IMPACT OF SELF PORTRAYAL ON INSTAGRAM

ON BODY IMAGE AND SELF-ESTEEM

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A Thesis

presented to

the Faculty of Humanities

at Notre Dame University-Louaize

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Media Studies - Advertising

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by

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MAY 2023

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments

Abstract

This study tackles the impact of self portrayal on instagram on body image and self-esteem. Social media platforms have now become extremely diversified, having both positive and negative effects. Framing theory and hyper reality were used to help explain how social media platforms have made reality so hard to achieve by framing what they want to highlight and keeping a lot in the darkness. The quantitative research methodology was used because it is objective, and relies on concrete numbers which helps remove bias from the research. Results showed that the hypotheses stated weren't completely supported but still effective; it's just not as popular as was expected and on a smaller quantity. Viewers are mentally and physically affected by the things they view on Instagram; they do seek validation and recognition from this platform, and are affected by what they view.

Key words: Self-esteem, Instagram, Body-image, Social media, Lebanon.

Introduction

"Focus on how to be social, not on how to do social." (Baer, 2015). The goal of the proposed project is to tackle how people portray themselves on instagram and how it affects body-image and self–esteem. Instagram is a free visual social media platform that has been available since 2010, it automatically became extremely popular with one million users registered in the first two months, and this platform gives you the opportunity to share photos and videos and is available for all smart phones. It gives people the opportunity to post from anywhere, and show people where they are, also, people can comment, like, and repost what their friends share on

Instagram. "Body image is a combination of the thoughts and feelings that you have about your body. Body image may range between positive and negative experiences, and one person may feel at different times positive or negative or a combination of both. Body image is influenced by internal (e.g. personality) and external (e.g. social environment) factors." (National Eating Disorders Collaboration). Self-esteem is a person's positive or negative self-evaluation, or the degree to which he or she believes oneself to be worthwhile (Leary & Baumeister, 2000). The main objective of this study is that Instagram has become extremely popular among people, and almost everyone has this application downloaded on their smart phones, even children. This platform has become the place for people to post the good things in their lives and exaggerate them. This over-exaggeration has led others to believe that they can't live up to a particular lifestyle that some have already been able to reach, in terms of luxurious lifestyles, the perfect body, the perfect relationship, and even the perfect healthy lifestyle that has no imperfections. They compare themselves to all they see on Instagram which reduces their self-esteem and causes body image. The slightest example is you can't always have the perfect body with no fat and eat protein all the time. People need to understand that most of what we see is practically unreal and impossible to achieve, you can live the "perfect life" but for how long? They are bound to be imperfections along the way, and that is utterly okay. This situation has been going on for a while but mental health wasn't taken as seriously back then as it is now, the world has opened up to people being affected mentally from outside sources. An example of an outside source is Instagram in this case, and even though on some level people know that not everything they see is real, the constant badgers and reminders that show up as posts can affect someone indirectly. It always affected but it was never taken seriously, but now that it's showing up more often, the aim is to open everyone's eyes to this situation. The goal of this study is to open our

society to understanding the mere fact that social media platforms aren't as real as they seem, Instagram is mostly people trying to stick to a standard that makes them "InstaFamous", and not let people get affected by this. It is hard to admit that Instagram may have affected your body image and self-esteem but once you do, it is easier to find a way to help surround yourself with the positivity you need to heal. The first thing people need to believe on all levels and keep in the back of their heads is that they should not believe everything they see on Instagram because everything is staged for the likes, comments and popularity.

Statement of the problem

With the increase of users and activity on Instagram people have become addicted to these platforms, viewing what their friends are doing and how they're spending their days. Users tend to post the perfect reality that they live in by subtracting everything that may disintegrate this perfection. All visuals on Instagram have been produced perfectly; this perfection leads viewers to forget that it is most probably staged. Once viewers forget this very important small detail, they tend to look into these posts very carefully, into every detail, and start comparing the slightest of things to the largest of things. When you start noticing these differences that aren't all realistic, it starts affecting your body image, self-esteem, and so many others factors. On the other hand, people have become addicted to posting their outfits, the places they are in, the foods they eat, and every little detail that goes into their life, this leaves them with no space for privacy. This constant urge of posting is needing the pleasure of others liking and commenting on your lifestyle. This can also be a reason for low self-esteem for the constant urge of being liked by others. These posts are practically staged and with smart phones nowadays it is easy to stage and edit a picture or video any way you please.

Literature Review

People portraying themselves on social media

An American Phsycologist William James suggested people have as many personalities as the number of situations they are found in. Peoples digital personalities aren't a whole picture of their actual personalities, they are "digital breadcrumbs" (William James) of themselves. Erving Goffman published a book titled "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life" in 1959. In it, he analogizes identity to the theater and speaks to how we are as actors on a stage. His research illustrates how humans adapt manner and appearance based on diverse social instances. He argues that impression management (also known as self-presentation which refers to the ways that people use to attempt to control how they are perceived by others (Goffman, 1959) can influence how one is treated by others and is also an essential part of social interaction. He noticed that society is not homogenous and people act differently in different settings. He explains this by comparing it to the theatre; actors give different performances in front of different audiences. He also argues that people display different masks controlling how they should appear to others. "The entire world is a stage and all the men and women merely players. They have their exits and entrances, and one man in his time plays many parts." (William Shakespeare) Erving Goffman took these lines from 'As You Like It' by William Shakespeare, very seriously. Individuals play different parts depending on the social interaction we are in. According to Goffman there is no "true self", he explains how people act out in different situations, calling it 'line'. This reflects on everything a person says or does to express his point of view of the situations, of others, or himself through the presence of others. Goffman didn't live to see the age of Social Media, but it was almost as if he was talking about it. His theory helps in understanding how people use social networks and social media. Nowadays, more people are

going online to become a part of this social capital, and are always seeking approval for how they appear online to expand on social media. With the burst of social media platforms, people's lives are becoming more visible online; people are very careful how they manage their personal information. There are also settings on social media platforms that allow you to select a specific audience to see your posts. This is very popular when it comes to people who want to show a different aspect of their lives to different groups of people. To understand the elements of social interaction online, it is important to discuss the term 'face'. The term 'face', Goffman stated, is the positive social value that a person claims for himself very effectively, by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. If a person fails to put forward information about his social worth that seems to not integrate then he is said to be in the wrong face. Similarly, when a person fails to be ready with a line the various kinds of participants in social interaction are expected to take, he is considered to be out of face. (Goffman, 1967) The capacity to express oneself in terms of giving impressions involves different kinds of sign activity i.e. the expression one gives and the expression one gives off. (Goffman, 1959). Instagram acts as the front stage, everything interesting that happens is posted, but whatever happens backstage doesn't reflect in those photos. Any photo that goes against the feed they normally post will be criticized. Qualitative work suggests that adolescents, especially girls, post selfies for the primary purpose of appearing attractive or favorable to peers and ultimately receiving positive peer feedback (Burnette et al., 2017; Chua & Chang, 2016; Yau & Reich, 2019). Emerging evidence suggests photo-based social media activity, rather than total time spent on social media, contributes to adolescents' body image disturbances (Choukas-Bradley et al., 2020; Cohen et al., 2017; Marengo et al., 2018; Meier & Gray, 2014). "Photography allows people to focus on what they wish to see and experience through framing, and it is easier for people to manipulate an image by

creating an ideal version of their image by using the photo editing software" (Lo, I.S.; McKercher, B. Ideal image in process: Online tourist photography and impression management). While photos were traditionally used as a means of remembering, digital photos are now used not only for communication but also for identity seeking and self-presentation (Dijck, J. Digital photography: Communication, identity, memory.) Peoples behavior online goes back to their sense of worth offline. People indulge in the culture of looking attractive to get more likes, getting likes makes people seem popular and desirable. The photos we post online are significant, self-representation has made us very vulnerable to how people see us. Researchers suggest that self-consciousness plays an important role in determining one's own differences, attitudes, and behaviors. Self-consciousness is how people see themselves and how they think others perceive them. Allan Fenigstein (In Handbook of Individual Differences in Social Behavior) suggested that self-consciousness includes two parts: private self-consciousness and public self-consciousness. Private self-consciousness refers to our thoughts, motives, and feelings, where public self-consciousness refers to being aware of oneself as a social object. People who have a high public self-conscious are more likely to make a positive impression on others, fear being judged by others, value recognition and their reputations on social media. To sum up, they engage in these behaviors to gain social approval and recognition. (Jun, S.-H, 2022). People tend to show a socially desirable, positive self-view to others. According to the self-presentation theory, people engage in projecting a desired image of themselves online because they want to influence others and make others like them. Instagram is an outlet mainly for self-presentation and impression management, through photo sharing. "A person's core self is no longer seen as singular because the self can be actively managed, jointly constructed and interactive on social media platforms." (Belk, R. Extended self and the digital world).And it does

allow us to have multiple identities. This gives a person a high risk of losing themselves in the process of self-representation; it reduces the status of self to words and actions. Therefore, Goffman's argument still holds much relevance in this age and time.

Why do people portray themselves in certain ways?

Users now want to be part of the community where they look "attractive" to get more "likes." The more like a person gets, the more popular or desirable they are. "Attractiveness" is getting new meanings in this social media world but the real question is who are we trying to look attractive for? The photos posted online are very important identity cues. We live in an age where we let our posts and stories talk about what we do during our day, this makes it easier to create our self-representation and reflects how people are always looking for validation of some sort. According to the article in the Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, a reason people post is that social media sharing can lead to positive social media feedback, self-esteem, and looking for more followers and likes pushes people to post. They enjoy the positive attention they get from posting. To sum up, people generally post for some kind of emotion that seeks a response. Since social media is all about communication, it makes sense that their motives for posting lead to wanting to connect with others. The history of media effects can be staged into four stages. The fourth stage is also the present stage which started in the early 1980s, it is characterized by "social constructivism." This stage combines both the strong and limited effects of mass media. Strong impact by building a social reality that is "by framing images of reality in a predictable way and patterned way" (McQuail, 1994). Since frames are for comprehending and presenting, two concepts can be specified: media frames and individual frames. Gamson and Modigliani (1987) conceptually defined a media frame as "a central organizing idea or story line

that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events . . . The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue". Viewing these media frames is likely turning a meaningless event into a worthy event. Tuchman (1978) "The news frame organizes everyday reality and the news frame is part and parcel of everyday reality . . . [it] is an essential feature of the news."Entman (1993) explained how media provides the world with schemes of events, he offered a similar definition for media frames: "To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (p. 52). The individual frames are defined as "mentally stored clusters of ideas that guide individuals' processing of information" (Entman, 1993). Neurologically speaking, social media affects different brain functions. It contains many stimuli that can trigger different reactions. Positive attention on social media affects multiple parts of the brain. Getting likes on social media activates a feeling of reward. The ventral tegmental area (VTA) is one of the key parts responsible for rewards in people's bodies. When users receive positive feedback (such as likes), their body releases dopamine, which is part of the VTA. Dopamine is a chemical that controls arousal and motivation and is released in the brain as a result of rewarding and pleasurable experiences (e.g., food) (Arias-Carrión & Pöppel, 2007).By understanding some social media behaviors, it becomes easier to understand the motivation for posting.

An article called "The Psychology of Social Sharing" helped state the different needs of posting:

1. Physiological needs: People sometimes post to benefit the health or well-being of their friends and family.

2. Safety: Physical, mental, and financial security are important for people when they choose to post some material on their social media.

3. Love/belonging: Users generally want to post to feel some kind of social acceptance from a group or a particular individual.

4. Esteem: People want to quell the rewards-oriented parts of their brains, which helps explain why people post "me-centric" content regularly.

5. Self-actualization: As the most important facet of the hierarchy of human needs, this aspect of social media posting manifests when people share their successes – getting a new job, completing an arduous project, or graduating from school, to name a few examples.

Is there a difference in how men and women portray themselves?

The male body is essentialized in our culture around certain traits that characterize maleness or masculinity. Similarly, femininity is also culturally constructed based on the body of the biological female. Thus, the concept of masculinity and femininity are culturally produced to signify the socially accepted differences between men and women. Although many scholars argue that this difference is based on biology, some of them argue that these differences are socially constructed (Dasgubta, 2018).For a long time, there has been a difference between how men and women use emotion and language. Previous studies on gender differences in language use have shown that men are more likely to use language to convey information, while women are more likely to use language to communicate for social purposes (Newman et al., 2008). Women are more likely to ask questions; men use commands. The study also found that women also use longer sentences, while men generally use more words and have more opportunities to speak in conversation (Mulac and Lundell, 1994). Regarding emotional research, most studies report that women refer to emotions more often than men (Thomson and Murachver, 2001).A

large-scale study conducted in MySpace revealed that women are probably more popular in social networking sites as women can both give and receive positive emotions; this means social media can serve as a strong platform to empower women and replace the stereotyping traditional media had against women.Witmer and Katzman (1997) found that women have more posts and challenges in their posts than men. Wolf (2000) found that while females show a strong preference for support groups that focus on the discussion of emotional issues, males appear to prefer information-oriented support groups. For instance, when women want to post their profile pictures, they always upload the most feminine ones to attract the male gaze. They know they are being watched and hence want to look attractive; the same goes for men. Studies show that men upload pictures that make them seem independent, and active; they self-promote themselves, while women focus on looking attractive. Haferkamp et al., (2018) study found that women were more likely to use SNSs for comparing themselves with others and acquiring information, whereas men primarily used SNSs to look at other people's profiles to find friends. Girls post their pictures of themselves while boys share pictures such as sexual content or alcohol; such behavior belittles the woman. Teenage girls are more likely to share personal information, which may sometime lead them to be exposed to sexual harassment or cyber bullying. For women, the public nature of online communication is fraught with risk, opening the potential for ridicule, hate, and harassment. (Duffy & Hund, 2019) In most cultures, boys and girls are raised with different cultural values. In traditional media, gender differences and the portrayal of gender stereotypes didn't stop in the online world. Liu et al. (2018) analyzed the post texts of an online medical community, and the results showed that male users' post information is usually more professional, and female users are more inclined to seek emotional support in a healthy community. At the same time, female users showed more negative emotions. On average, people

report posting nine selfies per week (Frames Direct, 2015) more by females than males (Sorokowski et al., 2015). Additionally, women outnumber men in social media. One global study reported that 76% of online women use social media, as compared to 70% of online men (Vollman, Abraham, &Mörn 2010). Similarly, Junco, Merson, & Salter (2010) found that women spend more time on social networking sites than men. Several researches have shown that women outnumber men in social networking sites, which is very uncommon in traditional media. Generally, studies reveal that women use social networking sites more than men to foster their social connections. In a 2007 study, it is seen that women are generally using social media for social connection and posting photographs. (Dasgubta, 2018)

Influence of mass media on body dissatisfaction

"Every society has a way of torturing its women, whether by binding their feet or by sticking them into whalebone corsets. What contemporary American culture has come up with is designer jeans."—Joel Yager, M.D. "Body image is a combination of the thoughts and feelings that someone has about their body. Body image may range between positive and negative experiences, and one person may feel at different times positive or negative or a combination of both. Body image is influenced by internal (e.g. personality) and external (e.g. social environment) factors." (National Eating Disorders Collaboration). Since the turn of the millennium, however, a notable shift of focus has occurred; acknowledging the evolved media use of the "digital generation," more and more studies now address the impact of social

networking sites (SNS) on people's perception and evaluation of physical appearances (e.g., Choukas-Bradley et al., 2018; Holland &Tiggemann, 2016; Tiggemann et al., 2018). While the creators of the respective uploads usually stress their benevolent intentions, recent studies have demonstrated that fit- and (especially) thinspiration posts tend to have quite negative effects on young audiences, nudging them towards unattainable beauty standards and disordered eating behaviors (Lewallen &Behm-Morawitz, 2016; Tiggemann&Zaccardo, 2016). The supposedly ideal body image on social media triggers body dissatisfaction since this ideal cannot be achieved. In 2002, actress Jamie Lee Curtis famously posed for More magazine, both in typical "glammed up" attire and then in her sports bra and shorts. The reality is that most magazines airbrush photos and use expensive computer technology to correct blemishes and hide figure flaws. In fact, in Jamie Lee's own words, she has "very big breasts and a soft, fatty little tummy and back fat" (Wallace, Curtis 2002). She felt that women should know that the figures portrayed by the media are rarely real. Before awards ceremonies, attendees routinely fast and endure tight-fitting undergarments to flatten their stomachs for unforgiving evening gowns. (Derrene&Beresin, 2006) Media may influence people with body dissatisfaction since they are unable to match up to others' body images. Hence, they are in constant search of the perfect body to the point where they may even develop eating disorders. Celebrities are no less susceptible to eating disorders than the rest of the population. Mary-Kate Olsen was hospitalized with anorexia nervosa, and the weekly gossip magazines have speculated consistently about the health of Lindsay Lohan and Nicole Richie. (Derrene&Beresin, 2006) Body dissatisfaction is a serious problem since it affects well-being, low self-esteem, symptoms of depression, and disordered eating. "BD affects adolescents in different ways: Boys tend to suffer socio cultural pressure encouraging them to have bigger, more muscular bodies" (Pope H.G., Jr., Gruber A.J., Choi P.,

Olivardia R., Phillips K.A.) while girls are under pressure to have a thin or ultra-thin body" (Thompson J.K., Heinberg L.J.) This pressure can come from parents, friends, partners, or even the media. Twenty five years ago, the average fashion model was 8% thinner than the average woman. Today, that number has risen to 23% (Kilbourne 1999). The pressure generated by mass media on men for the muscular body and women for the thin body is known as "the ideal body" and is difficult to achieve and will lead to disordered eating. Body dissatisfaction may occur when a person is viewing and comparing themselves to social media images and reading the appearance-related comments on social media, and feeling that they cannot live up to the ideal images presented. (National Eating Disorders Collaboration.) Teenage girls with preexisting body image concerns are especially likely to seek out a specific type of content, hoping to gain inspiration for changing their own weight or appearance (Carrotte et al., 2015). This shows how uncomfortable social media makes a person feel in their body and never feel good enough. Cultivation and social comparison should be considered since heavy viewing may promote an "ideal body". Cultivation theory holds that long-term exposure to media shapes how the consumers of media perceive the world and conduct themselves. (George Gebner, 1960's). This theory suggests that media effects build over time through constant repetitive viewing. If currently existing attitude and value structures get continuously accessed and updated during viewing, then the accessibility of those attitudes should be positively related to the frequency of viewing. (Shnum 2009) The more they see these "thin ideal bodies" the more accessible the images become. From a media psychological perspective, this suggests that certain aspects of social media might invoke cultivation processes similar to the ones that have been observed in the context of traditional mass media. (Philipp Stein, Ohler, 2021). Cultivation theory alone doesn't explain why these feelings are developed, social comparison theory proposes that people

are constantly evaluating themselves, and do so by comparing themselves to others (Festinger 1954). There are two types of comparison which are upward and downward. When individuals engage in upward social comparison, they are comparing themselves to someone who is (perceived to be or performing) better than we are. In contrast, when individuals engage in downward social comparison, they are comparing themselves to someone who is (perceived to be or performing) worse than they are. (Nortje 2020) Tiggemann and Slater (2003) suggested that "the process of social comparison may provide the mechanism by which exposure to media images induces negative effects". Bailey and Ricciardelli (2010) found that upward comparisons are one of the strongest reasons for body dissatisfaction. Recent research with adolescents has shown that engaging in social appearance comparisons with others' photos on social media is associated with body dissatisfaction (Chang et al., 2019) and disordered eating (Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2020). Also, adolescent girls high in trait social comparison (those who engage in greater social comparison than their peers) may be especially vulnerable to the deleterious effects of viewing others' photos on body image (Kleemans et al., 2018). Gender differences in socio cultural and biological factors produce differences in adolescents' body dissatisfaction and disordered eating. (Roberts, Maheux, Ladd, Choukas-Bradley, The Role of Digital Media in Adolescents' Body Image and Disordered Eating). Girls in particular are socialized to prioritize physical appearance (Daniels et al., 2020; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), and adolescent girls experience higher levels of body dissatisfaction and disordered eating than boys do (Neumark, Sztainer et al., 2006). Women are persistently given the message that they are not pretty enough or even thin enough. Men's body image concerns also stem from internalizations of body ideals seen in entertainment media (Diedrichs, 2012), and that internalization mediates the relationship between masculine role norms and body image (De Jesus et al., 2015). Barlett et al. (2008)

conducted two meta analyses that revealed pressure from social media is significantly related to men feeling worse about their bodies. Interestingly, Agliata and Tantleff-Dunn (2004) found that males might not go through the same internalization process as females do. They suggested that males are reactive to appearance-related cues and interpret messages at face value without internalizing them (Markova &Azocar). Similarly, Knauss et al. (2007) found that for boys, the stronger predictor of BD was pressure from mass media and not internalization. Although fewer men meet criteria for anorexia and bulimia than do women, more men are becoming concerned with shape and weight (Caralot, Camargo, & Herzog (1997), Woodside, Garfinkel, Lin et al., (2001). Men too are bombarded by media pressure. Duggan and McCreary found that reading muscle and fitness magazines correlated with levels of body dissatisfaction in both gay and straight men (Duggan, McCreary (2004). Unlike Barbie, whose shape has become more realistic in recent years, action figures have become increasingly muscular and devoid of body fat (Olivarda, Phillips, Pope at al., 2000). Gay men were most likely to report negative emotional effects from comparisons to media imagery such as dieting, cosmetic surgery and sexual risk-taking (Fawkner, 2004) and images promoting thinness (Stronge et al., 2001). Ethnic minority gay men's body satisfaction is worse than that of straight men. (Brennan et al, 2013). These findings are not surprising as many media outlets use males who are predominantly lean and muscular (Diedrichs, 2012), and the media targets gay men as a primary audience to sell fashion products (Gill, 2009). Fawkner (2004) found that men compare themselves with media imagery and report negative impact and distress (Adams et al. 2005) from them (Markova &Azocar). Their findings are consistent with the results of Manago et al. (2015), who found that men who were engaged in Facebook as part of their social lives were also more engaged in their body surveillance of objectified body consciousness, and thus were also more susceptible to feelings

of body shame. The results are also similar to those of Stronge et al. (2015) who found that Facebook users reported significantly lower body satisfaction than nonusers did. The results on the effects of entertainment media exposure are consistent with those of Hausenblas et al. (2003) and Humphreys and Paxton (2004), who found associations between exposure to entertainment media images and BD. (Markova &Azocar). Body image is also central to the self-concept and self-esteem, which influenced psychological function sand diverse behaviors (Cash &Pruzinsky, 2002; Halliwell & Dittmar, 2006).

Influence of mass media on self-esteem

Negative self–images are defined as "a way of thinking and feeling about one's body that negatively influences the person's self–esteem, body esteem, and body satisfaction" (Barlett, Harris, Smith, & Bonds–Raacke, 2005). Body esteem differs from body satisfaction by emphasizing the difference between thoughts and feelings, such that the former emphasizes feelings about their body while the latter emphasizes thoughts about their body. (Barlet et al., 2018).Self-esteem is a person's positive or negative self-evaluation, or the degree to which he or she believes oneself to be worthwhile (Leary & Baumeister, 2000). Self-esteem is a critical psychological factor that is closely related to mental and/or physical health and social behaviors (Mann, Hosman, Schaalma, & de Vries, 2004). Social comparison is argued to be a contributing factor to low self-esteem. Since idealistic information presented through social media has increased social comparison norms, the more time people spent on social media, the more likely they would believe that others have better lives, are happier, and are more successful, reducing their self-esteem (Stapleton et al., 2017). This social comparison may result in one believing that external conditions or socially approved benchmarks are more important than internal and

personal traits. As one perceives his or her inherent characteristics to be less important in gaining social recognition, the sense of self-esteem will be lowered (J. B. White et al., 2006). Instagram has a higher effect on social comparison due to options of enhancement pictures; also Instagram tends to exaggerate life scenarios since it is mostly images and videos that can be posted. Visual content can be used to cause a higher social presence than it is. Higher self-esteem is linked with better health, more social relationships, satisfaction, and success, as low-esteem takes all this away and adds depression, anxiety, and eating disorders (Mann et al., 2004). An important factor that increases self-esteem is physical attractiveness; therefore, high self-esteem will reduce the problem of body dissatisfaction. People who have high esteem have better relationship qualities, including being satisfied in a relationship, seeing yourself as a worthy person is associated with how satisfied you are when in a relationship with others. Frost and McKelvie (2004) found a serious relationship between self-esteem and body image. Therefore, it is understandable to expect that people's constant display of thin-ideal images on mass media will affect negatively body image and self-esteem. Sourcing one's self self-esteem from social media is far from sustainable, it causes psychological addiction. When people post something "Instagram-worthy" yet hide the negative parts, they are unconsciously attaching shame to those things. Instagram users tie their happiness with validation from others and share their lives online, while neglecting their own happiness. Social media influencers, celebrities, TV, movies, magazines, and the internet all bombard teens with images and pressures about what their bodies should look like. The problem is these versions of "beauty" are not obtainable because they aren't always realistic. The majority of images are air-brushed versions of models who weigh 23 percent less than the average woman. Nevertheless, millions of teens believe the lies and resort to unhealthy measures to try to fit themselves into that impossible mold. (YES, 2019). There has been increasing

interest in the effect that ideal media images have on negative self–images in men. The present pop culture of the United States puts heavy emphasis on muscularity for men, which is represented in multiple ways. Additionally, Pope, Olivardia, Gruber, and Borowiecki (1999) showed that more modern action figures, which are often played with by boys, are growing substantially in muscle size across the past three decades. Consequently, some, but not all, research has shown that males who feel pressure from the mass media have decreased self–esteem (Muris, Meesters, van de Blom, & Mayer, 2005), decreased body satisfaction (Agliata&Tantleff–Dunn, 2004). Research has shown these negative feelings and thoughts that are obtained from pressure from the mass media are significantly related to engaging in severely negative behaviors, such as an increase in food supplement intake, and an increase in the possibility of developing a food disorder. Males who are pressurized from the media to change their body or keep view muscular male media depictions will have lower body satisfaction and will compare their own body to these depictions and feel bad about their body; which also leads to low self-esteem. The negative self–image that is manifested consequences of feeling bad about one's body and lower self-esteem. Women who were exposed to thin "ideal" media representations had decreased self–esteem (Smith, 2000), and body satisfaction (Hargreaves &Tiggeman, 2002). Objectification Theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) posits that women will have a negative self–image after viewing thin female models. This effect occurs because women are socialized to be cognizant of the emphasis on the thin female body and being evaluated based on their appearance. (Barlet et al., 2008). For people with low self-esteem, social media has become a safe haven to interact. (Sheldon, Rauschnabel, & Honeycutt, 2019)

Do people seek validation from Instagram?

For some people, social media is a way to escape from reality and stresses of daily lives (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). Sheldon and Skies, 2018 revealed that social activity was a significant predictor of variance in Instagram addiction scores (6.3%). Those addicted to Instagram are more socially active. This makes sense as most people use Instagram for documentation purposes (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). Individuals who travel and attend events (are "socially active") often take many pictures to document their memories. As a visual social network, Instagram is an ideal forum for it. (Sheldon, Rauschnabel, & Honeycutt, 2019). Some social media users acknowledged that being visually perceived as the "best" on social media has become the norm and the only way to be "pretty enough" for peers. One's number of followers is another status setter (Sheldon, Rauschnabel, & Honeycutt, 2019). In the Chua and Chang (2016) study, pride came with an increase in followers, and disappointment followed a decrease in followers. A girl's status online and in her peer group was determined by likes and followers; lower numbers could cause the peer group to experience "anger, jealousy, inadequacy, and doubts about self-worth." 38% of the girls perceived intense competition and would try to ignore likes and follows so that they could avoid paying attention to their peers' beauty and popularity (Chua & Chang, 2016).Social media validation is counting the number of likes and comments, it is a way people seek validation to believe they are good enough for other people. (Kids and Tech, 2019). It is good to ask why do people post in the first place? Social media is a great platform to catch up with your friends and be aware of their constant movements. However, this may lead to reassurance seeking and attempts that are unhealthy since they may start seeking validation from others. Interestingly, researchers have found that social media use has created reliance to validate a person's identity assertions and self-worth (A. M. Manago, 2014). Social media applications are ideal social arenas for individuals who are attracted to ego enhancing activities (Wang,

Jackson, Zhang, &Su, 2012) as those platforms may fulfill their need for affiliation and confirm the sense of an idealized self (Sheldon, Rauschnabel, & Honeycutt, 2019). Other researchers said, external self-worth variables, such as those that rely on other people for self-validation, are highly associated with poor mental well-being (J. Crocker, R. K. Luhtanen, M. L. Cooper, and A. Bouvrette, 2003) Validation surrounds everyone and everything; social media plays a big part in this, and people want to feel accepted online and offline. People love to seem like they live the perfect life or do activities because they are in style. (Parron, 2022) Alec Waddell expresses, "people seek validation so they feel important and wanted." Another reason why researchers think teens seek validation from social media is FOMO (fear of missing out syndrome). FOMO is the main type of problematic attachment to social media and is associated with a range of negative life experiences and feelings, such as a lack of sleep, reduced life competency, emotional tension, negative effects on physical well-being, anxiety, and a lack of emotional control (Cham S., Algashami A., Aldhayan M., McAlaney J., Phalp K., Almourad M.B., Ali R.) According to Gladwell, FOMO involves a fear of missing out on someone's unique experiences and can be regarded as a subcategory of stress. To put it another way, FOMO describes the annoying feeling that other people may be experiencing something fun and extraordinary but that you are missing out on it. However, to mitigate the sense of FOMO and to level their position, teens usually post and share information about their whereabouts to update the audience. (Amirali, 2021). Beyens, Frison, and Eggermont (2016) also examined the FOMO relationship to social media use and addiction among adolescents. They found that a strong need to belong, and need for popularity leads to increased Facebook use and also increased FOMO.

Research questions and hypotheses

The first research question this study will be tackling is Research question 1: How does it make you feel post-viewing photos on Instagram of people living "the perfect lifestyle"? This question is important to start with to see if certain posts on Instagram do trigger something inside a person. It can be related to the social comparison theory that was developed by Leon Festinger which is the fact that people are constantly evaluating themselves by comparing themselves to others. The constant comparison between yourself and others on Instagram – especially the people who are faking the perfect lifestyle that we all seem to be jealous of – will lead people to body dissatisfaction problems and low self-esteem. The comparison that may occur doesn't always have to be towards people who are supposedly doing better than others which is known as upwards social comparison. It can also be compared to people who aren't living up to our lifestyles so others can feel better which is known as downward social comparison. In this comparison precisely it will most probably lead to higher self-esteem, but in the upwards social comparison, it will most definitely decrease your self-esteem. If it triggers negative emotions it means that they believe a lot of what they see which will lead to my next question. Research question 2: Do body-image concerns play a role when it comes to comparison between viewers and the virtual pictures of others? This is important because body-image problems arise once people start feeling negative emotions and comparisons when scrolling. They tend to forget that pictures are produced in a way to hide imperfections, especially with the help of filters and enhancing applications. Photo-editing encourages social appearance comparisons (Mingoia et al., 2019) and disordered eating behaviors (Lonergan et al., 2020), even when controlling for time on social media and internalization of the thin ideal (McLean et al., 2015) Most of these "ideal body" images are almost impossible to achieve; these images are what lead to body dissatisfaction and eating disorders. This can be related to both framing theory which was

developed by Erving Goffman and cultivation theory which was developed by George Geber. When it comes to certain posts that include the "ideal body" it relates to framing theory because this theory talks about how certain things are presented to the audience, and these frames influence how people process the information in the certain frame. In the case of the body, the frame is taken in a precise way to hide certain parts of the body that are considered flaws -but in reality, aren't-. They are certain angles the picture can be taken from, there are ways to stand to make sure your ass looks bigger than it really is, how to put your hands to make your waist look smaller, and they always stick their stomach in once posing. As for cultivation theory, let us consider the second possibility which is that I know people build frames to influence the way I see certain posts and this mindset has been inscribed into their brains. The constant exposure to these posts will eventually shape a person's mind to think that that is the ideal body and not mine. The third research question 3: Do the people who stage the perfect images also have low self-esteem? This question is aimed at the "perfect people". Are these people lacking something from their selves that they are looking for validation from people across social media platforms? Do they feel they have a particular lifestyle they should live up to be accepted? People who are active on Instagram have a habit of always comparing themselves to people which will then lead to the social comparison theory that was developed by Leon Festinger. Due to the upwards social comparison, people will eventually have the urge to be a part of this scam that is on Instagram to feel like they belong. Also, the cultivation theory developed by George Geber will affect since the constant viewing of these posts will eventually stick and these all affect lower self-esteem.

- **Research question 1:** Why do people compare themselves to people they see on Instagram, and how does it make them feel post-viewing these photos?

- **Research question 2:** Do body-image concerns play a role when it comes to comparison between viewers and the virtual pictures of others?

- **Research question 3:** Do the people who stage the perfect images also have low self-esteem?

The hypotheses is what we are hoping we predicted right after these research questions, and the first hypothesis is hypothesis 1: Self-esteem concerns related to people comparing themselves to other people from Instagram, and hypothesis 2: We are to consider body image as a problem due to comparison of ourselves with others on Instagram. These two hypotheses will be tackled using Framing theory that was developed by Erving Goffman and social comparison theory that was developed by Leon Festinger. Social comparison is one of the main reasons for low self-esteem due to comparing their own social and personal role to others. Framing theory also plays a role since everything is framed and enhanced in a certain way to influence the way we see these posts; body-image dissatisfaction and low self-esteem will arise. Endless hours of scrolling through Instagram can cause negative emotions mentioned above. Hypothesis 3: The perfectionists on Instagram are lacking something and are looking for approvals from the social media screens. Will help the researcher know if these certain people are looking for validation from others since they are not getting it from one-self. This also rises due to social comparison, the way people frame themselves, and constantly viewing the same themed posts over and over. Once you are different on Instagram, you don't automatically get all the likes and comments that others get. The fear of being unliked on Instagram is a fear many people face and think that these validations can be met on Instagram.

- **Hypothesis 1:** Self-esteem concerns related to people comparing themselves to other people from Instagram.

- **Hypothesis 2:** We are to consider body image as a problem due to comparison of ourselves with others on Instagram.

- **Hypothesis 3:** The perfectionists on Instagram are lacking something and are looking for approvals from the social media screens.

Theoretical Framework

In 1974, Erving Goffman developed the framing theory which suggests that how something is presented to the audience (called "the frame") influences the choices people make about how to process that information. In other words, frames are abstractions that work to organize or structure message meaning; constructing the stories we describe to the world. It suggests how something is presented to the audience; the choices people make to process the information. Framing theory is very useful in this proposal since it is about how people portray themselves on social media. Why do they post what they post and how the others perceive it? Goffman states that there are two distinctions in framing which are natural and social. Natural is when nothing is attributed to it and is identified as is being occurred. On the other hand, social is when the message is altered to be perceived differently and to manipulate other social players.

In 1960, George Geber developed the cultivation theory which holds that long-term exposure to media shapes how the consumers of media perceive the world and conduct themselves. This theory explains that the more display you have towards a certain image -in this case- will affect you in the long run due to constant exposure. Also, cultivation theory is a communication and

sociological framework which posits that long-term exposure to media shapes how the consumers of media perceive the world as well as to conduct themselves in life. Technically these definitions are being repeated but this theory is being used to explain that the more you see these "thin ideal" photos or "perfect lifestyles" will lead to comparison and will perceive yourself as "unlikable" or "different" in a negative way since you became accustomed to what you see on social media platforms. The use of this theory is applicable in this study for the sake of understanding that the more these photos are being viewed, the more they are being penetrated in an unhealthy way into the viewers mind.

In 1954, Leon Festinger developed the social comparison theory which is the idea that individuals determine their own social and personal worth based on how they stack up against others. This theory proposes that people are constantly evaluating themselves, and do so by comparing themselves to others. This theory is effective in this proposal because due to framing and cultivation, people will then have the urge to compare themselves to others which will lead to self-esteem and body dissatisfaction problems. The social comparison refers to a behavior where people compare certain aspects of themselves (e.g., our behavior, opinions, status, and success) to other people so that they have a better assessment of themselves (Buunk& Gibbons, 2007). In upwards social comparison people compare themselves to people doing better than them. In contrast, downwards social comparison is when people compare themselves to people doing worse than them.

In 1959, Erving Goffman developed the self-presentation theory that describes how individuals perform certain roles to project a desired impression to others. This theory suggests that any behavior made is done with the intention to change or influence how people view you. Anytime someone acts in a certain way or make people have a certain thought about them is self-

presentation. In most cases, people work hard on themselves to present their selves in the best way as possible, for others and for ourselves. That also means that people present themselves differently and varies according to the situation they are in, or person they are with. The self-presentation theory is being used in this proposal because of how multiple people present their selves on social media platforms, and how one single person can present their selves in various ways on one profile with different audiences.
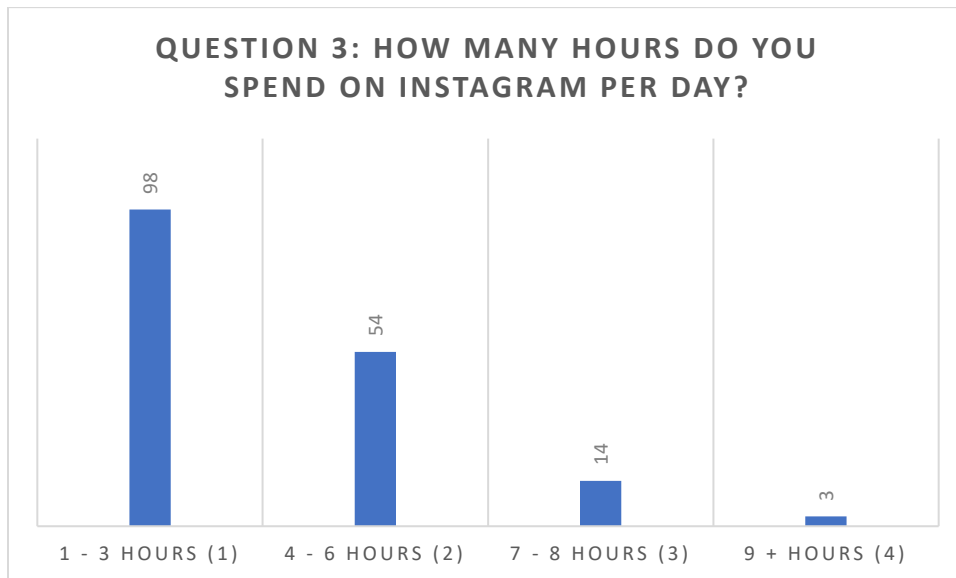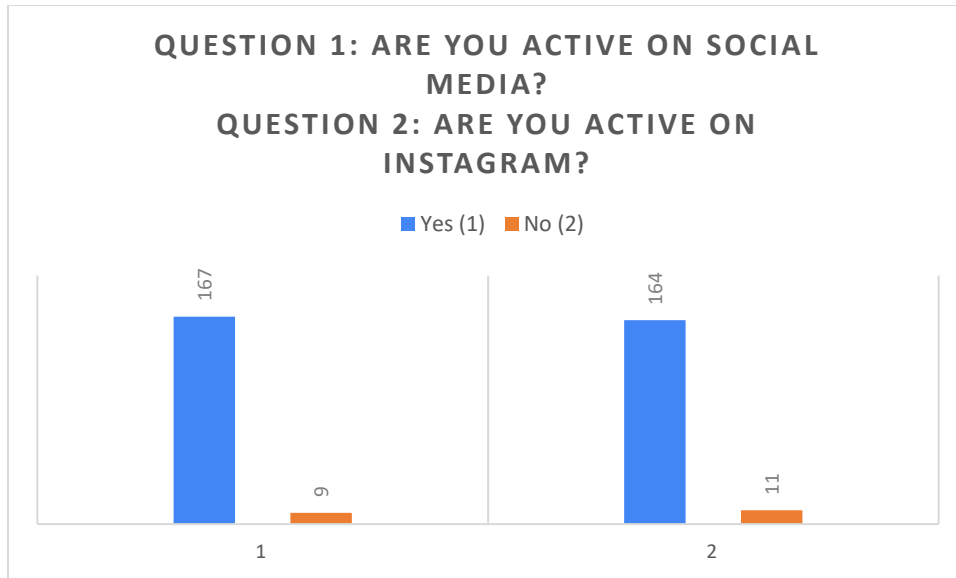
In 1945, Leon Festinger developed the comparison theory that suggests people have innate drive to evaluate themselves, often by comparing to others. The difference between this and Social comparison theory is that "Social comparison theory (SCT) is a theory that explains the reasons, as well as the processes, behind the idea that people evaluate their own opinions, values, achievements, and abilities by comparison respectively with the opinions, values, achievements, and abilities of others." (Powdthavee, 2004) This theory is relevant in our proposal since they don't only measure themselves on a social level, they compare themselves to others as well.

In 1997, Barbara Fredickson and Tomi-Ann Roberts founded the Objectification Theory that suggests as the name states, objectifying a person as an object and in particular, sexual object. This theory postulates that this can lead to depression, sexual dysfunction, eating disorders, and also diminishes mental health. It is important in this proposal because due to the increase of social media, and more social media use, people are more exposed to "sexual objectifying content and unattainable beauty standards". (Lloyd, 2022) This is extremely common nowadays and this showed a lot in the research explaining how women feel they need to amaze the male gaze, and how the men need to live to a certain body shape standard. In this case both genders are being objectified.
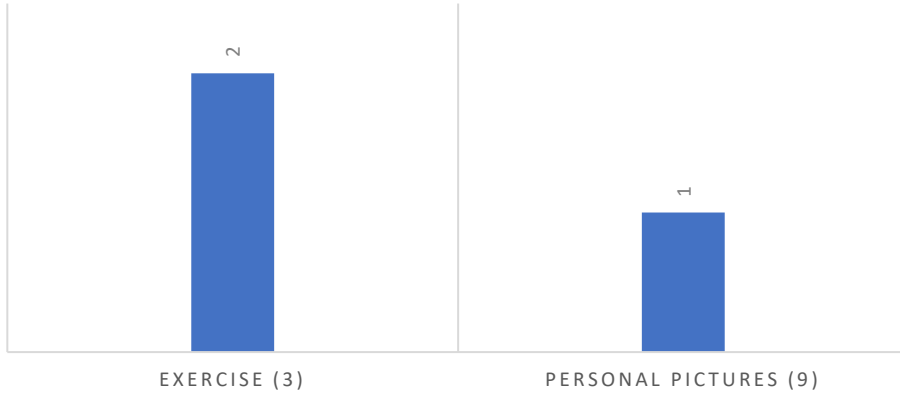
Methodology

This study used the quantitative method to test the research questions and hypotheses. It was measured by surveys-questionnaires; precisely Google docs that were posted online (on all social media platforms) and face to face which was answered by177 users. The researcher preferred the quantitative method since it attains greater knowledge and understanding of the social world. It is focused and the design of the study is determined from the start. This method produces data that is objective, unbiased, and can be communicated clearly through statistics and numbers. If it is performed correctly, the analysis helps the researcher make generalizations to larger populations (Williams, 2021). This study reached all types of people who were active on social media, even people whose work involves social media. So many of these people spend countless hours on this platform and their results make a difference. The results were analyzed thoroughly to get the following results.
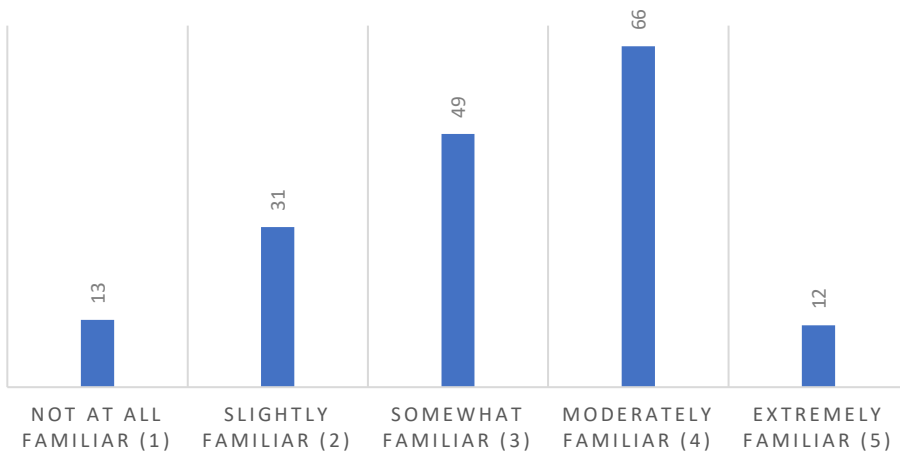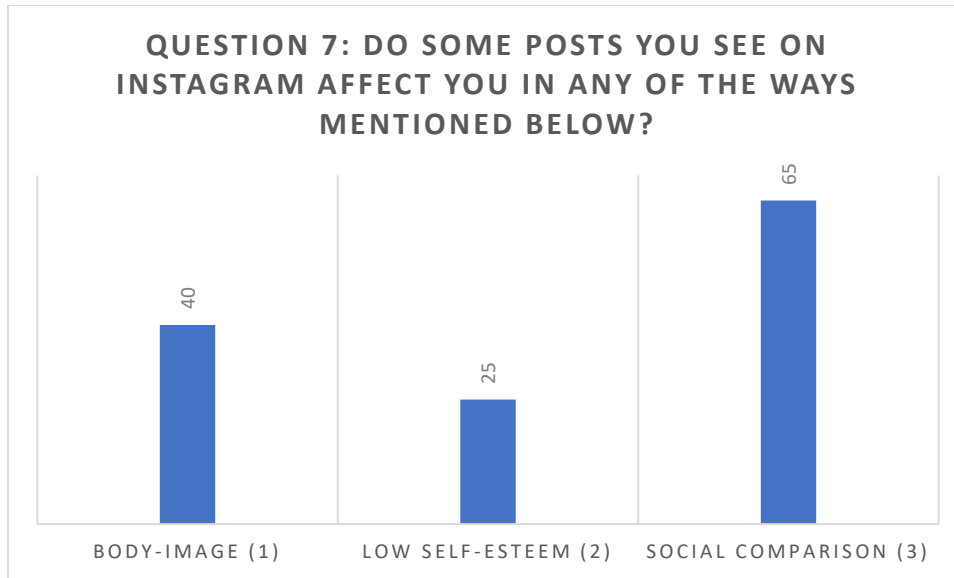
Graphs

QUESTION 1: ARE YOU ACTIVE ON SOCIAL MEDIA?
QUESTION 2: ARE YOU ACTIVE ON INSTAGRAM?

■ Yes (1) ■ No (2)

	Yes (1)	No (2)
1	167	9
2	164	11

QUESTION 3: HOW MANY HOURS DO YOU SPEND ON INSTAGRAM PER DAY?

1 - 3 HOURS (1)	4 - 6 HOURS (2)	7 - 8 HOURS (3)	9 + HOURS (4)
98	54	14	3

Options for responses in question 4 were several; the researcher took into consideration Exercise/Sports, and people's pictures.

QUESTION 4: WHAT ARE THE MOST POSTS THAT SHOW ON YOUR FEED? -YOU CAN CHOOSE MORE THAN ONE-

Category	Value
EXERCISE (3)	2
PERSONAL PICTURES (9)	1

QUESTION 5: ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH EVERYONE ON YOUR FOLLOWING LIST?

Category	Value
NOT AT ALL FAMILIAR (1)	13
SLIGHTLY FAMILIAR (2)	31
SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR (3)	49
MODERATELY FAMILIAR (4)	66
EXTREMELY FAMILIAR (5)	12

QUESTION 7: DO SOME POSTS YOU SEE ON INSTAGRAM AFFECT YOU IN ANY OF THE WAYS MENTIONED BELOW?

Question 8: Have you been so worried about your shape to an extent you felt you had to diet?

Question 9: Have you been worried that your body isn't the right shape? -as a result of what

You've seen on social media-

Question 10: Has feeling full -e.g., after eating a large meal/a meal social media has made you

believe you "shouldn't eat- made you feel fat?

Question 11: Have you felt so bad about your shape that you have cried?

Question 12: Has being around others -who you have become accustomed to believe (due to

social media) that are in perfect shape- made you self-conscious about your shape?

Question 13: Have you worried about other people seeing rolls around your waist or stomach?

Question 14: Have you felt that it is not fair that others have achieved the "perfect body" and

you haven't? -the perfect body according to what social media has defined as perfect-

Question 15: Have you been particularly self-conscious about your shape when in the company of other people?
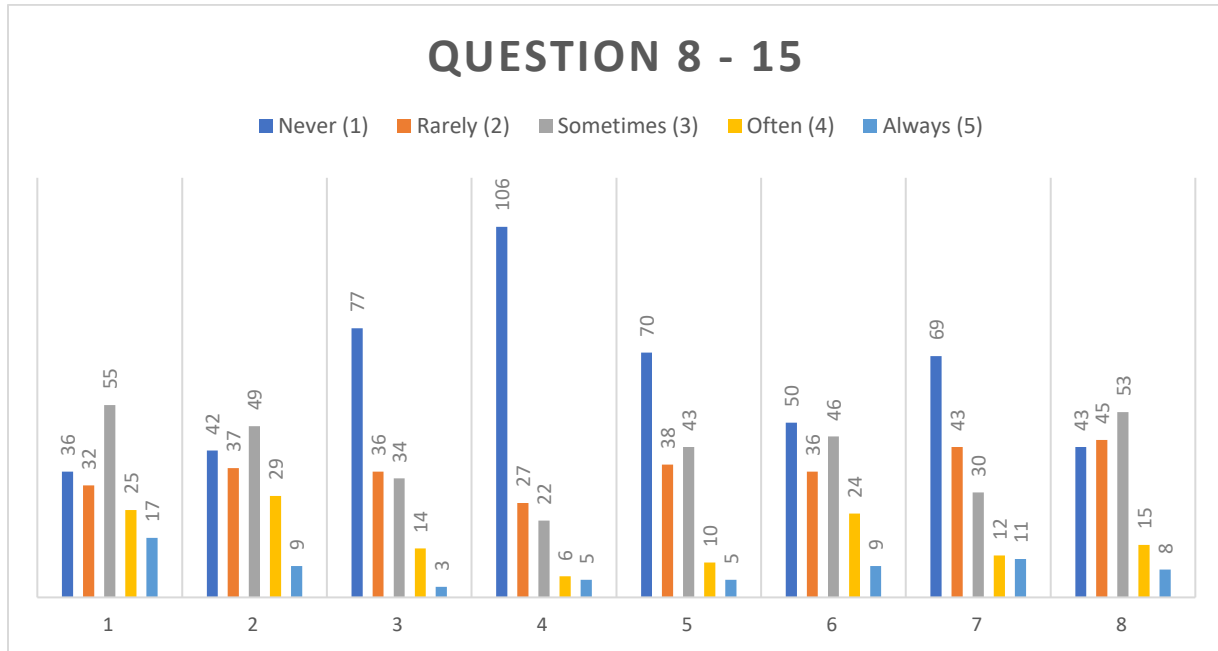
Question 16: My relationships would be better if my body weight and/or shape did not bother me.

Question 17: Worrying about my weight makes it difficult for me to live a normal life.

Question 18: You are satisfied with yourself.

Question 19: I am as worthy as other people that I see.

Question 20: I have a positive attitude towards myself.

Question 21: Do you imagine yourself in their shoes, living the life they are living?

Question 22: I always pay a lot of attention to how I do things compared with how others do

things.

Question 23: If I want to find out how well I have done something, I compare what I have done

with how others have done it.

Question 24: I often compare how I am doing socially -e.g., social skills, popularity...- with

other people.

Question 25: I am the type of person who compares myself to others.
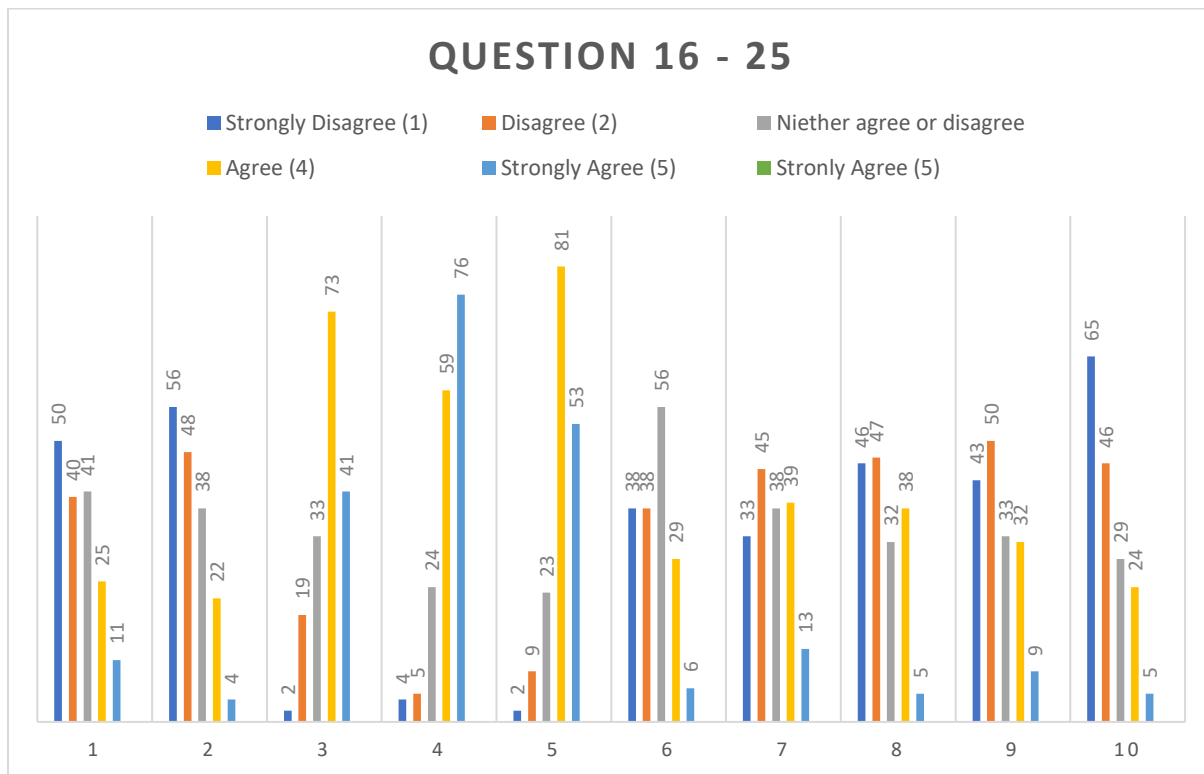
Data Analysis

As is shown in the first six questions are very general to understand what relationship our

respondents have with Instagram as a platform and with what they view/search most on this

platform. 94.9% of the respondents are active on social media, and 93.7% of that population is active on Instagram precisely. Only 1.8% spend 9+ hours on Instagram, as for 58% are able to keep their daily use to only 1-3 hours. The respondents towards what was mostly viewed on their home page were dynamic but 46.8% viewed sports and exercise. 25.7% of the respondents who agreed to being familiar with most of their followers, a bigger amount wasn't familiar with their followers, 45.6%. That's almost double the amount. 28.7% who admitted they were moderately familiar. Most of the respondents stated that their followers were moderately active, 61.8%, and only 2.9% were extremely active.

The question "Do some posts you see on Instagram affect you in any of the ways mentioned below?" had 3 important answers we wanted to know about which were, body-image, low self-esteem, and social comparison. 26.5% were affected with their body image, 9.9% had lower self-esteem, and 43% compared themselves to others.

We had 10.8% of the people who ALWAYS felt they had to diet regarding what they saw on Instagram, 15.6% often felt like it. 32.9% felt that they sometimes had to. 40.8% felt they rarely or never felt they had to diet as an effect of what they saw on Instagram. When the question stated if they felt worried that their body wasn't in the right shape, the percentage who agreed to always feel this way decreased to 6.5% but increased from constant dieting to believing they had a bad shape to 17.3%. Slightly less than half of our respondents have never felt bad for eating till they were full, 2.4% always felt bad. The people who were neutral from the start kept decreasing till they reached 20.5%. 63.7% have never felt bad about their body, yet it is noticed that a slight increase again happened saying that they always cry about their bodies. The increase shows slightly again when it shows that 3% always feel self-conscious about their body, but a big percentage never do, 42,3%. The increase continues when 6% always feel paranoid when others

see the rolls around their stomach, and only 29.9% never care. 14.4% often care, and 28.1% sometimes care about it. The increasing continues to 6.6% when people always feel that it's unfair how others have reached the "perfect body" -that Instagram has defined as perfect- and they haven't, and a big amount never and rarely feel this way, 67.6%, but 25.8% often do, and sometimes felt this way. 6.6% of the respondents felt that their body affected the relationships they had, while only 29.9% didn't care, 15% agree and 24.6% feel neutral about it. A huge decrease in the always or strongly agree responses when asked if they find it hard to live normally since they feel worried about their weight, 2.4%, but 13.1% agree and 22.6% are neutral, 61.9% disagree to this.

A huge over all percentage that proves Instagram doesn't affect their body-image.

More than half of the respondents are satisfied with themselves, feel as worthy as others, and have a positive attitude toward themselves. Then it is noticed that a slight increase occurs when people strongly imagine themselves in other people's life's, 3.6%, and 17.4% agree to this statement, 33.5% are neutral when 45.6% disagree to this. 7.7% pay a lot of attention to how others do the same things they do, 23.2% agree to this, 22.6% are neutral, 46.4% disagreed. Only 3% always compare how good they did with others, but 22.6% agree, and 19% were neutral. 5.4% always compare their social life to others and 19.2% agree to this, 19.8% were neutral and 55.6% disagreed to this. More than half of the respondents don't compare themselves to others and only 3% always compare themselves to others, 14.2% compare themselves but not always, and 17.2% were neutral about it.

A huge over all percentage proves that Instagram doesn't affect people by comparing themselves to others; whether socially or not.

It is noticed in one of the questions that were asked in the survey that 43% of people were affected by Instagram and led them to social comparison. 33.5% were moderately comparing their lives to others, and 7.7% compared what they were doing to other a lot of the time. 19.8% compare all aspects of their lives to other on social media, and 17.2% sometimes compare themselves to others overall. Social comparison leads people to act in certain ways and show themselves from certain angles. This was the main idea that Goffman stated when he talked about self-presentation. This explains how humans adapt manner and appearance depending on different social instances. People now indulge in the act of likes, followers, and being popular on these platforms. Also, to gain approval and recognition. The self-presentation theory explains how they engage in a certain image online to have people like them. This explains why people portray themselves on social media the way that they do. In 2014, a study done by Meier & Gray stated that evidence shows that photo-based social media activity contributes to body image disturbances. This result was shown after the survey was sent to the population since 26.5% of the respondents admitted that social media affected their body image. 10.8% felt that they always had to be on a diet, while 23.8% were almost always worried that their body wasn't in the right shape. 21.5% of the respondents believed that their relationships would be better if their body shape didn't bother them. 15% of people said that the constant worry they have about their bodies make it hard for them to live a normal life. Regardless of how big or small the numbers are, this problem is effective today and it is a serious matter since it leads to several other issues. National Eating Disorders Collaboration stated that body image is influenced by external and internal factors. The external factors can either fall under the category of social media or a person's social circle of friends. Several articles stated in the literature review has showed that social medias thin-spiration and fit body has led people to eating disorders and unattainable to

body standards. Jamie Lee Curtis states how fake social media is after she posed for More magazine. She states that in reality she has big breasts, back fat and a little tummy. But the magazine uses expensive technology to hide flaws. Girls are under the pressure of being skinny and fit and this shows in the survey that was sent. 17.3% of the respondents have often felt that their body isn't the right shape, and 26.2% of people have sometimes felt subconscious about their bodies when around others. When it came to the rolls around their stomachs, 28.1% were worried about it being noticed because women are constantly given the message that they are not thin enough. The numbers are reasonable numbers that show how people have become dissatisfied with their bodies due to the social media; particularly Instagram. People also felt that their weight affected their personal relationships, and made it hard for them to live a normal life. According to Derrene and Beresin in 2006, Mary Kate Olsen was hospitalized with anorexia nervosa. This proves that even people who people supposedly see as perfect suffer the same problems infamous viewers deal with as well. Even National Eating Disorders Collaboration states that body dissatisfaction can occur while a person is scrolling and comparing, feeling that they can't live up to the expectations set on these platforms. 24.6% of the respondents compare how they are doing with others they see on Instagram. In 2019, Chang et al conducted a research that said engaging in social appearance comparison led to body dissatisfaction, and this showed when the researcher asked if the respondents were satisfied with themselves and 11.3% disagreed. This is considered to be very unhealthy.

Self-esteem is a person's positive or negative self-evaluation, or the degree to which he or she believes oneself to be worthwhile (Leary & Baumeister, 2000). Social comparison is one of the reasons for low self-esteem. The more people were active on these social media platforms the more their self esteem was low, because they believed people were living their lives the happiest

they could ever be. Low self esteem in the respondents show when almost 31% are not satisfied with themselves, and almost 19% don't feel as worthy as others, while 20% don't have a positive attitude towards themselves. Regardless of these numbers being small, low self esteem is a result of social media; particularly Instagram. In 2000, Smith stated that women who were exposed to thin "ideal" media representations had decreased self–esteem, and this was obvious when the researcher asked if someone was around people who seemed Insta-fit made them feel self-conscious about themselves and 26.2% sometimes did feel this way. In 2021, Amirali explained what FOMO is (fear of missing out) and this is applied till today since 17.4% agreed that they sometimes imagined themselves living the life someone else is supposedly living, according to what they see on Instagram.

More detailed information about the data analysis and results can be found in the Appendix.

Conclusion

The primary goal of this study was to understand why people act certain ways on social media, especially Instagram. Instagram is a great platform just like any other social media platform and has been proven effective since it helps you stay connected with people around the world. This paper will help us understand the staged Instagram our society live in and help understand why body dissatisfaction and low-esteem issues arise. After analyzing the results, it was noticed through the respondent's answers to the survey that a huge percentage isn't affected by instagram, but it is also noticed in the graph of question #7 that some people are affected. Even if the results proved that the hypotheses wasn't supported doesn't mean that it still doesn't happen. People need to spread awareness about this so people know that it is happening on the low, and this is leading to eating disorders, unhappiness in their own body, not loving themselves and

always feeling that everyone is better than they are. The worst part of all of this is that it happen behind smiles, posts, normal plans with friends, all while living a very normal life. In more extreme cases it affects the person's energy levels to socialize and find it tiring to act okay when they're really not. This study is a benefit to society to show people that they are not in this alone; it is more common than they think. In addition, it should make people aware of the artificiality that shows on Instagram, aim to love themselves more, and not seek certain validations from any social media platform.

Limitations

The results reported should be considered with the limitations taken into consideration.

A limitation to this proposal could be the difference of ages that answered the survey, this could influence the results. Youngsters tend to be more affected by social media since they spend more time on these platforms, as for older people tend to be busier throughout the day.

Another limitation was the people who were uncomfortable with their bodies due to being skinny, it wasn't taken into consideration that some people aimed to gain weight.

Some people who work on social media platforms can alter the results as well since they have become accustomed to social media and probably reached a place where they can separate between the real and fake.

People who are fitness fanatics or gymaholics can alter our results since these people prefer being fit since they have it as a hobby, and accept that the body weight fluctuates.

The sample size cannot generalize all people who use social media since we have less than a fragment of the public.

We cannot generalize all men since a lot of men fear to admit this since it's a sensitive topic, women as well, but women are willing to open up more than men.

The analyses of the results are not reliable.

Culture bias and individuals background could affect the results. (If a person has been told at home or in his circle that they're fat, social media won't be the main reason in this case)

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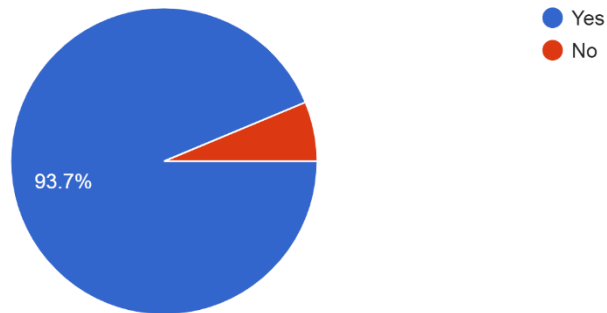
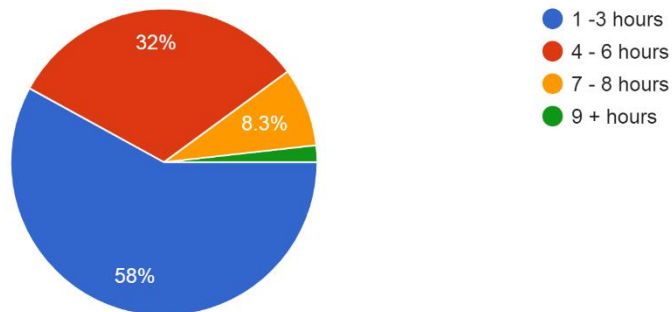# **Appendix**

Are you active on social media?

176 responses

- Yes
- No

94.9%
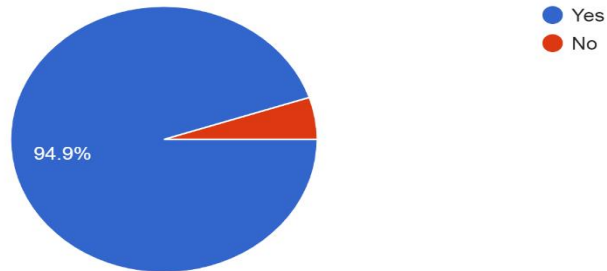
Are you active on Instagram?

175 responses

- Yes
- No

93.7%

How many hours do you spend on Instagram per day?

169 responses

- 1 -3 hours
- 4 - 6 hours
- 7 - 8 hours
- 9 + hours

32%

8.3%

58%

What are the most posts that show on your feed? -you can choose more than one-

171 responses

Category	Count
Food	108 (63.2%)
Clothes	90 (52.6%)
Exercise	78 (45.6%)
Styling and Makeup	77 (45%)
Quotes	99 (57.9%)
Cars	34 (19.9%)
Musics	64 (37.4%)
Crypto	8 (4.7%)
	6 (3.5%)
Politics	2 (1.2%)
Personal pictures	1 (0.6%)
programming and motiv...	1 (0.6%)
Travel	1 (0.6%)
Memes	2 (1.2%)
Horses and photography	1 (0.6%)
Babies	1 (0.6%)
Medical topics	1 (0.6%)
Nature	1 (0.6%)
fashion model	1 (0.6%)
Animals	1 (0.6%)
Breastfeeding and mater...	1 (0.6%)
Honey	1 (0.6%)
Tattoo - Art - Memes	1 (0.6%)
Sports	2 (1.2%)
Blogs	1 (0.6%)
Spiritual reels	1 (0.6%)
Football, thrift shopping,...	1 (0.6%)
Call of duty	1 (0.6%)
Furniture	1 (0.6%)
Tv shows , series, coach...	1 (0.6%)
Traveling	1 (0.6%)
Spiritual and self-help vi...	1 (0.6%)
Music	1 (0.6%)
pictures	1 (0.6%)
Pets, crafts, art etc etc	1 (0.6%)
art / drawing and softwar...	1 (0.6%)
views	1 (0.6%)
Old hollywood	1 (0.6%)
Cats	1 (0.6%)
Engineering, Finance	1 (0.6%)
Basketball Comedy	1 (0.6%)
Forex, business, public f...	1 (0.6%)
Bees	1 (0.6%)
Animals/Pets	1 (0.6%)
Comedy, lifestyle, women	1 (0.6%)
Arts (photography)	1 (0.6%)
Arts and craft	1 (0.6%)

Are they active?

170 responses

- Extremely
- Very
- Moderately
- Slightly
- Not at all

61.8%

28.8%
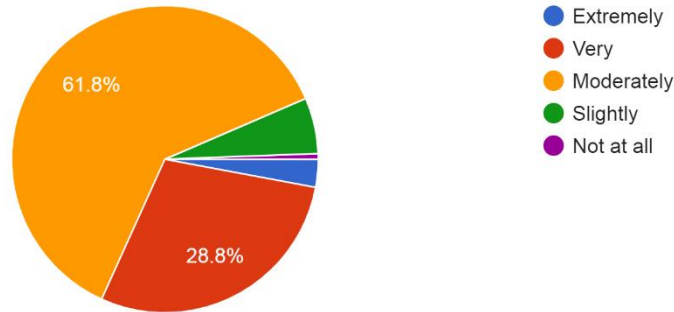
Are you familiar with everyone on your following list?

171 responses

- Not at all familiar
- Slightly familiar
- Somewhat familiar
- Moderately familiar
- Extremely familiar

38.6%

7%

7.6%

28.7%

18.1%
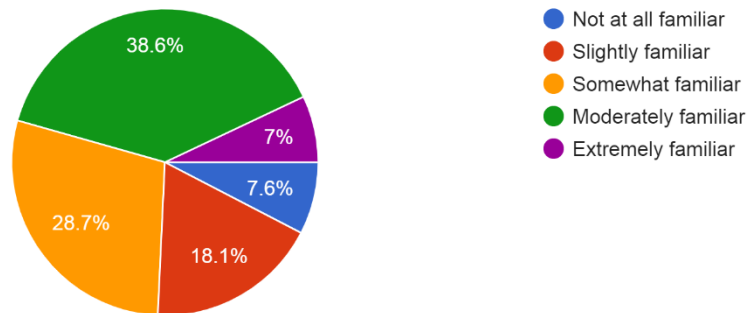
Do some posts you see on Instagram affect you in any of the ways mentioned below?

151 responses

- Body-image (also having a hard time…
- Low self - esteem
- Social comparison
- No
- Nothing
- Nope
- None

43%

26.5%

9.9%

1/3 ▼
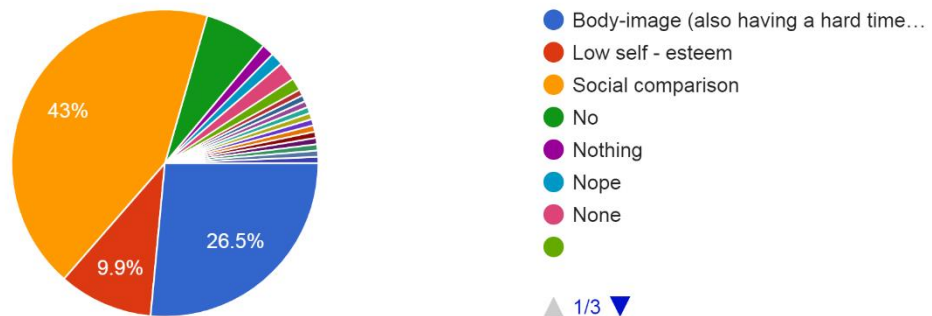
Have you been so worried about your shape to an extent you felt you had to diet?
167 responses
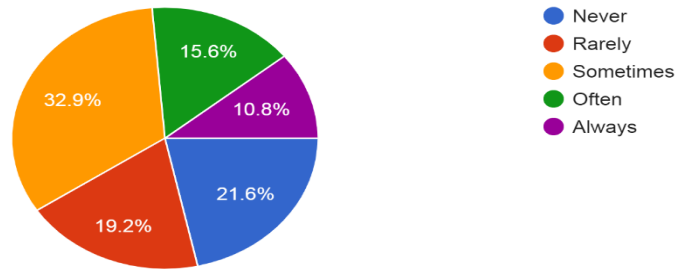
- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

15.6%
10.8%
32.9%
21.6%
19.2%

Have you been worried that your body isn't the right shape? -as a result of what you've seen on social media-
168 responses
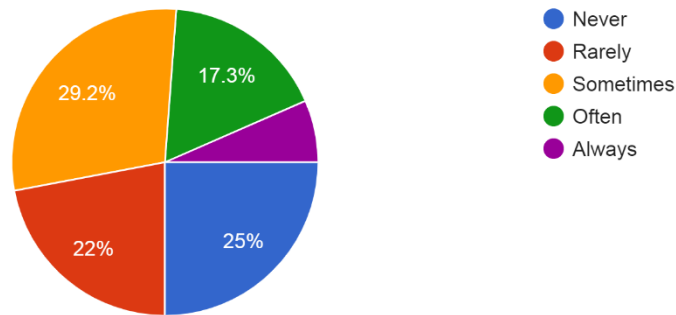
- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

29.2%
17.3%
22%
25%

Has feeling full -e.g., after eating a large meal/a meal social media has made you believe you "shouldn't eat"- made you feel fat?
166 responses

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

22.3%
20.5%
8.4%
46.4%
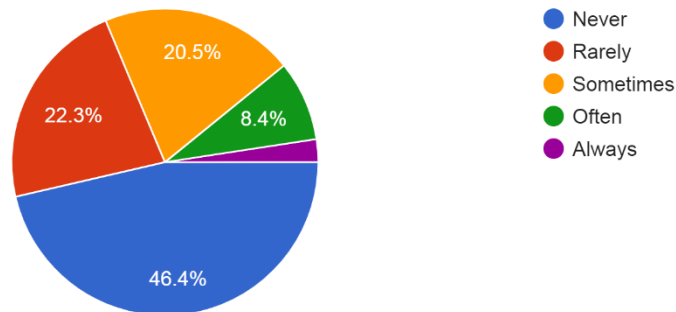
Have you felt so bad about your shape that you have cried?
168 responses
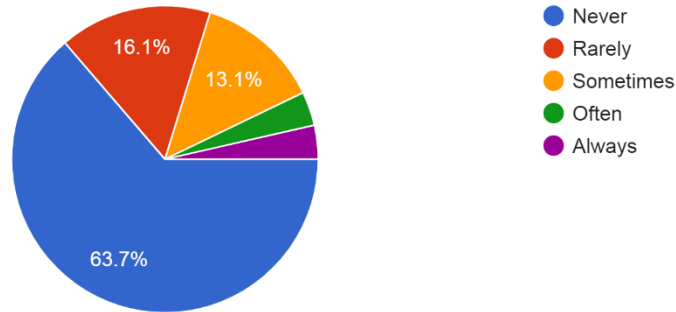
- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

16.1%
13.1%
63.7%

Has being around others -who you have become accustomed to believe (due to social media) that are in perfect shape- made you self-conscious about your shape?
168 responses

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

26.2%
6%
22.6%
42.3%
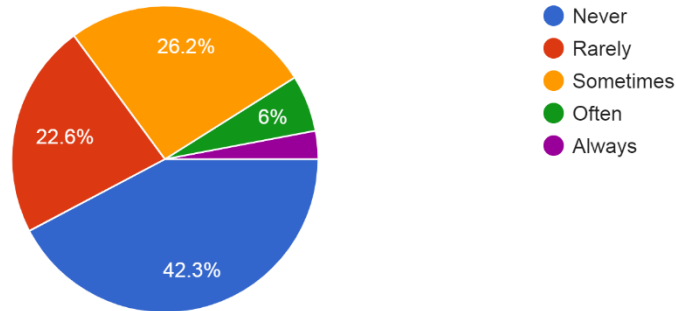
Have you worried about other people seeing rolls around your waist or stomach?
167 responses
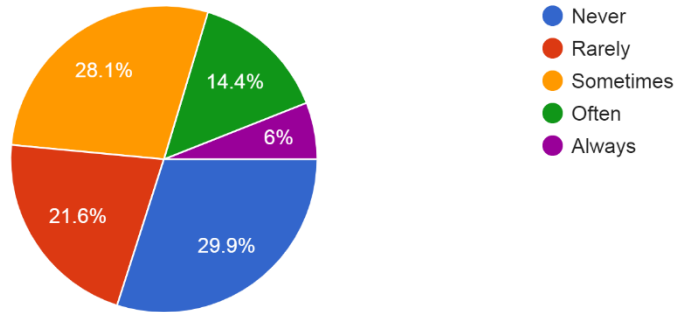
- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

28.1%
14.4%
6%
21.6%
29.9%

Have you felt that it is not fair that others have achieved the "perfect body" and you haven't? -the perfect body according to what social media has defined as perfect-
167 responses

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

18%
25.7%
41.9%
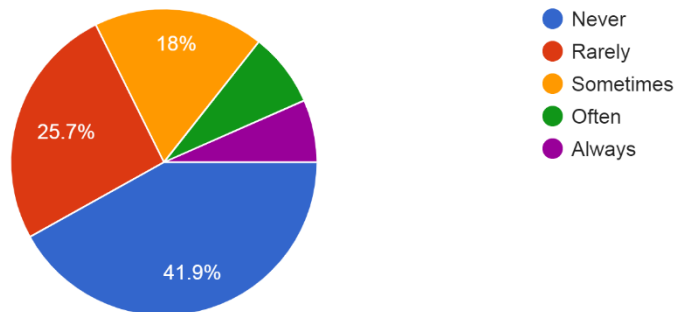
My relationships would be better if my body weight and/or shape did not bother me.
167 responses
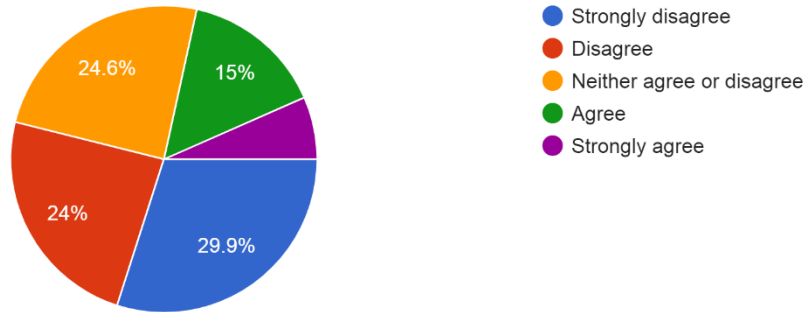
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Have you been particularly self-conscious about your shape when in the company of other people?
166 responses

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
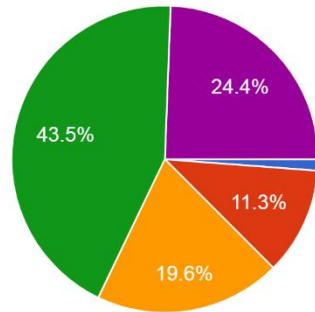- Often
- Always
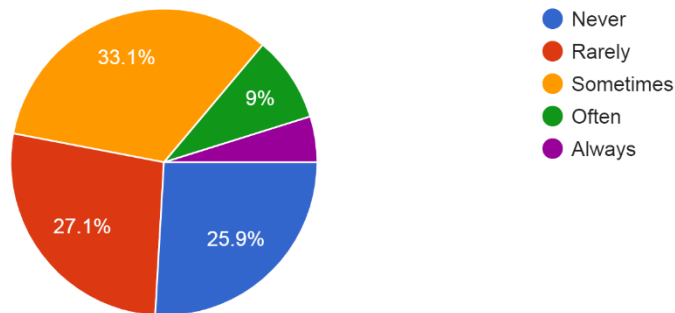
Worrying about my weight makes it difficult for me to live a normal life.
168 responses

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree
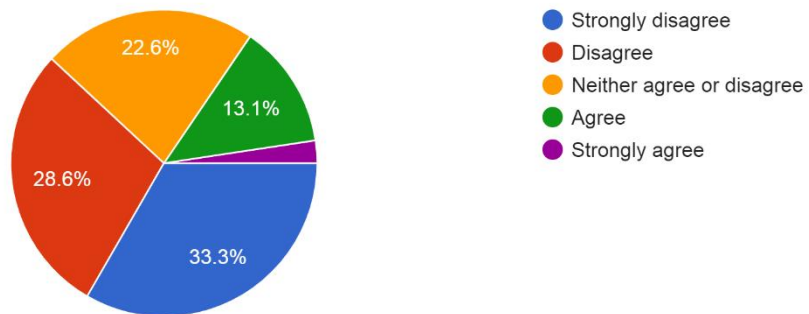
You are satisfied with yourself.

168 responses

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

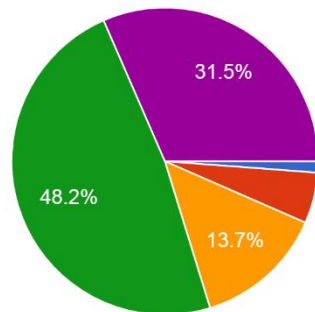## I am as worthy as other people that I see.

168 responses
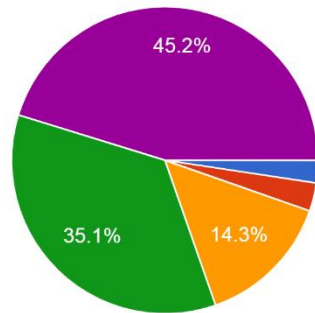
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree
- Stronly agree

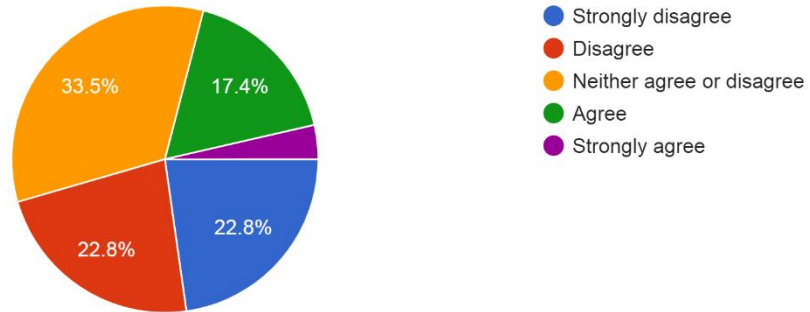## I have a positive attitude towards myself.

168 responses

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
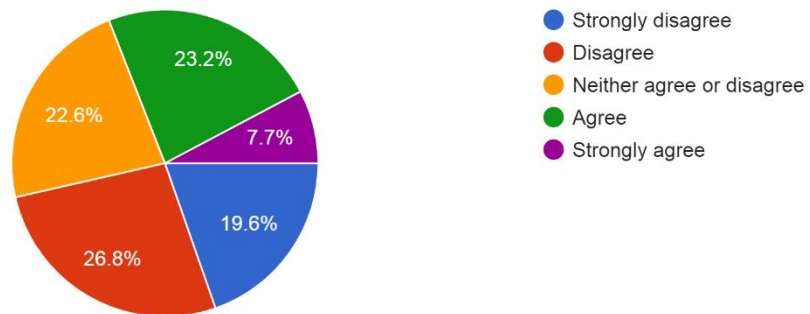- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Do you imagine yourself in their shoes, living the life they are living?
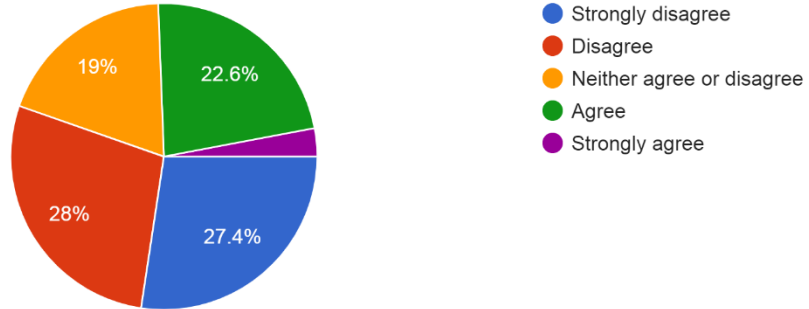167 responses

- ● Strongly disagree
- ● Disagree
- ● Neither agree or disagree
- ● Agree
- ● Strongly agree

I always pay a lot of attention to how I do things compared with how others do things.
168 responses

- ● Strongly disagree
- ● Disagree
- ● Neither agree or disagree
- ● Agree
- ● Strongly agree

If I want to find out how well I have done something, I compare what I have done with how others have done it.

168 responses

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

I often compare how I am doing socially -e.g., social skills, popularity...- with other people.

167 responses

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree
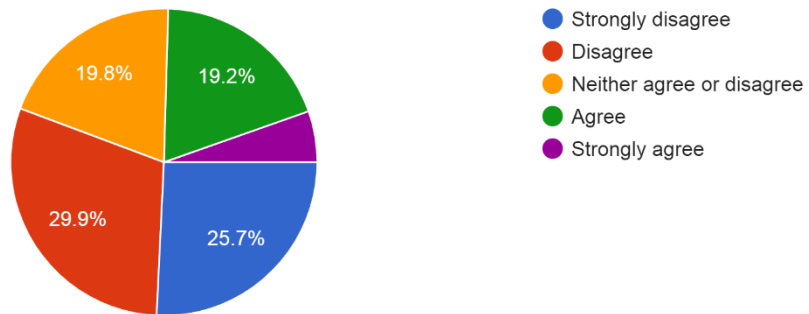
I am the type of person who compares myself with others.

169 responses