(RESEARCH ARTICLE)

On the image promotion on social media by polytechnic students in Nigeria

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Abstract

The research examined the reasons polytechnic students join social media such as Instagram and what they intend to learn from celebrities on Instagram in order to have their ideal body image for self-esteem. The study identified different measures polytechnic students used to achieve desired body image and the level of psychological effect Instagram posts have on their body image. The analysis is based on the findings of a questionnaire survey carried out in two higher institutions in Nigeria (N=600). The results revealed Nigerian students are highly conscious of their body image (91.2%), they employed different measures to achieve their desired body image, the rate at which Nigerian students patronized products advertised on Instagram to acquire ideal beauty standard is relatively high (61.5%) and finally, level of psychological effect of Instagram posts on body image is approximately high (88%).

Keywords: Instagram posts; Body Image; Purposive Sampling Technique; Likert Scale; Chi Square Test

1. Introduction

Social Networking Sites especially social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Tik Tok and Instagram have become a huge part of most youths' lives in recent years (Agliata and Tantleff-Dunn, 2004; Yayli *et al.* 2014). Originally, they are meant for interaction and building connections with new friends officially and otherwise (Robertson, 2014). Anyone can become a member of any of these sites through registration including adding photos. Researchers such as (Boyd and Ellison, 2007; Grabe *et al.* 2008) analyzed social networking sites as phenomenon, presentation of the self on social networking sites (Hochman and Schwartz, 2012; Salomon, 2013; Bakhshi *et al.* 2013).

Olofin *et al.* (2020) defined Instagram as an image-based social networking site that is famous among Nigerian students most especially those in tertiary institutions. Instagram allows users to take photos, post these photos to their personalized pages, and further disseminate the content by linking through other social media accounts like Facebook and Twitter. The popularity of Instagram is often linked with the rise of a new social phenomenon known as selfies (*i.e.*, self-portrait style photographs) (Smith, 2014). The selfie phenomenon has gained a great deal of public attention, with selfie being named the 2013 word of the year by Oxford Dictionaries (Bergstrom and Backman, 2013; Smith, 2014).

Abbott *et al.* (2013) and Wagner *et al.* (2016) opined that a selfie's focus on physical form might come with unintended associations for users who possess different levels of confidence and comfort with their bodies. The present study seeks to examine how Instagram influences body image among tertiary institutions students in Nigeria while seeking to determine whether the frequency of selfies taken and posted to Instagram are related to users' actual body size and sense of body dissatisfaction. This knowledge will help identify the psychological effects that Instagram posts on body image has on Nigerian students.

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Yamamiya *et al.* (2005) and Adamic and Adar (2005) affirmed that young females struggle with perceptions of the ideal body image and this affects them with their self-esteem and educational development. Social media contributes greatly to this distortion, alongside peers, family and society (Bakhshi *et al.,* 2013).

However, in the Nigerian society today, young females especially, are likely pressured to conform to change their appearance to certain beauty standards seen on different social networking sites (Olofin *et al.,* 2020). This is because they aim at having the body shape, size or complexion of celebrities or other people which they have seen on social media (Barlett *et al.,* 2013). The media has a way of prioritizing certain body image to be more attractive than the others e.g extreme thinness, big breasts and tiny waist for women and V-shaped muscled body for men etc (Barlett *et al.,* 2013; Chante *et al.,* 2014). Therefore, female undergraduates are on a daily basis confronted with the traditional and stereotypical ideals of beauty standards and regarding that it may be the first time they are allowed to make certain choices on their own, they are often faced with mixed messages regarding their value as students and the need to always look attractive (Olofin *et al.,* 2020).

The pursuit to conform to distorted beauty ideals and body image as Nigerian students is related to different problems which could include lack of self-confidence, low self-esteem among others.

Li and Agarwal, (2014); Campbell, (2017) and Constine, (2017) argued that millions of people are daily living with a dreadful feeling about how they look and that means they are not satisfied with their body image, which inevitably leads to low self-esteem.

2. Material and methods

The research design employed in this study was Survey Research Design. The Survey Research Design allows for easy administration of questionnaires to users of Instagram among the respondents at Federal Polytechnic, Ado Ekiti and Yaba College of Technology, Lagos to arrive at a reasonable result on the influence of Instagram on the body image of students of the two selected Polytechnics for this research. The population of the study comprised Instagram users among students of both institutions. The two polytechnics have combined population of about 60,000 students. The sample size for the study was 600 drawn from all the Schools from the two institutions. Purposive sampling technique was employed to select 75 students each from the eight colleges/schools in both institutions.

Questionnaire was used as the measuring instrument. The questionnaire was grouped into five sections. Demographics, Consciousness of Body Image, Measures Taken to Achieve Desired Body Image, Patronized Body Image Products Advertised on Instagram, Psychological Effects that Instagram Posts have on Body Image and Demographics Information. Section A contains five (5) items on demographic information such as Gender, Age, College/School, Institution and Instagram account. The next section contains 10 items about the consciousness of the body image of young females. A Four step Likert Scale questionnaire was used to extract crucial information from Respondents. Responses ranged from Strongly Agreed (SA) Agree (A) Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree (SD). The next subsection contains 10 items about measures taken to achieve desired body image using the open ended response scale of either "Yes" or , "No" while the next subsection contains 10 items about the patronage of body image products advertised on Instagram using the scale Regularly, Rarely and Never. The next sub-section also contains 10 items about the psychological effects that Instagram posts have on body image. The response scale is Highly (H) Minimal (M) Low (L). The instrument used was validated through a peered review by colleagues in both institutions.

Data collected through the questionnaire was collated, arranged, coded and computed using the Computer Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data in accordance to the research questions. The methods used in the study are descriptive statistics tools such as Bar chart, Pie Chart and Chi-square test.

3. Results and discussion

Table 1 Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	34	5.7
Female	281	94.3
Total	600	100%

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents by gender. The result reveals that 5.7% of the respondents are male students while 94.3% are female students in the two Polytechnics selected. Thus, majority of the respondents are female
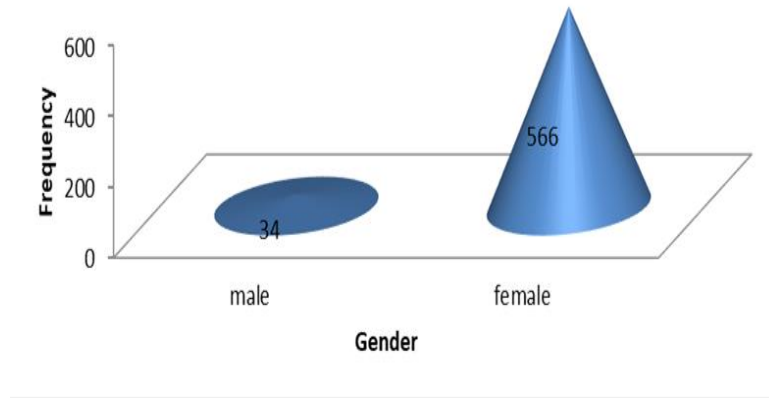

Figure 1 Distribution of respondents by gender in the two Polytechnics

Table 2 Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
15yrs & below	7	1.2
16 – 20yrs	175	29.2
21 – 25yrs	322	53.7
26 – 30yrs	77	12.8
31 – 35yrs	19	3.2
Total	600	100%

Table 2 shows the age distribution of the respondents. The result reveals that 53.7% of the respondents are in the age group 21-25yrs, 29.2% are in the age group 16-20yrs and finally, 12.8% are in the age group 26-30yrs. Majority of the respondents are in the age group 21 – 25yrs which is the mode.
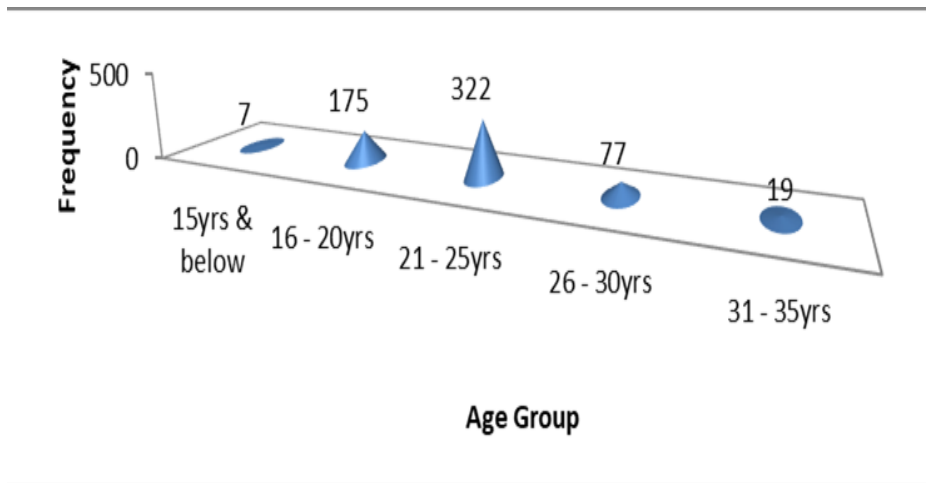

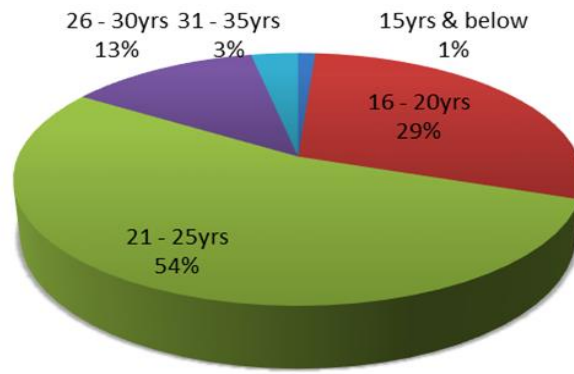**Figure 2** Age distribution of the respondents

Figure 3 Age distribution of the respondents

Comment: 54% of Polytechnic students that have Instagram account fall within age group 21 – 25yrs while 29% fall within 16 – 20 age group finally, 1% of Polytechnic students fall within age 15 and below respectively.

Table 3 Respondents' Polytechnics

Polytechnic	Frequency	Percentage
AdoPoly	300	50.0
YabaTech	300	50.0
Total	600	100%

Table 3 shows Polytechnics the respondents are studying. It could be observed that 50% of the respondents are studying at The Federal Polytechnic, Ado Ekiti while 50% of the respondents are studying at Yaba College of Technology, Lagos.

Table 4 Respondents' Faculties/Schools

Schools	Frequency	Percentage
SOS	37	6.2
SMBS	117	19.5
SSC	113	18.8
SOE	110	18.3
SES	112	18.7
SADP	37	6.2
SLS	37	6.2
SOT	37	6.2
Total	600	100%

Table 4 presents the Schools of the respondents. The result reveals that 19.5% of the respondents are in the SMBS, 18.8% are in the SSC, 18.7% are in the SES, 18.3% are in the SOE while SOS, SADP, SLS and SOT have 6.2% respectively. It could be observed that majority of the respondents that have Instagram account are in the SMBS
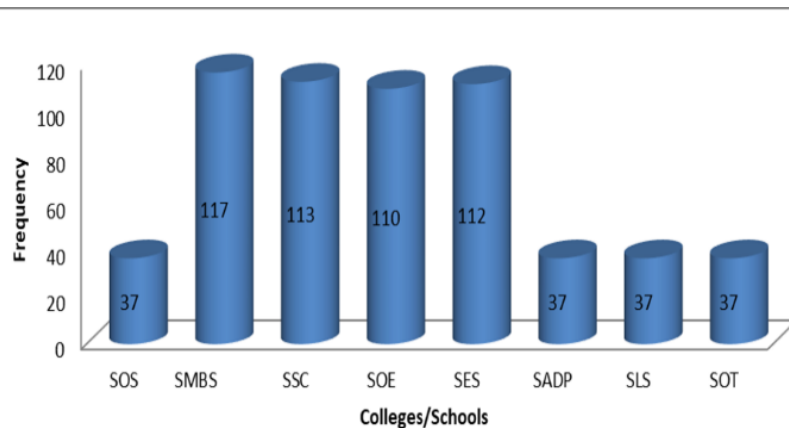
Figure 4 Distribution of respondents by different Colleges/Schools

3.1. Research Question 1

Are young Nigerian students conscious of their body image?

Table 5A Level of Consciousness of Nigerian students' body image

Item	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	Std. Dev.
I have a perfect body image	330 / 55%	217 / 36.2%	11 / 1.8%	42 / 7%	1.61	.834
I have the urge to change my body size	221 / 36.8%	243 / 40.5%	72 / 12%	64 / 10.7%	1.97	.957
I have the urge to change my complexion	247 / 41.2%	220 / 36.7%	78 / 13%	55 / 9.2%	1.90	.949
I have the urge to change my body shape	249 / 41.5%	233 / 38.8%	67 / 11.2%	51 / 8.5%	1.87	.922
I feel challenged with my body size	217 / 36.2%	235 / 39.2%	81 / 13.5%	67 / 11.2%	2.00	.972
I feel uneasy with my complexion	242 / 40.3%	220 / 36.7%	84 / 14%	54 / 9%	1.92	.948
I feel uneasy with my body shape	259 / 43.2%	218 / 36.3%	77 / 12.8%	46 / 7.7%	1.85	.920
I try to change my complexion	214 / 35.7%	250 / 41.7%	70 / 11.7%	66 / 11%	1.98	.956
I try to control my weight	226 / 37.7%	290 / 48.3%	39 / 6.5%	45 / 7.5%	1.84	.847
I try to reshape my body	253 / 42.2%	225 / 37.5%	59 / 9.8%	63 / 10.5%	1.89	.964

Table 5 shows the level of consciousness of Nigerian students on their body image. The result reveals that 36.2% of the respondent agreed that they have a perfect body image, 55% strongly agreed that they have a perfect body image while 7% disagreed that they have a perfect body image while 1.8% strongly disagreed that they have a perfect body image (Mean=1.61, SD=0.834). Again, 40.5% of the respondents agreed that they have the urge to change their body sizes, 36.8% strongly agreed that they have the urge to change their body sizes, while 10.7% of the respondents disagreed that they have the urge to change their body sizes and 12% of the respondents strongly disagreed that they have the urge to change their body sizes (Mean=1.97, SD=0.957). Furthermore, 38.8% of the respondents agreed that they have the urge to change their body shapes, 41.5% strongly agreed that they have the urge to change their body shapes while

8.5% disagreed that they have the urge to change their body shapes and 11.2% strongly disagreed that they have the urge to change their body shapes (Mean=1.87, SD=0.922). Moreover, 36.3% of the respondents agreed that they felt uneasy with their body shapes, 43.2% strongly agreed that they felt uneasy with their body shapes while 7.7% disagreed that they felt uneasy with their body shapes and 12.8% strongly disagreed that they felt uneasy with their body shapes (Mean=1.85, SD=0.920). Finally, 37.5% agreed that they tried to reshape their bodies, 42.2% strongly agreed that they tried to reshape their bodies while 10.5% disagreed that they tried to reshape their bodies and 9.8% strongly disagreed that they tried to reshape their bodies (Mean=1.89, SD=0.964). From the result, inference could be made that Nigerian students are conscious of their body image.

3.2. Inferential Statistics (Chi Square Test)

Table 5B Level of Consciousness of Nigerian students' body image

Consciousness of Body image	GENDER									
	I have a perfect body image	I have the urge to change my body size	I have the urge to change my complexion	I have the urge to change my body shape	I feel challenged with my body size	I feel uneasy with my complexion	I feel uneasy with my body shape	I try to change my complexion	I try to control my weight	I try to reshape my body
P- value	0.317	0.940	0.473	0.613	0.345	0.674	0.742	0.172	0.026	0.401
Decision Rule (α-value= 0.05)	H_o is not rejected	H_o is not rejected	H_o is not rejected	H_o is not rejected	H_o is not rejected	H_o is not rejected	H_o is not rejected	H_o is not rejected	H_o is rejected	H_o is not rejected
Interpretation	Students do not have perfect body image	Students do not have urge to change their body size	Students do not have urge to change their complexion	Students do not have urge to change their body shapes	Students do not feel challenged with their body size	Students do not feel uneasy with their complexion	Students do not feel uneasy with their body shape	Students do not try to change their complexion	Students try to control their weights	Students do not try to reshape their bodies

3.3. Research Question 2

What are the measures taken by young Nigerian students through Instagram posts to change their body features?

Table 6 shows measures taken by the students of two different Polytechnics in Nigeria to achieve their desired body image. The result reveals that 69.5% of the respondents used body whitening creams to achieve desired body image, while 30.5% didn't use body whitening creams to achieve desired body image (Mean=1.31, SD=0.461). Again, 75% of the respondents used skin whitening treatments while 25% didn't use skin whitening treatments to achieve desired body image (Mean=1.25, SD=0.433). Furthermore, 65.5% of the respondents engaged regular workout to achieve desired body image while 34.5% of the respondents didn't engage regular workout (Mean=1.35, SD=0.476). Finally, 72.7% of the respondents engaged fat burning program to achieve desired body image while 27.3% didn't engage fat burning program to achieve desired body image (Mean=1.27, SD=0.446). From the result, inference could be made that Nigerian students actually employed most of these measures to achieve their desired body image.

Table 6 Measures taken through Instagram posts to change body features

Complexion	YES	NO	Mean	Std. Dev.
Body Whitening Creams	417 69.5%	183 30.5%	1.31	.461
Skin Whitening Treatments	450 75%	150 25%	1.25	.433
Exfoliation	441 73.5%	159 26.5%	1.27	.442
Bleaching	467 77.8%	133 22.2%	1.22	.416
Body Whitening Pills	449 74.8%	151 25.2%	1.25	.434
Slimming Pills	365 60.8%	235 39.2%	1.39	.489
Slimming Tea	306 51%	294 49%	1.49	.500
Regular Workout	393 65.5%	207 34.5%	1.35	.476
Dieting	365 60.8%	235 39.2%	1.39	.489
Fat Burning Program (Keto)	436 72.7%	164 27.3%	1.27	.446

3.4. Research Question 3

To what extent do young students patronize the products advertised on Instagram to acquire the ideal beauty standard?

Table 7 Extent of Patronized Body Image Products Advertised on Instagram?

Item	Regular	Rarely	Never	Mean	Std. Dev.
Body Whitening Creams	369 61.5%	70 11.7%	161 26.8%	1.65	.874
Skin Whitening Treatments	379 63.2%	64 10.7%	157 26.2%	1.63	.870
Skin Toning Soaps	368 61.3%	91 15.2%	141 23.5%	1.62	.840
Body Whitening Pills	366 61%	62 10.3%	172 28.7%	1.68	.891
Exfoliation Scrubs	359 59.8%	102 17%	139 23.2%	1.63	.835
Flat Tummy Products	377 62.8%	78 13%	145 24.2%	1.61	.850
Slimming Pills	389 64.8%	56 9.3%	155 25.8%	1.61	.869
Weight Loss Products	398 66.3%	73 12.2%	129 21.5%	1.55	.824
Slimming Tea	386 64.3%	77 12.8%	137 22.8%	1.59	.837
Body Shaping Diet Pills	399 66.5%	75 12.5%	126 21%	1.55	.818

Table 7 shows the extent of patronized Body Image Products Advertised on Instagram by students of two different Polytechnics in Nigeria. The result reveals that 61.5% of the respondents agreed that they regularly patronize body whitening creams advertised on Instagram, 11.7% said they rarely patronize body whitening creams advertised on Instagram while 26.8% said they never patronize body whitening creams advertised on Instagram (Mean=1.65, SD=0.874). Again, 61.3% of the respondents agreed that they regularly patronize skin toning soaps advertised on Instagram, 15.2% said they rarely patronize skin toning soaps advertised on Instagram while 23.5% said they never patronize skin toning soaps advertised on Instagram (Mean=1.62, SD=0.840). More so, 64.8% of the respondents agreed that they regularly patronize slimming pills advertised on Instagram, 9.3% said they rarely patronize slimming pills advertised on Instagram while 25.8% said they never patronize slimming pills advertised on Instagram (Mean=1.61, SD=0.869). In the same vein, 64.3% of the respondents agreed that they regularly patronize slimming tea advertised on Instagram, 12.8% said they rarely patronize slimming teas advertised on Instagram while 22.8% said they never patronize slimming teas advertised on Instagram (Mean=1.59, SD=0.837). Finally, 66.5% of the respondents agreed that they regularly patronize body shaping diet pills advertised on Instagram, 12.5% said they rarely patronize body shaping diet pills advertised on Instagram while 21% said they never patronize body shaping diet pills advertised on Instagram (Mean=1.55, SD=0.818). From the result, inference could be made that students really patronize body image products advertised on Instagram to acquire their ideal beauty standard.

3.5. Research Question 4

What are the psychological effects that Instagram posts on body image have on Nigerian undergraduates?

Table 8 Level of Psychological Effects that Instagram posts have on body image

Item	Highly	Minimal	Low	Mean.	Std. Dev.
I derive inspiration through Instagram Posts	297 49.5%	233 38.8%	70 11.7%	1.62	.685
I derive inspiration through Instagram Models	251 41.8%	215 35.8%	134 22.3%	1.81	.778
I receive encouragement through Instagram models	256 42.7%	246 41%	98 16.3%	1.74	.722
I receive encouragement through Instagram posts.	236 39.3%	279 46.5%	85 14.2%	1.75	.687
I derive confidence through Instagram Posts	293 48.8%	207 34.5%	100 16.7%	1.68	.743
I derive confidence through Instagram Celebrities.	218 36.3%	246 41%	136 22.7%	1.86	.756
I build my self-esteem through Instagram posts.	224 37.3%	257 42.8%	119 19.8%	1.83	.736
I build self-esteem through Instagram Models	185 30.8%	259 43.2%	156 26%	1.95	.753
I desire to have the look of Instagram models.	223 37.2%	242 40.3%	135 22.5%	1.85	.759
I feel oppressed with the body of Instagram models	201 33.5%	214 35.7%	185 30.8%	1.97	.802

Table 8 shows results on level of Psychological Effects that Instagram posts have on body image. It could be observed that 49.5% of the respondents agreed that the level of inspiration they derived through Instagram posts on their body image is high while 11.7% of the respondents believed it is low (Mean=1.62, SD=0.685). Again, 42.7% of the respondents agreed that the level of encouragement they received through Instagram posts on their body image is high while 16.3% of the respondents believed it is low (Mean=1.74, SD=0.722). Also, 48.8% of the respondents agreed that the level of confidence they derived through Instagram posts on their body image is high while 16.7% of the respondents believed it is low (Mean=1.68, SD=0.743). In the same vein, 37.3% of the respondents agreed that the level of self-esteem they built through Instagram posts on their body image is high while 19.8% of the respondents believed it is low (Mean=1.83,

SD=0.736). Finally, 33.5% of the respondents agreed that the level of oppression they felt through Instagram posts on their body image is high while 30.8% of the respondents believed it is low (Mean=1.97, SD=0.802). From the result, inference could be made that the level of Psychological Effects that Instagram posts have on body image is high (88%)

4. Conclusion

Based on the result of analysis carried out on this study, It can be concluded that Nigerian students are highly conscious of their body image, they employed different measures to achieve their desired body image, the rate at which Nigerian students patronize product advertised on Instagram to acquire ideal beauty standard is high and level of psychological effect of Instagram posts on body image is high (88%).

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interests.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study."

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