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The influence of social media on teens' self-esteem

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THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON TEENS' SELF-ESTEEM

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my family and friends.

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Abstract

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THE INFUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON TEENS' SELF-ESTEEM
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Social media has made it incredibly easy to connect the world. One can check Twitter and see what their favorite celebrity is up to, log onto Facebook to find out when a friend's birthday is, or use Instagram to advertise a new business. However, is social media doing more harm than good? The purpose of this study was to conclude if there is a relationship between social media and self-esteem, especially among teenagers. 130 participants from two high schools completed two different surveys: one to assess their social media use and the second to measure their self-esteem. Each social media variable and the participant's self-esteem score were utilized to run correlational tests; two variables were found to be significant when using all 130 participants. The participants who did not have social media were excluded for the second data set and four variables were found to be significant against self-esteem scores including if the participants were bothered if they did not receive as many likes as they thought they were going to on their posts, the amount of likes on their last selfie, the amount of likes they usually receive on their selfies, and the amount of time the participants waited to check social media after they posted something. The conclusion of the current study is that a relationship exists between social media and self-esteem.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Purpose of the Study

Technology is an incredible staple in today's day in age, specifically the increased

use of social media. Many studies have been conducted to investigate the positive and

negative aspects of social media. Valkenburg, Peter, & Schouten (2006), concluded that

"positive feedback on profiles enhanced adolescents' social self-esteem and well-being,

whereas negative feedback decreased their self-esteem and well-being" (pp. 584). The

purpose of this study is to determine if social media influences teens' self-esteem. The

specific aim of the study is:

1.   To establish if the type of social media use and the individual's reaction to

social media relates to his/her self-esteem.

Each participant's self-esteem will be measured using a Self-Esteem Survey

designed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Measuring the individual's

reaction and the type of social media use will also be conducted using a survey. The

design of this study is a correlational design.

Hypothesis and Research Question

Teens in today's world allow social media to influence their self-esteem. How

will their self-esteem be effected by: if they do not receive many "likes" on their posts, if

they receive negative comments on posts, if they receive positive comments on posts, if

they feel they have many "friends" or "followers" on their accounts, if they feel they do

not have many "friends" or "followers" on their accounts, if they receive a high number

of likes on their selfies, if they receive a lower number of likes on their selfies?

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Significance of Study

Teenagers are so glued to their phones, computers, and all other forms of technology. CNN states that teens spend an average of 9 hours a day using some sort of media (Wallace, 2015). According to Seo, Houston, Knight, & Inglish (2014), "the proportion of teens engaging in some form of social media usage has increased from 55% in 2006 to 83% in 2012" (pp. 884). Teens are also very vulnerable during this period of their lives; they are trying to figure out who they are, who their friends are, and where they belong. Low self-esteem is also largely linked to issues with mental health. If it is known that social media has the potential to negatively influence self-esteem, there may be ways for prevention. For example, educating teens on the effects of social media or forming social groups that discuss the negative aspects of social media may make teens more aware that they should be in control of how they feel about themselves.

Definitions

Social Media- "forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content" i.e. Facebook. Instagram, Snapchat, etc. (Retrieved from merriam-webster.com)

"Friends"- people who follow you on social media (Facebook)

"Followers"- people who follow you on social media (Instagram, Twitter)

Likes- when someone likes your status, comment, or picture

Body image- "a subjective picture of one's own physical appearance established both by self-observation and by noting the reactions of others" (Retrieved from merriam-webster.com)

Self-esteem- "a positive or negative attitude toward the self" (Clay, Vignoles, Dittmar, 2005, pp. 451)

Selfie- "a photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a smartphone or webcam and shared via social media" (Retrieved from oxforddictionaries.com)

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Technology has made astonishing advances in the past decade and is widely utilized across the nation. A large percentage of the population has access to the Internet at their fingertips, whether it is with smartphones, computers, tablets, or laptops. Along with more access comes more exposure to media, which can have advantages and disadvantages. The media can be very informative with what is happening around the world and can keep one up to date on current events. It may also serve as a source for education for students. On the other hand, media has several downfalls. A main disadvantage of the media, people are vulnerable to body image issues due to idolization of celebrities with perfect bodies and glamorous looks. "Depression and low self-esteem have been consistently linked in social comparison research and low self-concept clarity has been strongly associated with lower levels of self-esteem" (Durkin, Paxton, Sorbello, 2007, pp. 1096). Eating disorders may be a resulting complication due to poor body image as well, stemming from social comparison to incredibly thin models. Social media possesses similar impacts upon people as the media does, including influences on self-esteem, body image, mental health, and eating disorders. According to Polce-Lynch, Myers, Kliewer, & Kilmartin (2000), "self-esteem, which refers to a person's general sense of worth or acceptance, is recognized for the critical role it plays in mental health and psychopathology" (pp. 226). This knowledge places emphasis in discovering how social media may influence self-esteem due to its overwhelming presence in today's society.

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Body Image and Body Dissatisfaction

Social comparison is an instrumental piece in explaining how the media may influence people's perceptions of their body image and their self-esteem. "Social comparison theory, in which individuals develop a self-evaluation in comparison with others, has also been used to explain media influence" (Benowitz-Fredericks, Garcia, Massey, Vasagar, Borzekowski, 2012, pp. 693). Most individuals are compelled to evaluate themselves by comparing their abilities and body image with others (Durkin, Paxton, & Sorbello, 2007, pp. 1093). "Commercials with women as a target group often use beautiful, slim models to promote their products" (Anschutz, Strien, Engles, 2008, pp. 401). Even though people may recognize that many models and celebrities in the media are unhealthy, underweight, and airbrushed to perfection, their self-esteem and body image are still negatively affected.

"Significant positive relationships between exposure to fashion or beauty magazines and a) overall appearance dissatisfaction and b) eating disorder tendencies were found" (Kim & Lennon, 2007, pp. 3). According to Clay, Vignoles, & Dittmar (2005), "the body size of women in the media is often more than 20% underweight" (pp. 452). However, Gibbs (2010) stated, "thin images of women in magazines cause body dissatisfaction in women" (pp. 14). Clay, Vignoles, & Dittmar (2005) researched how adolescent girls felt after being shown images of ultra-thin models and average sized models and came to the conclusion that viewing these images negatively correlated with self-esteem and body satisfaction (pp. 460). After the girls viewed the pictures, measures of self-esteem and body satisfaction were evaluated using surveys. Examples of questions on the survey included, "Attractiveness is very important if you want to get

ahead in our culture," "Clothes look better on thin models," "In our society, fat people are regarded as unattractive," and "Most people would consider me good looking" (Clay, Vignoles, Dittmar, 2005, pp. 460-61). When the girls viewed the models pictures, both ultra-thin and average, it had a negative correlation with self-esteem and body satisfaction (Clay, Vignoles, Dittmar, 2005; Dittmar, Halliwell, Stirling; 2009; Brown & Dittmar, 2005; Stice, Schupak-Neuberg, Shaw, & Stein, 1994).

Durkin, Paxton, & Sorbello (2007) researched the effects of body satisfaction on self-esteem by using a similar design as Clay, Vignoles, & Dittmar and came to the conclusion that viewing idealized models decreased body satisfaction and body image (pp. 1092). However, there were no differences in body dissatisfaction between viewing the average-size models and the ultra-thin models for the adolescent girls in Clay, Vignoles, and Dittmar's study. Previous research showed when adult women viewed the average sized model in comparison to the ultra-thin, there was "a relief effect after seeing average-size models" (Clay, Vignoles, Dittmar, 2005, pp. 468). In Durkin, Paxton, & Sorbello's study (2007), they examined a pathway between several factors such as self-esteem, psychological functioning, self-concept clarity, idealization of ideal, body comparison tendency, and change in body satisfaction following image exposure (pp. 1103). They found that "most paths in the proposed model were strong and significant" (pp. 1104). Granantino & Haytko (2013) also looked at age and determined even though adult women become distressed about body image, "so do very young children, who are less equipped to deal with the pressures put on them by the media, their peers, and society in general" (pp. 46).

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Furthermore, the media influences people of various races in different ways. Gibbs's (2010) looked further into the issue of media influence on body image dissatisfaction by comparing African American women's views on body satisfaction to Caucasian women's views. The hypothesis was that "Caucasian women are more likely to be influenced by the media on body image than African American women" (pp. 22). The results concluded that the hypothesis was correct. There was also a significant difference between Caucasian women and African American women in regards to body dissatisfaction resulting from the media, but there was not a significant difference in age (Gibbs, 2010, pp. 34).

Not only do people of various races react differently to media influences, but people with select traits do as well. It is important to note that "women do not just passively receive media but instead actively select and process media content…that may lead them towards increased levels of dissatisfaction with their own appearance" (Maddox & Miller, 2008, pp. 159). Patrick, Neighbors, & Knee (2004) looked into how women with certain traits would compare themselves to models in advertisements; they specifically dealt with contingent self-esteem and self-perceptions of attractiveness. People with high contingent self-esteem were defined as those who "base their feelings of self-worth on meeting standards and expectations" (Patrick, Neighbors, & Knee, 2004, pp. 501). Women who had high contingent self-esteem felt negatively after comparing themselves to the models and were more likely to engage in body shaming behavior. The women with low self-perceptions of attractiveness experienced depressive feelings as well as decreased positivity. Evidence in this study also reveals that contingent self-esteem may significantly influence emotion (Patrick, Neighbors, & Knee, 2004, pp. 512).

Most people would think the media influences only women's body satisfaction, but males' body satisfaction is also affected. Spurr, Berry, & Walker (2013) conducted a qualitative study and put together a focus group of adolescents to discuss their feelings and views on healthy ideals and wellness. One of the male adolescents in the group brought up the fact that the media negatively influences males as well; "media affects boys the same way it affects other people too. They see that figure on TV of being toned and muscular and they want to be like that" (Spurr, Berry, & Walker, 2013, pp. 27). It has also been discovered that "a higher level of male-directed magazine readership correlates with a stronger desire to improve one's body, particularly one's muscularity" (Morrison & Halton, 2009, pp. 59) and "unrealistic expectations are realized as the sculpted, lean muscular body" (Wright, Halse, Levy, 2016, pp. 7).

The same common themes were brought up in the focus group that have also been proven in a vast majority of studies on the same topic: the negative impact of media on body image, the unattainable body goals being set by adolescents, skewed thoughts about what a healthy body looks like, and pressure to conform to the western views of physical appearance (Spurr, Berry, & Walker, 2013, pp. 28-29; Ganatra, 2012, pp. 25; Giordano, 2015 pp. 479; Thomson & Heinberg, 1999). Ahern, Bennett, Kelly, & Hetherington (2011) received similar results when running two different focus groups with females ranging from adolescence to mid-20s; to begin the discussion, the groups were shown images of models and celebrities (pp. 71). Again, several themes were repeatedly occurring throughout the focus group including a desire for thinness, the pressure from the media, and negative emotions about body shapes (Ahern, Bennett, Kelly, & Hetherington, 2011, pp. 76). According to Benowitz-Fredericks, Garcia, Massey,

Vasagar, Borzekowski (2012), "media effects seem to be cumulative, in that, in most cases, greater exposure to overt messages regarding appearance predicts internalization of these social ideals" (pp. 698).

Eating Disorders, Abnormal Eating, and Excessive Exercise Habits

Another complication that arises with poor self-esteem and poor body image is eating disorders, abnormal eating, and excessive exercise habits. Numerous studies have proved that body dissatisfaction can lead one to engage in an eating disorder. There is a great difference between every day women's bodies and unattainable, unrealistic models' bodies, which makes women feel bad about themselves and leads them to feel compelled to exercise more and lose weight (Dunkley, Wer- theim, & Paxton, 2001; Stice & Shaw, 2002; Polivy & Herman, 2004). Bennett, Kelly, & Hetherington (2011) state that body dissatisfaction is "a robust predictor of dieting, binge eating, and eating disorders. It is also associated with taking diet pills, laxatives, excessive exercise and smoking and can lead to unnecessary cosmetic surgery" (pp. 71). High school girls are very much affected by the media and how "images in magazines encourage body dissatisfaction and a desire to lose weight" (Ahern, Bennett, Kelly, Hetherington, 2011, pp. 76). Even athletes who exercise often and are in shape are "pressured to conform to social and sporting norms concerning body weight" and "reported higher levels of body dissatisfaction and greater disordered eating symptomatology" (Kong & Harris, 2015, pp. 141). "Following from the accepted belief that caloric restriction is an effective means of weight control, body dissatisfaction is also thought to result in elevated dieting behaviors" (Stice & Bearman, 2001, pp. 598). Furthermore, Polivy & Herman (2004) state that the more dissatisfied a

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woman is with her body, the greater the likelihood that she will try to lose weight, "and dieting has itself been identified as another contributor to disordered eating" (pp. 4).

Overexposure to media, such as magazine articles focusing on weight loss, degrading overweight characters on TV, underweight actresses, and overly muscular actors, are not ideal for adolescents due to their heightened impressionability. "A third of female characters on sitcoms are below-average weight. These women receive more positive comments about their appearance and are involved in more romantic relationships than heavier characters" (Benowitz-Fredericks, Garcia, Massey, Vasagar, Borzekowski, 2012, pp. 694). There are repeated messages, from the media especially, saying that if 'if you don't look like this, you are not considered attractive.' This may potentially lead to thinking negatively about oneself and can become a habit. Thinking habitually negative things about oneself will eventually lead to feelings of low self-worth, which is proved to be correlated with engaging in abnormal eating patterns (Verplanken & Tangelder, 2011, pp. 687). Stice, Schupak-Neuberg, Shaw, & Stein (1994) founded "significant direct effects of media exposure on eating disorder symptomatology and gender-role endorsement" (pp. 838).

Mäkinen, Puukko-Viertomies, Lindberg, Siimes, and Aalberg (2012) performed a study in which school nurses would take the height and weight of students; those students would then complete a self-appraisal scale, body dissatisfaction subscale, a self-esteem scale, and an eating disorder inventory (pp. 2-3). Boys were more satisfied with their bodies and reported greater self-esteem compared to girls. "Girls expressed most satisfaction with their bodies when they were underweight, more dissatisfaction when they were normal weight and most dissatisfaction when they had excess body weight"

(Mäkinen, Puukko-Viertomies, Lindberg, Siimes, and Aalberg, 2012, pp. 1). Boys had a

similar response in regards to body satisfaction and dissatisfaction, but the girls'

responses were more profound. There was also a pattern of abnormal eating that was

occurring among the adolescents who were less satisfied with their bodies (Mäkinen,

Puukko-Viertomies, Lindberg, Siimes, and Aalberg, 2012, pp. 1 & 5). Ferguson, Munoz,

Contreras, Velasquez (2011) also observed that "Body Mass Index (BMI) plays an

important role in body dissatisfaction" and the "best predictors of body dissatisfaction

were mood symptoms such as depression and anxiety as well as BMI" (pp. 469 & 476).

Research has uncovered a chain reaction involved with poor body image,

disturbed eating, and depression. Depression is not mainly associated with body image,

but more with "emotional reactivity, deficits in social support, and stressful life events"

(Stice & Bearman, 2001, pp. 597). Although, individuals who are depressed and have a

poor body image are at a greater risk in developing an eating disorder. "Dieting is

theorized to contribute to depression, because emotional distress may result from the

failures associated with dietary efforts" (Stice & Bearman, 2001, pp. 598). Appearance is

a huge staple in the Western Society and depression may result if an individual does not

like what he/she sees in the mirror. According to Stice & Bearman (2001), the average

size of a fashion model is "5 feet 10 inches tall and weighs 115 pounds," which is not

attainable for many women. Yet, women compare themselves to models and feel as

though they need to restrict their eating and exercise more. Stice & Bearman (2001)

founded that "levels of perceived pressure, thin-ideal internalization, body dissatisfaction,

dieting, and bulimic symptoms showed the expected correlations with increases in

depressive symptoms" (pp. 601). Along with severe depression comes suicidal ideation,

which is prevalent in adolescence. Unfortunately, "individuals with eating disorders have a high lifetime frequency of suicide attempts" (Brausch & Gutierrez, 2009, pp. 60). Brausch & Gutierrez (2009) were able to test high school students to determine what is contributing to the suicidal ideation and discovered that "disordered eating habits and extreme weight control methods are significantly related to suicide ideation" (pp. 67).

The Negative Effects of Social Media

There has been a great deal of research contributing towards the knowledge that media influences self-esteem, body image, body satisfaction, and eating habits. However, there is not as much information on how social media may manipulate self-esteem, body image, and mental health due to the fact that social media is relatively new. Social media may bring out many issues due to social comparison. According to Kalnes (2013), there is a perpetual cycle that adolescent girls may engage in due to the overwhelming amount of time spent on social media; if the girls are constantly comparing themselves to others from being on social media, it will become a habit, thus degrading their self-image and self-esteem. Schufreider (2015) states that people may compare many aspects on Facebook including "appearance, clothing style, love life, or social calendar" and the longer amount of time users spends on Facebook, the more time they have to compare to others, "which caused users to begin to feel poorly about themselves, their self-worth, and their self-image" (pp. 17). Blease (2015) asserts that because there is so much social competition on Facebook, individuals are being exposed to a variety of others who appear successful on social media "evinced by the content of profile images, galleries, and status updates" (pp. 9).

Another aspect that social media can influence is the sense of belongingness. The sense of belongingness may increase or decrease based upon the social media use. For instance, if one has many friends or followers on social media, he/she might have a greater sense of belongingness. On the other hand, people may feel a "disconnection from society by spending more time perusing others' profiles on Facebook" (Schufreider, 2015, pp. 15). Having an increased sense of belongingness is incredibly important because humans are social beings. The level of support and belongingness one has in life may be a buffer to negative life events or stressful situations. Schufreider (2015) states high levels of connectedness help "individuals manage their emotions…facilitate keeping the individual's overwhelming negative feelings at bay" and "can also lessen one's low level of self-esteem" (pp. 14). All of these aspects assist an individual to have greater quality of life. Having a decreased sense of belongingness may contribute to a poor self-esteem.

Also, people receive social recognition when they get "likes" or "comments" on their pictures or statuses; "if users receive 'likes' or 'comments' from high status 'friends' this may result in boosts in self-esteem and feelings of well-being" (Blease, 2015, pp. 9). People also place so much importance and a great amount of their self-worth into amount of 'likes' and 'comments' they receive on social media; ergo, if they do not receive as many 'likes' and 'comments' as they thought they would, it might affect their self-esteem, self-worth, and trigger mild depressive symptoms. Not only is self-esteem and self-worth influenced by Facebook use, but also "the level of life satisfaction was the lowest among addicted Facebook users" (Blachnio, Prezepiorka, Pantic, 2015, pp. 703). Albooshi (2015) claims people "revealed that their use of social networks like

Facebook and Twitter has made their lives worse" (pp. 9). Facebook users who are not addicted are more satisfied with their lives (Blachnio, Prezepiorka, Pantic, 2015, pp. 703).

Unfortunately, the negative impact of social media does not stop there; depending upon the relationships formed, the tone of the reactions, and frequency of reactions on social media all play into self-esteem and well-being (Valkenburg, Peter, Schouten, 2006, pp. 589). It can become very problematic if an individual is receiving a copious amount of negative reactions on his/her posts or pictures on social media and allows the negativity to affect his/her well-being and self-esteem. Because "peer acceptance and interpersonal feedback on the self are important features of friend network sites," frequent use of these sites can potentially do more harm than good (Valkenburg, Peter, Schouten, 2006, pp. 584). Adolescents are especially at risk because their self-image is heavily characterized by peer influence and a significant piece during this developmental period is an "increased focus on the self" (Valkenburg, Peter, Schouten, 2006, pp. 585).

Facebook Depression Phenomenon

Recent studies have contributed towards research on the phenomenon of 'Facebook Depression.' Depression is a very common mental health issue among adolescents and young adults; unfortunately, even though it is common, it is often overlooked and undiagnosed. Moreno, Jelenchick, Egan, Cox, Young, Gannon, & Becker (2011) conducted a study in which they took the criteria of depression and used it to determine if one would be able to pick up any symptoms on Facebook (pp. 447). They founded "25% of profiles disclosed one or more depressive symptoms on status updates;

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the most common type of depression symptom reference was depressed mood" (Moreno, Jelenchick, Egan, Cox, Young, Gannon, & Becker, 2011, pp. 450).

The research of Rosen, Whaling, Rab, Carrier, & Cheever (2013) tested whether Facebook use could predict clinical symptoms of different disorders (pp. 1244). "Those participants who spent more time online and those who performed more Facebook impression management evidenced more clinical symptoms of major depression" (Rosen, Whaling, Rab, Carrier, & Cheever, 2013, pp. 1247). The results also showed that individuals would display less clinical symptoms if they had more friends on Facebook (Whaling et. Al, 2013, pp. 1247). However, Jelenchick, Eickhoff, & Moreno (2012) used an online survey to "evaluate the association between social networking site use and depression in older adolescents," but their evidence was inconclusive and they did not find any relationship (pp. 128).

Selfies and their Influence on Self-Esteem

People post "selfies" to gain social desirability as well as "to enhance their self-esteem, which occurs through the number of "likes" the selfie receives" (Pounders, Kowalczyk, Stowers, 2016, pp. 1880). When individuals have high self-esteem, they are less likely to let a lower number of "likes" or "comments" affect or bother them. Alblooshi (2015) used a correlational research design to study self-esteem and the number of selfies a person takes and posts; from that research, the results indicated people with lower self-esteem took less "selfies" compared to people with high self-esteem (pp. 22 & 28). Even though there was not a significant difference between the average number of selfies taken by people with low self-esteem (6.61) and people with

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high self-esteem (8.15), people with higher self-esteem may be taking more selfies because they are more comfortable with their appearances (Alblooshi, 2015, pp. 28).

Facebook allows users to post many pictures for other people to see. Adolescents or young adults may post pictures to receive attention; however, if Facebook users do not receive the attention they may want, it degrades their body images and self-esteem. Furthermore, there are a variety of reasons and motivators as to why people post pictures of themselves, otherwise known as "selfies". According to Hum, Chamberlin, Hambright, Portwood, Schat, & Bevan (2011), research has founded that a motivation to use Facebook is to enhance self-image and to gain social desirability; so, individuals may be more inclined to only display pictures of themselves when they are dressed a certain way or enhance the picture to make them look good (pp. 1831). This can create a complicated situation if many people are comparing themselves to others on social media and are seeing images that have been edited or digitally improved with different filters.

Another theory on the motivation of taking selfies involves the need for popularity, in other words "to do certain things to appear popular" (Wang, Yang, Haigh, 2015, pp. 3). Wang, Yang, & Haigh (2015) used a scale to measure need for popularity and founded that people who scored high in need for popularity also posted more selfies (pp. 8). Interestingly, the researchers also tested how selfie viewing influenced self-esteem and their results indicated that "selfie viewing had a significant negative effect on self-esteem, indicating the more frequent people view selfies on social media, the lower their self-esteem, which led to decreased life satisfaction" (Wang, et. Al, 2015, pp. 6). Interestingly, the influence of selfies may also be determined based upon one's attitude about selfies. "Perceiving one's own selfie behavior as self-ironic and only half-

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committed, allows to fulfill self-presentational needs without feeling narcissistic

(Diefenbach & Christoforakos, 2017, pp. 1).

Chapter 3

Methodology

Participants

This study was composed of 130 participants. 43 people were eliminated due to not completing a parent permission slip or because they declined to partake in the study. The sample included high school students from two different high schools; one medium sized high school in a upper middle class suburban area and one large high school in a middle class suburban area. The participants first answered questions pertaining to their social media use and then completed a survey that measured their self-esteem. To determine if there were any differences in correlations, one part of the data entailed all 130 participants and the second part excluded those without social media, which totaled 19 participants, leaving 111 participants.

Materials

A self-esteem survey, generated by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, was utilized for this study to measure the participants' self-esteem. This inventory survey was 10 questions and included statements such as "I certainly feel useless at times" and "I take a positive attitude toward myself" to which participants circled their agreement with each statement using the following: Strongly Agree, Agree Somewhat, Disagree Somewhat, and Strongly Disagree, as shown in the Appendix. A second survey, created by the researcher, was used to determine the participants' social media use, as shown in the Appendix. The survey contained questions such as "What is the greatest number of 'friends' or 'followers' you have on one of your social media accounts?," "If you post a picture of yourself on social media, about how many pictures

do you take before you post it," and "How many 'likes' do you usually receive on your selfie." The participants filled out their own answers for the questions.

Design

A correlational design was used for this study to determine if self-esteem and the use of social media have any relationship: positive, negative, or both. The independent variable for the study was the use of social media, measured using the social media survey. The dependent variable is self-esteem and was measured by the self-esteem survey.

Procedure

Permission was first given to the researcher to conduct the current study utilized the student body of the two high schools for a sample pool. Parent permission slips were also required by the students to partake in the study. The participants signed an assent form as well. The permission slips were given out to one health class per grade at one high school and five psychology classes at the second school. The students completed the surveys. The researcher scored the self-esteem surveys using the key from the CDC survey. Question from the social media survey required the participants to provide answers in numerical form and each answer represented a variable. The data was inputted using SPSS 23 and the researcher then ran a correlational test for each variable against the self-esteem score to determine if there is a relationship between different social media use and the participants' self-esteem.

Chapter 4

Results

The relationship between social media use and self-esteem was researched more in depth by utilizing two surveys: one self-esteem survey from the CDC and one survey created by the researcher that measured social media use. The two surveys were given to 130 participants from two different high schools, 39 boys and 91 girls. There were 14 freshmen, 20 sophomores, 21 juniors, and 75 seniors. Data was collected using all of the participants for one set and excluded participants who did not have social media for the second set. There were 19 participants who did not have social media, leaving 111 participants including 79 girls and 32 boys, 14 freshmen, 20 sophomores, 19 juniors, and 58 seniors.

The researcher's hypothesis was simply that social media use influenced self-esteem. Each question on the social media survey measured different variables of social media use. The participants gave a number answer for each question and the number was run through a correlation against their self-esteem score. Self-esteem scores were calculated using the key of the survey from the CDC.

The mean self-esteem score for males was slightly higher (M= 23.49, SD= 5.39) compared to females (M= 21.36, SD= 5.66). Out of 13 social media variables tested against self-esteem, two presented a correlation when using all 130 participants and four correlations were found when excluding participants who do not have social media. When comparing self-esteem score and if the participants were bothered if they did not receive as many "likes" or "retweets" as they expected to receive on a post, r (128) = -.573, p < .01, displaying a negative linear trend as shown in Figure 1. Self-esteem score

and how long the participants wait to check their social media (in minutes) after they have posted something also showed a correlation: $r(128) = .242$, $p < .01$, showing a positive linear trend in Figure 2. The rest of the variables using 130 participants did not present correlations. Self-esteem score and how often participants posted on social media $r(128) = -.033$. Self-esteem score he hours spent on social media correlation was reported $r(128) = -.116$. Self-esteem score and the greatest number of friends on social media was $r(128) = .141$. Self-esteem score and the number of social media accounts was calculated to be $r(128) = -.084$. Self-esteem score and how often the participants checked their social media after they have posted something reported $r(128) = -.017$. A correlation was run between self-esteem score and how much time the participants spent editing a picture (in minutes) before they posted it on social media and it was calculated as $r(128) = -.087$. The next correlation was between self-esteem score and how many pictures the participants took of themselves before they posted one $r(128) = -0.39$. A correlation was run between self-esteem score and negative comments received on social media in the past week, $r(128) = 0.76$. Self-esteem score and positive comments received on social in the past week, $r(128) = .151$. Self-esteem score and the number of likes on the last selfie posted was $r(128) = .172$ and lastly, self-esteem and the number of likes the participants usually receives on their selfies, $r(128) = .172$.

Because it did not make sense conceptually to put zeros in for some of the variables to represent the participants without social media, correlations were run excluding participants who did not have social media. 111 participants were used and four variables were found to be statistically significant including self-esteem and if the participants were bothered if they did not receive as many likes on their posts as they

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thought they were going to receive, self-esteem and how long the participants waited

after they posted something to check their social media, self-esteem and the amount of

likes they received on their last selfie, and self-esteem and the amount of likes they

usually receive on their selfies. Self-esteem and if the participants were bothered if they

did not receive the amount of likes they thought they were going to on a post was

calculated at r (109) = -.517, p < .01. A negative linear trend is shown in Figure 3. Self-

esteem and how long the participants waited before they checked their social media after

they posted something was significant at r (109) = .242, p < .05, displaying a positive

linear trend in Figure 4. Self-esteem and the amount of likes the participants received on

their last selfie calculated to be r (109) = .189, p < .05, displaying a positive linear trend

in Figure 5. Self-esteem and the usual amount of likes the participants receive on their

selfies was significant r (109) = .191, p < .05, depicting a positive linear trend in Figure

6. The following variables were not statistically significant against self-esteem scores.

Self-esteem score and how often the participants posted on social media was r (109) = -

.030. Self-esteem score and hours spent daily on social media was calculated at r (109) =

-.152. Self-esteem score and the greatest number of friends on a social media account, r

(109) = .150. Self-esteem score and the number of accounts the participants have was r

(109) = -.047. Self-esteem score and how often the participants checked their social

media, r (109) = .082. Self-esteem score and how much time the participants spent

editing a picture before they posted it on social media was calculated at r (109) = -.074.

Self-esteem score and how many pictures the participants took before posting a selfie was

r (109) = -.010. Self-esteem score and the amount of negative comments the participants

received on social media the previous week, r (109) = .065. Self-esteem score and the

amount of positive comments the participants received the previous week was r (109) =

.150.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Degrees of Freedom
Self-Esteem Score	130	6.00	30.00	22.00	5.68	128
How Often Post	130	.00	300.00	15.60	40.45	128
Hours Spend	130	.00	20.00	2.97	2.50	128
Number of Friends	130	.00	31600.00	930.94	2782.49	128
Accounts	130	.00	13.00	3.78	1.81	128
How Often Check	130	.00	200.00	13.40	30.12	128
How Much Time Edit Pictures	130	.00	30.00	4.00	5.38	128
How Many Pictures	130	.00	100.00	9.58	16.67	128
Negative Comments	130	.00	10.00	.29	1.32	128
Positive Comments	130	.00	200.00	7.58	20.23	128
Bother if No Likes	130	1	5	2.28	1.06	128
How Long Wait After Posting	130	.00	180.00	25.73	38.07	128
Likes on Selfie	130	.00	6922.00	203.71	607.86	128
Likes Usually on Selfie	130	.00	6000.00	186.88	528.61	128
Gender	130	1.00	2.00	1.70	1.70	128
Valid N (listwise)	130					

Note. These results are from a sampling of 130 students from two high schools.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Degrees of Freedom
Self-esteem score	111	6.00	30.00	21.86	5.68	109
How Often Post	111	1.00	300.00	17.35	43.42	109
Hours Spend	111	1.00	20.00	3.03	1.93	109
Number of Friends	111	10.00	31600.00	989.28	2973.04	109
Accounts	111	1.00	13.00	4.17	1.62	109
How Often Check	111	.00	200.00	14.98	32.21	109
How Much Time Edit	111	.00	30.00	4.52	5.58	109
How Many Pictures	111	.00	100.00	10.46	17.58	109
Bother if No Likes	111	1.00	5.00	2.41	1.04	109
How Long Wait	111	.00	180.00	27.42	38.93	109
Negative Comments	111	.00	10.00	.36	1.47	109
Positive Comments	111	.00	200.00	7.42	19.86	109
Likes on Selfie	111	.00	6922.00	221.70	654.73	109
Likes Usually on Selfie	111	.00	6000.00	199.32	567.97	109
Gender	111	1.00	2.00	1.71	.46	109
Valid N (listwise)	111					

Note. These results are from a sampling of 111 students from two high schools.

Figures of Correlations: All Participants

   Self-esteem score and if the participants were bothered if they did not receive as many "likes" or "retweets" as they expected to receive on a post were compared and a correlation was found, $r(128)= -.573$, $p < .01$, displaying a negative linear trend as shown in Figure 1.
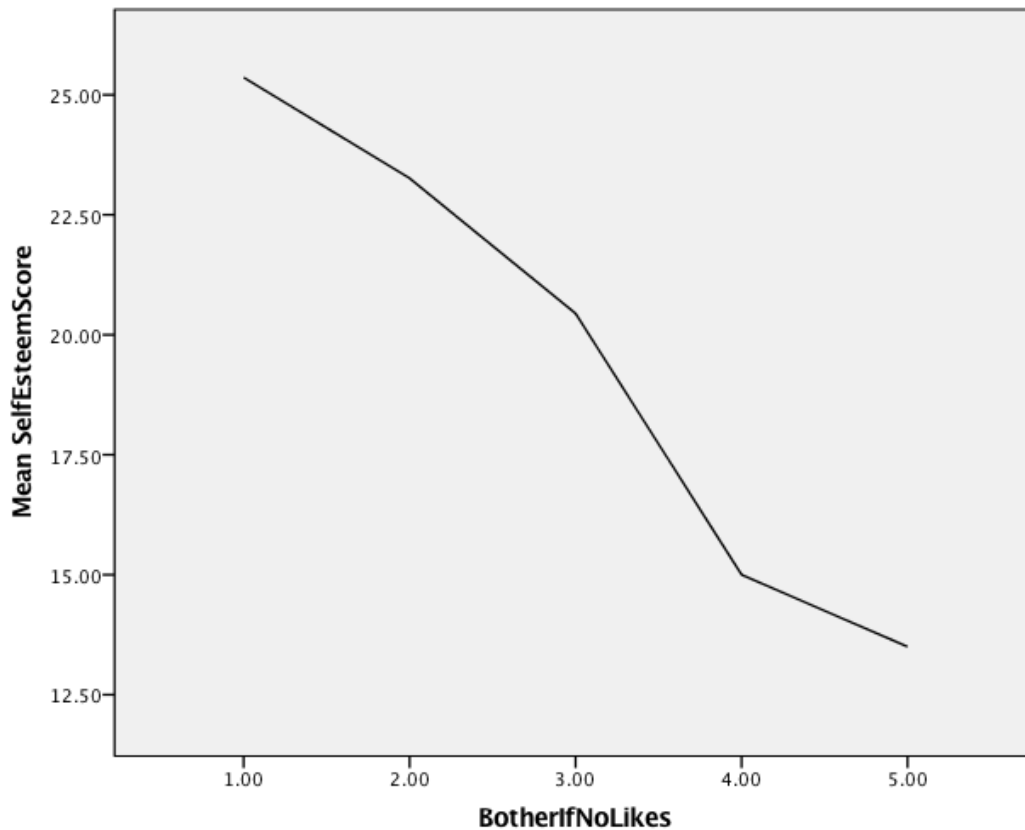

Figure 1. Self-Esteem Score and Bother If No Likes on Posts 130 participants

Self-esteem score and the amount of time (in minutes) the participants waited to check their social media after they have posted something also showed a correlation: r (128) = .242, p < .01, showing a positive linear trend in Figure 2.
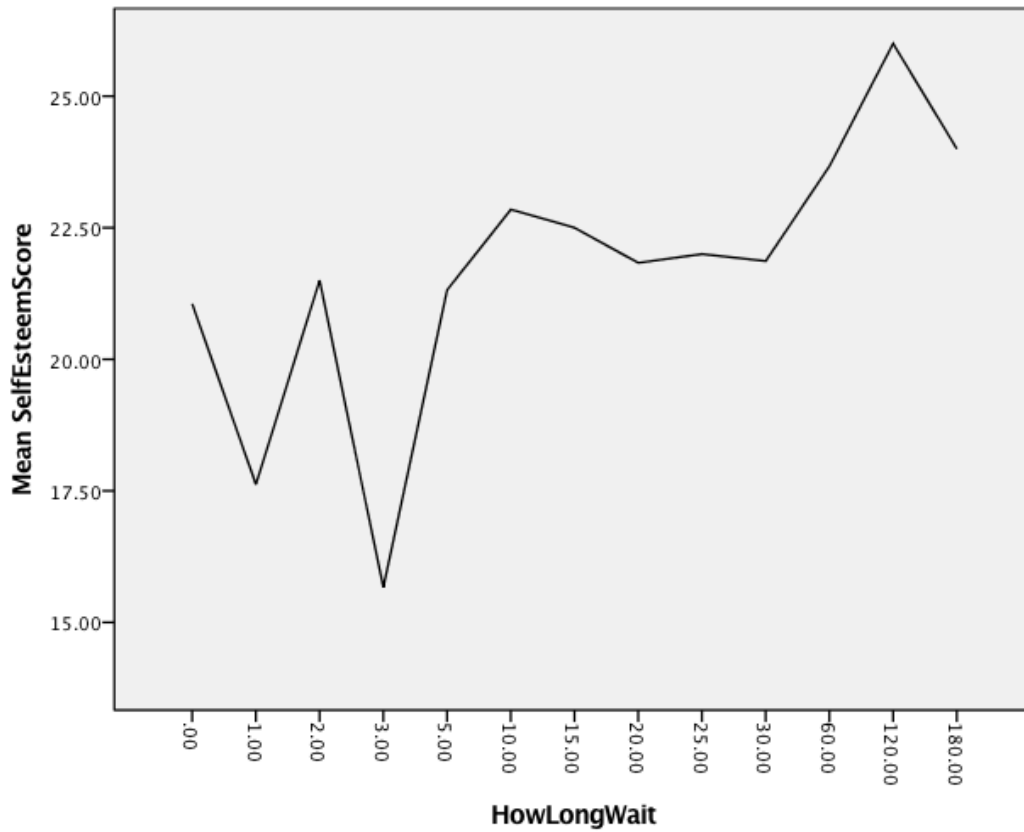

Figure 2. Self-Esteem Score and How Long Wait 130 participants

Figures of Correlations: Exclude People without Social Media

Self-esteem and if the participants were bothered if they did not receive the amount of likes they thought they were going to on a post was calculated at r (109)= -.517, p < .01. A negative linear trend is shown in Figure 3.
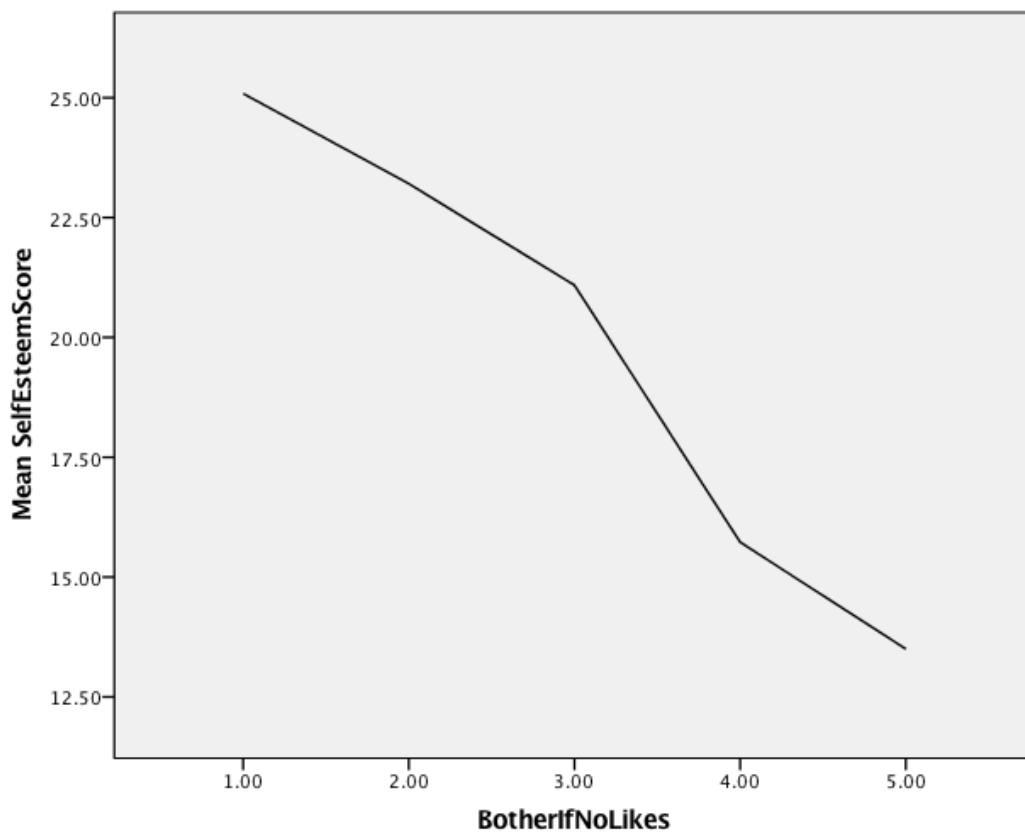

Figure 3. Self-Esteem Score and Bother if No Likes on Posts 111 participants

Self-esteem and the amount of time (in minutes) the participants waited before they checked their social media after they posted something was significant at r (109) = .242, p < .05, displaying a positive linear trend in Figure 4.
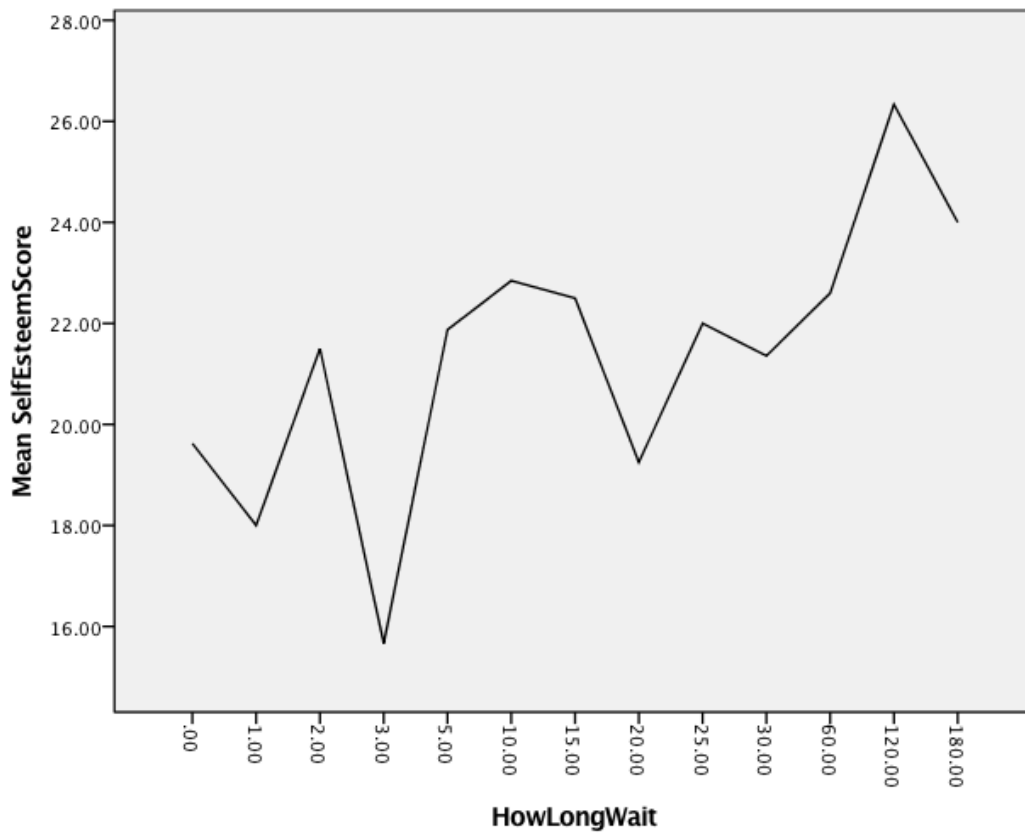

Figure 4. Self-Esteem Score and How Long Wait 111 participants

Self-esteem and the amount of likes the participants received on their last selfie

calculated to be r (109) = .189, p < .05, displaying a positive linear trend in Figure 5.
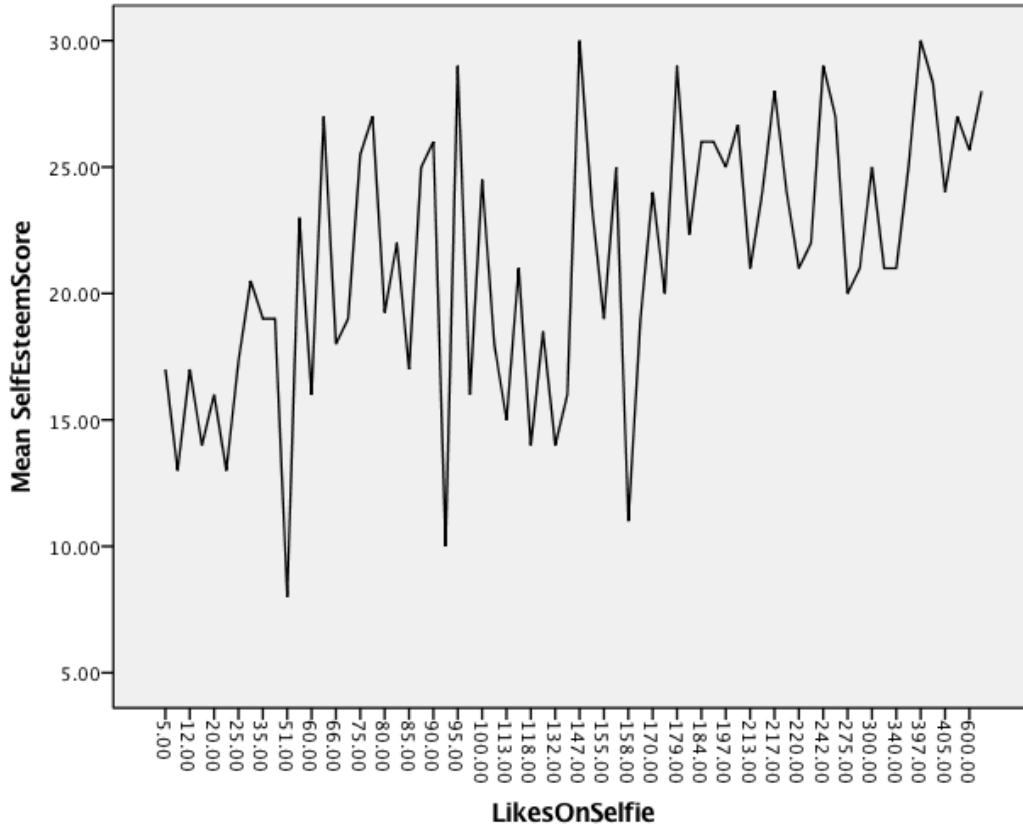
Figure 5. Self-Esteem Score and Likes on Last Selfie 111 participants

Self-esteem and the usual amount of likes the participants receive on their selfies was significant r (109) = .191, p < .05, depicting a positive linear trend in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Self-Esteem Score and Likes Usually Received on Selfie 111 participants

Self-esteem and several variables of social media use were found to be correlational. Two correlations were found when using all 130 participants and four correlations were found when the people without social media were excluded, leaving 111 participants.

Chapter 5

Discussion

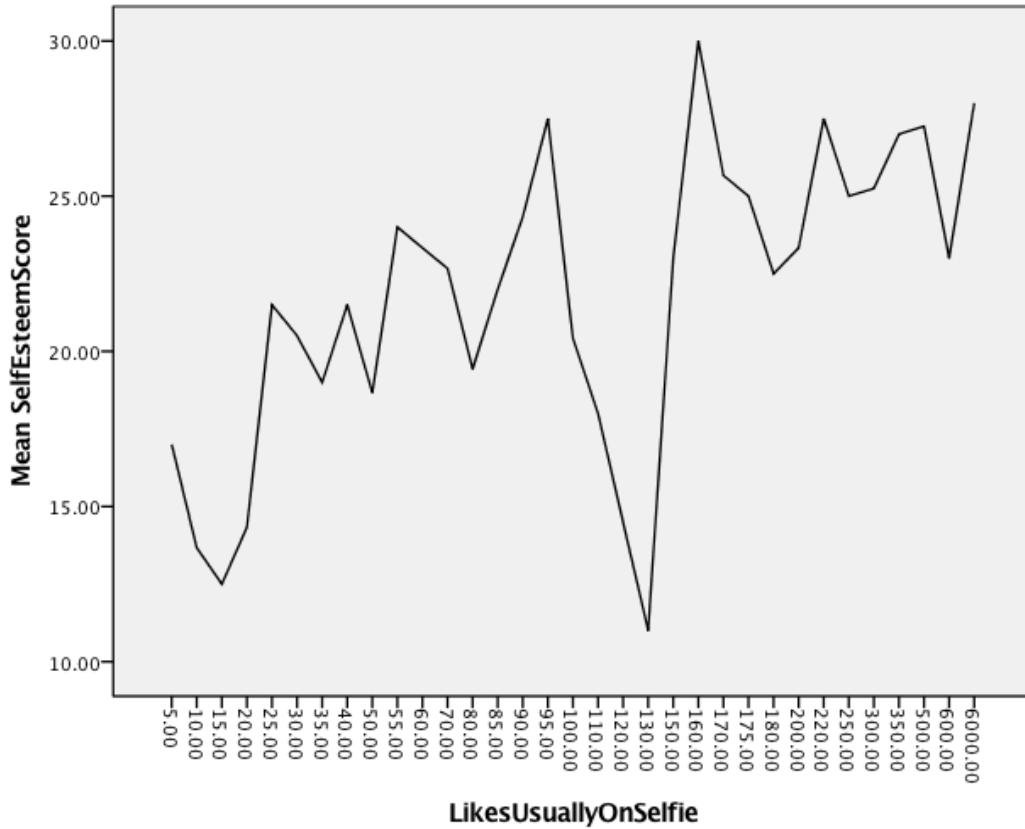The significance of this study was to determine if a relationship exists between self-esteem and social media use. With this knowledge, people would be aware of the potential negative ramifications of social media and adjust their social media use accordingly. The researcher specifically looked at how teenagers were using social media and how it compared to their self-esteem. Teenagers are very impressionable during their adolescent developmental period and their self-esteem may be very fragile. Therefore, any aspects of their lives that might affect their self-esteem should be recognized and openly discussed.

The hypothesis of the study is that social media influences self-esteem. To test this hypothesis, two surveys were given to several classes in two different high schools: one self-esteem survey and one survey that assessed social media use. The self-esteem survey produced a self-esteem score, to which the researcher used to determine if there was a correlation between the participants' self-esteem scores and 13 social media variables. Two sets of data were produced: one including all of the participants and one that excluded participants without social media to determine if correlations still existed including those with social media. However, participants who did not have social media could not answer some of the questions, and for some of the questions, it would not make sense conceptually to put those answers as zeroes, which is why a second data set was created, excluding those participants. Research conducted previously discovered that social media influences self-esteem positively and negatively.

It was discovered in the current study that those with high self-esteem had a greater number of likes on their posts compared to their counterparts with low self-esteem. They also waited a greater amount of time after they posted something on social media to check it again to see how many likes they received. It is logical that people with high self-esteem do not have to check their social media right away, but people with low self-esteem do. It is possible that high self-esteem acts a buffer when participants did not receive as many likes on their posts as they thought they were going to; this is indicated by the negative correlation between self-esteem scores and the scores in response to the question "On a scale of 1 to 5, how much does it bother you if you do not get as many "likes" or "retweets" as you expected to receive on a post?"

Limitations

There were a few limitations of this study including the sample size, the question ambiguity of one survey, a lack of diversity of the high schools' populations, and the social desirability of surveys. Because the population used for the study consisted of minors, 43 people were eliminated due to not completing a parental consent form or they declined to participate in the study. A larger sample size would have been more ideal to receive more accurate results. There were also a greater amount of females in this population compared to males. The lack of diversity of the population sample also could have led to a decreased accuracy of results. The questions created for the social media survey were somewhat ambiguous and some of the answers the participants gave had to be interpreted by the researcher. Lastly, participants who complete self-report surveys, although anonymous, would like to appear socially desirable and may not answer honestly, which could have skewed the results.

Future Research

    The future research of this topic should include a more efficient way of

assessing social media use as well as a sample size that is more diverse and larger

compared to the one used in this study. It would also be interesting to look into the

difference of social media use between males and females. In this study, females had a

slightly lower average self-esteem score than males, so they might be more influenced by

social media than males. Finally, because this was a correlational study, there is no

indication as to why a relationship exists between self-esteem and social media use.

Further research must be conducted in order to determine the causational factors

involved.

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Appendix A

Self-Esteem Survey

Directions: Please circle the number for each question that best describes your agreement

with each statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree
1. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal par with others.	3	2	1	0
2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	3	2	1	0
3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I'm a failure.	3	2	1	0
4. I am able to do things as well as most people.	3	2	1	0
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	3	2	1	0
6. I take a positive attitude toward myself.	3	2	1	0
7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	3	2	1	0
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.	3	2	1	0

	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree
9. I certainly feel useless at times.	3	2	1	0
10. At times I think I am no good at all.	3	2	1	0

Appendix B

Self-Esteem Survey Scoring

	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree
1. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal par with others.	3	2	1	0
2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	3	2	1	0
3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I'm a failure.	0	1	2	3
4. I am able to do things as well as most people.	3	2	1	0
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	0	1	2	3
6. I take a positive attitude toward myself.	3	2	1	0
7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	3	2	1	0
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.	0	1	2	3
9. I certainly feel useless at times.	0	1	2	3

	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree
10. At times I think that I am no good at all.	0	1	2	3

Appendix C

Social Media Survey

Directions: To the best of your knowledge, answer the following questions.

1. How often do you post something (picture, status, etc.) on social media?

2. How many hours do you spend on social media each day?

3. What is the greatest number of "friends" or "followers" you have on one of your social media accounts?

4. How many social media accounts do you have?

5. If you post something on social media, how often do you check to see how many "likes" or "retweets" you get?

6. How much time (in minutes) do you spend on editing a picture before you post it on social media?

7. If you post a picture of yourself on social media, about how many pictures do you take before you post it?

8. On a scale of 1 to 5, how much does it bother you if you do not get as many "likes" or "retweets" as you expected to receive on a post?

9. About how long (in minutes) do you wait to see how many "likes" or "retweets" you receive after you post something on social media?

10. In the past week, about how many negative comments on social media have you received?

11. In the past week, about how many positive comments on social media have you received?

12. The last selfie you posted, how many "likes" did you receive?

13. How many "likes" do you usually receive on your selfie?