



Objectified Body Consciousness And Social Media Usage Among Young Adults

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Abstract:

Objectified Body Consciousness (OBC) involves individuals adopting societal beauty standards, focusing on external judgement. Social media usage indicates an individual's interaction with platforms like Instagram or Facebook. Idealised body images on social media may heighten OBC, influencing body image and contributing to psychological impacts like lowered self-esteem. This study explores the relationship between Objectified Body Consciousness (OBC) and social media usage among 120 young adults. The data was collected using purposive sampling, with participants aged 18 to 25 years residing in Delhi NCR. Tools used were the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (24 items). The sample comprising two groups based on social media usage (less than 5 hours and more than 5 hours) showed no significant difference in OBC levels.

Keywords: Objectified body consciousness, body image, social media.

McKinley and Hyde (1996) introduced the concept of "objectified Body Consciousness," encompassing experiences of individual's body surveillance and the shame affecting beliefs about appearance control. Applicable to both genders, it involves a three-step self-objectification process: internalising appearance ideals, concentrating on specific traits, and engaging in vigilant body monitoring and behaviour modification. This pursuit is driven by the desire to achieve a specific appearance, impacting cognition and behaviour.

Objectified Body Consciousness (OBC) is a multifaceted framework comprising three interconnected dimensions: Self-Objectification, Body Surveillance, and Body Shame. These dimensions delve into the complex interplay between individual perception, societal ideals, and psychological experiences. Self-Objectification involves internalising societal beauty standards, viewing one's body as an object for external evaluation. Body Surveillance entails constant monitoring of one's body, driven by concerns about external perception. Lastly, Body Shame focuses on the emotional dimension, measuring the feelings of shame and discomfort individuals may experience in relation to their bodies. Together, these dimensions offer a nuanced exploration of how societal beauty standards impact individuals' awareness, behaviours, and emotional responses towards their own bodies.

Per the Self-Awareness Theory, individuals, when directing attention inward, gauge their behaviour against their internal standards. If they find that these standards don't align, they become self-conscious and experience negative thoughts known as their critical inner voice. These negative thoughts stem from traumatic experiences in childhood. This self-awareness is accompanied by continuous monitoring of one's body, also known as body surveillance.

Fredrickson and Roberts (1977) proposed objectification theory, asserting that gender socialisation often leads to societal gender objectification, fostering self-objectification in girls and women. This involves treating oneself as an object for scrutiny, resulting in continuous body monitoring and comparison to unrealistic beauty standards. The process induces anxiety, diminishes awareness of bodily sensations, and cultivates body shame, contributing to body dissatisfaction. This heightened body consciousness stems from societal valuing of the female body as an object for use or entertainment, influencing individuals to assess their worth through constant body monitoring. Socialisation into objectified body consciousness is significantly influenced by media use, peer interactions, and extends to the impact of these influences on social networking sites.

Social media encompasses web-based applications facilitating visual interaction, communication, and relationship-building. Users share text, photos, and videos, creating and updating profiles to express themselves and cultivate a digital identity. Real-time or asynchronous interaction fosters conversations, maintaining social connections. Social media serves various purposes, including information discovery, staying updated, and entertainment. Platforms like LinkedIn enable professional networking. Despite benefits, considerations for privacy, online behaviour, and mental health impacts are essential when using social media.

Excessive social media use significantly influences individuals' lives and interpersonal relationships, particularly in shaping idealised body images for both adolescent girls and boys. Comparisons with celebrities and influencers on social media contribute to concerns about body image, impacting boys and girls similarly, even when considering parent-child relationships. Boys are influenced more by peer feedback on exercising, while girls often view media celebrities as role models. The media's promotion of the thin-ideal image, prevalent in Western European countries, strongly affects body dissatisfaction, especially under social pressures. Television, magazines, and social media platforms present an idealised beauty standard, influencing both women and men and guiding those dissatisfied with their appearance.

Social media has dual impacts, offering positive aspects like social support, stress reduction, education, and improved communication skills, fostering confidence and personal growth. Conversely, negative effects include social comparisons, pressure for constant activity, and emotional consequences leading to feelings of worthlessness. Social media significantly influences body consciousness and self-image, as users aim to portray an idealised version of themselves. Recognizing this link is crucial for developing strategies to address negative effects and promote positive mental health in the digital age.

V. Appu, Dr. A., & Lukose, M. V. (2022) study explores the relationship between objectified body consciousness (OBC) and social interaction anxiety in adolescents, considering the moderating influence of self-confidence. Results reveal a negative and significant link between surveillance (a dimension of OBC) and self-confidence. Additionally, body shame and social interaction anxiety exhibit a positive correlation, while surveillance is positively correlated with social interaction anxiety. Importantly, self-confidence displays a negative and significant association with social interaction anxiety.

Sandhu, T., & Sandhu, S. (2021) conducted a study aiming to explore the role of Self-objectification within objectified body consciousness encompasses elements like monitoring one's body, experiencing shame about one's appearance, and holding beliefs related to controlling one's looks among young females. The results underscored the adverse influence of media images on the adolescent mindset, underscoring the importance of enhancing women's body experiences.

Butkowski, Chelsea, Dixon, Travis, and Weeks, Kristopher (2019) conducted a study on Investigating the impact of young women's engagement with selfie feedback on Instagram on body image concerns, particularly focusing on body surveillance. Applying Objectification Theory, the research reveals that higher selfie feedback investment is associated with Negative feelings or discontentment regarding one's own body and a drive for thinness, driven by increased body surveillance. The study illuminates the intricate dynamics among

social media, selfie culture, and young women's body perceptions, underscoring the importance of understanding the nuanced impact of social media interactions on mental health.

Objective:

To study the difference on the level of Objectified Body Consciousness among young adults with Social Media usage of less than and more than 5 hours.

Method:

- Design and sample:

A comparative research was conducted to understand the interplay between objectified body consciousness and social media usage among young adults. The sample size for this study was 120 participants consisting of 60 individuals who have social media usage less than 5 hours and 60 individuals who have social media usage more than 5 hours. The sample was collected using purposive sampling. The inclusion criteria of this study included individuals between the Individuals aged between 18 and 25 years.. Participants are residents of Delhi-NCR and must have accounts on at least one social media app.

- Measures:

McKinley and Hyde (1996) developed objectified body consciousness scale (OBCS), a 24-item scale for measuring objectified body consciousness. This scale assesses the extent of unpleasant emotions that arise when an individual perceives that their physique does not align with societal standards. The questionnaire utilises a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 for "Strongly Disagree" to 7 for "Strongly Agree." It comprises three subscales: body surveillance (8 items), body shame (8 items), and control beliefs (8 items). The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the scales are 0.89 for body surveillance, 0.75 for body shame, and 0.72 for control beliefs. The scale was administered in its original English form.

- Procedure:

The research aimed to explore the link between objectified body consciousness and social media usage among young adults (18-25 years). The 120 participants were split into two categories depending on their social media usage: one group with less than 5 hours and another with more than 5 hours. Purposive sampling was employed, and the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS) was administered. Participants, meeting inclusion criteria, gave consent, and were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Data analysis involved statistical tools, emphasising the importance of participants' voluntary participation and the option to withdraw at any time.

Results:

Table 1: SD & t-value for objectified body consciousness among young adults who have social media usage less than 5 hours & more than 5 hours.

Group	N	Mean	S.D	t-test	P- value
Social media usage less than 5 hours	60	94.88	12.95	0.30	Insig.
Social media usage more than 5 hours	60	97.65	16.20		

	120				
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** Insignificant at both levels (0.05 & 0.01)**

Discussion:

The primary objective of this study was to explore the association between objectified body consciousness and the use of social media among young adults. The sample size of the study is 120, it consisted of two groups divided on their social media usage. The results of the current study illustrate that within the parameters of this research and considering the chosen variables, spending more than 5 hours on social media does not appear to have a notable impact on objectified body consciousness among young adults when compared to those with less usage.

The term objectified body consciousness pertains to the internalisation of one's personal physical aspect as if viewing oneself from an outsider's viewpoint. In 1996, McKinley and Hyde introduced the term "objectified body consciousness" to explain how individuals can feel objectified when subjected to body surveillance and shame, greatly affecting their beliefs about managing their appearance.

Social media platforms are web-based applications that allow users to connect with others and share various types of content. They are online communities where users can create and engage with personal profiles, connect with friends both online and offline, meet individuals with shared interests, and interact with and show support for content created by others. Social media involves visual interaction with others and includes the use of online platforms that are specifically designed for connecting, sharing, and forming relationships. Users can create and update profiles, connect with others, and share text, photos, and videos.

The table summarises the examination of the interplay between social media usage and objectified body consciousness among young adults, categorised into two groups – those with social media usage less than 5 hours and those with more than 5 hours. The table provides insights into the variability and significance of observed patterns within each group. The mean body image score for the group with social media usage less than 5 hours was 94.88, while for the group with more than 5 hours, it was slightly higher at 97.65. The standard deviation, reflecting the variability in scores, was 12.95 for less than 5 hours and 16.20 for more than 5 hours. The t-test was conducted to compare both groups, resulting in a t-test value of 0.30. The associated p-value was deemed insignificant, indicating that, when considering both groups collectively, there is no statistically significant difference in objectified body consciousness scores based on social media usage duration. The results suggest that, when examining objectified body consciousness scores collectively, regardless of social media usage duration, there is no statistically significant difference. The p-value being insignificant reinforces the notion that any noticed variations in average scores are probably attributed to random chance rather than with social media usage duration.

Conclusion:

The objective of the study was to examine the interplay between objectified body consciousness and social media usage in young adults. Notably, no significant difference was found in objectified body consciousness for those with less than 5 hours of social media use. Limitations include a specific Indian cultural focus, a cross-sectional design limiting causal inference, and an insufficient sample size for generalisation. The study didn't focus on specific platforms like Instagram or Snapchat, prompting suggestions for future research. Potential areas include exploring various elements of the objectified body consciousness scale and examining relationships with problematic social media use, body image, personality traits, and peer relationships. Despite limitations, the findings offer valuable insights for future research and intervention programs.

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