

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA USE, BODY IMAGE DISSATISFACTION AND SELF ACCEPTANCE

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### ABSTRACT

*This study investigated relationship between social media, body image dissatisfaction and self-acceptance among female undergraduate students. 237 participants were selected for this study. All participants were females between the ages of 17-29 years, with a mean age of 19.68 and a standard deviation of 2.28. The participants were selected using purposive and convenient sampling technique from a population of all departments in the Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, Caritas University Amorji-Nike, Enugu. Three scales were used in this study which are; Body image satisfaction Scale, Unconditional Self-Acceptance Questionnaire and Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS). Multiple regression statistics was adopted to test the hypotheses. From the results body image dissatisfaction significantly predicted self-acceptance ( $\beta = -.19, p < .05$ ) while social media was not a significant predictor of self-acceptance. Results were discussed and recommendations made in line with the literature reviewed.*

**Keywords:** *body image, social media addiction, self-acceptance, students*

### INTRODUCTION

Self-acceptance is the state of complete acceptance of oneself. True self-acceptance is embracing who you are, without any qualifications, conditions or exceptions (Seltzer, 2008). According to Morgado and his academic colleagues (2014) self-acceptance entails an individual's acceptance of all his/her attributes both positive and negative. This definition places importance on acceptance of all aspects of an individual. it's not enough to embrace only the positive aspect, true self-acceptance means embracing everything ranging from the less desirable, the negative and ugly parts of oneself (Courtney, 2018). According to Shepard (1979), self-acceptance is an individual's satisfaction or happiness with oneself, and it is thought to be necessary for good mental health (a level of psychological well-being including one's cognitive, behavioral and emotional well-being).). "Self-acceptance permits balance in our recovery. We no longer have to look or seek the approval of others because we are satisfied with being ourselves. We are allowed to gratefully emphasize our assets, to humbly move away from our defects, and become the best recovering addicts we can be. Accepting ourselves as we are means that we are all right, that we are not perfect, but we can improve" (Narcotics anonymous world services, Inc., 1985).

Self-acceptance does not just affect or improve our psychological well-being but also gives physical benefit to us, improve our self-worth, independence and less desire to seek approval of others and enhance the decision to live life for oneself and not for others; an example is the result of a study in 2008, it proposed that older women with higher levels of environmental mastery, positive relations with other and self-acceptance showed lower level of glycosylated hemoglobin, which is a marker for glucose levels/insulin resistance (Ryff, Singer & Burton, 2006).

Different psychologists explained the concept and importance of self in their theories such as; Jahoda's work on mental health, Carl Rogers' theory on personality. In addition, Erickson and Neugarten mention the importance of acceptance of self, including one's past life and Carl Jung's

Jung's process of individuation also emphasized accepting one's self or shadow (Ryffet.al, 2006). The human society has always placed great value on the beauty of the human body (Schilder, Paul, 1999), but a person's perception of their own body may not always if not never correspond to society's standards. The term body image as been used in different disciplines such as psychiatry, philosophy, and psychology even the media frequently uses it now. Body image is a person's perception of the characteristics and sexual attractiveness of their body (Wikipedia).

Body image includes the memories, experiences, assumptions and comparisons of one's own appearance and overall attitudes towards one's height, shape and weight (National Eating Disorder Association, 2017). Modern definitions of body image involve two key elements which includes: a mental picture of one's body (including size, shape & appearance) and secondly one's attitudes towards the physical self (example; thoughts, feelings and behavior).

Body image has been defined as an individual's appraisal of and feelings about his body (Cornwell & Schmitt, 1990). It is also an important part of one's identity and self- concepts, due to the fact that feelings about the body may influence the way we think about ourselves and our capabilities (Chrisler & Ghiz, 1993). According to Abamara and Agu (2014), a person's body image is thought to be a product of their personal experiences, personality and various social and cultural forces. Thompson, Heinberg, Attabe and Tantleff- Dunn (1999) described body image as an umbrella term that encompass many different things which includes the following but not limited to them; weight satisfaction, size perception accuracy, appearance satisfaction, body satisfaction, appearance orientation, body schema and body esteem.

According to Smolak and Levine (2001), body image develops on or before the age of six (6). At this stage, children are aware of their own appearance and also of the society bias against people with certain body types such as, obesity. Different individuals have bodies of different shape and sizes, despite the diversity of this body shapes, many men and women wish that their body looked different and this wish for a different look is what is referred to as 'body dissatisfaction' or 'negative body image' Negative body image can be defined as, "the psychologically salient discrepancy between a person's perceived body and their ideal body, which manifests itself as the experience of negative thoughts and esteem about one's body and appearance" (Bell & Dittmar 2011, p.491). Grogan (2008) defines body dissatisfaction as a person's negative thoughts about his/her own body. This thoughts includes judgments about size, shape, muscle look and widely involves the discrepancy between one's own body and an ideal body type. Ridolfi et al. (2011, p. 491) defines body dissatisfaction as, "the cognitive-affective domain of body image, which refers to negative and dysfunctional cognitions and emotions about one's appearance."

Body dissatisfaction is defined as a subjective evaluation of the weight and shape of one's own body. A major component of body dissatisfaction is 'appearance-based social comparisons' that is an observer becomes dissatisfied with their body when he/she unfavorably compares his/her body with other people's bodies (Joseph, C. and Shiffar, M. 2011).

Body image disturbance means that an individual sees oneself or one's own body in an unrealistic manner either thinking it is too big, too ugly or having other negative characteristics. Before the advent of westernization, obesity related body dissatisfaction and the glorification of thinness or extreme muscularity were not known in our culture.

Most people have experienced the desire to modify some aspect of their appearance. Some dislike the colour of their hair, others dislike the size of their nose and so on. Use of cosmetics as an aspect for the improvement of physical attractiveness and individual appearance, has a

potential impact on an individual's body image, self-perceived attractiveness and acceptance of oneself (Huguet, Croizet and Richetin, 2014). A lot of studies and research have been carried out pertaining to body image, eating disorder, self-esteem, body dissatisfaction and the correlation between these variables. Individuals who accept their bodies without dwelling on perceived flaws are said to have a general positive body image. According to OndinaHatuany, LMFT, a 'healthy body image means you are comfortable with the body you have. It usually doesn't mean your body is perfect whereas it means you accept your body and show love and care for it.

A negative or unhealthy body image on the other hand involves a preoccupation with one's perceived flaws. Such individuals feel ashamed of their body and even feel disgust about their appearance. Some of the individuals may go extra miles to alter or hide their actual appearance or body size even at the expense of their well-being. Body image is generally experienced along a continuum. Televisions, advertisement, instagram, Facebook and other media can have a powerful impact on how people regard their bodies, messages often gotten from these media are usually harmful because the standards of physical attractiveness portrayed by the media may not be attainable by everyone. Social media platforms like instagram and facebook have become interwoven in the lives of countless individuals (Bindal M, Yaeun Lee, SusanahParkin and Leland Farner, 2018) with adolescents and young adults, especially young women being the primary users of such platforms.

Social media has currently been seen to affect/influence virtually all aspect of our lives. People now use the social media either as a reference point or medium of comparison among users in the society. Since the inception of social media in the year 1978, the rate of its usage has grown rapidly. Now through globalization social media is easily accessible. Social media offers a collaborative site for social interaction between a large number of people (Bindalet. al, 2018).

Social media can be seen as a computer-based technology that facilitate the sharing of ideas, thoughts and information through the building of virtual networks and communities. Social media are broadly defined as the use of platforms of electronic communication through which users create online communities (Chou & Hunt, 2009). The use of social media has increased drastically over the last decades and continues to increase. According to a review by Maya Dollarhide on social media, there were noted figures for the most popular social media websites as of (January, 2018) with facebook having the highest number of users (2.167 billion users) followed by Youtube (1.5 billion) and WhatsApp (1.3 billion). Also, Pew Research centre shows that 71% of 13-17 years olds use Facebook, 52% use Instagram, and 41% use snapchat in 2015. The top 10 most used social media Applications include; facebook, whatsapp, QQ, Wechat, Qzone, Tumblr, Instagram, Twitter, Google +, Baidutieba. About 70% of these social media applications create audio-visual platforms whereby users can send audios, videos and even video chat, upload pictures, update their storys' etc. all of these addition to their features has contributed a lot to the means of comparison among women, teenagers and the human population at large.

Several benefits have been identified in relation to the regular use of social media platforms. The major ones given are; increased interactions with others, more available shared information with others, increased accessibility and widening access to health information, peer social and emotional support, public health surveillance and potential to influence health policy ( Moorhead et al. , 2013 p.8). Despite the several benefits that come with social media use, specifically image-based social media, some uses of the platform could lead to unwanted effects (Bindal M. et al., 2018). Lewallen and Behm-Morawitz (2016) suggest that adolescent girls and young women following fitness boards on pintrest were more likely to report intentions to engage in extreme weight loss behaviors such as crash dieting or a radical exercise plan. In response to

images viewed on the fitness boards on pinterest, these adolescent girls and young women developed a process of self-reflection, which increased intentions to engage in extreme weight loss behaviors. In conclusion, the study results revealed that social media environments might influence adolescent girls and young women to engage in social comparison leading to feeling of inadequacy and body dissatisfaction (Alperstein, 2015).

Bierma (2003) opined that the development of body image is a lifetime process. They also emphasized on the fact that the experiences and emotions we receive as children and adolescents about our appearance have a significant impact on the formation of our body images

Current studies link social media platforms with body dissatisfaction in adolescent girls (Tiggemann and Miller, 2010; Tiggemann and Stater, 2013). In order to investigate the underlying processes, one study investigated over 100 seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) graders and found out that adolescent girls who shared more photos online such as selfies and used more Photoshop felt worse about their appearance and exhibited greater eating concerns (McLean et al., 2015).

Teenage girls are also using image-based social media platforms more frequently than the males; 61% of girls use instagram while 44% are boys who use it, the increase in the use of social media especially facebook and instagram, may have a negative effect on adolescent girls and on young women in regard to their self-confidence and body satisfaction (Lenhart, 2015). A study by Becker and colleagues (2011), suggests that media effects can take place indirectly. The authors studied whether direct and indirect exposure to mass-media (such as; television, videos, internet access) were associated with eating pathology in Fijian adolescent girls. They found relationship between both direct social media exposure (personal exposure) and indirect exposure (media exposure to the people in one's peer group) with eating pathology in Fijian adolescent girls. Some studies also suggest that increased usage of social media heightens body dissatisfaction and the acceptance of self and this is due to an increase in appearance related comments from friends (De Vries et al., 2015).

Instagram is one of the most popular social media platforms (Kharpal, 2015). It allows users to communicate solely through posting and sharing photos. Researchers have looked at the role of instagram on body image among young women who are the most frequent users of the social media platform. Studies on instagram have mostly been on fitspiration pictures; fitspiration is a movement that promotes a healthy lifestyle, primarily through food and exercise. Despite the wonderful idea behind its existence, researchers have suggested dysfunctional themes in the images and messages. For example, when over 600 fitspiration images were studied, one major theme regarding the female body emerged which is; "thin and toned" (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2016). Also, most images were found to contain certain elements that objectified the female body. Some researchers suggest that mere looking or watching fitspiration on instagram can lead to unhealthy eating and exercise behaviors in young adults (Holland & Tiggemann, 2016). In one experiment where 130 female undergraduates were randomly exposed to either fitspiration or neutral travel images, scientists found out that the appearance-based pictures of fitspiration had a negative impact on mood, body image and self-esteem (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015). This therefore showed that, the college students who viewed fitspiration images felt worse about themselves and their bodies compared to the students who viewed neutral images. There were limitations to the study which includes the use of travel photos as a control to fitspiration may have affected the variable of interest and resulted to inaccurate findings. Social media has sucked us of our happiness. We forget the fact that just the way we select nice pictures to upload that's the exact way the people we follow or compare ourselves with do; nobody will want to post a picture of them failing in something big or falling down from a stairs (Goldner, 2015).

Social media is a world in which our egos are capsulated as photo grids, a world in which we can actually quantify validation by way of likes (Hoff, 2018). Research shows that even just anticipating likes after posting a thing immediately sends a rush of feel-good dopamine to our brains (Hoff, 2018) but science suggests that the negative feelings associated with social media use can severely outweigh the positive. 'it is well documented in the psychological literature that social media channels can have a deleterious effect on our confidence and identity', says Heather Silvestri.

### **Statement of problem**

The vast majority of social media users especially the instagram seems to be more of females. Women who use the social media especially active on one or two of its platforms may on the long run develop body dissatisfaction which in turn signifies lack of self-acceptance. Women who are dissatisfied with their body image may begin to buy more cosmetics such as make-up; eye-shadow, eye-liner, brown powder etc. also those ones low on self-acceptance will join the trend of females who use make-up to enhance their looks.

This study seeks to address this problem;

Will there be a significant relationship between social media use, self- acceptance and body image dissatisfaction.

### **Purpose of study**

The purpose of this study is to effectively understand the concept of body image and use of social media and determine how they can predict one's self-acceptance and also, how one's self-acceptance can lead to a positive body image or body satisfaction. An improved understanding of these variables will help researchers develop methods to help females with problems of self-acceptance.

### **Media Influence on Body Image Dissatisfaction**

Sreedharan, Antony, Qureshi, Fazal and Siddiqui (2012) carried out a cross- sectional study to determine the degree of the influence of media on body image among 372 school and college students (129 males; 243 females) residing in United Arab Emirates. Data was collected using a self- administered questionnaire. The results indicated that twenty eight percent (28%) of the study group reported media to be the most influential factor on perception of appearance, of which the internet was found to be most influential medium (47.3% males and 42% females) on body image, the next was television (31% males and 37% females), The attitude of the family (37.4%), attitude of the opposite sex (36.9%) and friends (34.7%) ranked highest among the influencing factors, while the media was considered moderately influencing (37.4%). The media had effect only on the emotional and cognitive aspects. The overweight participants considered media to have strong influence; ( $P < 0.06$ ) which was statistically significant.

Frison and Eggermont (2016) investigated the effect of negative comparison on Facebook and body image dissatisfaction among 1840 Belgian female adolescents whose ages ranged from 12-19 years ( $M = 14.76$ ;  $SD = 14.1$ ) and were sampled in an online survey, the result of the study indicated that negative assertion about the shape of a female on Facebook influenced the removal of the pictures indicating that and uploading another picture which the individual gets comment approving such picture with better shape and then shows it to the public through the social media platforms. The conclusion drawn from out from the study was that girls prefer using slim-shaped



images of either themselves or role models and uploading it as their Facebook profile pictures than fat shaped pictures, and that fat females will end up embarking on exercises and dieting plans in order to reduce their shape whenever they are told by their friends on social media that they are getting fatter or are already fat.

McCabe and Ricciardelli (2003b) mentioned that media is not significantly correlated to body image among male adolescents because they do not feel pressured by images which are presented to them by the media for them to either gain or lose weight. According to the study carried out by Green and Pritchard (2005) with males, body dissatisfaction and media images showed no relationships.

Van den Berg et al. (2007) conducted a study with 2,516 individuals (1386 females and 1,130 males) from the second part of project "Eat Among Teens" (EAT-11) which sort to evaluate the degree at which body comparison along with media images interceded affiliations and socio-cultural variables and psychological factors, and body dissatisfaction. They found no relationship between media comparisons and body dissatisfaction (Van den Berg et al., 2007).

Mills and Hogue carried out research examining the effects of social media on the self-perceived body image of young women. They divided 118 female undergraduate students aged 18-27 into two groups. People in the first group were asked to log into Facebook and Instagram for 5 minutes and more and were asked to find peers of roughly the same age whom they considered attractive than themselves. Afterwards, they were all asked to comment on the photos of their peers. In the control group, the participants were asked to log into Facebook and Instagram for at least 5 minutes and asked to leave a comment on a post of a family member whom they did not consider very attractive. Before and after the tasks, the participants were asked how much dissatisfied they felt with their appearance by filling in a questionnaire using a scale ranging from "none" to "very much". The participants rated how dissatisfied they felt about the general looks and body by placing a vertical line, on a 10cm horizontal line.

The results of the study revealed that after interaction with attractive peers, the perception of the females about their own appearance changed whereas participants that were asked to interact with their family members did not have any changed perception about their body image. According to Mills and Hogue, "social media engagement with attractive peers increases negative state of body image".

Fardously, Diedrichs, Vartarian and Halliwell (2015) carried out experimental research on the effect of Facebook picture shapes in women's body image and appearance. A total number of 112 females aged 12-17 ( $M=14.3$ ,  $SD=2.0$ ) were randomly assigned to Facebook and Non-Facebook groups. The study result showed that female adolescents who spent more time on Facebook reported to have developed more negative feelings about their body size and weight after viewing pictures posted by friends, role models and celebrities. It was reported that spending time on Facebook led to greater desire to change the physical appearance including the color of their skin and hair, while others who do not constantly use social media or have never used it showed little or no concern about how their shape was or recognized the difference from that of celebrities. Therefore, according to the results of the research, it was concluded that social media has a significant effect on young females' perception and reaction of their body size.

Meir and Gray (2014) explored the relationship between body image and adolescent girls activity on social network platform such as; Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram. The study included a total of 103 participants who were students and were asked to complete questionnaires

on social media use, weight satisfaction, appearance comparison and drive for thinness. The result of the study revealed that social media is positively correlated with increased body image disturbance among adolescents especially the use of Facebook. The study concluded that individuals who use social media are more likely to involve in activities in order to reduce their body weight especially when their peers complain of their body size and weight.

A study carried out by Scott, Sarah on the influence of cosmetics on the confidence of college women. The study consisted of four female college students (Caucasians) aged 19-20 years old, two were freshman and two were juniors. The participants were asked to fill an open-ended survey questionnaire and also a revised version of the Cash Cosmetics Use Inventory (Cash, 1985). Each of the participant had their own personal make-up supply and were asked to fill out a survey tool developed by the researcher in order to record the specific cosmetic products used as well as the actions, thought and feeling of the participants in each situation before and after each condition. The participants were asked to change up their make-up when going to class and when going out with friends. Before each situation or event, they were asked to quickly fill out the “before questions” and after they had completed the situation, they were asked to fill the “after situation questions” and the state- trait anxiety survey developed by Spielberger et al, 1970. The results of the study showed that the participants felt more anxious while wearing a “class make-up” than when hanging out with girlfriends. There was no significant relationship between make-up and situation. The study provided evidence for the idea that matching two variables (make-up to situation) will reduce anxiety and thus increase confidence. Participants who had the lowest anxiety levels in class (while wearing less make-up reported that wearing less make-up allowed her to focus more in class) while participants recorded with increased level of anxiety said that she had given extra thought and effort to make-up application and formed expectations from her great application of make-up. In order to attract attention, she felt more anxious at the thought of receiving it. In conclusion, the use of a greater amount of make-up likely led to greater expectation and in turn leads to more anxiety.

### **Body image dissatisfaction and Self-acceptance/ Self-esteem**

Body-esteem and body satisfaction are associated with self-esteem (Barlett et al., 2008; Grogan, 1999). Grossbard, Leigh, Neighbors and Larimer (2009) researched on gender as a modulator of the association between self-esteem and body image concerns among 359 undergraduate freshman (40.9% males). Grossbard et al. (2009) found out that self-esteem influenced a desire for muscle mass among males.

Green and Pritchard (2003) studied the relationship between self-esteem and body dissatisfaction in adult men and women. The study consisted of 139 participants (94 females and 45 males) between the ages of 19 to 68 years old. The Body-Esteem Questionnaire consisted of fourteen (14) items to measure body image. The mass media influence subscale of the Socialization Factors Questionnaire consists of ten (10) items and was used to measure media influence. Close ended questions were asked to determine family influence. The Rosenberg self-esteem scale was used to measure self-esteem. Researchers distributed and mailed out approximately 200 questionnaires and received a response rate of 70%. Green and Pritchard concluded that body dissatisfaction was associated with age, family pressure and self-esteem.

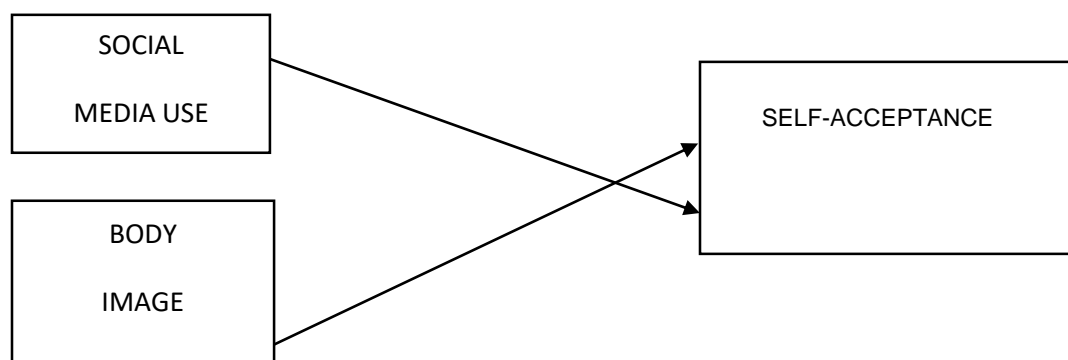
### **Theoretical Framework**

The self- discrepancy theory developed by Higgins (1987) was adopted as a framework for this study because it explained the internal (self) and external (society) factors that contributes to self-

acceptance and body dissatisfaction. The theory stated that people compare themselves to an internalized standard which is called the “self-guides.” According to the self-discrepancy theory by Higgins (1987) it postulated three domains of self namely; “the actual self”- which is the actual representation of the individual’s attributes also known as ‘the real self’. The second domain is the “ideal self”- it refers to the individual’s aspirations about possessing certain characteristics; according to Higgins, it is what motivates an individual to change and improve. The last domain is the “ought self”-they represent attributes that the individual wishes to possess

According to the self-discrepancy theory six self-states were outlined actual/own, actual/other, ideal/own, ideal/other, ought/own, ought/other. It states that when trying to compare one self-state with another self-state that discrepancy between these two states may occur and it occurs mostly between “actual/own (the way one views one’s self) and ideal/own or ought/other(the way one aspires to be or the society wants one to act for example the media standard for a nice body image and attractiveness which hinges around the premise of thinness).

The relevance of this theory to this study is that the theory explains that there are cultural norms that adopts or embrace a particular standard of attractiveness and require individuals to attain this standards, individuals trying to adopt this standard to compare one’s actual/own self & ideal/own self with the actual/other self & ideal and ought/other-self set out by the societal norms is on a high rate of falling short of standards and this often leads to discrepancy of self which relates to lack of acceptance of self which results to perceived feeling of dissatisfaction of self. According to this theory congruence between three domains of selves and six self-state will lead to great feeling of acceptance of oneself whereas when there’s a discrepancy between two of self-state or domains, one lacks self-acceptance and feeling of dissatisfaction accompanies it. The self-discrepancy theory provides a useful framework for examining the relationship that exist between social media, body dissatisfaction and self-acceptance, to determine if body image and social media predicts self-acceptance.



**Fig. 1:** *Conceptual model of associations between social media use, body image and self-acceptance.*



## Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested;

1. Social media use will not significantly predict self-acceptance among female undergraduates.
2. Perceived body image will not significantly predict self-acceptance among female undergraduates.

## METHOD

### Participants

A total of 237 female undergraduate students from the population of undergraduate students in the faculty of Management and Social Sciences, Caritas University Amorji-Nike, Enugu, participated in the study. The following participants were drawn using purposive sampling method. Collins et al. (2007) opined that purposive sampling is a technique in which the population under study is a typical case that provides characteristic requisite data or information for a specific population of interest to the researcher. They were drawn from the departments; Economics (40), Political Science (15), Sociology (8), Psychology (30), International Relations and Personnel Management (25), Accountancy (25), Banking and Finance (5), Marketing (10), English (24), Mass communication (35), Public Administration (10) and Business Administration (10). Their age ranged between 17 and 29 years with a mean age of 23.56 and a standard deviation of 2.28.

### Instruments

#### *Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale*

Social media use was measured using the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS). It consists of six items rated on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Always*) to 6 (*Never*). The BSMAS applies the six core addiction elements (salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict, and relapse). The BSMAS contains six items reflecting core addiction elements (i.e., salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict, and relapse; Griffiths, 2005). Sample items include; "did you use social media so much that their use had a negative impact on your work/studies?" and "Have you tried to stop using social media without success?" All items are scored directly with total score ranging from 6-36. In a pilot study, the researcher obtained a reliability coefficient Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the present study is .79.

#### *Body Image Satisfaction Scale*

Body image dissatisfaction was measured using the 12 items adapted from Jesters (1999) questionnaires on body image satisfaction scale. The scale was designed to assess perception toward one's body particularly and feeling happy about it. An example of an item from the body image questionnaires is: "I care too much about my weight and body shape". The instrument was a Likert format with seven options: Almost Always True = 1, Usually True = 2, Often True = 3, Occasionally True = 4, Sometimes But Infrequently True = 5, Usually Not true = 6 and Almost Never True = 7. The questionnaire is administered individually or in group after establishing adequate rapport with the respondents. The semi-illiterates' clients are helped to carry out the instructions. There are no right or wrong answer and no time limit for completing. A highest possible score of 84 and a least possible score of 12 is expected from any given respondent. Abamara and Agu (2014) obtained a reliability coefficient Alpha of .52 and a corrected value of .53 was obtained using Spearman Brown. In a pilot study, the researcher obtained a reliability Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .79.

***Unconditional Self-Acceptance Questionnaire (USAQ; Chamberlain & Haaga, 2001)***

Self-Acceptance was measured using Unconditional Self-Acceptance Questionnaire (USAQ; Chamberlain & Haaga, 2001). This instrument is derived from rational-emotive behavior therapy and measures the amount of self-acceptance an individual experiences that is not dependent on some type of evaluative criteria. This 20-item Likert self-report instrument measures responses ranging from 1 – “almost always true” to 7 – “almost never true.” Sample items include: “I believe that I am worthwhile simply because I am a human being” and “I feel I am a valuable person even when other people disapprove of me.” Total scores range from 20 to 140, with higher totals indicating greater levels of unconditional self-acceptance. The original version of this measurement had a moderate internal consistency ( $\alpha=.72$ ), but this figure was improved through rewording three question items ( $\alpha=.86$ ; Chamberlain & Haaga, 2001). As such, nine questions are scored directly (e.g., “I believe that I am worthwhile simply because I am a human being”), while eleven items are reverse-scored (e.g., “To feel like a worthwhile person, I must be loved by the people who are important to me”). In a pilot study, the researcher obtained a reliability coefficient of .79 for the scale.

**Procedures**

The participants were sampled from the population of undergraduate students in the Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, Caritas University Enugu. A total of 250 copies of the instruments were distributed within a period of one week to the target population. The researcher administered the instruments in their classrooms immediately after lectures. Only females who were present in the class and were willing to participate served as samples for the study. The instruments were administered to the participants and were collected immediately. There is no time limit in responding to the items of the instruments. Hence, 240 copies of each of the instruments administered were collected while 237 copies that were correctly filled were scored and used for analysis.

**Design and statistics**

Cross sectional design was adopted for the study. Hence, multiple regression statistics was applied to analyze the data in order to test the formulated hypotheses.

## RESULTS

**Table I: Descriptive Statistics of age, social media use, body image and self- acceptance**

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
SOCIAL MEDIA	237	21.00	9.00	30.00	19.1646	5.17023	26.731
BODY IMAGE	237	68.00	12.00	80.00	29.9367	15.19395	230.856
SELF ACCEPTANCE	237	85.00	23.00	108.00	84.0506	12.02318	144.557
AGE	237	12.00	16.00	28.00	19.6835	2.62264	6.878
Valid N (listwise)	237						

The table above showed the mean and standard deviation scores of social media use (  $M=19.16$ ,  $SD=5.17$ ); body image ( $M=29.93$ ,  $SD=15.19$ ); self-acceptance ( $M=84.05$ ,  $SD=12.02$ ) and age ( $M=19.68$ ,  $SD=2.62$ )

**Table 2: Model Summary table for social media use, body image and self- acceptance**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.216 <sup>a</sup>	.046	.038	11.79042	.046	5.705	2	234	.004

a. Predictors: (Constant), BODY IMAGE, SOCIAL MEDIA USE

The results of the regression analysis as presented in Table 2 shows that the predictor variables (body image and social media) accounted for 46% ( $R^2$  Change) variance increase on psychological wellbeing which is significant ( $F$  change (2, 234) = 5.71,  $P < .05$ ).

**Table 3: Regression Coefficients analysis of Social Media use and Body Enhancement on Self-Acceptance**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		$\beta$	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	90.635	3.000		30.212	.000
	SOCIAL MEDIA	-.100	.158	-.043	-.633	.527
	BODY IMAGE	-.156	.054	-.197	-2.896	.004

a. Dependent Variable: SELFACCEPTANCE

In the regression coefficient table 3, result reveals that social media use ( $\beta = -.04$ ,  $P > .05$ ), body image ( $\beta = -.19$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Thus the null hypothesis for social media use was rejected

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between social media use, body image dissatisfaction and self-acceptance. The aim was to find out if social media and body image dissatisfaction would predict self-acceptance. The study aimed at finding the link between the use of make-up and feeling of dissatisfaction with one's body image. Research has found out also that self-perceived attractiveness is linked to body image (Noles, Cash & Winstead, 1985). Another research has found that comments on profile pictures posted on Facebook influenced the feeling of self-acceptance (Frison & Eggermont, 2016).

According to the result of this study, hypothesis one which stated that social media will not significantly predict self-acceptance among female undergraduates was accepted. This means that social media did not significantly predict self-acceptance. This could be attributed to the fact that the rate at which the participants used social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook, was reduced as a result of the restriction placed on the use of Android phones in the university which hindered their frequent access to those social media platforms.

However, the second hypothesis which stated that body image will not significantly predict self-acceptance among female undergraduates was rejected. It was rejected because body image was shown to significantly predict self-acceptance. Thus, body image has statistical significant relationship with self-acceptance. This means that the way an individual (females particularly) perceives their body size, weight and shape will to a great extent determine how they accept themselves. Body image and self-acceptance directly influences each other; if you don't like some part of your body i.e. being dissatisfied with your body image, it is hard for you to feel good about your whole self. Similarly, when you develop self-acceptance that means you develop unconditional positive body image meaning you accept your body size, shape and look the way it is without feeling inadequate.

Contradicting this study is, Fardously, et. al.(2015) who found that social media has a significant effect on young female's perception and reaction of their body size, shape and weight. The difference between the findings of this study and that of the researcher could be as a result of the design used. Fardously, et al.(2015), used an experimenter design method to assign their participants to Facebook and non-Facebook groups. Meier and Gray (2014), found a positive correlation between social media and body image disturbances among adolescents with the use of Facebook. The reason behind this difference could be as a result of the difference in the type and size of population used. In support of this study, is a study carried out by Van den Berg, et al. (2007) they found no relationship between media comparisons and body dissatisfaction.

### Implications of the study

The result of this study showed that social media did not significantly predict self-acceptance and that body image dissatisfaction significantly predicted self-acceptance. This shows that, a person can be denied access to social media platforms and still not accept his/her body size, weight or shape meaning that social media has little or no effect in determining a persons' self-acceptance, while worries about how one looks or feeling of inadequacy definitely affects ones self-worth and hinders them from accepting both the favorable and unfavorable part(s) of their body image. Youths of today needs to be advised that the internet and social media platforms don't make them especially those who crave to be online showcasing their pictures. Self-acceptance is majorly a thing of the mind especially an expression of one's self esteem and self-worth.

### **Limitation of the study**

During the course of carrying out this research, some challenges were encountered, they include; getting the participants to comply by filling the appropriate answers on the questionnaire. Another was lack of understanding of the first item under the scale measuring the use of social media (it was a little bit unclear to the participants). Another challenge encountered was the issue of incomplete response to the items in the questionnaire, some were half answered. Also, finance posed as a challenge especially in printing materials such as questionnaire necessary for the completion of this work. Lastly another limitation was the inability of the study to check for the relationship between social media and body dissatisfaction, to find out if social media can predict body image dissatisfaction.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher hereby recommends that future researchers carrying out similar study should look into other predictors of self-acceptance especially other psychological factors such as personality, peer influence and parental upbringing in order to throw more light on the concept of self-acceptance.

### **Summary/Conclusion**

The findings of this study are summarized as follows; Body Image significantly predicted the feeling of self-acceptance among female undergraduates. In other words, more attention should be paid towards body image dissatisfaction as a factor predicting self-acceptance. Based on the outcome of this study the researcher hereby concludes that body image is a predictor of self-acceptance among female undergraduates' students of Caritas University, Enugu.



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