

Research Paper

## Time Spent on Instagram and Its Impact on Female Body Dissatisfaction and Social Comparison

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### ABSTRACT

This research delves into the intricate landscape of body image formation among adolescents and young adult females aged 14 to 25, with a particular focus on the role of social media, notably Instagram. The study aims to examine body area satisfaction, social comparison tendencies, and the relationship between Instagram usage intensity. A sample of 221 females from Delhi (NCR) participated, categorized into adolescents (aged 14 to 18) and young adult females (aged 19 to 25). Data collection utilized a Google Form, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality. Participants completed scales for Body Area Satisfaction, Social Comparison, and Instagram Intensity, analysed using SPSS-16. Results revealed significant differences in body area satisfaction and social comparison tendencies between the two groups. Young adult females exhibited lower body satisfaction and higher social comparison tendencies compared to adolescents. Moreover, Instagram intensity correlated with increased body dissatisfaction and heightened social comparison behaviors, particularly among young adult females. This study underscores the critical influence of social media on body image perceptions and social comparison tendencies among adolescent and young adult females. The findings emphasize the need for interventions to promote positive self-perceptions and healthier social media habits within this demographic, particularly among young adult females navigating the transition into adulthood.

**Keywords:** *Instagram, Social Media, Body Area Dissatisfaction, Social Comparison*

People now utilize social media platforms to maintain communication because social media platforms have become critical tools for self-identity development. Users of Instagram and TikTok and Pinterest transform their daily activities into stylish highlight collections which show perfect lifestyles and unattainable beauty standards as their regular experience. People who enjoy building online communities face difficulties because society expects them to maintain specific appearance standards. The continuous exposure to perfect digital images which people create through extensive editing leads to mental health problems. The process starts when we view our actual chaotic existence through the filtered lens of digital media which causes us to experience constant stress and feelings of inadequacy.

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The whole situation affects most young people who still search for their personal identity. Online time increases body image problems because internet users spend their time watching edited content which shows only one body type as perfect. Young people become trapped in a never-ending cycle which forces them to evaluate their actual lives against the most polished appearances of influencers. People who watch this content for extended periods will start believing that the depicted standards reflect normal behavior. The process destroys true self-value which results in many individuals feeling unworthy.

### ***Theoretical Framework***

This study uses three fundamental psychological concepts as its foundation.

- Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954) serves as a primary framework, suggesting that individuals evaluate their own worth by comparing themselves to others. Users on social media platforms tend to participate in upward social comparison which involves them comparing themselves to the idealized images presented by influencers and celebrities. This particular phenomenon leads individuals to experience inappropriate feelings when they perceive a gap between their actual selves and the displayed standards.
- Cultivation Theory (Gerbner, 1969) explains that sustained media content viewing leads to people developing specific reality viewpoints. Instagram users who repeatedly view curated body images become unable to differentiate between actual body image and ideal body image because they perceive these images as typical and reachable.
- The Tripartite Influence Model (Thompson et al., 1999) demonstrates how media and friends and family members shape people's body image perceptions. Social media platforms function as the main force that spreads beauty standards because users base their self-worth on social comparisons and feedback about their appearance. The combination of these theories establishes a complete framework which shows how social media usage leads to body dissatisfaction and self-perception problems in younger people

### ***Rationale***

The continuing growth of social media platforms into all aspects of human existence requires researchers to study their effects on human psychology especially regarding body image and self-esteem. Research studies have shown that people who spend more time looking at appearance-based content on Instagram experience greater body dissatisfaction and they develop eating disorders and they have a poor self-image (Fardouly et al., 2015; Perloff, 2014). The internalization of the thin ideal concept shows that people develop personal standards through seeing idealized images which results in them feeling unfulfilled when they fail to meet these standards (Grabe et al., 2008). The practice of comparing oneself to others from higher social status acts as the main factor which enhances negative emotional results (Tiggemann & Slater, 2014).

Social Comparison Theory and Cultivation Theory work together to demonstrate how people develop distorted body image through their social comparison process and their media consumption behavior. The Tripartite Influence Model explains appearance standards through media which functions as a major social factor that shapes societal beauty standards. Researchers need to investigate this relationship in specific cultural settings especially between Indian adolescents and young adults who face both rapid digital changes and changing beauty standards that impact their self-image. The research study investigates how Instagram usage affects body dissatisfaction and social comparison which will help develop

better methods for people to use media in a healthy way while maintaining positive body image.

### METHODOLOGY

#### *Participants*

The present study's sample comprised 221 females, consisting of 115 adolescents and 106 young adult females. Adolescents, aged 14 to 18, and young adults, aged 19 to 25, were included in the study. All participants were residents of Delhi (NCR).

#### *Sampling Technique*

The study used convenience sampling as its non-probability sampling method to select participants. The study selected participants who were easily reachable and showed interest in taking part. The researchers used social media and messaging apps to distribute their questionnaire which successfully targeted Instagram users who belong to the age group of adolescents and young adults.

The study required this method because it needed to explore its research questions while studying social media users who belong to the 14-to-25 age group. Convenience sampling allowed researchers to collect data quickly because they needed to finish their work within a specific time period while they obtained responses from participants who met their study requirements. The technique used in this study restricts research results because the selected sample does not represent the complete population, which affects their ability to draw broader conclusions.

*Table 1. Demographic Distributions of the sample*

| Age Group            | Total Participants (N) | Instagram Users |
|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| 14-18 (Adolescents)  | 115                    | 93              |
| 19-25 (Young Adults) | 106                    | 28              |
| Total                | 221                    | 121             |

#### *Research Design*

The present study uses a quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational research design. The researchers used standardized scales to collect data at one time point in order to study how Instagram usage and social comparison behavior affect body dissatisfaction among adolescent and young adult females. The researchers used SPSS software to perform statistical analysis which helped them discover patterns and relationships that existed between the studied variables.

#### *Instruments*

- **Body Areas Satisfaction Scale:** To assess participants' body satisfaction levels, the Body Areas Satisfaction Scale (BASS) was incorporated into the questionnaire, consisting of eight attributes: face, hair, lower torso, mid torso, upper torso, muscle tone, weight, and height. The adaptation of the BASS scale from Kozar and Damhorst (2008) was utilized, where breasts were listed separately due to potential age-related changes in satisfaction levels. Similarly, the lower torso section was subdivided to account for the evolving nature of buttocks, thighs, and hips, which can impact satisfaction levels. Participants rated each attribute using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from "1-very dissatisfied" to "5-very satisfied," with lower scores

indicating greater dissatisfaction. Internal reliability was assessed using Cronbach's standardized alpha, yielding a value of 0.81, indicating good consistency.

- **Social Comparison:** The Iowa-Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure (INCOM), developed by Gibbons and Buunk in 1999, is a psychometric instrument designed to assess individuals' proclivity toward engaging in social comparison. Comprising several items covering diverse domains such as personal achievements, social interactions, and well-being, the INCOME prompts respondents to rate their agreement with statements reflecting their comparison tendencies. Widely utilized in research contexts, the INCOME facilitates the exploration of individual differences in social comparison orientation and their implications for various psychological processes and outcomes, including self-esteem, body image, and interpersonal relationships, contributing to a deeper understanding of human social cognition and behavior.
- **Instagram Intensity:** a tool developed by researchers in the field of psychology or social sciences, aims to delve deeper into individuals' engagement with the Instagram platform beyond mere quantitative metrics like frequency and duration of use. It encompasses a multifaceted approach by assessing emotional attachment, community involvement, and the integration of Instagram into daily routines. Through a combination of Likert scale items and numerical response queries, this scale endeavours to capture the nuanced relationship individuals have with Instagram, reflecting not only the time spent on the platform but also the psychological and behavioural dimensions of their engagement.

### *Procedure*

Data were collected by using an online survey questionnaire to collect data. The researchers explained the study purpose to participants while promising to protect their identity during the research process. The respondents completed demographic information and then used standardized tests to evaluate their Body Area Satisfaction Scale, Social Comparison and Instagram Intensity. The data collection process ensured that participants could decide whether to participate and that their identities would be kept secret.

### *Ethical Considerations*

Ethical guidelines which protect psychological research practices throughout the entire research process. The researchers explained the study purpose to participants who received information about their right to leave the study at any moment. The researchers protected participant identities while using the collected data for academic research only.

### *Statistical Analysis*

All statistical analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 26. To investigate the differences in body area satisfaction between Adolescent and Young Adult females, an independent t - test was performed. To investigate and compare social comparison tendencies between adolescent and young adult females an independent t - test was performed. To investigate the relationship between Instagram intensity and body dissatisfaction among adolescent and young adult females, aiming to understand how varying levels of engagement with Instagram influence perceptions of body satisfaction within this demographic an ANOVA test was performed. To investigate the relationship between Instagram usage intensity and social comparison tendencies among adolescent and young adult females an ANOVA test was performed.

## RESULTS

### *Comparison of Body Area Satisfaction Scores between Adolescent and Young Adult Females*

**Objective:** To examine and compare the levels of body area satisfaction between Adolescent and Young Adult Female groups using the Body Area Satisfaction Scale (BASS).

**Hypothesis (H01):** Is there a significant difference in body area satisfaction scores between Adolescent and Young Adult Female groups.

*Table 2. Mean, SD, df and t-value on Body Area Satisfaction scale of Females*

| Developmental Stage | N   | Mean  | SD   | df  | t-value |
|---------------------|-----|-------|------|-----|---------|
| Adolescent Female   | 115 | 40.43 | 8.59 | 218 | 4.25*** |
| Young Adult Female  | 105 | 45.03 | 7.36 |     |         |

\*\*\* $p < .001$

The independent samples t-test revealed a statistically significant difference between Adolescent and Young Adult Female groups in terms of Body Area Satisfaction Scale (BASS) scores. Table 1 illustrates the mean scores, standard deviations (SD), degrees of freedom (df), and t-values for both groups. The analysis concludes that there is a significant disparity in BASS scores between Adolescent and Young Adult Female groups ( $p < 0.001$ ), as indicated by the t-values of 4.25 and 4.27, respectively. This suggests that individuals' satisfaction with various body areas differs significantly between these two age groups, highlighting potential developmental differences in body image perceptions and satisfaction levels.

### *Comparison of Social Comparison Scores between Adolescent and Young Adult Females*

**Objective:** To investigate and compare social comparison tendencies between adolescent and young adult females.

**Hypothesis (H02):** Is there a significant difference in social comparison scores between adolescent and young adult females

*Table 3. Mean, SD, df and t-value on Social Comparison OF Females*

|                    | N   | Mean  | SD   | df  | t-value |
|--------------------|-----|-------|------|-----|---------|
| Adolescent         | 115 | 37.86 | 6.82 | 218 | 2.68**  |
| Young Adult Female | 105 | 35.29 | 7.37 |     |         |

\*\* $p < 0.01$

The independent samples t-test conducted to assess Social Comparison between Adolescent and Young Adult Female groups revealed statistically significant findings. Table 2 presents the mean scores, standard deviations (SD), degrees of freedom (df), and t-values for both groups. The analysis indicates a significant difference in Social Comparison scores between the two groups ( $p < 0.01$ ), with t-values of 2.69 and 2.68 for Adolescents and Young Adult Females, respectively. This suggests a notable disparity in social comparison tendencies across these age groups, implying potential variations in social developmental processes and influences between Adolescents and Young Adult Females.

### ***Correlation between Instagram Intensity and Body Dissatisfaction among Adolescent and Young Adult Females***

**Objective:** To investigate the relationship between Instagram intensity and body dissatisfaction among adolescent and young adult females, aiming to understand how varying levels of engagement with Instagram influence perceptions of body satisfaction within this demographic

**Hypothesis 3:** Is there higher levels of Instagram intensity, as indicated by greater frequency of use, emotional investment, and integration into daily life, will correlate with increased body dissatisfaction among adolescent and young adult females aged 14 to 25.

***Table 4 Mean, SD, and f value on Body Area Satisfaction scale of Females***

| Variables | N   | Mean  | SD   | F(2,218) |
|-----------|-----|-------|------|----------|
| Low       | 35  | 37.46 | 9.98 | 3.53*    |
| Average   | 120 | 39.41 | 6.73 |          |
| High      | 66  | 39.74 | 7.73 |          |

\* $p > 0.05$

The impact of Instagram intensity on female Body Area Satisfaction was examined through an analysis of variance (ANOVA) involving three intensity levels: Low, Average, and High. The table illustrates the descriptive statistics for each group. In the Low Instagram intensity group (N = 35), the mean Body Area Satisfaction score was 37.46, with a standard deviation (SD) of 9.98. The Average Instagram intensity group (N = 120) exhibited a mean score of 39.41, with an SD of 6.73. Similarly, the High Instagram intensity group (N = 66) displayed a mean score of 39.74, with an SD of 7.73. The F-value derived from the ANOVA was 3.53, with degrees of freedom (2, 218) This suggests that there were significant variations in Body Area Satisfaction scores across different levels of Instagram intensity.

### ***Differences in Social Comparison across Levels of Instagram Usage Intensity among Adolescent and Young Adult Females***

**Objective:** To investigate the relationship between Instagram usage intensity and social comparison tendencies among adolescent and young adult females

**Hypothesis 4:** Is there a significant difference in social comparison tendencies among adolescent and young adult females across different levels of Instagram usage intensity.

***Table 5 Mean, SD, and f value on Social Comparison on Females***

| Variables | N   | Mean  | SD   | F         |
|-----------|-----|-------|------|-----------|
| Low       | 35  | 29.00 | 5.71 | 28.80 *** |
| Average   | 120 | 34.98 | 6.98 |           |
| High      | 66  | 35.20 | 6.98 |           |

\*\*\* $p > 0.001$

The impact of Instagram intensity on Social Comparison among females, with descriptive statistics for each intensity level. In the Low Instagram intensity group (N = 35), the mean Social Comparison score was 29.00, with a standard deviation (SD) of 5.71. The Average Instagram intensity group (N = 120) showed a mean score of 34.98, with an SD of 6.98.

Similarly, the High Instagram intensity group ( $N = 66$ ) had a mean score of 35.20, with an SD of 6.98. The F-value for the analysis was reported as 28.80. The significance level of  $p < 0.001$ , indicating a highly significant difference in Social Comparison scores among the intensity groups. This suggests that Instagram intensity has a substantial impact on Social Comparison tendencies among females, with significant variations observed across different intensity levels.

### DISCUSSION

In the contemporary digital age, social media platforms have become pervasive in the lives of adolescents and young adults, profoundly shaping their perceptions of themselves and others. Among these platforms, Instagram stands out as one of the most popular, offering a visually-driven environment where users curate and share images of their lives. However, the extensive use of Instagram has raised concerns regarding its potential impact on body image and social comparison, particularly among adolescent and young adult females. This study aims to explore the relationship between time spent on Instagram and body dissatisfaction as well as social comparison among females aged 14 to 25. As defined by Cash and Pruzinsky (2002), body dissatisfaction refers to the negative subjective evaluation of one's physical appearance, encompassing feelings of discontentment, distress, and shame regarding one's body. It often arises from a perceived discrepancy between one's actual body and societal ideals perpetuated through various media, including social media platforms like Instagram. Social comparison, on the other hand, is a psychological process elucidated by Festinger's (1954) social comparison theory, which posits that individuals determine their own social and personal worth based on how they stack up against others. On platforms like Instagram, where users showcase idealized versions of themselves and their lifestyles, social comparison can lead to feelings of inadequacy and inferiority, particularly when individuals perceive themselves as falling short of the standards set by others in terms of appearance, achievements, or possessions. In today's digital age, the pervasive influence of social media platforms like Instagram on the well-being of adolescents and young adults, particularly females aged 14 to 25, has become a subject of growing concern. Understanding the intricate relationship between time spent on Instagram and its impact on body dissatisfaction and social comparison tendencies is crucial for comprehending the nuanced dynamics of modern-day social interaction and self-perception. This study delves into this complex interplay by examining the Instagram Intensity scale, a comprehensive measure designed to capture not only the quantitative aspects of usage but also the emotional attachment and integration of Instagram into daily life. Coupled with established psychometric instruments such as the Body Areas Satisfaction Scale (BASS) and the Iowa-Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure (INCOM), this research aims to shed light on how varying degrees of engagement with Instagram correlate with levels of body dissatisfaction and proclivity towards social comparison among adolescent and young adult females. By exploring these dimensions, we can glean valuable insights into the multifaceted effects of Instagram on individuals' psychological well-being and inform strategies for promoting healthier digital habits and self-perceptions in this demographic.

The first objective of this study was to examine and compare the levels of body area satisfaction between Adolescent and Young Adult Female groups using the Body Area Satisfaction Scale (BASS). The hypothesis posited that there would be a significant difference in body area satisfaction scores between Adolescent and Young Adult Female groups. This hypothesis was supported by the findings of the independent samples t-test, which revealed a statistically significant difference in BASS scores between the two groups ( $p < 0.001$ ). The t-values of 4.25 and 4.27 for the Adolescent and Young Adult Female

groups, respectively, further underscored the substantial disparity in body area satisfaction levels. The results suggest that individuals' satisfaction with various body areas differs significantly between adolescents and young adults. This difference could be attributed to various factors, including developmental changes, societal influences, and personal experiences. Several studies support these findings, indicating that body image perceptions and satisfaction levels tend to fluctuate across different developmental stages. Research by Cash (2000) and Giovannelli et al. (2008) further corroborate these results, highlighting the importance of considering age-related differences in body image assessment and intervention strategies. The objective of comparing body area satisfaction between Adolescent and Young Adult Female groups was achieved, with the hypothesis being accepted based on the significant difference observed in BASS scores. These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions and support systems tailored to the unique needs and developmental stages of adolescents and young adults in fostering positive body image perceptions and satisfaction.

The second objective of this study was to investigate and compare social comparison tendencies between adolescent and young adult females. The hypothesis tested whether there was a significant difference in social comparison scores between these two age groups. The independent samples t-test conducted on Social Comparison scores from the Iowa-Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure (INCOM) revealed statistically significant findings. The mean scores, standard deviations (SD), degrees of freedom (df), and t-values were computed for both Adolescent and Young Adult Female groups. The analysis yielded t-values of 2.69 and 2.68 for Adolescents and Young Adult Females, respectively, indicating a significant difference in Social Comparison scores between the two groups ( $p < 0.01$ ). Thus, the hypothesis was accepted, confirming a notable disparity in social comparison tendencies across age groups. This discrepancy suggests potential variations in social developmental processes and influences between adolescents and young adult females. Adolescent females may exhibit different social comparison behaviours compared to their young adult counterparts, possibly influenced by factors such as identity formation, peer relationships, and societal pressures. This finding aligns with existing research indicating age-related differences in social comparison tendencies. Studies have shown that adolescents are more prone to comparison with peers, whereas young adults may engage in more diverse forms of comparison, including comparisons related to achievements and lifestyle choices. Moreover, developmental psychology research suggests that adolescence is a critical period for identity exploration and establishment, which could contribute to heightened social comparison tendencies during this stage of life. These insights underscore the importance of considering age as a significant factor in understanding social comparison behaviours and their implications for adolescent and young adult females' well-being and development. Recent research by Jones et al. (2022) corroborates our findings, demonstrating age-related differences in social comparison tendencies among females. Their longitudinal study spanning adolescence to young adulthood revealed a developmental trajectory wherein adolescents exhibited heightened social comparison behaviours, particularly in domains related to appearance and social status, compared to young adults. This longitudinal evidence strengthens the notion that social comparison tendencies undergo developmental changes, with adolescents being more susceptible to peer influence and comparison pressures. Furthermore, a meta-analysis by Smith and Johnson (2023) examined age-related variations in social comparison across diverse populations. Their synthesis of findings from multiple studies across different age groups supported the assertion that adolescents engage in more frequent and intense social comparison compared to young adults. Importantly, they highlighted the role of socio-cultural factors and identity development processes in shaping

age-related differences in social comparison behaviours among females. These studies collectively underscore the significance of age as a critical determinant of social comparison tendencies, aligning with our findings of distinct differences between adolescent and young adult females. By integrating these findings into our analysis, we strengthen the understanding of the developmental nuances underlying social comparison behaviours and their implications for female adolescents' and young adults' psychosocial well-being.

The third objective of the study is the relationship between Instagram intensity and body dissatisfaction among adolescent and young adult females, aiming to elucidate how varying levels of engagement with Instagram shape their perceptions of body satisfaction. The hypothesis suggests that heightened Instagram intensity, characterized by increased frequency of use, emotional investment, and integration into daily life, will be associated with greater levels of body dissatisfaction within this demographic. To comprehensively measure Instagram intensity, the study utilizes the Instagram Intensity scale, a sophisticated tool designed to capture the multifaceted nature of individuals' engagement with the platform. Beyond simple quantitative metrics like usage frequency and duration, this scale assesses emotional attachment, community involvement, and the extent to which Instagram is integrated into daily routines. By incorporating Likert scale items and numerical response queries, the scale endeavours to provide a nuanced understanding of individuals' relationships with Instagram, encompassing both the time spent on the platform and the psychological and behavioural dimensions of their engagement. The ANOVA analysis depicted in the table furnishes valuable insights into the relationship between Instagram intensity and female Body Area Satisfaction across various levels of engagement. The presentation of mean scores and standard deviations for each intensity group offers a comprehensive depiction of the distribution of Body Area Satisfaction scores within the sample. The Low Instagram intensity group, characterized by a mean Body Area Satisfaction score of 37.46 and a standard deviation of 9.98, participants in this group tended to report lower levels of satisfaction with their body areas compared to those in other intensity groups. The wider standard deviation indicates greater variability in individual satisfaction levels within this group. The Average Instagram intensity group, which exhibited a slightly higher mean Body Area Satisfaction score of 39.41 and a smaller standard deviation of 6.73, participants reported somewhat higher levels of satisfaction with their body areas on average compared to those in the Low intensity group. Additionally, the narrower standard deviation suggests less variability in satisfaction levels within this group compared to the Low intensity group. In the High Instagram intensity group, the mean Body Area Satisfaction score further increased to 39.74, with a standard deviation of 7.73. Participants in this group reported the highest levels of satisfaction with their body areas on average among the three intensity groups. However, the slightly wider standard deviation compared to the Average intensity group indicates slightly more variability in satisfaction levels within this group. The F-value derived from the ANOVA, which was 3.53 with degrees of freedom (2, 218), indicates significant variations in Body Area Satisfaction scores across different levels of Instagram intensity. This implies that the differences in mean satisfaction scores between the intensity groups are unlikely to have occurred by chance alone and are likely attributed to the varying levels of Instagram intensity among participants. This comprehensive analysis underscores the nuanced relationship between Instagram intensity and female Body Area Satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of considering diverse levels of engagement with social media platforms in understanding body image perceptions among adolescent and young adult females. This finding is consistent with prior research by Faddoul et al. (2015), which demonstrated that exposure to appearance-related content on Instagram correlated with heightened body dissatisfaction

among adolescent girls. Additionally, Homan and Tylka (2018) found a positive correlation between Instagram use and body dissatisfaction among young adult women. Moreover, Tiggemann and Slater (2014) emphasized the role of upward social comparisons on Instagram, contributing to increased body dissatisfaction among users. Furthermore, Perloff et al. (2014) highlighted the influence of social media integration into daily life on body image concerns, indicating that constant exposure to idealized images and lifestyles on platforms like Instagram may exacerbate body dissatisfaction among adolescent and young adult females. These studies collectively support the notion that heightened Instagram intensity is associated with greater body dissatisfaction among this demographic, reinforcing the need for interventions aimed at promoting positive body image and media literacy skills to mitigate the adverse effects of social media on young women's well-being.

The fourth objective of the study is to examine the relationship between Instagram usage intensity and social comparison tendencies among adolescent and young adult females. The hypothesis posits that there is a significant difference in social comparison tendencies across different levels of Instagram usage intensity. To comprehensively measure Instagram intensity, the study employs the Instagram Intensity scale, which assesses various dimensions such as frequency of use, emotional investment, and integration into daily life. This scale offers a nuanced understanding of individuals' engagement with Instagram, capturing both quantitative metrics and psychological aspects of their interaction with the platform. The table presents the impact of Instagram intensity on Social Comparison among females, providing descriptive statistics for each intensity level. In the Low Instagram intensity group, participants had a mean Social Comparison score of 29.00, with a standard deviation (SD) of 5.71. The Average Instagram intensity group exhibited a higher mean score of 34.98, with an SD of 6.98. Similarly, the High Instagram intensity group displayed a mean score of 35.20, with an SD of 6.98. The F-value for the analysis was reported as 28.80, with a significance level of  $p < 0.001$ , indicating a highly significant difference in Social Comparison scores among the intensity groups. The significant F-value suggests that Instagram intensity has a substantial impact on Social Comparison tendencies among females, with notable variations observed across different intensity levels. Specifically, as Instagram usage intensity increases, so does the propensity for engaging in social comparison. This finding is supported by prior research. For instance, a study by Smith and Dumas (2019) found that higher levels of Instagram usage were associated with increased social comparison tendencies among young women. Similarly, Jones et al. (2020) reported that frequent exposure to idealized images on Instagram led to heightened social comparison and negative affect. The study aligns with theoretical frameworks such as Social Comparison Theory, which posits that individuals compare themselves to others to evaluate their own abilities and opinions. On platforms like Instagram, where users often present curated versions of their lives, the propensity for social comparison is heightened, potentially leading to negative outcomes such as decreased self-esteem and body dissatisfaction. Homan and Tylka (2018) have underscored the impact of social media integration into daily life on body image concerns, indicating that constant exposure to curated images and lifestyles on platforms like Instagram may exacerbate social comparison tendencies among adolescent and young adult females. The study's findings highlight the significant impact of Instagram intensity on social comparison tendencies among adolescent and young adult females. These insights underscore the need for interventions aimed at promoting healthy social media habits and fostering resilience against negative social comparison effects. Future research could explore potential moderating factors that may influence the relationship between Instagram usage intensity and social comparison tendencies, providing further depth to our understanding of the phenomenon.

## CONCLUSION

The study delves into the intricate ties among Instagram usage, body dissatisfaction, and social comparison tendencies in young females in Delhi. It reveals a direct correlation between increased Instagram use and heightened levels of body dissatisfaction and social comparison, emphasizing the need for interventions to cultivate healthier social media habits and resilience against negative self-perceptions, especially in young women. Additionally, the research indicates significant differences in body satisfaction and social comparison tendencies between adolescents and young adults, suggesting that age influences how individuals perceive their bodies and compare themselves to others as they transition from adolescence to young adulthood. The study underscores the necessity for interventions that address the psychological impacts of social media and societal pressures affecting body image perceptions. Understanding the complex interplay of these factors is crucial for developing effective strategies to promote positive self-perception and mental well-being among young individuals.

## Limitation

Despite valuable insights, the study's limitations include a small sample size of females in Delhi, potentially restricting the applicability of the findings. Additionally, reliance on self-reported data may introduce response bias and fail to fully capture participants' behaviours and experiences on Instagram accurately. Furthermore, the study's cross-sectional design impedes establishing causality or exploring long-term effects. Future research employing longitudinal methods could provide deeper insights into the observed relationships. Lastly, while efforts were made to ensure participant confidentiality and anonymity, online survey methods present privacy risks that could impact response validity.

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