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Predicting Body Image Dissatisfaction From Social Media Use and Peer Comparison

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the Introduction, paragraph 3: The sentence "Indian adolescents and university students, particularly women, report growing concerns…" should include specific prevalence data or statistics from national surveys to substantiate this claim.

In the Introduction, paragraph 5: The sentence "This process becomes even more problematic when the images… represent an unattainable ideal" would benefit from a direct citation to empirical studies using experimental designs that tested manipulated images and their effects on body satisfaction.

In Methods and Materials, Measures section under "Body Image Dissatisfaction": While psychometric properties are discussed, please clarify whether the BSQ-34 has been validated in Indian populations specifically, given cultural variations in body image.

In the Measures section under "Social Media Use": The authors state, "It has been widely adopted…" but should consider referencing studies that have used the SMUIS in Indian or South Asian populations to justify cultural transferability.

In Table 4 explanation: The sentence "Both predictors significantly contributed…" would benefit from a discussion of the standardized beta weights' implications for intervention—e.g., does peer comparison need greater clinical targeting?

In the Discussion, paragraph 2: The authors state that "frequent engagement with image-centric content contributes to not only body dissatisfaction…" but could improve scientific clarity by specifying that this is a correlational finding and not causal, given the study design.

In the Limitations section: The limitation regarding lack of control for BMI is well-noted; however, the authors should also acknowledge the absence of data on time spent on specific platforms (e.g., Instagram), which could affect the strength of the social media variable.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the Introduction, final paragraph: "The current study aims to fill this gap…" — this section would be strengthened by a clearer articulation of the research questions or hypotheses, rather than a general aim.

In Methods and Materials, Study Design and Participants: The sampling method is stated as "convenience sampling," but it would enhance the rigor if the authors discussed how this approach may introduce bias and what efforts were made to mitigate such limitations.

In the Measures section under "Peer Comparison": There is a minor typographical error at the end—"(Dondzilo et al., 2021; Fardouly et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2025)s"—the extra 's' should be deleted.

In the Data Analysis paragraph: The authors state that "All assumptions… were tested and met," but a brief elaboration on how normality, linearity, and multicollinearity were assessed (e.g., values of VIF, plots used) would increase transparency.

In the Findings section, first paragraph: The demographic distribution by gender is commendably detailed. However, the authors should report whether gender differences in the dependent variable were examined (e.g., via t-tests or interaction terms), since body image concerns may vary significantly by gender.

In Table 2 results paragraph: While correlation values are reported, effect size interpretations (e.g., small, medium, large according to Cohen's guidelines) should be added to enhance understanding of the practical significance of these findings.

In Table 3 explanation: The sentence "The regression model… was statistically significant…" should discuss the standard error of the estimate or residual plots to provide insight into the model's precision.

In the Discussion, paragraph 5: The authors note that "peer comparison slightly outperformed social media use…" It would be valuable to speculate why this may be the case in the Indian university context, drawing on collectivism or interpersonal sensitivity.

In the Discussion, paragraph 6: The sentence "This aligns with studies that emphasize the increasing pressure on young men…" should include subgroup analyses or references to whether the current sample demonstrated similar trends across male participants.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.
Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.