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## **Impact of Fitspiration Images on Social Media and Body Image Comparisons Among Youth**

### **Abstract**

*Media studies have been paying little focus towards body image issues. The media has projected health as a major worry for people of all ages, but especially for young people. There are some advantages and disadvantages, though, given how big issue it has grown among teenagers and young adults. The issue raised by this review study, which addresses several media influence hypotheses, is if social media is too responsible for the spreading of ideas that cause young individuals to have harmful health perceptions. A total of 97 studies on the topic, with various stages of testing, were monitored. According to some research, looking at inspiration causes sexualization, objectification, and upward and downward societal comparisons, which may or may not result in self-improvement.*

**Keywords:** Fitspiration Images. Social Media. Youth. Body Image Comparisons, Objectification theory. Social Comparison theory. Social Ecological theory.

### **Introduction**

According to the researcher Cataldo (2017), social media is very famous in the fitness and cosmetic industries through different social media channels. In the fitness and health industries, these social media platforms are also employed for informational purposes. Social media is used daily by many people. Also, another researcher, Carrotte (2017), asserts in his research that many people use social media in their daily lives to learn about fitness and other health-related topics. In this current and modern era, a new thing has arrived called Fitspiration. This word comes from a short term called "fitspo." Basically, this term is used to define fitness inspiration and also helps people learn about their body perception. Despite the fact that these social media fitness trends are using unique and inspiring data to motivate people to do different exercises and be healthy, It also aid audience watch pictures and videos linked to fitness and exercises. Although people who are obsessed with fitspiration and thinspiration trends also communicate with other people who have

the same interests as their own, It also consists of different exercise tips, different weight loss recipes, photographs of people, and before and after images to bring out changes in weight or muscle. As well as these new Fitspo trends, they also allow users to easily follow fitness pages related to their interests.

### **Problem Statement:**

Social media is important for inspiration, but it may also have a negative impact on people's lives. Many concepts have been developed with the aid of social media that encourage the idea of body image comparisons, according to Tiggemann and Zaccardo (2015). (BIC). The most serious problem nowadays is body image comparisons (BIC), which happen often and especially when people have a negative point of view about their physical bodies and want to make minor or major modifications to their entire bodies. On many social media platforms, viewers of online media like photographs and videos have begun comparing themselves to attractive celebrities and well-known models. Additionally, it negatively affects people of all ages.

And body image comparison (BIC) are the main problem and the issue of the whole research. And many research studies were also done before on this issue.

### **Significance of Study:**

This study will prove significant as it will give suggestions to the social media owners, doctors, gym instructors, educationalists, media practitioners and government regulators to device such guidelines which can address the health-related concerns as well psychological and sociological problems among the users.

### **Objectives:**

- To investigate how to engage yourself in social media activity connected to fitness.
- To investigate that the social media fitspiration obsession is responsible for the anxiety and depression that young people encounter when it comes to how they perceive their bodies.
- To investigate that you agree that body image comparisons are altering the behavior of young people
- To investigate that you think that as a result of seeing before and after body photographs and videos on social media, young people are more self-conscious about their looks, including their body shape, size, and weight

- To investigate that having eating problems, using diet medications, or engaging in excessive exercise is hazardous for the body.

### **Research Questions:**

1. Do you engage in social media activity connected to fitness?
2. Do you believe that the social media fitspiration obsession is responsible for the anxiety and depression that young people encounter when it comes to how they perceive their bodies?
3. Do you agree that body image comparisons are altering the behavior of young people?
4. Do you think that as a result of seeing before and after body photographs and videos on social media, young people are more self-conscious about their looks, including their body shape, size, and weight?
5. Do you agree that having eating problems, using diet medications, or engaging in excessive exercise is hazardous for the body?

### **Hypothesis:**

H1: Fitspiration has negative influence among youth through social media.

H2: Fitspiration has positive influence among youth through social media.

### **Literature Review:**

There have been several studies on the impact of social media and "fitspiration" images on body image and self-esteem in youth. One study, published in the *International Journal of Eating Disorders* in 2016, found that exposure to fitspiration images on social media was associated with increased body dissatisfaction and disordered eating behaviors in young women. Another study, published in the *Journal of Eating Disorders* in 2018, found that exposure to fitspiration content on social media was associated with greater body dissatisfaction, lower self-esteem, and a greater drive for thinness in young women. Another study, published in the *International Journal of Eating Disorders* in 2017, found that social media use, especially use of Instagram, was associated with increased body dissatisfaction, disordered eating behaviors, and negative self-image in young adults. It is important to note that these studies are observational in nature and cannot establish a causal relationship between social media use and body image concerns. It is suggested that more research be conducted to understand the complexities of how social media influence body image and self-esteem in youth and to develop effective intervention strategies to mitigate negative effects.

### **Theoretical Framework:**

In order to understand the concept of fitspiration and to see its impact on people two theories " social and comparison theory" and " objectification theory" has been used here.

Social comparison theory is proposed by psychologist Leon Festinger in 1954, which says that there is a drive within individuals to gain accurate self-evaluations.

Objectification theory was represented by Fredrickson and Roberts in 1997. This theory occurs when the female body parts are used as mere instruments or regarded as they were capable of representing it.

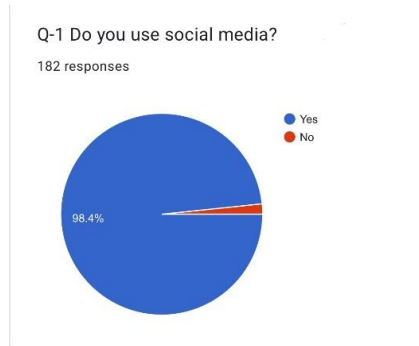
When the adults especially women and girls see something new on social media they try to imply it in their real lives and when they are not able to do so they start to feel insecure. In the same case, when someone see that perfect body images a desire of attaining that body figure develops in it and he/she tries to do everything they can in order to attain perfection but if they are not able to do so they feel insecure, they keep themselves way from others they feel that they are not perfect for others they are not beautiful because they didn't match the so called standards of beauty and perfection that social media tells us. They become depressed and hate themselves.

And this is how Social comparison theory and objectification theory linked to the research.

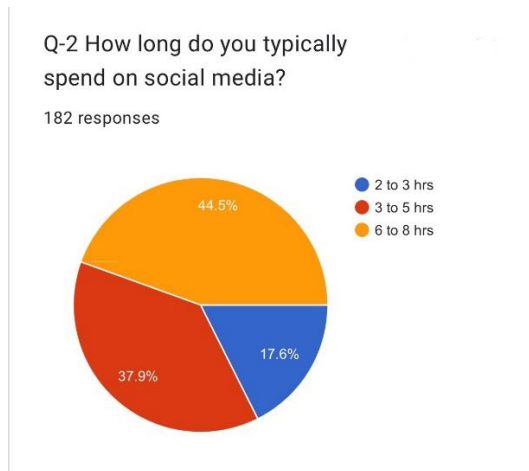
### **Methodology:**

The study used a close-ended questionnaire with random sampling as the survey method because it was a qualitative investigation. To address all of the study's concerns, a thorough evaluation of the pertinent literature was carried out. Depending on the topic of the study project, the data was obtained and thoroughly reviewed. The investigation examined the objectives, theoretical underpinnings, and conclusions of the research articles.

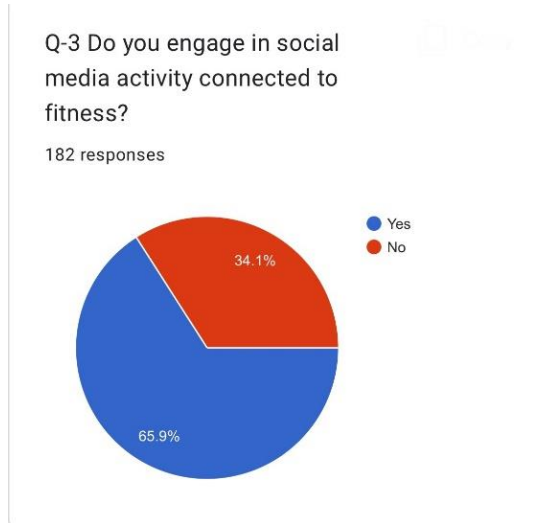
**Analysis and Interpretations:**



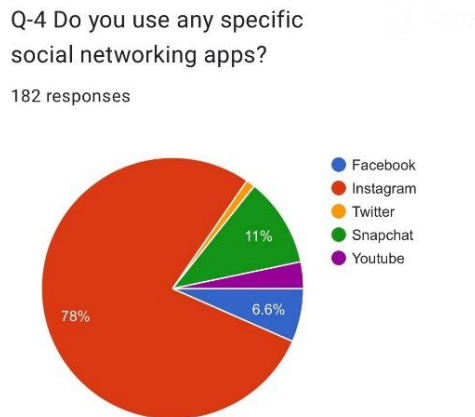
This graph displays the results of the study poll, 98.4% of those in blue use social media on a regular basis, While only 2% of those in red use it infrequently.



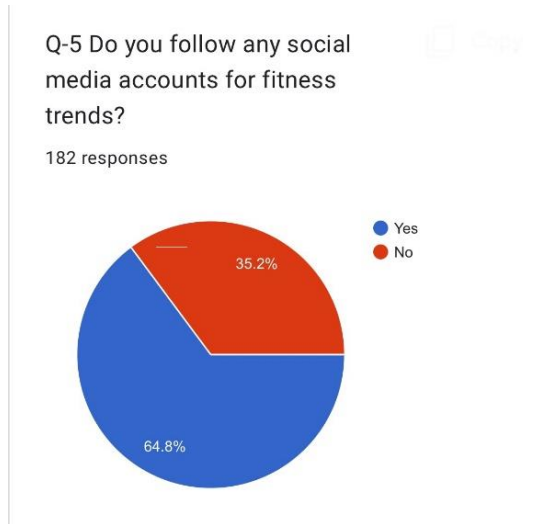
In this second poll question, 44.5% of those who identify as yellow color use social media for almost 6 to 8 hours, and 37.9% of those who identify as red use it for 3 to 5 hours and the remaining 17.9% of those who identify as blue use it for 2 to 3 hours. According to the finding, 44.5% of respondents use social media in excess.



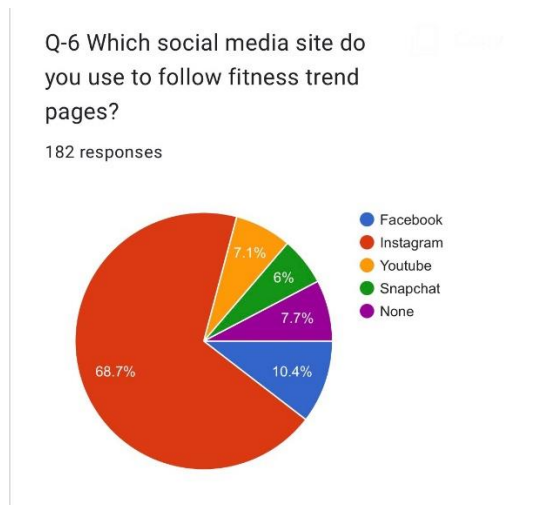
This research third question shows result in blue color that almost 65.9% people use social media for fitness purposes and use them according to their needs while the rest of the red color 34.1% people don't use it in fitness purposes.



In response to the fourth question, it is evident 78% of those who are red use Instagram frequently, Whereas 11% are those who are green use Snapchat, and 6.6% are those who use Facebook. Instagram is the most trending one among social media users.



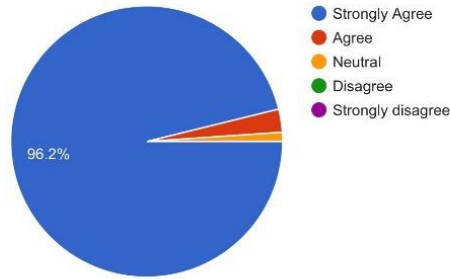
In response to the fifth question, which indicated that Instagram is the most popular platform for tracking fitness trend, this question reveals that 64.8% of those who use social media accounts to keep up with fitness trends follow various fitness sites, while 35.2% do not.



This result clearly shows that 68.7% of those in red use Instagram and follow fitness trend pages while the rest 6% of those in green use snapchat 10.4% of those who use Facebook, 7.1% of those in yellow use Youtube and 7.7% are those who not follow any fitness trend pages.

Q-7 Do you agree that fitness trends on social media has both positive and negative effects?

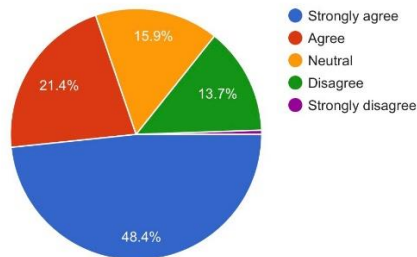
182 responses



This poll question indicates those 96.2% in blue agree that social media has both positive and negative affects while 4% are just agree too.

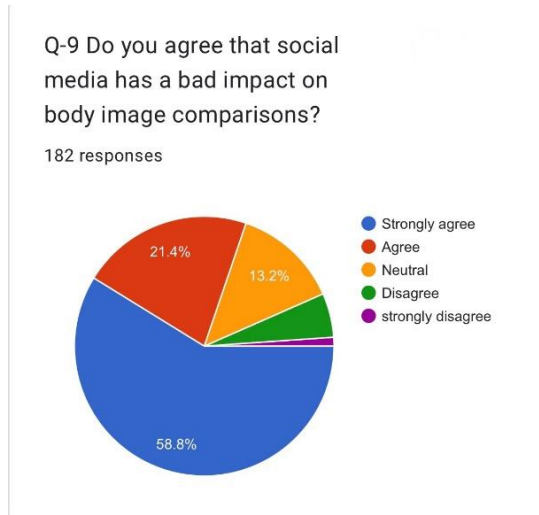
Q-8 Are pakistani young people encouraged to be skinny by social media?

182 responses

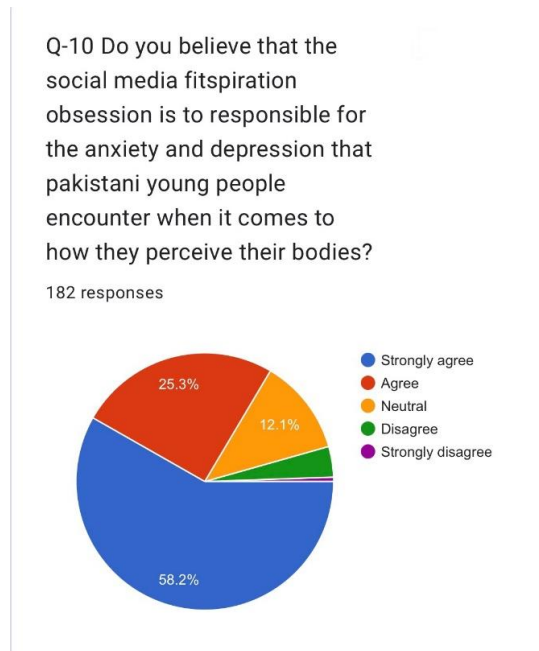


This result indicates that Pakistani young people are encouraged to be skinny by social media, people in blue 48.4% are strongly agree, and people in red 21.4% are just agree, and people in yellow 15.9% are neutral and people in green 13.7% are disagree with this.

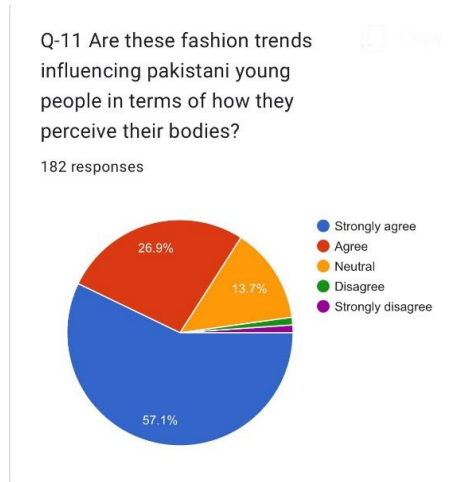




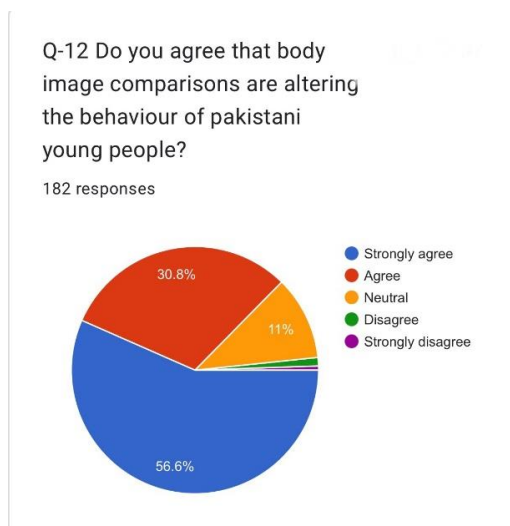
This graph result shows that blue color shows 58.8% of those in blue are strongly agree that through social media people are impacted and having negative thoughts about their bodies and started having body image comparisons issues while those who are in red color shows 21.4% are agree with this too and people 13.2% who are in yellow are showing neutral and people 10% in green also disagree with this point of view too and some other are strongly disagree with this too.



In this graph this blue color indicates that 58.2% people in blue are strongly agreeing with this point that these fitness pages are giving anxiety and depression issues among youth and they are changing their body perceptions after watching online fitness inspiring content, Red color shows that 25.3% people are agree too, and people 12.1% in yellow shows are neutral, and people 6.9% in green shows are disagree with this point of view and those in purple 2% show that are strongly disagree with this too.

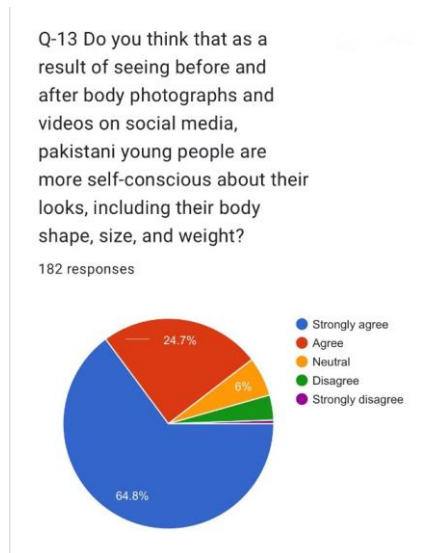


The graph result indicates that these fashion trends are influencing pakistani young people and they are having negative perspective about their bodies blue color of 57.1% people are strongly agree, red color 26.9% people are agree, people of 17% in yellow are neutral.

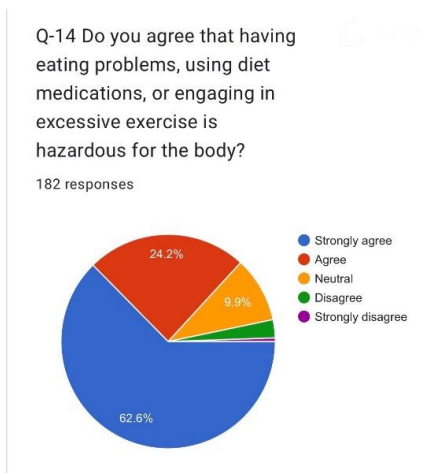


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The result of this question shows in graph that 56.6% people in blue color strongly agree that body image comparisons are changing Pakistani young people behavior day by day and 30.8% people in red color agree with this too and 11% in yellow color are not sure.



This result shows in this graph blue and red color people 64.8% are strongly agree and people 24.7% are just agree with this that pakistani people are getting more conscious about their bodies because when they watch before and after images and videos of bodies they start thinking about their own bodies and after that they want to change minor or major changes in it such as in their face looks, body shapes, body sizes and weight. While 6% people in yellow are neutral with this and 5% in green are disagree.



In this response to the last question graph shows pakistani people who are strongly agree are in blue 62.6% are strongly agreeing with this that for dieting and weight loss some dieting pills and excessive exercises and having eating disorders are very harmful for normal human body because not all the dieting pills and exercises are for every body type, and red color people of 24.2% indicates that they are agree while 9.9% people shows neutral result in yellow color.

### **Conclusion:**

The transformation from childhood to adulthood is a very sensitive period in which the young person experiences a series of rapid and major changes in physiological mechanisms, brain structure maturation, physical modifications, increased social autonomy, the development of one's identity, and one's own body image. From a communication standpoint, this review paper attempted to investigate the research perspectives of a new potential threat among youth. While greater media exposure to fitspiration content contributed significantly to objectification, greater objectification was also characterized by greater connotations in communication content. This was found to be truer for women than men. Social comparison theory postulates. The stand proved as greater exposure to social media content on fitspiration also led to a greater social comparison between both men and women though the resultant action was found to be different for different genders. Nevertheless, one commonality between the two genders was that social comparison bred negative emotions which were visible in extreme reactions to match up to the content exposed to. The studies revealed that both men and women had low levels of satisfaction with their physical appearance and strived for the better and were largely unconcerned with the ways adopted to achieve the same. Greater exposure to social media content on fitspiration led to a greater social comparison between men and women, though the resulting action was found to be different for different genders. Nonetheless, one commonality between the two genders was that social comparison bred negative emotions, which were visible in extreme reactions to the content exposed. The studies revealed that both men and women were dissatisfied with their physical appearance and desired to improve it, but were largely unconcerned with the methods used to do so.

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