Influences Social media has on body image, anxiety and self-esteem in young adults.

Anu Meshioye.
S.N: 1727699

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the BA Hons in Psychology / Higher Diploma in Psychology at Dublin Business School, School of Arts, Dublin.

Supervisor: Dr. Barbara Caska.
Programme Leader: Dr Patricia Frazer.

March 2016.
Department of Psychology
Dublin Business School.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my lovely parents for their financial and emotional support. Also want to appreciate my supervisor Dr. Barbara Caska for guiding and advising me throughout this project. Thanks to my lovely aunties Kofo and Toun for their emotional comfort, financially and general support.

I would also like to thank Dr. Rosie Reid for guiding me through this thesis module and for explaining every specification needed to complete the research. I would also like to appreciate all my lecturers that have taught me in Dublin Business School throughout my whole study in the college.

Anu Meshioye

1727699
Abstract

This study aimed to investigate if media has an impact on self-esteem, body image, social anxiety, and age from an Irish third level college. Total of 100 participants took part in this research. Participants ranged in age from 18-25 (n= 67) and >26 (n=33). The research is a quantitative study that uses four questionnaires to attain information from participants. The questionnaires were The Facebook Intensity Scale, (Ellison, 2007), The Rosenberg Self – Esteem scale, SES (Rosenberg, 1965), The Body Esteem Scale (Franzoi & Shields, 1984) and The social comparison scale (Allan & Gilbert, 1995). The analysis showed that Total esteem had a weak positive relationship with social media intensity however no further significance was found for the other variables. These findings are discussed.
1. Introduction

In the past decade social media has been very well researched area in terms of its influences on body image, anxiety and self-esteem in young adults. The aim of this study is critically evaluate and explore the influences of social media on body image, self-esteem, age, and anxiety. Social media is everywhere we go in this present time even if one wanted to avoid it would not be possible due to its omniscience powers in this day. Social media comes in the form of the Internet on sites like Facebook, other media devices like magazines, newspapers and television.

Social media has been shown to have both positive and negative effects on self-esteem, often depending on the nature of feedback (i.e. positive or negative comments) Valkenburg, Peter & Schouten, (2006). Body image has been found to be affected due to the way the media portrays the ideal thin body type resulting in negative self-evaluations, Grabe, Ward, & Hyde, (2008).

There is no single ideal body shape as this tends, to differ by gender and culture, (Gross, 2010). But the issue of wealth and social status would be an issue to able to afford good quality clothes advertised in magazines but was not a desperation in men and women would do anything to make their bodies look perfect doing things like surgeries, taking medications extreme activities in order to achieve the ideal shape, look and figure. According to Henrique& Calhoun, (1999) women are more sensitive to receiving negative judgments about their bodies compared to males.

Social media is a necessary and important way for people to interact and connect to each other in this day without seeing the person physically in order to deliver the
information. The Internet, mobile devices and other fast systems deliver social media. (Encyclical letter by Fr. Francis) mentions the social platform level has been downgraded in this generation, stating that there has been a decrease in real friendship and more of social connections and little groups and clichés with people with the same interests. The social media have the capability of pausing the common sense in people to work properly. Social media produces and spreads information that can cause breakthrough or a massive confusion, conflicts and mental pollution.

Festinger (1954) mentions that has normal human beings there is a biological desire to not be satisfied with ones self and desire to be like other people which causes lack of self esteem, low body image, and social anxiety. The social comparison theory was brought forward by Festinger(1954) it is how an individual evaluates themselves on how they are placed socially and personal worth in comparison to others.

Social Comparison theory has two types which are upward social comparison and downward social comparison. The upward comparison is the process of how an individual compares themselves to individuals that are greater than them and look up to those greater people to improve on themselves. The downward comparison is the process individuals compares themselves to someone who is worse than them, in order too make them feel greater than the person that they are looking down on. Social comparison is seen through media now with perfect figure and image of a man or woman. Tiggemann & Slater (2003) found that the appearance of women on music videos with being thin and perfect causes body esteem issues for women, this makes them compares themselves not good enough which effects there overall self esteem.
1.3 Self-esteem

Self-esteem is the feeling an individual feels towards themselves about their own value and abilities that they can do. (Kendra, 2014). Self-esteem is very important part of an individual’s health life and happiness. (Passer & Smith, 2007, pg. 453). According to (Braden 1969) there are three aspects of self esteem, firstly being the need of self esteem is highly important for living right and successful growth, secondly that self esteem comes from the inside and can be also impacted by social factors such as peer group, (Gross, 2010). Lastly that self-esteem works in order with an individual's thoughts, behavior, feelings and actions. (Kendra, 2015). Self esteem is highly important in an individuals life to make life worth living by helping the individual know how valued they are with people around them everyday, the feeling of being accepted and understood is a good contribution to increasing an individual self esteem, and the opposite is when an individual is not accepted, isolated and ignore this would decrease the self esteem level in such individuals Hogg & Vaughan. (2008). According to Tice, Hutton, Baumeister &Campbell (1989; 1990) self esteem has two differences, the first is the self concept confusion is the state when people with high self esteem have more self knowledge than the individual that have low self esteem. The second difference is motivational orientation is with individuals with high self esteem having an autocorrect feature that makes them focus on positive things to reach their maximum goals while the individuals with low self esteem have
overall self protection orientation which acts as a solution to their weaknesses in order to stay away from disappointments and failures.

A major theory regarding self-esteem was brought forward by Maslow, (1943; 1954; 1970). According to Abraham Maslow self-esteem is a very important aspect of a human being’s life. Maslow's has a hierarchy of needs that are part of living healthy and right. The first level is the physiological needs which comprises of having basics things to survive such as shelter, water and food, the second level is the security needs which comprises of safety and security needed to live but are not as important as the stage one physiological needs, security needs are like employment, money, health care, safe friends and neighbors. Thirdly the social needs, which is achieved if the individual gets over the two levels. The social needs are needs that are very important to attain in order to reach true happiness and healthy living the needs are love, relationships with loved ones, friendships, trust, and feeling accepted by the society, community and religious groups. The fourth need is the esteem needs is obtained if the individual achieves the three levels, the esteem needs are contain self-esteem, personal reflection and value. The esteem needs is the most important level for an individual to have personal worth to themselves and other see them it can either be high esteem which makes an individual happy, outgoing, positive, while the low self esteem would relate to the individual being negative, depressed, quick to anger and moods. The fifth level is the self actualizing needs which is the highest level of Maslow’s hierarchy and the individual that reach this level are very concerned about personal developments not attributing high levels of importance to the comments other people make about their lives of their deeds, with their main goal to reach the maximum potential and dreams.
A study was conducted to test the link between Facebook intensity, self-esteem and personality in college students. Found students who linked their self-esteem to real friendship was active Facebook users (n=200) students, 65% of the participant’s women from ages 18-40 and men 35%. The Facebook intensity scale Ellison (2007) measured hours spent online and how important being on Facebook was important to them. Results showed students from the both universities were on same hours on Facebook. The older adults used Facebook less compared to the younger adults. A study was done to investigate the role of media on self-esteem on two different ages groups the 15-17 and 24-26. The study found that women were influenced by media, self-monitoring and the men had traits of self-esteem. Eimear Duffy (2011).

1.4 Social Anxiety

Social anxiety is a fear of socializing with people due to the individual fearing negative reactions or being criticized, (Thomas, 2015). Social anxiety makes an individual hide inner talents in order to protect themselves from being judged by people. The individuals with social anxiety have physical symptoms like not able to make a eye contact with people, shortened breathing, nervous voice, fast heart rates and sweating excessively (Melinda & Ellen Jaffe 2016).

A study was done to examine social anxiety and technology in relation to physical communication versus social media communication among in young adults. Students found with social anxiety had a positive relationship between the lacks of social anxiety. 35-40% using mobile phones and text messaging using internet in hours 1 and 4 hours daily. The result showed social anxiety was experienced more among females compared to males, (Tamyra P, 2009). McCord, Rodebaugh & Levinson
(2014) conducted a study to see if social anxiety was influenced by the amount of hours spent on Facebook, the study results found that the people with higher social anxiety spend more time on Facebook and the people with lower anxiety spent fewer hours on Facebook. Gross, Juoven & Gable (2002) conducted a study to see how Internet use affects social anxiety affects adolescents. The study found that the adolescents spent more time on the Internet due to feeling left out and lonely that results to social anxiety as they results to avoid realistic interactions to replace with a large usage of Internet use.

1.5 **Body Image**

Body image is the feeling the person feels or visualizes their personal body and is done by the individual judging their body size, the level of attractiveness (Grogan, 1999; Muth & Cash, 1997). Thorndike (1920) The “halo effect” creates the perception for people that have a pleasant body image are said to have more intelligence and more likely to succeed in whatever they do compared to less attractive people. Gorman, S. (2015) did a study on the effect of media on body image and self-esteem in male and females from the age of 18 - 35. The study found out that the males had lower body image compared to the women in the study. Clark & Tiggerman (2006) conducted a study to examine the combined influence of media and peer factors, in the study the height and weight were measured the results found that the girls had the desire to be thin not due to mostly media but from their peers who always had conversations about body sizes and compared the findings with women with women
showing more awareness to their bodies due to media. Hutchinson & Rapee (2007) observed among adolescent girls to examine if the girls share the body image and eating problems that are in the same friend group, the results found that the girl’s cliques were engaged in binge eating, dieting in order to fit in with the group of ideal body size that was set my social network. Grabe .S, Ward & Hyde 2008 conducted a meta-analysis to measure the effect the amount of media affects body image in women in other studies, and the results approved the statement that the more time spent on media influences women body image to belong. Tara Mansfield (2012) conducted a study on how gender differences in body esteem, body dissatisfaction and the impact of media on body image. The results showed the females were more influenced by media scoring higher in the parts of body esteem, body dissatisfaction compared to the males who scored lower. Sarah Grogan & Helen Richards (2002) conducted a study on body image to see how it affects boys and men. The study observed how the boys and men felt about their bodies they found the younger boys desired the bodies of athletes with strong muscular, toned bodies as seen through media displays how men are meant to look like, this creates an low self esteem for younger adolescents boys showed less body image confidence, they also found that the older men desired to have athletics bodies in order to feel in control and strong to face day to day life. 

Gruber Manwetth et.al (2000) conducted study on body image perception with men in three countries; the men were taken from Austria (n=54), France (n=65) and United States (n=81). All the men in the study had to follow three body images that they felt about their current body images, then secondly they had to state the ideal body that they wanted, the body image type for a man of their age and lastly the body image thought to be wanted by females. The results showed that the men wanted more muscular looking appearance and gaining extra pounds about
28lb(13kg) to achieve the ideal look no matter what countries they were from the social media had delivered an image of the perfect male for the females.

1.6 Positive Body image

Positive body image is a type of body image that when the individual know their body and are extremely satisfied and can live happily. Thomas Cash (2012). Having a positive body image is said to make the person more grateful and appreciative about what and who is around them. Nicole Wood, Tracey T& Casey (2010) conducted a study using (n=15) college students as they got interviewed for having positive body image as the interview went on that the women seemed content with their physical appearances and ignoring how they were they looked like to others as the interviewer asked how others see them their confidence in their bodies decreased this study shows how women’s body image confidence can change if they are judged by others or by themselves. McVey, G.L&Davis, R. (2002) conducted a study to boost positive body image over a 1 year period they used young adolescent girls from grade 6 (n=263), they were spilt into two equal groups one was the group that were given surveys to find their body image satisfaction and any eating problems they had gone through a prevention intervention and were monitored over 6 to 12 months after. The results showed as the interventions increased the more they began to have more body image confidence by filling the questionnaires with less negative answers.
1.7 Negative Body image

Negative body image is a type of body image that the individual does not like what their body looks like and might show hatred and dissatisfaction to the body. Edward Willet (2006). This type of body image is mostly caused by the media in the forms of television, Internet, magazines that unrealistic male and females figure and this creates low confidence in people and in females might cause inferiority, low self esteem, social anxiety, dieting and eating disorders. James, Pam Orosan & Jeff Reiter conducted a study using (n= 51) obese women who were selected randomly to partake in cognitive behavioral body image therapy and the other set with no therapy. The set of people that were treated with therapy showed more concern for their bodies to make changes and they eventually lost some weight and their negative body image reduced, while the other group who had no therapy had no change in their body image. Jennifer Derenne & Eugene Beresin (2014) did a review on how media affects body image and eating disorders. They observed the changes in the development of female body types and how the weight conditions currently in women and males, which causes low body, esteem in both sexes, but due to how the media displays the perfect body shape ideal and can lead to eating disorders. A Meta-analysis conducted by Lisa, Michael, &Levine (2002) on the effects of experimental manipulations of the thin body idea as media displays females. The meta-analysis found that the negative body image increased as the women viewed the thin media images of the models and the lifeless models, the younger girls under 19 years of age were more influenced by these thin ideal images.
1.8 Age
Age is the duration of time an individual is from the time of birth to death. Media is a used by all generations now aging from the young middle aged to the elderly. Although the type of media each generation is different in certain types and models but still have to same aim in to make communication happen. The age from the old generation of using typewriters, telegrams to the middle aged generation of using letters, emails and big desktop computer to the younger generation now of using ipads, internet, television, high definition magazines.
Shehata et al.(2013) examined the age and effects of news media attention and social media use on political interest and participation. The study was done at the time of the 2010 Swedish national election campaign show in comparing what ages have more interest in politics from the ages of 18-33, 34-45, 46-64 and 65-74. The study found that the younger generations from 18-33 were more into political media use compared to the middle ages from 34-45 and this study shows that the young generations are more interested and motivated to make a change.
Previous Research

A study was done by Brown & Dittmar, (2005) done on the thin ideal perception and social comparisons tendency as moderators of media models impact on women's body focused anxiety in adult professional women they found that there were three different types of body images the thin model, average model or no models which was the baseline control. The study found that the other two images groups except from the thin model had a negative internal thought about the thin body type but would show high internal perception to the average body type and the baseline group but feel threatened by the thin body image. Russello, (2009) conducted a study regarding the impact of media exposure on the self-esteem and body satisfaction in men and women. The college students being showed television advertisement with men with muscular bodies did the study and women who were thin and it found that the men were more satisfied with their bodies compared to the females. The self-esteem and social comparison levels were at the same level in both sexes.

Daniel et al., (2004) conducted a study examining the impact of media exposure on male bodies. The study was done by showing the sample (n= 158) advertisements on the television showing the males with high levels of muscle mass and body tone and normal looking males the study found out that the males that were shown the ideal male figure advertisements became very self conscious and less satisfied with their muscles compared to the males who were showed the normal looking men.

Another study conducted by Cusumano & Thompson (1997) examining the influence of media on body image: in 8-10 year old boys and girls in total of 75 boys and 107 girls. The results of the study showed the media does have an influence on the both sexes but the sex that it influenced more were the girls.
The goal of this current research is to examine if media has an impact on self-esteem, body image, social anxiety, and age from an Irish third level college. Previous studies have not examined how media effects third level students in Ireland relating to body image, social anxiety, age and gender.

**Summary of previous research:**

Previous studies have examined the impact of media on males and females on measures of self-esteem, social anxiety, body image, age and the amount of hours spent online. The part that all the studies did not examine was the times spent on media in comparing to big age groups 18-25 and 26 above.

**Justification for the Current Study:**

The current study seeks to fill the existing gap in research regarding research in an Irish sample as well to provide an update of the existing research base.

**Aim**

The aim of this study is to examine if media has an impact on self-esteem, body image, social anxiety, age and time in an Irish third level students sample.
**Hypotheses:**
Following the review of the literature presented here, the following hypotheses have been devised to attempt to fill for-mentioned lack in current research.

$H_1$: There will be a significant relationship between intensity on social media on the following body-esteem subscales: social comparison and body image subscales and total self-esteem

$H_0$: There will be no significant relationship between intensity on social media on the body-esteem subscales, social comparison and body image and total self-esteem.

$H_2$: There will be significant differences between males and females in terms of use of social media.

$H_0$: There will be no significant differences between males and females in terms of use of social media.

$H_3$: There will be significant differences between age groups and social media usage

$H_0$: There will be no significant differences between age groups and social media usage.
2. Method:

2.1 Participants:
A Total of 100 participants were involved in this study, divided into males and females with the aspect of age differences. The females were 70 in total and the males 30. From the of age brackets of 18-25 of male and females to 67 and males and females over 26’s to 33. The participants were invited to take part in the survey for this study through online survey with the aid of sharing them to Facebook friends and friends outside Facebook through email. The participants voluntary filled in the survey with guided instructions and purpose of the study on the debrief form which was on the front page of the questionnaire.

2.2 Design:
The type of design that is used in this study is Quantitative, which is done with the aid of using questionnaires to obtain data. The aim of this study was to see if the amount of hours spent of media affects self-esteem, Body image, social anxiety with the sex and age group brackets. The Criterion for the study is the amount of hours spent on social media with the predictors being the age brackets of young adults from 18-25, 26 above.
2.3 Materials:

The participants completed the surveys with four questionnaires that were the: The Facebook Intensity Scale (Ellison, 2007), The Rosenberg Self – Esteem scale, SES (Rosenberg, 1965), The body esteem scale (Franzol, 1984) and The Social Comparison Scale (Gilbert, 1995) The participants were allowed to give demographic answers to questions of age and gender. The questionnaires were uploaded on the Internet in google drive form in which the participants filled them in voluntarily with being invited to the link through Facebook friends.

1) *The Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale, SES (Rosenberg, 1965)*

The Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale was brought by Dr. Morris Rosenberg to measure self-esteem. The questionnaire contains 10 items that are to answer with a 4 point Likert type scale. The scales measures from strongly agree to the least that is strongly disagreeing. The greater the number goes on the scales the higher of the participant agreeing with the question. The total sum of the scores start from 10-50, stating if a person scoring 10 or below have low self- esteem and if the person reaches the set target of 50; the person is rated to have high esteem.

2) *The Facebook Intensity Scale, (Ellison, 2007)*
The Facebook Intensity Scale measures the Facebook usage to find the amount of hours and duration and how it affects the individual. It contains 5 scales rating from strongly agree to strongly disagree with opened ended question with the amount of friends they have on Facebook. The amount of time spent on Facebook is opened ranging with the amount of minutes or hours spent on Facebook. It has 8 scale question scales, and calculating the mean for all the total items in the scale to find the total Facebook intensity.

3) The Social Comparison Scale (Allan & Gilbert, 1995)

The Social Comparison Scale measures social anxiety and self-perception of social rank. This scale is made of 11 bipolar constructs with the participants to global comparison of their selves to compare to other people using a ten point scale to rate what level they stand in for the different components of this scale. The higher the participant scored meant the better they felt socially while if they scored low would mean social anxiety when it comes to relating to people.

4) The Body Esteem Scale (Franzoi & Shields, 1984)

The Body Esteem scale is used to measure body esteem in an individual. It contains five scales rating from strong negative feelings to strong positive feelings. The Body Esteem scales contains 35 items, with three corresponding aspects that explains main body esteem extents are the sub scales for the scale. The final score is added together in order to find the individuals score of body esteem.
2.4 **Apparatus:**
The apparatus that were used was Google drive forms, Facebook friends and close friends through email by sending survey link. SPSS Statics software (version 22.0) was used to analyze the collected data from the participants.

2.5 **Procedure:**
A total of 100 participants were involved in this study. The Participants were sent links of the survey online, they would click the link and would have to consent to be over 18 and agree to do the study voluntarily. The debrief form explains the purpose, aim and purpose of the study and that the research being anonymous. Also the participants are informed that the data would be stored and secured in a password locked computer and all other software’s that will be used would be highly protected and secure in order to achieve a ethically safe research. When completed the end page would appear with the numbers of top main helplines in Ireland that can help any one facing any issues concerning their lives. The survey is timed to take 10 minutes max for the participants to complete online.
2.6 **Data Collection:**

The data was collected using an online survey system, which was hosted on google forms. A total of 100 participants completed the survey with a fully briefed form stating all the purpose of the study, privacy of the individuals, voluntary participation and above 18 years of age. Testing the two age groups from 18- 25 years and 26 years above. After all the needed participants reached the needed number of 100 the online survey was turned off in order to not receive any more survey entries from participants. All the filled questionnaires were stored on my password protected google account until the analysis started, and then exported to Microsoft excel which was finally analyzed using SPSS 22 statistical software version 22.0.

2.7 **Ethical Considerations:**

This research had to adhere to ethical considerations in order to make the research appropriate for the participants to fill in the questionnaire. The major ethical issue that had to be considered was that there was an age restriction on the debrief form for above 18 years of age. The Privacy and confidentiality was very important to state on the debrief sheet, stating how the information collected would be stored in a google account with a password. The participants were fully informed on the debrief form not to put their personal details like names as was fully stated that the research was completely anonymous and private, that the researcher would not know who
completed the surveys as no names would be displayed. As the participants would receive on the form it was stated on the debrief form that the research was voluntarily and was very open for to choice to fill in and if not comfortable to fill in the participants could easily exist from the online survey, but in that type of case the uncompleted survey would be disqualified to analyze. There participation to the study was appreciated as a grateful message was at the end of the questionnaire.

3. Results:
SPSS (Version 22.0) software was used to conduct the analysis on the data retrieved from the research, to see if the hypothesis were significant or not significant.

3.1 Descriptive Statistics
A total of 100 participants returned usable surveys (Males=30, Female =70) as shown on figure 1
Figure 1: Showing Gender and Age of Participants.

Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Self Esteem</td>
<td>27.55</td>
<td>2.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Intensity</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Social Comparison</td>
<td>59.31</td>
<td>25.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Condition</td>
<td>39.64</td>
<td>8.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Attractiveness</td>
<td>46.36</td>
<td>8.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Body Strength</td>
<td>27.18</td>
<td>5.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight Concern</td>
<td>32.88</td>
<td>7.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Attractiveness</td>
<td>39.13</td>
<td>7.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation.*
3.2 Inferential Statistics

Hypothesis one: \( (H_1): \)

A Pearson’s test of correlation found that among male participants (PA) Physical Attractiveness and social media intensity were held a weakly negative correlation which was not statistically significant \( (r(95) = -.100, \ p = .641) \). Upper body strength (UBS) was also found by a Spearman’s Rho test of correlation to have no significant relationship to social media intensity \( (\tau(95) = -.041, \ p = .842) \).

Sexual Attractiveness (SA) and social media intensity were found to have a weakly positive relationship with social media intensity which was not statistically significant \( (r(95) = .002, \ p = .988) \) and Weight Concern (WC) was found to weakly positive correlation with social media intensity which was not statistically significant following analysis with a Spearman’s Rho \( (\tau(95) = .143, \ p = .249) \).

Total self-esteem was found to have a weakly positive relationship with social media intensity which was found by a Spearman’s Rho test to be significant \( (r(95) = .210, \ p = 0.39) \) thus the null hypothesis can be rejected. (See figure 2 for scatterplot).
Hypothesis two: \((H_2)\)

A Mann-Whitney U test found that female participants reported higher levels of social media intensity (Mean Rank = 49.97, Median = 3.20) in comparison to male participants (Mean Rank = 46.35, Median = 3.10) however this difference was found to not be significant \((U = 845.00, Z = -.565, p = .572)\). The null hypothesis thus cannot be rejected.
Hypothesis three ($H_3$):

A Mann-Whitney U test found that participants in the 18-25 (Mean Rank = 48.27) age group scored lower on social media intensity than participants in the $\geq 26$ age group (Mean Rank = 50.41) but this was not statistically significant ($U = 1009.50$, $Z = -.356$, $p = .772$). Thus the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

4. Discussion:

Introduction

The research conducted investigated the influence of social media on body image, social anxiety, and self-esteem relating to young adults and older adults and gender in third level college students in Ireland. The questionnaires that were used to investigate the variables are the Rosenberg self-esteem questionnaire (Rosenberg, 1965) that has a 10-item system to categorize self esteem to high to low self esteem in the individual; The Facebook intensity questionnaire (Ellison, 2007) has a 8 item system to find out how they feel about Facebook and the amount of hours they use on Facebook; The social comparison questionnaire is used to measure the amount of social anxiety and self perception an individual with an 11 item scale system, the higher the score the
greater the social anxiety the individual and The body esteem scale (Franzoi & Shields, 1984) that is used to measure the level of body image with the use of a 35 scale item to find the level of body image.

4.1 Interpretation of Findings

The first hypothesis predicted that they would be a significant relationship between intensity on social media on self-esteem subscales, social comparison and body image. A Pearson’s test correlation found that the male participants and social media intensity had a negative correlation and was not statically significant. (r (95) = -.100, p= .641). Upper body strength (UBS) was found by the Spearman’s Rho test of correlation that had no significant relationship with social media intensity. (r (95) = -.041, p=.842). Sexual Attractiveness (SA) and social media intensity had a weak positive relationship with social media intensity that was statically not significant (r (95)=. 002, p=. 988) and Weight Concern (WC) had a weak positive correlation with social media intensity which was not significant from analysis with a Sperman’s Rho (r (95)=. 143, p=.249). Total self esteem had a weak positive relationship with social media intensity, which was found by a Spearman’s Rho test which was significant (r(95)=.210, p=0.39) which rejected the null hypothesis by being significant. Therefore, the hypothesis was supported. This result shows that social media intensity effects total esteem. Hogg and Vaughan express how important high self esteem is in an individuals life in order to reach happiness, peace to attain desired goals and dreams while the individual with low esteem suffers from emotional swings like sadness, depression and create a protective bubble in order to avoid failure and disappointments. As previously mentioned above Gorman, S. (2015) conducted a
study on the effect of media on body image and self-esteem in male and females from the age of 18 - 35. The study found out that the males had lower body image compared to the women in the study.

The second hypothesis predicted that there would be significant differences between males and females on their usage of social media. A Mann-Whitney U test was used and found that the female’s participants were more affected with the social media intensity compared to the male participants. There was no significant difference between the males and females. Therefore the null hypothesis was not rejected. As previously mentioned a study by Nicole Wood, Tracey T& Casey (2010) on college students to find out a through interview if they had positive body image, physical appearances. The study found that the women were ignoring how they looked like to themselves until the interviewer asked them individually how others see them suddenly their confidence in their bodies decreased, the confidence they had at the begging of the interview dead down drastically. Another study that was previously mentioned above by Tara Mansfield (2012) found the females were more in body image, influenced by media more than the males in the study.

The third hypothesis predicted that there would be a significance difference between age groups and social media usage. A Mann-Whitney U test was used to find the age group with a significant difference in social media intensity. It found that the 18-25 age group were less affected with social media intensity compared to the over 26’s has they scored higher in experiencing social media intensity. The test was statically not significant, therefore rejecting not rejecting the null hypothesis. A study previously mentioned above by Shehata et al. (2013) conducted a study to find if age affected the interest in news media compared to social media. The results showed that that the younger age groups showed more interest for news media with the help of
social media making it more pleasant to watch compared to the older age groups. Previously mentioned above McVey, G.L& Davis, R. (2002) conducted a study to boost positive body image over a 1-year period they used young adolescent girls. The results showed as the interventions increased the more they began to have more body image confidence by filling the questionnaires with less negative answers.

4.2 Limitations:

The study had several limitations that influenced the study. Size of the participants is a limitation with a total of 100 participants with a large female size of 70 and the smaller group of 30 men. The size of participants was limited due to Ireland small population. The 18-25 age bracket of the males and females were 67 and the smaller group were the over 26’s which was a total of 33 participants. Cohen (1992) mentions the total size of participants in a study is very important.

The other limitation may have been the data was collected. The method used in this current study was quantitative method, which is done through questionnaires, to obtain data to run the statistics. The questionnaires were preset questions which might not have been comfortable for participants to have a choice to fill it in or not which limit the participants to give a honest pick of answers which can make the answers biased or not truly sincere and honest.

The questionnaires may be another limitation for the study, which had to adhere to the College standard that was reviewed by an Ethics Committee. The questionnaires that were used like the following: The Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale, SES (Rosenberg, 1965), The Facebook Intensity Scale (Elision, 2007), The Body Esteem Scale (Franzoi & Shields, 1984) and The Social Comparison Scale (Allan & Gilbert, 1995)
which were all necessary to obtain data in the various fields needed to use for the analysis which is done by SPSS (Version 22.0). The Body Esteem Scale questionnaire is put together in a 5 point Likert scale, which does not give consideration for neutral answers and they the way the questions were worded could confuse the participants and it is not allowed for the searcher to change or adjust the surveys wordings to more easily and understood. The Facebook Intensity Scale should also have less offensive wording in other to avoid participants feeling like they do not belong in a group.

Another limitation was that age required to part take in the study was over 18’s and there was more accessibility to people less than 18 years which would have meant a bigger sample size, to be able to see to how media intensity affect the younger age groups who are more influenced by peer pressure with the perfect body ideal of being thin and for the under 18 teenage boys wanting to have the body of builders, as they could engage in excessive exercise, or steroids which is really unhealthy for their growing bodies.

The other limitation may be the filing of the questionnaires anonymously online through google form surveys. The Participants might have felt emotionally not comfortable with some of the aspects of the survey and might feel sad or unsatisfied with life but the problem that might arise is it not just 24 hour help lines like the Samaritans, The teen line Ireland, 3ts Ireland and so many others help lines in Ireland that offer their services free of charge. This is an important limitation that can affect the general outcome of the findings.

Another limitation might be the Internet where the survey links were shared, the participants might have experienced Internet connection problems which would have not allowed them to continue the questionnaires which leaves the uncompleted
questionnaires and in the type of that case the particular questionnaire would be disqualified from the research.

4.3 Strengths

One of the strengths of the study is that it made participants notice the amount of hours or emotional attachment to social media. This would make the participants more conscious about how much of the media they should take into consideration on day-to-day bases. It also gave a broader knowledge on how social intensity effect social anxiety, self esteem and body image, also checking if genders and age groups have a relationship. It is a relevant study using Irish students as participants; this would give a view of how the younger and older generations are influenced by media intensity.

4.4 Further Research:

For the progression of the future research the evaluation of the limitations stated above. That would help eliminate all the problems and issues that came up during the study. The size of participants involved in the study should larger in order make the statistics more significant. The Demographic aspect that should be considered is the age groups that should have an equal balance in other to be fair and more equally
divided to make a better sample. The location of the participants for future research should be more open to other people living in different countries except for Ireland so there can be a wider view to different types of cultures, manners and certain behaviors on how social media is perceived to other countries as this would have more significant results.

Also a qualitative design method could be taken into consideration for future research. A qualitative design method according to Denzin & Lincoln (2005) is taking into account natural situation and making sense off it through observation.

Future research in this specific type of study is needed to promote awareness and concern about how social media has such a massive impact of self esteem, body image, social anxiety in males and females, especially in females it has more effect to make them less satisfied with the physical appearances and how they are seen in a social setting. Other social media sources like Instagram, dating sites, LinkedIn, Twitter, Tumblr, Pineinterest, Flickr, Vimeo, Skype, YouTube, Digg, Word press, My Space and so many others should be added to the list of variables for a future research in order to get a clearer picture of the type of social media aspects that people use more due to their interests and hobbies instead of social communication

4.5 Conclusion:

For several generations body image, self esteem and social anxiety have been an issue in peoples lives, but has to media began to grow the more effecting both men and women, but has more impact on women as from previous studies that were mentioned above.
The purpose for this study was to see the impact media has on social anxiety, body image, and self-esteem using two different age groups 18-25 and the over 26’s lastly then the demographic of gender.

This research did support its first hypothesis that there will be a significant relationship between intensity of social media on the total esteem while the social comparison and body image were not significant.

The research did not support the second hypothesis that there will be a significant difference between males and females in terms of use of social media. Which means that males and females use a close similar usage of social media.

The research did not support its third hypothesis that there would be a significant difference between age groups and the social media usage. The over 26’s (Mean Rank= 50.41) used more social media than the 18-25 year olds (Mean Rank=48.27).
References


Cherry, K., & Cherry, K. (2016). *How Do Psychologists Define Self-Esteem?*. 


Appendixes

Appendix A

Debrief Form

My name is Anu Meshioye in psychology third year, and I am doing my final year thesis project. I want to find out the impact that social media has on social anxiety, self-esteem and different ages. Filling out this survey below will help me see the relationship between the variables and social media. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and you are free to leave. No names need to be written on the surveys this research is completely anonymous.

Thanks very much for your time and effort. In addition, as a student of the university, if that experience causes discomfort it is important that you are aware of the student counseling facilities available. The student counseling contact number is 01-4178748. However, it is my intention to ensure this experience is one that is not an uncomfortable one. If you have any queries about the study beyond that provided here please feel free to contact me at 1727699@mydbs.ie. While the survey asks some questions that might cause some minor negative feelings, it has been used widely in research. If any of the questions do raise difficult feelings for you, contact information for support services are included on the final page. These are some help lines you contact if you are experiencing any emotional, physical problems. The Samaritans
(116123) and email: jo@samariatans.org, The 3ts (Turn the Tide of suicide), Walk in my shoes, Teen line Ireland (1800 833 634), your mental health Ireland with all the available support groups in Ireland that offer their services free of charge.

Participation is completely voluntary and so you are not obliged to take part.

Participation is anonymous and confidential. Thus responses cannot be attributed to any one participant. For this reason, it will not be possible to withdraw from participation after the questionnaire has been collected.

The questionnaires will be securely stored and data from the questionnaires will be transferred from the paper record to electronic format and stored on a password-protected computer.

It is important that you understand that by completing and submitting the questionnaire that you are consenting to participate in the study.

Should you require any further information about the research, please contact

Anu Meshioye or via email: xxxxxxxx@mydbs.ie.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.
Appendix B

Do you agree in taking part in this research please this the box below thank you.

☐

Age:

Gender:

Survey:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree/Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Facebook is part of my everyday activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I am proud to tell people I'm on Facebook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Facebook has become part of my daily routine

I feel out of touch when I haven't logged onto Facebook for a while

I feel I am part of the Facebook community

I would be sorry if Facebook shut down

Approximately how many TOTAL Facebook friends do you have? ___

In the past week, on average, approximately how much time PER DAY have you spent actively using Facebook?______________

**Computing the Scale**

Score items 1 to 6 on a liker of 1-5, Strongly Disagree (1)...Strongly Agree (5).

Calculate the mean of all the items on the scale.
Citing this Scale


**Notes.**

‘How many total FB friends…”

Can be asked as an open-ended (as in Ellison et al., 2007) or closed-ended (as in Steinfield et al., 2008) question. If asked as an open-ended question, Total Facebook friends must transformed by taking the log before averaging across items to create the scale due to differing item scale ranges. If asked as a closed-ended question, a ten point ordinal scale may be used (e.g. 10 or less, 11–50, 51–100, 101–150, 151–200, 201–250, 251–300, 301–400, more than 400). You may wish to adjust these response categories depending on your population, etc. Note that earlier versions asked students to distinguish among in-network and total friends. This may or may not be appropriate based on population, site layout etc.

‘Time per day spent actively using FB…”

Can be asked as an open-ended or closed-ended question. If asked as an open-ended question, Facebook minutes should be measured by having participants fill in the amount of time they spend on Facebook. Then the item should then be transformed by taking the log before averaging across items to create the scale due to differing item scale ranges. If asked as a close-ended question an ordinal scale may be used
(e.g. 1= 0-14 min, 2=15-29 min, etc.). Again, response categories may differ based on population means.

Appendix C

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself.

If you *strongly agree* with the statement circle **SA**.

If you *agree* with the statement circle **A**.

If you *disagree* with the statement circle **D**.

If you *strongly disagree* with the statement circle **SD**.

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>At times, I think I am no good at all.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I feel that I have a number of good qualities.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>I am able to do things as well as most other people.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I feel I do not have much to be proud of.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. I certainly feel useless at times. | SA | A | D | SD
---|---|---|---|---
7. I feel that I’m a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others. | SA | A | D | SD
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself. | SA | A | D | SD
9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure. | SA | A | D | SD
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself. | SA | A | D | SD

**Scoring.**

Items 1, 3, 4, 7 & 10 are scored: SA=3, A=2, D=1, SD=0.

Items 2, 5, 6, 8 & 9 are reverse scored: SA=0, A=1, D=2, SD=3.

Sum the scores for the 10 items. The higher the overall total, the greater the self esteem.

**References**


Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
Appendix D

SOCIAL COMPARISON SCALE

Please circle a number at a point which best describes the way in which you see yourself in comparison to others.

For example:

Short 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Tall

If you put a mark at 3 this means you see yourself as shorter than others; if you put a mark at 5 (middle) about average; and a mark at 7 somewhat taller.

If you understand the above instructions please proceed. Circle one number on each line according to how you see yourself in relationship to others.

In relationship to others I feel:

Inferior 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Superior

Incompetent 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 More competent

Unlikeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 More likeable

Left out 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Accepted

Different 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Same
Untalented 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 More talented

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Stronger

Unconfident 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 More confident

Undesirable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 More desirable

Unattractive 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 More attractive

An outsider 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 An insider

**SCORING**

Scoring, add up all items. Sometimes it is useful to look at the 3 items of feeling left out, different and an outsider as a measure of group fit or belongingness.


**Appendix E**

**BODY ESTEEM SCALE**
Instructions:

On this page are listed a number of body parts and functions.

Please read each item and indicate how you feel about this part or function of your own body using the following scale:

1 = Have strong negative feelings

2 = Have moderate negative feelings

3 = Have no feeling one way or the other

4 = Have moderate positive feelings

5 = Have strong positive feelings

If you understand the above instructions please proceed.

Place the number of the corresponding answer next to each question.

1. body scent _____

2. appetite _____
3. nose _____

4. physical stamina _____

5. reflexes _____

6. lips _____

7. muscular strength _____

8. waist _____

9. energy level _____

10. thighs _____

11. ears _____

12. biceps _____

13. chin _____

14. body build _____

15. physical coordination _____
16. buttocks _____

17. agility _____

18. width of shoulders _____

19. arms _____

20. chest or breasts _____

21. appearance of eyes _____

22. cheeks/cheekbones _____

23. hips _____

24. legs _____

25. figure or physique _____

26. sex drive _____

27. feet _____
28. sex organs _____

29. appearance of stomach _____

30. health _____

31. sex activities _____

32. body hair _____

33. physical condition _____

34. face _____

35. weight _____

**Scoring**

To determine a subject’s score for a particular subscale of the Body Esteem Scale, simply add up the individual scores for items on the subscale. For example, for attractiveness, you would add up the subject’s ratings.