

Social Comparison and Social Media's Effects on Self-Esteem

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to investigate the impact of self-comparison and social media on self-esteem, with a focus on understanding the complex relationships between social comparison, social media usage, and self-esteem outcomes. By exploring the effects of social comparison on body image and the role of social media in shaping self-esteem, this research seeks to provide insights into the factors that influence self-esteem and inform strategies for promoting healthy self-esteem and well-being in individuals.

Design: The study is taken from secondary data, Like google scholar, internet, literature review, books and blogs.

Findings: The most of the study results shows the social comparison's and social media's effects making negative impact on self esteem. Negative Effects of Social Comparison like Social media platforms showcase curated highlight reels, fostering unrealistic comparisons and feelings of inadequacy, which can lead to lower self-esteem, anxiety, and depression. Constant exposure to idealized bodies, beauty standards, and lifestyles can contribute to body dissatisfaction, eating disorders, and low self-esteem. Impact on Body Image: Social comparison on social media can lead to body image concerns, particularly among young adults and adolescents. Exposure to idealized body types and beauty standards can perpetuate negative body image and low self-esteem.

Role of Social Media Social media can provide a platform for self-expression and social support, but excessive use can lead to decreased self-esteem and increased anxiety. Social media usage can also influence self-esteem through likes, comments, and followers, which can create a sense of validation or rejection.

Keywords: Social comparison, Social media, Self-esteem, Body image, Mental health, Online behavior, Social influence, Comparison theory

1. INTRODUCTION :

The social comparison process is a fundamental aspect of human behavior, where individuals evaluate their attitudes, abilities, and traits in comparison to others. This process can have a profound impact on self-esteem, motivation, and overall sense of identity. While social comparison can be a useful tool for self-assessment and improvement, it can also lead to negative self-perceptions and feelings of inadequacy if not managed properly.

In today's digital age, social media plays a significant role in shaping social comparison. Influencers and celebrities often present idealized lifestyles and beauty standards, which can create unrealistic expectations and promote consumerism. The pressure to conform to these standards can lead to extreme behaviours, such as undergoing surgery or excessive spending, in an attempt to achieve an unattainable ideal. Conversely, some individuals may experience low self-esteem and feelings of worthlessness due to unfavorable comparisons.

This paper aims to investigate the positive and negative effects of social comparison and its consequences on mental and physical health. By exploring the impact of social media on social comparison, this research seeks to provide insights into the factors that influence self-esteem and well-being.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

To examine the relationship between self-comparison and self-esteem.

To investigate the impact of social media on self-esteem and body image.

To identify the factors that influence self-esteem and self-comparison in the context of social media.

To provide strategies for managing social comparison and promoting healthy self-esteem and individuality.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is an exploratory study based on qualitative secondary data analysis approach, utilizing existing research studies, academic journals, and online resources.

4. RELATED RESEARCH WORK TABLE

SL. NO	Focus / Area	Contributions	Reference
1	Social comparison, social media, and self-esteem.	Facebook most often had poorer trait self-esteem, and this was mediated by greater exposure to upward social comparisons on social media. Using an experimental approach, Study 2 examined the impact of temporary exposure to social media profiles on state self-esteem and relative self-evaluations.	Vogel E. A. et.al; Psychology of popular media culture 3 (4), 206,(2014)
2	Social comparison, self-consistency, and the concept of self.	This study found that individuals with low self-consistency were more affected by social comparisons. Competition with the stimulus person had no significant effect on self-esteem change. Similarity between the individual and the stimulus person tended to boost self-esteem, while dissimilarity had the opposite effect. These findings support social comparison theory.	Morse S &Gergen K.J; Journal of personality and social psychology 16 (1), 148, 1970

3	Effects of social comparison direction, threat, and self-esteem on affect, self-evaluation, and expected success.	Two studies explored how social comparisons help manage negative emotions and threats. People with low self-esteem felt better after comparing themselves to someone worse off, especially when in a bad mood or after a setback. These findings support downward comparison theory, suggesting that people use comparisons to cope with challenges. The studies highlight the importance of social comparison in managing emotions and self-perceptions in difficult situations.	Lisa GA spinwall & Shelley E Taylor; Journal of personality and social psychology 64 (5), 708, 1993
4	Self-esteem as a moderator of the effect of social comparison on women's body image	The moderating effects of self-esteem on women's reactions to social comparisons of attractiveness were investigated. After viewing a photograph of an attractive or unattractive peer, female college students completed measures of affect, body esteem, internalization of socio-cultural norms of appearance, and contingencies of self-worth. Self-esteem significantly moderated the effects of social comparison on body esteem. Whereas the low self-esteem group displayed a contrast effect, the high self-esteem group displayed an assimilation effect. The Self-Esteem \times Social Comparison interaction was significant even when controlling for differences in affect, internalization of norms, and contingencies of self-worth.	April M Jones & Justin T Buckingham; Journal of social and clinical psychology 24 (8), 1164-1187, 2005
5	The grass is always greener on my Friends' profiles: The effect of Facebook social comparison on state self-esteem and depression	This study found that browsing Facebook can lower self-esteem and increase depression due to upward social comparisons, as people tend to share only the positive aspects of their lives. This can trigger negative emotions like shame and envy. The study suggests a causal link between Facebook use and negative psychological outcomes.	Yitshak Alfasi ; Personality and Individual Differences 147, 111-117, 2019
6	Downward comparison, prejudice, and evaluations of others: effects of self-esteem and threat	Two studies found that individuals with high self-esteem tend to derogate outgroups when faced with threats to their self-concept, whereas those with low self-esteem do not exhibit this behavior.	Crocker J,et.al; Journal of personality and social psychology 52 (5), 907, 1987

7	Who compares and despairs? The effect of social comparison orientation on social media use and its outcomes	Study found that people with a strong social comparison orientation (SCO) tend to use Facebook more and experience negative outcomes like poor self-perceptions, low self-esteem, and negative emotions when engaging in social comparisons on the platform.	Vogel E.A, et.al; Personality and individual differences 86, 249-256, 2015
8	Social comparison on Facebook: Motivation, affective consequences, self-esteem, and Facebook fatigue	This study found that people, especially those with low self-esteem, frequently engage in social comparison on Facebook for various motives, including self-evaluation and self-improvement. The study also showed that self-esteem influences the emotional outcomes of social comparison, with different motives leading to different emotional responses in individuals with high versus low self-esteem.	Emily M Cramer, Hayeon Song & Adam M Drent; Computers in Human Behavior 64, 739-746, 2016
9	Social media and self-esteem	The link between social media and self-esteem is complex, with studies showing mixed results. Research suggests that social media's impact on self-esteem varies from person to person, depending on individual factors and uses, rather than having a uniform effect on everyone.	Drew P Cingel, Michael C Carter, Hannes-Vincent Krause; Current opinion in psychology 45, 101304, 2022
10	The impact of social media influencing on self-esteem and the role of social comparison and resilience	A study found that exposure to Idealized images of social media influencers can have mixed effects on women's self-esteem. While it led to upward social comparisons, which lowered self-esteem, it also unexpectedly boosted overall self-esteem, possibly due to both positive and negative comparison processes.	Lale Ruther, Josephine Jahn & Tamara Marksteiner; Frontiers in Psychology 14, 1216195, 2023
11	Looking Up and Feeling Down". The influence of mobile social networking site use on upward social comparison, self-esteem, and well-being of adult smartphone users	This study found that social media use, particularly Facebook and Instagram, can harm adults' self-esteem and well-being by fostering upward social comparisons, with prolonged exposure potentially leading to negative effects over time.	Schmuck D et.al; Telematics and informatics 42, 101240, 2019

12	Impact of social media on self-esteem	Excessive Facebook use leads to lower self-esteem due to upward social comparisons. The research showed that 88% of students engage in social comparisons on Facebook, with 98% of those being upward comparisons, and that increased Facebook use significantly decreases self-esteem.	Muqaddas Jan, Sanobia Soomro & Nawaz Ahmad European Scientific Journal 13 (23), 329-341, 2017
13	Facebook and self-perception: Individual susceptibility to negative social comparison on Facebook	Facebook use can lead to negative social comparisons, which harm self-perceptions, especially in emerging adults. However, happier individuals are less affected by this negative impact, suggesting that happiness may buffer the detrimental effects of social media on self-perception.	Dian A De Vries & Rinaldo Kühne; Personality and individual differences 86, 217-221, 2015
14	Subjective well-being and social media use: Do personality traits moderate the impact of social comparison on Facebook?	Social comparison on Facebook can negatively impact subjective well-being, but certain personality traits, such as Goal-Drive Persistence, can moderate this effect, even turning it positive for some individuals. The study highlights the importance of individual differences in personality when assessing the impact of social media on well-being.	Jennifer Gerson, Anke C Plagnol & Philip J Corr; Computers in Human Behavior 63, 813-822, 2016
15	The effects of social comparison on the relationships among social media addiction, self-esteem, and general belongingness levels	This study explores how social comparison affects the relationship between social media addiction, self-esteem, and sense of belonging, aiming to provide a deeper understanding of the underlying mechanisms and potential negative impacts of excessive social media use.	Mehmet Kavaklı& Gülten Ünal; Current issues in personality psychology 9 (2), 114-124, 2021
16	Social Media's Influence on Adolescent Self-Esteem: Patterns and Perceptions	This study explores the complex relationship between social media usage patterns and self-esteem in adolescents, using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to gain insights that can inform academic discussions and practical interventions promoting healthy digital habits among youth.	Hanu Shashwat& Muskan Singh; Asian Pacific Journal of Nursing and Health Sciences 7 (2), 1-7, 2024
17	The influence of SNS usage, social comparison, and self-esteem on social media addiction	Study found that social media addiction is linked to low self-esteem and high social media usage, with self-esteem acting as a protective factor and active social media use as a risk factor. The research sheds light on the complex relationships between social media	Luna Schäfer; University of Twente, 2022

		use, social comparison, and self-esteem in the development of social media addiction.	
18	Similarity and self-esteem in downward comparison	Leon Festinger's 1954 theory of social comparison has had a lasting impact on social psychology, influencing numerous studies on affiliation, comparison choices, and self-perception, continuing to advance our understanding of how people use social information to conceptualize themselves.	Thomas Ashby Wills; Social comparison, 51-78, 2024
19	The mediating roles of upward social comparison and self-esteem and the moderating role of social comparison orientation in the association between social networking site usage	This study of 696 participants found that social media use can affect subjective well-being through upward social comparison and self-esteem. The impact is stronger for those with a tendency to compare themselves to others, especially when passively using social media.	Wang J.L.,et.al; Frontiers in psychology 8, 233971, 2017
20	The effects of social comparison orientation on psychological well-being in social networking sites: Serial mediation of perceived social support and self-esteem	Frequent social comparisons on social media can harm psychological well-being by lowering self-esteem, and can also trigger a chain reaction of negative emotions that reduce perceived social support and overall well-being.	Jin Kyun Lee;Current Psychology 41 (9), 6247-6259, 2022
21	The effects of Instagram use, social comparison, and self-esteem on social anxiety: A survey study in Singapore	Instagram use did not directly increase social anxiety. Instead, social comparison, a proximal outcome, and self-esteem, an intermediate outcome played mediating roles, supporting the complete mediation effects. This finding provides important theoretical and practical implications for the design of health campaigns and education in this digital era to enhance the positive effect of social media on health and emotional well-being.	Shaohai Jiang& Annabel Ngien;Social Media+ Society 6 (2), 2056305120912488, 2020
22	When every day is a high school reunion: Social media comparisons and self-esteem.	Social media comparisons, particularly frequent and extreme upward comparisons, can lead to negative effects on self-esteem, mood, and life satisfaction. Individuals with low self-esteem are more vulnerable to these	Midgley C,et.al; Journal of personality and social psychology 121 (2), 285, 2021

		negative impacts, and social media comparisons tend to have a greater negative effect compared to comparisons made in other contexts.	
23	All my online-friends are better than me—three studies about ability-based comparative social media use, self-esteem, and depressive tendencies	Three studies found that social media use can negatively impact self-esteem and increase depressive tendencies, both in the short-term and long-term, due to social comparisons. These effects were observed across different types of social media platforms, including Facebook and professional networks.	Phillip Ozimek & Hans-Werner Bierhoff; Behaviour & Information Technology 39 (10), 1110-1123, 2020
24	Digital mirror: social media's influence on youths self-esteem	The study of 12 youths from Selangor found that social media platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook can negatively impact self-esteem due to idealized portrayals and comparisons, particularly affecting young women. However, positive content can inspire and motivate. The study suggests promoting digital literacy, mindfulness, support networks, and mental health resources to mitigate negative effects and foster positive self-esteem and well-being.	Farah Aliya Khairul Nizam & Hamizah Sahharon; Forum Komunikasi 19 (2), 74-95, 2024
25	The good, the bad, and the self on social media: how self-awareness and self-esteem influence selective exposure to social comparisons	A study of 134 college students found that individuals with low self-esteem tend to engage in upward social comparisons when publicly self-aware and downward comparisons when privately self-aware. In contrast, those with high self-esteem tend to seek upward comparisons when privately self-aware.	Wenbo Li & Silvia Knobloch-Westerwick; Current Psychology 44 (1), 418-430, 2025
27	A meta-analysis of the effects of social media exposure to upward comparison targets on self-evaluations and emotions	A meta-analysis of 48 studies involving 7,679 participants found that exposure to upward social comparisons on social media has a negative impact on self-evaluations and emotions, particularly affecting body image, subjective well-being, mental health, and self-esteem. The analysis suggests that upward comparisons on social media lead to unfavorable self-comparisons and negative emotions.	Carly A McComb, Eric J Vanman & Stephanie J Tobin; Media Psychology 26 (5), 612-635, 2023
28	Generation validation: The role of social comparison in use of	A study of 237 young adults (18-29 years) found that social comparison on Instagram mediates the relationship between self-worth	Peta Stapleton & Gabriella Luiz Hannah Chatwin;

	Instagram among emerging adults	contingent on others' approval and low self-esteem. Additionally, the intensity of Instagram use can lead to more social comparison when self-worth is tied to others' approval, indirectly affecting self-esteem.	Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking 20 (3), 142-149, 2017
29	Leveraging Instagram to enhance self-esteem: A self-affirmative intervention study and multilevel mediation analysis	A study found that regularly viewing one's own Instagram profile can have a positive effect on self-esteem by boosting self-concept clarity and promoting self-affirmation. This suggests that guided use of social media can potentially improve self-esteem outcomes.	Shuna Shiann Khoo, Hwajin Yang & Wei Xing Toh; Computers in Human Behavior 150, 107972, 2024
30	Will Using Social Media Benefit or Harm Users' Self-Esteem? It Depends on Perceived Relational-Closeness	Two studies found that the impact of social media on self-esteem depends on the perceived closeness of relationships on the platform. Social media with weak relational closeness (e.g., TikTok) can harm self-esteem, while platforms with strong relational closeness (e.g., WeChat) can benefit self-esteem due to increased perceived social support. Upward social comparison and perceived social support play key mediating roles in this relationship.	Yang Han & Feng Yang; Social Media+ Society 9 (4), 20563051231203680, 2023
31	Self-esteem only goes so far: the moderating effect of social media screen time on self-esteem and depressive symptoms	A study of 437 US college students found that low self-esteem and high social media screen time are associated with depressive symptoms. Moreover, excessive social media use can weaken the protective effect of self-esteem against depression. The findings suggest that reducing social media use and using it intentionally for positive content and social support may benefit individuals with depressive symptoms or low self-esteem.	Samantha R Rosenthal & Abigail P Tobin; Behaviour & information technology 42 (15), 2688-2695, 2023
32	The Role of False Self-Presentation and Social Comparison in Excessive Social Media Use	A study of 400 social media users in Pakistan found that false self-presentation online can increase the fear of negative evaluation, leading to excessive social media use. Surprisingly, social comparison boosted self-esteem but also fueled excessive use as individuals sought online validation. Gender played a moderating role, with women experiencing a stronger link between social comparison and self-esteem. The study suggests that interventions should focus on	Nor Fariza Mohd Nor, Nayab Iqbal & Azianura Hani Shaari; Behavioral Sciences 15 (5), 675, 2025

		digital literacy programs to help users understand the psychological drivers of excessive social media use.	
33	Social Media Usage and User's Self-Esteem: The Influence of Instagram's posts on Millennials	Research explores the impact of social media, particularly Instagram, on millennials' mental health. A survey of 23-38-year-olds found that increased Instagram use leads to negative body image, upward social comparison, and decreased life satisfaction and self-esteem. This study highlights the potential dark side of social media, where excessive exposure to curated content can harm users' self-perception and mental well-being, potentially even contributing to depression or suicidal thoughts.	Yousra Ouafik; PQDT-Global, 2021
34	Social comparisons on social media: The impact of Facebook on young women's body image concerns and mood	A study of 112 women found that browsing Facebook for just 10 minutes negatively impacted their mood compared to those who visited a neutral website. Additionally, women with a tendency to compare their appearance to others experienced increased dissatisfaction with their facial features, hair, and skin after using Facebook. The findings suggest that Facebook use may contribute to appearance concerns, particularly among those prone to comparison.	Jasmine Fardouly, Phillippa C Diedrichs, Lenny R Vartanian, Emma Halliwell
35	A social identity perspective of social media's impact on satisfaction with life	A study of 260 individuals explored the dark side of social media, focusing on addiction, fear of missing out, and narcissism, and their impact on self-esteem and life satisfaction. The results showed that these factors significantly affect self-esteem, which in turn influences life satisfaction, with collective self-esteem playing a key role. The findings have implications for academics and practitioners.	Vincent Dutot; Psychology & Marketing 37 (6), 759-772, 2020
36	Social comparison: Why, with whom, and with what effect?	Social comparison involves evaluating oneself by comparing to others, serving two main purposes: self-evaluation (assessing abilities and opinions) and self-enhancement (boosting self-image). When evaluating abilities, people consider others' performance and effort, while opinion evaluation relies on	Jerry Suls, Rene Martin & Ladd Wheeler; Current directions in psychological science 11 (5), 159-163, 2002

		others' expertise, similarity, and past agreement. Self-enhancement through social comparison depends on whether one assimilates (feels similar) or contrasts (feels different) with others, influenced by factors like accessible self-knowledge and the comparison target's distinctiveness.	
37	Why social comparison on Instagram matters: Its impact on depression	A study of 245 Instagram users found that certain activities, such as viewing status updates and commenting on photos, can lead to upward social comparison, which is associated with increased depression. In contrast, downward social comparison was linked to decreased depression. The study suggests that Instagram use can indirectly contribute to depression through social comparison, rather than having a direct effect.	Ha Sung Hwnag ; KSII Transactions on Internet and Information Systems (TIIS) 13 (3), 1626-1638, 2019
38	When image isn't everything: The effects of Instagram frames on social comparison	A study of 58 US women found that exposure to body-positive content on image-based social media boosted self-esteem, while body-negative content led to increased social comparison and lower self-esteem. Women who compared themselves to the images often fantasized about achieving the depicted look and lifestyle. The findings highlight the impact of social media content on self-perception and comparison.	Jennifer Lewallen; The Journal of Social Media in Society 5 (2), 108-133, 2016
39	The Influence of Social Media on Adolescents' Self-Esteem	A study of 500 teenagers aged 13-17 found that excessive social media use is linked to lower self-esteem. Teens who spent more hours on social media daily had lower self-esteem, while those who engaged with text-based content had slightly higher self-esteem compared to those who mainly viewed images and videos. The findings highlight the need for digital literacy and open discussions about self-worth and body image to promote healthy social media use among adolescents.	Humera Omer Farooq & Hafsa Farrukh; Qlantic Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities 4 (3), 173-182, 2023
40	Do you dare to compare?: The key characteristics of social media users who frequently make online	Individuals who make upward social comparisons online tend to have lower quality of life, less social support, fear of missing out, social media addiction, and a need to censor themselves online. These factors are linked to	Gomez M, et.al; International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction 38 (10), 938-948, 2022

	upward social comparisons	negative well-being, suggesting that online comparisons can be detrimental to mental health.	
41	Integrating social comparison theory and self-esteem within objectification theory to predict women's disordered eating	A study of 274 college women explored how sexual objectification affects body shame and disordered eating. The findings showed that appearance feedback can lead to body surveillance, comparison, and shame, ultimately contributing to disordered eating. Women who closely monitor their bodies and compare themselves to others are particularly vulnerable to disordered eating. Self-esteem also plays a role in this complex dynamic.	Tracy L Tylka & Natalie J Sabik Sex roles 63, 18-31, 2010
42	Using social media for social comparison and feedback-seeking: Gender and popularity moderate associations with depressive symptoms	A study of 619 adolescents found that technology-based social comparison and feedback-seeking behaviours are linked to depressive symptoms. This association was stronger among females and less popular teens. The findings suggest that examining the psychological impact of technology use can provide valuable insights into adolescent depression, beyond just looking at overall technology use.	Jacqueline Nesi & Mitchell J Prinstein; Journal of abnormal child psychology 43, 1427-1438, 2015
43	A Comprehensive Analysis of Social Media's Effects on Mental Health: Assessing the Benefits and Drawbacks	The relationship between social media use and mental health is complex, with both benefits and drawbacks. While social media can provide opportunities for social connection, self-expression, and community, excessive use or exposure to harmful content can lead to negative effects like anxiety, depression, and loneliness. To promote healthy social media use, strategies such as limiting screen time and fostering positive online interactions can be effective.	Yousif AbdulRaheem; Iraqi Journal of Community Medicine 38 (2), 103-106, 2025
44	Instagram use and mental well-being: The mediating role of social comparison	A study of 1,172 female Instagram users aged 18-35 found that social comparison on the platform plays a mediating role in the relationship between Instagram use and mental health indicators, including depressive symptoms, self-esteem, and disordered eating attitudes. The findings suggest that excessive Instagram use can lead to increased social	Stefana A,et.al; The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease 210 (12), 960-965, 2022

		comparison, which in turn negatively impacts mental well-being.	
45	Understanding Social Comparison Dynamics on Social Media: A Qualitative Examination of Individual and Platform Characteristics	A study explored the dynamics of social comparison on social media, drawing on self-presentation and social comparison theories. Through two waves of qualitative research, including interviews and case studies, the findings revealed that factors like gender, age, self-esteem, media literacy, and content type influence user experiences of social comparison. The study proposes an integrative framework to understand the complexities of online social comparison.	Derbaix M; Psychology & Marketing, 2025
46	How do people compare themselves with others on social network sites?: The case of Facebook	According to the social comparison theory, people compare themselves to others to evaluate themselves and make decisions. With the rise of social media, people are frequently exposed to others' information, leading to increased social comparison. A study of college students found that personality traits, such as social comparison orientation and self-esteem, influence Facebook social comparison frequency. Additionally, intense Facebook use is linked to more frequent social comparison, which can lead to negative feelings.	Sang Yup Lee; Computers in human behavior 32, 253-260, 2014
47	INVESTIGATING THE INFLUENCE OF EXCESSIVE SOCIAL MEDIA USE ON SOCIAL COMPARISON AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS	A study of 5 university students (ages 19-25) explored the impact of excessive social media use on social comparison and mental health. The findings revealed that social media can foster feelings of inadequacy and negatively affect students' lives, with themes emerging around the pervasive influence of social media and the need for interventions to promote healthier online habits and mitigate the psychological effects of social comparison.	Aimah Sohail, Syed Qamar Ul Hassan, ShahZada Alam, Naeem Ullah, Zia Muhammad, Saqib Raza
48	The influence of social media on teens' self-esteem	A study of 130 high school students explored the relationship between social media use and self-esteem. The findings revealed a significant correlation between self-esteem and various social media factors, including the number of likes on posts, waiting time to	Shannon M Gallagher Rowan University, 2017

		check social media after posting, and the emotional impact of not receiving expected likes. The study concluded that social media use is linked to self-esteem among teenagers.	
49	Social comparison and envy on social media: A critical review	A review of existing research on social media use and well-being found that while earlier studies linked social comparison and envy on social media to lower well-being, newer studies (2019-2021) reveal a more complex picture. Some recent findings suggest positive links to well-being, as well as varied and nuanced effects that depend on individual differences and context. The review highlights limitations in current research and identifies areas for future study.	Adrian Meier, Benjamin K Johnson; Current opinion in psychology 45, 101302, 2022
50	An experience sampling study on the association between social media use and self-esteem	A study using experience sampling methodology over 2 weeks with 200 participants found distinct gendered patterns in the relationship between social media use and self-esteem. For women, low initial self-esteem predicted more frequent social media use, and recent social media use predicted lower current self-esteem. In contrast, men with low initial self-esteem used social media less frequently, and their self-esteem wasn't affected by recent social media use. Regardless of gender, individuals with unstable self-esteem used social media more. The findings suggest a reciprocal relationship between social media use and self-esteem for women, but a less detrimental effect on men.	Kristina Miljeteig & Tilmann von Soest; Journal of Media Psychology, 2022
51	Social comparison theory	This chapter explores the evolution of social comparison theory, from its origins in Festinger's classic work to recent developments. It discusses how people use comparisons with others to evaluate themselves and enhance self-esteem, and how research has shifted from self-evaluation to self-enhancement. The chapter also examines various models, including downward comparison theory and social cognitive approaches, and concludes with applications of social comparison in education, health, and	Jerry Suls & Ladd Wheeler; Handbook of theories of social psychology 1, 460-482, 2012

		well-being, highlighting unresolved questions and future directions.	
52	The effects of social media sites on self-esteem	The rise of social networking sites like Facebook has become a significant part of college students' daily lives, with around 90% of students having a Facebook account and spending 30 minutes to 2 hours on it daily. This study explores the relationship between Facebook use and self-esteem among college students. The results show that females spend more time on Facebook, have more Facebook friends, and experience lower body image satisfaction and a greater drive for thinness compared to males. The study suggests a potential link between social media use and negative self-perceptions, particularly among young women.	Kristine Raymer (2015)
53	The impact of media images of super-slender women on women's self-esteem: Identification, social comparison, and self-perception	A study of 41 women found that exposure to slender models can have varying effects on self-esteem and body satisfaction. Women who focus on internal cues experienced decreased self-esteem and body satisfaction when viewing slender models, likely due to social comparison. In contrast, women who don't rely on internal cues reported increased self-esteem and body satisfaction, possibly due to identifying with the models.	Kathy Wilcox & James D Laird; Journal of Research in Personality 34 (2), 278-286, 2000
54	Self-esteem, social comparison, and Facebook use	A study of 250 Italian students found that social comparison tendencies can mediate the relationship between low self-esteem and Facebook use, particularly in terms of time spent on the platform and using it for simulation. The study also found gender differences, with social comparison playing a more significant role in Facebook use among females. For females, high self-esteem directly influenced social interaction on Facebook, while low self-esteem had an indirect influence. The findings suggest that social comparison is an important factor in understanding Facebook use, especially among young women.	Elisa Bergagna & Stefano Tartaglia; Europe's journal of psychology 14 (4), 831, 2018

55	Affective and Behavioral Consequences of Social Comparison.	Research suggests that social comparisons can have significant emotional consequences, with upward comparisons often leading to negative feelings and downward comparisons to positive ones. However, the impact of these comparisons can be influenced by several factors, including perceived control. A study of college students who failed a test found that those who believed they couldn't improve their performance experienced more negative emotions when exposed to upward comparisons. This suggests that the debilitating effects of upward comparisons are most pronounced when individuals feel a lack of control over their situation.	Maria N Testa & Brenda Major (1988)
56	Overcome Social Media Comparison: A Guide to Self-Acceptance and Well-being	To overcome social comparison and its negative effects, it's essential to adopt a holistic approach that includes self-compassion, healthy boundaries, and mindful online interactions. By embracing authenticity and accepting imperfections, individuals can build a strong sense of self-worth that isn't reliant on external validation. Key strategies include practicing mindfulness, creating supportive online communities, and seeking professional help when needed. By implementing these strategies, individuals can promote mental well-being, reduce negative outcomes associated with social media use, and increase self-esteem, resilience, and overall life satisfaction.	Melkusedeck L.shine (2015-2018)
57	Cognitive and Affective Reactions to Social Comparison	A study of 143 college freshmen found that social comparison affects self-appraisal and emotions differently depending on individuals' certainty about their academic abilities. Students with low self-certainty reported higher self-appraisals after comparing themselves to someone who failed, while those with high self-certainty reported higher self-appraisals after comparing themselves to someone who succeeded. However, regardless of self-certainty, participants felt inspired by success and	Khanh Van T Bui & Brett W Pelham; Journal of Social Behavior & Personality 14 (4), 1999

		discouraged by failure. This suggests that social comparison can have complex and nuanced effects on self-perception and emotions.	
58	Social comparison and negative self-evaluations: An application to depression	Social comparisons can have a significant impact on self-evaluation, providing useful information but also potentially leading to negative self-views. Certain individual characteristics, such as attributes chosen for comparison and reference groups, can increase vulnerability to chronic negative self-evaluations. Research suggests that depressed individuals and those at risk for depression may exhibit differences in social comparison patterns, which can maintain or contribute to negative self-views. A cognitive vulnerability model of depression highlights the potential role of social comparison in the development and maintenance of depression.	Stephen R Swallow & Nicholas; A Kuiper Clinical Psychology Review 8 (1), 55-76, 1988
59	Social comparison on Instagram, and its relationship with self-esteem and body-esteem	Self-esteem and body-esteem scores significantly increased after downward comparison, with no change in scores following a neutral condition. Body-esteem scores significantly decreased after upward comparison, whilst self-esteem scores did not. Support for social comparison theory is provided.	Jacqui Taylor & Georgina Armes; Discover Psychology 4 (1), 126, 2024
60	Social comparisons and their affective consequences: The importance of comparison dimension and individual difference variables	A study of 151 people with multiple sclerosis found that social comparisons can have different effects depending on the dimension being compared (physical condition vs. coping ability). Downward comparisons had a greater impact on affect when related to physical condition. The study also found that individuals' outlook on life and perceived appropriateness of social comparison influenced their comparison behaviours and emotional responses. Those who believed comparison was appropriate experienced more positive effects, while those with a negative outlook experienced more negative effects.	Kenneth J Hemphill & Darrin R Lehman; Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology 10 (4), 372-394, 1991

61	For better or worse: The impact of upward social comparison on self-evaluations	Upward social comparison, where individuals compare themselves to others who are better off, can have mixed effects. While it may lead to negative self-evaluations, it can also provide valuable information and inspiration for self-improvement. In some cases, upward comparison can even enhance self-assessments and boost self-esteem, suggesting that people may engage in upward comparison to motivate themselves and improve their own abilities.	Rebecca L Collins Psychological bulletin 119 (1), 51, 1996
62	Comparison: An Examination of Social Comparison Orientation on Instagram as It Relates to Self-Esteem and State Anxiety	A study of 196 young adults explored how social comparison on Instagram affects self-esteem and anxiety. Contrary to expectations, the findings showed no significant negative impact of Instagram use on mental well-being. However, a follow-up experiment found that individuals with high social comparison tendencies experienced a greater decrease in anxiety.	Alice C Mullin (2017)
63	The Impact of Social Comparison on Self-Esteem and Body Image	Low self-esteem can lead to serious mental health issues like depression, anxiety, and eating disorders. Seeking professional help can provide specialized treatment, coping strategies, and support to improve mental health and relationships. It can also help individuals overcome academic or work performance issues. Various resources are available, including therapy, support groups, and online resources, which can offer personalized guidance, community support, and valuable information to build self-confidence and improve body image.	Softmind (2023)
64	Understanding Social Comparison on Social Media	Social media use can negatively impact mental health, particularly through social comparison, leading to depression, anxiety, poor self-esteem, and body image issues. Curated highlight reels create unrealistic expectations, promoting feelings of inadequacy and decreased well-being. Heavy social media use is linked to increased depression, low self-esteem, and suicidal thoughts, especially among young people.	The Jed Foundation

65	The relationship between reasons for social media use, levels of social comparison, and changes to state self-esteem	A study of 132 emerging adult social media users explored how social comparisons on social media affect state self-esteem. The findings showed that upward comparisons led to lower self-esteem, while downward comparisons resulted in higher self-esteem. However, the changes in self-esteem from pre- to post-testing were not statistically significant. The study also found that using social media for relaxation was negatively correlated with state self-esteem. The results highlight the importance of social media content in influencing self-esteem and suggest that future research should focus on more meaningful content, such as likes and comments.	Victoria Farinha William James (2022)
66	Social comparisons on social media: online appearance-related activity and body dissatisfaction in adolescent girls	Body dissatisfaction was significantly related to (i.) time spent engaged in social comparisons and (ii) upward social comparisons with various female targets while online. Evaluating oneself less favorably than the target group of close friends was most strongly associated with poorer body image appraisals. Serial multiple mediation analysis revealed that even after controlling for age and self-esteem, time spent engaged in social comparisons significantly mediated the relationship between online appearance-related activity and body dissatisfaction. This association was then further partially mediated by internalization of the thin ideal, which significantly mediated the relationship between time engaged in social comparisons and body dissatisfaction.	Malcom Scully, Lorraine Swords & Elisabeth Nixon Irish; journal of psychological medicine 40 (1), 31- 42, 2023
67	Effects of Instagram on users' self-esteem, social comparison, and life satisfaction	A study of 86 Instagram users explored the impact of Instagram on self-esteem, social comparison, and life satisfaction. The results showed no significant correlation between Instagram use and these psychological factors. Despite the findings, the study contributes to the understanding of social media's effects on psychological well-being and highlights areas for future research.	Katie O'Sullivan; Institute of Art, Design+ Technology, 2024

68	The impact of social media on life satisfaction: The mediating role of social comparison, envy and self-esteem	A study of 390 Egyptian individuals aged 18-35 found that excessive social media use is linked to lower life satisfaction. The analysis revealed a negative correlation between social media use and life satisfaction, with social comparison, envy, and self-esteem playing a mediating role in this relationship. The findings suggest that social media use can have a detrimental impact on mental well-being.	Mamdouh Abdellatif; Information Sciences Letters 11 (5), 1805-1813, 2022
69	Impact of Social Media on Self-Esteem	A study of 150 students from the Institute of Business Management found that social media use, particularly Facebook, leads to lower self-esteem due to upward social comparisons. The findings showed that 88% of students engage in social comparisons on Facebook, with 98% of those comparisons being upward. The study revealed a strong negative relationship between social media use and self-esteem, with every hour spent on Facebook daily resulting in a significant decrease in self-esteem score.	Muqaddas Jan IoBM (2017)
70	The Effect of Self-Comparison in Social Media on Self Esteem	A study of 221 Indonesian adolescents aged 13-18 found that social media use and self-comparison significantly impact self-esteem. The more adolescents engage in social comparison on social media, the more it affects their self-esteem. The study revealed that self-comparison is a strong predictor of self-esteem, accounting for 29.6% of the variance.	Clara Moningga & Ratih Eminiari (2019)

5. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The study reveals a significant negative and positive correlation between social comparison, social media usage, and self-esteem. Social media platforms showcase curated highlight reels, fostering unrealistic comparisons and feelings of inadequacy, which can lead to lower self-esteem, anxiety, and depression. Exposure to idealized body types and beauty standards can perpetuate negative body image and low self-esteem, particularly among young adults and adolescents. Online harassment can have devastating effects on self-esteem, leading to shame, humiliation, and isolation.

Same time in some cases Social media can provide access to supportive communities and inspirational content that encourages personal growth and resilience. Likes and comments can boost confidence and reinforce self-worth.

The findings suggest that Setting boundaries and limiting social media use can reduce exposure to harmful content and promote healthier online interactions. Unfollowing accounts that trigger negative comparisons and following accounts that promote positivity and inspiration can help. Treating oneself with kindness and understanding can counteract the negative impacts of social comparison.

6. OBJECTIVES EXPLAINED :

- a. **Relationship between self-comparison and self-esteem :** There is a significant relationship between self-comparison and self-esteem. self-comparison can have both positive and negative effects on self-esteem, depending on the context and individual differences.
Negative Effects likes Downward Comparison, Unrealistic Expectations, Social Media Comparison. And the Positive Effects likes Upward Comparison, Self-Awareness.
- b. **Impact of social media on self-esteem and body image :** Social media significantly impacts self-esteem and body image, particularly among young adults and adolescents. Negative Impacts likes Unrealistic Beauty Standards, Comparison and Envy, Cyberbullying and Body Shaming, Body Image Concerns. Positive Impacts like Body Positivity and Diversity, Supportive Communities, Education and Awareness.
- c. **factors that influence self-esteem and self-comparison in the context of social media :** Several positive and negative factors influence self-esteem and self-comparison in the context of social media. Positive factors like Body Positivity and Diversity, Supportive Communities, Education and Awareness. Negative factors like Unrealistic Beauty Standards, Comparison and Envy, Cyberbullying and Body, Shaming, Validation-Seeking, Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)
Other personal factors like Self-Awareness, Self-Compassion, Offline Interactions.
- d. **Strategies for managing social comparison and promoting healthy self-esteem and individuality :** There are some strategies for managing social comparison and promoting healthy self-esteem and individuality:
For Managing Social Comparison: Set boundaries, Curate feed, Take breaks, Practice self-compassion, Focus on real-life connections.
For Promoting Healthy Self-Esteem : Practice self-awareness, Set realistic goals, Develop self-compassion, Engage in activities that bring joy, Seek support.
For Promoting Individuality : Embrace uniqueness, Celebrate individuality and reject societal pressure to conform, Explore interests, Develop a growth mind-set, Practice self-expression, Cultivate self-acceptance.

7. FINDINGS :

- The study reveals a significant correlation between social comparison, social media usage, and self-esteem.
- Social media platforms can foster unrealistic comparisons, leading to lower self-esteem, anxiety, and depression.
- Exposure to idealized body types and beauty standards can perpetuate negative body image and low self-esteem.
- social media can also provide access to supportive communities and inspirational content that encourages personal growth and resilience.

- Setting boundaries, limiting social media use, and practicing self-compassion can promote healthier online interactions and self esteem.

8. SUGGESTIONS :

Based on the above study findings, the study suggests: Set boundaries: Limit social media use to specific times or days. Curate feed: Follow accounts that promote positivity, self-acceptance, and diversity. Take breaks: Regularly disconnect from social media to reduce comparison and promote self-reflection. Practice self-compassion: Treat own self with kindness and understanding. Focus on real-life connections: Nurture offline relationships and engage in activities that bring joy and fulfilment.

9. CONCLUSION :

The study concludes that social media has a significant impact on self-esteem and body image, particularly among young adults and adolescents. While social media can have negative effects, it can also provide opportunities for personal growth and resilience. By understanding the complex relationship between social comparison, social media usage, and self-esteem, individuals can develop strategies to promote healthy self-esteem and individuality. By setting boundaries, practicing self-compassion, and focusing on real-life connections, individuals can mitigate the negative effects of social media and cultivate a positive self-image.

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