InstaGRAM – Which GRAM Weighs the Most on Your Body Image?

A Qualitative Study on the Content of Instagram and its Different Impacts on Adolescents Body Image

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Abstract

Introduction and Objective: Through social network sites (SNSs) like Instagram, users are constantly exposed to what seems like the perfect lives and bodies of others. Research in this field has purely quantitively focused on the mere time adolescents spend on Instagram, uncovering the most negative effects of social media on body image. No research has yet been going to the root of the influence, the consumed content. Hence, this study is the first to investigate the actual posted content on Instagram. The study aims to uncover connections between the content and its diverse impacts on adolescents' body image qualitatively. **Method**: A diary study was used among 28 adolescents (Mage = 21, 79% female) to uncover these connections. First, a practical foundational understanding of adolescents participating in this study was built using a questionnaire. The questionnaire measured their Instagram usage, likelihood to engage in social comparison, and negative- and positive body image. The central diary study collected one Instagram post a day, which participants identified as body image influential. Over the course of 5 days, participants screenshotted content and were asked open questions about why they chose the post and its impact on them. **Results**: Contrasting to existing literature, participants of this study reported higher positive body image effects. These positive results are suggested to be caused by the emerging body positivity movement and active social media usage as it enhances the feeling of connectivity. Furthermore, participants engaged in social comparison to motivate themselves to become a better version and saw others as an inspiration. Results regarding negative body image effects were clearly caused by the idealistic thin ideal content, which is still present today. Additionally, passive Instagram usage and comparing oneself to strangers also negatively impacted body image. **Conclusion**: The findings suggest that solely social media usage does not affect body image, but rather that the specific content adolescents are exposed to and interact with effects their body image positively or negatively. **Implications**: These insights can serve as input for Instagram to redesign its main feed features in ways that enhance, rather than diminish, adolescents' body image. Moreover, they can be used to effectively support adolescents regarding their Instagram usage and assist them with possible consequences by enlightening and helping them understand where their body image influences are coming from.

Keywords: *Instagram, Instagram content, body image, social comparison, adolescents*

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1. Introduction

In the present time, individuals are constantly exposed to "the perfect body". Effects and problems caused by that exposure should not be overlooked in our society, especially not its influence on adolescence. Statistics show that around 50% of girls (aged about 13) report being unhappy with their bodies, which does not stop there. The numbers grow with age: by reaching the age of 17, the percentage of body image dissatisfaction lies at 80% (Linardon, 2022). Body image concerns are not only anchored in girls' nature. Research showed that 25% of German adolescent boys feel upset with their bodies, 20% feel overweight, and 15% are terrified of gaining any weight (Linardon, 2022). Body image is one's multidimensional perception of the body, consisting of behavioural, affective, cognitive, and evaluative components (Saiphoo & Vahedi, 2019). Body appearance, form, and size are factors that can play into that.

Interactions with one's body image were increased through the progression of traditional mass media forms (e.g., newspapers, radios, and televisions) into today's digital media era. This transformation has allowed mass media to gain an even far more extensive reach and impact (Praprotnik, 2016). This is especially true for adolescents, as they are in daily contact with the most significant part of the digital media era: social media (Pouwels et al., 2021). As mass media are powerful transmitters of societal standards, beliefs, and values, society's ideals are highly influenced by them (Burnette et al., 2017). Those society's ideals, including weight, beauty, fashion, gender, food, and fitness, impact one's body image, making mass media an influential force. The rapid evolution of social media has left its exact impacts on individuals less well understood. Regardless, there are multiple reasons to believe that the newer forms of media have the same, if not even a more extensive impact, on someone's body image, particularly influencing adolescents (Burnette et al., 2017).

The internet, but more prominently, social media, has evolved into a space for identity creation among adolescents (Rodgers & Melioli, 2015). Adolescence is the period following puberty in which a young person develops into an adult. The phases of adolescence and young adulthood are key periods in the development of oneself body image, perception, identity formation and health behaviours (Carrotte et al., 2015). The crucial role which social media plays in the communication and transmission of cultural stereotypes regarding ascetics of body image is enormous (Perloff, 2014). It leads to social media users being constantly presented with idealised beauty standards. The internalisation of these body ideals lead back to the pressure of

cultural and social forces, including the urge to fulfil socially defined ideals of beauty and physical appearance and the desire to fit in (Perloff, 2014). Consequently, spending time on social media results in social media being able to influence these norms and, thereby, this crucial time of development.

Instagram is one of the most used social media platforms among adolescents, with over 1 billion active users, where 95 million photos and videos are shared daily (Lister, 2022). It is a place for any kind of communication through posts, pictures, videos, live streams, comments, etc.. A distinction can be made between active and passive users, whereby the difference lies in the (inter)actions of the user with the platform (Bodroža et al., 2022; Fardouly et al., 2017; Verrastro et al., 2020). Instagram's most prominent characteristic is that it is very visual. Here users share flawless and edited pictures (Saiphoo & Vahedi, 2019) in which their best selves are presented (Rodgers & Melioli, 2015), which do not always equal reality. For this reason, spending time on Instagram results in exposure to unrealistic perfect bodies and the lives of others which may result in body dissatisfaction (Saiphoo & Vahedi, 2019). Anyone with a smartphone or a computer and a stable internet connection has access to social media networking sites 24/7. Hence, constant exposure to viewing idealised shared content is possible, resulting in exponentially more chances for social comparison and negative exposure to occur than ever before (Perloff, 2014). It is always just one click away, anytime, anywhere.

The greatest content on Instagram is generated by friends, peers, celebrities, and the rather newer version of celebrities, Insta-celebs, whereby mostly the term influencer is used. Their profiles present an idealised version of their lives and share experiences, travels, and materialistic objects that others dream of having. Through posting these curated perfect posts, influencers can have enormous impacts on others, especially on those who highly care for physical appearance (Stice, 2001). These picture-perfect bodies and thin ideals are seen as unrealistic and are being challenged by social movements like the body positivity moment.

The body positivity movement calls out exactly those narrowly defined perceptions by heartening body appreciation (Manning & Mulgrew, 2022). Body positivity posts include 'enhancement-free' postings in which, for example, body blemishes, stretch marks, cellulite, acne, and other imperfections can be seen (Cohen et al., 2019). Thus, Instagram is full of diverse content, and therefore individuals are exposed to entirely different postings, ideals, societal standards, and social movements.

By recognizing the indispensable ever growing influence of Instagram on adolescents' body image, this qualitative study aims to gain deeper insights by identifying types of content posted on Instagram which influences adolescents body image. Furthermore, it aims to create an understanding of the differences in impacts by various content. The novelty of this research is that it takes one step further by investigating the actual root of the influence, it adds onto the existing body of literature by shining light on the content posted on Instagram. This study investigates through a qualitative diary study how adolescents use Instagram, the content they come across, the people they are influenced by, the impacts they notice and how they feel regarding their body image. This research does not merely focus on the effects of social media usage on body image by focusing on time spent on Instagram by using quantitative measures which has been greatly studied before. In essence, this study aims to investigate what type of Instagram content influences adolescents' body image in what ways, creating the following research question (RQ):

RQ: *What kind of content on Instagram influences adolescents (aged 18 to 25) body image and what effects are evoked by different kinds of content?*

2. Theoretical Framework

For this research, adolescents and further the concepts of body image, social media, social comparison, peers and influencers, one's self influences (self-discrepancy and self-esteem) and lastly the occurring mindset shift on SNSs play central roles. Therefore, this section focuses on these mentioned key concepts by introducing, elaborating, and drawing connections between them. Moreover, sub-questions (SQs) will be derived from the central focus areas.

2.1 Adolescents in the social media era

Adolescence was derived from the Latin word *adolescere*—to grow up and describes the phase of life between being a child and an adult (Sawyer et al., 2018). Herby adolescence can be split into three developmental phases, early adolescence (ages 10 to 14, e.g., changing bodies), middle adolescence (ages 15 to 17, e.g., importance on physical appearance) and late adolescence (ages 18 to 25, e.g., intimate relationships). These transition periods are occurring in a social

world which is increasingly more global, urbanised, and mobile than ever before. Brown (2008, as cited in Spies Shapiro and Margolin, 2013) explains that adolescence involves two main concepts. The first is regarding standing out through pursuing autonomy and developing one's identity. The second concept concerns fitting in, which is the sense of gaining acceptance of friends and peers, being comfortable and finding a feeling of belonging. At its essence, adolescence is a time period in which individuals undergo changes physically, emotionally, socially and in their cognitive skills (Sebre & Miltuze, 2021). This happens while simultaneously actively searching for their roles, making meaning of their experiences and examining their strengths and weaknesses (Crocetti et al., 2007; Te'Neil Lloyd, 2002). According to Sebre and Miltuze (2021), adolescents are mainly concerned with asking questions like "who do I want to be?", "who am I now?" and "how do others perceive me?".

Social media platforms like Instagram contribute a mentionable amount to the developmental phases of adolescents. 59% of adolescents with an internet connection between the ages of 18 and 29 use Instagram (Statista, 2022). The vast majority start and end their day with checking their social network platforms and posts (Spies Shapiro & Margolin, 2013). Spies Shapiro and Margolin (2013) describe two dimensions of social network site usage, which impact and promote the self-identity development of adolescents. Firstly, a dispense of self-disclosure is given. Adolescents can choose how they identify themselves, view their content and profile compared to others, and choose to represent themselves through their posts. Secondly, adolescents can establish and find themselves, as they can connect with other like-minded individuals with which views, feelings and thoughts can be shared. Through talking to others and being on social media platforms, they have the possibility to assert their unique voice (Subrahmanyam et al., 2006) and express to the world who they are (Spies Shapiro & Margolin, 2013). Next to that, adolescents can present themselves with the possibility of immediate feedback from others. Whereby the feedback can be in the form of comments, likes and followers. The concerning part is that it can affect an individual's self-esteem and online identity positively and negatively (Sebre & Miltuze, 2021).

Nowadays, adolescents must not only include their family, friends, peers, and school in their developmental process of finding their identity but also must include the social media world. Contradicting the mentioned benefits, Eleuteri and colleagues (2017) see the likelihood that the inclusion of the social media world can also impede the process of finding oneself and even

create the risk of losing oneself. Concluding, social media platforms like Instagram are highly influential in adolescents' process of figuring out and becoming who they desire to be. Hence this study targets adolescents (aged 18 to 25) and aims to understand the connection between their body image and content displayed on Instagram. This study seeks to uncover the most influenceable Instagram posts and see which content adolescents identify to be impacting in such a crucial developmental phase of their life.

2.2 Body image and social media

Every individual has a body image of themselves. Body image is referred to as "the picture of our own body which we form in our mind, that is to say, the way in which the body appears to ourselves" (Schilder, 1950, p.11). It is not only about how someone forms a picture in their mind but also about how someone treats, feels toward, and thinks about their body (Tylka, 2012). Adding on to that, one's body image can adjust to internal and external information, making it a flexible and malleable concept (Grogan, 1999). Thompson and van den Berg (2002) created a four-component model describing body image facets. The first component, the affective dimension, concerns the emotions someone has regarding their body evaluation and the feelings connected to that (e.g., appearance esteem). The cognitive dimension, the second component, considers one's beliefs held concerning their body (e.g., internalisation of the thin- ideal). Thirdly, the behavioural dimension entails the undergone actions which are related to someone's idea of their body (e.g., disordered eating). Lastly, the fourth component looks at one's satisfaction with their body and overall appearance, called the subjective satisfaction dimension (Berg, 2002). This four-component model shows how multifaceted body image is, how many dimensions play into it and how many levels of influence it entails.

For decades scholars have investigated the impacts of traditional media on individuals' body image and perception (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2016). Festiger (1954) found this phenomenon in traditional media early on. Traditional media provided individuals with the chance to compare themselves to celebrities and models (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2015), which were often portrayed idealized and enhanced in looks (Reaves et al., 2004). These images of 'ideal' body types and looks of celebrities have invaded traditional mass media such as fashion magazines and television for many years (Grabe et al., 2008). Grabe and colleagues (2008) explained that the results of being exposed to primarily photo-shopped tall, incredibly thin, and

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young models and celebrities had been found to lead to unreachable beauty standards. This shows how influencing individuals is rooted in traditional media and started early on.

Traditional media forms are being overtaken by the more interactive media such as the Internet, especially among young adolescents (Bell & Dittmar, 2011). The move from traditional media to social media allowed for a change in consumption. Nowadays, individuals can choose how actively they want to participate compared to traditional media, where the only option was to be a passive consumer (Holland & Tiggemann, 2016). As defined by Verduyn and colleagues (2017), an active social media user facilitates direct exchanges by, for example, liking, commenting, and posting themselves. On the counter side, passive users consume content without any (inter)action. They merely scroll, view, monitor and look at profiles (Verduyn et al., 2017; Thorisdottir et al., 2019). Muntinga and colleagues (2011) investigated these action behaviours further and defined active social media usage as "contributing" or "creating" and passive social media usage as "consuming". Additional research implies that passive social media usage is connected to greater depression symptoms, lower body image and decreased well-being (Valkenburg et al., 2021; Verduyn et al., 2017). Furthermore, a positive relationship between active social media usage and well-being was also found (Verduyn et al., 2017). This was explained by the feeling of connectedness and the creation of social capital which is created though active usage of SNSs.

SNSs are interactive online environments in which individuals' real selves, ideal selves and false selves are represented (Michikyan et al., 2014). Individuals either present authentic aspects (real- selves), aspects they desire or wish to have (ideal- selves), or aspects which are not truthful (false selves). SNS users not only present themselves in the form of selectively chosen images but may experience and perceive social pressure to do so (Ahadzadeh et al., 2017). This social pressure might lead users to share more idealised images of themselves with the goal of impressing others with their physical appearance and the aestheticism of the posted pictures (Manago et al., 2008). Found negative effects of social media on body image, like leading people into disordered eating such as anorexia, can be clearly ruled back to the internalisation of unrealistic body standards (Brewster et al., 2019) and higher smartphone and social media usage (Abi-Jaoude et al., 2020; Perloff, 2014; Richards et al., 2015). It comes forward how traditional mass media's influential roots continue to grow in the newer forms of mass media.

Research has shown that an important distinction must be made between state and trait feelings and characteristics, which is underlying for this study as it concerns the state-like body image of adolescents. Conditions which are referred to as states are defined as, for example, emotions and moods and are short-lived (Nowlis, 1970). Questions like "how do you feel now?" or "how do you feel today?" are questions to which a state answer is being given (Fridhandler, 1986). The prime referent of a state must instantly be able to introspect and feel in that exact moment. On the opposite side, traits can never be introspectively felt; they are not in the now. Additionally, they cannot be encountered through a single measure or by observing behaviour. Overall, four distinctions can be made between the two concepts, state and trade. They differ in short versus long duration, concreteness versus abstractness, situational versus personal causality, and continuousness versus reactivity (Fridhandler, 1986).

User impacts and ways of influencing the newer and more popular forms of social media are not fully discovered, as they differ significantly from traditional mass media. Through the evolvement of media engagement (active and passive), from which individuals now have the independence to choose from, and the varied type of content users are exposed to it is interesting to investigate the interrelationship between content and engagement. Consequently, the following sub-question is posed:

SQ 1: *How does Instagram engagement (active or passive usage) influences the content selection and the contents impact on adolescents' body image?*

2.3 Social comparison

A reasonable explanation of why social media has an impact on someone's body image is the concept of social comparison. Foregoing research suggests that appearance-based social comparison is triggered by social media usage (Saiphoo & Vahedi, 2019). Generally, for comparison and evaluation to occur, an individual must care for a specific opinion. This care then functions as the driving force of comparison; the more important an opinion or ability is, the greater the drive for social comparison. According to Reaves (2011), "the evolutionary roots of social comparison are similar to social rank in animal behaviour (inferior–superior; weaker–stronger; upward and downward), and in humans, this judgment of social rank is made quickly" (p. 122). In other words, this confirms that comparison to others is human nature.

Psychologists have detected two primary motives for social comparison: self-evaluation and self-enhancement (Lewallen & Behm-Morawitz, 2016). Whereby self-evaluation deans for maintaining a positive self-evaluation by comparing oneself to someone seen as inferior. This is done through downward comparison. And on the other hand, self-enhancement is done to compare oneself to superior individuals for successful improvement. This is achieved by upward comparison (Lewallen & Behm-Morawitz, 2016). Moreover, scholars have added that social comparison is part of the self-socialization process in which someone can compare their abilities to others in their social circle (Ruble et al., 1980). This shows that there is almost no way around social comparison; social comparison is almost always present.

Social comparison, particularly appearance comparisons, seems to be a big part of the interrelationship of body image concerns and social media. Generally, the social comparison theory by Festinger (1954) states that individuals evaluate their appearance by comparing themselves with the socio-cultural ideas presented in the media. Festinger (1954) verified that humans compare themselves to others through self-exploration, which means that individuals have a natural desire to create an accurate self-evaluation. Fundamentally, this implies that comparing and exploring similar or dissimilar others helps one verify or deny aspects of one's own identity (Festinger, 1954). Drawing these comparisons is seen as diagnostic and functional (Wood & Taylor, 1991). The reason behind that is that individuals can position themselves in their social circle while evaluating their person.

Previously done research has proven that social comparison, especially in connection with thin-ideal imagery and social media, is connected to increased body dissatisfaction. (Kleemans et al., 2018). Kleemans and colleagues (2018) between-subject experiment among girls showed that exposure to the retouched pictures leads to lower body image. Moreover, participants with higher social comparison tendencies were significantly more negatively affected. The same outcomes were brought to light by Brown and Tiggemann (2016), who researched the same setting among adult women. Saiphoo and Vahedi (2019) generally conclude that social media, compared to traditional media, could be even more influential on body image. This can be due to the constant direct comparisons it allows someone to make.

Social comparison has proven that social media can harm body image (Saiphoo & Vahedi, 2019). Since previous research did not purely focus on the content which adolescents are comparing themselves too, this study aims to investigate which form of social comparison can be

brought in connection with different kinds of content posted on Instagram. Subsequently, this study is interested in qualitatively investigating Instagram's content and is concerned about:

SQ 2: *What is the connection between social comparison (upward and downward social comparison) and identifying body image influenceable Instagram content by adolescents?*

2.4 Peers and Influencers

Even though social media presents a range of different people, including friends, family, celebrities, influencers, and complete strangers, its primary use is to connect with peers. A peer is someone equal to oneself. More precisely, it is someone who belongs to the same societal group based on gender, age, and status (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Peers are mostly the group one surrounds oneself with, one's friends. Research suggests that peer-based comparison has the most significant influence on body image (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2016). This can be validated by a component of Festinger's (1954) self-comparison theory, which states that individuals are far more likely to compare themselves to similar others due to the more useful evaluative information the comparisons allow someone to draw.

In addition to the mentioned peers, Instagram is a platform where individuals can further connect with celebrities and the so-called 'Insta Celebs' or 'Influencers', which are people who became well known only through Instagram with a significant reach in their following (Tiggemann & Anderberg, 2020). Many scholars state that influencers mostly have a big following due to their high attractiveness, and it was generally proposed that influencers are categorised between traditional celebrities and peers (Brown & Tiggemann, 2020; Hund, 2017; Stice, 2001; Tiggemann & Anderberg, 2020). Moreover, Influencers interestingly are used by brands and companies to endorse specific products on their Instagram pages to influence their followers (Brown & Tiggemann, 2020). Their function literally is to influence people.

Previous studies have validated that attractive influencer posts reinforce the thin ideal, which further leads to upward social comparison and body dissatisfaction (Zhang et al., 2021). For example, Brown and Tiggemann (2016) showed that exposure to images of attractive celebrities, influencers, and peers had a way more negative effect on body dissatisfaction and emotions than being exposed to nature images. The same result was found by Shorter and

colleagues (2008), which proved that favoured celebrities resemble a strong source of influence as they become unattainable targets for young females' upward social comparison.

Social media platforms like Instagram offer users endless possibilities to compare themselves to not only their peers but to celebrities or the newer forms of influencers (Hew, 2011). This results in providing an enormous amount of content, mainly in the form of pictures, which can be used to draw comparisons and thereby influencing one's body image. Given the societal rise of influencers, it is remarkable that not more research was conducted to investigate influencers' impact on someone's body image. This study further investigates:

SQ 3: *To who's Instagram content do adolescents compare themselves the most with?*

2.5 Self-influences; self-discrepancy and self-esteem

Something pivotal to note is that there are more profound personal aspects which influence body image: one's self-discrepancy and self-esteem. Not only the posts on Instagram, the individual behind the post, how these people display themselves, and one's likelihood to engage in social comparison influence body image.

Only being exposed to idealised images of other bodies and lives does not always have a negative effect. An impacting factor that plays a significant role is someone's self-discrepancy (Zhang et al., 2021). Self-discrepancy describes the incongruity between features of one's self-concept, specifically between one's actual self and one's ideal self (Higgins, 1987). Individuals with lower self-discrepancy might show a positive effect on their body satisfaction when exposed to idealised body posts. This can be explained by the self-determination theory, which concerns individuals' goals, aspirations for perceptions, cognitions, and motivations (Zhang et al., 2021). Individuals perceiving low self-discrepancy feel and look closer to the exposed idealised body, which lets that exposure enhance someone's self-enhancement in the form of motivation. On the other hand, people with high body image self-discrepancy may not share that motivation as the gaps and differences between their own perception of appearance and the idealised person are perceived as too large (Bessenoff, 2006; Zhang et al., 2021). This, in turn, can induce self-directed negative consequences as the ideal is perceived as unachievable (Bessenoff, 2006). The study by Ahadzadeh and colleagues (2017) proved the mediation effect of someone's self-discrepancy by analysing Instagram usage among students and the effect on body satisfaction.

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Their results further established a connection between body satisfaction, self-discrepancy, and someone's self-esteem.

Self-esteem can be defined as someone's beliefs about their competencies, abilities and standing (McConnell, 2010). Low self-esteem means lacking respect for oneself, feeling inadequate, unworthy and deficient and has been brought in connection with negative body image disturbance (Rosenberg, 1965). Paxton and colleagues (2006) discovered that pressures around body image are more experienced by individuals with low self-esteem as compared to individuals with higher self-esteem. This was validated by de Sousa Fortesa and colleagues (2014) study, which concluded that participants with low self-esteem had more unfavourable feelings towards their body image. Next to the negative impacts of low self-esteem on body image, self-esteem levels can also moderate the influence of internalisation on body dissatisfaction (Ricciardelli & McCabe, 2001). This implies that high self-esteem individuals are less likely to be affected by internalised societal thin ideals, which means they deal less with body dissatisfaction (Ricciardelli & McCabe, 2001). This shows that inner processes have an impact on one's body image and further predetermine the level of influence outside cues can have.

It is interesting to consider these factors when analysing the connection between social media and body image. These personal factors, self-discrepancy, and self-esteem seem to influence body image perception and the way social media influences it. The following sub-question arises:

SQ 4: *How do adolescents' personal feelings and mental states influence the Instagram content they identified as body image influential?*

2.6 Mindset shift on SNSs

Today, mindset shifts in the form of social movements regarding "perfect" body pictures can be seen on SNSs. The most prominent one is the body positivity movement. Body positivity challenges exactly these "perfect" thin ideal narrowly defined standards and perceptions by encouraging body appreciation and promoting diverse looks, shapes, sizes, and colours (Manning & Mulgrew, 2022). This counter-movement is especially prominent on Instagram

According to Tylka and Wood-Barcalow (2015), the body positivity concept is made up of six core elements. Namely, appreciation of the body's uniqueness and functions, accepting

one's own body and loving it and, in general, shifting from a narrowly defined concept of beauty to a broad one, investing in body care, inner positivity and protecting oneself by forgetting negative body ideals (Tylka and Wood-Barcalow, 2015). Body positivity posts on Instagram include enhancement-free pictures in which you can see body blemishes, cellulite, freckles and stretch marks (Cohen et al., 2019). Moreover, posts of various body shapes, and sizes, larger people in body campaigns and modelling jobs, and last told stories of recovery from eating disorders; posts exactly reassembling the opposite of thin-ideal imagery.

Even though the body positivity movement is rather new, some studies already tested its influence on state like body image. In the study by Williamson and Karazsia (2018) and Cohen and colleagues (2019), participants were either exposed to a body positivity movement post or a post which matched the thin ideal. Results showed that exposure to body-positive images improved the participants' body satisfaction, body appreciation and overall mood. These studies show that body-positivity content may offer a prosperous way to improve body image influences through social media.

Considering the increasing attention to body positivity, it is interesting to see how adolescents are in touch with the movement on Instagram. Therefore, it is questioned:

SQ 5: *How is the body positivity movement reflected in Instagram content that influences adolescents' body image?*

3. Method

3.1 Research design and procedure

This study used a diary study approach to gain deeper insights into the content on Instagram and its various effects on adolescents' body image. What makes this study innovative is that it purely focuses on the posted content on Instagram and additionally does this through a qualitative approach. The existing body of literature which was concerned with body image impacts of social media has solely researched this phenomenon though a quantitative approach purely focusing on the social media consumption time (Barthorpe et al., 2020; Boers et al., 2019; Nagata et al., 2020; Odgers et al., 2020; Twenge et al., 2017). To provide a new angle, this study

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chose to dig deeper into the content by means of a qualitative diary study approach uncovering new findings.

In the beginning, functioning as a foundation, a questionnaire was sent out to gain a better understanding of the researched sample. It was used to investigate individual differences such as motivation for Instagram usage, consumption, average time spent on Instagram, followed accounts, posing behaviour, and performed activities on the platform. Next to those aspects, the questionnaire entailed questions regarding participants' body image perception and the likelihood of engaging in social comparison. Through the questionnaire the researcher was able to create an understanding of the participants characteristics and detect similarities of behaviour. The questionnaire was a practicality to gather bassline information before diary study day 1. Those results were able to be brough in relation with participants diary study results through which connections between personal characteristics and Instagram contents body image impacts was able to be detected. The whole questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

The primary diary study allowed for a deeper understanding of one area (Patton, 2002 retrieved from Etikan, 2016), especially because this area has not been extensively studied. The diary study was used to understand participants' behaviour and intentions (Carter & Mankoff, 2005) in real-time context and situations (Chun, 2016). With daily diary data bidirectional effects can be observed and participants nature of mood, social interactions, behaviour, and consequences of certain behaviour's, mood stated, and experiences can be undergone, analysed, and understood (Gunthert & Wenze, 2012). Overall, it was concerned with what kind of content on Instagram triggered or stimulated the participants to think about their bodies, make comparisons or influenced them in some way. The complete diary study can be found in Appendix B.

In order to ensure smooth data collection, participants received a detailed WhatsApp message regarding the study and its procedure one day before data collection started. To further clarify possible misinterpretation, a detailed information PDF (Appendix C) was attached to that message. During day one of the data collection, each participant received a private WhatsApp message at 10 am, which contained the questionnaire link and their personal participation ID. At 6 pm, every participant received another message, reminding them to fill in the questionnaire. The day after, on data collection day 2, the diary study stated. Just as with the questionnaire, the same procedure was followed. Participants received the diary study link and their participation ID

at 10 am each day, followed by a reminder message at 6 pm. This was done for all five diary study days.

3.2 Research sample

A mixture of two non-probability sampling methods was used to collect participants for this study. In the beginning, some inclusion criteria were established to ensure valuable results and the collection of a fitting participant sample. To qualify for participation, participants first and foremost had to be frequent Instagram users, between the ages of 18 to 25 and had to be able to read and write in English. Additionally, they had to own a smartphone, tablet, or computer with which they could fill out the questionnaire and follow the diary study online.

To collect participants, convenience sampling was chosen, whereby individuals of a specific target group who met the given criteria were selected (Sedgwick, 2013). This study used convenience sampling by approaching friends, fellow students, and other acquaintances. In addition, snowball sampling was used by asking participants to name potential new participants for the study and by asking them to advertise this study in their social circle. To ensure no biased results, some additional exceptions were made. Fellow students with a similar research topic for their bachelor thesis, family members (e.g., sister and cousins), and close friends (e.g., boyfriend and best friends) were taken out of the sampling pool. However, this group of excluded participants could make suggestions and refer to potential participants.

3.3 Participants

This study included 33 participants, of which 28 were valid respondents. Participants were verified as valid if they matched the created prior requirements and if they completed at least 90% of the survey. As 5 participants did not fulfil these measures, they were excluded from this study. Overall, 6 participants of the respondents were male, and the other 22 participants were female. All respondents were in between the pre-defined age range of 18 to 25. Hereby the youngest participant was 18, the oldest participant was 24, and the mean age was 22. Out of all participants, 19 participants were German, 5 participants were Dutch, and 4 participants were from another nationality, namely, Spain, Italy, Bulgaria, and India. Lastly, all participants were full-time students enrolled at a university. All of the participants' descriptive statistics can be found in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Participants

	Mean	S.D.	Min.	Max.
Age	21.57	1.37	18	24

	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	6	21%
Female	22	79%
Nationality		
German	19	68%
Dutch	5	18%
Other	4	14%
Occupation		
Student	28	100%

3.4 Measures and instruments

3.4.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was used to gather information about participants Instagram usage, their body image, and their likelihood to engage in social comparison the day before the diary study started. The questionnaire can be seen as diary study day 0 which functioned as a pure practicality to gather information about the participant pool. Existing measurement scales were used to understand tendencies of adolescents in this study and to later draw connections between those and the diary study content data.

Instagram Usage. For evaluating Instagram usage, 8 questions were posed regarding the time spend on the platform, the consumed content, and the participants activeness on Instagram. Example questions are: "What content do you mainly engage with on Instagram?" and "How many hours do you spend on average on Instagram per day?".

Social Comparison Likelihood. For analysing participants likelihood to participate in social comparison the survey entailed the already existing Iowa-Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure (INCOM; Gibbons & Bunk, 1999). Though the 11-item construct the

likelihood of engaging in social comparison was estimated. Participants were asked to answer statements like "I often compare myself to others concerning what I have accomplished in life." by using a 5- point answering scale (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree). In this study the INCOM yielded an acceptable reliability score (Cronbach's alpha = .65).

Positive Body Image. For assessing participants positive body image, the Body Appreciation Scale (BAS; Avalos, Tylka, & Wood-Barcalow, 2005) was used. The BAS is made up of 13 different statements about one's own body like "I respect my body". Participants were able to respond to those statements by indicating their agreement or disagreement on a 5-point scale (1 = never to 5 = always). The BAS was proven to be reliable in this study (Cronbach's alpha = .92).

Negative Body Image. To analyse participants negative body image the established Body Image Disturbance Questionnaire was used (BIDQ; Dufresne, Phillips, Vittorio & Wilkel, 2001). The BIDQ is a 7-item construct whereby some items can also be answered on the same 5-point scale (1 = never to 5 = always) and others are open-ended questions. One example item is "Has your concern caused you impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning?". In this current study the BIDQ yielded an acceptable reliability score (Cronbach's alpha = .78).

3.4.2 Diary study

The central task of the diary study was that participants were asked to identify one post each day which influenced, triggered, or stimulated them thinking about their body image. After determining that post and uploading its screenshot, a series of open-ended questions was posed. The posed questions concerned the exact reason for choosing that post, how participants came across it, which activities they performed with it (e.g., liked, commented, shared), if they were related or knew the creator of the post, if they felt connected with the creator, and if the participants felt more, less, or equal attractive. Next to questions reading the post content, questions reading its effect on participants' body image were asked. Here the way the post affected their body image (positively, neutral, or negatively), how big that impact was on participants (on a scale from 1 = no impact to 10 = high impact), and how they felt after being exposed to the post and their thoughts throughout the process of seeing it was asked about. In the last diary questionnaire, on day 5, the participants were moreover asked evaluative questions.

Here the focus was laid on how this study impacted the way participants see Instagram and whether it affected their body image and how they feel after intensively thinking about their body image.

3.4.3 Pre-tests

To ensure validity, both the questionnaire and the diary study were pretested. At its core, pretesting is done to detect ambiguities, difficulties, unclear questions, lack of appropriate answers and any other difficulties the respondents might encounter with the instruments. Overall, four pre-tests were conducted using the think-out load method and the plus and minus method. During both feedback rounds, the researcher had the opportunity to ask for more elaboration to understand the participants' thoughts and opinions fully.

Based on the pre-test, parts of the questionnaire and the diary study were adapted to the participant's feedback and evaluation. Main changes were made in the wording of some questionnaire questions to make them more specific. As an example, the open-ended question "How often do you post on Instagram?" was split into two multiple-choice questions; "How often do you post stories on Instagram?" and "How often do you post in feed posts on Instagram?" to make a comparable distinction between story and in feed postage. Moreover, the question about time spent on Instagram was changed from a 24-hour scale to a multiple-choice answer containing six options, each suggesting a time frame, as this was seen as more feasible. Concerning the diary study, the two definitions regarding body image and state-like characteristics were formulated less scientific and in a broader general context. Moreover, to the explanation for uploading the Instagram post, screenshot information was added that the creator's face and name needed to be blurred if he or she had a private account.

3.5 Data Analysis
3.5.1 Data analysis of questionnaire

To begin with, the collected questionnaire Qualtrics data was downloaded and converted into an SPSS file. Conducting a complete reliable statistical analysis of the questionnaire was impossible, as this study only contained 28 participants. Instead, the questionnaire was analysed by descriptive statistics. The outcomes were used as a baseline and background information for each participant for the main diary study.

The first step revolved around data set cleaning. Here, 5 participants were taken out of the data set due to insufficient completion of the diary study. Next to that, any missing values were coded as -99, and two items of the INCOM items had to be recoded. The reason for recoding the two items was that they were posed negatively and therefore had to be reversed coded to fit the other nine positively posed items of the INCOM questionnaire. Then the pre-existing measurement scales were summarised into total scales. Finally, the collected questionnaire data was analysed by computing all variables' means, standard deviations and ranges.

3.5.2 Data analysis of diary study

The diary study was analysed by coding the collected data, analysing the created analytical memos, comparing the outputs of the questionnaire and diary study, and making inferences from there. Throughout the entire research procedure, analytical memos were created. "Analytical memos can be described as the researcher's ongoing reflections during coding concerning the codes, the phenomenon, the informants and their interrelations" (Skjott Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019, p.18). To ensure the anonymity of the studied participants, each participant had their own respondent ID. This allowed for comparing participant results over time as it was possible to draw back answers to IDs while hiding participants' personal information. As the diary study was conducted using Qualtrics, all data was transferred into an Excel Sheet in which coding was made possible.

In the Excel Sheet, all data was structured by creating separate Excel Sheets for each of the 28 participants in which the coding took place. By structuring the data, an overview was made in which the meaning, relevance and importance of responses were easily accessible for sufficient analytical work (Skjott Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). In total, 59 codes were created and grouped into 11 main categories. The 11 main categories are the following "Instagram post characteristics", "Instagram post type", "Post category", "Instagram post selection motive", "Instagram post activities", "Instagram post findings", "Body Image impact", "Feelings", "Social comparison", "Social media shift" and "Study impact" which are visualized in Table 2. The complete codebook can be found in Appendix D.

This study used a combination of inductive and deductive coding. This allowed for a more open and flexible approach as the researcher cycled back and forth between data and theory (Pierce, 1978, as cited in Skjott Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). Inductive coding was used to

create codes directly from the data. In contrast, deductive coding was used by including pre-defined concepts, which are known to be crucial in already established literature (Skjott Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). Additionally, three cycles of coding were applied. Open coding was the first cycle in which the data was segmented, and the first indictive codes were created (Boeije, 2010). In the second phase, axial coding, already assigned codes, though both indictive and deductive codes, were retrieved and relationships between main and subcategories were determined. During the last phase, selective coding, main and sub-codes were verified, and findings were interpreted and written down (Boeije, 2010). After coding, results were compared with the created analytical memos, which allowed for more detailed results and analysis.

Table 2

All Codes and Sub-codes

Code	Sub-codes
1. Instagram post characteristics	1.1 One person
	1.2 More than one person
	1.3 No person
	1.4 Only body
	1.5 Naked skin
	1.6 Covered skin
	1.7 Female
	1.8 Male
2. Instagram post type	2.1 Influencer
	2.2 Friend
	2.3 Family
	2.4 Peer
	2.5 Advertisement
	2.6 Food
	2.7 Brand

3. Post category

    3.1 Food

    3.2 Travel

    3.3 Beauty

    3.4 Fitness

    3.5 Lifestyle

    3.6 Fashion

    3.7 Comedy

    3.8 Body positivity

4. Instagram post selection motive

    4.1 Inspired

    4.2 Desire to look like that

    4.3 Motivated

    4.4 Jealous

    4.5 Feel good about oneself

    4.6 Triggered

5. Instagram Post activities

    5.1 Liked

    5.2 Commented

    5.3 Shared

    5.4 Reposted

    5.5 Saved

6. Instagram Post findings

    6.1 Follow

    6.2 Suggestion by Instagram

    6.3 Instagram advertising

    6.4 Story

7. Body image impact	7.1 Positive
	7.2 Neutral
	7.3 Negative
	7.4 No influence
	7.5 Ambiguous
8. Feelings	8.1 Happy
	8.2 Sad
	8.3 Motivated
	8.4 Inspired
	8.5 Calmed
	8.6 Strengthened
9. Self-comparison	9.1 Upward social comparison (negative)
	9.2 Downward social comparison (positive)
	9.3 Connection to the post creator
	9.4 Attractiveness
10. Social media shift	10.1 Thin ideal
	10.2 Body positivity
11. Study impact	11.1 Positive
	11.2 Negative
	11.3 No impact

4. Results

4.1 Participant descriptives

To understand the participant pool, the questionnaire was sent out on data collection day 1, diary study day 0. Descriptive statistics of each scale were produced, which can be all found in Appendix E. As this study does not have enough power to do statistical tests regarding the

likelihood to engage in social comparison, and participants positive and negative body image, the conducted analysis on the means and standard deviations can be found in Appendix F.

Firstly; participants were asked about their Instagram usage. The three most given reasons were to keep up with their friends (98%), to use it out of boredom (54%) and to present themselves (44%). Overall, most participants (13%) use Instagram for 1 to 2 hours a day where no major difference in genders was seen.

When comparing the postage behaviour of participants, a clear distinction arose between Instagram stories and infeed postage. All 28 participants reported posting Instagram stories; the only difference was that they differed in postage quantity and duration. 13 participants reported posting once or twice a week, 10 participants reported posting at least once a month, 3 participants reported of posting daily, and only 2 participants reported of posting less than once a month. Comparing Instagram story postage engagement to the engagement of posting in feed posts, it was clearly seen that participants are significantly more active posting Instagram stories. Feed posts were reported to be posted less than once a month by 23 participants, once a month by 3 participants, daily by 1 participant and one participant never posted a feed post.

When asked which activities participants performed on Instagram, next to posting stories and in-feed posts, all participants seemed to be very active on Instagram. 27 participants reported liking other Instagram posts, 26 participants sent posts to their friends, 21 participants saved posts, and 18 participants reported that they comment on other posts.

Participants' interest on Instagram mostly lay in lifestyle content (79%), followed by travel content (61%), food content (50%), fashion (47%), fitness (32%), beauty (29%), and other including comedy, memes, animals, music (36%).

4.2 Influential creators

In summary, 28 participants generated data over 5 days. This led to collecting 140 Instagram post screenshots whereby each participant delivered 5 posts, 1 Instagram post per day. The majority of Instagram posts were posted by creators participants did not know in person. Hereby, the most Instagram posts were by strangers (55), followed by celebrities (47), influencers (14), brands (6), and by 6 other accounts (new page (2), meme pages (2), inspiration page (2)). Next to creators participants did not know in person, Instagram posts by people of their close

circle (10), and of relatives (2) were chosen. Thus, adolescents seem to be more influenced regarding their body image by individuals they do not know, like celebrities and influencers.

A further distinction was whether participants followed accounts or if they came across the content otherwise. Results showed that most posts were seen through following the individual (72), followed by posts seen though Instagram's suggestion (51), though Instagram's advertising (8), and one participant got a post sent by a friend.

4.3 Content categories

Analysing all taken screenshots of Instagram posts let five categories arise, namely, body positivity, negative thin ideal, fitness, positive thin ideal, and lastly lifestyle. A table indicating which participants belonged to which category can be found in Appendix G.

4.3.1 Body positivity

The biggest category of participants is made up of 11 female participants and concerns Instagram posts related to body positivity. In all 55 Instagram post screenshots females are displayed. Every participant had at least one Instagram post reported regarded body positivity, whereby most included two body positivity Instagram posts out of the five diary study days. Figure 1 displays a picture selected by participant 28 to which she said, "It doesn't matter how you look; your body is perfect, and you should love it" and "It represents different bodies and shows that every body is good the way it is".

Motives behind choosing body positivity posts were that participants support the movement because they see how wrong current societal standards are and see the need for change in societal believes of beauty. Participant 33 reported on a picture which showcases different breast sizes and forms, "It made me think that society still often still sexualizes women's bodies and that this is not okay. This ad is a positive step into celebrating the diversity of our bodies.", she further stated, "[…] This made me realize that we are all perfect, no matter how we look like, and that society takes a step in normalizing showing the female body." Participant 14 shared that opinion and stated, "How unrealistic the beauty standards of society are and that this can be hard for people who are unsure about themselves anyway". Participant 9 chose to report a sketch which abstractly displays woman as beautiful and stated, "It made me feel glad that this message

is being sent". It became very apparent how important this change of mind is for female adolescents of this study.

Another motive for participants that chose body positivity posts was the fact how relatable the content is to them. Participant 25 as an example chose a picture of Lena Meyer Landrut in which she is laying on the couch without makeup on. Participant 25 said "It's okay to have a bad day and to feel tired. We don't have to be perfect or always good looking.", and "It was one of a few posts, where the person was not looking "perfect". She is wearing no makeup it's all natural and she is not posing. It's just a picture of a tired girl at the couch.". Participant 28 chose to screenshot an Instagram post in which a side-to-side comparison between wearing workout leggings high waisted and low waisted is seen. Hereby, in the low waisted picture, the woman's not so perfectly trained "normal" stomach is shown. Participant 28 stated "It shows the reality and I think that is more important than changing yourself for Instagram" and "Social Media is not always showing the reality and many things are fake". This research showed how much impact this mindset shift already had, especially female adolescents seem to feel more appreciated and understood.

Lastly, participants felt assured by body positivity posts. Participant 29 reported two bikini pictures of a woman who do not belong to the thin ideal image of woman and commented "Even if you don't have the flattest tummy, you can show yourself off". Moreover participant 29 voiced "She encouraged me that there is nothing to be ashamed of" and that she thinks "it's nice to see that people who don't conform to the ideal are also happy and show themselves. There should be something like that more often". Participant 30 also reported a woman who does not belong to the thin ideal and said "it made me feel better about myself. It is nice to see that not super skinny people are confident and are not afraid of showing their body". Lastly, participant 34 screenshotted an Instagram post of a curvier woman in a tiny top and shorts and reported "Everybody is worthy and can be shown off". It became clear that female adolescents seem to be relieved that society is moving away from the "perfect" thin ideal and more towards valuing and recognizing all types of bodies and its various forms.

What can be generalised is that posts belonging to body positivity are natural pictures. Overall, mostly posts of females which do not match the thin ideal who are wearing a bikini (8), or tight clothes (7) were selected. Moreover, candid pictures (6), illustrations showing that females bodies are beautiful no matter their size (5), one quote encouraging all beauty and one

female in a workout outfit were chosen. What can also be said is that whenever a face was visible in a body positivity Instagram post, when it was not blurred due to privacy protection or when it was not an illustration, the female in the picture is smiling and giving off positive energy. The newly spread mindset changes the way of content from moving away from picture perfect posts towards natural candid pictures in which nothing seems to be staged and overly perfect.

Interesting to note here, is that whenever a body positivity movement picture was reported, other chosen Instagram pictures related to different categories were either rated as neutral or as not having a high impact, neither positively, nor negatively.

Figure 1

Kale.themwith.kindness, Instagram post, 2022

4.3.2 Negative thin ideal

Negative thin ideal pictures regard pictures of individuals which correspond to the socially created thin ideal. In total, 6 female participants were assigned to this category. What all 30 reported Instagram posts screenshots have in common is that they all display females. Mostly thin ideal females in bikinis (21) were screenshotted, followed by thin-ideal females wearing tight clothing (5) and in a workout outfit (1). Figure 2 shows an example of which participant 10 chose to report. That participant chose that Instagram post as it "Shows an overly perfect body type ideal", "Perfectionism". This category appears to be very body focused by displaying bodies or single body parts in the most aesthetic and perfect way.

Overall, all Instagram posts were chosen out of upward social comparison. Motives included wanting to have that "perfect" body (participant 4, "How nice life could be when u are

skinny"), seeing it as a body goal (participant 4, "Imagine if l would look like that"), out of jealousy (participant 8, "I want to have a body like that to wear a dress like her"), or out of desire to look like that (participant 26, "I started to think about the parts of my body that I would change.").

Most of the reported Instagram screenshots showed thin ideal woman presenting a lot of skin posing for the perfect picture. In this category, all participants engaged in upward comparison, with following negative impact on adolescents' body image. Participant 20 chose a post in which a thin ideal woman is taking a mirror picture, wearing low-waisted pants and a tiny top showing her hips and stomach. Participant 20 stated, "I felt envious because I want my stomach and hips to look the same way and although I realize it is quite unrealistic, and photoshop may be involved, I still wonder how I'd be possible to achieve this body shape." She also shared that "It made me compare it to my body. I think it just happens subconsciously, and I always tend to compare bodies of people online to my own, especially if they have a similar (but in my opinion better) physique.". Participant 6 reported feeling "A bit stressed, and also annoyed by all the perfectionism on Instagram" and feeling "Less pretty as I am not that „perfect" in regard to a picture in which a thin ideal female is posing in a tiny shirt and long plants where her entire stomach, chest, shoulders and arms are set in scene. Especially female adolescents evaluated the thin ideal content as being the main goal to strive for and made themselves feel bad if they did not correspond with this ideal.

Figure 2

Luisaviictoria, Instagram post, 2022
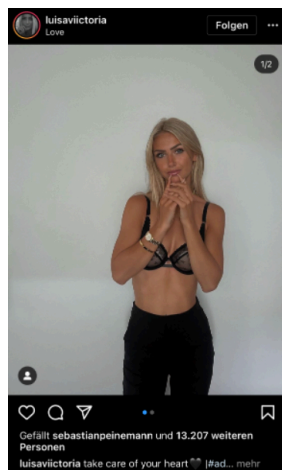
4.3.3 Fitness

The category which was made up of all male participants but one was fitness (5 out of 6 male participants). The uniform 25 screenshotted Instagram posts all displayed males posting fitness content. Mostly males were posing for the camera to get a picture showing off all their muscles (17), working out in the gym with their muscles on a pump (4), or in other settings (e.g., drinking a coffee) where their physique is clearly visible (4). Figure 3 displays a screenshot that participant 15 took as an example. He chose this post because he saw it as motivation to go to the gym; "I was motivated to go to the gym." This post belongs to the majority of posts in which the person showed a lot of skin, by for example, not wearing a shirt (15 out of 25 reported Instagram posts). In this study, male adolescents were clearly impacted most by purely staged fitness content of other male body builders.

Motivation was overall the biggest motive for selecting Instagram posts in this category. All 5 participants reported motivation at least on one of the 5 selected Instagram posts which influenced their body image. Participant 12 said, "It motivates me to see what the body is capable of doing". Next to motivation, inspiration was mentioned as well. Participant 15 reported on an Instagram post in which a male is seen at the gym "The creator is one of the biggest inspirations when it comes to bodybuilding. Every time I see him, I have to think about my body image". Lastly, the participants of this category all engaged in upward comparison, comparing themselves to someone who they think of as better than themselves, but saw this gap as motivating and something to strive for.

In conclusion, it is interesting to note that positive and encouraging results outweigh negative ones, as participants saw the pictures as stimulating and an inspiration of something which they can achieve too. An example of that is participant 7, who chose a picture of a man in the gym deadlifting heavy weights in which, most prominently, his leg muscles were shown. Participant 7 said that "I felt very motivated, though I know is a very high level of a physique that is unlikely to achieve due to the fact that the showed athlete is maybe taking performance-enhancing substances and has decades worth of experience, but I know that and can just appreciate the hard work and set an example for myself".

Figure 3

Davidlaid, Instagram post, 2022

4.3.4 Positive thin ideal

The positive thin ideal category includes 3 female participants, 15 screenshots, who chose thin ideal Instagram posts displaying females in bikinis and wearing tight clothing. This category is different from the previous thin ideal category as it was not framed from a negative point of view. Rather these pictures had a positive effect on adolescents' body image.

Participants 1, 2 and 5 included Instagram posts displaying females who comply with the thin ideal of a woman. Figure 4 showcases participant 5 Instagram post screenshot to which she stated, "She is really small and thin and underweight. Made me think about myself in a positive way that I am happy that I am healthy and not that thin". As another example, participant 2 reported an Instagram post of a thin ideal model wearing a bikini and stated, "I feel pleased with my body because I see that everybody is unique but different, which makes it so special". Lastly, participant 1 did not see thin ideal women as skinny but thought of them as well trained. Participant 1 chose an Instagram post of a woman's stomach representing the thin ideal and reported, "That when you train a lot, it's possible to see some process and that it's worth it to train." In this category, women who represent the thin ideal were not seen as only skinny, and thereby it did not have a negative impact on the participants.

Figure 4

Personal account, Instagram post, 2022

4.3.5 Lifestyle

Compared to the other categories, this category consists of 3 participants, 15 posts and is made up by both genders. It includes 1 male participant and 2 female participants. Participants 17, 23 and 24 chose to screenshot Instagram posts in which, compared to the other categories, skin is covered, and the individuals of the posts fit into the lifestyle category. Here, a clear pattern could not be identified. Their screenshotted Instagram posts mostly included a small mixture of the categories mentioned above. What stood out, however, is that the reported pictures showed individuals who were more dressed and covered more skin compared to the other categories of Instagram post screenshots. Moreover, posts were of concerts, out on the beach, in the city and the person of the post did not occupy the whole picture. The pictures of this category had more background to show and were not merely focused on one's body.

Figure 5 shows an Instagram post screenshot of participant 23 to which he said "I feel good that there is a scene where your body is not important", "I don´t care about his body just about his music", and "He is my Idol, and no one cares about his body". Participant 17 chose an Instagram post of a female which is wearing long pants, a cardigan and a top and said, "It shows an image of a woman with big breasts" and "The picture made me reflect on how I look like, I have small breasts". Overall, the motives of the participants of this category were also about

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comparison, though here, a small mixture between upward, and downward comparison can be noted.

Figure 5

Redlean.juice2, Instagram post, 2022

4.4 Participants evoked feelings

Out of the 140 screenshotted Instagram posts 68 Instagram posts influenced participants positively, 42 Instagram posts influenced participants negatively, and 30 Instagram posts influenced participants neutrally. Positive influences as an example were caused for participant 2 by coming across a post in which a female is wearing a dress. Participant 2 reported, "I like the strong attitude on the picture". It made her feel "strong and confident". Similarly, participant 3 screenshotted a post of Selena Gomez and said, "It made me feel good and happy because she seems so confident and happy". Here content leading to positive results included body positivity content, fitness content and content in which it is clear to see how the creator feels confident in their own skin.

Posts which evoked negative feelings in participants were mainly evoked through content corresponding to the "perfect" thin ideal. Participant 4 uploaded a picture of a female matching the thin ideal wearing a top and jeans and said it made her feel "A little hopeless because it will never be my body type". Likewise, participant 26 screenshotted a post in which a thin ideal female is wearing a tiny top and shorts. Participant 26 said, "I felt slightly jealous and sad because I don't think my body is equal to hers".

Participants who reported neutral feelings on posts uploaded more lifestyle content like participant 13. One chosen Instagram post showed a man posting that he did not have time to work out today and participant 13 expressed, "I thought that I should really go to my training again, however, that it is also fine to not go for a while if you are too busy or so". Moreover, participant 12 uploaded a post that "show[ed] a man in good shape" drinking a coffee and reported the feeling of "I would say neutral and a bit inspired".

Connections to the people of the chosen Instagram posts were only felt with a small part of the posts (33 out of 140). Whenever a connection was felt, however, it was either with a friend or a person the participant knew (participant 4, "Yeah kind of, she is friends of friends and she used to ride shows before becoming a model"), when the individual of the Instagram post had a similar body than the participant (participant 2, "Yes because I can identify myself with her energy and her body"), or when the participant shared the same values and beliefs like the individual of the post (participant 9, " I feel connected to the artist because I have the same opinions as her"). Out of all participants who reported on the attractiveness level, the majority (61) of Instagram posts made them feel less attractive (participant 6, "less attractive because of her thin body"), some (58) equal attractive (participant 14, "Definitely less attractive. All people in this picture are like models") and a small amount (4) felt more attractive (participant 29, "I feel more attractive because it shows that everybody is beautiful as it is".). These results show that mainly no connections to creators were felt and that overall adolescents felt less attractive than the creator of the chosen body image impact post.

4.5 Participants activities and impact

Overall activities participants engaged in included liking posts, saving posts, just viewing posts, and sending them to friends. The highest engagement was seen with liking posts (84), followed by just viewing posts (51), 1saving posts (2), and sending posts to friends (2). It was possible to group all participants into 3 categories. The first category comprises 8 participants (participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 15, 18, and 34) who liked every picture they reported. Hereby interesting to note is that participant 4 also saved every single post. The second category includes participants who only viewed the Instagram posts and did not engage with them (participants 6, 8, 13, 14, and 17). The last and biggest category is made up of participants who did a mixture of

liking, commenting, and sharing (participants 5, 7, 9, 12, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 32, and 33).

The participants were asked to indicate their chosen Instagram picture's impact on them. Herby, the scale reached from 1, meaning almost no impact, to 10, very high impact. Viewing the average impact score of the biggest three categories led to the following results. The first category, in which all participants liked every post they reported, had an average impact of 8.6, rounded to a 9 out of 10. Hereby, 68% reported a positive impact, 22% a negative one, and 11% a neutral one. The second category, in which all participants only viewed the Instagram post and did not engage with it had an average impact score of 4.08, rounded to a 4 out of 10. These participants reported a negative impact for 59%, a positive one for 22%, and lastly, a neutral one for 19%. The last category, which is made up of participants who did a mixture of engaging with the post (linking and sharing) and only viewing it had an average score of 4.84, rounded a 5 out of 10. From which 49% reported a positive impact, 27% a neutral one, and lastly 24% a negative one. This showed how active engagement with the posted content leads to having a higher impact on adolescents' body image.

4.6 Participants social comparison

What all participants had in common is that every single one engaged in upward social comparison. What became apparent here is that people dealt differently with the results of that. What can be seen is that females engaged in upward social comparison and mostly felt negative consequences. As an example, participant 2 chose a post of a thin ideal woman in a bikini with her butt in focus and said, "it triggers me that I want to look like her", "Why don't I have a butt like her", expressing the feeling of being "Upset". Another example is participant 4, who on diary study day 4, uploaded a post of a thin ideal wearing a tight off-the-shoulder dress. She expressed, "When I saw this picture it made me think of my body image because she looks like today's perfect body image, and I felt like she looks like a doll, and I am not quite sure what to think about it".

Unlike female participants, male participants also engaged in upward social comparison but, on the other hand, drew positive conclusions from it. For example, participant 12 screenshotted an Instagram post of a male in the gym working out, showing his arm muscles for diary study day 3. To that he stated, "It motivates me to see what the body is capable of doing".

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Similarly, participant 15 screenshotted a post of a male working out in the gym where his shoulder and arm muscles are highly demanded and expressed, "I felt motivated to push myself to the limit in the gym". As a last example, participant 18 chose a post of a male posing without a shirt showing off his upper body and said, "It made me feel more inspired to work harder".

Participants did not only engage in upward social comparison. Even though the majority engaged in upward social comparison, some participants also engaged in downward social comparison. Participants 20, for example, uploaded a post of a woman in a bikini taking a mirror picture on day 4 of the diary study. To which was stated, "The picture shows some natural stretches and lines. It made me realise that natural bodies don't look perfect. It had a positive effect on my mood." Participant 25 chose a post of a female showing a body transformation for diary study day 4 and said, "I'm happy that I do not look like the right version of the girl." Lastly, participant 33 chose an Instagram post of a woman corresponding to the thin ideal and likewise, participant 25 stated, "Actually I feel glad that my body is not as skinny as hers. I mean, she looks great, but I personally feel happy about my own body that it is healthy."

4.7 Evaluations and realizations of participants

4.7.1 Participants Instagram evaluation

On the 5ᵗʰ and thereby last diary study day, participants were asked to express their thoughts, feelings, and evaluations of this study. Out of all collected answers, it was clear that participants agreed on Instagram's setup. Participant 2 expressed, "I feel like nobody is really representing themselves in a real and honest and transparent way". Participant 12 further ads, "Instagram is not real. You can take 200 pictures and use the best one even though the others are shit...and Photoshop". Participant 24 expressed concern and stated, "It made me realise that Instagram only suggest good looking people and almost no normal bodies". Participant 15 realizes the danger in that and expressed, "Instagram pictures are always perfect and often fake. You often forget that." Just like participant 15, participant 3 further elaborated and said "I'm sure that they have their problems too and don't share them because they don't want to get judged. But it's human to have problems. Some people don't see that and could get serious problems because of how influencers share their perfect life".

Participants have noticed what an enormous impact this has and stated, "there are so many pictures of influencers with perfect bodies and perfect skin. It's crazy how many times I've

thought to myself `I want to have this body´. It's really unhealthy" (participant 26) and "I really think about how look and maybe also how I need to look like (social pressure)" (participant 2). Lastly, participant 13 summarised everything nicely: "Most of the ads and influencers show the standard beauty standards. I knew that before but when you start focusing on it, it actually is a bit sad. Generally, everything seems to be extreme. Either you are extremely perfect or extremely for body positivity. Nobody seems to be fine with just being". Participants of this study were aware of how harmful and fake Instagram can be and know what costs this brings with it.

4.7.2 Participants personal evaluation

Alongside expressing thoughts about Instagram, participants also personally shared their opinions and outcomes of the study. Overall, positive conclusions were shared. Participant 3 shared, "I thought that it was a great idea because I got to know my body image better and […] it's important to know and realise that you should take good care of your body". Moreover, participant 20 indicated, "I got more conscious about what my body image really means to me and what type of pictures/bodies have an effect on me. […] I realized through this study that it definitely gets amplified through Instagram content and I don't believe it to be necessarily healthy."

After the diary study days, participants were more consciously in contact with their Instagram feed and their feelings which made them come to different realisations. Participant 10 said, "Automatically you compare yourself with other people you don't even know. Sometimes that was motivating […]. But often it made me also feel worse off about my own body which is horrible in my opinion. I think not seeing this kind of content too often is for sure healthier". Participant 12 expressed, "I think it really depends on if the person doing the study is happy with his/her body or not. For me, I don't really get effected by other people's body but people with a low self-esteem can get effected by the amount of "perfect body's" on social media." Next to these comments, participants recognised their body's importance and appreciated it more. For example, participant 26 said, "I actually have been thinking these days about how much I actually love my body. It keeps me alive, and everybody has a different body".

Lastly, it came across that participants realised the importance of this topic as they expressed, "It's interesting to see how much the posts etc. influence you unconsciously. Without the study, I would not have noticed it so intensively" (participant 29), "I think it was very

interesting to track one's own state of mind and thoughts regarding this study" (participant 10), and "I think this study is very interesting and its results can be very important. I also think that more studies like this should be made" (participant 32). It became evident that this study helped participant navigate and create an understanding of their Instagram usage. This helped them learn more about their own body image and about the impact Instagram's content has on them.

4.8 Participants characteristics and Instagram content influence

Using the gained data on participants characteristics and tendencies though the online questionnaire and the data on influential Instagram content gained though the diary study relationships were able to be seen. Comparing participants' characteristics, their likelihood to engage in social comparison (INCOM), their positive body image (BAS) and negative body image (BIDQ) to the chosen Instagram content clear patterns were able to be established. It became apparent that participants who chose Instagram posts of the same content category also share similar characteristics.

It can be overall seen that all participants share the likelihood to engage in social comparison. Having uncovered that, the highest likelihood to engage in social comparison was scored by participants belonging to the negative thin ideal content category, who interestingly also shared the highest negative body image scores. Oppositely, all participants in the fitness category scored the highest positive body image scores, followed by the scores of body positivity content participants. Participants' scores belonging to either the positive thin ideal or lifestyle category share an overall more positive body image than a negative one.

This showed that the higher adolescents' likelihood to compare themselves to others is, the higher the chances that they have a more negative body image of themselves. Additionally, they share the tendency to engage with negative thin ideal content which impacts their already poor body image even more. Moreover, the higher adolescents body image scores, the more likely they are to identify body positivity content as influential or content which helps them to become a better version of themselves (fitness).

5. Discussion

5.1 Main finings

This study aimed to uncover the influences of Instagram's content on adolescents' body image, posing the following research question: "*What kind of content on Instagram influences adolescents (aged 18 to 25) body image and what effects are evoked by different kinds of content?*" Existing research suggests a negative connection between social media and body image by conducting quantitative studies investigating the level of social media usage (time spend on social media) and the actual usage behaviours (active versus passive). This study went one step further to investigate this connection, to examine qualitatively what specific Instagram content influences adolescents' body image. To do this, a diary study supported by a questionnaire was conducted.

Contradicting to previous literature which suggest that online comparison can lead to negative effects on body image and body dissatisfaction (Myers & Crowther, 2009; Eyal & Te'eni-Harari, 2013; Babaleye et al., 2020), this study revealed the complete opposite. It showed that overall, mostly positive influences occurred. Out of all screenshotted Instagram posts which participants identified as body image influenceable, the majority described having a positive impact from it. This study suggests that the dominant positive effect of Instagram usage can be linked to, firstly, the emerging body positivity content emerging on Instagram, and secondly, to the improving and more positive motives and attitudes participants seem to have. When exposed to Instagram content, most adolescents of this study felt good about themselves, even more so, they felt motivated, accepted, and unique.

5.1.1 Body image and social media

To begin with, the first sub-question regarded to what degree Instagram engagement (active or passive usage) influences the type of content and the impact on adolescents' body image. Analysing participants' level of engagement on Instagram, whether they are active or passive users, gave results that are entirely in line with previous research. This study supports the findings of Valkenburg and colleagues (2021) that active social media use equals positive influences on body image. While oppositely passive usage corresponds with negative influences on one's body image. Valkenburg and colleagues (2021) explained that the positive effects originate through the felt connectedness created through actively engaging with the post. While

passive social media usage, on the other hand, provokes social comparison and creates the feeling of envy through being exposed to other individuals who accomplished or possess something desirable (Lim & Yang, 2015).

This study can further add that active engagement does not only lead to positive body image influences but additionally to a more significant impact in general. The average impact for active users was significantly higher compared to passive users, suggesting that active social media engagement leads to more positive impacts on body image and also evokes stronger overall impacts.

Additionally, as this study was the first to investigate the content, it was able to reveal a link between what kind of content was chosen as being body image influenceable and the degree of engagement of the participant. Hereby, a relation between passive engagement and content displaying pictures of thin ideal women was seen. Active engagement was seen in connection with more positive content including posts containing "normal" sized individuals and posts belonging to the body positivity movement. Additionally, a further link was seen between male participants and active engagement. Male participants uniformly liked the content of other males in the gym, working out or posing to show their physique while sharing uplifting, motivating, and inspiring effects.

Overall, the most visible content among participants was Instagram posts of other people fitting societal ideals. A lot of screenshotted Instagram posts by participants only, or most prominently, focused on one body part. This was in line with previous literature, which describes Instagram content as mostly sexually objectifying, containing sexual poses (Boepple et al., 2016) or only displaying specific body parts (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2016).

5.1.2 Social comparison

The second sub-question cantered social comparison, which kind of social comparison is mostly used in connection to the Instagram content adolescents came across. Earlier conducted research (e.g., Vogel et al., 2015) stipulated that social comparison can take place on social media platforms, and both upward and downward comparison take place online (Lewallen & Behm-Morawitz, 2016). The vast majority of participants engaged in upward social comparison to compare themselves to superior individuals, resulting in positive and negative outcomes. This finding is in tune with previous literature, which states that people with a tendency to compare

themselves evaluate themselves based on what they see in others (Buunk et al., 2007). Only a hand full of participants engaged in downward comparison, comparing oneself to someone inferior, whereby only clear positive outcomes were found. Downward social comparison was proven to neutralise the negative effect of social comparison, which explains the only experienced positive impacts (Tiggeman & Anderberg, 2019). Having found more upward social comparisons indicates that adolescents pay more attention to others they view as better off than themselves and engage more in drawing similarities and differences with superior individuals. This is fitting with Festinger (1954) theory which early on found out that engaging in social comparison serves for verifying or denying aspects of one's identity.

Results of this study suggested that individuals who showed higher tendencies to engage in social comparison also showed higher body disturbance. This outcome is supported by other researchers who found a connection between upward social comparison and its harmful consequences on body image (Lewallen & Behm-Morawitz, 2016). This study adds by suggesting that there is a gender difference. Even though all participants engaged in upward social comparison, motives and how participants dealt with them are split. Females engaged in upward social comparison and were dominantly left with negative consequences, feeling jealous and less attractive. Male participants, on the other hand, engaged in upward social comparison and mostly drew positive conclusions from it. Male motives consisted of inspiration, motivation, and the stimulation to become a better version of themselves.

Results regarding gender differences and their personal characteristics align with previous research that suggests that females overall have a lower body image than males (He et al., 2021). This study found equal results, as females voiced more negative impacts while reporting higher body dissatisfaction. What could be identified further is that females were not as consistent and showed more variety in body image and confidence. Whereas male participants reported more similar thoughts, feelings, and experiences, showed similar behaviour, and overall expressed a higher body appreciation.

5.1.3 Peers and influencers

The third sub-question aimed to uncover which creator content on Instagram impacts adolescents' body image most. In other words: to whom do adolescents compare themselves the most with. Research in this field suggests that peer-based comparison has the most significant

influence (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2016). This can be led back to Festinger's (1954) statement that individuals are more likely to compare themselves to similar others. The current study was not in line with Festinger (1954), as results showed that most comparisons were made with individuals who were reported as strangers, celebrities, and influencers. The findings of this study correspond closer to Shorter and colleagues (2008) study, which proved that celebrities resemble a strong source of influence. Sherman and colleagues (2017) explain that influencers and celebrities are more influential through the sizable network of followers generating more likes on their posts, which makes them seem more impactful and further increases adolescents' brain activity. Overall, out of all postings detected as body image influenceable content, creators to whom participants felt no connection were primarily chosen. This finding is in line with a study by Lup and colleagues (2015), who found out that generally content of strangers has the most frequent impact.

The results of this study also showed that adolescents are predominately in contact with others' ideal selves. As literature suggests, SNS users perceive social pressure to present themselves, which leads to some users to post idealised pictures (Manago et al., 2008). This study shows that most participants were influenced by these perfectly made aesthetic posts.

On the counter side, an interesting growing trend which was able to be identified is that more participants reported pictures of others' real selves. These real-self posts include pictures which are not completely in line with the previously made suggestion of posting aesthetic pictures wanting to impress others with once physical appearance, but rather show individuals without makeup, laying on the couch or having imperfections visible.

Interesting to note is that the way adolescents came across the postings they compared themselves with, the postings which impacted their body image, can be split into two categories. In the slightly bigger category, participants came across the Instagram postings though individuals they already follow. In the second category, participants came across Instagram postings from people they did not know through Instagram's own suggestions or advertising. This shows that adolescents are impacted and influenced not only by people they follow but even more so by complete strangers and individuals they have never come across.

5.1.4 Self-influences; self-discrepancy and self-esteem

The second to last sub-question looked at adolescents' state like body image, accounting for their mental state, their self-discrepancy and self-esteem, and the impacts of these influences on their content selection. This research uncovered that, in this current sample, male adolescent participants had lower body self- discrepancy compared to female adolescent participants. Zhang and colleagues (2021) describe that for people which high self-discrepancy, gaps between their perception of appearance and the idealised person in the Instagram postings are too large.

Male participants of this study had low self-discrepancy. They mostly reported themselves as equally attractive and did not observe big differences between them and the creator of the Instagram post. Those images of predominately fitness content of other males working out and showing off physiques lead to enhancing male adolescents' self-enhancement motivation. Generally, some female participants showed similar behaviour. Comparing both genders, however, showed that more female adolescents induce self-directed negative consequences when seeing idealised Instagram positing, which is in line with previous research (Yurdagül et al., 2019). This suggests that female adolescents in this study have higher self-discrepancy and do not share the motivational feelings males feel.

Additional findings show that some participants saw a relationship between negative consequences of Instagram through engaging in social comparison due to someone's low self-esteem. These opinions align with research by Vogel and colleagues (2014), who expressed that social comparison is a mediator between self-esteem and Facebook usage. In this study female adolescents' self-esteem was predominantly negatively affected by other females who they see as more attractive. This further is supported by research which revealed that females' self-esteem is especially sensitive to appearances (Heatherton & Wyland, 2003). Oppositely males' self-esteem, on the other hand, was positively affected by other males, which they saw as better off as themselves. This finding is in line with previous research by Heatherton and Wylands (2003).

5.1.5 Mindset shift on SNSs

The final sub-question regarded the emerging body positivity movement on social media. This study investigated how the body positivity movement is reflected in Instagram content that influences adolescents' body image. Results of this study are completely in line with previous research, which showcases that a general shift from a narrowly defined beauty concept is shifting

to a broader one whereby body care and inner positivity are emphasised (Cohen et al., 2019). This study's results further confirm previous findings by proving that body positivity content improves participants' body satisfaction and, more prominently, participants' overall mood (e.g., Williamson & Karazsia, 2018; Cohen et al., 2019).

Something crucial to note is that the body positivity movement majorly came across female participants. Hereby, the posts show bodies with stretch marks, body hair, different breast sizes, cellulite and other features which would be seen as imperfections by the thin ideal. The chosen body positivity posts comply with Manning and Mulgrew's (2022) view of body positivity content. They state that the movement challenges thin ideals narrowly defined perceptions by promoting diversity and "imperfections". These findings can be explained by a recent study by Betz and colleagues (2019), which concludes that social media content includes more diversity in featuring female bodies that differ from the thin ideal but now displays curvier or athletic body types.

A reason that male participants did not come across body positivity posts can be linked to a study by Franchina and Coco (2018). Their study shows that ideals for male participants, which are presented on social media, still regard muscular men. As all male participants of this study reported Instagram posts fitting that ideal, this study supports the study of Franchina and Coco (2018).

Moreover, this study revealed that participants gave uniform answers concerning evaluations of Instagram and the content most prominent on the platform. Statements regarding unrealistic overly perfect posts and bodies were given multiple times. It was expressed that people should be more open to sharing their struggles and insecurities since everyone has them. Those mindset shifts can be further supported by viewing the studies' evaluations of the participants. It was voiced various times that this study made them realise that they want to be more appreciative of their body, take better care of it, and start loving it more.

5.2 Strengths

The main theoretical strength of this study is that it aids the academic field as it is one of the first to explore the posted content on Instagram. This study dove deeper by looking at the actual Instagram content consumed by adolescents in relation to their body image, uncovering new realisations that can be built upon and perceived as being very valuable. This study's

procedure and build-up were voiced as being very useful to navigate the Instagram space better. This method helped adolescents understand the impacts they were feeling and, more so, let them understand where exactly these originate. The diary study was an intervention tool that helped adolescents become more aware of body image impacts and comprehend internal processing.

Another strength of this study is that it is based on a qualitative approach while also combining it with a more quantitative method. A great starting point was able to be established by primarily using a qualitative data collection as it allows to uncover and learn about underlying connections compared to quantitative data. This study started out by using a questionnaire (quantitative method) to collect background information and to learn about the participants' characteristics. Afterwards, a diary study (qualitative method) was used to uncover and investigate participants' habits, engagements, motivations, influences, and feelings. By choosing this form of data collection, frequent and real-time research enabled the collection of more precise data of participants. It enabled recording adolescents' answers in their natural environment, which has been proven to deliver more realistic results. Overall, more in-depth opinions were able to be exposed by studying participants over the course of five days, compared to studies that only look at a snapshot in time. Thus, the applied data collection method can be evaluated as a sufficient fit for exploring Instagram's content connected to adolescents' body image.

5.3 Limitations

As with the vast majority of conducted studies, this study has some limitations and aspects for improvement. The biggest limitations concern the sample of this study. To begin with, the study involved a relatively small sample (n=28) made up of predominantly female participants (22 out of 28). Next to influential Instagram content, this study aimed to investigate differences between genders. As gender is not equally distributed among the participants, this study cannot generalise the found results; it is not applicable to society. Moreover, even though the used research method allowed the researcher to collect in-depth answers, the overall sample size did not allow to draw strong conclusions on the quantitative data that was collected. Additionally, the sample showed an unequal distribution of nationalities. As the researcher's sample included Germans primarily, it can be expected that the study's findings and resulting suggestions are primarily applicable to German adolescents. Thirdly, the findings of this study are more practical

to older emerging adults as this sample is solely made up of adolescents between the ages of 18 to 25 years old.

Next to the limitations of the sample, some other limitations regarding the methods were established. As methods of convenience sampling and snowball sampling were used to collect participants, it makes it harder to replicate this study. The underlying reason being that the researcher's network was used to recruit participants, making it hard for other researchers to establish a similar pool of participants. Additionally, findings of the study can be made less generalizable as the researcher's population included a non-random selection of participants.

5.4 Recommendations for future research

From the mentioned limitations of this study, good recommendations for future research can be drawn. Generally, it is recommended to dive even deeper into the content of Instagram and its underlying influence on adolescents' body image. As this research sample included adolescents aged 18 to 25, it is advised to take younger adolescents aged 16 to 18 into account. Next to the age range of participants, it is being suggested to further include a more diverse sampling population in terms of nationality and gender. Including participants from multiple countries and gender would allow for generating results which would be applicable to an international, broader context. To additionally generate results which are applicable to draw general conclusions from, it is advised to apply the design of this study to a large sample. Increasing the sample size to 200-400 participants, the study could uncover results which could be interpreted less cautiously.

Additional recommendations for future research regard the analysis and set-up of the study. Firstly, it is suggested that future research investigates adolescents' characteristics (e.g., age, groups, nationality, religion) more in-depth to see connections between them and body image influential Instagram content. Next to that, this topic could be researched more experimentally. A suggestion here would be to separate participants into three groups whereby one group is exposed to Instagram content which is not directly related to body image (e.g., lifestyle or comedy content), the second group to more negative body image triggering content (e.g., thin ideal or fitness content), and the last group to more positively body image triggering content (e.g., body positivity posts). Participants could fill out a survey pre and post their exposure, whereby results could indicate if the different content affects adolescents differently.

A final recommendation for future research did not emerge from the mentioned limitations but rather was recognised throughout the research progress. Due to limited resources, especially time constraints, the participants' in-person progress could not be investigated and followed up. The in-person progress entails the five diary study days and could, for example, be analysed by looking for trends in behaviour. It could be purely focused on whether the adolescent participants show similar patterns when consciously identifying Instagram content that impacts their thinking of their body image, using the same method this study followed. By uncovering these kinds of results, fluctuations of what content affected adolescents' body image can be detected, and additional trigger points or enhancement factors could be brought to light. The researcher of this study sees high value in this data and highly advises to continue this research as it is of high importance.

5.5 Implications

Taking the study's findings into account, some practical implications can be considered. To begin with, Instagram could improve its application so that suggestions for following other people are excluded from users' main home feed and limited to users explore page. Instagram could only allow suggestions in home feeds to be made which correspond to positive movements like the body positivity movement. This would result in Instagram's users' home feed being made up of friends, celebrities, influencers, and strangers which they beforehand chose to follow, and suggestions made by Instagram which relate to positive outcomes. Instagram's follow suggestion regarding other profiles could be moved to the explore page and be only accessible here. By doing that, users are not exposed to the toxic and negatively influencing suggestions that in this study were being reported regarding Instagram's suggestions.

Another implication is directed to educational institutes or organisations that support adolescents. They are advised to take the gained insights from this research into account to assist adolescents in their social media use in a way that is favourable for their body image. For example, support can be offered to adolescents by showing how to deal with feelings of envy or help make adolescents familiar with movements like the body positivity movement. This could help eliminate the widespread internalisation of the thin ideal, especially concerning females. Moreover, adolescents could be encouraged to not engage with Instagram content and accounts

that they know beforehand would negatively impact them. Instead, they can be advised to follow nonappearance-related content to reduce the appearance focus of their Instagram feed.

5.6 Conclusion

To conclude and answer the research question, this qualitative research suggests that differences in body image effects can indeed be liked to different content on Instagram. This study was one of the first to dive deeper and to research on the origin of the influence, the posted content. Results of this study revealed that various content on Instagram evokes different effects on adolescents' body image. This study has found negative effects on female adolescents' body image when exposed to content corresponding to the society-created perfect thin ideal. Moreover, negative body image effects were able to be linked to content posted by strangers and passive Instagram usage, as it is purely appearance-based comparison and evoked feelings of envy and jealousy. More importantly, this study uncovered more frequent and dominant positive influences of Instagram content on body image. Positive effects originated through the increasing visibility of body positivity content shared on Instagram and users' active usage, creating positive feelings of connectivity. As social media platforms like Instagram are omnipresent in our world, it is pivotal to continue research in this field. We should help adolescents benefit from social medias identity-building parts and research possibilities through which social medias potential harms can be reduced or in best case eliminated once and for all.

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Questionnaire

Bachelor thesis Questionnaire

Start of Block: Informed consent

Dear Participant,

I hereby happily invite you to participate in the research for my bachelor thesis on the relationship between Instagram consumption and one's body image.

This study is conducted by Hannah Glaser, from the Faculty of Behavioural Management and Social Sciences at the University of Twente.

The aim of my study is to explore the impact of daily Instagram consumption on body image. This will be done by means of a diary study and a survey.   The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Your data will be treated with care and will be subject to absolute confidentiality. Moreover, all collected data will be used exclusively and anonymously for the bachelor thesis in Communication Science.

Participation in this study is voluntarily and you can withdraw from the study at any time or skip questions you feel uncomfortable with to answer.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail: h.c.glaser@student.utwente.nl

I want to thank you for your time and participation in advance!

If you click on the arrow on the right corner below, you agree to participate voluntarily in the study described and you proceed to the questions.

End of Block: Informed consent

Start of Block: Demographics

Respondent ID What is your respondent ID?

_____

Resp. gender What is your gender?

    ◯ Male (1)

    ◯ Female (2)

    ◯ Non-binary / third gender (3)

    ◯ Prefer not to say (4)

Resp. age How old are you?

_____

Resp. nationality What is your nationality?

    ◯ German (1)

    ◯ Dutch (2)

    ◯ Other: (3) _____

    ◯ Prefer not to say (4)

Resp. profession What is your profession?

○ Student (1)

○ Employed full time (2)

○ Employed half time (3)

○ Unemployed (4)

○ Prefer not to say (5)

Insta usage Why do you use Instagram? (multiple answers can be selected)

☐ To present myself (1)

☐ To keep up with my friends/ social circle (2)

☐ To compare myself to others (3)

☐ Out of boredom (4)

☐ Because everyone around me uses it (5)

☐ Other (6) _____

Insta time How much time do you spend on Instagram in one day on average approximately?

○ > 30 mintues (1)

○ 30 minutes to 1 hour (2)

○ 1 hour to 2 hours (3)

○ 2 hours to 3 hours (4)

○ 3 hours to 4 hours (5)

○ < 4 hours (6)

Insta post amount How often do you post stories on Instagram?

○ Daily (1)

○ Once or twice a week (2)

○ Once a month (3)

○ Less than the above (4)

○ Never (5)

Q56 How often do you post in feed posts on Instagram?

○ Daily (1)

○ Once or twice a week (2)

○ Once a month (3)

○ Less than the above (4)

○ Never (5)

Insta post content What is the general content of your post? (multiple answers can be selected)

☐   Selfies (1)

☐   Pictures of my self (2)

☐   Pictures with friends (3)

☐   Pictures of nature (4)

☐   Pictures of food (5)

☐   Pictures of traveling content (6)

☐   Other (7) _____

Insta post following Who do you follow on Instagram? (multiple answers can be selected)

☐   My friends (1)

☐   My family (2)

☐   Acquaintances (3)

☐   Celebrities (4)

☐   Influencers (5)

☐   Other (6) _____

Insta activities What activities do you perform on Instagram? (multiple answers can be selected)

☐   I post in feed pictures (1)

☐   I post stories (2)

☐   I like posts (3)

☐   I comment on posts (4)

☐   I save posts (5)

☐   I send posts to my friends (6)

Insa fave accounts Where lie your interests on Instagram? (multiple answers can be selected)

☐   Lifestyle (1)

☐   Beauty (2)

☐   Fashion (3)

☐   Food (4)

☐   Fitness (5)

☐   Travel (6)

☐   Other (7) _____

End of Block: Instagram

SC explanation You will now see a couple of questions regarding social comparison. Please read through the following statements and select the answer that applies to you the most.

SC 1 I often compare how my loved ones (boy or girlfriend, family members, etc.) are doing with how others are doing.

○ Strongly disagree (1)

○ Somewhat disagree (2)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)

○ Somewhat agree (4)

○ Strongly agree (5)

SC 2 I always pay a lot of attention to how I do things compared with how others do things.

○ Strongly disagree (1)

○ Somewhat disagree (2)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)

○ Somewhat agree (4)

○ Strongly agree (5)

SC 3 If I want to find out how well I have done something, I compare myself to how others did it.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)

- ○ Somewhat disagree (2)

- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)

- ○ Somewhat agree (4)

- ○ Strongly agree (5)

SC 4 I often compare how I am doing socially (e.g., social skills, popularity, appearance, interact) with other people.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)

- ○ Somewhat disagree (2)

- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)

- ○ Somewhat agree (4)

- ○ Strongly agree (5)

SC 5 I am not the type of person who compares often with others.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)

- ○ Somewhat disagree (2)

- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)

- ○ Somewhat agree (4)

- ○ Strongly agree (5)

SC 6 I often compare myself with others with respect to what I have accomplished in life.

○ Strongly disagree (1)

○ Somewhat disagree (2)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)

○ Somewhat agree (4)

○ Strongly agree (5)

SC 7 I often like to talk with others about mutual opinions and experiences.

○ Strongly disagree (1)

○ Somewhat disagree (2)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)

○ Somewhat agree (4)

○ Strongly agree (5)

SC 8 I often try to find out what others think who face similar problems as I face.

○ Strongly disagree (1)

○ Somewhat disagree (2)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)

○ Somewhat agree (4)

○ Strongly agree (5)

SC 9 I always like to know what others in a similar situation would do.

○ Strongly disagree (1)

○ Somewhat disagree (2)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)

○ Somewhat agree (4)

○ Strongly agree (5)

SC 10 If I want to learn more about something, I try to find out what others think about it.

○ Strongly disagree (1)

○ Somewhat disagree (2)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)

○ Somewhat agree (4)

○ Strongly agree (5)

SC 11 I never compare my situations or life to that of others.

○ Strongly disagree (1)

○ Somewhat disagree (2)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)

○ Somewhat agree (4)

○ Strongly agree (5)

P body image def This part of the questionnaire deals with your general body image. Please read through the following statements and click on the answer that applies to you the most.

PBI 1 I respect my body.

○ Never (1)

○ Sometimes (2)

○ About half the time (3)

○ Most of the time (4)

○ Always (5)

PBI 2 I feel good about my body.

○ Never (1)

○ Sometimes (2)

○ About half the time (3)

○ Most of the time (4)

○ Always (5)

PBI 3 On the whole, I am satisfied with my body.

○ Never (1)

○ Sometimes (2)

○ About half the time (3)

○ Most of the time (4)

○ Always (5)

- -

PBI 4 Despite its flaws, I accept my body for what it is.

○ Never (1)

○ Sometimes (2)

○ About half the time (3)

○ Most of the time (4)

○ Always (5)

- -

PBI 5 I feel that my body has at least some good qualities.

○ Never (1)

○ Sometimes (2)

○ About half the time (3)

○ Most of the time (4)

○ Always (5)

- -

PBI 6 I take a positive attitude toward my body.

○ Never (1)

○ Sometimes (2)

○ About half the time (3)

○ Most of the time (4)

○ Always (5)

PBI 7 I am attentive to my body's needs.

○ Never (1)

○ Sometimes (2)

○ About half the time (3)

○ Most of the time (4)

○ Always (5)

PBI 8 My self-worth is independent of my body shape or weight.

○ Never (1)

○ Sometimes (2)

○ About half the time (3)

○ Most of the time (4)

○ Always (5)

PBI 9 I do not focus a lot of energy being concerned with my body shape or weight.

○ Never (1)

○ Sometimes (2)

○ About half the time (3)

○ Most of the time (4)

○ Always (5)

PBI 10 My feelings toward my body are positive, for the most part.

○ Never (1)

○ Sometimes (2)

○ About half the time (3)

○ Most of the time (4)

○ Always (5)

PBI 11 I engage in healthy behaviors to take care of my body.

○ Never (1)

○ Sometimes (2)

○ About half the time (3)

○ Most of the time (4)

○ Always (5)

PBI 12 I do not allow unrealistically thin images of people presented in the media to affect my attitudes toward my body.

○ Never (1)

○ Sometimes (2)

○ About half the time (3)

○ Most of the time (4)

○ Always (5)

PBI 13 Despite its imperfections, I still like my body.

○ Dislike a great deal (1)

○ Dislike somewhat (2)

○ Neither like nor dislike (3)

○ Like somewhat (4)

○ Like a great deal (5)

End of Block: Positive body image

Start of Block: Negative body image

Neg. body image def This part of the questionnaire assesses concerns about appearance. Please read each question carefully and tick the answer that best describes your experience. Please also write answers in the appropriate boxes.

NBI 1 Are you concerned about the appearance of some part of your body, which you consider especially unattractive?

○ Definitely not concerned (1)

○ A bit concerned (2)

○ Averagly concerned   (3)

○ Probably yes (4)

○ Definitely yes (5)

- -

Display This Question:

If Are you concerned about the appearance of some part of your body, which you consider especially u... = A bit concerned

And Are you concerned about the appearance of some part of your body, which you consider especially u... = Averagly concerned

And Are you concerned about the appearance of some part of your body, which you consider especially u... = Probably yes

And Are you concerned about the appearance of some part of your body, which you consider especially u... = Definitely yes

NBI 1.1 What are these concerns? What specifically bothers you about the appearance of these body parts?

_____

- -

NBI 2 What effects has your preoccupation with your appearance had on your life?

_____

- -

NBI 3 Has your concern often caused you a lot of distress, torment or pain?

○ No stress (1)

○ Mild, and not too disturbing (2)

○ Moderate and disturbing but still managable (3)

○ Severe, and very disturbing (4)

○ Extreme, and disabling (5)

NBI 4 Has your concern caused you impairment in social, occupational or other important areas of functioning?

○ No limitation (1)

○ Mild interference but overall performance not impaired (2)

○ Moderate, definite interference, but still manageable (3)

○ Severe, causes substantial impairment (4)

○ Extreme, incapacitating (5)

NBI 5 Has your concern often significantly interfered with your social life?

○ Never (1)

○ Sometimes (2)

○ About half the time (3)

○ Most of the time (4)

○ Always (5)

NBI 5.1 If yes, how?

_____

NBI 6 Has your concern often significantly interfered with your school work, your job, or your ability to function in your role?

○ Never (1)

○ Sometimes (2)

○ About half the time (3)

○ Most of the time (4)

○ Always (5)

NBI 6.1 If yes, how?

_____

NBI 7 Are there things you avoid because of your concern?

○ Never (1)

○ Sometimes (2)

○ About half the time (3)

○ Most of the time (4)

○ Always (5)

- -

Display This Question:

    If Are there things you avoid because of your concern? = Sometimes

    And Are there things you avoid because of your concern? = About half the time

    And Are there things you avoid because of your concern? = Most of the time

    And Are there things you avoid because of your concern? = Always

NBI 7.1 If yes, what do you avoid?

_____

End of Block: Negative body image

Diary study (with final block)

Info for participant Dear Participant,

this is the last questionnaire for you to fill in, so I want to especially thank you again for participating in this study! :)

Before we start I would like you to remind you of some important aspects:
- please fill out this survey until **21 o'clock**
- please be sure to upload the blurred **screenshot** of the chosen Instagram post
- please check the **instruction pdf** in case of unclarity or **contact me** (+4917663744065)
- here, some **final questions** are involved regarding the evaluation of this study, please fill them out **honestly**

Thank you so much in advance!

Explanation def Before answering questions, I would like to provide you with two definitions.

- -

Body image def **Body image** is a combination of the thoughts and feelings that you have about your body. Body image may range between **positive** and **negative** experiences, and you may feel at different times positive or negative or a combination of both. Body image is influenced by internal (e.g. personality) and external (e.g. social environment) factors.

- -

State like def In this study your **state like** body image is measured. States are patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving in a concrete situation at a **specific moment in time**. Everyone has certain characteristics they possess and that don't change a lot over time, for example being a perfectionist or having a lot humor. However, in-the-moment you can differ in how

perfectionistic you are depending on the situation and people and objects in your context.

As an example: You might be perfectionistic in nature, especially when it comes to your work and study. However, when you go out on a party, you do not care about the way you dance, you just want to have a good time. In the moment of going and and partying your state like perfectionism is different.

Respondent ID What is your respondent ID?

_____

Survey date What is the current date (dd/mm/yyyy)?

_____

File upload Please upload the screenshot (with a blurred name and face) of the Instagram post which made you to think of your body image (in case you have problems uploading you can contact me +4917663744065)

Why this post **Why** did this picture make you think of your body image? Please explain yourself in a few sentences.

_____

Post made you think After seeing this Instagram post, what did it **make you think of**? Please explain yourself in a few sentences.

_____

Post make you feel After seeing this Instagram post, how did it **make you feel**? Please explain yourself in a few sentences.

_____

Post impact In which way did this Instagram post influence your body image?

◯ Positively (1)

◯ Neutral (2)

◯ Negatively (3)

Post impact scale How big was the impact?

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0 means no impact, 10 means very high impact											

Q19 **Why** did this Instagram post influence you?

_____

Post activities What activities did you perform with this post? (excluding taking a screenshot for this study). You can tick multiple boxes.

☐   I liked this post (1)

☐   I commented on this post (2)

☐   I shared this post with a friend (3)

☐   I reposted this post (4)

☐   I saved this post (5)

☐   Other (6) _____

Post finding How did you come across this picture?

○ I follow this account (1)

○ It was a suggestion by Instagram (2)

○ It was an advertising (3)

○ Other (4) _____

Post person Who is this post from?

○ A family member (1)

○ A relative (2)

○ A best friend (3)

○ A close friend (4)

○ A person from your social circle (5)

○ A stranger (6)

○ A celebrity (7)

○ Other (8) _____

Post connection If this image involves a person, do you **feel connected** to him/her and why? Please explain yourself in a few sentences.

_____

Post feel If this image involves a person, do you **feel better or worse off** than him/her and why? Please explain yourself in a few sentences.

_____

Post attractive If this image involves a person, do you **feel equally, more or less attractive** than him/her and why? Please explain yourself in a few sentences.

_____

End of Block: Self comparison state questions

Start of Block: Evaluation

Q25 As today is the final day of the diary study, there are some last evaluative questions for you to answer.

E think of the study What did you think of this study? Please explain yourself in a few sentences.

_____

E realise I. content Did this study made you realise something about Instagrams content? Please explain yourself in a few sentences.

_____

E impact BI Did this study have an impact on the way you think of your body image? Please explain yourself in a few sentences.

_____

E conscious BI Did you through this study get more conscious about your body image? Please explain yourself in a few sentences.

_____

End of Block: Evaluation

Appendix C

Information PDF for participants

Bachelor Thesis Hannah Glaser

Instagram and one's body image

THANK YOU very much for participating in this study!
This document explains the build-up of this study and gives you information for successful completion.

1 Survey

The first part of this study is made up of a **survey** which will take approximately **10 minutes** to complete. You will receive a **link** from me through Whatsapp which will direct you to **Qualtrics**, a website with which I created the survey. There you can complete it by answering questions regarding you as a person, your Instagram usage, your body image perception and your likelihood to engage in social comparison are asked.

2 Diary Study

The second part of this study involves a diary study which will **start the following day** you complete the main survey. I will provide you with a **link to the questionnaire** every morning (around 10 am). I will again send you a message on Whatsapp to kindly remind you and to provide the link to the survey. In that way, you do not have to keep track of the link. You have all day to complete the task, but please make sure to complete the daily survey by **21 o'clock** each day. You will complete the **same task** over the span of **5 days**.
Every day I will ask you to:
1. **identify and screenshot one post** which you came across on **Instagram** which made you think about your **body image**. This can be in a positive, neutral or negative way.
2. Next to providing this screenshot, you will be asked to answer a **few questions**.

PLEASE be careful!
After you choose the Instagram post, please check if the profile where the picture is from is a public or private account. In case the picture is from a **private account**, please make sure to **hide the person's name and face** e.g. with a sticker. Additionally, please **cut out the comments** section, but **keep in the likes**, please.
This is an example of how to do it ⟶

In case you encounter problems or need help, please contact me:
+4917663744065

89
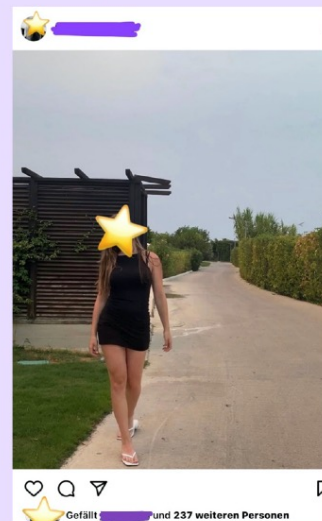
Appendix D

Codebook

Code	Sub-code	Definition	Example
1. Instagram post characteristics	1.1 One person 1.2 More than one person 1.3 No person 1.4 Only body 1.5 Naked skin 1.6 Covered skin 1.7 Female 1.8 Male	Refers to what is seen in the Instagram post	*Can be seen when looking at the post*
2. Instagram post type	2.1 Influencer 2.2 Friend 2.3 Family 2.4 Peer 2.5 Advertisement 2.6 Food 2.7 Brand	Refers to who the Instagram post is from	*Can be seen when looking at the post*
3. Post category	3.1 Food 3.2 Travel	Refers to which category the Instagram post belongs to	*Can be seen when looking at the post*

	3.3 Beauty		
	3.4 Fitness		
	3.5 Lifestyle		
	3.6 Fashion		
	3.7 Comedy		
	3.8 Body positivity		
4. Instagram post selection motive	4.1 Inspired 4.2 Desire to look like that 4.3 Motivated 4.4 Jealous 4.5 Feel good about oneself 4.6 Triggered	Refers to which motives were behind selecting that Instagram post	"He inspired me"
5. Instagram Post activities	5.1 Liked 5.2 Commented 5.3 Shared 5.4 Reposted 5.5 Saved	Refers to the activities performed by the participant with the post	"I liked this post"
6. Instagram Post findings	6.1 Follow 6.2 Suggestion by Instagram	Refers to how the participant came across the Instagram post	"I follow this account"

	6.3 Instagram advertising		
	6.4 Story		
7. Body image impact	7.1 Positive	Refers to what impact the Instagram post had on participants body image	"Positively"
	7.2 Neutral		
	7.3 Negative		
	7.4 No influence		
	7.5 Ambiguous		
8. Feelings	8.1 Happy	Refers to which feelings were evoked by the Instagram post	"It made me feel good and not judged"
	8.2 Sad		
	8.3 Motivated		
	8.4 Inspired		
	8.5 Calmed		
	8.6 Strengthened		
9. Self-comparison	9.1 Upward social comparison (negative)	Refers to situations in which the participants compare themselves to people who are "better"	"That I am not sporty enough"
	9.2 Downward social comparison (positive)	Refers to situations in which the participants compare	

			themselves to people who are "worse"	"She is really small and thin and underweight. Made me think about myself in a positive way that I am happy that I am healthy and not that thin"
	9.3 Connection to the post creator		Refers to if the participant feels connected to the person in the Instagram post	"I don't feel connected to her because I don't know what she's like in person"
	9.4 Attractiveness		Refers to if the participant feels equally, more or less attractive to the person in the Instagram post	"I feel equally attractive cause our body shape is so different, and it depends on the type"
10. Social media shift	10.1 10.2	Thin ideal Body positivity	Refers to the Instagram picture and to which social media movement it belongs to	*Can be seen when looking at the post*
11. Study impact	11.1 11.2 11.3	Positive Negative No impact	Refers to the impact this study had on participants	"It made me realize that I should take better care of my body image and that I only matters what I think!"

Descriptive statistics participants

Table 3

Instagram usage reason

	Frequency	Percentage
To present myself	12	43%
To keep up with my friends / social circle	25	98%
To compare myself to others	2	7%
Out of boredom	15	54%
Because everyone else around me uses it	10	36%
Other	10	36%

Table 4

Time spent on Instagram

	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	S.D.
>30 minutes	4	14%		
30 min to 1 hour	9	32%		
1 hour to 2 hours	13	46%		
2 hours to 3 hours	2	7%		
Total			2.46	.88

Table 5

Time spent on Instagram by gender

	N	Mean	S.D.	Min.	Max.
Male	6	2.50	.55	30 minutes to 1 hour	1 hour to 2 hours
Female	22	2.45	.91	>30 minutes	2 hours to 3 hours
Total	28	2.46	.84	>30 minutes	2 hours to 3 hours

Table 6

Instagram postage, stories

	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	S.D.
Daily	3	11%		
Once or twice a week	13	46%		
Once a month	10	36%		
Less than above	2	7%		
Total			2.39	.79

Table 7

Instagram postage, in feed posts

	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	S.D.
Daily	1	4%		
Once a month	3	11%		
Less than above	23	82%		
Never	1	4%		
Total			3.82	.67

Table 8

Activities participants perform on Instagram

	Frequency	Percentage
I post in feed pictures	18	64%
I post stories	26	93%
I like posts	27	96%
I comment on posts	18	64%
I save posts	21	75%
I send posts to my friends	26	93%

Table 9

Participants interest on Instagram

	Frequency	Percentage
Lifestyle	22	79%
Beauty	8	29%
Fashion	13	46%
Food	14	50%
Fitness	9	32%
Travel	17	61%
Other	10	36%

Participants likelihood to engage in social comparison, negative- and positive body image

The descriptive statistics of the 3 constructs regarding the likelihood to engage in social comparison (INCOM), participants positive body image (BAS) and negative body image (BIDQ) are presented in Table 10. When inspecting the means, it seems to be the case that gender differences in each construct exits. The likelihood to engage in social comparison was slightly higher among female participants compared to male participants. This suggests that females tend to compare themselves more to other individuals then male adolescents do. It suggests that female adolescents lay more importance on evaluating themselves to others in order to create an understanding of their worth and appearance.

The BAS descriptive findings indicate that male participants had higher body appreciation than compared to female participants in this study. This showed that male adolescents participated in this study have a more positive body image of themselves, they felt better in their skin and are more comfortable in their body. Lastly, fittingly, the descriptive of the BIDQ states that female participants in this study experienced higher levels of body disturbance compared to the male participants showing that female adolescents have a more negative body image. This suggest that female adolescents who participated in this study overall fell less comfortable in their own skin and share more insecurities about their bodies than male adolescents of this study.

Concluding, when comparing means it seems that male participants have a higher body image compared to female participants who in turn have a more negative body image and a higher likelihood to engage in social comparison. However, this is not officially tested due to this study being qualitative and therefore having not enough power to do statistical tests.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics of the Constructs

	Mean	S.D.	Min.	Max.
Likelihood to engage in social comparison *(INCOM, scores between 11-55)*				
Overall	38.2	5.93	24	48
Male	38.2	5.08	32	44
Female	38.4	5.46	25	46

Positive body image *(BAS, scores between 11-65)*				
Overall	46.3	9.04	19	64
Male	50.5	5.24	46	60
Female	45.1	9.82	19	64
Negative bod image *(BIDQ, scores between 7-35)*				
Overall	12.5	3.39	6	21
Male	12.3	3.86	6	21
Female	12.5	1.38	11	14

Participants per category

Table 11

Participants per category

	Participant ID
Body positivity	Participant 3, 9, 13, 14, 25, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, 34
Negative thin ideal	Participant 4, 6, 8, 10, 20, 26
Fitness	Participant 7, 12, 15, 18, 21
Positive thin ideal	Participant 1, 2, 5
Lifestyle	Participant 17, 23, 24