

INSTAGRAM AND PRESENTATION OF SELF: A STUDY ON THE PERCEPTION OF SIKKIM UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Ms. Karshika Boruah

Ex-Student

Department of Mass Communication
Sikkim University, Gangtok, Sikkim, India
Email - boruahkarshika@gmail.com

Abstract: This study examined the relationship between Instagram use and Perception of Self among women and men between the ages of 18 and 28 from the Sikkim University students (n = 324) taking female (n=216) and male (n= 108) subjects. Furthermore, this study tested to identify the subjects related to who are highly active in Instagram, their followers, time given to Instagram, etc. It enabled the researcher to identify the responses of those subjects who are not an active user of social media, basically Instagram. It also sought to identify the subjects who use Instagram, their perception of body shaming and how effects their self- esteems. New media, most notably social media, has introduced a new form of mediated rhetoric that needs to be accounted. Social media applications such as the image-based platform known as Instagram allows for immediate access to a plethora of idealized body images. The nature of the proposed research is analytical in nature and will be substantiated by Survey Method. For survey purpose close ended questionnaire technique would be employed. For the purpose of the research primary data will be collected from the field by employing random sampling methods. The area selected for this research will be Sikkim University students of Sikkim.

Key Words: Social Media, Instagram, Self-Presentation, Body Shaming, Self-Esteem, Fat Shaming.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Instagram as a social media platform depends more on visuals than visceral and able to produce new narratives on the presentation of the self. With the proliferation of social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook, look has started to matter more than ever and it has also given birth to a concept called “Body Shaming”. The Body Shaming very unabashedly refers to a body shape and these social media platform have given scope to people to shoot and scoot. Compared to other social media platforms, Instagram has more number of young subscribes who are quite fast to adopt new lifestyles and ether propounded by the social media sites. In this context, it has become imperative to understand how Instagram as a place to define and alter their perceptions of body. It also needs to be understood how the youngsters refashion themselves in accordance with the most dominating views in Instagram. So far as fashion and body shape is concerned, this research work seeks to explore how the students of Sikkim University who are mostly young, try to relocate their self-presentation and identities with reference to Instagram and the induced effect among especially the heavy Instagram users.

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

Many studies reported that approximately 91% of women are dissatisfied with their bodies and roughly 80.7% of men talk in anxious prone way about their bodies. In today’s context of ubiquitous of social media, individuals, both men and women, are vulnerable to the collision of this medium. Youth, especially are more prone to using different forms of social media and they create an identity of their own in this virtual world through all these different media forms. Taking into consideration social media as principal patron to media depletion, we can begin to realize the budding ramifications of this social problem for current and future generations. Instagram, being the most popular among all, it will be significant to conduct a study on this medium as a platform for presentation of self and body shaming.

And finally, Sikkim University, being a central university, is the breeding ground for students coming from all across the nation. These students hailing from different parts of the country, carry along with them a diverse culture, value system, language, and overall a diverse background. Therefore, it will be significant to find out how these youngsters make use of different forms of social media, especially Instagram, as a tool for presentation of self and body shaming in the virtual space.

3. OBJECTIVES:

- To understand how the students perceive Instagram as channel of communication.
- To understand if the active student users try to refashion themselves.
- To find out if the students accept the notion of Instagram statement on their bodies.
- To explore if Instagram changes their views on their presentation of identities.

- To find out how frequently the students change their profiles and updates on Instagram.

4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- What is the popularity of Instagram vis-à-vis Facebook as a medium of communication for self?
- How seriously do students take Instagram as a modifier of their life views?
- How far students change fashion style in accordance with Instagram?
- Do students indulge in fat shaming?
- Do students, especially the ladies, try to change or modify their curves in accordance with Instagram?
- How far are the students flexible in terms of presentation of their identities on Instagram?
- How frequently students change profiles on Instagram?
- How actively do the students change their status updates on Instagram?

5. METHODOLOGY:

In this section, the researcher will expand on the method and sequence of steps that are going to be taken in the research study. Participants and sample size, procedure and data collection have been thoroughly regarded as to achieve adequate results. The nature of the proposed research is analytical in nature and will be substantiated by Survey Method. For survey purpose close ended questionnaire technique would be employed. For the purpose of the research primary data will be collected from the field by employing random sampling method.

6. PARTICIPANTS:

The population for the proposed study will be localized to (n=324) male and female of Sikkim University students. This finding possibly makes the age group most susceptible to media influence and exposure and that is why this study will focus on Sikkim University students where the expected age ranges from 18-28. The sample (n=324) will include 216 female participants and 108 male participants.

7. PROCEDURE:

The procedures are as follows,

7.1. RESEARCH DESIGN:

A questionnaire is a form of inquiry which contains a systematically compiled and organized series of questions that are to be sent to the population samples. It is an important instrument in survey research, being used to gather information from widely scattered sources. It is one of the commonly used data gathering devices. The respondents are asked to respond the question by supplying answers. Questionnaire is a systematic compilation of questions, which are submitted to a sample of population from which information is desired. A properly constructed questionnaire and administered scale serves as an appropriate and useful data gathering device. For this the researcher developed a questionnaire with the following steps:

Step-I: Collection of Questions

The researcher collected 16 questions on the basis of various sources and experiences. This questionnaire contains the questions relating to social media, Instagram, body shaming, self- esteem, presentation of self, etc. The researcher formulated 16 closed form questions and divided all in two sections Section-I and Section II.

Step- II: Editing of the Questions

Editing is an important component for construction and standardization of any tool of research. Therefore, the researcher paid enough attention to this step. The preliminary draft of 20 questions relating to various problems was given to the context experts. The context expert rejected 4 numbers of questions, as these were not having much relevance to the problems; as a result the final draft of questionnaire consisted of 16 questions in all.

Step- III: Try out

Since the draft of sixteen (16) questions in which consisted of 5 in multiple choice form, 11 in Yes/No form was found satisfactory, therefore, it was used for identifying the perspective of Sikkim University students on Instagram and presentation of self. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section I, related to who are highly active in Instagram, their followers, time given to Instagram, etc. It enabled the researcher to identify the responses of those subjects who are not an active user of Instagram; all the questions were in multiple choice close- ended type. This section had 5 questions. Section II consisted of 11 questions in Yes/No type. Each question item carried 1 mark each. So the minimum score obtained can be 0 (zero) and the maximum can be 16, other scores ranging in between these limits. This questionnaire is shown in Appendix I.

8. DATA COLLECTION:

To start with, the students were requested to participate heartily and sincerely in responding to all the tools with their own ideas and knowledge. The students were assured that the results will be only for research purpose. After that, the researcher imparted all the instruction to be taken care. Keeping in mind all directions and nature of the tools, the researcher circulated the questionnaire which took two months of time.

9. LIMITATIONS:

This study has the following limitations:

- Perception of Sikkim University students
- Instagram
- Presentation of Self
- Generalized based only on 324 samples

10. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

From the study the researcher can draw the following major findings that can be presented based on the objectives set for the purpose of the study:

- To understand how the students perceive Instagram as channel of communication.

This objective recounts with the research questions:

- a) What is the popularity of Instagram vis-à-vis Facebook as a medium of communication for self?

This finding reveals that how the students perceive Instagram as channel of communication and popularity of Instagram as compare to Facebook.

It is found that 64% of the female students and 36% of the male students perceives Instagram as a channel of communication, whereas 74% of the female students and 26% of the male students agreed that Instagram is more popular than Facebook as a medium of communication for self.

- To understand if the active student users try to refashion themselves.

This objective recounts with the research questions:

- a) How seriously do students take Instagram as a modifier of their life views?
- b) How far students change fashion style in accordance with Instagram?

This finding reveals that whether the active users of Instagram try to refashion themselves and modify their life views in accordance with Instagram and how they modifies their life style in accordance with Instagram.

It is found that 75% of the female students and 25% of male students take Instagram as a modifier of their life views. It also reveals that 56% of the female students and 44% of the male students change their fashion style in accordance with Instagram.

- To find out if the students accept the notion of Instagram statement on their bodies.

This objective recounts with the research questions:

- a) Do students indulge in fat shaming?
- b) Do students, especially the ladies, try to change or modify their curves in accordance with Instagram?

This finding reveals whether the students accept the notion of Instagram statement on their bodies, if they ever came across body shaming or they body shamed someone and if the females try to change or modify their curves in accordance with Instagram.

It is found that 56% of the female students and 44% of the male students tries to change their style in accordance with Instagram. It also says that 63% of the female students and 33% of the male students came across body shaming, whereas 78% female students and 33% of male students considered themselves as the victim of body shaming. This study also recounts that 62% of the female students and 32% of the male students body shamed their fellow mates, however 72% of the female students and 28% of the male student feels pressure from Instagram to look pretty. 69% of the female students and 31% of the male students perceives that the students, especially the ladies, try to change or modify their curves in accordance with Instagram.

- To explore if Instagram changes their views on their presentation of identities.

This objective recounts with the research questions:

- a) How far are the students flexible in terms of presentation of their identities on Instagram?

This finding reveals whether the students are supple in terms of presentation of their identities on Instagram or not.

So from this objective it is found 70% of the female subjects and 30% of the male subjects think students are flexible in terms of presentation of their identities in Instagram.

- To find out how frequently the students change their profiles and updates on Instagram.

This objective recounts with the research questions:

- a) How frequently students change profiles on Instagram?
- b) How actively do the students change their status updates on Instagram?

This finding reveals whether the students changes their profiles and updates on Instagram or no, if yes then how frequently. It also divulges that how actively the students change their status update on Instagram.

Here it is found that no subject posts on their own social media on daily basis, whereas 67% of the female subjects and 33% of the male subjects post on their social media after every 2-3 days. 58% of the female subjects and 42% of the male subjects posts in weekly basis and 68% of the female subjects and 32% of the male subjects posts occasionally. This finding also reveals about, on an average how many hours do they spend browsing their account in a week. For this 67% of the female subjects and 33% of the male subjects reported that they browse Instagram for less than 2 hours in a day, whereas 57% of the female subjects and 43% of the male subjects browse Instagram for 2-3 hours. However 50 % of the female subjects and 50% of the male subjects browse Instagram for 3-4 hours, 80% of the female subjects and 20% of the male subjects browse Instagram for 4-5 hours and 64% of the female subjects and 36% of the male subjects browse Instagram for more than 5 hours in a day.

11. CONCLUSION:

While concluding, it can be said that Instagram has an impact on the students of Sikkim University on perception of body appearance. There are several influences of Instagram usage that signals to the negative and positive body concerns for both male and female. The objectification of one's body through the use of social media, especially the photo-based platform Instagram, can often result in psychosomatic effects. These body concerns may include a severe lack of confidence, self-esteem issues and the internalization of appearance ideals. This study shows that the females of Sikkim University are more active in Instagram as compared to the male students. They take Instagram as a modifier of their lifestyles and are more flexible in terms of presentation of self. Another conclusion of this study was that the students do not know that they are unintentionally socially controlling their peers through positive comments; however a form of this is seen as constant assessment of the Sikkim University female students' bodies on Instagram. Although certain students note that they enjoy being bombarded with regular comments. They don't feel any pressure from Instagram to have an idealized body. This may be due to their thinking of achieving the standards set by modern society through the use of social media and advertisements. As new media is mostly used by the youth, the Sikkim University students feel that changing their profiles on Instagram and updating their status will heighten their presence in social networking sites. They consider that the notion of Instagram statement is important for them and they work accordingly. Many of the students noted that they came across body shaming and even they body shamed someone or the other. The students also agreed that they, especially the ladies, try to change or modify their curves in accordance with Instagram, as they thinks that Instagram is more popular among the youth compared with other social media platforms, as such Facebook.

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