivation. - Maham

According to the idea of self-objectification (Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997), participants experience a reduced state of self-objectification while watching music videos, as Pritchard and Tiggemann (2012) report. Exercise, it has been proposed, may cause people to pay more attention to their physical motions than to their looks, lowering objectification of the circumstance and negative body image judgements. However, social media appears to have a variety of effects on body image. Jada shares an intriguing narrative in which she discloses that becoming a vegetarian has considerably changed her lifestyle, resulting in less body dissatisfaction. Jada explains how veganism has influenced her approach to living a healthy lifestyle:

"Yes, it comes from celebs like Kardashian. I feel pressure from them. I have pressure ... (pauses) their images on Instagram. Because of my comparisons with Kardashian, especially Kim, I end up with a poor body image. he had ideas like, "Why can't I look like this? !! This sight will make me joyful and I shall live a happy life. " I wanted curves because Kardashian influenced this image of the body. Also, if we talk about the face, I would want big lips and a little nose – P5.

It was discovered that the most frequently encountered themes in the study were young women's experiences with and perceptions of their own body image as they interacted with other people through the use of various social media platforms. The features that were shared by all participants were examined, and the findings revealed that, as a result of their use of social media, women have overwhelmingly negative attitudes toward their physical appearances. The only thing that the majority of participants mentioned was that it encouraged them to be more physically active and eat healthier. When women connect on social media on a regular basis, according to Tiggemann and Miller (2010) and Festinger's theory of "social comparison," they are more likely to engage in a comparison process that results in high levels of misery. The use of quantitative approaches as well as younger demographics have been employed in past research in this area (Tiggemann & Slater, 2013). A series of in-depth interviews is conducted first, after which Brown and Clark's thematic analysis concepts are applied (2006). Finally, women who compare themselves to pop culture icons have strong emotional ties to these figures as a result (theme 4).

Overall, this study was successful in generating and exploring body image awareness and the use of social media among young women through their personal experiences. It is hoped that this study will help to improve the overall quality of published material on body image and social media. As a result of the study question, four subjects were found, each of which was related to previously published material in some way. There are, however, many limitations to the study that should be taken into consideration in future research. Due to the small size of the study's sample (just six participants), it was unable to capture the full range of viewpoints held by young women in the community. The findings can't be summed because they only relate to the six young ladies who participated in the study and are therefore not representative of the entire population of the United Kingdom. Because the participants were students, their perceptions of their bodies when interacting with others on a social networking site differed according to their different degrees of educational attainment. In order to gain a better understanding of social media and body image among young women in the United Kingdom, a larger sample size is recommended in the future.

While the use of theme analysis has its advantages, it also has certain disadvantages, such as the inability to maintain consistency and consistency in a report (Braun and Clark, 2006). These discrepancies and inconsistencies can be identified through the usage of separate reports. Furthermore, because the method forces participants to concentrate on the subject, they lose their ability to distinguish themselves from one another. Other qualitative methods, such as explanatory phenomenological analysis, will be useful in future research since they allow for the inspection and explanation of each participant's life experience without distorting the results of the investigation (Smith et al., 2009 & Creswell, 2012).

Reflexivity

Researchers should think about how their actions affect the process when performing qualitative research. The interviews in this study revealed new insights on body image and social media issues. I was motivated to conduct study because of my interest in this topic. As a researcher, I'm interested in learning more about how young women think about their bodies and how they utilize social media. Due to a desire to better comprehend their experience, quantitative research is not appropriate. As a result, this research adopts a qualitative approach. I was able to communicate with the participants on a personal level. It helped me acquire interpersonal skills that I could apply for work or future research beyond the interview, which enhanced my confidence. Furthermore, because all six participants agreed to be interviewed on the agreed-upon date, data collection was simple. However, I believe that if I used additional tests, some of my collaborators' replies would be expanded. It was all owing to my lack of semi-structured interview experience, which influenced various areas of the interview. I didn't think the participants would continue to talk after a long gap, so I went on to the following subject. As a result, I believe I may be missing some crucial information.

CONCLUSION

According to this, the obvious explanation for why these women use blogs - which appears to be the primary reason for which women use these sites - is correct. People who receive social support are more likely to feel self-acceptance, confidence, and love as well as a sense of belonging and connection with others, according to researchers Albrecht and Adelman. Many bloggers express dissatisfaction with their family, friends, and classmates in their comments. Accepted suggestions. Perhaps blogs might provide the essential recognition and social support for these users. Social support, according to researchers, can help people take control of their situations, particularly when it comes to health issues. This will help Yu explain why so many women seek answers and support from eating disorder blogs. There are four types of social support, according to Bambina: affective / emotional, informative, instrumental, and friendly.

Emotional support can take the form of love, encouragement, empathy, empathy, and care, among other things. Information support can take many forms, including advice, facts, and solutions to problems. Tool support includes assistance with tasks, challenges, and/or contractual duties. Persuading people that they are significant and that they are a part of something larger is at the heart of communication. Both affective and informational support are examples of sorts of assistance that appear to be consistent with the findings of this study. Affective and emotional support Both of these sorts of assistance contribute to the understanding of why people turn to these websites in the first place. By looking at the profiles of the women who use these sites, we

can learn more about them and the challenges they are dealing with in their lives. As previously said, many women rely on these websites for information, facts, and/or decision-making purposes.

These blogs provide a knowledge-sharing community on a variety of topics, whether you're looking for eating disorder treatments or information and solutions in other aspects of your life, these blogs can help. Women who use these sites also appear to offer support, love, and compassion to persons who appear to be struggling or mourning on these forums, according to the information available on the sites. For many people, one of the most tempting aspects of these programmes is the opportunity to interact with other people "like everyone else." Supporters, medical professionals, and family members were all classified by the researchers using Twitter. It is possible that some of these women will seek support or assistance from a health professional. Women are more likely to connect with people who are similar to them because it is easier to connect with someone who understands your circumstance than it is to connect with someone who does not. A number of the women who use these websites may already be able to manage with the stress of eating disorders as well as the stress of normal life through the employment of a range of coping methods. As evidenced by recent cases, many bariatric surgery patients employ a variety of stress management techniques to cope with the anxiety associated with the process itself.

Coping is described as the application of one's cognitive and behavioural abilities in order to cope with stressful circumstances. People employ coping mechanisms in a variety of ways, including seeking and providing social support to others who are in need of aid. coping mechanisms Consider these online blogs as support groups where people can seek assistance or offer assistance to those who are willing to fight for what they believe is right in their respective situations. Alternatively, in other cases, consumers are more likely to pick an alternative strategy of coping, such as voluntary concealment, which involves refraining from disclosing their eating issue to their family and friends. The desire to avoid worrying or troubling their loved ones is one of the reasons people may choose not to notify their loved ones about their eating disorders or eating disorders. Because they are concerned that others may attempt to prevent them from engaging in their eating problem, some people choose to keep their eating disorder a secret voluntarily. The majority of eating disorder blogs, on the other hand, are a community of people who are willing to share information.

A large number of people participate in internet forums where they can share their experiences, anxieties, and concerns regarding eating and body issues with others. Users tend to be at ease while expressing themselves on this forum. Others may choose to suppress information about their eating disorder in order to avoid being judged or humiliated by others. People suffering from eating disorders, as described by Borzekowski et al., may exhibit a wide range of signs and symptoms. Some women may choose to use screening as a coping mechanism in addition to other methods. A large part of the screening process is avoiding unpleasant situations and conversing with people who may not understand or who may be harmful to their well-being. In the event that they fear their contacts with a certain person would be negative or detrimental to their attempts to overcome eating disorders, consumers will conduct background checks on them or limit their exposure to that person. As a modern woman and researcher, my personal experience with this research was a powerful one for me.

The same challenges that many other women are dealing with when it comes to body image, social stress, loneliness, and eating disorders affect me as well. While researching for this post, I realised that many people assumed these blogs promoted eating disorder recovery when I told them about

it. This appears to be a good thing, so I decided to write it. I astonished them by telling them that these sites promote eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia, and they responded by saying they had expected the blogs to be negative in nature. Then they're usually interested in knowing more about blogs and are startled to discover that such sites actually exist. For a long time, I believed that these blogs were harmful and detrimental in a variety of ways. Astounded by what I uncovered, I learned that these blogs are actually positive in many respects, serving as a supporting community and a space for women to communicate with one another. Personally, I believe that there are much too many comments on these sites to be considered legitimate. Since I've completed my study, I've gained new insight into the subject of these posts. Now I understand why women use these websites, and I'm relieved to know that I'm not the only one who struggles with body issues.

Limitations

Because this is a qualitative study, researchers have not interacted with customers directly, and they can only make suggestions for future research because of this. These blogs may have users who are lying or not being completely truthful in their comments, or they may contain users who are concealing information or feelings. The results and notions are the researcher's interpretation because the researcher has no direct connection or contact with the individuals. When doing research on a blog or website, researchers take a certain amount of risk. Blogs and websites are frequently updated, deleted, or shut down. It's not rare for a website domain name to expire, become dormant, change, or be removed by the domain's host. When pro-ana / mia blogs first debuted, they were frequently taken down by blog domains due to content issues. Another possible cause is that blog owners may decide to delete or cease maintaining and posting on their blog or website for a specific length of time or indefinitely due to confidentiality, confidentiality, or a lack of interest to keep the blog updated and posted on.

As I previously stated, my research indicates that some people may use these social networking sites to seek and provide help. Supporting their eating disorder, dysfunctional family, weight loss, eating disorder recovery, pregnancy, self-harm, quitting smoking, changing occupations or making decisions, relationships, loneliness, high altitude, despair, or suicide are all possibilities. Support is sometimes underestimated, yet it is crucial. People can discover amusement or knowledge on social media, television, and the internet, and most likely support. The concept of relationships is another element to examine for inclusion in remuneration-based research. Many of these people appear to read and converse through blogs. The blog will be used by users to contact with one another, to discuss their situations, to discuss their challenges, and to discuss their daily lives. They all want to take part, not just one of them. Not only do these blogs give a safe refuge for this, but they also allow users to communicate and connect with strangers who are going through similar experiences, ideas, and body image issues.

While the theory of use and satisfaction can assist explain how these women respond to their combined cognitive, emotional, personal, and social demands, it has little, if any, application to stress-free requirements. There's little evidence in the blog that these ladies are utilizing these sites to unwind, relax, or reconnect with themselves. Perhaps one of the reasons for this is that these women are dealing with a serious issue, such as body image and eating disorders, and they are still serious, dark, mysterious, and sorrowful in the tiniest sense. These ladies will not explore these sites to avoid eating disorders, according to the researchers. In fact, individuals appear to seek

more information, insight, counsel, and support from these blogs than from others. On these platforms, women did not appear to be at ease or alone. These websites nearly compound their problems by focusing on weight, shame, inferiority, and the nutrition complex, as well as food rejection and eating disorders.

Future Research

Future research could include tracking and interviewing people who use, interact with, create, or host these sites. Future research could focus on the owners or authors of these websites; as a result, we may discover that the media's influence is more subtle than many people believe. "Historically, women's body dissatisfaction has drew more research interest than males, in part because research reveals that women report higher degrees of body dissatisfaction than men....", and a stronger emphasis on weight loss, according to Grover, Keel, Mitchell, and Garner (2006). "Historically, women's body dissatisfaction has sparked more research than men's, in part because studies have indicated that women report higher degrees of body dissatisfaction than men and place a greater priority on weight loss" (p. 65).

On guys who publish on training sites, research can be done. Men can be polled or interviewed to learn how they feel about their bodies and how they use social media blogs to obtain their ideal physique. Guys suffering from anorexia may be studied, as well as men suffering from the Adonis complex. Men frequently use the phrase "Adonis complex" to explain their own physical issues. In Greek mythology, Adonis is a god with a flawless male form. Although it is stated that males find it more difficult to declare or accept that they have an issue with their body. Some guys believe it is in their nature to strive for perfection in their bodies. If a man admits to having a physical ailment, some men may perceive it as a sign of weakness or lack of character.

Competing Interests

The authors declared no known competing interests.

REFERENCES

- Altabe, M. (1998). Ethnicity and body image: Quantitative and qualitative analysis. *International journal of eating disorders*, 23(2), 153–159. doi:10.1002/(SICI)1098-108X(199803)23:23.0.CO;2-J
- Baker, N., Ferszt, G. and Breines, J.G., (2019). A qualitative study exploring female college students' Instagram use and body image. *Cyberpsychology, behavior, and social networking*, 22(4), 277-282.
- Brown, Z. and Tiggemann, M., (2020). A picture is worth a thousand words: The effect of viewing celebrity Instagram images with disclaimer and body positive captions on women's body image. *Body image*, 33, 190-198.
- Bue, A.C.C., (2020). The looking glass selfie: Instagram use frequency predicts visual attention to high-anxiety body regions in young women. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 108, p.106329.

- Butkowski, C.P., Dixon, T.L. and Weeks, K., (2019). Body surveillance on Instagram: Examining the role of selfie feedback investment in young adult women’s body image concerns. *Sex Roles*, 81(5), 385-397.
- Celia, N., (2021). *The influence of Instagram screen time on body image dissatisfaction in female emerging adults* (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Pelita Harapan).
- Chang, L., Li, P., Loh, R.S.M. and Chua, T.H.H., (2019). A study of Singapore adolescent girls’ selfie practices, peer appearance comparisons, and body esteem on Instagram. *Body image*, 29, 90-99.
- Cohen, R., Newton-John, T. and Slater, A., (2017). The relationship between Facebook and Instagram appearance-focused activities and body image concerns in young women. *Body image*, 23, 183-187.
- Faelens, L., Hoorelbeke, K., Cambier, R., van Put, J., Van de Putte, E., De Raedt, R. and Koster, E.H., (2021). The relationship between Instagram use and indicators of mental health: A systematic review. *Computers in Human Behavior Reports*, 4, p.100121.
- Fardouly, J., Willburger, B.K. and Vartanian, L.R., (2018). Instagram use and young women’s body image concerns and self-objectification: Testing mediational pathways. *New Media & Society*, 20(4), 1380-1395.
- Grogan, S., Rothery, L., Cole, J. and Hall, M., (2018). Posting selfies and body image in young adult women: The selfie paradox. *The Journal of Social Media in Society*, 7(1), 15-36.
- Halliwell, E., & Dittmar, H. (2004). Does size matter? The impact of model's body size on women's body-focused anxiety and advertising effectiveness. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 23(1), 104–122. doi:10.1521/jscp.23.1.104.26989
- Hendrickse, J., Arpan, L.M., Clayton, R.B. and Ridgway, J.L., (2017). Instagram and college women's body image: Investigating the roles of appearance-related comparisons and intrasexual competition. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 74, 92-100.
- Hu, Y., (2018). Exploration of how female body image is presented and interpreted on Instagram. *Advances in Journalism and Communication*, 6(04), p.95.
- Mabe, A. G., Forney, K. J. and Keel, P. K. (2014), Do you “like” my photo? Facebook use maintains eating disorder risk. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 47, 516–523. doi:10.1002/eat.22254
- Mackson, S.B., Brochu, P.M. and Schneider, B.A., (2019). Instagram: Friend or foe? The application’s association with psychological well-being. *New Media & Society*, 21(10), 2160-2182.
- McComb, S.E. and Mills, J.S., (2021). Young women’s body image following upwards comparison to Instagram models: The role of physical appearance perfectionism and cognitive emotion regulation. *Body Image*, 38, 49-62.
- Modica, C.A., (2020). The associations between Instagram use, selfie activities, appearance comparison, and body dissatisfaction in adult men. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 23(2), 90-99.

- Piper Jaffray. (2014). Taking stock with teens—2014. Retrieved from <http://www.piperjaffray.com/2col.aspx?id=178>
- Prichard, I., Kavanagh, E., Mulgrew, K.E., Lim, M.S. and Tiggemann, M., (2020). The effect of Instagram# fitspiration images on young women’s mood, body image, and exercise behaviour. *Body Image*, 33, 1-6.
- Roeza, V.M., Sutatminingsih, R. and Marini, L., (2021). The Influence of Online Social Support on the Body Image among Adolescent Instagram Users. *International Journal of Progressive Sciences and Technologies*, 27(2), 339-348.
- Stein, J.P., Krause, E. and Ohler, P., (2021). Every (Insta) Gram counts? Applying cultivation theory to explore the effects of Instagram on young users’ body image. *Psychology of Popular Media*, 10(1), p.87.
- Suls, J., Martin, R., & Wheeler, L. (2002). Social comparison: Why, with whom, and with what effect. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 11, 159–163. doi:10.1111/1467-8721.00191
- Tiggemann, M. and Anderberg, I., (2020). Social media is not real: The effect of ‘Instagram vs reality’ images on women’s social comparison and body image. *New Media & Society*, 22(12), 2183-2199.
- Tiggemann, M. and Barbato, I., (2018). “You look great!”: The effect of viewing appearance-related Instagram comments on women’s body image. *Body image*, 27, 61-66.
- Tiggemann, M., Anderberg, I. and Brown, Z., (2020). Loveyourbody: The effect of body positive Instagram captions on women’s body image. *Body image*, 33, 129-136.
- Verrastro, V., Liga, F., Cuzzocrea, F. and Gugliandolo, M.C., (2020). Fear the Instagram: beauty stereotypes, body image and Instagram use in a sample of male and female adolescents. *Qwerty-Open and Interdisciplinary Journal of Technology, Culture and Education*, 15(1), 31-49.