

## Impact of Social Media on Life Satisfaction and Body Self Image: A Study on Adults

Yashasvi<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr. Garima Joshi<sup>2</sup>

### ABSTRACT

This study examines the effects of social media use on 113 participants' physical self-image and life satisfaction. Measures measuring the participants' frequency of social networking use, life happiness, and body image evaluations were completed. Despite significant individual variances, descriptive statistics showed moderate levels of life happiness, substantial social media participation, and an overall favorable body self-image. There were no statistically significant correlations between life happiness, body self-image, and social networking use. Additionally, a multiple regression analysis showed that the model did not reach statistical significance and that social media use and body image evaluations together explained less than 1% of the variance in life satisfaction. These results imply that social media use does not significantly affect people's life satisfaction or body image within this sample. The findings highlight the intricacy of psychological well-being and emphasize the significance of future study examining factors other than social media activity.

**Keywords:** *Social Media, Life Satisfaction, Body Self Image, Adults*

Social media has revolutionized contemporary communication, reshaping interpersonal relationships, information dissemination, and self-expression. While it enables connection, community-building, and creative engagement, it also presents notable psychological risks. Excessive social media use is increasingly linked to mental health concerns such as anxiety, depression, and loneliness, particularly through mechanisms of social comparison and exposure to idealized representations of success and beauty.

With global usage rising exponentially—surpassing one-third of the world's population by 2016—social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook have become ubiquitous sources of social influence. This widespread exposure encourages constant comparison with curated online identities, which may negatively impact users' body image and life satisfaction.

### *Theoretical Framework*

#### **Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT)**

UGT posits that individuals use media to fulfill specific personal needs such as information, companionship, and entertainment. On social media, users actively select content that aligns

<sup>1</sup>MA Counselling Psychology, Amity University Noida

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Amity University Noida

\*Corresponding Author

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with their desires, which helps explain patterns of engagement, particularly with appearance-focused platforms.

### **Social Identity Theory (SIT)**

SIT explains how individuals define themselves through group affiliations. Social media facilitates identity construction and self-presentation, encouraging users to adopt virtual personas shaped by group norms, filters, and aesthetic standards.

### **Cognitive Dissonance Theory**

This theory suggests that individuals alter beliefs or behaviors to reduce psychological discomfort from conflicting information. Exposure to dominant online opinions or curated beauty standards can lead individuals to conform their self-perception or beliefs to the perceived majority.

### **Social Comparison Theory**

According to Festinger (1954), people evaluate themselves by comparing to others. Social media intensifies both upward and downward comparisons, affecting self-esteem and life satisfaction. Idealized images can lead to feelings of inadequacy and dissatisfaction, particularly among adolescents and young adults.

### **Body Self-Image**

Body self-image encompasses perceptual, emotional, and behavioral dimensions of how one views and feels about their appearance. Social media can distort body image by promoting unrealistic beauty ideals through edited and filtered visuals. Women and younger users are especially vulnerable to body dissatisfaction, which may contribute to low self-esteem, disordered eating, and psychological distress.

### **Self-Image Theory**

While there is no unified theory of self-image, Morris Rosenberg's work highlights its development through personal perception, perceived external judgment, and ideal self-concept. Suzaan Oltmans identifies six dimensions of self-image, including physical, psychological, intellectual, skill-based, moral, and sexual aspects. Distorted or unstable self-image is linked to conditions such as Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD) and Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD), both of which affect psychological well-being.

### ***Life Satisfaction Theories***

#### **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**

Maslow emphasizes the progression from basic needs to self-actualization. Social media may interfere with esteem and belonging needs by fostering superficial validation rather than authentic connection.

#### **PERMA Model**

Seligman's PERMA framework identifies five drivers of well-being: Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. Social media can both support and undermine these elements depending on how it is used—for genuine connection or for comparison and validation.

### ***Aim***

The purpose of this study is to investigate how social media affects life satisfaction and body image.

### *Hypotheses*

- There is a significant relationship between social media and life satisfaction.
- There is a significant relationship between social media and body self-image.
- There is significant relationship between life satisfaction and body self-image.

### *Tools used*

- **Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS):** The SWLS, developed by Diener et al. (1985), was employed to measure participants' global cognitive judgments of their life satisfaction. This five-item instrument uses a 7-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). Higher cumulative scores reflect greater life satisfaction. The SWLS has demonstrated high internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha > .80$ ) and strong construct validity across diverse populations.
- **Body Self Image Questionnaire (BSIQ-SF):** To evaluate participants' perceptions and attitudes toward their physical appearance, the **BSIQ-SF** developed by Rowe (2005) was used. This instrument includes **27 items** distributed across **nine subscales**:
  1. Overall Appearance Evaluation
  2. Health Fitness Influence
  3. Investment in Ideals
  4. Health-Fitness Evaluation
  5. Attention to Grooming
  6. Height Dissatisfaction
  7. Fatness Evaluation
  8. Negative Affect
  9. Social Dependence

Participants responded using a **5-point Likert scale** (from “Not at all true of myself” to “Completely true of myself”). The scale is not intended to provide a single cumulative score; rather, individual subscale scores are used for analysis. The BSIQ-SF has been validated for use among young adults and shows strong factorial validity and internal consistency.

- **Social Networking Usage Questionnaire:** The Social Networking Usage Questionnaire, developed and validated by Gupta and Bashir (2018), was used to assess patterns and purposes of social media use among university students. This 19-item scale covers four dimensions:
  1. **Academic Use**
  2. **Socialization**
  3. **Entertainment**
  4. **Informativeness**

Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale (Always = 5 to Never = 1). The tool demonstrated good psychometric properties, including high internal reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .830$ ) and content validity established through expert review. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses confirmed its construct validity and applicability to the Indian higher education context.

**Sampling Technique Used:**

A non-probability selection technique called convenience sampling is used to choose participants based on their accessibility and closeness to the researcher. Convenience sampling can be a useful technique for gathering preliminary data for a study on the relationship between spirituality, resilience, and life satisfaction, especially when time, money, or access to a varied population are constrained. In this situation, the researcher may choose readily available participants, such as students from a particular school, workers from a workplace, or members of a certain community or faith. The following factors make the approach very beneficial in this study:

- **Ease of Access:** By selecting participants who are easily accessible, the researcher may collect data more rapidly and effectively, which makes the process go more smoothly.
- **Cost-Effectiveness:** Compared to randomized sampling or substantial outreach, this approach saves money.
- **Relevance:** The study's emphasis on spirituality, resilience, and life satisfaction may be pertinent to the chosen group since they may have traits in common, such as similar cultural or spiritual practices.

**RESULTS**

**Descriptive Statistics**

*Table 1 Key statistics for social media, life satisfaction, and body self-image*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
LIFESATISFACTION	113	6	35	20.81	6.709
SOCIALNETWORKING	113	28	95	63.58	13.504
BODYSELFIMAGE	113	33	110	78.95	15.112
Valid N (listwise)	113				

**Correlations**

*Table 2: Relationships between social media, life satisfaction and body self image.*

		LIFE SATISFACTION	SOCIAL NETWORKING	BODY SELFIMAGE
LIFE SATISFACTION	Pearson Correlation	1	-.032	-.093
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.738	.329
	N	113	113	113
SOCIAL NETWORKING	Pearson Correlation	-.032	1	.150
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.738		.112
	N	113	113	113
BODY SELFIMAGE	Pearson Correlation	-.093	.150	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.329	.112	
	N	113	113	113

**Model Summary**

**Table 3: Regression model fit for predicting life satisfaction.**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.094 <sup>a</sup>	.009	-.009	6.739

a. Predictors: (Constant), BODYSELFIMAGE, SOCIALNETWORKING

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	44.925	2	22.462	.495	.611 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	4996.172	110	45.420		
	Total	5041.097	112			

a. Dependent Variable: LIFESATISFACTION

b. Predictors: (Constant), BODYSELFIMAGE, SOCIALNETWORKING

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	24.543	4.225		5.808	.000
	SOCIALNETWORKING	-.009	.048	-.018	-.190	.849
	BODYSELFIMAGE	-.040	.043	-.090	-.936	.351

a. Dependent Variable: LIFESATISFACTION

**DISCUSSION**

This dataset, which includes answers from 113 people, looks at three behavioral and psychological factors: body self-image, social networking use, and life satisfaction. According to the responses, participants' life satisfaction levels ranged from at least 6 to as high as 35, with an average of 20.81. This implies that individuals' levels of life satisfaction were, on average, moderate. A reasonable amount of diversity in how different people reported their level of satisfaction was indicated by the life satisfaction standard deviation of 6.709; most replies fell within a mid-range band, with some people notably more or less content than others.

With ratings ranging from 28 to 95, participants reported a wider variety of engagement with social networking. With an average score of 63.58, it appears that members used social networking sites often. Significant variations in usage patterns are also indicated by the large standard deviation of 13.504; some people may use social media extensively throughout the day, while others use it less often. The wide range of digital behaviors among the sample's users is reflected in this dispersion.

A scale with a range of 33 to 110 was used to quantify body self-image, another important variable in this study. At 78.95, the average score was comparatively high, suggesting that individuals had an overall good impression of their bodies. Nonetheless, the standard deviation of 15.112 indicates that there were significant individual differences in how people saw their bodies. It's possible that some participants had more positive or ambiguous opinions about their physical appearance, while others may have indicated high levels of confidence and contentment.

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A correlation study was performed to investigate any connections among these three factors. It was discovered that there was a very slight negative connection (-0.032) between social networking use and life satisfaction. A p-value of 0.738 further suggests that this link was not statistically significant. This indicates that there is no solid proof linking people's level of life satisfaction and the amount of time they spend on social media. With a correlation coefficient of -0.093, life satisfaction and body self-image likewise had a weak and negative link. Additionally, this link was statistically non-significant ( $p = 0.329$ ), indicating that changes in life satisfaction are not significantly correlated with gains or losses in body image.

With a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.150, social networking use and body self-image were the only two variables in the data to show a positive link. Although this may suggest that more positive body image judgments are partially correlated with increased social media use, the finding was not statistically significant ( $p = 0.112$ ). As a result, we are unable to say with certainty that the population from which the sample was taken had a true association between these two variables.

To find out if social networking use and body self-image could predict life happiness together, a multiple regression analysis was performed. The regression model's findings weren't promising. The model yielded an R-squared value of only 0.009 and a R value of 0.094. Accordingly, social networking and body image scores together might only account for 0.9% of the variation in life satisfaction scores, which is a very small percentage. In contrast to a model that merely utilizes the mean life satisfaction score as the prediction, the adjusted R-squared value, which was negative (-0.009), is even more striking and indicates that adding additional factors to the model actually reduces the predictive accuracy.

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) table, which showed an F-statistic of 0.495 and a significant value ( $p$ ) of 0.611, supports this conclusion even more. This number demonstrates that the regression model is not statistically significant because it is significantly higher than the standard cutoff of 0.05. Essentially, the model as a whole is unable to predict life happiness based on the variables of body self-image and social networking usage.

When combined, these results imply that there are no statistically significant connections between life happiness, body self-image, and social media use in this sample. This dataset offers no solid evidence to support the widely held beliefs that excessive social media use may worsen body image or reduce life satisfaction, both of which can have an adverse effect on one's general well-being. The findings demonstrate the complexity of psychological well-being and imply that life satisfaction may be more significantly influenced by other variables not included in this investigation.

### **CONCLUSION**

Through thorough statistical analysis and systematic testing of important hypotheses, the study examined the relationships among adults in Delhi NCR between social media, body self-image, and life satisfaction.

According to the study's findings, there are no meaningful connections between life happiness, social networking use, and body self-image among the 113 participants in the sample. Perceptions of body image and social networking activity did not significantly influence life satisfaction levels. None of the associations were statistically significant,

despite minor patterns being noted, such as a small positive link between body self-image and social networking use.

The model itself was not statistically significant, and the multiple regression analysis further demonstrated that social networking and body self-image combined only explained a very small percentage of the variance in life happiness. These findings imply that, in contrast to some widely held beliefs, social media use and perceptions of one's physique may not have a significant impact on life satisfaction in this specific demographic. It draws attention to the possibility that psychological well-being and life satisfaction are more strongly impacted by other, unmeasured factors.

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### ***Conflict of Interest***

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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