

Social Media and Self-Image

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Abstract

For our research study, we aimed to see if there is a correlation between increased social media use and low self esteem. We first created a survey on the software Qualtrics, and included questions to evaluate both social media use and self-esteem. We accumulated 200 responses from individuals who are over the age of 18. The majority of our participants were 18-29 years old, or over 40 years old. Our responses from the participants varied, but certain patterns in the data helped us to evaluate our results. We found that some of the biggest factors between social media use and self esteem were age, gender, and the amount of time that they spend on social media. All of these factors affected how strong or weak their self esteem is.

Introduction

Social Media is something that has become integrated into our everyday lives. We spend much of our waking moments on our phones, consuming videos and pictures and information from dozens of different platforms. It's easy to become consumed with the perfect images that we see on apps such as Facebook or Instagram, and use those photos as rubrics for which we should judge ourselves. With the rise of social media in the last decade, we wondered just how much social media use affects body image. In this research study, we evaluated both women and men above the age of 18 on their social media habits as well as their self-perception and self-esteem to see if there was a correlation between increased social media use and low self-esteem.

Literature Review

Social Media refers to websites or applications that people use to share content with the rest of the world. In today's society, social media has become extremely popular and influential. It is important for individuals who use social media to understand that heavy viewing of content on these sites may begin to affect them personally. As this concern has come to light in the last decade, many studies and articles alike have drawn the conclusion that social media may heavily affect users' self-image.

One theme found throughout many articles, is that it is very common for adolescents to compare themselves to those who get a lot of attention via social media. According to Nierngarten (2017), many users view getting a "like" as a source of validation in the social media community. Adolescents want to fit the narrative of what is favorable to see on a timeline or what gets the most "likes" on their feed. This comes from added pressure from role models on

social media, along with peers, that can result in negative body image. This relates to another study by Simmons (2016), that concluded that adolescents are the most vulnerable to feel negatively about themselves, as they are the heaviest social media users. Both articles focused on how adolescents compared themselves to one another, which is a little different than what is proposed in another study by Tiggemann and Slater (2017). This article focuses on marketing and advertising and how the “idealistic” body of a woman can be interrelated with selling a product. Rather than focusing on how one can typically “sell” a look on social media, it focuses on the business at hand and the purpose behind the post. Though it is a bit different from the first two articles, it highlights the undeniable fact that social media can be used to sway people’s opinions, and essentially, their self-image. Adolescents will typically compare themselves to whatever model is selling the product, which can also taint the image they have of themselves.

Another thing that was held in common with many of the articles that we looked through is that retouched and photo shopped images on social media can have a negative impact on self-image. In another article, the authors conducted a research study of young girls which showed that these girls who were exposed to retouched photos on Instagram were more likely to have poor body image. These girls also rated the retouched photos more positively than the original photos (Kleemans, 2018). Similarly, in an article written by Nancy Clark, she studies how we often compare ourselves to those on social media. This exposure to “perfect” people on Instagram and other social media platforms can lead to young girls trying diet pills, quick fixes, and magic cleanses so that they can measure up. Both of these articles show how social media can quickly give people feelings of dissatisfaction with their bodies after seeing the unrealistic standards portrayed on social media (Clark, 2017). Another research study showed that more

than 20 million adults have downloaded a photo shopping app for their Instagram pictures, and about 70% have admitted to retouching their photos before posting them online (Solon, 2018). All of this can lead to lower self-confidence and self-esteem in young people today after going on social media.

An important model to understand with our research is called the Media Dependency Model. According to Ball-Rokeach (1976) this academic study explains the Media Dependency Theory created in 1976 and predicts why people become attached to mass media. People become cognitively and behaviorally affected by more use of mass media. There is a correlation between social media use and being more dependent on and be impacted by the media. The next two sources are great examples of understanding Media Dependency and the effects to our society when people become dependent on the media for information. The Developmental Psychopathology of Eating Disorders written by Michael P. Levine and Linda Smolak, highlights the common society standards. The “ideal girl” is described as 5'7", 100 pounds and a size 5 with long creamy blonde hair. This ideal look is found in magazines and on T.V. which shows how the cultivation of mass media creates unrealistic standards of what beauty is. This source also relates with Body Image of Women written by Tiggemann, M., & Slater, A. (2017) and how marketing specifically focuses on what the ideal body looks like which affects society's opinion. This is directly linked with our research questions and how the media may create eating disorders. Something to take away from the study is that mass media and eating disorders create an image that is 25% over estimated than the realistic image. Both sources highlight the issues with mass media and effects upon women. In contrast, “The Developmental Psychopathology of

Eating Disorders” touches more about how society’s standards have influenced women to develop eating disorders.

Additionally, it is notable that the articles often discuss the common demographics of social media users. Many articles mention research studies involving subjects during adolescence, and the influence social media has on someone during this period of life. It is also common for female adolescents to be the main focus of this research, because they are subjected to constant pressure in society to meet unrealistic expectations of beauty. In the article, Makwana, Lee, Parkin, and Farmer (2018) discuss how social media has started to consume females lives. Moreover, the article had mentioned a research study which examined how females in particular are influenced by the media, how much time they use social media, and the correlation between social media platforms and body dissatisfaction.

Moreover, Tiggemann and Slater (2016), also strictly analyzed females use of Facebook and its correlation to body image concerns. This study involved females taking a questionnaire that measured their Facebook use and body image concerns. Moreover, two years later the girls took the same questionnaire which showed that Facebook usage increased as well as the number of body image concerns. Although it was common for our articles to focus and analyze how females use/are affected by social media, Salomon and Brown (2018), did discuss a research study that revolves around both male and female teenagers and their use of social media. This study concluded that adolescents are using social media in their most influential years. Furthermore, years in which they are undergoing drastic physical changes and developing an identity within society. This is important to note because majority of the time females are

portrayed to be more sensitive or easier to influence compared to males. This information allowed us to expect more responses from females than males in our study.

Many of the articles that were used for our individual annotated bibliographies overlap each other interchangeably. This was demonstrated through the common demographics of all the subjects of each article, whose self-esteem or body image concerns were affected by social media. It was often found that females, specifically, those who are in the period of adolescence, tend to be affected by social media the most (physically and mentally). Moreover, as individuals increase their usage of social media, body dissatisfaction and self-image concerns also increase. It has also become very common for females to alter their pictures in order to feel accepted into the social media community and meet society's unrealistic expectations of beauty. Females tend to be the most vulnerable when it comes to comparing themselves to those they view on social media. Though this was a common theme throughout different sources, a few articles mentioned both males and females in their research studies. It is necessary for us to keep these demographics in mind, so we can collect the most accurate data from both genders. Throughout analyzing the different articles one thing is certain; more research must be done on the effects of social media, and suggestions must be made in order to create a healthy relationship between social media use and self-image.

Rationale

Our literature review highlighted many key concepts and the impact social media has had on society. Within the past decade, social media has been a common topic concluding that heavy social media use may affect a user's self image. There is a trend in some of the sources we found

that mention adolescents are commonly found to compare themselves to those who get more attention on social media. Nierngarten (2017) claims that many users getting a “like” as validation within the social media community. Relating to another study by Simmons (2016) users with the most amount of social media usage, tend to feel the most vulnerable and negative about themselves. Feedback and reactions from social media have shown to affect adolescents the most. A common theme is adolescents and how younger people tend to compare themselves to one another. Another article that backs up why this is, is a study by Tiggemann and Slater (2017). This study focuses on how marketing and advertising has created the “idealistic” body of a woman is interrelated with selling a product.

An important model to understand when analyzing this information is called the Media Dependency Model by Ball-Rokeach (1976). This study goes into depth on why people become attached to mass media. People tend to be more cognitively affected along with behaviorally affected by increasing use of social media. There is a correlation between social media use and being more dependent on the media. Whether people depend on it for good information or not, it has been shown through the model that people become more dependent for information. Many of the articles we found for our individual bibliographies, contributed to our research. There was a lot of overlap between each source which helped our research stay consistent.

Overall, studies have shown that females, who are in their period of adolescence tend to be affected by social media the most. What we have learned from research is that with more social media use, there is a chance of being affected by it whether it is positive or negative. Most of our studies have leaned towards the idea that people are affected more negatively by social

media. Examples are of that people feel better about getting more “likes” and positive feedback from social media. A study showed that not getting enough “likes” creates a negative feeling. The Media Dependency Model helps us understand why these results tend to shift one way. The common themes have been that women and adolescent women in particular tend to be more influenced by social media. This is because statistics show women use social media more and women tend to be more sexualized in the media. With more use, there are much higher chances of being affected by social media. Adolescent women tend to be more influenced as well because younger people are easier to influence upon. With understanding this, it also helped us understand what questions to ask within our survey and cultivate research questions.

1. How does the amount of social media that one may use affect how they view themselves?
2. In what ways does social media use affect self image?
3. What social media platforms create the largest insecurities?

We felt that these three questions would create a better understanding of how social media affects self-image in our demographic. Keeping an open mind on what the results would be, we intended to find out how people are affected or if people are affected at all.

Methods

The aim of this research study was to create and develop a survey that measured the quantity of people whose self-image is affected by social media. In order to be able to survey people, it was critical that an IRB proposal was complete. Information that was put in the IRB proposal included how the research and survey were going to be conducted, how participants

would be recruited, risks and benefits associated with taking the survey, and how the survey could be accessed. The proposal took weeks to complete before being submitted. It was vital that it would include enough detail in order to get approved by the IRB review board.

Alongside the IRB proposal, this study required a survey as the main focus of research. More specifically, a survey focusing on social media use and self-image. The survey was first completed in a word document. This document contained questions and response options that were then put on the platform, Qualtrics. Once the IRB proposal was approved by the board, this researches Qualtrics survey would be published for the public. Before this could take place, it was vital to determine the demographics and recruitment message, both of which were a fundamental part of the IRB proposal. As mentioned above, this research strictly revolves around the survey responses of participants. After coming up with the research topic, it was decided that the participants needed to fit the following demographics: Male/Female/Other and 18 Years or older. It was necessary for the survey to be taken by anyone who fit those demographics. Race, religion, social class, etc. was not a limitation to this research. Due to having individuals take the survey, it was necessary to have a recruitment message. The recruitment message for this study read:

“Do you think the content on social media affects individuals self image? If you are 18 or older, we’d like to hear from you. Click on the link below to take an anonymous survey on social media and self image. As a thank you, at the end of the survey we will share suggestions for promoting a more positive body image messages through social media.

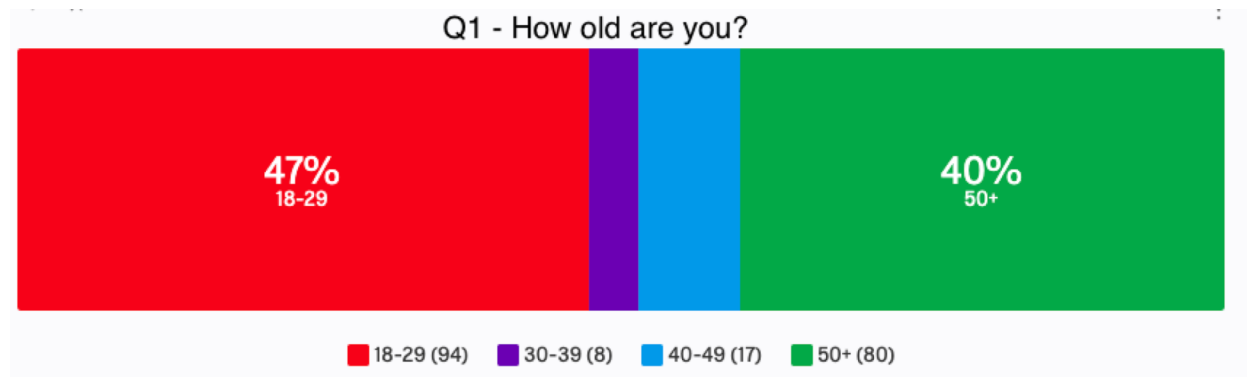
Thank You!”

This message was crucial to have posted along with the survey because it is what attracts and informs the audience. The process of developing this message was not difficult. It was important to first decide on the topic of the research study. Following, develop our research questions, which lead to defining our demographics. These were all pivotal steps because that is the information that is needed for the recruitment message. Now, all that needed to be done was to develop our survey. It was important to focus on questions that revolve around social media and body image. When developing the questions, word choice was a main priority. This allows readers to know exactly what was being asked. To perfect the survey, response forms also needed to be kept in mind. This is significant when trying to measure the results.

As previously mentioned, Qualtrics was the platform used to conduct the survey revolving around this research. The instrumentation of the survey took place at the end of the IRB proposal. Part of the IRB proposal was to develop questions that would focus on the correlation between all individuals (above the age 18) and the use of social media. More specifically, the research aimed to see if this correlation was between an increase of social media and low self esteem. With this topic in mind, questions were decided on by how much time individuals spent on social media platforms, how long individuals could go without, one's social likeability (Number of followers, number of likes), one's inward feelings (comparing yourself to others, experiencing a negative and positive feelings) one's feelings towards others (feeling envious and how realistic individuals portray themselves), etc. In total, this survey had 25 questions. Deciding on questions was not difficult because of the studies research questions, as well as, the scales that were used. The scales decided on for this study were Rosenberg's Self Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) and the Social Media Addiction Scale (Sahin, 2018).

Rosenberg's Self Esteem Scale applied well to this survey because it measures an individual's self worth by looking at both positive and negative feelings about the self. An example of this scale in the survey would be Q12, "Have you ever experienced a negative feeling about yourself while viewing another person's social media account?". Additionally, the Social Media Addiction Scale was pivotal in this research because it allowed measurement to take place regarding social media addiction levels. An example of this scale that was asked in this survey was Q24, "Do you feel you are a person of worth, or at least on an equal plane with others?". These two scales determined the majority of the questions in this survey. The survey did not take long to make, and information from secondary research proved to be helpful in shaping the survey questions. By making the survey through Qualtrics, every response was recorded. This allowed examination of how many individuals had started the survey, who had completed the survey, and what the answers were to each individual question. Once the IRB proposal was approved, the first step was to make the survey public. From here, the survey link as well as the recruitment message was shared to Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. After receiving 200 responses, the survey was closed off from the public and examination of results began.

Results



Above are the results for the different age groups that participants who completed our survey fall into.

Stub: Q3: How many hours do you use Facebook per week?

	Q1: How old are you?				
	Total	18-29	30-39	40-49	50+
0	2.0%	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%
1-5	55.3%	60.6%	12.5%	29.4%	58.8%
11+	12.6%	7.4%	37.5%	29.4%	12.5%
6-10	30.2%	28.7%	50.0%	41.2%	27.5%

The image above represents the different age groups of the people who took our survey, and how long those age groups typically spend on Facebook.

The image below represents the different age groups of people who took our survey, and how long each age group typically spends on Instagram.

Stub: Q4: How many hours do you use Instagram per week?

	Q1: How old are you?				
	Total	18-29	30-39	40-49	50+
0	29.1%	2.1%	50.0%	58.8%	52.5%
1-5	38.2%	37.2%	25.0%	41.2%	40.0%
11+	9.0%	14.9%	25.0%	0.0%	2.5%
6-10	23.6%	45.7%	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%

Below are the results for what each age group answered when asked about negative feelings they have experienced on social media.

Stub: Q12: Have you ever experienced a negative feeling about yourself while viewing another person's social media account?

		Q1: How old are you?							
		Total	18-29	30-39	40-49	50+			
Definitely not	24.7%	8.5%	25.0%	5.9%	48.1%				
Definitely yes	33.3%	54.3%	25.0%	35.3%	8.9%				
Might or might not	8.6%	9.6%	12.5%	23.5%	3.8%				
Probably not	15.7%	5.3%	37.5%	23.5%	24.1%				
Probably yes	17.7%	22.3%	0.0%	11.8%	15.2%				

Stub: Q23: Overall, how satisfied are you with the person you are?

	Q1: How old are you?				
	Total	18-29	30-39	40-49	50+
Agree	50.0%	60.6%	62.5%	47.1%	36.7%
Disagree	6.6%	11.7%	12.5%	5.9%	0.0%
Strongly Agree	41.4%	23.4%	25.0%	47.1%	63.3%
Strongly disagree	2.0%	4.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

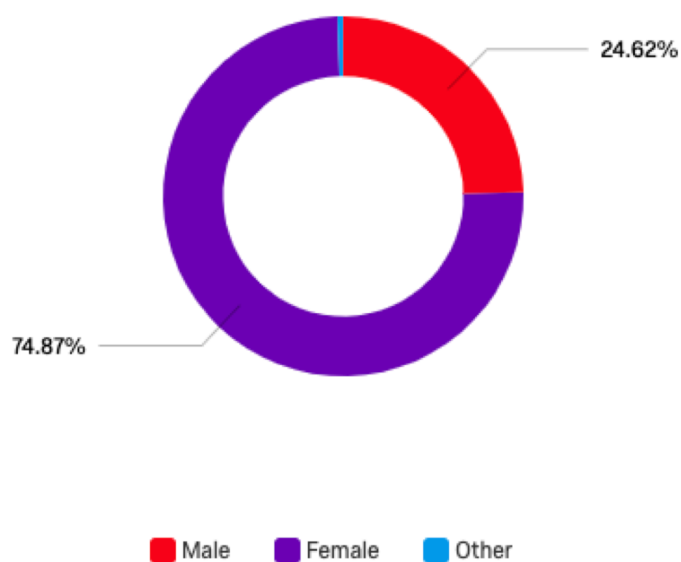
The image above represents how satisfied participants are with themselves, based on the different age groups they are in.

Stub: Q25: Do you have a positive attitude towards yourself?

	Q1: How old are you?				
	Total	18-29	30-39	40-49	50+
Agree	44.7%	49.5%	62.5%	52.9%	35.4%
Disagree	11.7%	21.5%	12.5%	11.8%	0.0%
Strongly Agree	42.1%	25.8%	25.0%	35.3%	64.6%
Strongly disagree	1.5%	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

The image above represents the results of participants who answered a question about having a positive attitude, based on the different age groups they are in.

Q2 - What is your gender?



The image above represents the answers from a question about participants' gender.

Stub: Q10: Do you find that you compare yourself to others on Facebook?

	Q2: What is your gender?			
	Total	Female	Male	Other
Definitely not	54	32	21	1
Definitely yes	29	27	2	0
Might or might not	34	28	6	0
Probably not	48	30	18	0
Probably yes	34	32	2	0

The chart above considers the participants' genders when asked about comparing themselves to others on Facebook.

The chart below considers the participants' genders when asked about comparing themselves to others on Instagram.

Stub: Q11: Do you find that you compare yourself to others on Instagram?

	Q2: What is your gender?			
	Total	Female	Male	Other
Definitely not	79	47	32	0
Definitely yes	49	44	4	1
Might or might not	20	15	5	0
Probably not	18	11	7	0
Probably yes	31	30	1	0

The chart below represents what each gender answered when asked about being satisfied with themselves.

Stub: Q23: Overall, how satisfied are you with the person you are?

	Q2: What is your gender?			
	Total	Female	Male	Other
Agree	99	80	19	0
Disagree	13	11	2	0
Strongly Agree	82	54	27	1
Strongly disagree	4	3	1	0

Stub: Q11: Do you find that you compare yourself to others on Instagram?

	Q4: How many hours do you use Instagram per week?				
	Total	0	1-5	11+	6-10
Definitely not	40.1%	89.3%	30.3%	22.2%	4.3%
Definitely yes	24.9%	1.8%	19.7%	55.6%	48.9%
Might or might not	10.2%	3.6%	14.5%	5.6%	12.8%
Probably not	9.1%	5.4%	13.2%	5.6%	8.5%
Probably yes	15.7%	0.0%	22.4%	11.1%	25.5%

Above are the results to a question about making comparisons to others on Instagram, in relation to how many hours participants used Instagram.

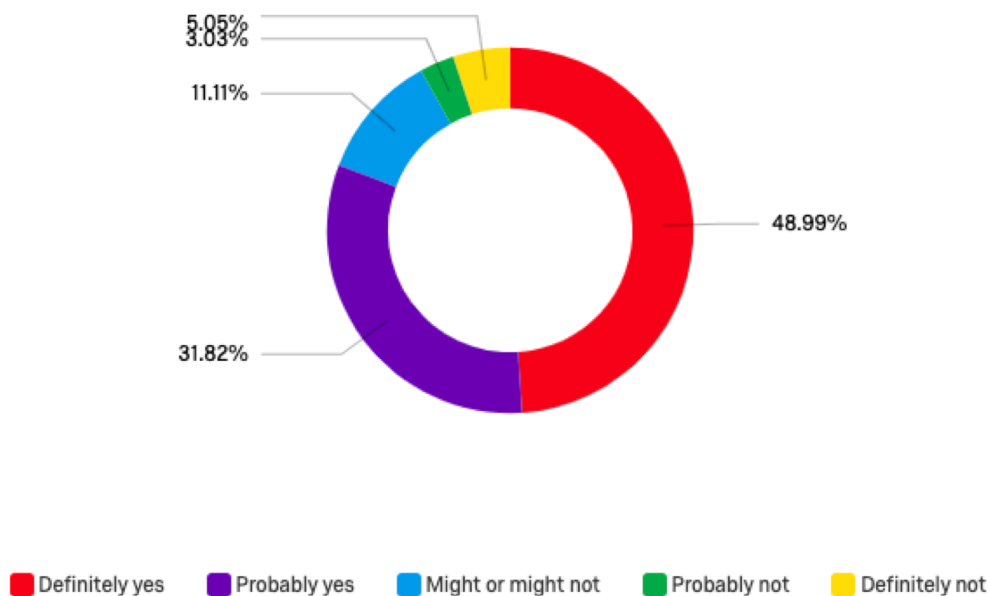
Stub: Q10: Do you find that you compare yourself to others on Facebook?

	Q3: How many hours do you use Facebook per week?				
	Total	0	1-5	11+	6-10
Definitely not	27.1%	75.0%	28.2%	48.0%	13.3%
Definitely yes	14.6%	0.0%	11.8%	16.0%	20.0%
Might or might not	17.1%	0.0%	18.2%	8.0%	20.0%
Probably not	24.1%	25.0%	24.5%	16.0%	26.7%
Probably yes	17.1%	0.0%	17.3%	12.0%	20.0%

Above are the results to a question about making comparisons to others on Facebook, in relation to how many hours participants used Facebook.

Below are the results from a question about receiving a “like” on Facebook and Instagram.

Q13: Have you ever experienced a positive feeling after receiving a “like” on Facebook or Instagram?



The chart below captures the results of our question about feeling negative while viewing others’ social media profiles, and considers how long participants use Instagram per week.

Stub: Q12: Have you ever experienced a negative feeling about yourself while viewing another person's social media account?

Q4: How many hours do you use Instagram per week?					
	Total	0	1-5	11+	6-10
Definitely not	24.7%	40.4%	25.0%	16.7%	8.5%
Definitely yes	33.3%	17.5%	28.9%	55.6%	51.1%
Might or might not	8.6%	5.3%	11.8%	0.0%	10.6%
Probably not	15.7%	28.1%	11.8%	11.1%	8.5%
Probably yes	17.7%	8.8%	22.4%	16.7%	21.3%

The chart below captures the results of our question about feeling negative while viewing others' social media profiles, and considers how long participants use Facebook per week.

Stub: Q12: Have you ever experienced a negative feeling about yourself while viewing another person's social media account?

Q3: How many hours do you use Facebook per week?					
	Total	0	1-5	11+	6-10
Definitely not	24.7%	100.0%	24.8%	20.0%	21.7%
Definitely yes	33.3%	0.0%	33.9%	28.0%	36.7%
Might or might not	8.6%	0.0%	6.4%	12.0%	11.7%
Probably not	15.7%	0.0%	15.6%	28.0%	11.7%
Probably yes	17.7%	0.0%	19.3%	12.0%	18.3%

Discussion

The results that were gathered from the survey provide succinct information about the relationship between social media and self-image. Certain factors that come into play when considering how one's social media use affects their self-image are: age, gender, the duration of time spent on different platforms, and feelings associated with being a part of a social media community. Though each individual who participated in the survey was unique, many patterns became prevalent when considering shared demographics between social media users.

The first demographic that impacted users' self-image and social media use was age. A social media users age may affect the time spent on different platforms, what platforms were being used, how one compares themselves to others on these sites, and how satisfied one may be with themselves. The most common sites used by people ranging in various ages were Facebook and Instagram. Facebook is commonly used by people of all ages, but Instagram was dominated by users in the age range of 18-29. This age range scored the highest when asked how many hours were spent per week on both platforms. Similarly, users between the ages of 18 and 29

disclosed that they have experienced a negative feeling about themselves while viewing another social media users profile, at a higher rate than those of other ages. This also correlates with the results of two questions relating to one's self-image. The age range that spent the most time on social media, had the lowest score when it comes to having a positive attitude and being satisfied with who they are as an individual. The younger users of social media tended to spend the most time on social media platforms, and are consequently the most affected by what content they were viewing. They compare themselves to who they view on social media, and it affects them negatively. These results are congruent with the findings of Rachel Simmons (2016), who also concluded that adolescents are the most vulnerable social media users. Young social media users are at the highest risk of a decreasing self-image, due to the overwhelming amount of time spent on social media. These results answered our research question "What social media platforms create the largest insecurities?". The dominating 18-29 age range reported using Instagram more than Facebook. As previously mentioned, they also scored the lowest on the self-esteem scale. It is apparent that Instagram causes the biggest insecurities within individuals, as they are constantly comparing themselves to favorable images they see on the site.

Another demographic that affected users' self-image and social media use was gender. Two questions asked if users compared themselves to others on Facebook, or others on Instagram. While a handful of females said that they did not, majority agreed that they did indeed, compare themselves to others on these sites. Dissimilar to the females, majority of males said that they did not compare themselves to others on social media. One person, who identified their gender as "other", also said that they compare themselves to users online. Though majority of all genders said that they are satisfied with who they are as a person, more females said that

they were not satisfied with who they were as a person than males. This may be a result of females' tendency to compare themselves to others on social media. If a female is comparing herself to others on these sites, their self-image may be harmed. These results relate to previous research done by Tiggemann and Slater (2016), who strictly analyzed females use of Facebook and its correlation to body image concerns. These results answered our research question "How does the amount of social media that one may use affect their self-image?". The more time females tended to spend on social media, the more they became unsatisfied with themselves. As more social media users tend to be female, and they tend to spend the most time on social media, they are at risk of a decreasing self-image.

The amount of time a user spends on social media can also affect their self-image. In one question, participants were asked to disclose the amount of time they use Facebook and Instagram per week. In another question, participants were asked if they had ever experienced a negative feeling about themselves when viewing another person's profile. Those who answered that they spent a lot of time on social media (6-10 hours or 11+), were also those to disclose feeling negatively about themselves while viewing another users' profile. These results also answered our research question of "How does the amount of social media that one may use affect their self-image?". The longer the duration of time spent on social media, the more time users have to compare themselves to others and their self-image takes a toll.

All users that are on these platforms are a part of "communities". Whether it be Facebook or Instagram, the user is communicating with other people on these sites in which they are publishing and viewing content. Within these social media communities, norms develop. When participants were asked if they had ever experienced a positive feeling after receiving a "like" on

Facebook or Instagram, an overwhelming amount of people said that they had, or probably had. This has become the norm for social media users, as they view a “like” as something positive. These results answered our research question “In what ways does social media use affect self image?”. Receiving a lot of likes on something may boost a users’ self-image, as they feel that they are receiving positive feedback from their social media community. These results also relate to research done by Mary Beth Nierngarten (2017) who found that social media users compare themselves to those who get a lot of attention via social media. Receiving a low amount of “likes” may harm users’ self-image, because users aren’t feeling validated by their social media community.

One limitation experienced while conducting research, was the requirements for taking the survey. The only requirement in taking the survey was that participants be 18 years or older. The requirements should have also included that participants must have both Facebook and Instagram. Many users that were 50+ did not have an Instagram, so questions pertaining to Instagram were not relevant to them. This may have caused our data to be skewed, because when asked if they compared themselves to others on Instagram, they would say “no”. Many Instagram users said they did compare themselves to others they viewed on the site, so the results may have been different if we added a “I don’t have Instagram” option.

Another limitation experienced would be the amount of time provided to distribute the surveys. We had to make an adjustment to the IRB proposal, which delayed us from distributing the survey as soon as possible. With the short amount of time that we had, the audience that were reached may have been larger otherwise. Though we were able to gather 200 responses, an even larger population would have given even more accurate data.

Future directions for research would be to explore different social media sites. We only researched Facebook and Instagram, and there are plenty of other popular social media sites that could be affecting users' self-image. Though Facebook and Instagram are the biggest social media sites, it would be interesting to see how other sites affect users. Facebook and Instagram are heavily based on visual aspects, so it is easy for one to compare their appearance to another person's. It would be fascinating to see how someone compared their personality to someone else's on a site that was more literacy based like twitter.

Conclusion

As the results of this study show, the use of social media is prevalent in many peoples' lives. This research study was created to focus on the correlation between increased social media use and self esteem levels in individuals. This study revolved around three pivotal research questions. The research questions were: "how does the amount of social media that one may use affect how they view themselves?", "In what ways does social media use affect self image?", and "what social media platforms create the largest insecurities?". Using these research questions allowed smaller and more specific questions to be developed and used within a Qualtrics survey. This survey collected data results from 200 individuals and the findings were very similar to what was anticipated prior to the survey. Data results demonstrated that age, gender, and the duration of time spent on different social media platforms does correlate to self-esteem and feelings associated with being apart of a social media community. Moreover, Facebook is commonly used by people of all ages, but Instagram is most commonly used by individuals in the ages 18-29. Additionally, individuals from the age 18-29 responded that they spend higher

amounts of hours on these platforms, as well as have experienced more negative feelings about themselves than positive. Furthermore, the majority of females had responded that they compare themselves to others on platforms such as Instagram. Regardless, the data results from the survey prove that everyone who uses social media feels significantly better when receiving likes. The findings from this research study are similar to previous studies that have been conducted. Based on the results found in this study, it can be concluded that there is a positive correlation between social media use and self-image.

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Survey
Social Media and Self Image Survey

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q28 The purpose of this survey is to better understand the relationship between social media and self-image. Please keep that in mind as you respond to each question. Your participation is greatly appreciated and involves taking an online survey which will take three to five minutes. Your responses are completely anonymous as no identifying information will be collected. Your participation is voluntary, and you can skip any question or stop at any time. There are no risks to taking this survey. There is one small benefit, at the end of the survey there will be suggestions for promoting more positive body image messages through social media. If you have any questions you can contact the primary researcher: Mackenzie Richman at MRichman@edgewood.edu. If you have questions or concerns and would like to talk with someone other than the researcher, please feel free to contact the Institutional Review Board at IRB@edgewood.edu

By clicking "I agree" you are agreeing to participate. If you would rather not participate, click "I disagree". Thank you again for your time and honest responses.

☐ I agree (1)

☐ I disagree (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If The purpose of this survey is to better understand the relationship between social media and self... = I disagree

Q1 How old are you?

☐ 18-29 (1)

☐ 30-39 (2)

☐ 40-49 (3)

☐ 50+ (4)

Q2 What is your gender?

☐ Male (1)

☐ Female (2)

☐ Other (3)

Q3 How many hours do you use Facebook per week?

☐ 0 (1)

☐ 1-5 (2)

☐ 6-10 (3)

☐ 11+ (4)

Q4 How many hours do you use Instagram per week?

☐ 0 (1)

☐ 1-5 (2)

☐ 6-10 (3)

☐ 11+ (4)

Q5 How long do you believe you could refrain from using social media?

☐ Minutes (1)

☐ Hours (2)

☐ Days (3)

☐ Months (4)

☐ Years (5)

Q6 How many Facebook "friends" do you have?

☐ 0-300 (1)

☐ 301-500 (2)

☐ 501-1000 (3)

☐ 1000+ (4)

Q7 How many Instagram "followers" do you have?

☐ 0-300 (1)

☐ 301-501 (2)

☐ 501-1000 (3)

☐ 1000+ (4)

Q8 Do you use social media while others are around you?

☐ Definitely yes (1)

☐ Probably yes (2)

☐ Might or might not (3)

☐ Probably not (4)

☐ Definitely not (5)

Q9 Do you prefer communication via social media over face to face communication?

☐ Definitely yes (1)

☐ Probably yes (2)

☐ Might or might not (3)

☐ Probably not (4)

☐ Definitely not (5)

Q10 Do you find that you compare yourself to others on Facebook?

- ☐ Definitely yes (1)
- ☐ Probably yes (2)
- ☐ Might or might not (3)
- ☐ Probably not (4)
- ☐ Definitely not (5)

Q11 Do you find that you compare yourself to others on Instagram?

- ☐ Definitely yes (1)
- ☐ Probably yes (2)
- ☐ Might or might not (3)
- ☐ Probably not (4)
- ☐ Definitely not (5)

Q12 Have you ever experienced a negative feeling about yourself while viewing another person's social media account?

- ☐ Definitely yes (1)
- ☐ Probably yes (2)
- ☐ Might or might not (3)

☐ Probably not (4)

☐ Definitely not (5)

Q13 Have you ever experienced a positive feeling after receiving a "like" on Facebook or Instagram?

☐ Definitely yes (1)

☐ Probably yes (2)

☐ Might or might not (3)

☐ Probably not (4)

☐ Definitely not (5)

Q14 Have you ever felt envious of someone after viewing their Facebook or Instagram profile?

☐ Definitely yes (1)

☐ Probably yes (2)

☐ Might or might not (3)

☐ Probably not (4)

☐ Definitely not (5)

Q15 Do you believe social media "Influencers" portray themselves as having a realistic life?

- ☐ Definitely yes (1)
- ☐ Probably yes (2)
- ☐ Might or might not (3)
- ☐ Probably not (4)
- ☐ Definitely not (5)

Q16 Do you view social media as an escape from the real world?

- ☐ Definitely yes (1)
- ☐ Probably yes (2)
- ☐ Might or might not (3)
- ☐ Probably not (4)
- ☐ Definitely not (5)

Q17 Why do you use social media? Please answer with your top reason.

- ☐ Entertainment (1)
- ☐ News (2)

- ☐ Inspiration (3)
- ☐ Communication with others (4)

Q18 What kind of content do you follow on these sites? Please answer with your top choice.

- ☐ Lifestyle (1)
- ☐ Sports (2)
- ☐ Fitness (3)
- ☐ Fashion (4)
- ☐ Nature (5)
- ☐ I only use social media to stay connected to friends (6)

Q21 Is there an influencer that comes to mind when you think about Instagram? What intrigues you about this person? Please answer with your top choice.

- ☐ Lifestyle (1)
- ☐ Appearance (2)
- ☐ Personality (3)
- ☐ Travel opportunities (4)
- ☐ Aesthetic (5)

☐ Other (6)

☐ There is not an influencer that comes to mind at this time (7)

Q22 Do you believe you portray yourself authentically on your social media?

☐ Definitely yes (1)

☐ Probably yes (2)

☐ Might or might not (3)

☐ Probably not (4)

☐ Definitely not (5)

Q23 Overall, how satisfied are you with the person you are?

☐ Strongly Agree (1)

☐ Agree (2)

☐ Disagree (3)

☐ Strongly disagree (4)

Q24 Do you feel you are a person of worth, or at least on an equal plane with others?

☐ Strongly Agree (1)

☐ Agree (2)

☐ Disagree (3)

☐ Strongly disagree (4)

Q25 Do you have a positive attitude towards yourself?

☐ Strongly Agree (1)

☐ Agree (2)

☐ Disagree (3)

☐ Strongly disagree (4)

Q26 Do you feel that you have a number of good qualities?

☐ Strongly Agree (1)

☐ Agree (2)

☐ Disagree (3)

☐ Strongly disagree (4)

Q27 Do you compare yourself to those who you interact with in person?

- ☐ Definitely yes (1)
- ☐ Probably yes (2)
- ☐ Might or might not (3)
- ☐ Probably not (4)
- ☐ Definitely not (5)

How to promote body positive messages online:

1. Shift from self criticism to inspiration - Instead of using social media as fuel to beat yourself up, use it as a positive source of inspiration
2. Realize that social media is a highlight reel - You don't get a glimpse of what goes on behind the scenes
3. Be proactive instead of reactive - Instead of comparing yourself to others, focus on the great qualities you have and use this to improve your confidence
4. Do something - You can help spread positive body image messages by portraying yourself authentically online