



The Influence of Social Media Usage on Body Image Perception

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ABSTRACT

There have been concerns raised about the impact of social media on body image perception, raising questions about how it influences people's impressions of their own bodies. The study seeks to comprehend the complex relationship between social media usage and body image perception, as well as the potential mechanisms through which it may lead to body dissatisfaction, self-esteem concerns, and related psychological well-being. Pearson correlation was conducted. A mild significant correlation ($r=0.06$) was found between social media usage and body image perception. The result suggests a positive association, which means that as social media usage grows, so does body image perception. To accomplish these objectives, this study intends to give insights that can inform interventions and

initiatives to promote healthier body image beliefs, particularly among those who may be more vulnerable, by evaluating a varied spectrum of people.

Keywords: Social Media, Body Image, Influence

Introduction

An individual's opinion of their outward appearance, along with any associated feelings and ideas, are collectively referred to as their body image. These feelings and ideas can be influenced by both external and internal sources, and they can be positive or negative. Social media might negatively impact how people view their bodies. On the other hand, social media can positively impact a person by endorsing information that strives for adopting healthy practices. Rogers and Rousseau (2022), focused on college students, emphasizing how social media may drastically alter how people perceive their bodies. It recognized the positive aspects, such self-expression, but draws attention to the worrisome impact of carefully selected images that uphold conventional beauty standards. In other words, society may give rise to overblown conceptions of beauty. The impact that social media has on people has increased recently. Individuals who compare their bodies to those of their peers and try to fit the same standards of beauty run the risk of becoming pessimistic and competitive because of social media. Cyberbullying may arise on social media, where victims are attacked due to their physical features or attributes. The person's perception of their body or sense of self-worth may suffer as a result. Individuals could experience dissatisfaction and discomfort with their physical appearance.

It might also be a chance to support the body positivity by enabling people to share images of their own bodies and promoting acceptance and self-love. People could experience anxiety and self-consciousness. These anxious and humiliating sentiments can quickly turn into low self-esteem issues and even body dysmorphic disorder (BDD), a mental illness characterized by obsessive thoughts about

one's appearance and perceived defects. It's important to have a thorough understanding of the effects of social media on emotions and self-acceptance, as well as to think about ways to lessen any potential negative consequences. In the twenty-first century, social media has changed every aspect of our lives, impacting many aspects of our lives, including how we perceive our bodies. There have been worries raised about the impact of controlled and idealized pictures of beauty and body standards on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok influence how individuals view their own bodies. The intricate relationship between social media use and body image perception is the main subject of this research project.

There are worries about how these networks constant exposure to digitally modified, frequently unattainable beauty standards may affect how people view their own bodies. This phenomenon has significant effects on people's psychological health and may be a factor in issues with self-esteem, body dissatisfaction, and other issues.

In this research, the scale "Social Media and Body Image: Social Media Intensity and Self-Perceived Body Image" is an important tool that helps in the investigation of the complex relationship between social media use and people's opinions about their own bodies. This carefully designed scale consists of a set of questions meant to measure university students' 18–24-year-old self-perceived body image as well as the quantitative components of their social media activity. The main objective of the scale is to rate the level of social media use. It explores how often and how long people engage with different social media platforms, giving a thorough overview of their online activities.

One may wonder how much time is spent on social media on a daily average, how many platforms are used, and what kinds of material are consumed. The purpose of adding additional categories to the scale is to measure participants' level of immersion in the digital world. At the same time, the scale also explores one's perception of one's own physique. It investigates how individuals subjectively evaluate their own bodies, touching on issues including confidence, contentment, and perceived adherence to

social beauty standards. Participants may be asked about their degree of comfort with their physical appearance, whether they experience pressure to live up to social media's standards of beauty, and whether their perception of their bodies has changed over time.

This comprehensive strategy seeks to identify the psychological effects of social media on people's self-perceptions of their bodies. The Likert-type response structure used by the scale enables participants to indicate the frequency or severity of their experiences. The response scales strongly disagree to strongly agree range allows for a series of inquiries.

Review of Literature

Rodgers and Norwiki (2024) concerns about body image have been linked to young women's use of photo-based social media. Midlife women are facing more and more pressure to look good, and this pressure may be especially intense on social media. However, most studies on social media use conducted to date have concentrated on younger women, which represents a significant disparity. Investigating a model of the connections between social media use and body image in women over 40 was the goal of this study. An online survey measuring factors such as selfie investment, social media appearance demands, internalization of the thin-ideal, appearance comparison, weight and shape concerns, face satisfaction, drive for youthfulness, and drive for muscularity was completed by 192 women, who were selected at random and ages 40 to 73. Thin-ideal internalization and appearance comparisons moderated the pathways between the social media variables and the body image ones in the final sociocultural model, which suited the data quite well.

Tylka et al. (2023) discovered possible mechanisms of action that may be empirically investigated in future research and utilized to guide preventative and intervention efforts, it is important to consider how social media variables may be integrated as predictors, mediators, and moderators within current

theoretical frameworks of body image. To accomplish this, we first identify the social media characteristics that have been studied in body image research as mediators, moderators, and predictors. The following critical and sociocultural theoretical frameworks are then discussed: the acceptance model of intuitive eating, social comparison theory, objectification theory, tripartite impact model, developmental theory of embodiment, cultivation theory, and uses and gratifications theory. We also introduce the notion of the development of critical body awareness, a recently created model that could shed further light on the connections between social media and outcomes connected to body image. It describes the literature that has already been done on social media variables in relation to each model and explains how social media variables may be investigated as moderators, mediators, and predictors within the framework of each model. Finally, we discuss relevant gaps and constraints in this field of study that may guide future investigations across theoretical frameworks.

Boursier et al. (2020) investigating social media by teenagers is currently a common activity, and objectified bodily consciousness (OBC) may provide a helpful framework for investigating how people present themselves online and use social networking sites (SNS). Social networking sites (SNS) could, in fact, be a very approachable platform for socializing with self-objectification. There is still little research on the connection between OBC components and problematic SNS use, though. The current study assessed the mediating impact of body image control in pictures (BICP) in problematic SNS use across male and female groups, hence evaluating the hitherto unexamined predictive significance of appearance control beliefs. 693 teenagers in all, with a mean age of 16 years old and 55% female, took part in the study. The findings indicated that appearance control ideas had a negative predictive function for control over body image in photographs. Furthermore, the detrimental impact of appearance control attitudes on girls' problematic SNS use was mitigated by BICP. Contributing to the field of OBC research and the ongoing discussion about protective and predictive factors in problematic SNS usage, the current study examined the hitherto unknown impact of appearance control attitudes on problematic SNS use.

Rodgers et al. (2020) studied adolescents who use social media are more likely to experience eating disorders, body image issues, and body modification behaviors. Testing an integrated model and examining these interactions within a biopsychosocial framework were the objectives of this study. 681 adolescents (49% female), with a mean age of 12.76 years ($SD = 0.74$), filled out a questionnaire evaluating their use of social media, depression, self-esteem, body mass index, internalization of the muscular ideal on social media, comparison of their appearance, body dissatisfaction, disordered eating, and muscle-building behaviors. The hypothetical model was put to the test using path analysis, and after some modifications, it was found to fit the data well, but gender differences did show up. According to the research, body image, eating habits, and muscle growth outcomes may all be conceptualized with the help of biopsychosocial frameworks.

Dumas and Desroches (2019) provide an overview of current research on the impact of social media use on body image issues in women and teenage girls, as well as the implications of weight management therapies given through social media on weight reduction. Research on women's weight control utilizing single-component social media-delivered interventions—that is, without including any other modalities of intervention delivery—shows promise, but not efficacy. Studies on teenage girls and women indicate that social media has a generally negative effect on body image outcomes, while this effect varies depending on peer input, context (such as exposure to idealized social media appearance photographs), and structures (such as the desire to compare one's appearance). conclusions about the effectiveness of therapies delivered through social media regarding weight and body image outcomes, as well as to determine the circumstances under which and how social media exposure can support positive body image in women and effective weight management, more study is required.

J. Gaffney (2017) examines and evaluates the impact of social media-induced negative body envisioning. This will be partially accomplished by outlining the history of women and how their body

mass index and attractiveness have changed throughout time. It will also go through historical variations in what was deemed attractive in previous eras based on various social media platforms and how it evolved over time. I will go into detail about the significant harm that social media and the fashion industry cause later in the thesis. This clarifies how the average woman's self-perception might be negatively impacted by these two combined pressures. compared to the ideal of the flawless body and these idealized, unattainable representations of beauty in the media. Moreover, describing the potential psychological and physical effects on women of trying to conform to society's ideal of perfection. Along with how modern design technology can alter the real models' appearance and look in comparison to what is portrayed to the public.

Jwana (2017) is concerned with body image dissatisfaction and fatphobia. An elevated level of body image-related issues has been linked to media exposure, according to a previous study. We must take into consideration the new mediated discourse that has been brought about by new media, particularly social media. One can instantly access a multitude of idealized body images through social media programs like Instagram, which is an image-based platform. Stats show that the most active Instagram users are between the ages of 16 and 24. The goal of this research proposal is to empirically investigate how Catalan undergraduate students' use of Instagram and their negative body image and fat phobia relate to each other on social media. It is a three-step experimental research study with 200 male and female participants in the sample. The Sociocultural Attitude towards Appearance Questionnaire-3, the Body Image Disturbance Questionnaire, the Fat Phobia Scale, and questions pertaining to Instagram use have been selected as the three scales from which the data will be extracted.

Bell (2016) studied social media has become more and more common in society. This study examines relationships between the proliferation of social media platforms and an individual's self-perception of their body considering the messaging and imagery on these platforms. The primary focus is on female body image and the potential link between poor body image and body dissatisfaction on

social media. A survey was designed to gather information about the body image perceptions of current female college students. It was voluntary and anonymous to participate in the poll. The participants were female college students from Bridgewater State University who belong to the Phi Sigma sorority, with ages ranging from 18 to 23. Apart from the survey results, supplementary information was gathered and examined from scholarly sources, books, and articles that provided more support for the research topic. The study and data examine how participants' exposure to various social media platforms affects and varies their perception of female body image. Numerous studies concluded that while social media may not be the direct cause of bad body image, it does correlate with it. Due to the users' internalization of words and images, there was a higher rate of negative body image among social media users. The likelihood of having a negative body image and body dissatisfaction increases with one's level of internalization.

Rationale

People's interactions with representations of appearance and beauty have undergone a significant transformation with the advent of online media. It is important to investigate how this development influences people's perceptions of their bodies because it signifies a change in cultural norms and standards. Developing a deeper understanding of how social media affects people's perceptions of their bodies will help us design evidence-based strategies and therapies to mitigate the negative impacts and promote better online behavior. Revolutionary Change in Interaction: It's true that the rise of internet platforms has fundamentally changed how people interact with images of attractiveness and appearance. These platforms provide a never-ending flow of pictures and words that influence people's beliefs and values.

Social Standards Representation: Social standards and notions of beauty are frequently reflected and upheld on online platforms. It is important to comprehend these depictions since they have a significant

impact on people's perceptions of their bodies and of themselves. **Effect on Body Image:** Studies indicate that social media exposure to idealized pictures may exacerbate problems with poor body image and self-esteem, particularly in vulnerable groups like teenagers. **Evidence-Based Interventions:** Through examining the ways in which social media shapes people's perceptions of their bodies, we may create strategies and therapies that are grounded in research to lessen the detrimental impacts. This could involve activities that support positive self-esteem, media literacy campaigns, and educational programs. **Encouraging Better Online Behavior:** Efforts to promote healthy online behavior can benefit from an understanding of how social media affects body image. This could entail encouraging inclusivity and diversity in media portrayals as well as critical interaction with internet content.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

The goal of the research is to better understand the intricate connections between social media use and how people see their bodies, as well as any possible pathways by which these connections may result in issues with self-esteem, body dissatisfaction, and associated psychological health.

Objective

- Social networking platforms play a significant role in our daily lives, serving as primary sources of news and social engagement.
- Mental health is closely linked to body image perceptions and can be affected by social networking behaviors.
- Understanding the impact of social networking on body dissatisfaction and eating disorders is crucial for mental health professionals.

- Social networking platforms can contribute to unrealistic body ideals and comparison, exacerbating mental health issues.
- Monitoring social networking usage and promoting healthy online behaviors could help mitigate the negative effects on mental health.

Hypothesis

- **Null Hypothesis (H0):** Social media use and body image perception do not statistically significantly correlate.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H1):** Social media use and body image perception are statistically significantly correlated.
- **Null Hypothesis (H0):** Gender differences in social media usage between males and females are not statistically significant.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H1):** Men and women use social media in quite different ways depending on their gender.
- **Null Hypothesis (H0):** Males and females perceive their bodies in the same ways, with no discernible gender differences.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H1):** Men and women perceive their bodies differently, with a notable gender difference.

Controlled Variable

Although a correlational design does not suggest causality, it is important to account for any confounding variables that might affect the connection under investigation. Social media usage and the perception of

one's body image can be influenced by factors like personality traits, self-esteem, and offline social interactions. Through regulating these variables, scientists can distinguish the distinct role that social media plays in issues related to body image.

Measurement of Variables

The two most important factors in this study are the use of social media and perceptions of body image. Quantitative measurements can be made of social media usage, including the quantity and frequency of interactions, the number of platforms utilized, and the kind of content viewed. Self-report assessments can be used to evaluate participants' perceptions of their bodies, examining how satisfied they are with their appearance, how much pressure they feel to meet social norms for beauty, and how their body image has changed over time.

Tools

- **The Social Media Use Scale (SMUS)** is a quantitative tool designed to assess individuals' engagement with social media platforms. Comprising several key components, it aims to capture the frequency, duration, and types of activities users undertake on these platforms. The frequency of use section prompts respondents to report how often they engage with social networking sites, while the duration of use segment measures the time spent per interaction session. Additionally, the scale delves into the specific activity's users undertake on social media, including following feeds, uploading content, interacting with posts, and consuming various media formats. Furthermore, some versions of the SMUS inquire about users' platform preferences, offering insights into variations in behavior across different platforms. Overall, the SMUS provides researchers with quantifiable data on social media usage patterns, facilitating group comparisons

and investigations into the relationship between social media usage and various outcomes, such as body image perceptions.

- **Body Image Scale (BIS):** The Body Image Scale (BIS) serves as a tool to gauge individuals' attitudes, emotions, and perceptions regarding their own bodies. It encompasses various dimensions including body contentment, body esteem, and body image disturbance. Body contentment measures overall satisfaction with different body parts or the body, typically assessed on a scale ranging from extreme dissatisfaction to extreme satisfaction. Body esteem evaluates individuals' sense of confidence, attractiveness, and self-worth in relation to their bodies. Meanwhile, body image disturbance examines negative thoughts or behaviors related to body dissatisfaction, appearance obsession, or unhealthy weight control practices. By employing the Body Image Scale, researchers can gather valuable insights into individuals' body perceptions and their associations with factors such as social media usage, demographics, and psychological well-being.

Research Design

When examining the connection between social media use and body image perception, a correlational research design is a suitable and useful method. With no need to change any parameters, this approach enables researchers to investigate the kind and degree of the relationship between these two factors, offering important insights into the patterns of behavior that naturally arise.

RATIONALE FOR CORRELATION DESIGN

Finding out if there is a relationship and how much two or more variables co-vary is the aim of a correlational study. This design fits in well with the exploratory nature of the research in the context of social media and body image perception since it examines participants in their natural habitat rather than subjecting them to contrived conditions.

PARTICIPANTS

To ensure that the results are representative, the study may include a broad sample of participants, considering variables like age, gender, and socioeconomic background. A more thorough knowledge of how social media affects body image across diverse groups is made possible by the participation of participants from a variety of demographic backgrounds.

DATA COLLECTION

Data collection methods may include surveys or questionnaires distributed electronically or in-person. Participants can be asked about their social media habits, the platforms they use, and their subjective feelings and perceptions regarding their body image. The use of standardized scales for body image assessment can enhance the reliability and validity of the data.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Correlational design can be used to ascertain the direction and degree of the association between social media use and the perception of one's body image. It is possible to quantify the degree of relationship

using statistical methods like Pearson's correlation coefficient. A positive association implies that body image dissatisfaction rises with social media usage, whereas a negative correlation implies the reverse.

RESULT

Pearson correlation analysis was done to respond to the initial study topic. Social media use and the perception of one's body image were found to have a weakly significant two-tailed connection, $r(0.06)$. This graph indicates a positive correlation, meaning that as the use of social media platforms increases, so does the perception of one's body. The magnitude of this link is particularly noteworthy. Although the 0.06 correlation coefficient seems little, it is statistically significant. The use of a two-tailed test suggests that the researchers considered the possibility of a reciprocal relationship between social media usage and body image perception, as well as social media usage and body image perception. The identification of a statistically significant relationship demonstrates the influence of social media on individuals' self-perceptions of their bodies. Despite the tenuous connection, even small impacts can have a big impact, especially considering how much social media has influenced contemporary culture. investigates the relationship between body image and social media. It suggests that a person's self-perception may change because of greater exposure to images and content on social media sites.

Social media users who are exposed to well-curated and idealized photos may compare themselves more favorably or unfavorably to these photos, which may have an impact on how they perceive their bodies. An independent t-test was used to address the second study question, and the results indicated that there are no gender differences in social media usage ($p=.050$). The analysis produced a 0.050 p-value. This p-value is equivalent to the widely recognized 0.05 cutoff, which is widely utilized to assess statistics, In the context of this study, a p-value of 0.050 denotes a marginally significant level of association. A difference is considered statistically significant when the p-value is less than or equal to 0.05, suggesting that it is

unlikely to have happened by chance alone. However, in this case, the p-value is precisely 0.050, which is quite close to the cutoff. This means that the result is almost statistically significant. In actuality, the data suggest that there might be a faint suggestion of gender differences in social media usage, but this difference is too little and not statistically significant to be deemed so. Sometimes results can be slightly above the significance level due to small changes in the data or other conditions, hence such results must, In the context of this study, a p-value of 0.050 denotes a marginally significant level of association. A difference is considered statistically significant when the p-value is less than or equal to 0.05, suggesting that it is unlikely to have happened by chance alone. However, in this case, the p-value is precisely 0.050, which is quite close to the cutoff. This means that the result is almost statistically significant. In actuality, the data suggest that there might be a faint suggestion of gender differences in social media usage, but this difference is too little and not statistically significant to be deemed so. Sometimes results can be slightly above the significance level due to small changes in the data or other conditions, hence such results must, Furthermore, the sample size and particular study setting may have an impact on the degree of significance. In conclusion, there is a tepid indication of gender differences in social media usage, according to the independent t-test results with a p-value of 0.050. Nevertheless, this difference is not statistically significant at the conventional significance threshold of 0.05. More research with larger sample sizes or more reliable data may be needed to provide a more conclusive grasp of the relationship.

In addition, an independent t-test was performed to address the third question, and the results indicated that there are no gender differences in how people see their bodies ($p=.050$). This p-value is equivalent to the widely recognized 0.05 cutoff, which is widely utilized to assess statistical importance. In the context of this experiment, a p-value of 0.050 suggests that there is no substantial evidence of gender differences in body image perception. The finding did not surpass the threshold that would indicate a substantial difference between the perceptions of men and women's bodies, although being statistically significant. It's

important to know that a p-value of 0.05 is typically considered the cutoff point for a result to be considered statistically significant. When the p-value is more than 0.05, it suggests that the observed variations in how genders see their bodies are not likely to be the result of chance. This study suggests that, in terms of application, gender is not a significant factor in determining how the analyzed population perceives their bodies. The sample size, methodology, and particular context of the study must all be considered, though, as these factors may change how significant the findings are.

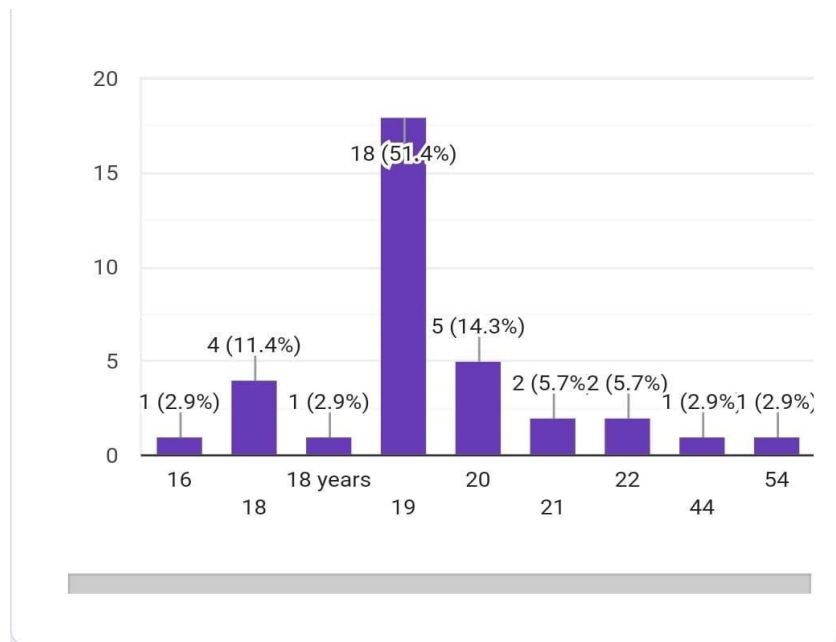
Table 1*Group Statics*

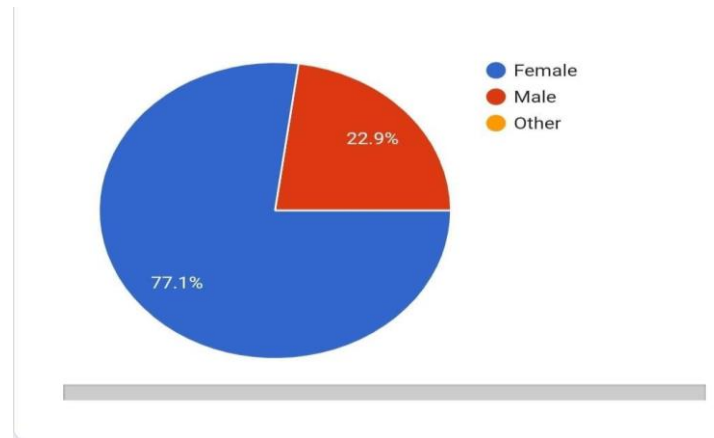
Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	S.E. Mean
Body Image F Perception	21	48.81	8.67	1.89
M	14	48.79	9.40	2.51

Table 5

Correlation

		Social Media Usage	Body image Perception
Social Media Usage	Person Correlation	1.000	.060
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.732
	N	35	35
Body image Perception	Person Correlation	.060	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.732	
	N	35	35

AGE

GENDER**Discussion**

This study looked at the connections between various facets of social media and body image. The results imply that some variables and social media are more closely related than others. The results of our study provide credence to the theory that there is a connection between social media use and body image perceptions. This finding contributes to the growing corpus of research showing social media has an impact on people's self-perceptions, particularly about attractiveness. Statistical significance is maintained even though the correlation between the two variables is not very strong. These findings are consistent with Perloff's research, which provides significant insight into this phenomenon. Perloff's research indicates that those with negative self-schemas regarding their bodies are more vulnerable to social media's harmful effects. This tendency arises from their frequent exposure to carefully chosen and often idealized photographs on social media sites, which can either amplify or confirm their preexisting negative body image beliefs. This study's consequences include the recommendation that social media should be considered in interventions aimed at promoting positive body image and self-esteem. Teaching people how to use social media in a way that promotes self-worth and providing specific coaching may be beneficial for those who already have negative self-schemas.

regarding their bodies. Our findings also highlight the value of media literacy and critical thinking abilities since they enable people to question damaging or unattainable beauty standards that are widely disseminated on social media. Even though we discovered a statistically significant correlation, with a small impact size. Longitudinal studies could provide more insight into the long-term effects of social media on people's perceptions of their bodies. Future research could focus on certain materials or social media platforms that could have a bigger, more significant impact than those in our study.

The results of our study indicate that gender differences are somewhat significant. There may be some slight variations, even if the data show that the p value is .050, which means that our hypothesis—that there is no substantial gender difference in social media usage among males and females—is not successfully supported. As per other studies (Acar, 2008), there exist variations in their social media usage patterns. It has been observed that women are generally more active online than men are. Women are discovered to use social media to communicate with their peers more than men do at colleges. Our study's tiny but statistically significant gender disparities raise important questions that require more research. Understanding the nature of these inequalities and their implications for society is crucial in an increasingly digitalized and interconnected world. These findings demonstrate how important it is for social scientists and educators to take gender-specific approaches into account when addressing issues related to social media use, technology proficiency, and interpersonal communication in educational settings. The limitation of our research is that the underlying reasons for these gender differences in social media use are not examined. Subsequent studies could investigate the personal interests and values underlying these differences, providing details on the psychological, cultural, and socioeconomic aspects. Our study's findings refute our third hypothesis, which holds that there is a substantial gender difference in how men and women see their bodies. Instead, they indicate that there are no gender differences in how people perceive their bodies. Our findings are in line with a shift in societal attitudes and body

positivity campaigns that motivate individuals to value their physical attributes regardless of gender. However, it's important to recognize that each person's experience is different and that some people—regardless of gender—may still have problems with body image. It doesn't matter how much less important it is to deal with these difficulties personally because there are no clear gender differences. Our study focuses on a particular population group or sample, so its conclusions might not apply to other situations. Subsequent research endeavors ought to consider broader demographic samples and scrutinize the influence of several factors, including cultural and age-related attributes, on individuals' body perceptions.

CONCLUSION

Finally, our findings show that, albeit not significantly, social media affects how individuals view their bodies. The conventional statistical significance criterion is not met by the gender disparities in body image beliefs and social media use, despite indications of such variances. More studies using reliable data and bigger sample sizes might shed more light on these relationships. The complicated links between gender, social media, and body image perception are highlighted by these findings, underscoring the need for more study in this field. To overcome the difficulties brought about by social media's impact on our beliefs and general wellbeing, it is essential to comprehend these mechanisms.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTION

One of the intrinsic limitations of correlational research is that they cannot prove causation. It's critical to recognize that the link may be influenced by factors not considered in the study. Thus, by using experimental designs or longitudinal studies to investigate causal relationships and the long-term impacts

of social media on body image perception, future study could build on these findings. To sum up, correlational research design provides an effective way to investigate the connection between social media and the perception of one's body. This strategy adds to a more nuanced understanding of the influence of social media on people's perceptions of their bodies by enabling researchers to acquire insights into the intricate dynamics between these variables through systematic data gathering and statistical analysis.

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