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## Relationship Between Instagram Use, Body Satisfaction, and Self-Esteem in Youth



Social media is integrated into our daily lives and has psychological consequences on the perception of our body image and emotional well-being. A new article, which studies the specific case of Instagram use among youth, shows that it can be a risk factor for body dissatisfaction. Therefore, it is necessary to promote a conscious use to improve the psychological well-being of young people.

Our research focuses on exploring how Instagram use influences body satisfaction and self-esteem among young adults aged 20 to 40 years. In a context where social media is a daily presence, constant exposure to idealized images has significant effects on how we perceive our bodies and on our emotional well-being. In this study, conducted with a sample of 95 participants, we sought to delve into the psychological consequences of using this platform by employing measures such as the *Body Shape Questionnaire* (BSQ) and the *Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale*.

Our results indicate that **greater Instagram use is associated with increased body dissatisfaction**, especially when users are exposed to **appearance-focused content**. These findings suggest that the constant presence of idealized images on Instagram **fosters social comparison and dissatisfaction with one's own body**, particularly when

the content emphasizes aspects such as physique, fashion, and aesthetics. **Participants who spent more time on the platform tended to experience greater dissatisfaction with their body image, especially if they spent more than three hours per day on Instagram.** This phenomenon is concerning, as body dissatisfaction is a known risk factor for developing mental health issues, such as eating disorders and body dysmorphia.

However, **we did not find a significant relationship between Instagram use and participants' general self-esteem.** This leads us to believe that other factors, such as the type of content consumed or individual characteristics, may **mediate** this relationship. In fact, our findings indicate that not all Instagram users experience a negative impact on their self-esteem, which suggests that aspects like social support outside social media and personal experiences might influence how individuals handle exposure to comparative content.

We also observed a **positive correlation between body satisfaction and self-esteem.** In this regard, participants with higher body satisfaction tended to report higher self-esteem.

An important finding in our study is **the lack of significant gender differences in relation to body dissatisfaction or self-esteem.** This result contradicts some previous studies suggesting that women are more vulnerable to body dissatisfaction. Our research suggests that **both men and women may suffer the effects of constant exposure to unattainable beauty standards**, though these effects might manifest differently depending on each gender's aesthetic concerns.

These relationships underline the importance of **developing interventions that promote a critical and healthy use of social media**, aiming to minimize the negative effects on body image. We believe that **educating young people about the influence of idealized images and helping them develop a critical perspective could reduce the harmful effects of exposure to such images.**

We conclude that Instagram use, especially when focused on physical comparisons or appearance-related content, can be a risk factor for body dissatisfaction. Furthermore, we propose that **future interventions to improve psychological well-being include raising awareness about the effects of social media and fostering healthy interaction habits with these digital environments.** Such interventions could include educational programs in schools and workshops that teach young people how to manage social comparison and strengthen healthy self-esteem based on personal values beyond physical appearance.

Ultimately, our study provides evidence of the importance of encouraging conscious Instagram use, particularly among young people, who are more susceptible to negative influences on body image. Our goal is to contribute to the development of resources and strategies that help mitigate these effects and promote a healthier relationship with social media.

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#### **References**

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