

**THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE ON BODY DYSMORPHIA AMONG  
YOUNG ADULTS IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN NAIROBI, KENYA**

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**MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY**

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## DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university or for any other award.

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this research project to my Family for their moral support and inspiration towards my studies.



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## ABSTRACT

Young adults have been faced with issues related to comparing themselves with others which leads to lack of self-acceptance. This has caused many to be distressed with their appearance hence experiencing body dysmorphia. This study aimed to evaluate the influence of social media on body dysmorphia in young adults in private universities located in Nairobi Kenya. This research was directed by three primary objectives; to establish the social media preferences among young adults in private institutions of higher learning in Nairobi Kenya, to establish the Frequency of Social Media Use and its influence on body dysmorphia among young adults in private universities found in the city of Nairobi, Kenya; to determine the influence of Social Media Engagement on body dysmorphia among young adults in private universities in Nairobi city, Kenya and to determine the rate of extent at which Social Media Content influence body dysmorphia among young adults in private universities located in the city of Nairobi, Kenya. The study used Social cognitive Theory by Albert Bandura Theory. The researcher used descriptive research design. The research population was the students of the private universities in Nairobi. The researcher used random sampling technique and Yamane formula to select the sample. The instrument reliability and validity were tested through use of Cronbach alpha whereby if it was above the recommended threshold of 0.7, the instrument was considered reliable. The researcher utilized a 5-likert scale questionnaire and interviews to gather data. Data was then analyzed descriptively through the help of SPSS version 27 and presentation was through the use of tables. Inferential tests were carried out to establish the effect of predictors on the predicted variable. The study found out that preference of social network sites had diverse effect on body dysmorphia of youths in private universities in Nairobi. This was also accompanied by the fact that the students in private universities in Nairobi were prone to frequently use of social media. The correlation results show significant relationships between social media use and body dysmorphia among youth. Frequency of use ( $r = .583$ ), engagement ( $r = .697$ ), and content ( $r = .491$ ) all positively correlate with body dysmorphia ( $p < 0.05$ ). Holding all other factors constant, predictors explain 64.3% of variance, with frequency, engagement, and content increasing body dysmorphia by 39.4% ( $\beta_2 = 0.394$ ,  $p\text{-value}=0.000$ ), 23.3% ( $\beta_3 = 0.233$ ,  $p\text{-value}=0.000$ ), and 29.3%, ( $\beta_3 = 0.293$ ,  $p\text{-value}=0.000$ ) respectively. The study concludes that social media use, particularly frequency, engagement, and content, significantly contributes to body dysmorphia among youth. Thus, Universities should promote responsible social media usage and implement awareness programs to mitigate body dysmorphia, while policymakers should regulate exposure to idealized images and encourage media literacy.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>BDD</b>	:	Body Dysmorphic Disorder
<b>DSMMD</b>	:	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Distractors
<b>OCD</b>	:	Obsessive-Compulsive-Distractor



## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

According to the American Psychiatric Association (2013), Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD) is a distractor of mind that is distinguished by upsetting fixation on perceived imperfections or shortcomings in an individual's physical appearance. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders classifies it as an obsessive-compulsive disorder (DSM-5). When it comes to their perceived appearance problems, people with BDD frequently experience severe anxiety and melancholy, even when others reassure them that the imperfections are very slight or nonexistent. People of various genders, ethnicities, and socioeconomic status are affected by BDD. This suggests that the illness primarily manifests during adolescence when young adults begin to recognize their identity. Relationships, employment, and social functioning are just a few areas of a person's life that the condition may significantly affect (Mejius, 2018).

According to Aparicio, Perea, Martinez, Redel, Pagliari, and Vaquero (2019), the widespread use of social media in digitalized era has affected human life worldwide. Social media platforms have changed how people communicate by bringing individuals from different backgrounds and cultures together. However, because of its extensive use, there are worries about how it can affect mental health, especially regarding body dysmorphia and body image. Due to their heavy reliance on social media, young adults, in particular, have been influenced by advanced effects of social comparisons, idealized body ideals, and unattainable beauty standards (Smith & Chris, 2023). As a result, the widespread usage of social media has transformed how individuals communicate and view one another and themselves.

The construct of body image encompasses an individual's subjective perception and internalized assessment of their physical form, which is profoundly influenced by sociocultural dynamics and prevailing beauty paradigms. Contemporary society, permeated by a plethora of media representations, often perpetuates unrealistic standards of beauty that disproportionately valorize slenderness and specific aesthetic traits, engendering pervasive discontentment among individuals regarding their corporeal selves (Tiggemann & Slater, 2024). The insidious nature of these ideals is exacerbated by the omnipresence of social media platforms, which not only disseminate idealized portrayals but also cultivate environments conducive to comparison and self-scrutiny. This phenomenon engenders a dissonance between perceived and actual body image, fostering a fertile ground for the emergence of body dissatisfaction and related psychopathologies, such as body dysmorphic disorder (Levine & Murnen, 2019). Moreover, the psychological ramifications of this discontent can manifest in detrimental behaviors, including disordered eating and compulsive exercise regimes, ultimately compromising individuals' mental health and well-being (Stice, 2022).

The pervasive phenomenon of dissatisfaction with one's physical appearance, often exacerbated by contemporary societal norms and the relentless barrage of idealized imagery, constitutes a profound psychological malaise. This discontentment frequently manifests as a distortion in self-perception, wherein individuals become ensnared in an unremitting cycle of comparison and self-critique, fueled by the omnipresence of curated representations of beauty on digital platforms (Tiggemann & Slater, 2024). Such pervasive exposure engenders an insatiable yearning for conformity to these often-unattainable standards, ultimately leading to diminished self-esteem and increased vulnerability to a plethora of mental health problems, including nervousness and depression (Fardouly et al., 2020). Moreover, the insidious nature of this dissatisfaction is compounded by a culture that valorizes superficiality, strengthening

the notion that personal value is inextricably linked to physical appearance (Levine & Murnen, 2019).

In addition to the benefits, Marengo et al. (2018) pointed out that worries have been raised on results of excessive media tools use on mental wellbeing, namely body dysmorphia and body image. Smith and Johnson (2022) claim that people may compare themselves to unattainable beauty standards due to the growing usage of filters, picture editing software, and introduction to unrealistic body images on social media. Feelings of inadequacy, physical dissatisfaction, and body dysmorphia may result from this comparison. Moreover, the unceasing quest for approval via likes, comments, and follows may serve to validate these unfavorable beliefs and actions, sustaining a vicious cycle of anxiety and discontentment with one's physical appearance.

In contemporary society, the multifaceted discourse surrounding one's corporeal visage has reached unprecedented complexity, engendering profound implications for individual self-concept and psychological health. Individuals frequently grapple with the dichotomy between societal beauty ideals, often promulgated through various media channels, and their intrinsic self-perception. This discord can precipitate a plethora of adverse psychological outcomes, including but not limited to body dysmorphic disorder, anxiety, and depression (Cash, 2018).

The incessant bombardment of meticulously curated images on platforms dedicated to social interaction exacerbates this phenomenon, as individuals are incessantly exposed to unattainable standards of physical perfection (Perloff, 2024). Such exposure can lead to an insidious internalization of these ideals, engendering feelings of inadequacy and self-loathing when personal corporeal form does not fit these standards (Tiggemann & Slater, 2024).

Social media was used for leisure and amusement a few years ago. The progression of social media usage from its nascent stages to its current ubiquity reflects a profound metamorphosis

in the way individuals interact, communicate, and curate their identities in the digital realm. Initially conceived as rudimentary platforms facilitating basic interpersonal connections, contemporary social media now encompasses an intricate tapestry of multimedia sharing, instantaneous communication, and global networking, thereby engendering a paradigm shift in social dynamics (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020). In its formative years, social media served primarily as a vehicle for maintaining personal relationships, yet it has since burgeoned into a multifaceted ecosystem that not only shapes individual self-perception but also influences societal norms and collective consciousness (Boyd, 2044). This proliferation has elicited both commendation and condemnation, as users navigate the duality of social media's potential for fostering community and its propensity to exacerbate feelings of isolation, anxiety, and inadequacy (Twenge, 2019). The current landscape is characterized by an incessant barrage of curated content, compelling individuals to continuously compare themselves to idealized representations, which can detrimentally impact mental health and overall well-being (Vogel et al., 2024). Therefore, it is imperative to critically examine the ramifications of this digital phenomenon, as the interplay between social media engagement and psychological health continues to unfold in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

Social media is now considered an internal entity. The recent enhancements to social communication platforms have significantly impacted users who feel their bodies and minds are separated. For most people between the ages of 15 and 27, media is currently an integral part of their lives, and they are primarily concerned with their anxieties. They come across photos with intricate editing and vibrant color images that are surreal and do not accurately capture a person's actual appearance when browsing this platform (Raj et al., 2022).

Haddad (2022) claims that in current years, there is rise in interest in the topic of teenage mental health on media issues a tool used by young individuals to present idealized versions of their appearance and self. Young people's drive to alter their appearance has raised concerns about

the potential connection between body dysmorphia, social media use, and body worries. The growing desire among young individuals to change their looks has sparked concerns about the possible link between body image anxiety, social media engagement, and body dysmorphic disorder. The increasing preoccupation of the youth with modifying their physical appearance has elicited profound apprehensions regarding the intricate interplay between body dysmorphic tendencies, pervasive social media engagement, and the escalating fixation on corporeal aesthetics. This phenomenon, rooted in a confluence of psychological and societal influences, suggests a troubling nexus wherein digital platforms perpetuate unrealistic beauty standards, thereby exacerbating latent insecurities and catalyzing an unhealthy obsession with perceived physical imperfections. The insidious nature of this dynamic not only amplifies body dissatisfaction but also raises critical questions about the broader implications for mental health and the perpetuation of distorted self-perception within contemporary youth culture.

Basing the fact on the current compilation, a critical literature synthesis was done to show the connections between social media adoption and body dysmorphia in American teenagers. According to Mejius (2018), there is a direct link between the usage of social media by adolescents and the rise in body dysmorphia and discontent. In Saudi Arabia use media tools at high rate, and it's linked to a harmful impact on body image satisfaction. Teenagers and young adults are more bothered and self-conscious about their appearance and are more susceptible to peer pressure, claim Saad, Altayar, Alshamari, and Alqahtani (2020). The most popular social media apps for improving body image promote universal aspects of beauty, like Instagram and Snapchat. Using a questionnaire, the study enrolled 1010 people in total. It was discovered that roughly 60.8% of the participants were self-conscious about some physical regions they thought were ugly.

Popular social media sites like Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and LINE are extensively utilized for self-expression, communication, and content sharing in Japan. Social media has many

advantages, but there are worries about how it affects mental health, especially about body dysmorphia and body image. Japanese society places much weight on beauty standards and looks. Specific conventional beauty criteria, like pale skin and a trim build, have been prized historically. However, the emergence of social media has brought in global beauty standards and aspirations, which could cause young adults to become more dissatisfied with their bodies and engage in social comparisons. In addition to contributing to false representations of beauty, the wide editing on media surfaces may have impact to body dysmorphia (Yamamoto & Suzuki, 2023).

Social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube have founded incredibly popular in Brazil, especially among young people. Notwithstanding the advantages of social media, apprehensions have been expressed about its possible influence on psychological well-being, encompassing body dysmorphia and body image. Young Brazilians may experience body dysmorphia and increased body dissatisfaction as due to social media's effect on beauty standards and trends. Feelings of inadequacy and self-criticism about one's appearance can be exacerbated by exposure to idealized and digitally altered photos and the search for social approval through likes and comments (Silva & Souza, 2022).

The swift expansion of internet usage and social media accessibility in Africa is consistent with the worldwide pattern. Social media's effect on body form and mental wellbeing has drawn attention as African youth use it more and more. Traditional African beauty standards frequently diverge from those promoted by social media. According to Nkosi and Osei (2023), this cultural milieu may greatly influence young adults' perceptions of their bodies and selves in connection to internet photographs.

The emergence of social media in South Africa has completely changed how individuals interact, share material and communicate online. Many people, particularly young folks, The

broad and boundless employ of social media sites doth span the nation, as the masses partake in these digital realms with great fervor. On the other hand, young South Africans may experience more social comparison and body dissatisfaction Owing to the incessant exposure to glorified and idealized images upon social media platforms and international beauty standards. This group may be more susceptible to the onset or aggravation of body dysmorphia because of the availability of filters, photo editing software, and the desire for validation from likes and comments (Mkhize & Van der Merwe, 2023).

Girma and Alemayehu (2023) claim that Ethiopia has a rich and diversified cultural background and distinct beauty ideals. However, young Ethiopians may have increased body dissatisfaction and Concerns over bodily aesthetics arising from the relentless exposure to ever-expanding and homogenized global standards of beauty and digitally changed images on social media. Body dysmorphia may arise in this population as a result of social media metrics providing approval and pressure to adhere to standards of beauty.

Young Ugandans may have more body dissatisfaction and body-related worries as a result of being exposed to exalted and meticulously curated images on social media and international beauty standards. In this group, body dysmorphia may emerge or worsen as a result of pressure to meet perceived beauty standards and the desire for validation via social media measures (Kawesa & Akello, 2023). Many people, especially younger people, now put in mind media essential part of their everyday lives. Virtual arenas including social networking site A, image-sharing application, short-video platform, microblogging service, and messaging app are frequently utilized for self-expression, content sharing, and communication. Despite all of social media's advantages, worries have been raised about how it can affect mental health, particularly about body dysmorphia and body image (Phillips et al., 2021).

Mwangi and Kimani (2019) claim that young Kenyans may have more body dissatisfaction and body-related worries consequent to the continuous encounter with glorified imagery across digital networking platforms and international beauty standards. In this population, body dysmorphia may emerge or worsen as a result of pressure to meet perceived beauty standards and the desire for affirmation via social media measures. The frequent social media usage, particularly the consumption and engagement with content related to idealized body images, significantly contributes to body dysmorphia among youth. High exposure to curated, often unrealistic portrayals of beauty standards can affect body image negatively and self-comparison (Perloff, 2014).

Regular engagement with social media, including activities such as liking, commenting, and sharing, reinforces these comparisons and perpetuates dissatisfaction with one's own appearance (Fardouly et al., 2015). Furthermore, the nature of the content especially when it emphasizes appearance and receives peer validation—can exacerbate feelings of inadequacy and body-related anxiety (Tiggemann & Slater, 2013). Therefore, the primary emphasis of this study is how young adults attending private universities in Nairobi, Kenya, experience body dysmorphia due to using social media.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Similar to other regions globally, body dysmorphic disorders impact people of different ages, genders, and cultural backgrounds in Kenya. More specifically, young adults have been most impacted because they use social media so frequently and at a high rate. Ofcom (2022) estimates that 67% and 81% of Kenyan youth between 12 and 17 use social media. This has been linked to issues like image-based content, which is mainly used on social media networks and is carefully selected and updated regularly. Because of the emphasis on appearance-related social evaluation and the accepting of unattainable beauty ideals, the prevalence of content

supporting appearance dissatisfaction has increased due to excessive utilization of social media (Laughter *et al.*, 2023). This is because there is a forum for appearance-based social comparison, which promotes the objectification of oneself based only on appearance (Ramsey & Horan, 2018). This has caused a rise in the number of young individuals thinking about ways to change their appearance, which has led to a high prevalence of body dysmorphic disorders.

Numerous studies have documented the adverse mental health impacts of social media usage among young people, linking it to diagnosable conditions such as anxiety, mood disorders, attention deficits, behavior disorders, and suicidality (Sulistyo *et al.*, 2022). However, the specific impact of media on body dysmorphia has been largely overlooked. Body dysmorphic disorder, distinguished by an obsessive preoccupation with imagined imperfections in one's corporeal visage, has been connected to a broader spectrum of obsessive-compulsive disorders (Newport Academy, 2020).

While general body dissatisfaction is common among adolescents, those with body dysmorphia experience an intense fixation on specific body areas, leading to significant psychological distress. The existing literature has primarily focused on peer interactions as a source of psychopathologies, emphasizing contribution of social comparison in exacerbating mental wellbeing issues (Nesi, 2020). Furthermore, the rise of cyberbullying on social media has been connected to an increase in both internal and external mental health challenges among teenagers, contributing to higher rates of self-harm and suicidal behavior (AACAP, 2018). This cyberbullying, along with social media conflicts and drama, has resulted to elevate youth's vulnerability to anxiety, depression, and self-harm (Nesi, 2020).

Despite these findings, there remains a significant literature gap concerning the direct effects of social media on dysmorphic disorder related to one's physical form. This investigation endeavors to address this lacuna by scrutinizing the correlation between the engagement with

digital platforms and the incidence and intensity of dysmorphic disorder and discontent with one's physical appearance among young individuals. By elucidating this particular nexus, the present research aspires to furnish a more nuanced understanding of the detrimental repercussions of online networking on mental health, particularly concerning issues of corporeal self-perception. Such an inquiry is crucial for devising targeted strategies and support frameworks aimed at alleviating the adverse effects of digital communication on the psychological well-being of the younger demographic.

### **1.3 The Research Purpose**

This study investigated the influence of social media use on body dysmorphia in young adults in Private Universities located in the city of Nairobi.

### **1.4 Objectives**

- i. To establish the preference of social network sites among young adults in private universities found in Nairobi, Kenya.
- ii. To establish the Frequency of Social Media Use and its influence on body dysmorphia among young adults in private universities found in Nairobi, Kenya
- iii. To determine the influence of Social Media Engagement and content on body dysmorphia among young adults in private universities in Nairobi Kenya.
- iv. To come up with the intervention strategies to curb Social Media use among young adults in private universities located in Nairobi, Kenya

### **1.5 Questions of the Research**

This research will be based on specific questions below:

- i. Which are the most preferred social networking sites among young adults in private universities in Nairobi, Kenya?

- ii. How does the frequency of social media use influence body dysmorphia among young adults in private institutions of higher learning in Nairobi, Kenya?
- iii. How does the type of social media engagement and content on the influence body dysmorphia among young adults in institutions of higher learning in Nairobi, Kenya?
- iv. What are the intervention strategies to curb Social Media use among young adults in Nairobi Kenya.?

### **1.6 The Significance of the Research**

The study was significant to many parties. It was a foundation for well-informed policy creation, decision-making, and interventions to support university students' health related to mental ability and general well-being. The study was helpful to university administration in their understanding of how social media affects young adults attending private institutions who have body dysmorphia. The study's findings assist counselors and university officials in recognizing and addressing possible mental health issues associated with body image issues. With this information, colleges can put focused initiatives into place to help students' academic performance and general well-being, like support services and mental health awareness campaigns.

This work enlightens the level of the connection found between the social media and the body dysmorphia, which is important information for policymakers, particularly those in the higher education sector. It also educates policymakers about the mental health challenges that young adults attending private colleges confront. With an emphasis on the value of encouraging students to have positive body images and mental health, this information can direct the creation of comprehensive mental health policies and activities.

The government also benefit from the study's findings regarding allocating funds supporting mental health programs in postsecondary educational institutions and raising awareness of the

effects of social media tools on the body dysmorphia. After the study is over, the results might persuade the government to work with academic institutions, psychologists, and counselors to provide preventative programs and other services to help young adults who are struggling with body image issues.

This study is very important to psychologists and counselors, who are vital in helping students with their mental health. It will give them an evidence-based understanding of the particular difficulties related to body dysmorphia in the context of social media usage. With this understanding, counselors and psychologists can create customized therapeutic interventions to help young adults form positive attitudes toward their bodies and learn coping mechanisms.

The study's conclusions will provide academics with useful information and prompt further investigation into the connection between young people's body dysmorphia and that of the social media utilization. It will also add to the corpus of information about the effects of social media on mental health and higher education. The results might stimulate more investigation and scholarly debate, advancing knowledge of the psychological impacts of social media on students' mental health.

### **1.7 Scope of the Research**

The research focused on young adults in Nairobi, Kenya's private universities. To give a wide knowledge of the result of media on body dysmorphia in this particular setting, the research is restricted to this geographic area. The study primarily focuses on young adults, who are usually between the ages of 18 and 25, since they are more likely to be regular users of media and more susceptible to issues related to body image. Both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies was used in this investigation. While interviews provided qualitative insights into participants' experiences and attitudes, survey questions will be employed to collect quantitative data.

## **1.8 The limitations of the Research**

The study had boundaries because it only focuses on a subset of Nairobi private university students, which may skew the results against students at public universities. The study's focus on private institutions in Nairobi County raises the possibility of information bias because the findings might only apply to some private universities in Kenya. To reduce the constraints as much as possible, the researcher considered conducting pilot studies with 10% of the sample size, which was excluded to be utilized in the analysis to assess the response and compare it with the study's ultimate conclusion based on the concept of private universities.

## **1.9 Assumptions of the Research**

One assumption is that regular use of media accelerates the development of body dysmorphia in young adults attending private institutions in Nairobi. This study also assumes that because internet access is so easy, cyberbullying may occur frequently. The study assumes that young adults in private universities may be coerced into photo-altering through self-denial. This is predicated on the idea that young adults' use of media has a significant consequence on the development of a variety of diseases, including BDD, which increases the likelihood of suicidal thoughts and behaviors. Furthermore, the study will assume that young adults' increased social media usage has resulted in a lack of self-control, which has led to a lack of self-acceptance, prompting them to consider using body paint to alter their natural appearance.

## **1.10 Key meaning of operational terms**

This section will give the meaning of terms as they have been used in the research

**Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD):** This is a condition linked to mental health whose signs include a consistent and troubling fixation on perceived imperfections or flaws in one's bodily appearance.

**Image filtering (Photo editing):** This is the process of digitally altering or modifying images to enhance their appearance, correct imperfections, or apply artistic effects.

**Social comparison:** This is a process of psychology in which persons check selves by comparing their abilities, qualities, or achievements to those of other people.

**Social media:** it's a group of online surfaces and technologies that enable users to build, share, and access content and information through virtual networks and communities.

**Social Media Use:** This is the overall time spent and frequency of accessing social media platforms by individuals. It encompasses activities such as browsing, viewing posts, and general interaction with the content available on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat.

**Social Media Engagement:** Social media engagement involves active participation in social media platforms, including activities such as liking, commenting, sharing posts, creating content, and interacting with other users. It reflects the level of interaction and involvement a user has with social media content and communities.

**Social Media content:**

Social media content is the material produced and shared on social media platforms, including text, images, videos, and links. It covers a wide range of topics such as personal updates, advertisements, news, entertainment, and user-generated content, influencing how users perceive and interact with information online.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Literature of empirics, theoretical and conceptual framework will be presented in this chapter. The chapter also contained the summary of the literature review. It is organized into five sections. This helped the research to gain knowledge related to the impact of media tools use on the body dysmorphia in youths.

### **2.2 Empirical Literature**

#### **2.2.1 Concept of Body Dysmorphia**

Body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) is featured by an obsession associated to one's perceived physical appearance flaws or anomalies, which are frequently minor to others or go unnoticed. Individuals afflicted by this malady frequently partake in compulsive and repetitive actions, manifesting as excessive grooming rituals, incessant self-scrutiny before mirrors, and a relentless quest for external validation. As delineated by the American Psychiatric Association (2013), body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) is categorized as a manifestation of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) within the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5), thereby rendering its prevalence increasingly commonplace. The construct of body dysmorphic disorder is theoretically comprehended through the lenses of cognitive distortion and perceptions of corporeal self-image. This sickness exposes the subjectivity in evaluating one's appearance, challenging the conventional understanding of body image. For example, whereas some BDD sufferers may be able to identify obvious appearance faults, others may not be able to (Phillips, 2015).

It is essential to keep in mind the similarities between BDD and other mental illnesses, especially OCD (obsessive-compulsive disorder). This link demonstrates the intricate relationship that exists between obsessive thoughts, routines, and body image. Uncomfortable,

recurring thoughts about their perceived defects are a common symptom for both BDD and OCD individuals (Phillips, 2015). Because of this overlap, thoroughly examining the diagnostic standards and therapeutic modalities for both illnesses is necessary.

Moreover, an intricate interplay between biological, psychological, and societal elements led to the development of BDD. BDD symptoms may arise as a result of neurotransmitter imbalances, early life experiences, or genetic predispositions (Castle, Molton, Hoffman, Preston, & Phillips, 2014). Social influences, media representation, and cultural beauty standards greatly influence self-perception. This is especially true in the contemporary world, where the widespread use of tools and photo-editing applications further distorts notions of beauty and fuels the rise of BDD cases (Perloff, 2014). The complicated psychiatric ailment known as body dysmorphic disorder casts doubt on widely held notions about how people see their bodies. The text underscores the subjective nature of evaluating one's looks and its correlation with mental health disorders such as obsessive-compulsive disorder.

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The engagement with social media constitutes a pivotal determinant in the exacerbation of corporeal dysmorphic disorder. According to Phillips' (2005) research, people with body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) frequently have an increased obsession with physical defects. This problem is worsened by the unrealistic beauty standards spread through social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat. These websites flood users' newsfeeds with well-

chosen photos and effects, warping the notion of the "ideal" beauty and setting unachievable standards. Frequent exposure to these Retouched images disseminated across social media platforms may intensify sentiments of inadequacy and heighten concerns about one's looks, which can exacerbate the compulsive aspects of BDD symptoms.

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Moreover, as Castle et al. (2004) observed, comparing oneself to digitally improved photographs may encourage people to pursue severe cosmetic operations. This could strengthen the connection between body dysmorphic disorder and the contemporary digital world and create cycles of body dissatisfaction. The prevalence of BDD and the extent to which the influence of social platforms on body imaging highlight the need for a critical analysis of how social media shapes how people perceive themselves and also the importance of increased awareness and accessibility to mental health resources in the digital era.

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Young people's usage of social media has increased dramatically recently, and this has been linked to an increase in body dysmorphia. Smith's (2017) research suggests that individuals may develop false beauty standards due to their mass exposure to carefully-chosen photos of other people posted on social platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. Young persons are repetitively exposed to images of people with physically unachievable features, which may distort their perceptions of themselves and cause them to feel inadequate. Additionally, Johnson and Brown's (2019) study demonstrated how social comparison and the urge for likes and comments might aggravate these negative impacts. Social media users' constant competition can put more pressure on young people to live up to expectations, which raises the risk of body dysmorphia. Thus, more investigation is needed to have full understanding of the intricate and multidimensional problem of how media influences young people's body dysmorphia.

Media networks are the primary platforms for image-based material, which is carefully selected and updated regularly. According to Laughter et al. (2023), this content emphasizes appearance-related social judgment and promotes the internalization of unattainable beauty standards, contributing to appearance dissatisfaction. Additionally, social media promotes self-objectification based on looks and provides a continuous platform for appearance-based public assessment (Ramsey & Horan, 2018). Neziroglu et al. (2018) state that these two components play a crucial role in body image disorders like BDD.

Two research (Heilfert & Warschburger, 2013; Wertheim & Paxton, 2012) found that body dissatisfaction was the main predictor of low self-esteem. Kim and Kim (2018) propose that a person's self-worth and satisfaction with their looks are directly correlated with the upkeep of their appearance, hair care regimen, and adherence to fashion trends. Andreassen's (2015) work searched at the link between age, gender, performance, and self-esteem; it did not address the impact of peer pressure on youth's self-esteem development.

Peer pressure and frequent the utilization of social platforms has been correlated. Many young people nowadays have elevated presumptions, attributions, schemata, and automatic brain processes. Different studies have clearly indicated a certain amount of link found between obsessive social media use and low self-esteem (Hong *et al.*, 2014; Malik & Khan, 2015), as well as a difference in the conception of social platforms as a sanctuary for authentic self-expression. between individuals with low and high self-esteem (Forest & Wood, 2012). Accordingly, obsessive social media use may result from believing that one's substantial following or number of friends may change negative self-perceptions like "I am not likable" or "I have poor social skills."

Long-term studies on Facebook users, for example, revealed that the relationship between Facebook use and social capital depends on one's self-esteem, with increased Facebook use helping people with low self-esteem accumulate social capital (Steinfeld *et al.*, 2008). Low life satisfaction, low self-esteem, and the conviction that using Facebook makes you popular and makes you more friends correlate with having little offline connections.

According to Andreassen, Pallesen *et al.* (2016),

Numerous investigations have unveiled a favorable correlation between narcissistic tendencies and engagement with the visual-sharing application, with narcissistic users submitting more selfies and using the platform more frequently. Gender disparities also affected Instagram use, as it was the most representative platform for usage (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). A comprehensive investigation involving 23,592 users of social networking platforms, including the visual-sharing application and the microblogging service, revealed that excessive engagement with digital communication is correlated with the female gender, elevated levels of narcissistic traits, and diminished self-worth (Andreassen, Pallesen *et al.*, 2016). The US and Europe have been the primary locations of these studies.

Studies on the use of technological knowhow in the region of Middle East are scarce, more so in Lebanon. This is as described by Hawi & Rupert (2015) and Samaha & Hawi (2017). Recent Pew Research Center research (Perrin, 2015) found that 72% of Internet users in 24 new and developing nations, including Lebanon, use social networking sites, comparable to the 73% of Americans who do the same. According to this report, every Lebanese user uses social media to maintain relationships with their loved ones. On social networking sites, users can post images, videos, and details about their offline activities and personal information about their daily lives. These occurrences have increased interest in research on users' happiness and sense of self-worth on social media sites.

Several studies have shown a positive association with stress, worry, and sadness and a negative correlation with academic accomplishment when it comes to addiction from technology, including those pertaining to digital platforms and the World Wide Web. Hawi and Samaha (2016), Kabasakal (2015), and Samaha and Hawi (2016) all contend that these partnerships exert a detrimental influence on overall life contentment. Bachnio *et al.* (2016) discovered that those with addictions had less effects of life satisfaction and self-esteem than non-addicts in a recent study involving 381 Polish Facebook users. 311 Turkish undergraduate students participated in the study, which Identified a detrimental association between maladaptive engagement with the social networking platform and general psychological health. The study corroborated this finding (Satici & Uysal, 2015). Eighty-two Americans who participated in an experience sample revealed that people's feelings about themselves and their lives were negatively correlated with how much time they spend on Facebook (Mage 14 19.5). A German source study including 583 Facebook users discovered that those who watch other users online without actively participating in their interactions experience envy and self- comparison, which lowers their life satisfaction (Krasnova *et al.*, 2013).

Chau and Edge (2012) discovered in another study that persons who use Facebook more frequently and those who check it more frequently had the impression that other people's lives are better than their own, that other people's lives are unfair, and that other people's lives are happier than their own. Facebook is a platform that people use to share their good times, unique experiences, and best moments, according to a Swedish study that surveyed 1,011 respondents. People's sense of self-worth and wellbeing may suffer if they think other people's lives are more important than their own (Denti *et al.*, 2012). Positive or negative comments from virtual buddies can elevate or depress a person's mood

### **2.2.2 Social media use/engagement and body dysmorphia**

Livingston et al. (2014) state that social media is currently the most effective medium youth can access. This technology's benefits include speeding up information acquisition and facilitating communication with adult mentors such as parents, relatives, and teachers (Lenhart et al., 2019). However, frequent or excessive use can make it challenging to engage in other healthy activities, like extracurricular and community events (Orben & Przybylski, 2019).

Even if the results of a recent international study are statistically significant, the authors believe that the impacts of digital technology exposure on adolescent wellbeing are not significant enough to justify the need for policy reform. Instead, the effects are relatively small. Some claim that kids who participate in "problematic SMU," which is characterized by social media addiction symptoms, are more prone to issues because it encourages unsafe online connections with strangers who could be harboring bad intentions. According to Qiaolei *et al.* (2018), these encounters may lead to addictive behaviors, social disengagement, and decreased social functioning.

Adolescents have high chances to go through unpleasant behavior, such as cyberbullying, as a result of more frequent and severe SMU (Jessor, 2016). Young people are under pressure to fit

in with group norms in their social contexts because they think that being not very friendly or engaging in cyberbullying has social benefits, such as raising one's social status (Prizant-Passal et al., 2016). Furthermore, because there are no overt indications of these activities, the detrimental effects of cyberbullying and online harassment go unreported. Consequently, the aggressive behavior is likely to continue only in the presence of this beneficial input.

Disinhibition may also be impacted by recurrent exposure to hate speech or bullying online (Sampasa-Kanyinga & Hamilton, 2015). Put another way, over time, young people can accept these hostile behaviors as usual. These consequences might make someone more likely to engage in cyberbullying or become a target of it. Adolescents who use electronics excessively may also be more vulnerable to psychological issues such as social anxiety and loneliness. These young people are susceptible to digital exploitation even though they lack the expertise and social support to stop it in its tracks. Therefore, it may be more possible that someone who uses social media regularly and problematically will witness and imitate aggressive online conduct, either as a victim or an offender.

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According to cross-sectional research, teenagers who use social media excessively and inappropriately are more likely to experience cyberbullying and online harassment (Erreygers et al., 2019)—cyberbullying impacts between 37 and 70 percent of the general population, according to Cramer's (2018) estimation. According to a prior study, some people are likelier than others to become victims. Some characteristics of their disease may make them more susceptible to abuse. Therefore, they could be singled out for maltreatment (Twyman et al., 2010).

Cyberbullying among teenagers with autism has been reported to occur in China (15%; Hu et al., 2019), Spain (64.4%; Iglesias et al., 2019), and Canada (30.4%); the differences in prevalence could be attributed to the study samples used in each country. It has been shown in earlier research (Ledingham & Mills, 2015; Payne et al., 2019) that adults with autistic spectrum disorders do not usually commit cybercrimes. Furthermore, Hu et al. (2019) found that young individuals with autism do not have a high degree of cyberaggression.

Research has also linked cyberbullying to issues with behavior, mental health, and self-worth (Cenat et al., 2014; Perren et al., 2010). Bullying has been linked in several studies to adverse

psychological effects such as depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem (Didden et al., 2013). Teens with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are cyber-victimized have high chances to be hit by depression, and excessive use of social media is linked to low self-esteem (Wright, 2017).

Empirical researches have extensively studied the influence of social media engagement on body dysmorphia among youth, revealing a substantial correlation. Social media engagement, characterized by activities such as posting photos, commenting, liking, and sharing content, can intensify body image concerns. Fardouly and Vartanian (2016) found that engaging in photo-based activities on social media platforms like Instagram and Snapchat is linked to increased body dissatisfaction and higher levels of appearance comparison among young women. This constant comparison to peers and influencers often leads to feelings of inadequacy and a distorted self-image (Holland & Tiggemann, 2016).

Moreover, McLean, Paxton, Wertheim, and Masters (2015) highlighted that adolescent girls who frequently engage in appearance-focused social media behaviors are more likely to internalize societal beauty standards, which exacerbates body dysmorphia symptoms. The feedback mechanisms inherent in social media platforms, where users receive comments and likes on their posts, can also contribute to body dysmorphia. Positive feedback may temporarily boost self-esteem, but negative or comparative feedback can lead to increased anxiety and self-scrutiny (Perloff, 2014).

Furthermore, the act to give an ideal style of oneself on social media can create a dissonance between one's real and online personas, fostering body dissatisfaction (Chua & Chang, 2016). Research by Cohen, Newton-John, and Slater (2017) supports these results, showing that huge levels of media engagement are linked to greater body displeasure and disordered dietary behaviors among adolescents. These studies collectively underscore the need for interventions

that promote critical media literacy and healthy social media use to mitigate the adverse results on body image and mental wellbeing in youth.

### **2.2.3 Social content and body dysmorphia**

Empirical research has demonstrated a strong link between social media content and body dysmorphia among youth. Investigations shows that openness to idealized body images and beauty standards on platforms like Instagram and Facebook can exacerbate body dissatisfaction and dysmorphic concerns (Holland & Tiggemann, 2016). For instance, content featuring fitness and beauty influencers often presents unrealistic and edited images, leading to heightened self-comparison and negative body image (Perloff, 2014). Additionally, the feedback mechanism on social media, where likes and comments can serve as validation or criticism, further influences youths' body perceptions (Fardouly *et al.*, 2015).

Research by Meier and Gray (2014) found that frequent engagement with appearance-focused content correlates with increased body surveillance and internalization of thin ideals. These findings highlight the significant impact of social media content on youths' mental health, underscoring the need for interventions that promote media literacy and body positivity to alleviate the risks accompanying social media use.

According to recent meta-analyses, appearance-related media behavior had a more significant impact on females who internalized body ideals in the context of photo-editing than did general social media use (Mingoia, 2017). According to Pounders *et al.* (2016), posting pictures of oneself on social media that highlight one's "best" physical attributes is an expected appearance-related behavior. It may also involve how one presents themselves, such as choosing the most outstanding photos and altering their appearance.

According to Rousseau's (2021) application of the models related to culture related to image of the body, photo-editing behavior, females who use media tools may resort to photo-editing

to improve their appearance due to body dissatisfaction. This places photo editing activity after the model. Nonetheless, the research mentioned above indicates that photo-editing behavior has been connected to body-related problems, including body dissatisfaction and a greater inclination to consider cosmetic surgery (Othman *et al.*, 2021). This suggests that the model may include a "feedback loop" in which the act of photo-editing reacts to an individual's body dissatisfaction, hence perpetuating the activity.

However, research has indicated that photo editing protects against body dissatisfaction; this finding could be outlined by the self-discrepancy theory (Lee & Lee, 2019). Self-discrepancies can happen when someone has a belief that is not being truthful about a critical aspect of who they are. An increase in body-related issues, including eating disorders and body dissatisfaction, has been connected to elevated levels of self-disparity (Bessenoff, 2016). A person may have a self-discrepant body image if they believe their body does not correspond to their idealized form, as per Bessenoff's (2014) theory. These actions may act as a self-discrepancy barrier in photo editing by lessening the feeling of dissimilarity that female social media users have with their ideal body image, according to Lee and Lee (2019) and Sung *et al.* (2016).

The relationship between photo manipulation and health problems is still unclear to researchers. However, some studies have proposed that body checking or surveillance could explain or mediate this link. Fitzsimmons-Craft *et al.* (2014) define body surveillance as the mentality in which an individual considers and regards their body as an object of study. When using body surveillance, female social media users may feel dissatisfied with their bodies since there can be a discrepancy between what they see and what they want to see. Photo modification has been shown to increase body dissatisfaction by raising body awareness and the impression of flaws and imperfections, according to Chang *et al.* (2019).

For example, Sukamto's (2018) research found that participants who often took part in activities such as uploading photos, browsing others' pictures, and following Instagram influencers were more prone to making upward comparisons about their appearance even though they did not develop a negative body image. Girls who were more likely to compare themselves to others in social situations had a poorer overall body image, especially after seeing photos that had been edited on Instagram, according to research by Kleemans (2016).

Jakarta, Bandung, Surabaya, Fox, and Vendernia (2016) searched on the connections between Instagram users and the body image of Yogyakarta youth. After interviewing 235 teenagers between the ages of 15 and 18, this study was completed utilizing quantitative methods. The study's findings demonstrate a negative correlation between teenagers' perceptions of their bodies and their levels of social support on Instagram. This study aimed to find out how Yogyakarta, Indonesia, teens who use Instagram see their bodies in light of photo-editing apps that have heavily invested in the face beauty trend. For example, Facetune, a photo-editing program, is incredibly popular despite offering only a few essential tools for contouring and smoothing skin.

The perception of one's physical look-how is referred as body image. In an American study, Howlett et al. (2015) discovered that peer rivalry was the only factor affecting young women's body image rather than TV watching or social media use. Age and body recognition were revealed to be statistically significantly correlated in women from early to late adulthood (Swami et al., 2018). As indicated by Halliwell (2015), onward investigations ought to put forward at assessing the influence of media tools on age-related body image. Reel, Voelker, and Greenleaf (2015) found a common link between food, exercise, famous beauty and wellness trends on TV and social media, and bad body image. These studies did not focus on other variables influencing young adults' opinions of their bodies, such as age and peer

pressure. The effects of appearance management due to unconnected causes are examined in this study.

#### **2.2.4 Frequency of social media use and body dysmorphia**

Empirical research progressively demonstrates an important connection between the frequency of media use and body dysmorphia among youth. Frequent engagement with media platforms has been associated with more body discomforts and heightened symptoms of body dysmorphia. Studies reveal that excess moments young ages spend on media, the more they are exposed to idealized body images and engage in social comparisons, which negatively impact their body image (Fardouly *et al.*, 2015). For instance, Tiggemann and Slater (2013) found that adolescent young ladies who spent more time on Facebook reported higher levels of body dissatisfaction and a greater desire to change their appearance. Similarly, a study by Sidani *et al.* (2016) indicated that young adults who used social media more frequently were at a higher risk of developing eating disorders and other body image issues.

Mechanism behind this relationship often involves the internalization of unrealistic beauty standards perpetuated by social media content, leading to increased self-scrutiny and body surveillance (Holland & Tiggemann, 2016). Additionally, frequent users are more likely to encounter negative feedback or cyberbullying, which can exacerbate feelings of inadequacy and body dysmorphia (Perloff, 2014). A longitudinal study by Vannucci, Flannery, and Ohannessian (2017) further supports these findings, demonstrating that more use of media predicted greater body dissatisfaction over time among adolescents. These studies collectively underscore the benefit of addressing the frequency of media tools use as a critical factor in understanding and mitigating the development of body dysmorphia in youth. Interventions aimed at promoting healthier social media habits and critical engagement with online content are essential in combating the adverse effects on body image.

### **2.2.5 Intervention strategies for social media body dysmorphia**

Users of social media must fulfill the four requirements listed by the DSM-V in order to be diagnosed with body dysmorphia. An obsessive-compulsive disorders report 2013 report on by the American Psychiatric Organization states that the hallmark of the first condition is a "preoccupation with one or more perceived defects or flaws in physical appearance that are not observable or appear slight to others." To fulfill the second condition, the patient must also partake in repeated sort of manners like that of extra grooming, compulsive mental activity, mirror checking, or excoriation. According to the American Psychiatric Organization (2013) standards, an obsession must produce clinical important distress or impair social, occupations, or other parts of functioning for it to be considered a third measure for OCD.

The fourth diagnostic implication asserts that the patient's self-consciousness about appearance has nothing to do with their weight or body fat, which may be more in line with the diagnostic process for a disorder. A medical professional diagnosing a patient must additionally state whether the patient has a clear, moderate, or limited understanding of the severity of their condition.

One of the suggested interventions to expand project is a multi-step evaluation progression for body dysmorphia in the context of non-invasive enhancing medical therapy. The primary target population for the screening will be patients looking for medical aesthetic injectable procedures for their faces, such as neuromodulators and dermal fillers. Since many BDD patients will probably be comfortable answering questions directly about their appearance, a discrete and caring approach will be needed for this intervention. The BDD screening tool used in this quality improvement project will resemble Leslie Fletcher's (2021) tool. An informal questionnaire focusing on treatment motivators and a few hidden negative motivators will be the first step.

The primary examination includes a checklist of healthy and unhealthy sources of motivation for seeking therapy and three particular, unhealthy, and unrealistic motivating goals that patients can choose from according to how they view themselves (Fletcher, 2021). The three detrimental target possibilities are "look 20 again," "look perfect," and "look perfectly symmetrical" (Fletcher, 2021). Selecting any one or more of the implausible treatment objectives results in a positive cryptic screening, necessitating further assessment using the Cosmetic Procedure Screening Questionnaire for Body Dysmorphic Disorder (COPS), a screening tool frequently employed in researches to test this patient population. The COPS screening instrument, a nine-part questionnaire that asks patients about their perceived unpleasant physical traits, will not be used in this experiment due to its complexity in the current study target population.

Higher scores (ranging from 0 to 72) are associated with a more profound dysmorphic six impairment, according to Velale et al. (2012). In academic research, every positive screening result from generally accepted and validated tests should be taken as a contraindication to body or facial alteration therapies, and the cosmetic physician should consider referring the patient to mental specialists. Licensed medical professionals will complete all stages of the multiphasic screening process, including consultations and treatment plans, in order to maintain the initiative's focus on BDD.

The final stage of this quality improvement plan's suggested intervention involves establishing a referral relationship between the project site and qualified medical professionals who treat patients with BDD and obsessive-compulsive disorders. This intervention was not disclosed or utilized in Fletcher's screening process 2021. Building relationships with these providers and presenting evidence of positive screening tool results well after the project's planned completion date will create opportunities for treatment planning and sustainability referrals if the action site chooses to implement this screening process as the standard of care. Medication

and cognitive behavioral therapy are crucial components of the BDD patient's all-encompassing care plan upon referral in order to ensure a speedy and effective recovery.

## **2.3 Theoretical Review**

This research will be anchored under the Person-Centered Theory

### **2.3.1 Social Cognitive Theory**

This theory was first put forth by Bandura in 1989, and it was based on the notion that people desire to feel as though they have agency and can affect the important events. The sense of agency and control individuals experience is shaped by various factors, including personal goals, self-assessment, expectations of outcomes, and self-efficacy (Schunk, 2012). The foundational research by Bandura and his colleagues, particularly the famous "Bobo Doll experiments," forms the basis of social cognition theory. In these experiments, early preschoolers watched a video in which an adult behaved aggressively toward a huge inflated doll. This aggressive behavior comprised both verbal insults and physical acts such as hitting and slapping. By the end of the video, the children had either observed the adult's aggressive activities result in a reward, get him in trouble, or have no repercussions (Schunk, 2012).

After viewing the model, the kids were taken to a room with a similar inflatable Bobo doll. The researchers discovered that children who saw the adult being rewarded or experiencing no consequences for their aggressive actions were more likely to display aggressive behavior toward the doll (Schunk, 2012). This experiment was groundbreaking because it introduced the idea of observational learning in humans. Prior behaviorists, like B.F. Skinner, held much different views on learning.

As per Skinner (1950), learning could only occur through direct action by the individual. However, Bandura contends that learning can also occur in people and animals through imitation of models found in their environment, which speeds up the process of knowledge

acquisition. Bandura agreed with behaviorists that experience serves as behavior's basic source. Nevertheless, he suggested an alternative process distinct from conditioning. According to him, people acquire new skills by imitating and observing others' behaviors. Because it stresses both the behavior itself and the cognitive mechanisms underlying learning, this theory is not completely behaviorist. The main purpose of social cognition theory is to explain goal-directed behavior that is sustained over time through reward and control. Bandura incorporated five constructs into his first formulation of the linked social learning theory, which allowed him to include self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986). Reciprocal determinism, the core principle of social cognitive theory, explains the ongoing and mutual influence between individuals, shaped by their unique learning experiences, and their environment, which includes the external social context, along with their actions or behaviors in response to stimuli in order to achieve goals. This idea is predicated on numerous elements. Its central claim is that people want to believe they are in control of their lives and this can affect the important events in it.

Among the factors influencing this sense of agency and control are goals, self-evaluation, self-efficacy, and result expectancies (Bandura, 1989). To prove reciprocal determinism, consider if a student believes they can succeed on a test, or have self-efficacy, they are inclined to put in the required education efforts (behavior). If they don't think failing is not possible, they aren't going to revise as much. Thus, their actual exam performance will either support or contradict their beliefs about their abilities (self-efficacy) (outcome). As a result, this will affect attitudes and behavior going forward. If the child performs well on the exam, they will probably put in a lot of study time and have confidence in their ability to perform well on upcoming tests. If they are unsuccessful, they may come to doubt their abilities (Bandura, 1989). According to Bandura (1989), behavioral capability refers to an individual's capacity to carry out a task based on their skills and knowledge. Essentially, before taking action, a person must understand what needs to be done and how to do it. Individuals learn from the consequences of their actions,

which can lead them to adjust both their behavior and their environment (Bandura, 1989). Reinforcements are the internal or external reactions to an individual's behavior that influence whether that behavior will continue or cease. People can create positive or negative reinforcements for themselves or receive them from their surroundings. Positive behaviors are more likely to be repeated, while negative behaviors tend to be avoided. Reinforcements can also be categorized as direct or indirect. Direct reinforcement occurs as an immediate consequence of an action, which impacts the likelihood of that action being repeated. Positive reinforcement, like getting paid for working, is an example of this type of reinforcement. Even though indirect reinforcements don't change behavior right away, they can nevertheless have an effect in the long run. An example of indirect reinforcement would be working hard in school to gain admission to a reputable college (Bandura, 1989). Expectations, on the other hand, are connected to the outcomes one intends to achieve by their activities. For example, outcome expectations may pertain to an individual's anticipation of how a specific behavior will affect their health. People frequently think about the consequences of their decisions before acting, and this can affect whether or not they complete the behavior (Bandura, 1989). Expectations are primarily shaped by an individual's prior experiences. On the other hand, Expectations are largely influenced by an individual's past experiences. Additionally, expectations are also based on the personal value each person assigns to the outcome. For example, a student who lacks motivation to achieve high grades may not regard the necessary efforts to attain them as highly as a student who aims for academic success. Self-efficacy refers to the extent to which an individual believes they can successfully execute a specific action. A person's level of self-efficacy is shaped by their abilities and various personal and environmental factors, which are referred to as obstacles and facilitators (Bandura, 1989). It is common to note that self-efficacy is specific to tasks, meaning that individuals may feel confident in their ability to accomplish one task but not another. For instance, a student might

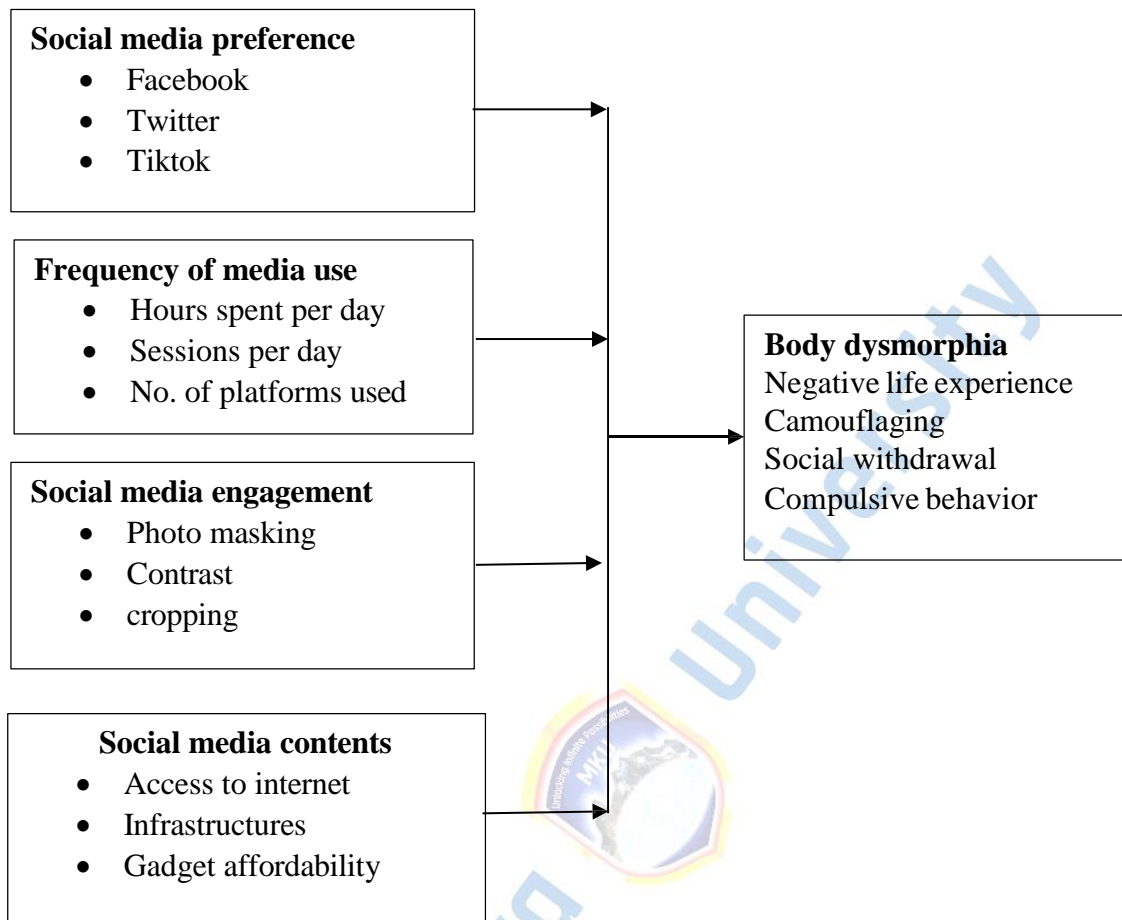
feel more assured about their ability to perform well on a test than about their ability to form friendships. This variation arises because self-efficacy is influenced by one's experiences and beliefs. If a child has never made friends before, they are less likely to believe they will be able to do so in the future. This idea will be of significance to this study in that through social media use, young adults find it easy to replicate what is there which in turn creates body dysmorphia.

## **2.4 Conceptual Framework**

The framework conceptual below indicate the link between social media use and body dysmorphia among the youth. The independent variables include the frequency of social media use (measured by hours spent, number of sessions, and platforms used), the type of social media engagement (content consumption, creation, and interactive engagement), and the nature of media content (exposure to body-related content, self-comparison frequency, and feedback type). The dependent variable is body dysmorphia, indicated by excessive mirror checking, camouflaging, social withdrawal, and compulsive behavior. This framework aims to elucidate how specific social media behaviors leads to body image conflicts amongst youth.

## Independent variables

## Dependent variable



**Figure 2. 1: Conceptual Framework**

Source: (Author, 2024)

### 2.5 Summary and research gaps

The empirical review highlights a robust link between social media engagement and body dysmorphia among youth, showing how activities like posting photos, commenting, and liking intensify body image concerns. Studies by Fardouly and Vartanian (2016) and Holland and Tiggemann (2016) illustrate that involvement of photo-based actions on platforms like Instagram leads to increased appearance comparisons and body dissatisfaction. McLean et al. (2015) further emphasize that adolescents internalize societal beauty standards through these engagements, exacerbating symptoms of body dysmorphia.

Feedback mechanisms on social media, whether positive or negative, significantly impact self-esteem and body image (Perloff, 2014). Moreover, the dissonance between one's real and idealized online personas fosters body dissatisfaction, as highlighted by Chua and Chang (2016). Cohen et al. (2017) found that higher social media engagement correlates with wide body downs and disordered eating behaviors. Despite these findings, research gaps remain. Most studies focus on female adolescents, with limited attention to other demographics such as male youths and young adults in different cultural contexts.

Additionally, while the influence of social media engagement on body image is well-documented, the exact role of different types of content—particularly the influence of positive versus negative feedback—needs further exploration. There is also a lack of longitudinal studies that track changes in body dysmorphia symptoms over time with varying social media usage patterns.

This study aimed to seal the gaps by examining the influence of social media use on body dysmorphia among young adults in private universities in Nairobi, Kenya. It will investigate both genders and consider cultural distinctions, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the issue. Moreover, it explored the specific types of social media content and engagement that lead significantly to body dysmorphia, offering insights for targeted interventions to promote healthier social media use and improve body image among youth.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The chapter outlines the approaches to be utilized in the targeted activity. The study's methodology covered research design, target population, chosen sampling design and research methods. At the same time, the issues of data collection procedures, data analysis, presentation together with the research instruments was covered in the area.

### **3.2 Research Design**

The study employed descriptive research design. The use of descriptive research designs was based on the fact that the research sought to evaluate on whether there was existence of any relationship found in the relation to media use and body dysmorphia among young adults. Relationships were further drawn based on how different social media network platforms affect body dysmorphia. According to Sifuna, Fatuma, and Oanda (2006), descriptive study design ensures that the research questions that determine the influence of the predictor variable on the result variable are addressed. When employing descriptive research design, the researcher also has the choice to use both descriptive and inferential data analysis methods. Cyberbullying, low self-esteem, photo alteration, and social media intervention strategies will all be independent variables in the study. The body dysmorphic disorder was the dependent variable.

### **3.3 Region of the Research**

The intended work was done in all private institutions of higher learning located in the city of Nairobi to understand more on how social media use has influenced body dysmorphia among young adults.

### 3.4 Target Population of the Study

Population is considered as the total number of elements under the study. There are a total of 30 registered private universities in Kenya (Ministry of higher education, 2023). This study therefore considered targeting those private university which are in Nairobi County. Based on the survey report (2023) from the ministry of higher education, there are a total of 23 private university registered and operating in Nairobi. These universities have an enrolment of 219,500 students (Ministry of Higher Education, 2023). This study therefore targeted all the 219,500 students in these private universities as drawn in below 3.1.

**Table 3. 1: Target population**

Serial No.	Name of Private University	Student Population
1	Adventist University of Africa	3,500
2	Africa International University	4,000
3	Africa Nazarene University	6,000
4	Aga Khan University	2,500
5	AMREF International University	2,700
6	Catholic University of Eastern Africa	15,000
7	Daystar University	10,000
8	East African University	3,200
9	Umma university	4,500
10	International Leadership University	2,300
11	Kabarak University	8,000
12	KCA University	12,000
13	Kenya Methodist University	9,000
14	Kenya Highlands University	2,800
15	Lukenya University	3,000
16	Mount Kenya University	20,000
17	Pan Africa Christian University	5,000
18	Pioneer International University	4,000

19	RAF International University	3,000
20	Riara University	3,500
21	Scott Christian University	2,500
22	St Paul's University	7,000
23	Strathmore University	11,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>219,500</b>

Source: (Ministry of Education, 2024)

### 3.5 Procedures and Techniques of Sampling

A simple random sample method was utilized to select study participants for this study. Simple random sampling ensured that each case is assigned and is contained in the final sample. However, it is more important to note that a simple random sampling was used to guarantee equal probabilities of choosing all person in the targeted group. Students from each university was chosen at random. The study used the Yamane (1967) formulae to calculate the size of the sample:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Which implies that: n=sample size

N= Population size

e= Margin of error

Therefore, sample size =  $219,500 / 1 + 219,500(0.05)^2$

Hence n =  $219,500 / 1 + 219,500(0.0025)$

n =  $219,500 / 549.75$

n = 359 students

This means that through simple random sampling, a total of 359 students was randomly selected to participate in this study.

### **3.6 Instruments of Research**

There was use of Questionnaires to collect data for the intended project. Questionnaires are preferred base on the fact that they are ease to use and gather data which includes opinions of the respondents (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013). They are also preferred due to being cost-effective since they can quickly be disseminated, requiring a small team to quickly cover a vast number of individuals (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013). Furthermore, they offer people time to think about the questions before responding, preventing rushed answers. This study considered 1-5-point scale questionnaires which are based on gauging the level of agreement (strongly agree, agree, Neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree). The researcher developed the questionnaires using the research objectives as a guide.

Additionally, the researcher interviewed the Deans of students at each of the Universities, since they could help give elaborate and concrete information's, unearth how different groups think and feel about the issues at hand and why they have certain views and to highlight possible solutions to challenges identified. Before distribution to responds, questionnaires and interview guides were pre-tested to pose validity and reliability.

### **3.7 Pilot Study**

A research study procedure called "study piloting" is used to assess the validity and dependability of research instruments. Mendez (2017) asserts that a pilot study is essential for identifying potential restrictions on the research data-gathering tool. In this case, 10% of the study sample size, or 40 (10%\*399) respondents, was part of the pilot group in this study, which will not be included in the final research, in order to evaluate the reliability of the research instrument (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013). Two students from each university were chosen randomly from the sample size of all the public universities outside Nairobi County to participate in the pilot project. This was predicated on the fact that there are 20 private

institutions, and as the pilot study had 40 respondents, two students were chosen randomly from each private university's sample size.

### **3.7.1 The Validity of the Study Instruments**

The issue of validity assesses if a measurement yields the desired results (Zikmund, 2013). Nix and Chen (2013) state that the main issues with validity are the data's relevance and accuracy, as well as how far the conclusions may be drawn. This study addressed the question of whether the questionnaire adequately measured the variables and whether the questions will match the study's objective. This study considered the use of content validity. The researcher also sought guidance from experts in the field of study. The experts helped to assess the questionnaires' formats to improve them before any data is collected.

### **3.7.2 Reliability of the Study Instruments**

Internal consistency reliability was estimated using the Alpha coefficient. Establishing this form of reliability, only a single administration of an instrument is required (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2015). The measuring scales consistency was determined using the Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ). Alpha values above .70 are acceptable (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2015).

Reliability referred to the extent of consistency among survey variables within the same grouping (Kariuki, 2021). To evaluate the reliability of the study's questionnaire, the researchers utilized Cronbach's alpha, using the SPSS version 25. A minimum threshold of 0.6 for Cronbach's alpha was set to determine the acceptable reliability of the questionnaire items. Scores of 0.7 or higher were considered adequate, while values above 0.8 signified a strong level of reliability for the questionnaire tool.

The reliability statistics presented in Table 4.1 below indicate the internal consistency of the items used to measure each factor in the study. The Cronbach's Alpha for frequency of social media use is .798, which is above the accepted threshold of .7, suggesting a moderate level of reliability. The social media engagement shows a Cronbach's Alpha of .813, indicating high internal consistency, and suggesting that the items used effectively capture this construct. The Social media content factor has an even moderate Cronbach's Alpha of .743, reflecting moderate internal consistency among the items. Similarly, the Body dysmorphia among youth also demonstrates moderate reliability, with a Cronbach's Alpha of .712. This means that the items included in the scale consistently measure the underlying construct related to the influence of social media use on body dysmorphia among university students in Kenya.

**Table 3. 2: Reliability Statistics**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>N of Items</b>
Frequency of social media use	.798	36
Social media engagement	.813	36
Social media content	.743	36
Body dysmorphia among youth	.712	36

**Source: Researcher (2024)**

### **3.8 Data Collection Procedure**

The investigator traveled to each private university in Nairobi County to personally ask the dean of students for approval. The researcher required a research permit, which was obtained to collect data. The researcher got assistant from someone in distributing the questionnaire and before distributing the questionnaires to the respondents, the researcher and the research assistant ensured the questions were not bias with the content they were seeking to elucidate. Then, the questionnaires were distributed to the selected students, who filled them out and

return them for analysis. Similarly, interviews were carried out by the researcher herself and all responses recorded for further actions.

### 3.9 Data Analysis and Presentation

The researcher after collection the questionnaires before tabulating them checked for the completeness by ensuring whether all of them were returned, then check for completeness of every questionnaire. The incomplete questionnaires in this study were not be accounted for as they led to tabulation biasness. The data was then fed to Package for Social Science style 27 for analysis. Depending on the study's objectives, data analysis used description and inferential statistics. Description statistics were used when appropriate to generate frequency distributions, means, and standard deviations of varied data. Due to the correlational nature of the research design, multiple inferential statistics was used. Pearson's correlation coefficient was utilized to confirm the link between body dysmorphia and social media influence. Tables and narrative prose were used to present the data. The study utilized the regression model to elucidate the relationship among the study variables

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + e$$

**Where:**

**Y** = Body dysmorphia among youths

**X<sub>1</sub>** = Social media preference

**X<sub>2</sub>** = social media use frequency

**X<sub>3</sub>** = engagement of media tools

**X<sub>4</sub>** = content of media tools

**e** = Error term

**α** = Constant

**β** = Coefficient of independent variable

### **3.10 Ethical consideration**

Researcher begun by getting an authorization letter from Mount Kenya University and a letter of introduction from the Graduate School. An application for a research permit were done and issued by the deals with the issues of Sciences, Technologies and Innovations (NACOSTI). At the same time, the authorization to conduct the research was sought in Nairobi County offices of Education. The researcher visited the targeted institutions for the first time in order to book an appointment with the institution dean of students. Later, preparation of the questionnaires was done where they were packed in envelops according to the number of respondents.

The dean of students in each school gave the consent for their students to take part in their respective schools. The researcher explained to the students the main objective of the research and then a consent form were given to them to read in order to make wise decisions on whether to take part in the research or not by signing the form. Confidentiality of all that was written from the participant was maintained. This made them to feel free to take part in this research and even ask questions that they would wish to ask.

It is essential to keep in mind the similarities between BDD and other mental illnesses, especially OCD (obsessive-compulsive disorder). This link demonstrates the intricate relationship that exists between obsessive thoughts, routines, and body image. Uncomfortable, recurring thoughts about their perceived defects are a common symptom for both BDD and OCD individuals (Phillips, 2015). Because of this overlap, thoroughly examining the diagnostic standards and therapeutic modalities for both illnesses is necessary. It is essential to keep in mind the similarities between BDD and other mental illnesses, especially OCD (obsessive-compulsive disorder). This link demonstrates the intricate relationship that exists between obsessive thoughts, routines, and body image. Uncomfortable, recurring thoughts about their perceived defects are a common symptom for both BDD and OCD individuals

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

The data analysis, interpretation, and presentation are all covered in this chapter. At the same time, content analysis was used to study the qualitative data, and inferential and descriptive statistics were used to examine the quantitative data. A narrative explaining the participants' viewpoints on the research issue was constructed by distilling the qualitative data into discernible themes and patterns. This enhanced the conversation about how the variables relate to one another. Frequency distributions, percentages, and tables were used to display the data and aid comprehension and interpretation.

#### 4.2 Response Rate

The computation of the response rate involves dividing the total number of responses the study's target participants have received. It is displayed as a proportion of the completed surveys. The information on the study's response rate is shown in Table 4.1 below.

**Table 4.1: Response Rate**

<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Completed	300	83.6%
Uncompleted	59	16.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Researcher (2024)**

Three hundred questionnaires were completed, accounting for 83.6% of the sample as a whole. Of the sample, 59 replies (16.4%) still needed to be completed. This corroborates Kothari's (2014) claim that studies with a response rate of 70% or higher are suitable for analysis and conclusions. This study satisfies that requirement, with an 83.6% response rate, making the data analysis and findings trustworthy.

### 4.3 Demographic Characteristics

Demographic data helps characterize the sample or population being studied by providing an overview of the characteristics of the respondents. The analysis and interpretation of the data in connection to these demographic characteristics is based on this information. It helps researchers to comprehend the sample's demographic composition and spot any biases or data restrictions. The questionnaire's first section sought broad details about the respondents' profiles, such as their gender, age, highest degree of education attained, and kind of respondent.

#### 4.3.1 Gender of the Respondents

The target respondents were asked their gender. Table 4.2 shows the outcome of this statement in the study.

**Table 4.2: Gender**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	173	54.7	57.7	57.7
	Female	127	40.2	42.3	100.0
	Total	300	94.9	100.0	

**Source: Researcher (2024)**

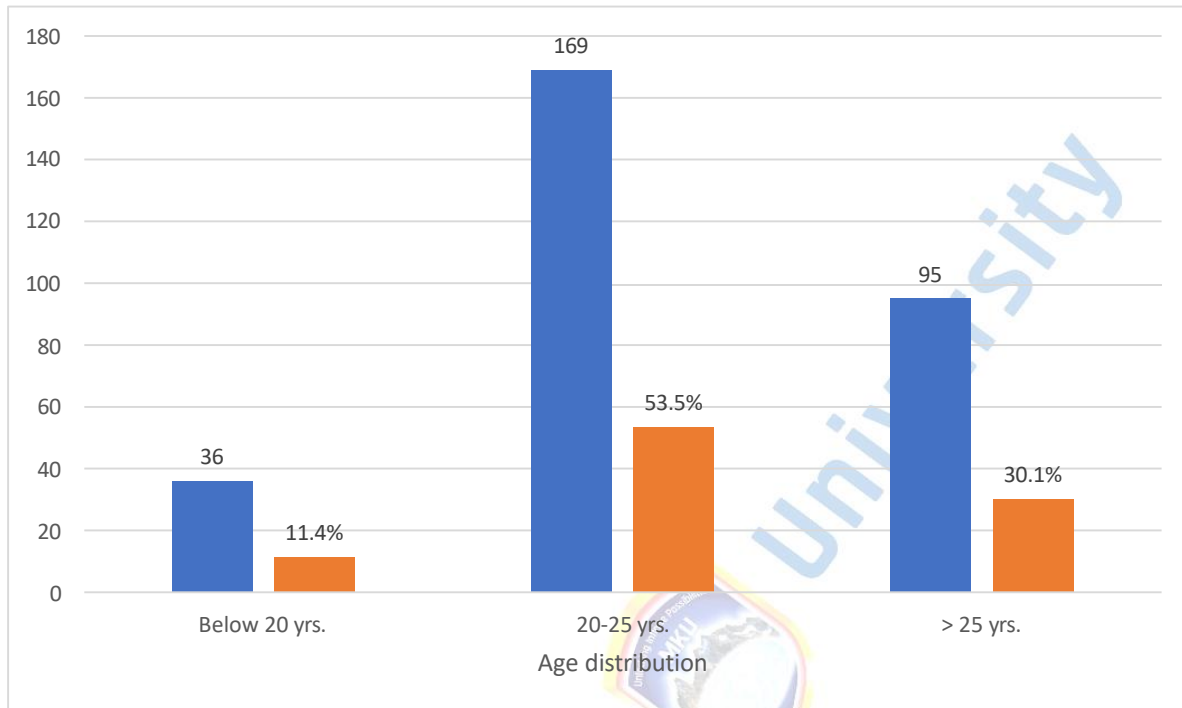
Of the sample, 127 responders were female, accounting for 42.3%. One hundred seventy-three male responses (57.7% of the sample) were registered. This is consistent with research by Sicat et al. (2020), which discovered that many female students occupy Kenyan universities.

#### 4.3.2 Age of the Respondents

The study aimed to ascertain the participants' ages. The respondent's age is intimately linked to their developmental milestones, responsibilities, priorities, and stage in the lifecycle. Several age groups that have undergone substantial historical and technical change throughout their lives include Gen Z, Gen Y, Gen X, and "baby boomers." Knowing how generations differ from one another is crucial because, depending on their experiences and developmental stages,

different generations may have distinct attitudes, priorities, and responses. These are shown in Figure 4.1, which follows.

**Figure 4. 1: Age distribution**



**Source: Researcher (2024)**

According to the respondents' age distribution, 12.0% of them are under the age of twenty. This group comprises the online-savvy generation, recognized for its modern perspectives and digital literacy. People in the 20–25 age range include the most significant sample (56.3%), primarily those who have embraced social media. Those over 25 made up 31.7% of the participants. This supports the claims made by Song et al. (2021) that people under 25 belong to Generation Z, which was raised in an era of technological advancement. As a result, they were exposed to social media and are more likely to experience dysmorphia because of their adaptability to the digital world and desire to change without thinking through the implications.

### **4.3.3 Highest Level of Education**

The participants were tasked to state the highest level of education and the responses were summarized as in Table 4.3 below.

**Table 4. 3: Highest Level of Education**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Certificate or Diploma	117	37.0	39.0	39.0
	Undergraduate Degree	96	30.4	32.0	71.0
	Postgraduate Degree	40	12.7	13.3	84.3
	Others, specify	47	14.9	15.7	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>94.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

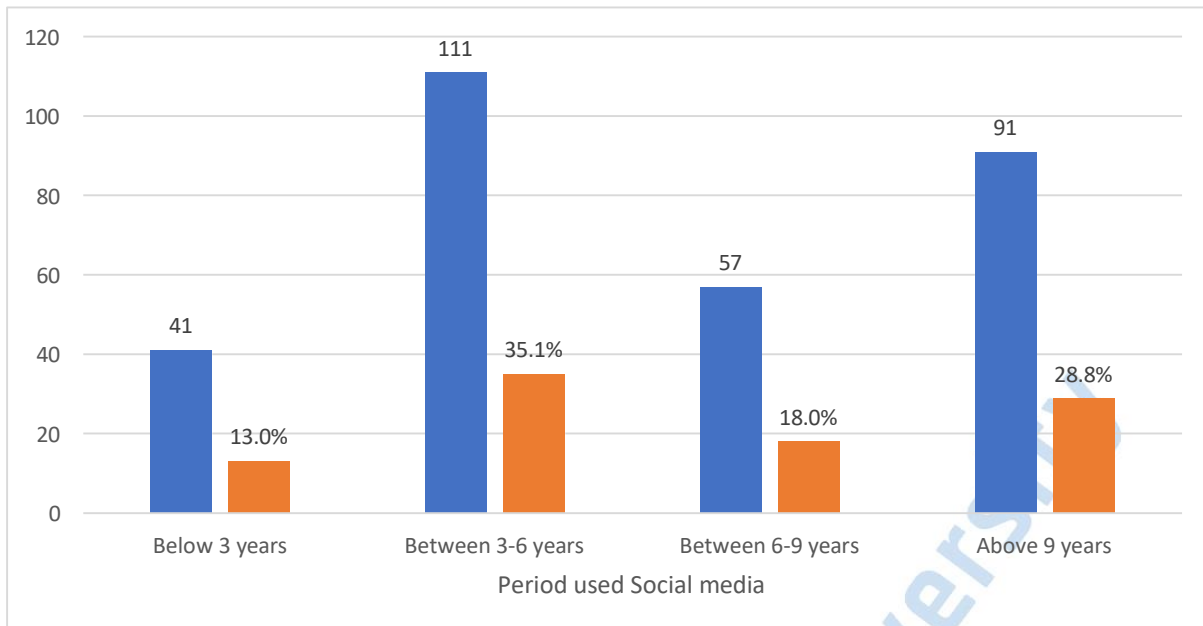
**Source: Researcher (2024)**

The educational attainment of the sample was high, with the majority holding certificate/diploma, accounting for 39% of the respondents. Undergraduate qualifications follow at 32%, indicating a strong presence of advanced education. Postgraduates and other qualifications were less common, with frequencies of 13.3% and 15.7%, respectively.

#### 4.3.4 Period of using social media

The study was in dire need to understand the period the respondents have been using social media. This categorization in figure 4.2 helps in identifying the distribution of their different periods in which they have been using the social media

**Figure 4. 2: Period of using social media**



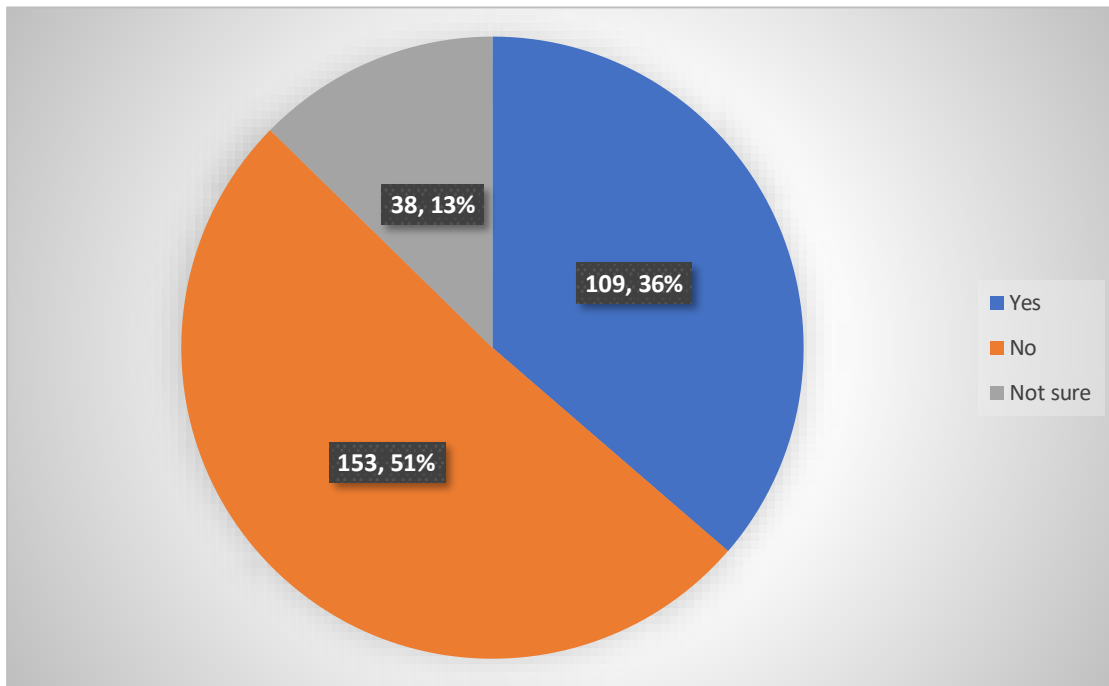
**Source: Researcher (2024)**

According to the data, 37% of respondents, or the largest share, had been using social media for three to six years. This meant that even though they were using social media during that period, they were not addicted to it because they were not psyched up about it because of its adverse effects. Those using social media for over nine years, or thirty-three % of the total, came after them. Individuals who had used social media for six to nine years were ranked 19%, while those who had used it for less than three years made up 13.7%. The response, which showed that the youngsters embraced technological innovation without considering the grave ramifications, such as influencing bodily dysmorphia, confirmed that the youth generation was technologically savvy.

#### **4.3.5 Social media importance**

The researcher was in need of establishing whether the respondents thought of the importance of the social media use to them. The response was presented as indicated by Table 4.6.

**Figure 4. 3: Social media importance**



**Source: Researcher (2024)**

The conclusions shown in the above figure were derived from respondents' perceptions of the significance of social media. The results showed that, for the most part, 51% of respondents thought social media was insignificant since they spent too much time on it. This meant that even though they used social media often, they needed to see the value. The 36.3% rating for those who said "yes" confirmed that some people were exploiting it as a marketing ploy, even if it caused them to experience body dysmorphia. 12.7% of respondents said they were unsure about it, which was supported by the fact that they were utilizing it based on how others were using it and hence needed to learn about its importance.

#### **4.3.6 Most preferred social media networks**

The researcher presented the findings of the respondents based on which social media network they mostly preferred as indicated below in table 4.4

**Table 4. 4: Most preferred social media networks**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Instagram	17	5.4	5.7	5.7
	TikTok	33	10.4	11.0	16.7
	Snapchat	34	10.8	11.3	28.0
	Facebook	44	13.9	14.7	42.7
	Twitter	58	18.4	19.3	62.0
	WhatsApp	59	18.7	19.7	81.7
	YouTube	16	5.1	5.3	87.0
	Reddit	12	3.8	4.0	91.0
	Pinterest	6	1.9	2.0	93.0
	LinkedIn	21	6.6	7.0	100.0
	Total	300	94.9	100.0	

**Source: Researcher (2024)**

According to the analysis results in the above table, most respondents (19/7%) favored using WhatsApp. Those who preferred using Twitter came close behind them, at 19.3%. Facebook use was selected by 14.7% of respondents. TikTok accounted for 11.1%, and Snapchat for 11.3%. LinkedIn users made up about 7% of the total. 5.7% of those who were hooked to Instagram followed them. 5.1% of the population utilized YouTube. Reddit users were ranked at 4%, while Pinterest users were ranked at 2%. These results implied that certain groups favored social media platforms, representing their most favored interaction scenarios.

#### **4.4 Discussion of Individual Objective Results**

The coded data findings in various contexts were examined while evaluating the multiple study objectives and conclusions.

#### 4.4.1 Discussion of objective one: Preference of social network sites and body dysmorphia

The first objective of this study was to determine which social networking sites young adults attending Nairobi's private universities preferred. As a result, the respondents were asked to express whether they agreed or disagreed with the supplied assertions. These replies were given based on the means and standard deviation of the inferential statistics. The results of this investigation are shown in Table 4.5 below.

**Table 4. 5: Preference of social network sites and body dysmorphia**

	Mean	Std. Deviation
I feel more dissatisfied with my body after spending a significant amount of time on social media.	4.08	1.152
Frequent use of social media makes me more likely to compare my appearance to others	3.82	1.321
I often think about changing my appearance after viewing social media content	3.94	1.274
Spending many hours on social media increases my anxiety about my looks	4.05	1.274
I normally use filters and photo editing tools to change how I appear on social media.	4.05	1.183
I feel pressure to look perfect when I post photos on social media.	4.08	1.240
Valid N (listwise)		

**Source: Researcher (2024)**

The study looked at the most popular social media platforms and how they affected respondents' body dysmorphia in general. As a result, this was provided based on the conclusions drawn from each statement regarding the respondents' degree of agreement within various inferential statistical contexts about means and standard deviation.

The study's results showed that, on whether respondents felt less content with their bodies after using social media extensively, the mean was 4.08, and the standard deviation was 1.152. This shows that, in general, respondents consider the time they spend on social media to be valuable if it is used wisely, particularly when studying. This was supported by the fact that some respondents agreed with the statement, indicating that social media use has not had a significant positive impact on their lives and has caused more harm than good.

The mean score of 3.82 and standard deviation of 1.321 indicate a slightly above-average perception of social media use about the belief that using social media frequently makes me more likely to compare my appearance to others. However, the variability in responses suggests that some users find social media more useful than others.

The mean score for individuals who frequently consider altering their looks after watching social media information was 3.94, with a standard deviation of 1.274. This score, below the middle, indicates worries about how social media competition affects perceptions and raises the incidence of body dysmorphia. The range of answers highlights even more how important a concern the rate of divergent social media opinions is to many people. With a mean score of 4.05 and a standard deviation of 1.274, "spending many hours on social media increases my anxiety about my looks" was evaluated. This suggests a lack of self-confidence, contributing to excessive social media use because it heightens the respondent's anxiety about their appearance and makes them feel unlikable.

The statement "I normally use filters and photo editing tools to change how I appear on social media" has a mean score of 4.05 and a standard deviation of 1.183, indicating that the respondents did not value themselves, leading them to compare themselves frequently, which increased their rate of self-doubt. The high variability suggests that some users encounter these problems infrequently while others do so often.

According to the study, respondents were asked if they feel pressured to look flawless when they post pictures on social media; the mean score was 4.08, with a standard deviation of 1.240. This composite score shows that respondents feel a moderate amount of pressure, which makes them feel more imperfect. This confirms that the respondents were confronted with dysmorphia.

According to Satici and Uysal (2015), people's feelings about themselves and their lives were negatively correlated with how much time they spent on Facebook (Mage 14 19.5). A German source study, which included 583 Facebook users, found that those who watch other users

online without actively participating in their interactions experience envy and self-comparison, which lowers their life satisfaction. These findings are consistent with broader research on the frequent use of social media networks, which leads to a lack of self-satisfaction with the natural makeup.

Facebook is a platform that people use to share their good times, unique experiences, and best moments. People's sense of self-worth and well-being may suffer if they think other people's lives are more important than their own (Denti et al., 2012). Chau and Edge (2012) found in another study that persons who use Facebook more frequently and those who check it more frequently had the impression that other people's lives are better than their own, that other people's lives are unfair, and that other people's lives are happier than their own.

Participants in the interview shared the following information based on the dean of students' interview guide:

Participant 001 stated, *"I find Facebook to be worth using, especially during the opening of a new term, as I use it to market the institution."*

The following was said by participants 007, 015, and 020: *"I prefer to use TikTok and Instagram since they are usually active and most of the time make me laugh."*

*"I have no evidence of being influenced by my peers to certain social network sites as they may always imitate my behavior on those sites,"* Participant 011 stated.

#### **4.4.2 Objective 2 findings: The Frequency of Social Media Use and its influence on body dysmorphia among young adults in private universities found in the city of Nairobi, Kenya**

The study's second objective was to determine the frequency of social media use and how it affected young adults with body dysmorphia enrolled in private universities in Nairobi, Kenya. To this end, respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with the statements provided. Their answers were also based on the means and standard deviation of the inferential statistics. The results of this are shown in table 4.6 below.

**Table 4. 6: The Frequency of Social Media Use and its influence on body dysmorphia among young adults in private universities.**

	Mean	Std. Deviation
I feel more dissatisfied with my body after spending a significant amount of time on social media	4.08	1.152
Frequent use of social media makes me more likely to compare my appearance to others	3.82	1.321
I often think about changing my appearance after viewing social media content	3.94	1.274
Spending many hours on social media increases my anxiety about my looks	4.05	1.274
I normally use filters and photo editing tools to change how I appear on social media.	4.05	1.183
I feel pressure to look perfect when I post photos on social media.	4.08	1.240
Valid N (listwise)		

**Source: Analytical Data (2024)**

The frequency of social media use was the study variable, and the findings were based on responses to various statements that reflected the degree of agreement from a response perspective in a Likert scale, which was truncated to an inferential statistic using means and standard deviation.

With a mean score of 4.08 and a standard deviation of 1.152, the study's findings regarding respondents' feelings of increased dissatisfaction with their bodies after spending a significant amount of time on social media indicated a higher parity of how the respondents felt about their bodies when they spent much time on social media, which made them feel as though they were not the same person in comparison to others.

The study found that respondents who use social media frequently are more likely to compare their appearance to others, with a mean score of 3.82 and a standard deviation of 1.321. These results indicate that frequent social media users are more likely to experience daily self-dissatisfaction, which makes them feel like they are not the same person every day. As a result,

they are more likely to injure themselves through various life dimensions of comparison, which leads to increased body dysmorphic behavior.

The study's findings regarding the frequency with which respondents considered altering their appearance after viewing social media content showed a mean of 3.94 and a standard deviation of 1.274, indicating that most respondents agreed that they frequently consider altering their appearance after visiting various social media platforms and viewing different parametric dimensions that are more attractive than them. This further supported the notion that respondents' bodies and appearances may become distorted to conform to the images they see on their platforms.

Regarding the question of whether spending much time on social media makes respondents feel more anxious about their appearance, the study confirmed that it had a mean of 4.05, indicating a high rate of agreement with the statement, and a standard deviation of 1.274, indicating a high rate of statement congruency. As a result, the researcher concluded that the respondents' extensive use of social media contributed to their high exposure to body dysmorphia.

The study's findings regarding the respondents' typical use of filters and photo editing software to alter their online personas were confirmed by a mean score of 4.05 and a standard deviation of 1.183, indicating that most respondents agreed with the findings. The findings also revealed that the primary motivation behind their use of these tools was their desire to resemble others, which resulted in a lack of love for themselves and a distortion of who they were, which in turn led to a higher rate of body dysmorphia among themselves.

The research conducted to determine whether the participants feel pressured to appear flawless when they share photos on social media produced a mean score of 4.08 and a standard deviation

of 1.240, indicating a strong correlation between the respondents' responses and how they arranged themselves to fit the appearances of others. This confirmed that the participants were incredibly selfless when sharing photos of themselves on social media most frequently, which created a sense of pressure on themselves and contributed to the social media threat of abattoirs.

The study's findings, which focused on determining the frequency of social media use and its impact on body dysmorphia among young adults in private universities, generally indicated a higher rate of positivism with the statements at hand based on how the respondents were full of embracing social media use. These findings were in line with those of Sidani et al. (2016), who found that young adults who used social media more frequently were more likely to develop eating disorders and other body image issues; additionally, frequent users are more likely to experience cyberbullying or negative feedback, both of which can exacerbate feelings of inadequacy and body dysmorphia (Perloff, 2014); they also supported the findings of Ohannessian (2017), who showed that increased media use predicted greater body dissatisfaction among adolescents over time.

According to the dean of students' interview, the study produced disparate results.

*"I rarely use social media because there are a lot of young adults there who always have behaviors that are not pleasing, especially to elderly people like me,"* Participant 014 stated.

*"Because I'm not used to using social media, I'm always comfortable with how I look and therefore I don't find any issues with my body,"* stated Participant 004.

The only time, according to Participant 011, *that she has ever felt self-disgusting over social media comparisons with other people was when she realized her appearance was unwelcoming and nearly committed suicide as a result.*

Participant 003 stated, *"I like other people's posts on social media without leaving a comment because I want to make them feel loved and cared for."*

**4.4.3 Objective no 3: To determine the influence of Social Media Engagement on body dysmorphia among young adults in private universities in Nairobi city, Kenya.**

As a result, the respondents were asked to provide their opinions regarding whether they agreed or disagreed with the statements provided, and these responses were also provided based on the inferential statistics through means and standard deviation. The results of this are provided in Table 4.7 below. The third objective of the study was to ascertain the influence of social media engagement on body dysmorphia among young adults in private universities in Nairobi, Kenya.

**Table 4. 7: Social Media Engagement on body dysmorphia among young adults in private universities in Nairobi city, Kenya**

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Viewing posts of influencers and celebrities with idealized body images makes me feel dissatisfied with my own body	3.97	1.277
Exposure to fitness and diet content on social media increases my desire to change my body	4.07	1.155
Seeing edited and filtered photos of others on social media makes me more critical of my natural appearance.	4.09	1.168
I feel more self-conscious about my appearance after viewing social media content that highlights physical attractiveness.	3.97	1.214
Social media advertisements and promotions for beauty and fitness products make me more dissatisfied with my body.	3.93	1.233
Comparing myself to the 'perfect' images on social media makes me feel anxious about my body	4.21	1.005
Valid N (listwise)		

**Source: Researcher (2024)**

The statements representing the degree of agreement from the response perspective in the Likert scale truncated to inferential statistics through means and standard deviation were used

to present the findings based on Social Media Engagement in line with the study variable under study.

The majority of respondents agreed that whenever they view posts of influencers and celebrities with idealized body images, they always have self-doubt about their body makeup, which increases the rate of body dissatisfaction. The study regarding the respondents' perceptions of whether viewing posts of these individuals makes them feel dissatisfied with their bodies found a mean score of 3.97 and a standard deviation of 1.277.

The study found that the respondents' desire to change their bodies increased when exposed to fitness and diet content on social media, with a mean score of 4.07 and a standard deviation of 1.155. These results indicate that when respondents have a strong admiration for fitness but do not find it within themselves, they seek external exposure, which makes them hate themselves and puts them in a situation where they dislike their appearance daily, increasing the likelihood of experiencing body dysmorphia.

Most respondents agreed that when they see edited and filtered photos of others, they always aspire to be like them and try everything to discomfiture themselves to fit those external appearances, which increases the likelihood of body dysmorphia. The study examined whether seeing edited and filtered photos of others on social media makes me more critical of my natural appearance. After data analysis, the study's mean was 4.09, and the standard deviation was 1.168.

Regarding whether the respondents feel more self-conscious about their appearance after seeing social media content that emphasizes physical attractiveness, the study confirmed that it had a mean of 3.97, indicating a high rate of agreement with the statement, and a standard deviation of 1.214, indicating that there was a high rate of statement agreement, which was interpreted as positive feedback. As a result, the researcher established that the respondents

were likely to compare their photos with those of others on the social media platform of their choice, creating the impression that they have differing opinions about their appearance. This confirmed the high rate of exposure to body dysmorphia.

Most respondents strongly agreed that social media advertisements on promotional products for beauty and fitness always engulf them to be like those on the product; therefore, through comparison, they feel like they are not as good as they would wish. The study findings established that a lack of self-control through social media makes many youths frustrated by life based on their appearances. The study findings on whether social media advertisements and promotions for beauty and fitness products make me more dissatisfied with my body were confirmed through a mean score of 3.93 and a standard deviation of 1.233.

The study aimed to determine whether comparing oneself to social media's "perfect" images causes anxiety about one's body. It found that the mean score was 4.21, and the standard deviation was 1.005. This indicated that the respondents' rate of self-conflict about their appearance was very high, as they constantly found new comments about their appearance on various social media platforms, making them feel incompetent. This increased their rate of personal dislike, which in turn increased their rate of body dysmorphia.

While different researchers had differing opinions about how social media engagement was a significant factor in their research, the findings based on social media engagement were consistent. For example, the study by Erreygers et al. (2019) confirmed that teens who use social media excessively and inappropriately are more likely to encounter cyberbullying and online harassment, which affects between 37 and 70 percent of the general population.

It also confirmed the findings of Wright (2017), who discovered that teens with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are cyber-victimized have a high probability of experiencing depression and that excessive use of social media is linked to low self-esteem. Didden et al.

(2013) also found that bullying has been linked in multiple studies to adverse psychological effects like depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem.

The study observed that varied answers were obtained based on the perspectives of the dean of students in the interview guide.

Participant 006 stated, *"I have never felt pressured to post anything on social media because I am aware of the negative effects it can have on people, especially when someone is trying to bully you."*

Participant 014 stated, *"I cannot tell which content made me feel positive or negative as long as I don't post any content on social media. This is also articulated by the fact that I am not a frequent user of social media," further supported this.*

#### **4.4.4: Objective no; Body dysmorphia among youth**

The dependent variable on body dysmorphia among young adults in private universities in Nairobi, Kenya, was the study's fourth objective. Accordingly, respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with the statements provided, and their answers were also based on the means and standard deviation of the inferential statistics. The results of this are shown in Table 4.8 below

**Table 4. 8: Body dysmorphia among youth**

	Mean	Std. Deviation
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Dysmorphia can be avoided through strict regulations on use of social media	3.90	1.235
Young adults need to be informed of aspect of self - acceptance	3.76	1.333
Young adults should be encouraged to love the way they are to avoid lowering their dignity	3.79	1.324
Social media should be regulated especially to avoid cyberbullying	3.73	1.380
Issue related to self -esteem should be taught so as to avoid dysmorphia effect to young adults.	3.89	1.256
Valid N (listwise)		

**Source: Researcher (2024)**

The respondents generally perceive that body dysmorphia can be avoided through strict regulations based on social media use as moderately adequate, as indicated by the mean score of 3.90 with a standard deviation of 1.125 for dysmorphia. Regarding the need for young adults to be informed about self-acceptance, the mean score of 3.76 and standard deviation of 1.333 indicate that respondents generally need information on self-acceptance. The response suggests that youths should always be coached, especially on the negative effects of frequent use of social media.

Social media should be regulated, especially to avoid cyberbullying. The mean score was 3.73 with a standard deviation of 1.380, suggesting a generally positive perception of platform variety, though responses vary significantly. The statement "Young adults should be encouraged to love the way they are to avoid lowering their dignity" has a mean score of 3.79 and a standard deviation of 1.324. This score indicates that respondents find youths should always have mentors on the addictive nature of social media so that they are not carried away by the waves that occur in those social media platforms.

With a standard deviation of 1.256, the mean score for the issue of whether or not self-esteem should be taught to young adults to prevent the dysmorphia effect is 3.89, indicating a

moderately positive perception of self-esteem that should be taught in various higher education institutions for the youths to avoid issues related to body dysmorphia.

#### 4.5 Correlation results

Table 4.9 below presents the correlation data showing a statistically significant association between juvenile body dysmorphia and social media activity.

**Table 4. 9: Correlation results**

		Frequency-social media use	Social media engagement	Social media content	Body dysmorphia among youth
Body dysmorphia among youth	Pearson Correlation	.583**	.697**	.491**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.021	0.010	
	N	300	300	300	300

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

**Source: Researcher (2024)**

These results suggest that social media usage frequency ( $r = .583$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) has a moderate positive correlation with body dysmorphia, meaning that more social media use is linked to higher levels of body image dissatisfaction; social media engagement ( $r = .697$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) has a stronger positive correlation, meaning that the more people use social media platforms, the more body dysmorphia they have; social media content ( $r = .491$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) suggests that the kind or nature of content consumed on social media may also have an impact on body image concerns. Taken together, these results indicate that social media usage frequency and social media engagement are significant factors in the development of body dysmorphia in young people.

## 4.6 Regression Analysis

To determine the impact of social media engagement, frequency of use, and social media content on body dysmorphia in young people, regression analysis was utilized. The results of this analysis, including model fitness, regression coefficients, and analysis of variance, are presented in Tables 4.10, 4.11, and 4.12, respectively.

**Table 4. 10: Model fitness**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.802 <sup>a</sup>	.643	.639	.53513

a. Predictors: (Constant), SMC, FSMU, SME

The model adequately links the variables, as evidenced by the R-value, representing the correlation coefficient between the predictors and the dependent variable. The R-value of 0.802 indicates a higher positive correlation between the predictors and the dependent variable, suggesting that the predictors collectively explain a substantial portion of the variance in body dysmorphia among youth in Nairobi private universities. The frequency of social media use, engagement, and content explains approximately 64.3% of the variance in body dysmorphia among youths in Nairobi's private universities. Other factors outside the scope of this study account for the remaining variance.

**Table 4. 11: Analysis of Variance**

ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	152.542	3	50.847	177.561	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	84.764	296	.286		
	Total	237.307	299			

- a. Dependent Variable: BDAY
- b. Predictors: (Constant), SMC, FSMU, SME

The regression model is statistically significant, as indicated by the F-value of 177.561 and the significance value of 0.000. This suggests that the predictors—frequency of social media use, engagement, and content—significantly impact the dependent variable, body dysmorphia, and that the model explains the variation in the data better than chance. The presented ANOVA table breaks down the dependent variable's variability, body dysmorphia, into variability explained by the model (Regression) and unexplained variability (Residual).

#### **4.6 Regression Coefficients**

A one-level increase in the value frequency of social media use increases body dysmorphia among youths in private universities in Kenya by 0.394 ( $\beta_2 = 0.394$ ), according to the regression coefficient table, which also revealed that the p-value for the coefficient of social media engagement is 0.000, also less than 0.05, indicating statistical significance. As a result, there is a significant relationship between the frequency of social media use and body dysmorphia among youths in private universities in Kenya.

Therefore, there is a significant relationship between youths' use of social media and their body dysmorphia in Kenyan private universities; for every level increase in social media engagement, youths' body dysmorphia in Kenyan private universities increases by 0.233 ( $\beta_3 = 0.233$ ). The study also found that the p-value for social media content is 0.000, which is less than 0.05 and indicates a significance level; consequently, there is a significant relationship between social media content and youths' body dysmorphia in Kenyan private universities.

**Table 4. 12: Regression coefficient**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t		
1	(Constant)	.134	.169		.791	.430
	FSMU	.394	.065	.388	6.078	.000
	SME	.233	.063	.238	3.694	.000
	SMC	.293	.057	.256	5.174	.000

a. Dependent Variable: BDAY

The final regression model estimated from the study results is as follows:

$$Y = 0.134 + 0.394X1 + 0.233X2 + 0.293X3$$

Where:-

Y = Body dysmorphia

X1 = Frequent social media use

X2 = social media engagement

X3 = social media content

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

A summary of the study's findings is given in this chapter, along with a discussion of how the findings relate to the study's goals and suggestions for future developments in terms of determining and implementing suitable interventions based on the effect of social media use on body dysmorphia in young adults attending private universities in Nairobi. The study's goals were to determine the effects of three factors on body dysmorphia among young adults enrolled in private colleges in Nairobi, Kenya: (1) social network site preference, (2) frequency of social media use, and (3) social media engagement.

#### 5.2 Summary of the Study Findings

The study's main objective was to find out how young adults attending private universities in Nairobi's metropolis experienced body dysmorphia due to their use of social media. The study set out to investigate the following specific goals: (i) to find out which social networking sites young adults in private universities in Nairobi, Kenya preferred; (ii) to find out how frequently young adults in private universities in Nairobi, Kenya used social media and how that influence affected their body dysmorphia; and (iii) to find out how social media engagement affected young adults in private universities in Nairobi, Kenya's body dysmorphia. The paragraphs that follow will so address these synopsis results.

The study's primary goal was determining which social networking sites young adults at private colleges in Nairobi, Kenya, preferred. The results showed that after spending considerable time on social media, the respondents felt less satisfied with their bodies. This was further influenced by the fact that I'm more prone to compare my appearance to others because I use social media frequently. The results also showed respondents often consider altering their appearance after

watching social media content. Conversely, the study discovered that participants typically alter their online personas through filters and photo-editing software on social media platforms. It was also found that the respondents experience pressure to appear flawless in pictures they share on social media. This was further demonstrated by the finding that there was a significant and positive correlation between body dysmorphia and the preference for social media network sites, with a p-value of 0.000—less than 0.05—for media use. This demonstrated how important social media preferences are in causing body dysmorphia.

The study's second objective was to determine how frequently young adults attending private institutions in Nairobi, Kenya, use social media and how much of an impact it has on body dysmorphia. Most responders to the study reported feeling less content with their bodies after using social media for extended periods. Furthermore, the study results showed that respondents who used social media frequently were more inclined to compare their appearance to others. This was consistent with the results showing respondents often consider altering their look after watching social media content.

Additionally, it was shown that spending a lot of time on social media makes respondents feel more self-conscious about their appearance. Furthermore, the study indicated that the respondents feel pressure to look flawless when uploading social media images. They typically utilize filters and photo editing tools to alter how they appear on social media. This was further taken into account by the significance level of social media use, where a p-value of 0.000 further demonstrated the existence of a significant positive link between social media use and body dysmorphia.

The third goal, which looked at how social media use affects body dysmorphia in young adults attending private universities in Nairobi, Kenya, found that seeing posts from influencers and celebrities with idealized body images makes them feel self-conscious about their bodies. The

results that showed exposure to diet and fitness content on social media boosts the desire to alter one's physical appearance further supported this. Additionally, it was discovered that the respondents became more judgmental of their natural appearance after viewing others' filtered and manipulated social media photographs.

The respondents' increased self-consciousness about my looks following their perusal of social media content that emphasizes physical attractiveness further supported this. It was further established that respondents' dissatisfaction with their bodies increases in response to social media advertising and ads for fitness and beauty items. This ensured respondents wouldn't feel self-conscious about their bodies when they compared themselves to the 'ideal' photographs on social media. The data also demonstrated a positive and significant association between Social Media Engagement and body dysmorphia.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

In private universities in Nairobi, this study examined how young adults' use of social media affected their body dysmorphia. Three goals were sought after by conducting this examination: to determine the preferred social network sites, the frequency of social media use, and the impact of social media engagement on body dysmorphia in young adults attending private universities in Nairobi, Kenya. Several conclusions have been drawn from the findings of the previously discussed study. These conclusions are consistent with the stated study objectives and are further elaborated upon below:

The study results showed that social media sites have varying effects on young adults' body dysmorphia depending on their preference for them among young adults attending private universities. However, when these social media platforms are used wisely, they can improve the lives of young adults by serving as a marketing tool that caters to their wants and needs.

Because they will have a critical perspective based on the network sites, this will improve their lives and lessen their problems with body dysmorphia.

The study results on the frequency of social media use among young adults at private institutions show that using it for extended periods makes respondents feel less confident about their bodies. The survey also found that respondents were more prone to compare their appearance to others when they used social media frequently. The respondents' frequent consideration of altering their appearance following the reading of social media information served as confirmation of this. Furthermore, the study found that respondents' worry about their appearance increases when they spend a lot of time on social media. This was also consistent with the findings that the respondents feel pressure to appear flawless when posting photos on social media and frequently use filters and photo editing software to alter how they appear on the platform.

Finally, research on the impact of social media engagement on body dysmorphia shows that, although it is thought to have a significant influence, seeing posts by influencers and celebrities with idealized body images makes people feel bad about their bodies. Furthermore, as the research supports, people are more motivated to alter their physical appearance when exposed to social media posts about diets and exercise. This was also consistent with the finding that respondents are more critical of others' natural appearance when they see filtered and manipulated images of them on social media. It was also figured out that the respondents feel more self-conscious about their appearance after viewing social media content highlighting physical attractiveness. Social media advertisements and promotions for beauty and fitness products make the respondents more dissatisfied with their bodies.

## **5.4 Recommendations**

### **5.4.1 Management Practice Recommendations**

First, university management should develop awareness campaigns focused on the detrimental impacts of social media on body image. This can be done through conferences, seminars, and counselling sessions to educate students about the influence of social media platforms on self-esteem and body satisfaction.

Secondly, it is necessary to promote appropriate social media usage by fostering critical thinking among students while engaging with filtered and manipulated photos. Digital detox measures, such as "no social media days," can help minimize students' pressure to comply with unattainable beauty standards.

Thirdly, academic institutions ought to work with mental health specialists to provide focused counselling services that specifically address body image issues associated with social media use. Students should have access to body dysmorphia-specific therapy sessions and support groups.

Finally, academic institutions and social media firms may collaborate to promote safer online spaces. This could entail supporting media prioritizing diversity and real portrayal over appearance-based norms.

### **5.4.2 Policy Recommendations**

First, legislators should adopt norms that control exposure to modified content, particularly photos that set unrealistic beauty standards. Private universities might use these guidelines as part of their efforts to promote mental health and wellness.

Secondly, the Ministry of Education should mandate the inclusion of media literacy programs in university curriculums. These programs would educate students about the psychological

impacts of social media use, encouraging them to evaluate the content they engage with critically.

Thirdly, a national public awareness campaign should encourage appropriate social media use and digital well-being. The significance of mental health and the risks of excessive exposure to appearance-centric content should be emphasized by this endeavour.

Finally, lawmakers and social media companies could work together to impose more lucid disclaimers on content that has been edited or filtered. Students can discriminate between authentic and edited photos more easily if consumers know when content has been altered, which may lessen the negative impacts of comparison.

#### **5.4.3 Theoretical Implication**

The study firstly emphasizes how crucial it is to provide spaces, both real and virtual, where kids feel free to be themselves without feeling pressured by society to meet beauty standards. Person-centered theory emphasizes unconditional positive respect, which can be fostered in academic environments.

Second, as fundamental components of Person-Centered Theory, educational institutions must stress the importance of authenticity and self-acceptance. The main goal of counselling services for students should be to support them in creating a positive self-concept unaffected by social media comparisons.

Thirdly, this study highlights Carl Rogers' point that people's capacity to sustain a positive self-concept is disrupted when they are exposed to idealized images on social media. Promoting interventions that offset these detrimental effects is crucial to assist students in concentrating on their development and self-actualization.

Last but not least, person-centered approaches should be used in educational and mental health interventions to help students concentrate on their internal values and sense of worth rather

than circumstances outside themselves. Targeted therapy and awareness campaigns that value authenticity overlooks could help achieve this.

### **5.5 Recommendations for further research in this field of study**

The study findings emphasize numerous areas for further research to expand our understanding of social media's impact on kids. First, future studies should evaluate the broader influence of social media on behavioral changes among young adults in Kenya. This could include examining how prolonged social media usage impacts lifestyle choices, routines, and interpersonal behaviors. Additionally, greater research is needed to understand the causes of self-denial among university students. Researching the psychological, sociological, and cultural underpinnings that cause young adults to reject or deny who they are when faced with outside pressures may offer vital information for mental health interventions.

Furthermore, research on the connection between social media use and loneliness in higher education settings is necessary. With greater digital contact potentially replacing face-to-face connections, it is crucial to understand how social media contributes to feelings of isolation among students. More successful tactics for encouraging young people's mental health and better digital involvement may result from research in these fields.

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## APPENDICES

### Supplement 1: Introductory Letter & Consent

Dear sir/madam

#### Re: Request for Permission to Collect Data

I am Grace Wawitima Kiarie, a student of Master of Arts in counselling psychology at Mount Kenya University. I am carrying research on "Influence of social media use on body dysmorphia among young adults in the private institutions of higher learning in Nairobi, Kenya."

I respectfully seek for permission from your organization to gather data that will assist me to finalize my research work.

I will be thankful if my plea will be considered.

Yours faithfully,

Grace Kiarie

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**Note:** Data from this study will not be utilized for any other activity other than the targeted intention.

#### Consent

"I hereby certify that I have age of 18 and above and I willingly choose to willingly participate in the activities to be done. I confirm that all my questions and concerns linked to this study have been addressed.

Agree [  ]

*(tick if are in the agreement with the statement above)*

## Supplement 2: Questionnaire for Students

The title of the study is “influence of social media use on body dysmorphia among young adults in Private Universities in Nairobi, Kenya

”. Please, put the tick where appropriate.

### SECTION A: Demographic Information

1. Name of your University \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is your sex?

Male [ ]

Female [ ]

3. What is your highest qualification academically?

a. Certificate or Diploma [ ]

b. Undergraduate Degree [ ]

c. Postgraduate Degree [ ]

d. Others, specify [ ]

4. What bracket of age do you fit bracket?

Below 20 years [ ]

Between 20-25 years [ ]

Above 25 years [ ]

5. How long have you been using social media \_\_\_\_\_

Below 3 years [ ]

Between 3-6 years [ ]

Between 6-9 years [ ]

Above 9 years [ ]

6. Do you think social media is so important for you?

Yes ( ) No ( ) Not sure ( )

### SECTION II: STUDY VARIABLES

7. Most preferred social Networking sites (tick where necessary)

Serial No.	Types of Social Networking Sites	Tick (X)
1	Instagram	
2	TikTok	
3	Snapchat	
4	Facebook	
5	Twitter	
6	WhatsApp	
7	YouTube	
8	Reddit	
9	Pinterest	
10	LinkedIn	

**Frequency of social media use(FSMU)**

5. How do you agree with the statements below in relation to frequency of social media use and body dysmorphia? Use the given ratings

1. Strongly Disagree (SD), 2. Disagree (D), 3. Uncertain (U), 4. Agree (A), 5. Strongly Agree (SA)

Statement	1.SD	2.D	3.U	4.A	5.SA
I feel more dissatisfied with my body after spending a significant amount of time on social media					
Frequent use of social media makes me more likely to compare my appearance to others					
I often think about changing my appearance after viewing social media content					
Spending many hours on social media increases my anxiety about my looks					

I normally use filters and photo editing tools to change how I appear on social media.					
I feel pressure to look perfect when I post photos on social media.					

**Social media engagement (SME)**

5. At what rate do you agree with the below statements related to social media engagement and body dysmorphia? Use the rates given.

1. Strongly Disagree (SD), 2. Disagree (D), 3. Uncertain (U), 4. Agree (A), 5. Strongly Agree (SA)

Statement	1.SD	2.D	3.U	4.A	5.SA
Interacting with posts about beauty and fitness on social media makes me feel worse about my own body					
Posting photos of myself on social media increases my concerns about my appearance					
Receiving comments and likes on my photos affects how I feel about my body					
Comparing my photos to those of others on social media makes me more critical of my appearance.					
I often edit or use filters on my photos to meet social media beauty standards					
Engaging in discussions or comments about body image on social media increases my dissatisfaction with my own body.					

**Social media content SMC)**

5. How do you agree with the given statements related to social media content and body dysmorphia? Use the ratings criteria below

1. Strongly Disagree (SD), 2. Disagree (D), 3. Uncertain (U), 4. Agree (A), 5. Strongly Agree (SA)

Statement	1.SD	2.D	3.U	4.A	5.SA
Viewing posts of influencers and celebrities with idealized					

body images makes me feel dissatisfied with my own body					
Exposure to fitness and diet content on social media increases my desire to change my body					
Seeing edited and filtered photos of others on social media makes me more critical of my natural appearance.					
I feel more self-conscious about my appearance after viewing social media content that highlights physical attractiveness.					
Social media advertisements and promotions for beauty and fitness products make me more dissatisfied with my body.					
Comparing myself to the 'perfect' images on social media makes me feel anxious about my body					

### Body dysmorphia among youth (BDAY)

How will you rate the below statements based on body dysmorphia? Please tick where appropriate in the provided space. Use a scale given 1 to 5.

Statement	1.SD	2.D	3.U	4.A	5.SA
Dysmorphia can be avoided through strict regulations on use of social media					
Young adults need to be informed of aspect of self -acceptance					
Young adults should be encouraged to love the way they are to avoid lowering their dignity					
Social media should be regulated especially to avoid cyberbullying					
Issue related to self -esteem should be taught so as to avoid dysmorphia effect to young adults					

###END##

### Supplement 3: Interview Questions for Deans of Student

1. Which social networking sites do you like most?
2. What features do you find most appealing about your preferred social networking sites?
3. How do your peers influence your choice of social networking sites?
4. How long do spend on social media per day?
5. Do you notice any changes in how you feel about your body after spending a significant amount of time on social media?
6. Can you describe any specific instances where prolonged social media use impacted your body image?
7. What types of activities do you engage in most on social media (e.g., posting photos, liking posts, commenting)?
8. How does engaging in these activities affect your perceptions of your own body?
9. Have you ever been pressurized to present any image or appearance on social media? Are you free to describe that experience?
10. What types of content do you frequently view on social media (e.g., fitness, beauty, lifestyle)?
11. How does exposure to certain types of content (e.g., photos of influencers or celebrities) affect your body image?
12. Can you provide examples of content that made you feel either positively or negatively about your body?

#### Supplement 4- List of Private Institutions of Higher Learning in Nairobi

1. Adventist Uni
2. AIU
3. ANU
4. Aga Khan
5. AMREF
6. CUEA
7. Daystar
8. East African
9. Umma
10. ILU
11. Kabarak
12. KCA
13. Methodist
14. Kenya Highlands
15. Lukenya
16. Mount Kenya
17. Pan Africa
18. Pioneer International
19. RAF International University
20. Riara
21. Scott Christian
22. St Paul's
23. Strathmore