The teenagers' exposure of Instagram and its relationship with their body acceptance

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Abstract

Teenagers are being exposed to social media content on their daily routine, with a wide range of social media platforms on which individuals can connect with others, share or receive information and entertain themselves. Social media has positive and negative effect on teenagers. Since social media platforms like Instagram depends on posting images, content creators can easily manipulate the posted pictures of their bodies though editing and filters, accordingly creating unrealistic beauty standards.

Also, when teenagers experience body dissatisfaction it may cause various psychological disorders, unhealthy ways of weight loss and eating disorders. This study aims to identify the effect of Instagram exposure on body image perception among teenagers.

The research depends on quantitative method, by conducting a survey on teenagers to measure the effect of their exposure to pictures on Instagram and their body acceptance. The survey sample will be 400 teenagers, ranging in age from 13 to 19, from those who use Instagram. Social media platforms have become an essential part of teenagers' daily routines, and it is still the most controversial issue to be studied as it is in continuous growth.

Teenagers were found to be logging in to their accounts on social media for 6 to 8 hours, which makes them heavy users, and the majority of the sample agreed that they used Instagram throughout their online activities as a location-based social network mobile application for sharing photos and videos that allowed users to apply digital filters and share their photos and videos on other social networks and social media platforms. However, half of the sample recorded a low degree of Instagram addiction, yet 45% scored a moderate degree of Instagram addiction, may be because every day a new application is created and a decrease the assigned time for Instagram.

The answers of the participants revealed that they experienced a moderate level of body acceptance due to being exposed to standardized beauty scales in online advertisements and content.

Keywords: Teenagers, Body acceptance, Social media, Instagram

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تعرض المراهقين للإنستجرام وعلاقته بقبول أجسادهم

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الملخص:

يتعرض المراهقون لمحتوى وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي في الروتين اليومي، حيث تتوفر مجموعة واسعة من المنصات التي يمكن من خلالها للأفراد الاتصال بالآخرين، ومشاركة أو تلقي المعلومات، والترفيه عن أنفسهم. تؤثر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي بشكل إيجابي وسلبي على المراهقين. وبما أن منصات مثل إنستجرام تعتمد على نشر الصور، يمكن لمبدعي المحتوى بسهولة التلاعب بالصور المنشورة لأجسادهم من خلال التحرير والفلاتر، مما يؤدي إلى إنشاء معايير جمال غير واقعية. كما أن تجربة المراهقين لعدم الرضا عن أجسادهم قد تسبب اضطرابات نفسية متعددة، وطرق غير صحية لفقدان الوزن، واضطرابات غذائية.

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد تأثير التعرض لإنستجرام على تصور صورة الجسم بين المراهقين. يعتمد البحث على المنهج الكمي، من خلال إجراء استبيان موجه للمراهقين لقياس تأثير تعرضهم للصور على إنستجرام وقبولهم لأجسادهم. ستكون عينة الاستبيان ٠٠٠ مراهق، تتراوح أعمارهم بين ١٣ و ١٩ عامًا، من مستخدمي إنستجرام. أصبحت منصات التواصل الاجتماعي جزءًا أساسيًا من روتين المراهقين اليومي، ولا تزال القضية الأكثر جدلًا التي يجب دراستها نظرًا لنموها المستمر. وُجد أن المراهقين يقومون بتسجيل الدخول إلى حساباتهم على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي لمدة تتراوح بين ٦ إلى ٨ ساعات، مما يجعلهم مستخدمين بصورة مكثفة، وأجمعت الغالبية العظمى من العينة على أنهم يستخدمون إنستجرام خلال أنشطتهم عبر الإنترنت كشبكة اجتماعية قائمة على الموقع لمشاركة الصور والفيديوهاتهم على الشبكات الاجتماعية ومنصات التواصل الاجتماعي الأخرى. ومع ذلك، سجل نصف على الشبكات الاجتماعية ومنصات التواصل الاجتماعي الأخرى. ومع ذلك، سجل نصف العينة درجة منخفضة من إدمان إنستجرام، بينما حصل ٥٤% على درجة متوسطة من إدمان إنستجرام، وقد يكون ذلك بسبب إنشاء تطبيقات جديدة يوميًا وتقليل الوقت المخصص الامان الستجرام. كشفت إجابات المشاركين أنهم يعانون من مستوى معتدل من قبول الجسم بسبب تعرضهم لمقاييس الجمال الموحدة في الإعلانات والمحتوى عبر الإنترنت.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المراهقون، قبول الجسم، وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، إنستجرام

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Introduction:

Teenagers are being exposed to social media content on their daily routine, with a wide range of social media platforms on whi individuals can connect with others, share or receive information and entertain themselves.

1. Research Problem:

Social media has positive and negative effect on teenagers. Since social media platforms like Instagram depends on posting images, content creators can easily manipulate the posted pictures of their bodies though editing and filters, accordingly creating unrealistic beauty standards. Also, when teenagers experience body dissatisfaction it may cause various psychological disorders, unhealthy ways of weight loss and eating disorders. This study aims to "identify the effect of Instagram exposure on body image perception among teenagers".

2. Research Objectives:

A.Measuring the frequency of teenagers' exposure to Instagram.

B.Exploring the relationship between teenagers' exposure to Instagram content and their body acceptance.

3. Research Significance:

A.The popularity of Instagram is rising day by day, as being a well-known mobile application among young people who are active users on social media, so this research focus on Instagram.

B.The frequent increase of Instagram's features (reels, filters, edited stories) that may relatively affect teenagers' body acceptance.

C.The impotence for enhancing teenagers' social media literacy, to be able to interpret and analyze the presented content.

4.Research Hypothesis:

•There is a statistical significant correlation between teenagers' exposure to Instagram content and their body acceptance.

5.The study variables:

A.The independent variable

- •Teenagers' exposure to Instagram content
- B.The dependent variable
- •Teenagers' body acceptance

6.Methodology:

6.1.Study Method

The research depends on quantitative method as a way of data collection. This method will be applied by conducting a survey on teenagers to measure the effect of their exposure to pictures on Instagram and their body acceptance.

6.2. Sampling Methods

The survey sample will be 400 teenagers, ranging in age from 13 to 19, from those who use Instagram. The researcher chooses the stage of teenager because it represents the most difficult stage in the formation of the child's personality, where he begins to determine his tendencies and directions, as well as the stage of the desire for independence.

7.Measurements:

- •The Pattern of exposure to Instagram: Will be measured through responses to some questions: How often do you use social media daily? Do you use Instagram? What other platforms do you use? And several statements to measure their frequency of using Instagram.
- •Teenagers' Instagram addiction; Kircaburun and Griffiths created the "Instagram Addiction Scale (IAS)" as a modified version of Internet Addiction Young. The scale included two scales, "Instagram Feed Addiction" and "Instagram Stories Addiction", but the study will mix between them, to identify Instagram-related behaviors. Each item in Instagram Addiction Scale represents the addiction component, salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict and relapse.
- •Body acceptance: Also the researcher will use the "Body-Esteem Scale for Adolescents and Adults (BESAA)".

8.Literature Review

Since new media has a great role in affecting adolescents' body image, Audrey et al. and his colleagues (2020) studied Instagram as a medium that enlarged body comparisons between adolescents and the ideal body they presented on Instagram. They worked on this research to identify whether self-esteem is linked with body image in female Instagram users. Audrey and his colleagues specified their sample to be working on females who were high Instagram users, and that proved that two mechanisms enhance the effect of Instagram on females: the first was the idealization of the social standard of

physical appearance, and the second was the social comparison process done by users. The research showed that there was a significant relationship between body image and self-esteem among female users. However, it was clear that some dimensions had positive relationships, such as those who were satisfied with all parts of their bodies, those who felt satisfied with their appearance, and those who considered their weight reasonable and had high self-esteem. Others had recorded a negative relationship between body image and self-esteem, especially those who don't care about being fat and don't concern themselves with their body weight, as they recorded high self-esteem.

Steinsbekk et al. (2020) stated that photographs on social media presented the best version of oneself, so they proved that the negative effect of social media on one's appearance and self-esteem depended upon the type of engagement with social media content. They examined a group of children and adolescents and divided them into two groups: one group that actively posted their pictures and received comments and appearance confirmation ("self-oriented social media use"), and the other group that only viewed and responded to others' content ("other-oriented social media use"). The results showed that passive users who followed and watched other people's perfectly constructed photos were more likely to be negatively affected and negatively impact their appearance and self-esteem, and those users usually socially compared themselves with others trying to prove their attractiveness. However, the users who posted and shared their content had higher self-esteem due to the positive comments they received and encouraging words about their appearance. However, they added that it could be incomplete self-esteem because they might be sharing (selfies), which indicated that they didn't accept their bodies. Steinsbekk assured that both females and males used photo-shared social media websites, but they proved that females who didn't share their photos had less self-esteem about their body image than males because they compared themselves with their same gender on social media.

McComb and Mills (2020) agreed with Steinsbekk about the negative effect of social media on young women who perceived the idealized body images on Instagram that made them all the time compare themselves with peers, celebrities, and models. Although images of

idealized models' bodies were available in traditional media and many researchers studied their effect, McComb and Mills stated that social media reduced females' feelings of shame, body dissatisfaction, and low mood because of the vast amount of time that young people spent on social media and due to the widespread usage of filters and Photoshop programs that could be used to alter images on social media. McComb and Mills exposed a group of young ladies to idealized body images on social media, and they found that females compared themselves upwards to the models by considering them superior in their physical appearance, which resulted in increasing weight appearance dissatisfaction and less confidence.

Jiang and Ngien (2020) agreed with McComb and Mills on the importance of Instagram since it is the upcoming famous website that focuses on images and creating pictures with filters and editing tools. The study by Jiang and Ngien stated that Instagram offered many electronic features that made heavy users more capable of social comparison with others, through pictures and videos allowing self-presentation that increased users' social comparison. Also, Instagram included public profiles for celebrities and influencers that allowed users to like, comment on, and share their pictures and videos, which made it easy to compare on social media. Also, hashtags facilitated the search and accordingly facilitated the social comparison. When users made social comparisons with picture content that presented a positive appearance, this proved to increase one's social anxiety. As the rest of the researchers, Jiang and Ngien, proved that social comparison had a negative impact on users' self-esteem.

Lewallen (2016) focused on fitness images presented in an Instagram format and the effects of their text frames (body-positive, body-negative, and no caption) on women's self-esteem and upward social comparison, so she conducted an experiment on U.S. women and divided them into three groups (exposed to Instagram fitness images featuring body-positive captions, exposed to Instagram fitness images featuring body-negative captions, and exposed to Instagram fitness images featuring no caption). The findings showed that text captions paired with images on Instagram had an impact on the way users evaluated their body image and feelings of self-worth; accordingly, women in the body-positive condition reported higher levels of self-esteem than women in the body-negative condition, who reported

significantly lower levels of self-esteem. It was also proved that women with negative conditions ranked significantly higher on the state of upper social comparison with the images, and those who ranked higher in social comparison with the images also ranked significantly higher in fantasy, believing that they could achieve the look and lifestyle of the women featured in the images.

Fardouly (2017) agreed with Lewallen about the effect of being exposed to ideal images on Instagram and women comparing themselves to these images. Fardouly conducted the study on women aged 18–25 years (as heavy users) from Australia and the U.S. to determine the effect of Instagram usage associated with young women's body image concerns and self-objectification, as well as specifying the exact effect on body dissatisfaction, whether it was internalization of societal beauty ideals or the tendency to compare one's appearance to the appearance of others.

The research assured that Instagram was found to be an appearance-focused media platform, so spending more time on Instagram was associated with higher self-objectification because of the salience of physical appearance; accordingly, Instagram usage was proved to positively correlate with self-objectification.

The researcher found that internalization of the beauty ideal mediated the association between Instagram usage and self-objectification because the posted images on Instagram were carefully selected, edited, and enhanced, which increased the idealized representations of women's physical appearance. Participants reported comparing their appearance most frequently to both friends and celebrities, but only comparisons to celebrities on Instagram mediated the relationship between Instagram usage and self-objectification.

And finally, the higher the participants' exposure to inspirational images on Instagram, the higher body dissatisfaction and a greater drive for thinness among young women, but this was not associated with self-objectification.

Tiggemann and Anderberg (2020) experimentally investigated the effect of exposure to 'Instagram vs. reality' images on women's body dissatisfaction and appreciation. 'Instagram vs. reality' is online social activism where women post two images of themselves side-by-side: an ideal 'Instagram' version that is perfectly lit to show their best attributes and a more realistic version with a more natural look. The

participants were females, and they were divided into groups: the first group viewed the "Instagram vs. reality' images, the second viewed the real pictures, and the third viewed the Instagram pictures only. The results showed that the group exposed to "Instagram vs. reality' images and the group exposed to the real images scored lower body dissatisfaction than did viewing idealized Instagram images. Appearance comparison predicted an increase in body dissatisfaction and a decrease in body appreciation for those who were exposed to the idealized Instagram images.

Reategui and Plamer (2017) conducted an experiment study on a sample that included 4 groups of females divided according to their body mass weight (underweight, normal, overweight, and obese). Some of the samples were exposed to a video of Victoria's Secret fashion show, and others were exposed to a part of Dove's real beauty campaign. In this experiment, they measured females' comparison with the models, their self-esteem, and body self-acceptance. The results showed that the group who watched Dove's campaign experienced lower self-comparison and lower self-esteem, while those who watched Victoria's advertisements experienced a higher level of upward social comparison with the models and lower self-esteem. They also proved that the younger the female, the higher she compared herself with the models presented in the media. Their second hypothesis proved that the higher the body mass index of the females, the lower their self-esteem, as their feeling that they couldn't meet the ideal thinness and the better overall image presented by media might generate a high level of anxiety, leading to the creation of a truly negative self-concept and a worrying depressive state.

Ghazaly (2019) decided to measure the psychological effect of using Instagram on female adolescents in Lebanon. Ghazaly, throughout his research, moved from testing how Instagram's content was perceived by women to how this affected their self-esteem, ending with its effect on their self-enhancement and motivating them to be better. First, he found that the thin and beautiful faces of models and influencers on Instagram caused a mood swing in women, as they felt ugly and fat. This mood swing was heavier for younger females, aged from 18 to 25, than for older females, yet they were all affected. It was proven that the majority of the sample compared themselves with the images and posts they were exposed to on Instagram and that this made them

not satisfied with their bodies and lives. It also proved that the sample was very keen on the number of "likes" they received and the number of "followers" they had.

Brown (2017) examined whether females' usage of social media might be harmful and influential on how they perceived their self-body image, so she made in-depth analyses of some famous eating disorder blogs. The analyses showed unexpected results: females found these blogs a source of support on which they freely felt open to talk with each other, exchange experiences, and ask for advice. The comments of the females showed that they preferred communication with others who understood what they were experiencing, and this communication promoted self-acceptance, self-esteem, and satisfied needs for affection and intimacy. Females used these blogs as an outlet to express their often-obsessive thoughts about being thin and healthy and looking like models. The result showed that some women were easily influenced and pressured by social media and many other social influences to achieve the perfect body. So they used the blogs for information on disordered eating and behaviors.

Wallis (2015) focused her thesis on studying the relationship between using social media and its effect on body satisfaction in adolescents and young females aged 14–25 (divided into 2 groups ranging from 14–18 and 18–25 years). It was proven that the higher the usage of social media for female adolescents, the more they were willing to compare themselves with influencers as well as their peers and vice versa, regardless of their age, as they all agreed on this. She also proved that the female who frequently engaged herself with self-comparison with influencers, as well as her peers, had lower body self-satisfaction and vice versa. However, Wallis's study proved that there is no significant relationship between the amount of time spent on social media and women's appearance-related attitudes. However, it was proven that there is an inverse relationship between females' appearance-related attitudes and their body self-satisfaction.

9. Results of questionnaire addressed to teenagers:

1. Sample distribution according to gender:

The study sample is mostly females, with a ratio of (76.8%), while the ratio of males is (23.3%). The reason is that females were more interested in social media influencers, and they all agreed on following these accounts, as well as showing more respect for

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answering and contributing to this academic research. However, males were less interested as they followed more football celebrities and food bloggers.

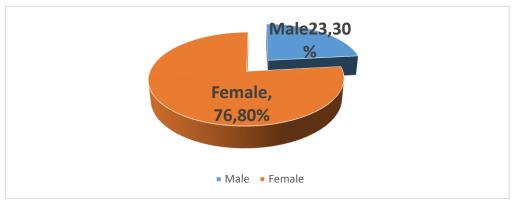


Figure (1): Sample distribution according to gender 2. Sample distribution according to age:

The result shows that teenagers aged between 17 and 19 years old represent (92.1%) of the whole sample, and this is because they are adults. They are more patient in answering the questionnaire, and they can read without the help of their parents, who may affect their answers. As agreed with many previous studies, this range of age makes them heavy users of different social media platforms. While teenagers aged between 13 and 16 years old represented (8.1%) as they were younger, it took them a lot of time to understand the idea of a questionnaire, and they were not high users of social media.

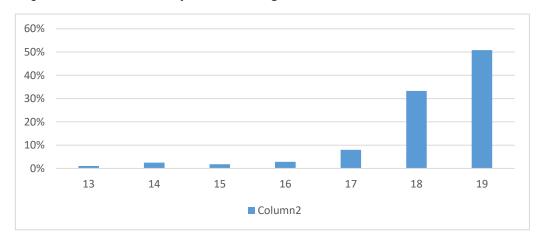


Figure (2): Sample distribution according to age

3.The use of Instagram:

The figure shows that 92.8% of the research sample used Instagram, as it is a free social networking platform specially designed for young individuals, allowing them to upload and share photos and videos through a mobile app with features that increase the interaction of the users to grab their attention and become the main source of linkage with social life. Especially now that Instagram has developed the concept of narration and storytelling and converted it to the digital era, it has become a digital storytelling tool that bears cultural codes. Instagram can present all the narrative story elements, such as symbols, rituals, heroes or valiants, and values, throughout its visual posts, which have a great effect on the behavior and attitudes of the users (Seyfi, 2017). Jiang and Ngien (2020) agreed on the importance of Instagram since it is the upcoming famous website that focuses on images and creating pictures with filters and editing tools. Instagram offered many electronic features that made heavy users more capable of social comparison with others, through pictures and videos allowing self-presentation that increased users' social comparison.

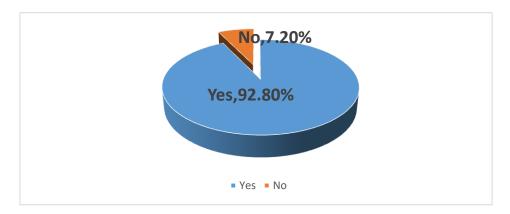


Figure (3): The use of Instagram

4. Frequency of using Instagram: (Instagram feed and stories addiction)

The sample consisted of 24 questions that represent the degree of their addiction and frequency of using Instagram according to Instagram feeds and stories addiction scales. The results show that teenagers scored lower degrees of addition to using Instagram (50.5%) in addition to moderate addition to using Instagram (45%). This result contradicts most researchers who proved that their sample are high

and moderate users of social media generally and Instagram specifically. Fardouly (2017) proved that women aged 18–25 years were heavy users of Instagram, which was associated with higher self-objectification because of the salience of physical appearance. Also, Kircaburun and Griffiths (2018) found that addictive Instagram users were less agreeable individuals who didn't post about their lives but spent excessive time on Instagram checking celebrities' pages or checking the pages of any interesting topic that would occupy their time.

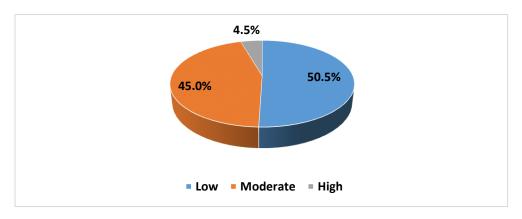


Figure (4): Addiction of using Instagram
5.Teenagers' perception about the degree of their body acceptance: (Body-Esteem Scale for Adolescents and Adults

Teenagers in the sample recorded a moderate level of body esteem (67.5%); however, the sample was found to be heavy social media users and frequent users of Instagram, yet this doesn't affect their body acceptance or body image, unlike the other studies. However, most studies stated that adolescents suffered from a low level of body acceptance. Yahaya et al. (2021) conducted a questionnaire that showed that the majority of the senior students had body image concerns ranging from mild to serious, and there was a significant relationship between body image and self-esteem. Audrey et al. (2020) studied whether self-esteem is linked with body image in heavy female teenage Instagram users. They proved that two mechanisms enhance the effect of Instagram on females: the first was the idealization of the social standard of physical appearance, and the second was the social comparison process done by users. Ajmal and Javaid (2019) also proved that body image was a big part of

adolescents' total self-image, as they were sensitive to criticism about their body image and felt irritated due to negative comments that made them start to lose their self-esteem and confidence about their appearance, physical abilities, social looks, and ethnic features.

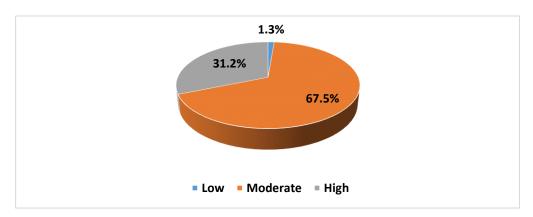


Figure (5): The degree of teenagers' body acceptance Conclusion:

Social media platforms have become an essential part of teenagers' daily routines, and it is still the most controversial issue to be studied as it is in continuous growth, whether by adding new features to the old platforms to make them easier and more entertaining to the users or by creating new platforms called "Threads" to keep the users engaged in their online activities. Teenagers were found to be logging in to their accounts on social media for 6 to 8 hours, which makes them heavy users, and the majority of the sample agreed that they used Instagram throughout their online activities as a location-based social network mobile application for sharing photos and videos that allowed users to apply digital filters and share their photos and videos on other social networks and social media platforms. However, half of the sample recorded a low degree of Instagram addiction, yet 45% scored a moderate degree of Instagram addiction, may be because every day a new application is created and a decrease the assigned time for Instagram. The answers of the participants revealed that they experienced a moderate level of body acceptance due to being exposed to standardized beauty scales in online advertisements and content.

10. Hypothesis result:

"There is a relationship between being exposed to social media influencers' pages and teenagers' self-esteem with the existence body-esteem."

The data in the table reveals a significant correlation between teenagers' exposure to social media influences' pages and teenagers' self-esteem with the existence of body-esteem, as the value of the Pearson correlation reached (=0.277), which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. In terms of its intensity, it is a weak relationship where (0.1 < r > 0.3). And in terms of its direction, it is a direct relationship, which means that the higher the exposure to social media influencers' pages, the higher teenagers' body-esteem, and vice versa. Accordingly, we accept the sub-hypothesis that states:

"There is a statistically significant positive correlation between teenagers' exposure to social media influencers' pages and their body esteem.

Table (1) Correlation between teenagers' exposure to social media influencers' pages and their body-esteem

R	Sig.
0.277**	0.000
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01	

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