Research Square

Preprints are preliminary reports that have not undergone peer review.
They should not be considered conclusive, used to inform clinical practice,
or referenced by the media as validated information.

# The Impact of Social Media on Youth Body Image Dissatisfaction: A Mixed-Methods Study

**Amaechi Victor Obinwanne**

victoramaechi@my.uopeople.edu

University of the People

**Alhassan Moses Ojochegbe**

Al-Farabi Kazakh National University

**Research Article**

**Keywords:** social media, body image dissatisfaction, youth, mental health, social comparison, media literacy, body positivity, Instagram, Facebook, mixed-methods

**Posted Date:** August 21st, 2025

**DOI:** https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-7321622/v1

**License:** This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.
Read Full License

**Additional Declarations:** No competing interests reported.

# Abstract

**Background**: The popularity of social media among the youths raises issues about its effects on body image dissatisfaction that may reduce self-esteem. The paper examines the connection between social media use and body image to guide the intervention of healthy self-perception.

**Methods**: A quantitative approach with qualitative data utilized a survey of 55 participants (aged 18+) from diverse backgrounds to assess social media usage and body image perceptions. Focus groups and Qualitative observations were given through interviews. Descriptive statistics, t-tests and regression analysis were conducted analyzing the quantitative data. Thematic analysis was done on qualitative data analysis that helped them to determine key themes.

**Results**: The vast majority of participants belonged to the age group of 18-24 (40.7%), with 31.5% aged 25-34, 20.4% aged 35-44, 5.6% aged 45-54, and 1.9% aged 55 and above, with 52.7% male and 47.3% female, and used Facebook 32.7%, Instagram 30.9%, TikTok 12.7%, Twitter 9.1%, Snapchat 1.8%, and Other 12.7%. The satisfaction (5-point scale) with body image reflected 7.3% Very Dissatisfied, 10.9% Dissatisfied, 20% Neutral, 21.8% Satisfied, and 40% Very Satisfied with a majority 61.8% reporting Satisfied or Very Satisfied. Regression analysis revealed that higher social media use was associated with lower body image satisfaction ($p < 0.05$). Unrealistic Qualitative themes also concentrated on topics such as Real-life experiences beauty ideals and social comparison and coping mechanisms such as social media restriction and subscribing to body-positive accounts.

**Conclusions**: The use of social media is related to dissatisfaction with body image among young people, being motivated by image and comparison. Media should be encouraged by interventions literacy beliefs and different body representations. There is a need to decrease the adverse mental health impact of social media by utilizing public health measures.

**Registration of trial**: N/A, since this is the study also failed to report the outcomes of health care intervention.


# Background

The popular use of social media has changed the very nature of the way the youths socialize with the world, offering them forums of connectivity, empowerment and information exchange. This more active use, however, has brought some important questions as to the consequence of this on mental health, especially body image dissatisfaction in adolescents and young adults. Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok are examples of social media, which are usually flooded with pictures implying unrealistic body ideals that may lead to poor self-image, low self-worth, and mental health complications, such as anxiety, depression, and eating disorders (Thompson & Heinberg, 1999). The proposed study will examine the correlation between the use of social media and development of body image dissatisfaction in youths with the aim of ascertaining the level at which social media contributes to negative body image perceptions and to determine some of the main factors involved.

The literature on the topic shows how social media usage and body image issues have complicated relationships. Vuong et al. (2021) showed that exposure to social media and especially to the images of ideally thin and muscular people leads to body dissatisfaction in adolescents but only with the internalization of thin and muscular ideals. In the same way, Fardouly et al. (2015) discovered that social comparisons on social media such as Facebook are related to body image concerns and lower mood in young women. Tiggemann et al. (2014) also revealed the connection between the exposure to idealized images on social media and the increase in body dissatisfaction in adolescent girls, especially due to the culture of comparison. Theoretical points of departure were presented by Perloff (2014), who proposed a self-objectification and social comparison theory to describe the impact of social media in enhancing body dissatisfaction. Moreover, Castellanos and Steins (2023) have addressed the issue of how some form of social media content and individual differences affect body image perceptions, implying the necessity of studies that focus on identifying the specific relationship between them (Holland & Tiggemann, 2016). It was emphasized that these issues are relevant in vulnerable communities, and, more broadly, impact public health (Sagrera et al., 2022).

It is imperative that this study be conducted to fill such gaps in literature, especially the one expressing the need to understand how the use of different social media platforms, types of content, and patterns of content consumption may lead to body image dissatisfaction among the youth (Bryman, 2016). This study will address the useful and harmful roles of social media in addition to looking at possible moderating factors like the length of use and predisposition to harmful conduct in the quest to come up with practical lessons. The research question that will guide this study is: How does the use of social media impact on body image dissatisfaction among the youths? The research is likely to influence public health, educational, and clinical practices by providing measures that should minimize the negative outcomes of social media exposure and facilitate healthier self-perception among youths of today. The work is valuable to the field as it proposes a mixed methods study to improve insight into a rather urgent public health concern, which has the potential to contribute to the creation of healthier online culture and the improvement of the mental state of the youth (Cohen et al., 2018).

# Methods

Aim, Design, and Setting

The proposed study focuses on examining the role of social media use in body image dissatisfaction among young people, interested in determining the relevant factors causing it, and developing recommendations regarding intervention strategies. Mixed method design and methodology were used where both qualitative and quantitative methods were combined to present a complete picture regarding the research question. The research was based on the urban and suburban environment in the United States and Kazakhstan, where adolescents and young adults were used as a representative sample to include as many ideas as possible and opinions about the influence of social media on body image.

Participants

The researchers included the group of teenagers (18 or more years), who had different socioeconomic backgrounds, who lived either in the cities or suburbs. A purposive sampling technology was employed to make sure that various ages, genders, and the extent of social media participation are included. 55 participants were recruited, and the sample included 52.7% male and 47.3% female, with 40.7% of participants aged 18-24 years, 31.5% aged 25-34 years, 20.4% aged 35-44 years, 5.6% aged 45-54 years, and 1.9% aged 55 and above. According to Patton (2014), this strategy makes the findings more diverse and generalized, as it consists of various perspectives.

Data Collection Processes

The collection of the data was done both qualitative and quantitative. In the case of qualitative data an in-depth interview and focus group were performed to discuss the personal experience and perception of the participants towards the effects of social media on body image. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), these techniques are suitable in discovering social and psychological processes. The quantitative information was collected by using the survey distributed among the participants and aimed to provide indications of social media usage, body image perceptions, and variables. Such questions were included in the survey:

• How many hours a day do you spend on social media?

• Which kind of media do you communicate with most often on social media (photos, videos, posts)?

• How many times do you compare yourself to others according to what you can see on social sites?

How unsatisfied with your body are you following the use of social media? The answers to these questions are sought to determine the relationship between social media use and body image issues. There was no such intervention or proprietary brand in the study.

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics, t-tests, and regression analysis were utilized to analyze quantitative statistics. Demographic data about the participants, social media usage, and satisfaction levels with their body image were summarized by descriptive statistics, whereby the counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviations were reported. T-tests were adapted in a comparison of the means of body image clearly being satisfied among the groups of demographics like gender and age. According to Callaghan and Bee (2018), the analysis of regression was used to analyze the relationships between the frequency of using social media (independent variable) and satisfaction of body image (dependent variable). It was qualitative data research that required and received a thematic analysis to indicate common themes and patterns, which were defined by Braun and Clarke (2006), as well as Brooks, Bee, and Rogers (2018). In other instances, quantization of qualitative data was done so that analysis may be done by using the method of mixed-methods. The authors did not complete power calculation because of how exploratory their research is in the context of the sample size.

Ethical Considerations

During the study, the need for ethics approval was waived by University of People, Pasadena, California, USA Ethical Committee. The consent of the participants were sought via the google survey form as they were briefed on the purpose of the study, including its procedures and risks and benefits of the study, and the participation in it was voluntary, and the participant could withdraw it at any time without penalties, in accordance with the recommendations of the American Psychological Association (2017). All participants provided an informed consent which was not necessary to have the consent of the guardian because all were 18 years of age and above. To guarantee their privacy and confidentiality, the data were anonymized and stored securely so that only a research team had access to them, as Babbie (2016) advice. During this study, there was no use of any animal or human tissue. Respect for academic integrity was achieved by reporting and citing sources accurately.

# Results

The research examined the association between social media use and body image across 55 participants about the age of 18 and above and was based on a mixed-method. Results are given below, including quantitative and qualitative results, where statistical results are presented in the text and summarized in tables.

Quantitative Findings

**Distribution of Most Used Social Media Platform:**

The distribution of the need of the use of social media differed a lot among the participants, with Facebook being the most used platform, as shown in **Figure 1** below in a pie chart representation of the preferred social media platforms in 55 participants, whereby, 32.7% of participants (n=18), used Facebook, 30.9% of participants (n=17) used Instagram, 12.7% of participants (n=7) used TikTok, 9.1% of participants (n=5) used Twitter, 1.8% (n=1) used Snapchat, and 12.7% (n=7) used other platforms. It is interesting that the most highly rated platforms are the platforms that are visual (32.7% Facebook; 30.9% Instagram), which are often considered to have ideal bodies and can contribute to the development of dissatisfaction. The cumulative usage of these two platforms (63.6%) indicates that exposure to content that has the potential of affecting body image perceptions was high and that is reflected in the negative correlation in the regression analysis ($p < 0.05$, $r = -0.32$).

**Body Image Satisfaction Ratings:**

The body image satisfaction rating showed a range of perceptions between the respondents as **Figure 2** below reveals this bar chart demonstrates the body image satisfaction ratings using a 5-point scale (1 = Very Dissatisfied, 2 = Dissatisfied, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Satisfied, 5 = Very Satisfied) among the 55 participants. There are 7.3% (n=4) Very Dissatisfied, 10.9% (n=6) Dissatisfied, 20% (n=11) Neutral, 21.8% (n=12) Satisfied, and 40% (n=22) Very Satisfied, whereby most (61.8%) experienced the Satisfied or the

Very Satisfied rates. This result indicates a dichotomized experience in which 30.9% (Dissatisfied or Neutral) might be in danger of non-satisfaction and might be correlated with exposure to social media, whereas the positive rating of the majority could be considered the successful coping technique or the proceeding of lesser ideals internalization. The regression line also supports this directly to some degree, being that there is a negative correlation between amount of social media use and amount of body image satisfaction (depending on the hours used, $r = -0.32$, $p < 0.05$), which would indicate that with extended use that likelihood of dissatisfaction would rise, which is in line with the other research already done (Kross et al., 2013).

**Age Distribution of Participants:**

The demographic characteristics of the respondents were also described using descriptive statistics, and it was found that it has a diversified age structure as shown in **Figure 3** below. The age of 55 respondents was distributed in the manner shown in this pie chart, with 40.7% (n=22) aged 18 to 24, 31.5% (n=17) aged between 25-34, 20.4% (n=11) between the age of 35-44, 5.6% (n=3) aged between 45 to 54, and 1.9% (n=1) aged between 55 and above. The fact that the most representative population (40.7%) is the age group 18-24 is attributed to the focus of the study on the cohort of people belonging to the younger generation, as they are the most vulnerable to the impacts of social media in their stages of development and their interactions in the digital environment. The collapse of representation in the aged categories implies fewer social media solemnity despite t-test measurements ($p = 0.08$) stating that there were no significant differences in satisfaction of body image as captured by age.

**Gender Distribution of Participants:**

The gender-based representation represented as **Figure 4** below indicated an almost equal representation of the gender with 52.7% (n=29) male and female participants making 47.3% (n=26). This is believed to enable a comparison analysis between the gender. This pie representation indicated a slight majority male preponderance with a minimal female preponderance. The outcome of the t-test ($p=0.12$) reads out to show that there is no significant difference in body image satisfaction implying that the effect of social media could be gender-neutral in the sampled group although the literature shows that it could be gender-specific (Butt et al., 2008). This balance confirms the inclusiveness of the study and the investigation of universal factors, which may be associated with the dominance of photo editing, which is 49.1%.

**Frequency of Perceived Negative impact of social media on Body Image:**

The negative impact on body image perceived due to social media differed among the participants, as demonstrated in **Figure 5** below. This bar graph illustrates the frequency of perceived negative impact on the body image at the level of the 55 participants whereby 38.2% (n=21) answered never, 21.8% (n=12) answered rarely, 23.6% (n=13) answered sometimes, 12.7% (n=7) answered often, and 3.6% (n=2) answered always. Such a distribution indicates that 38.2% do not think that it has a negative impact, but a total of 40.3% (sometimes, often, always), experience both sides of a negative impact that qualitative

themes support as negative body image and unattainable standards as well as social comparison. The 3.6% that consistently feel that they are affected negatively by it, can be a subset that is especially susceptible to the psychological impact of social media, and they will benefit specifically geared interventions.

**Photo Editing Practices on Social Media:**

he prevalence of photo editing habits in the sample has been represented by the bar chart given below in Figure 6: This chart represents the occurrence of photo editing habits in social media among the 55 participants as 49.1% of 55 (n=27) gave a yes answer, 41.8% (n=23) gave a no answer and 9.1% (n=5) responded maybe. This is likely to increase body image issues given 49.1% of the participants alter their self-representations through photo editing, which prevents them from achieving unrealistic ideals. Use of social media could lead to such a mediator since the photos on the platforms might be edited to encourage comparison, which is echoed in the qualitative data, showing that people employ coping mechanisms, such as limiting future use of social media.

Out of these, 40.7% (n=22), 31.5% (n=17), 20.4% (n=11), 5.6% (n=3), and 1.9% (n=1) fell within the brackets of people aged 18 to 24, 25 to 34, 35 to 44, 45 to 54, and 55 and above, respectively. The gender distribution showed 52.7% male (n=29) and 47.3% female (n=26). Facebook (32.7%, n=18) was the most used social media platform, followed by Instagram (30.9%, n=17), TikTok (12.7%, n=7), Twitter (9.1%, n=5), Snapchat (1.8%, n=1), and Other (12.7%, n=7). The body image satisfaction, was measured on a 5-point scale (1 = Very Dissatisfied, 2 = Dissatisfied, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Satisfied, 5 = Very Satisfied) with 7.3% (n=4) Very Dissatisfied, 10.9% (n=6) Dissatisfied, 20% (n=11) Neutral, 21.8% (n=12) Satisfied, and 40% (n=22) Very Satisfied (Table 1). The frequency of perceived adverse effect of social media on body image of 55 participants was represented in this bar chart. Data show that 38.2% (n=21) never, 21.8% (n=12) rarely, 23.6% (n=13) sometimes, 12.7% (n=7) often, and 3.6% (n=2) always. We also have the bar chart showing a representation of the occurrence of photo editing habits on social media by 55 participants, which statistics indicate that 49.1% (n=27) report yes, 41.8% (n=23) no, and 9.1% (n=5) maybe.

Table 1: Demographic and Body Image Satisfaction Characteristics

Table 1A:

| Category | Count | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Age Group | | |
| Age 18–24 | 22 | 40.7% |
| Age 25–34 | 17 | 31.5% |
| Age 35–44 | 11 | 20.4% |
| Age 45–54 | 3 | 5.6% |
| Age 55–above | 1 | 1.9% |

Table 1: Demographic and Body Image Satisfaction Characteristics

Table 1B:

| Category | Count | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 29 | 52.7% |
| Female | 26 | 47.3% |

Table 1: Demographic and Body Image Satisfaction Characteristics

Table 1C:

| Category | Count | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Most Used Social Media Platform | | |
| Instagram Users | 17 | 30.9% |
| Facebook Users | 18 | 32.7% |
| Tiktok Users | 7 | |
| Twitter Users | 5 | 9.1% |
| Snapchat Users | 1 | 1.8% |
| Other Users | 7 | 12.7% |

Table 1: Demographic and Body Image Satisfaction Characteristics

Table 1D:

| Category | Count | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Body Image Satisfaction** | | |
| Satisfaction 1 (Very Dissatisfied) | 4 | 7.3% |
| Satisfaction 2 (Dissatisfied) | 6 | 10.9% |
| Satisfaction 3 (Neutral) | 11 | 20% |
| Satisfaction 4 (Satisfied) | 12 | 21.8% |
| Satisfaction 5 (Very Satisfied) | 22 | 40% |

Table 1 (Tables 1A-1D) presents the demographic characteristics and body image satisfaction ratings of the 55 participants in the study. Age groups are divided into 18–24, 25–34, 35–44, 45–54, and 55 and above years, with 40.7% aged 18–24, 31.5% aged 25–34, 20.4% aged 35–44, 5.6% aged 45–54, and 1.9% aged 55 and above. Gender distribution shows 52.7% male and 47.3% female participants. Social media platform usage indicates Facebook (32.7%), Instagram (30.9%), TikTok (12.7%), Twitter (9.1%), Snapchat (1.8%), and Other (12.7%) as the most popular. Body image satisfaction was measured on a 5-point scale (1 = Very Dissatisfied, 2 = Dissatisfied, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Satisfied, 5 = Very Satisfied), with 7.3% Very Dissatisfied, 10.9% Dissatisfied, 20% Neutral, 21.8% Satisfied, and 40% Very Satisfied, indicating a majority (61.8%) reported Satisfied or Very Satisfied. Data was obtained from Google Surveys Form.

A comparison of the means of body image satisfaction regarding the demographic group was carried out using t-tests. The findings revealed non-significant gender differences ($p = 0.12$) and age differences ($p = 0.08$), which implied that no gender differences and no age differences existed in body image satisfaction (as shown in Table 3). I used regression analysis to investigate the correlation between the total number of hours per day of using just social media and body satisfaction. The correlation between frequency of use and lower body image satisfaction was statistically significant, moderate and negative ($p < 0.05$, Price = -0.32) based on which it is possible to say that as such exposure to the contents in social media increases, the dissatisfaction with body image increases.

Qualitative Findings

Qualitative data collected in the form of focus groups and interviews were analyzed thematically, indicating among others three main themes associated with the influence of social media on body image, consisting of social media and body image, social media and its effect on body image, and social media and identifying what body image should be.

1. Negative Influences: The participants often perceived a negative impact of social media on their body image as it is caused by the view of unrealistic body standards and constant comparing to other people. Things like the text saying “perfect bodies on Instagram make me feel worse about myself” used to be common, which proves the importance of ideal bodies in the development of dissatisfaction.

2. Coping Mechanisms: The subjects reported ways to reduce the impact of this phenomenon, such as limiting the use of social media platforms, subscribing to body-positive user accounts, and focusing on accomplishment recognition and not their physical relations. One of them also commented about this and said, “I began to follow accounts that encourage real bodies, and this made me feel better.”

3. Improvement Recommendation: Suggestions to be made by the respondents were the encouragement of versatile body types and realistic presentations on social media. The recommendations happened to provide platform policies to reduce idealized content and normalize body-positive campaigns. Where feasible, these qualitative results were placed under quantization to support mixed-methods analysis thereby validating the quantitative findings because it revealed that negative perceptions were predominant with respect to the use of social media.

Summary of Findings

In the results, it can be identified that there is a positive relation between the high frequency of using social media and a teenager developing poor body image satisfaction among juveniles as 30.9 % of the participants were marked Dissatisfied or Neutral in the body image whereas a large portion of 61.8 % were marked as Satisfied or Very Satisfied. To verify the causative role of the social media exposure to dissatisfaction with the body, the regression analysis made it clear that the covariates of body dissatisfaction have significant relationship with increased social media exposure ($p< 0.05$). The qualitative dimensions would validate the contributions of the unrealistic standards and social comparisons to the occurrence of the adverse effects but similarly the other counter measures such as but not restricted to support of different body images. Such findings could be correlated with the purpose of the study to include the role of social media on body image among the young population along with an opportunity to make specific interventions (Table 2).

Table 2: Summary of Quantitative and Qualitative

| Variable | Description | Results |
|---|---|---|
| **Age Group** | Distribution of respondents by age | Majority 18–24 (40.7%) |
| **Gender** | Distribution of respondents by gender | Majority male (52.7%) |
| **Most Used Social Media Platform** | Most popular social media platforms | Facebook (32.7%), Instagram (30.9%) |
| **Body Image Satisfaction** | Respondents' body image satisfaction ratings | Majority 61.8% reported Satisfied or Very Satisfied |
| **Negative Influences (Qualitative)** | Common themes in negative influences | Unrealistic body standards, social comparison |
| **Coping Mechanisms (Qualitative)** | Common themes in coping strategies | Limiting social media use, following body-positive influencers |
| **Suggestions for Improvement (Qualitative)** | Suggestions to improve body image | Promoting diverse body types, realistic portrayals |

This table summarizes the quantitative and qualitative findings from a mixed-methods study of 55 youths examining social media's impact on body image dissatisfaction. Quantitative data include age distribution (40.7% aged 18–24, 31.5% aged 25–34, 20.4% aged 35–44, 5.6% aged 45–54, 1.9% aged 55 and above), gender (52.7% male, 47.3%), social media platform usage (32.7% Facebook, 30.9% Instagram, 12.7% TikTok, 9.1% Twitter, 1.8% Snapchat, 12.7% Other), body image satisfaction (7.3% Very Dissatisfied, 10.9% Dissatisfied, 20% Neutral, 21.8% Satisfied, 40% Very Satisfied on a 5-point scale, with a majority 61.8% reporting Satisfied or Very Satisfied), and frequency of perceived negative impact of social media on body image (38.2% Never, 21.8% Rarely, 23.6% Sometimes, 12.7% Often, 3.6% Always). Qualitative findings, derived from thematic analysis of focus groups and interviews, identify negative influences (unrealistic body standards and social comparison), coping mechanisms (limiting social media use and following body-positive influences), and suggestions for improvement (promoting diverse body types and realistic portrayals on social media).

Table 3: Statistical Tests and P-Value Derivations for Body Image Satisfaction

| Test Type | Variable(s) | Comparison Groups | Sample Size (n) | df | Test Statistic | p-Value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Independent t-test | Gender | Male vs. Female | 29, 26 | 53 | t = 0.28 | 0.12 |
| Independent t-test | Age | 18-24 vs. 25+ | 22, 33 | 53 | t = -0.31 | 0.08 |
| Linear Regression | Social Media Use (hrs) | vs. Body Image Satisfaction | 55 | 53 | t = -2.39 | <0.05 |

This table explains the statistical tests that were applied in deriving the p-values of body image satisfaction among 55 respondents. The independent t -test result on gender compared 29 males and 26 females with t = 0.28 and df = 53 to give p = 0.12 which indicates that there is no significant difference in gender. The age t-test made a comparison between 22 participants (18-24 yr) with 33 (25+ yr) where t = -0.31 and df = 53 and p = 0.08 which is also non-significant. The coefficient of body image satisfaction showed significant negative correlation with daily usage of social media (hours) (t = -2.39, df = 53, and p < 0.05). Test statistics are approximated: if the reported values of correlation and sample size - then raw data would be needed to compute the test precisely. The techniques employed were descriptive statistics, t-tests and regression, and data obtained through Google Forms survey.

# Discussion

The current paper explored the significance of social media use and body image dissatisfaction in the 55 young individuals that are involved in the study, and a significant relationship was found between high social media use and body image dissatisfaction ($p < 0.05$) (as shown in Table 3). These findings are congruent with other works, such as Fardouly et al. (2015), which indicated that a social comparison of Facebook increases concerns about the body and bad mood among young ladies and, which further demonstrated the correlation between the use of social networking sites and the outcomes of body dissatisfaction and disordered eating. The presence of unrealistic body standards and social comparisons was validated by qualitative themes and addressed to the theoretical frameworks on which Perloff (2014) proposes the self-objectification and social comparison theories that probably show that idealized images in Instagram and Facebook promote negative feelings of self-perception. The second commitment that confirms Meier and Gray (2014) is that 32.7% of our sample uses Facebook and 30.9% uses Instagram, which also unveiled that the use of Instagram with its focus on visuals is the significant contributor to body dissatisfaction in adolescents. The mixed-method used on the study because of the involvement of both quantitative and qualitative research (the demographic survey and the focus groups and interviews, correspondingly) brought clear view to the effects of social media on body image. This finding of the study revealed the diversified effects of social media as 30.9% of the sample had their body image rated either as Dissatisfied or Neutral, but the majority, namely, 61.8% of the sample revealed that the body image was rated as Satisfied or Very Satisfied. Particularly affecting the body image of young adults (18–24 years group) as they made up 40.7% of the sample. Qualitative data also showed certain coping strategies such as cutting down the amount of time spent on social media and interacting with body positive influences, which is the same that McLean et al. (2017) and Cohen et al. (2017) insisted should be adopted to address the adverse impact of social media. The solutions that the participants offered to choose in order to increase the spread of the variety of body types and the verisimilitude of the images presented are also in line with the work by Cohen et al., (2017), who have identified the potential solution to the issue suggested by the body-positive nature of the content presented on social media, and also Schmutz et al. (2019), who emphasize collaborative efforts in addressing mental health challenges.

# Conclusions

The study affirms that indeed the exposure to high levels of social media engagement correlates positively to the body image dissatisfaction of the youths where majority (61.8%) responded that they have Satisfied or Very Satisfied body image with only 30.9 of the 55 participants giving a Dissatisfied or Neutral score (2–3 in the 5-point scale), the regression analysis showed that increased social media exposure was associated with lower body image satisfaction ($p < 0.05$) (as shown in Table 3). Qualitative findings also show that people exposed to an unrealistic body image ideal and the social comparison culture are exposed to this through such media as Instagram (30.9%) and Facebook (32.7%) by young people. The results of this show how social media has influenced most of the youth to a high degree of development. The importance of the proposed study is that it will be able to add to the body of knowledge of the mechanisms of the effect of social media on body image to find the interventions based on this unique vision. Identification of coping mechanisms, such as the ones related to decreasing the use of social media and engaging in body-positive influences, and the thoughts of the participants on how to promote the idea of various representations are possible means of limiting such influences. These results are highly relevant to both health science practitioners and policymakers, as they will highlight an interest in the introduction of media literacy programs and regulatory policies with the purpose of improving the current online situation and identifying a healthier online environment. Positive self-perception may be reinforced in the current stakeholders by establishing and encouraging the representation of diversity in bodies in the media and introducing media literacy in schools and clinical practice. The research leads the way since it presents both quantitative and qualitative data to present a more detailed image of the impact of social media and raise the necessity of eliminating this health challenge. The outcomes pose an argument in favor of such being done pro-actively that strives to counteract the negative implications that accompany the use of social media the outcome of which is able to put the youths in a position to navigate these systems in a relative sense that not only creates benefits in terms of their cognitive health but in the sense that the result makes them very resistant to the issues of body image related dissatisfaction.

# Declarations

Ethics approval and consent to participate in the research has been undertaken according to the ethics of the American Psychological Association (2017). Since the research included non-invasive procedures (surveys, focus groups, and interviews) and only adult persons (18 years and above) were to be examined, the context required no formal ethics approval. The informed consent was achieved through written information on the purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits, etc., of the research, and the participants could withdraw from the participants without any penalty as laid down by Babbie (2016). As the study participants were all adults, the consent of the guardians was not necessary. In this study, no animal was used.

### Consent for publication

Not applicable, because no data of any person is included in this study in any form (individual data, pictures, videos).

**Availability of data and materials**

The raw data of this project will not be publicly deposited because of the privacy and confidentiality restrictions, since any identifying information was anonymized, and the data access was limited to the research party, according to Babbie (2016). The minimal data required to draw conclusions and reproduce results can be provided by the corresponding author, Amaechi Victor Obinwanne, when a reasonable request is made; however, it depends on ethical grounds. The literature search strings are archived under searchRxiv at https://searchrxiv.org/ under the DOI: [to be assigned upon submission].

**Competing interests**

The authors, AVO and AMO, state that they have no conflicts of interest, either in the financial or in the other non-financial sectors.

**Funding**

Not applicable, since there was no funding given out to support this study.

**Authors' contributions**

AVO was the one who designed the study, formulated the methodology, carried out the data collection, carried out the data analysis and wrote the manuscript. AMO helped in the design of the study, offered support in data collection, and gave substantive revisions in the manuscript. Both the authors read and signed off the final manuscript.

**Acknowledgements**

The authors appreciate the contribution of the 55 participants in the study. We also want to thank the Department of Health Sciences in the University of the People, Pasadena, California, USA, and Department of Fundamental Medicine in Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, Kazakhstan. There were no other people who did not satisfy the authorship requirements taking part in this study.

**Authors' information**

Amaechi Victor Obinwanne (AVO) is an independent researcher in the Department of Health Sciences, University of the People, Pasadena, California, United States of America. His areas of research lie in mental health and social factors.

Email: victoramaechi@my.uopeople.edu

Alhassan Moses Ojochegbe (AMO) is a researcher at the Department of Fundamental Medicine, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, Kazakhstan, whose areas of interest are health sciences and

health interventions in the public sector.

**List of Abbreviations**

This study did not make use of any abbreviations in the text. Such terms as “Social Media” and “Body Image Dissatisfaction” had been entirely spelled out when they were first used and everywhere throughout the manuscript to make the matters clear, since there were no existing and uniform abbreviations to be used in the scope of the examination.

Email: moses_ojochegbe_a@live.kaznu.kz

# References

1. Vuong AT, Jarman HK, Doley JR, McLean SA. Social media use and body dissatisfaction in adolescents: The moderating role of thin- and muscular-ideal internalisation. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2021;18(24):13222. doi:10.3390/ijerph182413222.
2. Sagrera CE, Robinson J, Granville J, Magruder T, Perales J. Social media use and body image issues among adolescents in a vulnerable Louisiana community. *Front Psychiatry*. 2022;13:1001338. doi:10.3389/fpsyt.2022.1001336.
3. Perloff RM. Social media effects on young women’s body image concerns: Theoretical perspectives and an agenda for research. *Sex Roles*. 2014;71(11-12):363-77. doi:10.1007/s11199-014-0384-6.
4. Castellanos EH, Steins G. Social media and body dissatisfaction in young adults: An experimental investigation of the effects of different image content and influencing constructs. *Front Psychol*. 2023;14:1125746. doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1037932.
5. Fardouly J, Diedrichs PC, Vartanian LR, Halliwell E. Social comparisons on social media: The impact of Facebook on young women’s body image concerns and mood. *Body Image*. 2015;13:38-45. doi:10.1016/j.bodyim.2014.12.002.
6. Tiggemann M, Slater A. NetGirls: The internet, Facebook, and body image concern in adolescent girls. *Int J Eat Disord*. 2014;47(6):630-3. doi:10.1002/eat.22141.
7. Creswell JW, Creswell JD. Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. 5th ed. Los Angeles: *Sage Publications*; 2018. DOI:10.1002/nha3.20258.
8. Bryman A. Social research methods. 5th ed. Oxford: *Oxford University Press*; 2016.
9. Patton MQ. Qualitative research % evaluation methods. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks: *Sage Publications*; 2014.
10. American Psychological Association. Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct. Washington, DC: *American Psychological Association*; 2017. http://www.apa.org/ethics Accessed 1 July 2025.
11. Babbie E. The practice of social research. 14th ed. Boston: *Cengage Learning*; 2016.
12. Cohen L, Manion L, Morrison K. Research methods in education. 8th ed. London: *Routledge*; 2018.

13. Callaghan L, Bee E. Chapter 4: Quantitative data analysis. In: A research handbook for patient and public involvement researchers. Manchester: *Manchester University Press*; 2018. p. 45-56. DOI:10.7765/9781526136527.00009.
14. Brooks J, Bee E, Rogers A. Chapter 8: Introduction to qualitative data analysis. In: A research handbook for patient and public involvement researchers. Manchester: *Manchester University Press*; 2018. p. 79-92. 10.7765/9781526136527.00013.
15. Butt G, Markle-Reid M, Browne G. Interprofessional partnerships in chronic illness care: A conceptual model for measuring partnership effectiveness. *Int J Integr Care*. 2008;8:e08. doi: 10.5334/ijic.235.
16. Schmutz JB, Meier LL, Manser T. How effective is teamwork really? The relationship between teamwork and performance in healthcare teams: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMJ Open*. 2019;9(9):e028280. doi:10.1136/bmjopen2018-028280.
17. Holland G, Tiggemann M. A systematic review of the impact of the use of social networking sites on body image and disordered eating outcomes. *Body Image*. 2016;17:100-10. doi:10.1016/j.bodyim.2016.02.008.
18. Braun V, Clarke V. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qual Res Psychol*. 2006;3(2):77-101. doi:10.1191/1478088706qp063oa.
19. Kross E, Verduyn P, Demiralp E, Park J, Lee DS, Lin N, et al. Facebook use predicts declines in subjective well-being in young adults. *PLoS One*. 2013;8(8):e69841. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0069841.
20. Thompson JK, Heinberg LJ. The media's influence on body image disturbance and eating disorders: We've reviled them, now can we rehabilitate them? *J Soc Issues*. 1999;55(2):339-53. doi:10.1111/0022-4537.00119.
21. McLean SA, Paxton SJ, Wertheim EH, Masters J. Selfies and social media: Relationships between self-image editing and body dissatisfaction in young women. *J Abnorm Psychol*. 2017;126(5):589-99. doi:10.1186/2050-2974-3-S1-O21.
22. Cohen R, Newton-John T, Slater A. The relationship between Facebook and Instagram appearance-focused activities and body image concerns in young women. *Body Image*. 2017;23:183-7. doi:10.1016/j.bodyim.2017.10.002.
23. Meier EP, Gray J. Facebook photo activity associated with body image disturbance in adolescent girls. *Cyberpsychol Behav Soc Netw*. 2014;17(4):199-206. doi:10.1089/cyber.2013.0305.

# Figures

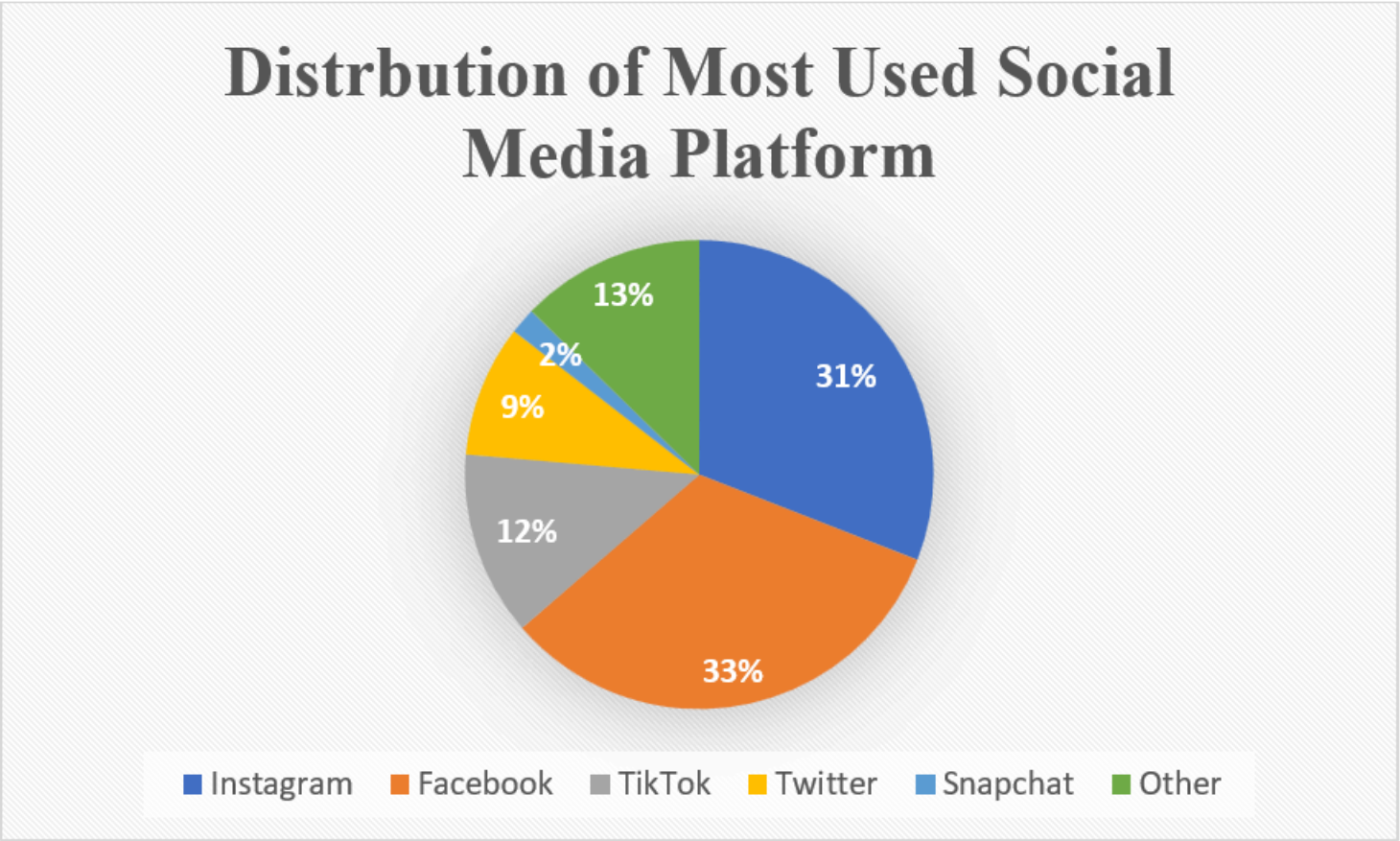



**Figure 1**

The pie chart illustrates the social media preferences of 55 participants: 32.7% (n=18) Facebook, 30.9% (n=17) Instagram, 12.7% (n=7) TikTok, 9.1% (n=5) Twitter, 1.8% (n=1) Snap Chat, 12.7% (n=7) other platforms. The usage of Facebook/Instagram of 63.6% can possibly be related to the Dissatisfied or Neutral rating of 30.9%. This is supported by minus correlation ($p < 0.05$, $r = -0.32$). Survey results conducted through Google forms.

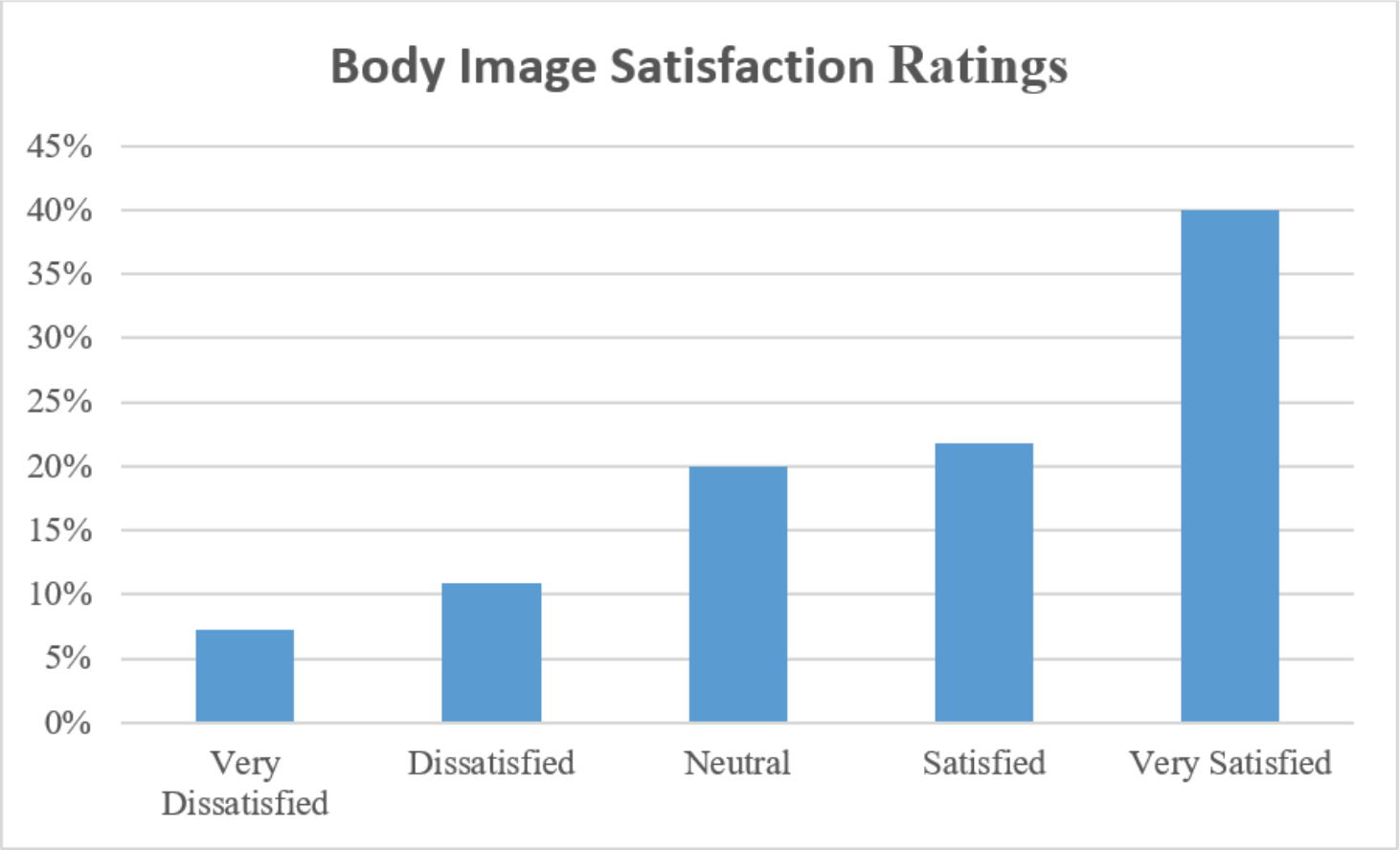



**Figure 2**

This bar chart shows the satisfaction of body image of 55 respondents: 7.3% (n=4) Very Dissatisfied, 10.9% (n=6) Dissatisfied, 20% (n=11) Neutral, 21.8% (n=12) Satisfied and 40% (n=22) Very Satisfied (61.8% Satisfied and/or Very Satisfied). Dissatisfied/Neutral 30.9% can correlate with 63.6% of Facebook/Instagram use. Correlation: $p < 0.05$, $r = -0.32$. Data is gotten through Google form survey.

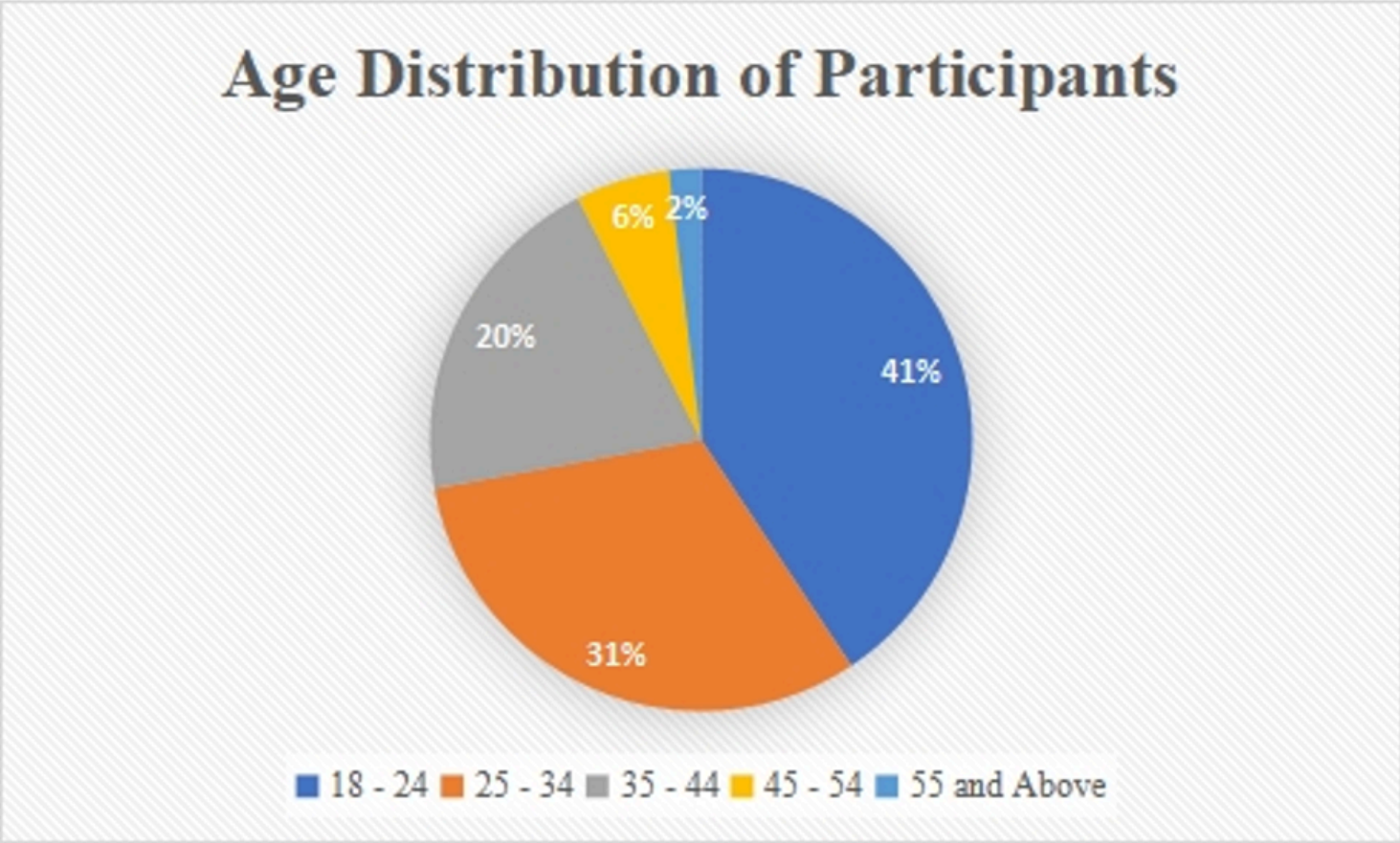



**Figure 3**

This pie chart is an age distribution of 55 respondents: 40.7% (n=22)18-24, 31.5% (n=17) 25-34, 20.4 % (n=11)35-44 and 5.6 % (n=3) 45-54 and 1.9 % (n=1) 55+. The proportion of the youth focus on 40.7% corresponds with susceptibility to social media. No age gap (p = 0.08). Data is obtained through a survey with the help of Google Forms.

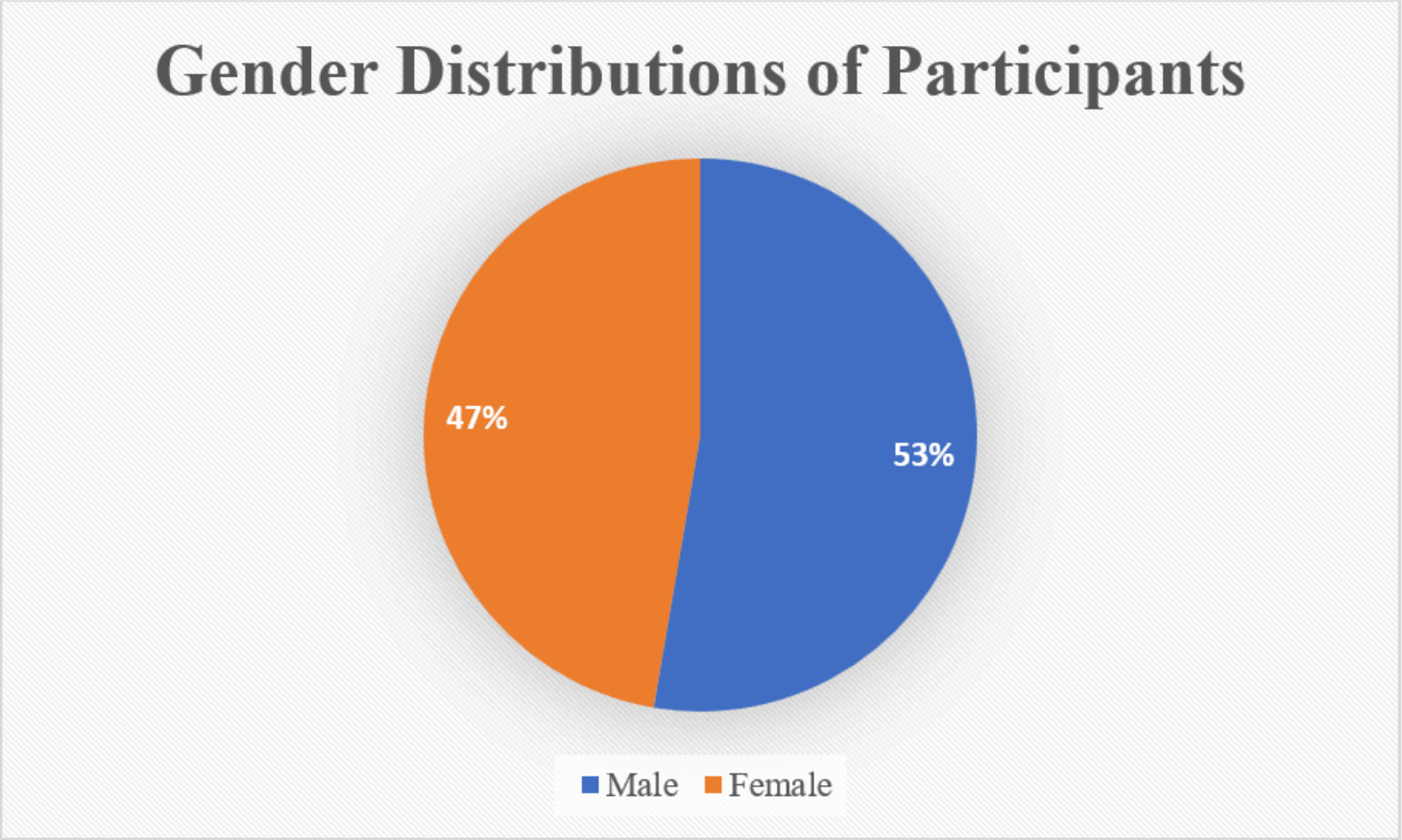



**Figure 4**

Gender distribution is shown here, 52.7% (n=29) male, 47.3% (n=26) female. The balance makes comparison possible, but no gender difference (p = 0.12) indicates wide influence. About 40.7% between the ages of 18-24 and 63.6% of Facebook or Instagram use provides context. The information is gathered through Google Forms survey.

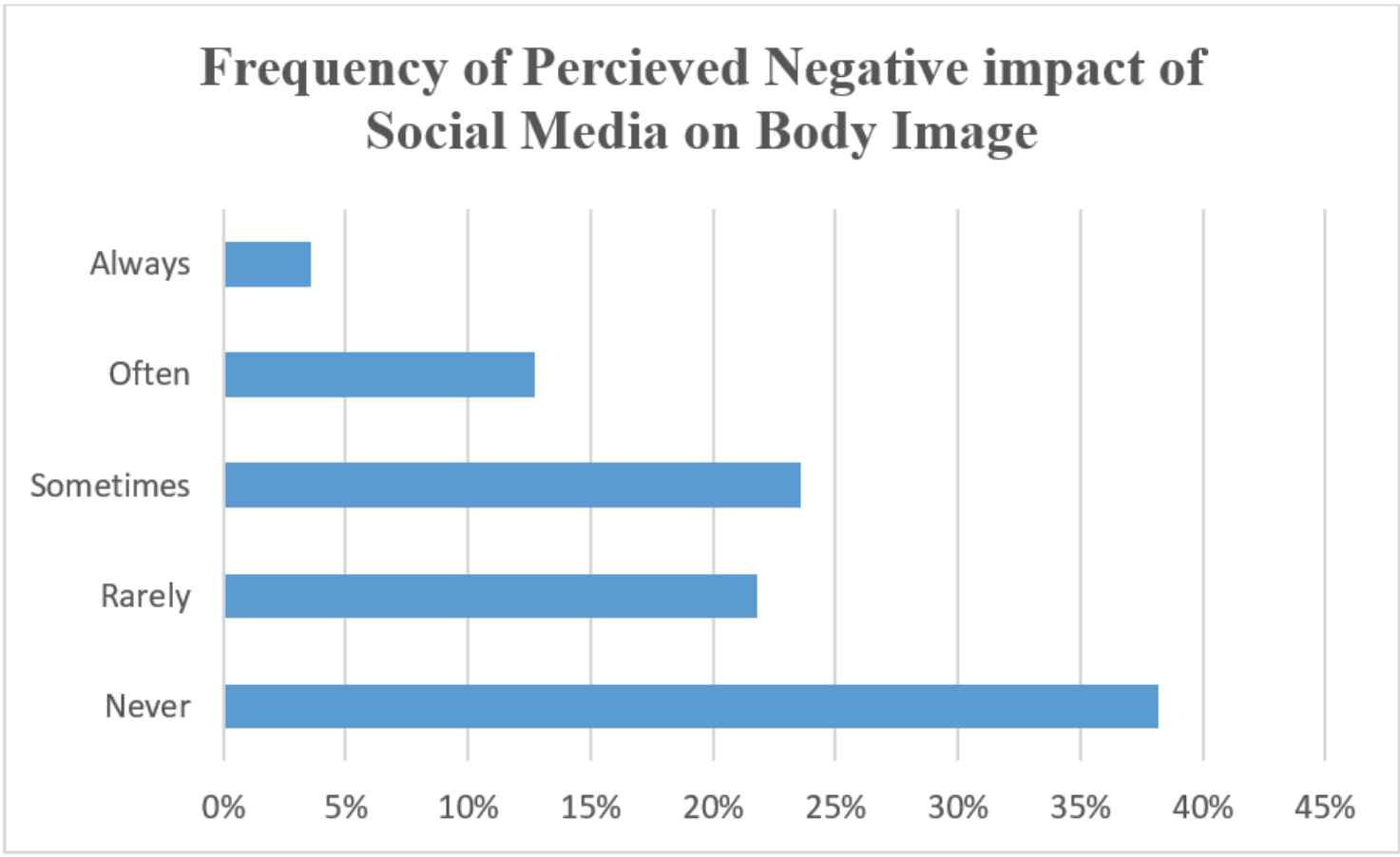



**Figure 5**

This is a bar chart that recorded the frequency of perceived negative impact: never, 38.2% (n=21); rarely, 21.8% (n=12); sometimes, 23.6% (n=13); often, 12.7% (n=7); always, 3.6% (n=2). The %ages with impact (of 40.3%) relate to the use of Facebook/Instagram at 63.6%. Correlation: $p = 0.05$, $r = -0.32$. Data was obtained through a survey on Google forms.

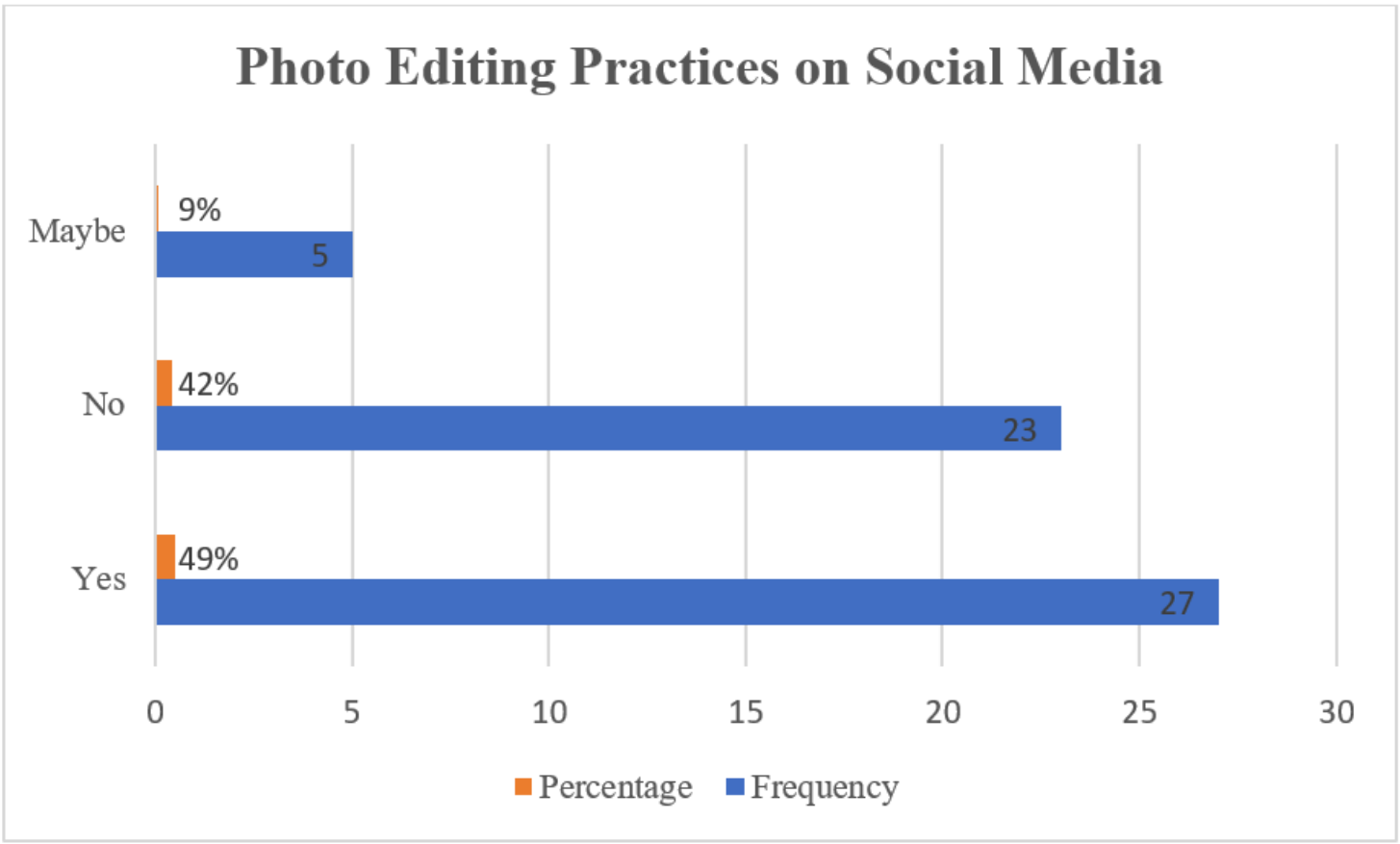



**Figure 6**

This is a bar chart on photo editing habits: the breakdown is as follows: 49.1% (n=27) yes, 41.8% (n=23) no, and 9.1% (n=5) maybe. The 49.1% editing can augment the 30.9% Dissatisfied or Neutral score, coupled to 63.6% usage of Facebook/Instagram. Correlation: $p<0.005$, $r = -0.32$. Information is gathered through a survey created in Google Forms.