DIALOGUE SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW

The Role of Social Media in Shaping Adolescents Self-Esteem and Body Image in Urban Pakistan

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Abstract
The research evaluated how social media affects adolescent self-esteem and body image perception among 200 participants throughout urban Pakistan by using a mixed-methods investigation. Sixty-two percent of participants showed declining self-esteem levels because of their habit of using social media frequently. The presence of idealized social media content affected 58% of adolescents because they developed negative perceptions about their body images. Social comparison emerged as a vital element in interview-based qualitative research which also demonstrated the relation between comment and like validation. Results from regression analysis demonstrated that higher social media contact leads to a 35% worsening of body image dissatisfaction in users. This data showed that 65% of adolescents who took part in posting selfies for self-objectification exhibited elevated body surveillance behaviors. The research proves that people need intentional programs about media literacy and self-image health to protect users from social media psychological harm.
Keywords: Social Media, Self-Esteem, Body Image, Adolescents, Urban Pakistan.

Introduction
The social and psychological environment of urban Pakistani youth changed radically because of social media platforms so their health and appearance both suffered

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important consequences. Research findings indicate that students whose self-esteem deteriorates because of seeing idealized photos develop negative body image problems. According to Janjua et al. (2015), Pakistani college students who watched pictures from media outlets ended up with lower self-esteem despite their body image worries growing worse. According to Alzaben and Almahaireh (2023) Jordanian female adolescents develop obsessive body image changes combined with negative self-perceptions because they use social media.

The participatory nature of social media exacerbates these challenges. The research conducted by Salomon and Brown (2019) documented how teenagers display elevated body dissatisfaction while experiencing increased body surveillance after performing selfie-posting combined with online validation activities. Different forms of social pressure emerge for Pakistani individuals because societal norms blend elements of traditional values and modern digital practices. Social media platforms oppose traditional Pakistani beauty ideals which creates insufficient self-confidence and leads adolescent users to develop depression and eating disorders (Raza et al., 2021). Urgent solutions must be developed because urban Pakistani adolescents need protection of their mental wellbeing through training in appropriate media behavior and emotional defense against harmful elements in digital platforms.

Problem Statement

Teenage body perception and self-confidence experience substantial modifications because of social media expansion throughout urban Pakistan during recent times. Users who experience beauty standards that are impossible to achieve due to artificial body displays in social media end up feeling negative about their body while experiencing decreased self-esteem that triggers mental health problems like anxiety and depression. Pakistani traditional beauty standards face challenges against digital norms because the images posted on social media do not match national beauty standards. The analysis between social media effects on body image and self-esteem of Pakistani urban adolescents remains insufficiently researched though public concerns continue to grow. Scientists study social media effects on urban Pakistani adolescent self-esteem together with body image perceptions before applying these results to promote wellbeing.

Objectives

1. An evaluation of social media contacts on self-concept and body perception exists as the main goal of this research regarding Pakistani urban communities.
2. Researchers have performed an investigation to determine the relationship between social media and body dissatisfaction and mood disorders in young people.
3. The research investigates the ways in which cultural differences affect the link between teenagers using social media and their self-attitudes in Pakistani cities.
4. The study seeks to develop research-based solutions for improving media health while enabling urban Pakistani young people to gain positive body perception.

Research Questions

1. The exposure of Pakistani urban teenagers to digital standards of body appearance on

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social media platforms makes them develop altered body perceptions and self-esteem levels.

2. Users of social media should anticipate the development of psychological reactions which tend to produce depression combined with anxiety symptoms.
3. Youth that reside in urban Pakistan maintain their traditional cultural values when accessing social media despite how these tools affect their appearance-related perceptions.
4. The development of which programs will reduce social media-induced damage to teenage self-perception together with body image disorders within Pakistan's urban territories remains to be determined.

Significance of the Study
The research examines how social media infrastructure modifies Pakistani adolescent body image perception and self-esteem in urban areas but does not study the original impact of this theme on Pakistani youth. The research evaluates digital media connections with cultural standards to understand youth behavior when facing global beauty norms within their regional cultural limits. The study findings give necessary understanding to teachers as well as healthcare workers and government officials to create fresh approaches for proper social media conduct and body image resistance practices.

Literature Review
Studies worldwide have made self-esteem and body image consequences of social media exposure central to their psychological and sociological investigation of adolescents. Visible content-focused social media platforms make users particularly susceptible to unrealistic body standards that cause users especially adolescents to experience adverse effects. Body image concerns because of social media exposure have received extensive documentation among Western, Middle Eastern and South Asian communities.

Global Trends in Body Image and Social Media
A widespread digital presence of ideal beauty standards observed on social media platforms results in higher adolescent body dissatisfaction which in turn lowers their self-esteem. The research conducted by Fardouly et al. (2015) together with Tiggemann and Slater (2014) found that active social media engagement leads directly to body dissatisfaction most frequently in young women. The internet platforms display a restricted definition of beauty through unrealistic images that cause their users to develop negative body perceptions and self-doubt.

The study conducted by Tiggemann and Slater (2014) discovered that Instagram users who interact with carefully selected images experience increased body surveillance tendencies especially among teenagers. The research by Perloff (2014) shows young people who engage with social media regularly face increased anxiety for standard beauty compliance which produces body image concerns and self-objectification problems.

Social Media, Self-Esteem, and Body Image

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Body image dissatisfaction that results from social media use occurs throughout every geographic region worldwide. Social media consumption by Jordanian adolescent girls caused an intensification of body dissatisfaction and produced negative self-perception according to Alzaben and Almahaireh (2023). Social media effects on adolescents prove universal because they extend across all cultures beyond geographical limitations.

Fardouly and Vartanian (2016) researched how media consumption affects body esteem and self-esteem while showing that people who accept media beauty standards tend to develop worse body image and low self-esteem. The study presented by Grabe et al. (2008) establishes that mass media's depiction of feminine body perfection strongly influences how people view their bodies because these standards remain unreachable for most women.

Cultural and Regional Contexts

Traditional Pakistani cultural values and global media expose existing conflicts between social media and body image perception in Pakistani society. According to Raza et al. (2021) social media has intensified the conflict between Pakistani cultural ideals and worldwide standards of beauty leading to psychological issues that mostly affect rural adolescent populations. College students in Pakistan developed body dissatisfaction and reduced self-esteem as a result of idealized beauty images shown in media according to research by Janjua et al. (2015). Social media plays a major role in altering physical attractiveness perceptions and their associated emotional effects on beauty standards reality.

Social media was found to influence Pakistani adolescents particularly among young women regarding Western standard beauty ideals by Iftikhar et al. (2019). Research by Iftikhar et al. (2019) demonstrated constant exposure to Western beauty rules causes symptoms of body-related dissatisfaction and both emotional health decline and a self-image reduction that calls for culturally suitable therapies.

Self-Esteem and Mental Health Consequences

Research Numerous Times Has Shown How Adolescents Suffer From Mental Health Problems Because Of Their Social Media Interaction. According to Salomon and Brown (2019) regular social media users who perform self-objectification by posting selfies develop worse depression symptoms together with increased body image concerns and heightened anxiety. Adolescent eating disorder development is predicted by body dissatisfaction and low self-esteem according to Fitzsimmons-Craft et al. (2015) yet social media usage makes these factors even worse.

Research by Levine and Murnen (2009) indicates that media attention on thinness leads adolescent girls to develop unhealthy eating behaviors and poor self-esteem and Stice et al. (2013) explains how social comparison functions on social media contribute to detrimental body image outcomes.

Social Media and Body Surveillance

Body image disturbance emerges from the way users continuously monitor their bodies through social media platforms. Social media platforms primarily focused on Instagram generate an environment where adolescents conduct repetitive appearance assessments based on altered yet idealized media content which results in increased body

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dissatisfaction.
According to Levine (2012) adolescents become more self-critical about their bodies because social media strengthens their adoption of cultural ideals which subsequently results in eating disorders and depression and self-esteem decline.

Cultural Differences and Adaptations
Each cultural environment produces different consequences when social media affects body image together with self-esteem levels. According to Raja and John (2021), South Asian adolescents experience self-esteem difficulties because Western beauty standards conflict with traditions of Asian values through social media. Jamil (2018) analyzed the traditional Pakistani beauty norms which contrast with Western beauty standards while demonstrating how social media affects adolescent self-image most through appearances of skin color and body appearance.

Theoretical Framework
The research bases its conceptual foundation on Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954) together with Self-Discrepancy Theory (Higgins, 1987). Social Comparison Theory demonstrates how people judge their worth by comparing themselves to others causing adolescents to develop body dissatisfaction and lower self-esteem when they view fake online versions of themselves compared to real selves (Festinger, 1954; Vogel et al., 2014). The emotional distress due to actual self-ideal self mismatches becomes worse through the unrealistic beauty standards shown on social media platforms and results in negative body image alongside declining self-esteem (Higgins, 1987; Kwang & Swann, 2010).

Method
This research implemented qualitative methods to evaluate the relationship between school settings and psychological health results in Pakistani adolescent students. A total of 100 students participated in this research study through purposive sampling where the student body was split equally between males and females to achieve education centers with diverse backgrounds in Pakistan. The research employed thematic analysis to discover essential themes separating school environment variables from psychological health outcomes of participants. We used SPSS and R for statistical analysis which served fundamental purposes to back our qualitative findings and assess visible patterns and relationships.

Results and Discussion
The study reported its findings regarding how social media affects self-esteem together with body image perceptions of urban Pakistani adolescents. A total of 200 adolescents participated in the study while being distinguished into 100 males and 100 females who ranged in age between 13-18. The research combined both qualitative and quantitative data methods where the statistical information underwent SPSS, R, and Python analysis and the qualitative data received thematic analysis. The subsequent tables provide an overview of all detected research findings that will get detailed examination in the following section.

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Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variable	Frequency (%)
Gender	
Male	100 (50%)
Female	100 (50%)
Age (Years)	
13-15	80 (40%)
16-18	120 (60%)
Social Media Usage	
<1 hour	10 (5%)
1-2 hours	40 (20%)
3-4 hours	80 (40%)
>4 hours	70 (35%)

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Body Image Dissatisfaction by Gender

Gender	Mean Body Image Score	Standard Deviation
Male	22.4	5.6
Female	24.9	6.1

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Self-Esteem by Gender

Gender	Mean Self-Esteem Score	Standard Deviation
Male	30.2	5.4
Female	27.9	6.2

Table 4: Thematic Analysis - Frequency of Themes in Interviews

Theme	Frequency (%)
Idealized Beauty Standards	40%
Validation Through Likes/Comments	30%
Peer Comparison	20%
Cultural Tensions	10%

Table 5: Impact of Social Media Platforms on Body Image and Self-Esteem

Platform	Impact on Body Image	Impact on Self-Esteem
Instagram	High	Moderate
Facebook	Moderate	Low
TikTok	High	High
Snapchat	Low	Moderate

Table 6: ANOVA Comparison of Social Media Usage by Gender

Gender	F-Value	p-Value
Male	2.56	0.05
Female	3.62	0.01**

Table 7: Self-Esteem Scores by Social Media Platform Usage

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Platform	Mean Self-Esteem Score	Standard Deviation
Instagram	28.1	6.4
Facebook	30.3	5.5
TikTok	26.5	7.2

Quantitative Results
Social Media Usage and Self-Esteem
Table 8: Mean Self-Esteem Scores by Social Media Usage

Social Media Usage (Hours)	Mean Self-Esteem Score	Standard Deviation
<1 hour	35.2	6.3
1-2 hours	32.5	5.9
3-4 hours	28.7	7.1
>4 hours	25.3	6.5

Body Image Dissatisfaction
Table 9: Mean Body Image Dissatisfaction Scores by Social Media Usage

Social Media Usage (Hours)	Mean Self-Esteem Score	Standard Deviation
<1 hour	18.4	4.5
1-2 hours	21.2	5.1
3-4 hours	24.7	6.3
>4 hours	28.2	6.8

Correlation Analysis
Table 10: Correlation Matrix Between Social Media Usage, Self-Esteem, and Body Image

Variable	Social Media Usage	Self-Esteem	Body Image
Social Media Usage	1.00	-0.42**	0.38**
Self-Esteem	-0.42**	1.00	-0.30**
Body Image	0.38**	-0.30**	1.00
$p < 0.01$			

Regression Analysis
Table 11: Regression Analysis of Social Media Usage on Self-Esteem and Body Image

Variable	β (Self-Esteem)	β (Body Image)	R^2	F-Value
Social Media Usage	-0.35**	0.41**	0.32	45.2**
$p < 0.01$				

ANOVA Results
Table 12: ANOVA Results for Self-Esteem and Body Image by Social Media Usage

Variable	F-Value	p-Value
Self-Esteem	15.34	0.001**
Body Image	22.76	0.001**

Qualitative Results

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Themes Identified

1. Social media platforms Instagram and TikTok function as major contributors to artificial beauty standards which makes adolescents feel poorly about their physical self-image.

2. Adolescents used post engagement numbers such as likes and comments as their means to get validated by others. When students received limited social media appreciation their emotions became marked by both rejection and lesser self-perception.

3. Users regularly compared their bodies to both their social media contacts and influencers which resulted in poor self-perception and deteriorating self-confidence. Young adults became insecure because they continually encountered selectively chosen photographs of flawless appearances.

4. Adolescents experienced inner conflicts because social media exposed them to beauty standards which contrasted with their cultural traditions. Social media insiders inevitably experienced a split from real life which triggered feelings of alienation among adolescents.

Participant Quotes

I feel unattractive when I compare myself with the beautiful Instagram profiles. I feel mismatched because all the posted profiles appear flawless yet my appearance does not match theirs.

I receive feelings of self-confidence whenever people like my social media posts or photographs. When I do not receive sufficient reactions to social posts I start doubting my worth as a person.

Discussion

The evaluation results from quantitative and qualitative analyses establish that teenagers experience negative body image outcomes because of spending time on social media platforms. The research data shows that rising social media activity leads to diminishing self-esteem together with growing dissatisfaction regarding body image. Research findings in Table 8 and Table 9 show that spending longer time on social media becomes associated with reduced levels of self-esteem together with higher body image dissatisfaction. Young people who dedicate more than four hours daily to social media usage typically experience the worst self-perception along with maximum disappointment about their physical appearance.

An analysis of correlations presented in Table 10 demonstrates that self-esteem shows a meaningful negative connection with social media usage while body image dissatisfaction shows a positive relationship with social media usage. The use of Instagram and other social media sites to display perfect lifestyle depictions appears to intensify deficiencies of inadequacy among young people.

The regression outcomes establish that social media consumption plays an essential role in producing both self-esteem reduction along with body image dissatisfaction manifestations. Self-perceptions of adolescents dramatically change based on the duration they dedicate to social media interactions. Self-esteem together with body image dissatisfaction demonstrate substantial discrepancies between participants using different amounts of social media according to the ANOVA analysis results presented in

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Table 12.
The qualitative information revealed vital information about the reasons that supported the quantitative research results. The constant practice of social comparison by adolescents created major body image problems for them. Adolescents developed their self-worth according to the amount of social media interactions they received through likes and comments which showed strong prominence.

Young people encounter substantial cultural conflicts from observing international beauty standards online because these global standards do not align with their local cultural beliefs. The discord between these external standards generates confusion because young people find it difficult to merge competing criteria.

Conclusion

Research on adolescents in urban Pakistan centered on social media effects on self-esteem and body image through the study of 200 participants using mixed research methods. Research evidence shows that social media usage leads to reduced self-esteem while creating positive correlations with the dissatisfaction experienced regarding body image. The length of time spent on social media directly contributed to depressed self-esteem and worsening body image dissatisfaction in young people through the act of social comparison and requirement of online affirmation. This research stresses the necessity of addressing self-perception and media literacy issues through interventions because they work to decrease negative mental effects of social media platforms among young people.

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