INSTAGRAM USE AND FEMALE UNDERGRADUATES' PERCEPTION OF BODY IMAGE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined how the use of Instagram by female undergraduates and the viewing of body related posts affect their body image. The study adopted the survey method with a sample size of 381 female students from Covenant, Crescent and Bells universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. It was discovered that female undergraduates' exposure to Instagram body ideals significantly influenced their self-concepts (β= -0.277, r = -0.371, t= -7.113, p<0.05). These posts made female undergraduates to alter their body image by seeking to lose weight through exercising, portion control and also enhancing their skin colour with the use of skin lightening creams and soaps and other procedures ($\bar{x}$ = 4.22). The study recommends that students who are experiencing body image dissatisfaction as a result of low self-concept can speak to a psychologist to avoid taking repercussive actions or measures.

Keywords: Body Ideals, Body Image, Instagram use, Self-Concept, Social Comparison

INTRODUCTION

The pursuits of appearance and beauty have become a prevailing power in the human society today. Some studies have shown that this global aberrant idea of beauty has facilitated the distortion of body image in the lives of young females. Concerns with body image show up in different ways among young females. Prominent ones are: the enthusiastic desire to have a perfect thin figure and the need to have a light skin complexion. The controversial relationship between *Instagram* influence and body image is somewhat new

in the terrain of research and one yet to be resolved and the notion of beauty even though not formally documented is strongly connected to femininity. Females are on a daily basis confronted with the traditional and stereotypical ideals of beauty standards such as being light skin, thin body sized, having a curly hair texture, pink lips among others. DeLaMater (2002) affirmed that young females are particular about their body image and this affects their self-esteem and educational development. Social media in addition to family, peers, religion and society contribute greatly to this distortion. For some young female undergraduates, it could be the first time they are allowed to make certain choices on their own, and as such they are often faced with mixed messages regarding their value as students and the need to always look attractive. Miles (2009) stated that for a lot of women, university is a paradox between the serious nature of intellectual curiosity and the pull to conform to societal expectations and these expectations can be powerful forces as they define themselves mentally and physically.

Over the years, the ideal beauty standards have evolved; today, thin, skinny, light-skinned are regarded as beautiful. These society-created standards have caused some form of struggle for people that are yet to be in this category and those that have attained these are under pressure to maintain them. This shows that some females especially in the younger category are willing to take the steps to conform to societal standard of beauty irrespective of the measures taken or the side effects. The concern with body image has originated from individual self- perception and the actual body (Arasa, 2017). According to Badero (2011), millions of people are constantly living with a dreadful feeling about how they look and that means they are not satisfied with their body image, which inevitably leads to low self- esteem. Furthermore, the researcher observed that body dissatisfaction is a major concern amongst both genders, but particularly among females. Thompson and Heinberg and Tantleff (1999) asserted that a person's appearance is determined by many factors including genetics, biology, and cultural standards and also that there are socio-cultural factors that can play a role in contributing to body dissatisfaction such as pressure from family, friends, teachers, and coaches. Due to these diverse and complex influences, the appearance of human beings vary greatly and despite this diversity, the culture of western society sets forth a rigid ideal for appearance that holds that women should appear slender and thin while men should appear tall and heavy muscled. Shabangu (2016) affirmed that,

women have been made to feel that their overall physical appearance can only be attractive in an unorthodox sense. Exotic, fascinating, outlandish, enticing are terms which were and are used to describe women's bodies and beauties. Craig (2006) suggested that these feelings are characterized by a constant anxiety and effort to always look 'on-point' as a result of the prospect of being gazed upon by fellow members of the society. Being overly conscious of one's appearance could lead to self-objectification which is when the body is viewed as an object for others to view. This could lead to eating disorders, depression and low self-esteem in the long run.

Irving (2008) as cited in Wynn, (2012, p.15) asserts that although there are other media forms that promote this body ideal through their representations, social media especially *Instagram* since its creation in 2010 continues to gain more attention because young people are exposed to as much as eight to ten hours of social media per day.

Campos (2020) explains that in keeping with social expectations, young women are dissatisfied with how they look, and feel pressured to modify their pictures to appear flawless and attract more followers. The constant exposure to *Instagram* pictures distorts the idea of an attainable body and this leads young people to go to any length to get the kind of bodies they see oblivious of the fact that some might be manipulated.

Arasa (2017) suggested that it would be useful to assess whether the construction of body image in general and of beauty in particular may vary across students studying in secular and religious inclined private universities. While taking this suggestion into consideration, this study sought to measure *Instagram* use and perception female undergraduates have of body image.

Objective of the Study

This research examined *Instagram* use and female undergraduates' perception of body image. Specifically the study aimed to:

1) find the extent to which female undergraduates' are exposed to *Instagram* body ideal posts;
2) determine the extent to which exposure to *Instagram* body ideals affect female undergraduates' self-concept;
3) ascertain the amount of time female undergraduates spend on *Instagram*;

4)   investigate the measures female undergraduates take in altering their body image based on their exposure to *Instagram* body ideals;

Hypotheses

H₁: There is a significant influence of exposure to *Instagram* body ideals on the self-concept of female undergraduates.

H₂: There is a significant influence of amount of time spent on *Instagram* viewing body ideals and body objectification.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical framework

Social Comparison Theory

The social comparison theory plays a significant role in understanding the presence and measures taken when a person self-evaluates herself and also in linking contemporary media and beauty ideals. According to Aziz (2017), the theory was propounded by a social psychologist, Leon Festinger in 1954. This theory explains that people tend to derive a sense of self-comprehension when they compare themselves to others. By doing this, they seek the opinion of others to test for adequacy and validation. Furthermore, in an upward comparison, the self-esteem of the individual can be boosted when making comparisons with others they consider to be less fortunate. On the flip side, there is a decrease in self-esteem when compared with individuals that represent the ideal standard.

The theory is germane to this study in the sense that the dominance of the thin body and light skin beauty ideals on social media (*Instagram*) results in negative practices and attitudes among young females and this tend to lead these females to make comparisons with the images they are exposed to. Aziz (2017) asserts that most of these hyper-idealized bodies on *Instagram* are a result of some editing and fine-tuning which explains why most females will associate negative feelings when comparing their own body as they are comparing it to an unrealistic and unattainable standard.

Uses and Gratification of Social Media and True Self-Concept

Self-concept is the totality of a person's thoughts and feelings about herself and these thoughts may be different from what she is actually like. In exploring the idea of self-preservation and its implication among young women, Nguyen (2014) sought to provide a foundation for understanding

the selfie phenomenon and its relationship to perceived sense of self-worth in young women with the use of *Instagram*. Using the qualitative research design, 11 participants were sampled. The study demonstrates that social media use conflicts between external expectations and personal aspirations and causes comparison to others. The study provided a framework for future explorations of identity construction through self-presentation and social media use in a rapidly changing communication environment. The researcher suggested that it is important to continue research in this area of selfies as a category on its own due to the endless ways it is incorporated in our lives.

In a study by Apodaca (2017) on true-self and the uses and gratification of *Instagram* among 200 college-aged females, participants were asked to provide answers regarding their habits for using *Instagram*, whether their online portrayal of self, reflected their true self and determines overall life satisfaction. Findings revealed that there was less than 1% difference in usage of *Instagram* among gender. Other results of the study showed that there was a visible, positive relationship between the presentation of true-self and life satisfaction. Other important findings merged negative relationships between true-self and escape motive; and a negative relationship between the escape motive and life satisfaction. The researcher concluded that there are many other versions of self-portrayed on *Instagram* and that motive for being on the site are not straight forward and as such, more research is required.

Wagner, Aguirre and Sumner (2016) investigated the relationship between *Instagram* selfies and body image in young adult women and the relationship between actual body size, body dissatisfaction, frequency of selfies taken and number of *Instagram* selfies posted. Their findings indicated that actual body size was positively related to body dissatisfaction and negatively related to number of selfies taken and also there is a positive relationship between body dissatisfaction and the amount of selfies an individual takes.

Gorman (2015) affirmed that the media is found to be the most prominent disseminator of societal values like body ideals, size and weight which is linked to body dissatisfaction and in turn could lead to health concerns like depression, low self-esteem and eating disorders. 150 participants aged between 18 and 25 took part in the study and a quantitative non-experimental correlation design in three stages was used. Findings from the study revealed that males have lower body image than females and there is no correlation

between media usage and body image. The findings also showed that there is a negative correlation between body image and self-esteem for both males and females.

A study by Aziz (2017) investigated the relationship between social media (*Instagram*) use with body image dissatisfaction and fat phobia. Findings from the study reveals that *Instagram* as an image based platform allows for immediate access to surplus of idealized body images and the study's statistics showed that the age group of 16-25 is the most active of users.

Puglia (2017) examined the effects of social media use on body esteem in young women. The study made use of a self-report survey of 339 college women and found out that body comparison tendency was negatively correlated with body esteem and positively correlated with the motivation to use social media for body comparisons. The study also conducted an exploratory investigation of the impact of different social media platforms have on body satisfaction. With a response of 204, *Facebook* showed the largest negative correlation with body satisfaction. The study suggest that, social media is a new avenue for individuals to engage in maladaptive body comparison processes, creating a need for health communication and behaviour change interventions that address this issue, especially among vulnerable populations.

Exposure to Ideal Body Related Posts on Social Media

Body Ideal refers to the suitable body for a person which could be as a result of socio-cultural construction. In this study, it refers to the concepts of thin body and light skin that are being portrayed on Instagram as the standard of feminine beauty. The communicated beauty ideal on social media and the perceptions of young women in Sweden by Bertilsson and Gillberg (2017), aimed at understanding how women in Sweden perceive the ideal beauty communicated on social media and how they also perceive its possible effects on their body image and body dissatisfaction. Results from the survey showed that young women perceive the communicated beauty ideal on social media as unrealistic and unattainable and this was due to thinness, editing of pictures and surgery possibilities. Social media was also recognized as the main component in influencing the beauty ideal in which young women strive to achieve. This therefore affirms that social media contributes to the development of body dissatisfaction and body image disturbances.

In a study by Edmond (2014) on the promotion of skin-bleaching products in Jamaica and its effects, the study found that there was greater complexion dissatisfaction among darker skinned women, but there was not enough evidence to suggest that this was a direct result of consuming media representation.

Hayasaki (2016) in a study on effects of media exposure to beauty ideals on body image concerns among adolescent girls from Brazillian origin living in Spain examined how media messages showcasing unattainable beauty ideals affect body image dissatisfaction of adolescent girls.. Findings from the study showed that media exposure affects body image dissatisfaction of the adolescent girls by portraying societal standard of ideal woman's beauty to be light skinned and skinny, if not an hour-glassed body shape.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the survey research design. The population of this study comprised female undergraduates of Covenant, Bells and Crescent Universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. According to the Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC, 2018), there are 75 approved private universities in Nigeria and Ogun state being ranked with the highest number possesses a total number of 10 accredited private universities.

The population as sourced from the Registry department of the three schools consisted of female undergraduates totalling 6,480. The breakdown is thus: Covenant University 3336, Crescent University 389 and Bells University 2755. Two sampling techniques were adopted- the purposive sampling technique was used to pick female undergraduates that have active *Instagram* accounts. The snowball sampling technique was also adopted in the sense that a respondent with an *Instagram* account referred similar students to the researcher.

To get the sample size from the population of 6,480, the Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) formula was used. The sample after calculation was 381. The sample was then distributed proportionately across the three universities.

Crescent University 389/6480 x 100 = **6% (23)**

Covenant University 3336/6480 x 100= **51.5% (196)**

Bells University 2755/6480 x 100= **42.5% (162)**

To confirm the validity of the research instrument, the researcher adopted face validity procedure by giving a framework of the questionnaire to two

professionals in Nursing and Communication to ascertain the credibility of the instruments.

To establish the reliability of the instrument, the Cronbach's Alpha technique was utilized through the administration of 20 copies of questionnaire to a female group outside the chosen population. The following coefficients were yielded: Level of Self-Concept= 0.808, Exposure to *Instagram* body related posts= 0.966**,** Measures taken to alter body image= 0.920, Body Objectification= 0.805.

The Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) Software, version 22 was used to analyse the data retrieved from the field. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the research questions using mean and standard deviation while the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the correlation between the dependent and independent variables.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Three hundred and eighty one (381) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to female students in Crescent University (23), Covenant University (196) and Bells University (162). However, three hundred and thirty two (332) copies of the questionnaire were retrieved and three hundred and nineteen (319) were validated for further analysis (83.7% return rate).

Research Question one: To what extent are female undergraduates exposed to *Instagram* body ideal posts?

Table 1: Exposure to *Instagram* Body Ideal Posts

Items	SA F (%)	A F (%)	D F (%)	SD F (%)	U F (%)	$\bar{x}$	SD
I am exposed to the ideal female body size on *Instagram*	162 (50.8)	133 (41.7)	21 (6.6)	1 (0.3)	2 (0.6)	4.42	0.69
I am exposed to the ideal female skin complexion on *Instagram*	152 (47.5)	129 (40.4)	33 (10.3)	5 (1.6)	-	4.34	0.73
Instagram is a good source for viewing information on the ideal female skin complexion	164 (51.4)	114 (35.7)	31 (9.7)	2 (0.6)	8 (2.5)	4.33	0.87
I follow a page(s) on *Instagram* that portrays the ideal female body size	146 (45.8)	134 (42)	38 (11.9)	-	1 (0.3)	4.33	0.71
I follow a page(s) on *Instagram* that portrays the ideal female skin complexion	158 (49.5)	110 (34.5)	43 (13.5)	7 (2.2)	1 (0.3)	4.31	0.81

Instagram is a good source for viewing information on the ideal female body size	127 (39.8)	155 (48.6)	13 (4.1)	17 (5.3)	7 (2.2)	4.19	0.90
Average Mean						**4.32**	**0.78**

Source: Field Study

KEY: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, U=Undecided*Decision Rule if mean is ≤ 1.49 = Undecided; 1.5 to 2.49 = Strongly Disagree; 2.5 to 3.49 =Disagree; 3.5 to 4.49= Agree; 4.5 to 5= Strongly Agree**

Table 1 indicates that female participants agreed they were exposed to *Instagram* body ideal posts ($\bar{x}$ = 4.32). Participants agreed they were exposed to *Instagram* body ideal posts in the following ways: they were exposed to the ideal female body size on *Instagram* ($\bar{x}$ = 4.42), they were exposed to the ideal female skin complexion on *Instagram* ($\bar{x}$ = 4.34), they viewed information on the ideal female skin complexion ($\bar{x}$ = 4.33), they followed page(s) on *Instagram* that portrayed the ideal female body size ($\bar{x}$ = 4.33), they followed page(s) on *Instagram* that portray the ideal female skin complexion ($\bar{x}$ = 4.31) and they viewed information on the ideal female body size ($\bar{x}$ = 4.19). This analysis implies that female users of *Instagram* were exposed to *Instagram* body related posts. They were exposed to the ideal female body size and ideal female skin complexion on *Instagram*. They viewed information on the ideal female skin complexion, followed page(s) that portrayed the ideal female body size and skin complexion and they viewed information on the ideal female body size on *Instagram*.

Research Question Two: What is the level of female undergraduates' self-concept based on exposure to *Instagram* body ideals?

Table 2: Level of Self-Concept based on exposure to *Instagram* body ideals

Items	VH F (%)	H F (%)	L F (%)	VL F (%)	NA F (%)	$\bar{x}$	SD
I'm generally attentive to my inner feelings	185 (58)	123 (38.6)	11 (3.4)	-	-	4.55	0.56
One of the last things I do before leaving my house is look in the mirror	197 (61.8)	105 (32.9)		10 (3.1)	7 (2.2)	4.52	0.76
I think I am an attractive person	164 (51.4)	117 (36.7)	24 (7.5)	-	14 (4.4)	4.31	0.94

						$\bar{x}$	SD
I get moody when I don't get enough likes on my *Instagram* body related posts	20 (6.3)	26 (8.2)	118 (37)	155 (48.6)	-	2.72	0.86
I feel low each day people don't comment on my looks	21 (6.6)	11 (3.4)	143 (44.8)	144 (45.1)	-	2.71	0.82
I usually worry about making good impressions with my pictures on *Instagram*	18 (5.6)	20 (6.3)	128 (40.1)	153 (48)	-	2.70	0.82
I'm usually aware of my appearance	3 (0.9)	10 (3.1)	119 (37.3)	180 (56.4)	7 (2.2)	2.44	0.64
I'm self conscious about the way I look	-	10 (3.1)	123 (38.6)	179 (56.1)	7 (2.2)	2.43	0.59
Average Mean						**3.30**	**0.75**

Source: Field Study

KEY: VH=Very High, H=High, L= Low, VL=Very Low, NA=Not at all, ***Decision Rule if mean is ≤ 1.49 =Not at all; 1.5 to 2.49 = Very Low; 2.5 to 3.49 = Low; 3.5 to 4.49= High; 4.5 to 5= Very High

Table 2 indicates that generally, participants had low self-concept ($\bar{x} = 3.30$). Female participants noted they had very high self-concept when: they were generally attentive to their inner feelings ($\bar{x} = 4.55$), One of the last things they do before leaving their house is look in the mirror ($\bar{x} = 4.52$). On the other hand, they had high self-concept when: they thought they were attractive ($\bar{x} = 4.31$). However participants had low self-concept when: they got moody when they do not get enough likes on their *Instagram* body related posts ($\bar{x} = 2.72$), they felt low each day people do not comment on their looks ($\bar{x} = 2.71$) and when they worried about making good impressions with my pictures on *Instagram* ($\bar{x} = 2.70$). Female respondents had very low self-concept when: they were aware of their appearance ($\bar{x} = 2.44$), and when they were self-conscious about the way I looked ($\bar{x} = 2.43$).

Research Question three: What is the amount of time that female undergraduate spend on *Instagram*?

Table 3: Amount of Time Spent on *Instagram*

Items	VHE F (%)	HE F (%)	LE F (%)	VLE F (%)	NA F (%)	$\bar{x}$	SD
I check *Instagram* daily	178 (55.8)	108 (33.9)	30 (9.4)	3 (0.9)	-	4.45	0.70
On a typical day, I spend 5-30 minutes on *Instagram*	157 (49.2)	105 (32.9)	55 (17.2)	2 (0.6)	-	4.31	0.77

On a typical day, I spend more than 30 minutes on *Instagram*	151 (47.3)	119 (37.3)	32 (10)	17 (5.3)	-	4.27	0.85
Average Mean						4.34	0.77

Source: Field Study

KEY: VHE=Very High Extent, HE=High Extent, LE= Low Extent, VLE=Very Low Extent* **Decision Rule if mean is ≤ 1.49 = Very Low Extent; 1.5 to 2.49 = Low Extent; 2.5 to 3.49= High Extent; 3.5 to 4= Very High Extent**

Table 3 shows that participants to a very high extent spend time on *Instagram* daily ($\bar{x} = 4.34$). They agreed they checked *Instagram* daily ($\bar{x} = 4.45$), they spent 5 to 30 minutes on *Instagram* on a typical day ($\bar{x} = 4.31$) and they spent more than 30 minutes on *Instagram* on a typical day ($\bar{x} = 4.27$).

Research Question Four: What are the measures female undergraduates take to alter their body image based on exposure to *Instagram* body ideal**?**

Table 4: Measures Females have taken to Alter Body Image

Items	SA F (%)	A F (%)	D F (%)	SD F (%)	U F (%)	$\bar{x}$	SD
I consider exercising as a way of managing my weight	193 (60.5)	106 (33.2)	15 (4.7)	5 (1.6)	-	4.53	0.66
I am open to using meal plans	161 (50.5)	139 (43.6)	17 (5.3)	2 (0.6)	-	4.44	0.63
I have adjusted the quantity of my usual food intake	160 (50.2)	129 (40.4)	24 (7.5)	6 (1.9)	-	4.39	0.71
In order to alter my body size, I have taken many conscious measures	139 (43.6)	140 (43.9)	34 (10.7)	6 (1.9)	-	4.29	0.73
I am open to the use of skin lightening creams and soaps	128 (40.1)	127 (39.8)	35 (11)	18 (5.6)	11 (3.4)	4.08	1.02
I am open to taking syrups and pills for weight management	132 (41.4)	120 (37.6)	40 (12.5)	9 (2.8)	18 (5.6)	4.06	1.08
I am open to the use of lightening spa baths and injections	96 (30.1)	134 (42)	41 (12.9)	21 (6.6)	27 (8.5)	3.79	1.19
Average Mean						4.22	0.86

Source: Field Study

KEY: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, U=Undecided***Decision Rule if mean is ≤ 1.49 = Undecided; 1.5 to 2.49 = Strongly Disagree; 2.5 to 3.49 =Disagree; 3.5 to 4.49= Agree; 4.5 to 5= Strongly Agree

From Table 4, female participants agreed they had taken measures to alter their body image ($\bar{x} = 4.22$). They agreed they adopted the following ways to alter their body image: considered exercising as a way of managing their weight ($\bar{x} = 4.53$), they were open to using meal plans ($\bar{x} = 4.44$), they had adjusted the quantity of their usual food intake ($\bar{x} = 4.39$), they had taken many conscious measured to alter their body size ($\bar{x} = 4.29$), they were open to using skin lightening creams and soaps ($\bar{x} = 4.08$), they were open to taking syrups and pills for weight management ($\bar{x} = 4.06$) and they were open to the use of lightening spa baths and injections ($\bar{x} = 3.79$). This suggests that female participants altered their body image by exercising to manage their weight, by using meal plans, adjusting the quantity of food intake, by being open to the use of skin lightening creams and soaps, by being open to the use of syrups and pills for weight management and by being open to the use of lightening spa baths and injections.

Test of Hypotheses

H$_1$1: Exposure to *Instagram* body ideals significantly influences female undergraduates' self-concept

Table 5a ANOVA & Model Summary Testing Significant Influence of Exposure to *Instagram* Body Ideals on Self-Concept

Model	Sum of Squares		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	238.934	1	238.934	50.601	**0.000^b**
	Residual	1496.846	317	4.722		
	Total	1735.780	318			

R= 0.371

R Square = 0.138

Adjusted R Square = 0.135

Source: Field Study

Table 5a shows the ANOVA and model summary computations in relation to the test of significant influence of exposure to *Instagram* body ideals on self-concept.

Table 5b Simple Linear Regression Testing Significant Influence of Exposure to *Instagram* Body Ideals on Self-Concept

Construct	β	R	T	Sig.
(Constant)	30.186		34.454	.000
Exposure to *Instagram* Body Ideals	-.277	-0.371	-7.113	**.000**
Dependent Variable: **Self-Concept**				

Source: Field Study

Table 5a and Table 5b indicate that exposure to *Instagram* body ideals significantly influenced female undergraduates' self-concept (β= -0.277, r = -0.371, t= -7.113, p<0.05). The coefficients show that exposure to *Instagram* body ideals had a negative weak significant influence on female undergraduates' self-concept (r = -0.277). This implies that as exposure to *Instagram* body ideals increases, female undergraduates' self-concept reduces. Consequently exposure to *Instagram* body ideals damages female undergraduates' self-concept. Therefore, efforts should be made to reduce female undergraduates' exposure to *Instagram* body ideals in order to improve their self-concept. The model indicates that exposure to *Instagram* body ideals explained 13.8 percent (R^2 = 0.138) variation of female undergraduates' self-concept. Consequently, the hypothesis that exposure to *Instagram* body ideals significantly influence female undergraduates' self-concept was accepted.

H₁2: The amount of time spent on *Instagram* viewing body ideals significantly influence body objectification

Table 6a ANOVA & Model Summary Testing Significant Influence of Amount of Time Spent on *Instagram* on Body Objectification

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	268.118	1	268.118	89.402	**0.000ᵇ**
Residual	950.694	317	2.999		
Total	1218.812	318			
R= 0.469					
R Square = 0.220					
Adjusted R Square = 0.218					

Source: Field Study

Table 6a shows the ANOVA and model summary computations in relation to the test of significant influence of amount of time spent on *Instagram* on body objectification.

Table 6b Simple Linear Regression Testing Significant Influence of Amount of Time Spent on *Instagram* on Body Objectification

Construct	B	R	T	Sig.
(Constant)	7.188		10.844	.000
Time Spent on *Instagram*	.609	.469	9.455	**0.000**
Dependent Variable: Body Objectification				

Source: Field Study

Table 6a and Table 6b show that amount of time spent on *Instagram* viewing body ideals significantly influenced body objectification (β= 0.609, r = 0.469, t= 9.455, p<0.05). The coefficients show that time spent on *Instagram* viewing body ideals had a positive weak significant influence on body objectification (r = 0.469); which suggests that as amount of time spent on *Instagram* viewing body ideals increases, body objectification would also increase. Therefore, one of the ways of reducing body objectification among female undergraduates is to reduce the amount of time spent on *Instagram* viewing body ideals. The model indicates that amount of time spent on *Instagram* viewing body ideals explained 22 percent ($R^2 = 0.220$) variation of female undergraduates' body objectification. Therefore, the hypothesis that the amount of time spent on *Instagram* viewing body ideals significantly influence body objectification was accepted.

Discussion of Findings

This study sought to look at female undergraduates' use of *Instagram* and the societal construction of beauty ideals like light skin and a thin body and how this affects their body image. It was discovered that the sampled female undergraduates used *Instagram* daily, and spent over 30 minutes on a typical day. It was also discovered that female undergraduates altered their body image and this could be associated to their exposure to *Instagram* body related posts as established in the study. Altering of the body is linked to having a low self-concept; findings show it might be as a result of the significant influence that exposure to *Instagram* body ideals had on female

undergraduates' self-concept (β= -0.277, r = -0.371, t= -7.113, p<0.05). In the test of hypotheses, the coefficients showed that exposure to *Instagram* body ideals had a negative weak significant influence on female undergraduates' self-concept (r = -0.371); which implied that increased exposure to *Instagram* body ideals among female undergraduates, reduced their self-concept.

The findings of Gorman (2015) are in agreement in the sense that there is a negative correlation between body image and self-esteem. Similarly, Dignard (2017) discovered that appearance comparisons to a greater extent had effect on viewers' self-concept and Jafari (2016) further asserted that exposure to objectifying social media images may negatively affect females at different levels, given that these images are likely to increase body dissatisfaction. The Social Identification Model also predicts the findings of this study by noting that social media portrayal of what an ideal female body should look like has the power to influence the body image of female social media users. With a view from the social identity model, the saliency of the thin body and light skin ideal can cause an individual to acknowledge or get convinced that, that is who and how they should be rather than who they really are, and once this notion is accepted by the individual, such users take actions to achieving these looks in order to be socially accepted.

In addition, this finding is not surprising because amount of time spent on *Instagram* viewing body ideals significantly influenced body objectification (β= 0.609, r = 0.469, t= 9.455, p<0.05); hence, as amount of time spent on *Instagram* viewing body ideals increased, body objectification also increased. Therefore, the study demonstrated that exposure to *Instagram* body ideals reduced female undergraduates' self-concept and increased body objectification. This led to female undergraduates having a sour mood when they did not get enough likes on their *Instagram* body related posts and felt low when their pictures are not commented on positively. The findings of this study can be corroborated by Gorman (2015) asserting that the media plays a huge role in conveying societal accepted values regarding body size and weight and this can be linked to issues of body dissatisfaction and health-related concerns. Furthermore, too much exposure to social media could negatively affect perception of body image as found by Behan (2015) who asserted that negative body image is as a result of upward social comparison engagement and also depending on the social network platforms. Belinska (2018) in her study also found that the images that received the highest likes

from her followers were those that revealed the ideal and acceptable woman's body that they represented.

Therefore, it is not surprising that low self-concept which occurred to female undergraduates as a result of exposure to *Instagram* body posts made female undergraduates to alter their body image by seeking to lose weight through exercising, portion control and also enhancing their skin colour with the use of skin lightening creams and soaps and other procedures. Hence, the participants of this study being females might have influenced the results of altering body image as argued by Eskrom and Maier (2017) where it was discovered that gender had an effect on the correlation between body dissatisfaction and posting of fitness photos on *Instagram*. Norton (2017) similarly found that social media plays an important role in influencing body dissatisfaction; while females experience body image dissatisfaction more.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study revealed that most female students who are exposed to images and messages on body ideals could not resist the urge to follow female body ideal pages on *Instagram*, even though it sometimes makes them unhappy especially if their body features do not meet the ideals they view.

The study recommends that students who are experiencing body image dissatisfaction as a result of low self-concept can speak to a psychologist to avoid taking repercussive actions or measures. Furthermore, female *Instagram* users can quit following pages that promote these ideals and report pages that constantly invade their timelines with their posts.

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