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### Full Length Research Paper

## A Study on Body Image In Relation To Social Media Use and Fear of Negative Evaluation

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### ARTICLE DETAILS

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### ABSTRACT

In this digital world, it has grown to be very difficult for an individual to appreciate their body as it is. One of the major reasons for the same is the use of social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram etc. where a perfect ideal life is seen. Thin figures are idealized for females and strong masculine bodies for the male audience. All this leads to a negative body image and a fear of negative evaluation whenever the reality is displayed to the world of social media. The purpose of this study was to assess social media use and Fear of negative evaluation as predictors of Body Image among young adults. The sample consists of 200 adults (males=100, females=100) using Brief Fear of Negative Evaluations Scale, Body Appreciation scale and Social Media Use Scale in order to understand how fear of negative evaluation and use of social media decreases body appreciation. The results indicate that there is a negative correlation amongst body image and fear of negative evaluation. The results also there are a difference between body image and fear of negative evaluation in males and females. Thus, there is a need for body positive social media content and counseling session for adults in order for them to increase body appreciation. It is also important for social media to be a safe and accepting space in order to decrease fear of negative evaluation.

### 1. Introduction

Recently, social media has been popular among all age groups, especially young people. Facebook, Snapchat, and Instagram may be accessed from any device. Most individuals use it to get information and talk to friends and relatives (Bergagna et al. 2018). Beauty and beauty are valued. Commonly, these traits are linked to pleasure, intellect, and success (Rennels, 2021). This mentality is common in most post-industrial societies, and the obsession with appearance may be greater than ever. The "appearance culture" is the constant reminder of how we should and shouldn't look (Jones et al., 2004). This culture applies constant pressure to individuals and society. This is evident in the many ways to change our appearance. Exercise, dieting, cosmetic treatments, liposuction, muscle-building supplements, plastic surgery, and other operations are options. The message is destructive and clear: if you're not attractive, you're not trying hard enough. In this context, a negative body image is continuous unpleasant thoughts and sentiments regarding one's body.

These beliefs are so common that they are normative (Tantleff-Dunn et al., 2004). Our body image and attractiveness worries start early in life. Children as early as five years old have indicated concerns about their size and a desire to develop (Smolak, 2001). This dread may be a sign of children's desire to grow up and become "big kids" like them. By six, there is evidence that youngsters are beginning to worry about weight and form like adolescents and adults (Smolak, 2001). The body influences self-identity more in early adolescence than in previous years.

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Psychological difficulties might result from excessive body image worry. The process of establishing negative body image thoughts, esteem, and admiration is characterized by a substantial discrepancy between one's body and desired self. Body image concerns and eating disorders have increased worldwide (Bell & Dittmar, 2011; Strayer et al., 2012). Longitudinal study suggests this number may climb. Children learn from family, school, friends, and the media that being overweight is "bad" and being small is "good". Media influences people to follow and adopt legendary ideas in their daily life. It often under represents overweight and obese characters while over representing thin models and performers (Grabe et al.2008). Teens are pressured by the media, classmates, environmental and social influences, and other factors to have a perfect body like those in the media (Bell et al., 2011). Not everyone exposed to idealized media develops negative body image or clinically recognized eating problems. Over the past few years, social media has changed how young adults communicate, view themselves, and feel about themselves. Social media use can harm body image, self-esteem, and social anxiety. However, social media offers networking, communication, and knowledge exchange.

This study examines the complex relationship between social media use and mental health in young people. Instagram, Facebook, and others have changed how people communicate and express themselves visually. Users might create an idealized online identity by emphasizing only a few positive aspects of their lives. An individual's subjective assessment of their looks is called "body image". For positive and negative reasons, social media influences body image. If exposed to well selected and idealized beauty photos, a person may acquire body dissatisfaction and an erroneous self-image. This is theoretically possible. These implications are especially dangerous for young adults who are still discovering themselves. This is because young adults are still discovering themselves. Young adults are more likely to be affected by exposure.

### *1.1 Social Media and Its Impact*

The term "social media" refers to a social environment that involves peer and media interaction. People call that "social media." The atmosphere is interactive, attractive, and engaging (Auxier et al.2021). All of these are environmental traits. However, the quantity of time young people spend in this environment is rising at a worrying rate. Youth spend an average of three hours a day on social media (Mingoia,2019). Social media use decreases with age (Hayes et al. 2015). This supported their hypothesis. The verdict was positive. Social media can help with self-expression, networking, and hobby pursuit (Weinstein, 2018). These are just few benefits. However, more research links heavy social media use to poorer mental health in teens. Yes, this happens. This paper presents data from several cross-sectional and longitudinal studies (Kelly et al., 2018; Booker et al., 2018; Coyne et al., 2020; Orben, 2019; Viner, 2019). However, just a few adult studies have been done. Since last year, well-being research has focused on how unsatisfied an individual is with their appearance.

### *1.2 Body Image*

Body image can be defined by an individual's thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about their body (Grogan,1999). A person's body image depends on how they see themselves. It is common to use "body dissatisfaction" to characterize people's negative body image. This is routine. Grogan emphasizes the importance of positive body image perspectives in improving physical and mental health (Grogan,1999). People who are unhappy with their body may have both good and terrible physical health effects. Unsatisfied with their bodies either encourage themselves to improve and exercise or avoid it since they are embarrassed to exercise in public (Grogan, 2008). A study found that women are more likely to try for a slimmer body shape due to media and advertising promoting a certain body image. This increases body dissatisfaction (Johansson et al.2005). A survey indicated that men value physical appearance more than women when choosing a mate. Because men value physical attractiveness more than women, this inclination may be evolutionary. Women value beauty less (Bhogal et al.2021). Social media has a stronger impact on body image and self-esteem concerns. These evaluations are called "self-esteem," and the term "self-esteem" refers to them. Social media users can gather likes, comments, and followers to gauge their popularity. Because of this, social media platforms foster social comparison and identification. On the other hand, overusing social media to obtain acceptance may damage self-esteem. Because people are more sensitive to criticism or virtual approval, this tendency has occurred. The constant need for acceptance and the pressure to have a good reputation online can lead to feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and low self-esteem in young people.

These two factors can cause these feelings. In India, physical shape and weight are intimately linked to social life and marriage, especially for girls. Urban adolescents are more aware of their body image and engage in dietary actions to lose weight than their rural counterparts. Fashion displays and beauty contests are widespread at college events and cultural activities in major cities. This prevalence makes students more self-conscious about their appearance (Hargreaves et al., 2004). In contrast, rural teenagers lack diet and lifestyle awareness. Ignorance and diet fallacies cause malnutrition. Malnutrition, whether underweight or overweight, causes stress in teenagers, according to study. Ozmen et al. (2007); Kim (2009). Students also face melancholy and anxiety due to body image worries and fear of being judged. Female Indian adolescents generally choose nutrition over exercise to control their weight (Klesges et al.,1987). Indian teens are gradually developing body image problems. To elaborate, this trend is caused by societal and psychological reasons. The prevalence of social media and

idealized body images shape adolescents' body image. Constant comparison distorts body image, contributing to body image issues. Social rejection and physical appearance judgment intensify these issues. Indian society values physical beauty as a sign of success and acceptance, which heightens adolescents' concerns. According to Klesges et al. (1987), female adolescents prefer diets to exercise. Social standards and gender roles may gently discourage women from exercising or misrepresent the effects of exercise on the female body. Dieting to lose weight ignores the need of a balanced diet and physical health, which can lead to nutritional shortages and other health issues. As body image concerns rise among Indian adolescents, comprehensive solutions like body positivity education, healthy lifestyle choices, and educational support networks are needed to address them. Such interventions could reduce adolescent psychological harm and build a more welcoming society. Asian countries, particularly India, are conducting study on this issue and its causes (Cummins & Lehman, 2007), however the evidence is lacking. India's few studies have not examined how positive and negative body image views affect adolescents' mental health. Since body image studies typically combine with eating disorder and obsessive-compulsive disorder research, understanding teenage mental health is crucial. Negative body image or body image disturbance defines body dysmorphic disorder, which affects men and women. A thorough treatment plan is needed for those at risk of psychiatric illnesses induced by negative body image, as mental health experts have not given enough attention to this area.

### *1.3 Fear of Negative Evaluations*

FNE, a continuous dread of being poorly evaluated by others, is a hallmark of social anxiety disorder, according to psychology specialists. This illness is known to cause severe anguish and everyday functional impairment. The cognitive models suggest that biased information processing may cause this dread, especially when one expects a frightening occurrence (Clark & McManus, 2002). Social anxiety has been linked to maladaptive social assessments, which involve selective recollection of negative self-information, especially before a frightening incident. (Rapee, Heimberg, 1997). Social disruption is continuously occurring. From the bottom of this spectrum, there is no social anxiety; from the middle, there is a strong desire to be positively evaluated; and from the top, social anxiety is closely related to social circumstance or engagement. Its tendency to avoid action is one of its traits. The highest diagnostic criteria for social anxiety disorder or social phobia are these. These people are suitable for the sickness. Social anxiety sufferers are known to have a variety of information processing biases that cause worry. Social anxiety persists due to fear and low self-esteem in vicious cycles. Clark & McManus (2002); Morrison & Heimberg (2013). Social anxiety persists due to these factors. Consider how social media use affects body image and mental health in the digital age. Social media has increased image exposure, which can affect body satisfaction and lead to eating disorders, especially in women. This study examined how social media pictures affect body image constructions and offered eating disorder prevention techniques. Given social media's influence on cultural and beauty standards, it's important to study how it affects body image and self-esteem.

This study shows how social media harms body image, especially in vulnerable groups like teens and young adults. Promoting media literacy and highlighting the negative impacts of social media on body image can help people navigate these platforms and preserve their mental health. In conclusion, understanding how social media affects body image and mental health is vital in the digital age. We can help people create a positive self-image and protect their mental health by raising awareness of social media's negative impacts on body image and supporting healthy media usage. People can become more media savvy, improve their self-image, and reduce the negative psychological effects of social media use with therapies and prevention. This study can also affect internet policies and guidelines that promote responsible use. These actions can improve online safety and mental wellness. The causes of social media addiction are unknown, despite growing research on its pros and cons. This study studied numerous aspects that may contribute to social media addiction, body image, and fear of bad appraisal.

### *1.4 Objective:*

*To assess Social Media Use and Fear of Negative Evaluations as a predictor of Body Image among Young Adults*

## **2. Method.**

### *2.1 Sample*

Participants were selected using a random sampling method from the Robust World NGO. Uttarakhand is a state of India located in northwestern region. 200 individuals who included 100 males and 100 females who fell under the age range of 20 to 24 years old (young adults) considering the population of the city in preferred range of participants required for the study were selected using purposive sampling method for this research and were ethnically diversified.

### *2.2 Research design*

Causal Comparative/Quasi Experiment Design was used in the present study. Causal comparative research is a methodology used to identify causal relationships between independent variables and dependent variables. Researchers can study cause and effect in retrospect. This can help identify the effects or causes of differences that already exist between different groups of people.

2.3 Description of tools

2.3.1 Body Appreciation Scale-2 (Tylka, 2005)

Considered a measure of positive body image, the 13-item Body Appreciation Scale (BAS; Avalos, Tylka, & Wood-Barcalow, 2005) assesses people's acceptance, positive opinion, and respect for their bodies. Although the BAS has received psychometric support, we have improved it by revising the wording of some BAS items (removing gendered versions and body dissatisfaction language) and developing additional items based on research on positive body image. Across three studies, we examined reformulated, newly developed, and retained items to determine their psychometric properties in a university and online community sample (Amazon Mechanical Turk) of 820 women and 767 men. After exploratory factor analysis, 10 items (original 5 BAS items) were retained. Confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the unidimensionality and invariance of the BAS-2 across gender and sample type. Internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and construct (convergent, incremental, and discriminant) validity were supported. BAS-2 is a psychometrically sound measure of positive body image suitable for research and clinical use.

2.3.2 Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation by Leary

The Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation (BFNE; Leary 1983) scale [a shortened version of the Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE; Watson and Friend 1969) scale] assesses fear and anxiety about being negatively evaluated by others. Fear of negative evaluation is assumed to be a core feature of social anxiety disorder (Haikal and Hong 2010; Heimberg et al. 2010), and the BFNE is frequently used in the study of disorders and problems that may have social relevance to social anxiety disorder. It's possible. Assessment component. For example, BFNE has been linked to social anxiety in populations with eating disorders (e.g., Gilbert and Meyer, 2005; Levinson and Rodebaugh, 2012), schizophrenia (Blanchard et al., 1998), and alcohol problems (Lewis and Meyer, 2012). Used to measure the sides. O... Neill 2000), depression (O' Connor et al. 2002), body dysmorphic disorder (Zimmerman and Mattia 1998), and patients undergoing bariatric surgery (Adams et al. 2011). In summary, there are many studies demonstrating the broad clinical and research utility of BFNE.

2.3.3 Social Media Use Scale (Tuck, A.B, & Thompson, R.J,2024)

Social Media Use Scale is a response to a large body of research that has produced conflicting and often conflicting results regarding the impact of social media use on psychological well-being Because of these conflicting results, experts are advocating for research to examine social media use more closely. said co-author Renee J. Thompson, assistant professor of psychological and brain sciences and director of the Institute for Emotion and Mental Health.

2.4 Procedure

The aim of this investigation is to study Body Image in relation to Social Media Use and Fear of Negative Evaluation among the young adult population of Uttarakhand. Relevant literature such as Factors affection body image perception, social media addiction and social media consciousness (Sevim Cimke et al. 2023) were evaluated to provide evidence for the current study. A sample of 200 participants (100 male and 100 female) was taken from the Uttarakhand state. The participants were later divided into two categories on the basis of their gender. To gather the data three assessment tools were used named The Social media use scale (SMUS), Body Appreciation Scale (BAS-2) and Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation (BFNE). To gather required data offline method using the assessment tool in printed and physical format along with the consent of the participant and only those participants who provided their consent were allowed to be the part of this study. After collecting the required data, statistical analysis was performed and means, median, mode standard deviation, standard error, t-test and multiple regressions and correlation was found out between sample's scores of Bodys Image, Social Media Use and Fear of Negative Evaluation.

2.5 Variables

Independent Variables-Social Media Use and Fear of Negative Evaluations were taken as independent variables.

Dependent Variables- Body Image was taken as dependent variable.

3. Results & discussion

Table 1. Group statistics for social media use, Body Image and Fear of Negative evaluation

	Social Media Use	Fear of Negative Evaluation	Body Image	Gender
Valid	200	200	200	200
Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean	80.80	34.69	42.96	
Std. Error of Mean	.553	.347	.403	
Median	81.45 <sup>a</sup>	34.65 <sup>a</sup>	42.63 <sup>a</sup>	
Mode	82	33	39	

<b>Std. Deviation</b>	7.826	4.907	5.699
<b>Variance</b>	61.246	24.074	32.481
<b>Skewness</b>	-.281	-.044	-.104
<b>Std. Error of Skewness</b>	.172	.172	.172
<b>Kurtosis</b>	-.122	-.368	-.618
<b>Std. Error of Kurtosis</b>	.342	.342	.342
<b>Range</b>	39	24	28
<b>Minimum</b>	60	22	27

This table indicates the differences between the descriptive statistics for all the three variables i.e. Social Media Use, Body Image and Fear of negative evaluation. All the variables are skewed towards left which indicates that the mean is smaller than the mode for all variables. High variance is seen for social media whereas low variance is seen for body image and fear of negative evaluation. The kurtosis is also negative which is platykurtic, which indicates more values are located near the mean and less values are located near the tails of the curve.

**Table 2.** Correlation between Body Image, Fear of Negative Evaluation and Social Media Use.

		<b>Body Image</b>	<b>Fear of negative evaluations</b>	<b>Social media use</b>
<b>Body Image</b>	Pearson Coefficient	1		
<b>Fear of Negative evaluation</b>		-.448**	1	
<b>Social media use</b>	Pearson Coefficient	.111	-.135	1

The correlation coefficient (r) value between body image and fear of negative evaluation is 0.448 which shows a moderate negative association between both the variables. The P value is < 0.01 which means the relationship is statistically significant. So we can say that increase in the level of fear of negative evaluation can decrease body appreciation. There is negligible correlation between social media and body image. \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level ( 2-tailed)

**Table 3.** Independent samples t-test of body image, fear of negative evaluation and social media use among males and females

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Male</b>		<b>Female</b>		<b>T</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>95% CL</b>	
	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>			<b>LL</b>	<b>UL</b>
<b>SMU</b>	79.86	7.833	81.74	7.744	-1.707	0.089	-4.052	0.292
<b>FNE</b>	36.94	3.889	32.44	4.800	7.284	0.00	3.282	5.718
<b>BI</b>	41.15	4.359	44.77	6.299	-4.726	0.00	-5.132	-2.108

An independent samples t test was conducted to test the hypothesis that variable body image, fear of negative evaluation and social media use between male and female student differ significantly or not. The group statistics table shows the difference of mean value for male and females. As it is evident from the 95% confidence Interval of the difference Values for upper and lower limit for social media use are positive and negative i.e. Lower (-4.052) and upper (0.292) for males and females. Body image and fear of negative evaluations have significant difference for males and females. It is evident from the 95% confidence Interval of the difference Values for upper and lower limit for fear of negative evaluation are positive i.e. Lower (3.282) and upper (5.718) for males and females. Similarly, for body image it is evident from the 95% confidence Interval of the difference Values for upper and lower limit for fear of negative evaluation are positive i.e. Lower (5.132) and upper (2.108) for males and females.

**Table 4** Modal summary for dependent and independent variables

<b>Model</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	<b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b>	<b>Durbin-Watson</b>
<b>1</b>	.451 <sup>a</sup>	.204	.196	5.112	1.488

As indicated in table 5 we can see that R<sup>2</sup> value is 0.204 which means that the independent variables i.e Fear of negative evaluation and social media use cause 20.4% change in the Social Media Use and Constant is Body Image.

**Table 5.** ANOVA results for body image, fear of negative evaluations and social media use.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1316.210	2	658.105	25.186	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	5147.470	197	26.129		
	Total	6463.680	199			

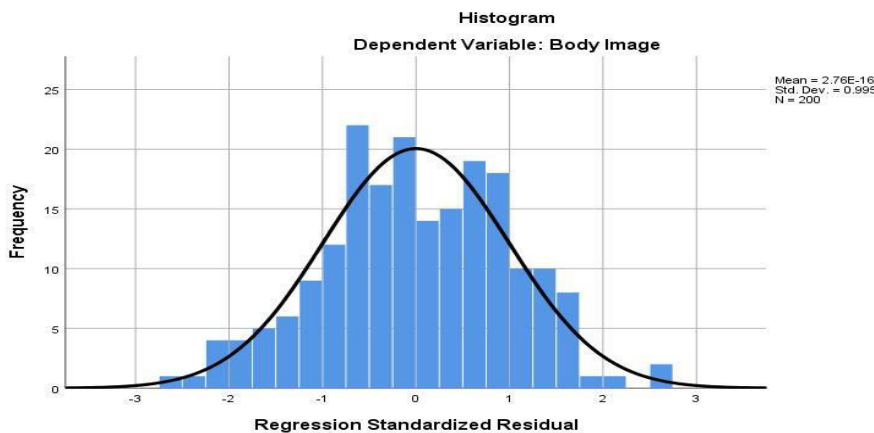
The table no 6, anova results shows that p-value is 0.00 which is less than 0.05, hence we say that there is a significant relationship between our independent variables i.e social media use and fear of negative evaluation and the dependent variable i.e Body Image.

**Table 6 .** Coefficients results for social media use, body image and fear of negative evaluations.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Si g.	95.0% Confidence Interval B		Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Err				Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Toler	VI F
<b>(Constant)</b>	57.7	4.8		11.8	.00	48.16	67.3		
<b>Social Media Use</b>	.03	.04	.051	.79	.43	-.05	.12	.982	1
<b>Fear of Negative Evaluation</b>	-.51	.07	-.44	-6.8	.00	-.66	-.36	.982	1.

a. Dependent Variable: Body Image

As indicated in the table the beta value is 0.51, which means that the change in independent variable 1 i.e social media use by one unit will bring about the change in the dependent variable Body image by 0.51 unit. The beta value is positive which indicates positive relationship between body image and social media use. Furthermore, the beta value is -0.442, which means that the change in independent variable 1 i.e social media use by one unit will bring about the change in the dependent variable i.e Body image by -0,442 unit. The beta value is negative which indicates negative relationship between body appreciation and fear of negative evaluation.



**Fig 1.** Histogram For Regression Residual and Its Frequency

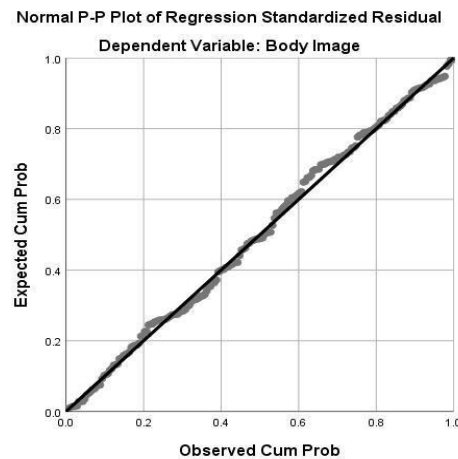
**4. Discussion**

After the analysis of results, it was found that Social Media Use and Fear of Negative Evaluation are good predictors of Body Image. The data obtained shows that there is a significant relationship between body image and fear of negative evaluation. A negative moderate correlation between Body Image and Fear of Negative Evaluation was observed. This negative moderate correlation indicates that an increase in fear of negative evaluation decreases body appreciation and increases negative body image. A less significant correlation of body image and social media was found in males or females.

Thus, Ha1 is accepted, which indicates that there is a significant relationship between Body Image and its correlates among young adults. Similar results were found in a study, suggesting that emerging adults are considered particularly vulnerable to body image dissatisfaction and social anxiety. These issues have been found to lead to negative outcomes, including compromised social adjustment and well-being. While social anxiety is often linked to a fear of negative evaluation, this aspect

is not frequently considered in studies of body image and its impact on social anxiety. This study aimed to fill this gap by examining the role of fear of negative evaluation in the relationship between body image dissatisfaction and social anxiety.

The main hypothesis was confirmed: there were positive associations between body image dissatisfaction, fear of negative evaluation, and social anxiety. Furthermore, fear of negative evaluation was found to mediate the connection between body image dissatisfaction and social anxiety (Pawjit, 2017). The results were found to indicate that issues related to Body Image and Fear of Negative Evaluation are more significant in females than males. It was observed that women are more fearful of being negatively evaluated by society and more conscious about their body image than males. Similar results were also found in a study that was conducted to examine the relationship between body abnormalities and body image. Girls reported a significantly lower body image compared to boys, and this lower body image was associated with overweight and heaviness in both men and women.



**Fig 2.** Plot of regression

The interaction with gender revealed that for boys, short stature was negatively associated with body image, while for girls, being underweight was positively associated with body image. (Vilhjalmsson et al., 2012) The findings of the study shed light on the differences in how body image and fear of negative evaluation are experienced by males and females. The results suggest that societal norms and pressures may contribute to women feeling more anxious about their appearance and receiving negative evaluations. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of considering gender differences when examining body image issues, as the findings indicate that certain body types may be perceived differently based on gender. Overall, the research emphasizes the need for further exploration and understanding of the factors that influence body image perceptions in both men and women.

The results also indicated that Social Media use and Fear of Negative Evaluation have a significant impact on body image. It was found that Social Media Use and Fear of Negative Evaluation have around 20.4% impact on Body Image. Similar results were found in a study which proposed the term "digitized dysmorphia" in recent literature to define the gap between social media digitalized beauty standards and females' body image. It is suggested that apps like Instagram have contributed to the increase in dysmorphic disorders among young women. In the present paper, the relationship between the use of Instagram, the internalization of beauty standards, the social pressure to adhere to them, and the anxiety towards body image is analyzed in a sample of high school students (N= 621, aged 13 to 21, 61% females) in Italy. Results suggest that adolescents who edit their pictures and then upload them online have internalized the stereotype of beauty proposed by Instagram and feel more anxious and uncomfortable with their body image. They also feel more pressure to uphold to the social media standards. These results apply not only to female adolescents, as seen in previous studies, but also to males. Social and clinical issues are discussed. (Valeria Verrastro 2015).

## 5. Conclusion

The major findings indicated that Social Media Use and Fear of Negative Evaluation were evaluated as predictors of body image. SMU and FNE are correlates of BI and fear of negative evaluation had a great impact on an individual's body image and can decrease an individual's sense of body appreciation. It was also indicated that females have lower body appreciation and more fear of negative evaluation than males. Social media and fear of negative evaluation has a significant impact on body image. It is important for social media users to make the platform a more accepting space and show real content rather than filtered aspects of their life in order to increase body appreciation and have a decreased fear of negative evaluation.

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