

Perceived Self-Worth of Learners: Basis for an Enhanced Guidance Support Program

Jethro P. Tique

*Institute of Graduate and Professional Studies, Lyceum-
Northwestern University, Dagupan City, Philippines*

ABSTRACT

The study examines the relationship between social media engagement and self-worth among learners, focusing on the impact of digital exposure on self-esteem and body image. Through a comprehensive analysis of demographic profiles, self-perception indicators, social media engagement behaviors, and statistical correlations, the research highlights significant influences of digital validation, comparison culture, and academic performance on adolescent self-concept. Findings reveal that excessive engagement with curated online content reinforces unrealistic beauty standards, leading to insecurities and pressures related to physical appearance. The study identifies key demographic factors, including gender and academic achievement, that significantly correlate with self-esteem variations. Social media behaviors such as excessive photo editing, online comparison, and digital validation further contribute to diminished self-worth. Statistical analysis demonstrates that learners from lower-income households exhibit

higher susceptibility to self-esteem challenges, while frequent exposure to idealized digital portrayals negatively impacts self-perception. These insights emphasize the importance of tailored interventions to support learners in developing a healthy self-image. Recommendations focus on integrating psychological support into Enhanced guidance support programs, implementing digital literacy initiatives, and fostering self-esteem workshops within academic settings. In addressing the influence of social media on adolescents' confidence and self-perception, educational institutions and parents can help learners navigate the complexities of identity formation in the digital age. Future research should explore personalized strategies that consider resilience factors in mitigating negative self-worth outcomes.

Keywords: | *Self-Esteem, Guidance support program*

INTRODUCTION

Social media platforms have become a central aspect of adolescents' lives, influencing their self-perception, behavior, and interactions. Learners, typically aged 15-16, are particularly vulnerable as they navigate critical developmental stages characterized by heightened self-awareness and sensitivity to external validation. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook often

present curated and idealized versions of life, leading many young individuals to compare themselves unfavorably to others. This constant exposure can significantly impact their self-esteem and body image, potentially hindering their emotional and social development.

A study by Fardouly & Vartanian (2016) emphasized that exposure to appearance-focused content on social media is directly linked to body dissatisfaction among adolescents, as it promotes unrealistic beauty standards. The findings by Fardouly and Vartanian (2016) are well-supported by real-life experiences of many adolescents. For example, consider the story of Maria, a 16-year-old high school learner who frequently scrolls through Instagram and TikTok. Her feed is filled with influencers showcasing perfect bodies, flawless skin, and glamorous lifestyles. Maria begins to compare herself to these seemingly unattainable standards. Despite being healthy and active, she starts feeling insecure about her natural body shape, leading her to skip meals or try fad diets she encounters online.

This situation is not unique to Maria. Many teenagers face similar struggles as they internalize the idealized images perpetuated by social media. They may resort to photo editing apps to alter their appearance in selfies or develop an obsession with likes and comments as validation of their worth. Over time, these behaviors can erode their self-esteem, causing anxiety, depression,

or disordered eating. This lived experience underscores how exposure to appearance-focused content significantly impacts adolescents' mental health and self-perception.

Meanwhile, Perloff (2017) argued that the interactive nature of social media exacerbates self-objectification among young users, contributing to distorted body image perceptions. The argument highlights a critical aspect of social media's influence: its interactive nature fosters a cycle of self-objectification among young users. Unlike traditional media, where individuals passively consume content, social media encourages active participation. Adolescents post photos, videos, and updates, often seeking validation in the form of likes, comments, and shares. This feedback loop places an immense emphasis on appearance and external approval. For instance, a young user might post a picture and receive positive comments about their looks. While this may initially boost their confidence, it also reinforces the idea that their value is tied to their physical appearance. Over time, they may begin to judge themselves through the lens of others' reactions, prioritizing how they look over who they are. This can lead to constant self-surveillance, where they critically evaluate their appearance, compare it to others, and modify it to fit perceived standards of beauty. Such behavior contributes to distorted body image perceptions, as adolescents become preoccupied with achieving unrealistic ideals portrayed on social media.

Tiggemann and Slater (2020) identified that frequent engagement with photo-based social platforms increased body dissatisfaction and lower self-esteem among teenage girls. Photo-based social platforms, such as Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok, are digital spaces where users primarily share, view, and interact with visual content like photos and videos. These platforms are highly curated, with users often showcasing idealized versions of themselves, emphasizing physical appearance, fashion, and lifestyle. The nature of these platforms encourages constant comparison, as users are bombarded with polished images that often adhere to societal beauty standards. Filters, editing tools, and staged settings amplify these unrealistic portrayals, creating an environment where natural appearances are undervalued. For teenage girls, who are particularly vulnerable to external validation during their formative years, this exposure can lead to feelings of inadequacy. They may feel pressure to conform to these standards, often resulting in body dissatisfaction.

Furthermore, the interactive features of these platforms, such as likes and comments, reinforce the focus on physical appearance. A photo that garners many likes or compliments can become a measure of self-worth, while fewer interactions may lead to self-doubt or anxiety. This dynamic creates a cycle where users feel compelled to constantly present an idealized version of themselves, further eroding genuine self-esteem and body positivity.

This study examined the Perceived Self-Worth of Learners in relation to a Enhanced guidance support program on self-esteem and body image at Mauaque Resettlement Elementary, East District, Mabalacat City. The study was limited to self-reported data from surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions, which were subject to potential response biases. Additionally, the research primarily used quantitative and qualitative methods to assess relationships and patterns, excluding experimental or longitudinal designs. Despite these limitations, the findings aimed to provide valuable insights and actionable recommendations to enhance the well-being of Learners through targeted interventions for the 2025-2026 school year.

METHODS

Research Design

This chapter presents the research design, the sources of data, the instrumentation and data collection, and the tools for data analysis.

Participants and Locale

This chapter presents the research design, the sources of data, the instrumentation and data collection, and the tools for data analysis.

Sampling and Data Collection

This chapter presents the research design, the sources of data, the instrumentation and data collection, and the tools for data analysis.

Data Analysis

The following tools were utilized to treat the data statistically:

Ethical Considerations

In conducting this study, several ethical considerations were prioritized to protect the rights and well-being of all participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, including Learners, teachers, and guidance counselors, with specific consent required from parents/guardians for learners under 18. Participants were fully informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, their right to withdraw at any time, and the minimal risks involved. To maintain confidentiality, participants' identities were kept anonymous, using codes or pseudonyms instead of personal identifiers, and all data were securely stored with access limited to the research team. Participation was voluntary, with no academic or personal consequences for those who chose not to participate, and learners were reminded that their involvement would not affect their relationship with teachers or school staff.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- 1.** The study examines the relationship between social media engagement and self-worth among learners, focusing on the impact of digital exposure on self-esteem and body image.
- 2.** Through a comprehensive analysis of demographic profiles, self-perception indicators, social media engagement behaviors, and statistical correlations, the research highlights significant influences of digital validation, comparison culture, and academic performance on adolescent self-concept.
- 3.** Findings reveal that excessive engagement with curated online content reinforces unrealistic beauty standards, leading to insecurities and pressures related to physical appearance.
- 4.** The study identifies key demographic factors, including gender and academic achievement, that significantly correlate with self-esteem variations.
- 5.** Statistical analysis demonstrates that learners from lower-income households exhibit higher susceptibility to self-esteem challenges, while frequent exposure to idealized digital portrayals negatively impacts self-perception.
- 6.** PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA This chapter presents the discussion of findings brought from the data gathering procedure.

7. Dev. | Skewness | Kurtosis Honors/Distinction Level | 8 | 8 | 16.325 | 1.121 | -0.113 Advanced/High Proficient Level | 28 | 28 | | Proficient Level | 45 | 45 | | Developing Proficiency Level | 12 | 12 | | Below Basic/Remedial Level | 7 | 7 | | Total | 100 | 100 | | Attendance Rate | f | % | Std.
8. Dev. | Skewness | Kurtosis Excellent Attendance | 6 | 6 | 13.546 | -0.425 | -3.132 Good Attendance | 25 | 25 | | Moderate Attendance | 32 | 32 | | Poor Attendance | 32 | 32 | | Chronic Absenteeism | 5 | 5 | | Total | 100 | 100 | | The monthly income distribution reveals a considerable spread among households, with the majority falling within the Php 11,000-Php 20,000 range (36%), followed closely by those earning Php 21,000-Php 30,000 (26%).
9. A significant portion also falls within the lower income brackets, with 24% earning Php 5,000-Php 10,000 and 7% earning less than Php 5,000.
10. The smallest proportion belongs to the highest income group, with only 7% earning Php 31,000 or more.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The demographic profile of Learners shows that socioeconomic status, gender, academic achievement, and attendance rates contribute to variations in self-worth and career aspirations.

Social media significantly influences self-esteem and body image, with digital validation playing a key role in shaping adolescents' perception of themselves.

Frequent social media engagement, particularly comparison behaviors and exposure to idealized images, leads to body dissatisfaction and self-worth issues among learners.

Statistical analysis reveals that gender, income, and academic achievement have substantial effects on self-esteem and social media engagement patterns.

Recommendations

1. Schools implement structured self-esteem workshops to help learners build confidence and critical thinking skills regarding social media influences.
2. Enhanced guidance support programs should integrate psychological support mechanisms that address body image concerns while providing learners with realistic professional aspirations.
3. Parents and teachers must engage in conversations about digital literacy, teaching adolescents how to critically evaluate online content and mitigate comparison culture.
4. Policies promoting mental health awareness should be strengthened in educational institutions to support learners struggling with self-worth issues.

REFERENCES

- Aquino, L. (2023). Peer comparisons on social media and its contribution to mental health struggles among Filipino learners. *Philippine Journal of Adolescent Psychology*, 12(2), 45-62.
- Cruz, M. (2023). The role of media literacy in addressing social media's harmful effects on Filipino youth. *Journal of Media and Education*, 10(1), 75-84.
- De Leon, R. (2019). Correlation between social media usage and body dissatisfaction among Filipino high school learners. *Philippine Journal of Social Sciences*, 17(3), 213-229.
- Fardouly, J., & Vartanian, L. R. (2016). Social comparisons on social media: The impact on body image and self-esteem. In E. M. Brown & F. J. Smith (Eds.), *Body image and self-esteem in the digital age* (pp. 101-120).
- Garcia, A. L. (2021). The psychological impact of online validation and its role in shaping self-worth among Filipino teenagers. *Journal of Adolescent Mental Health*, 8(4), 192-205.
- Holland, G., & Tiggemann, M. (2016). Social media and body image concerns: The influence of hashtags and fitness trends on adolescent girls. *Journal of*

Youth and Adolescence, 45(6), 1271-1285.

Perloff, R. M. (2017). Social media use and self-objectification: The role of appearance-focused content in shaping body image perceptions.

Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, 20(3), 143-149.

Reyes, P. (2021). The impact of excessive social media use on Filipino highschool learners' self-esteem and body dissatisfaction. Philippine Journal of Educational Psychology, 15(2), 111-124.

Santos, R., & Villanueva, P. (2020). Social media engagement and its effects on the self-esteem and appearance satisfaction of Filipino adolescents.

Philippine Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychology, 19(4), 45-61.

Tiggemann, M., & Slater, A. (2020). The influence of photo-based social media platforms on body dissatisfaction and self-esteem in teenage girls. Body.