

Instagram Use and Emerging Adults: The Role of Self-compassion on Body Image

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Abstract: The negative impact on body image for emerging adults cannot be separated from social media, especially Instagram. Self-compassion has been studied to play a role in problematic body image. The purpose of this study was to see the extent to which self-compassion affects body image. Emerging adults who use Instagram (N=276) completed a scale measuring self-compassion and body image. Regression analysis was conducted to correlate the relationship between self-compassion and body image. The results show that self-compassion is a factor that affects the body image of emerging adults who use Instagram ($R^2 = 0,231$). This finding explains that the application of self-compassion can minimize the negative impact of Instagram usage on body image.

1 INTRODUCTION

Social media is currently a place to spend time for young people, especially photo-based social media. This is because photo-based social media allows users to share photos and short messages more relaxedly (Bjornsen, 2018). Furthermore, NapoleonCat (2021) reports 82.3 million Instagram users during the January 2021 period in Indonesia, and its users are dominated by individuals aged 18-24 years or emerging adults (Arnett, 2018). The dominance of emerging adults as Instagram users is very reasonable because media as a means of socializing is done intentionally to carry out their developmental tasks, namely identity exploration (Coyne, Padilla-Walker, & Howard, 2015).

The importance of social media for emerging adults has led several researchers to focus recently on the negative impact of social media use. For example, time to use the internet and social media is positively related to the internalization of the ideal thin body, body control, and encouragement to look thin (Tiggemann & Slater, 2013). In addition, previous researchers have reported that Instagram affects body image satisfaction in young people (Ahadzadeh, Sharif, & Ong, 2017). It was further explained that exposure to photos on Instagram impacted the individual's body image.

Body image is a dynamic mental representation of oneself that develops in the body (Krueger, 2002). In addition, body image is the physical identity of the individual (Santrock, 2019). During the exploration of identity, emerging adults will focus on body image, especially how they and other individuals evaluate their body appearance (Wängqvist & Frisén, 2013). Gattario and Frisén (2019) stated that body image starts to stabilize at 18 years and moves positively when individuals age 24 years. However, there are many inappropriate body images in emerging adults (see Haslinda, Ernalina, & Wahyuni, 2015; del Mar Bibiloni, Coll, Pich, Pons, & Tur, 2017).

Media-mediated body image is generally caused by two paths, namely the internalization of ideal thinness and the tendency to compare one's appearance with the appearance of other individuals (Dittmar & Howard, 2005). High internalization will lead individuals to be dissatisfied with their bodies (Rodgers, McLean, & Paxton, 2015), especially when exposed to posts or photos depicting other users' ideal body appearance (Cohen, Newton-John, & Slater, 2017). Furthermore, regarding the second path, Instagram users will engage in social comparison behavior after viewing photos of celebrities and peers (Brown & Tiggemann, 2016; Fardouly, Willburger, & Vartanian, 2018). Individuals exposed to photos that show an ideal body appearance report threatened body image because of dissatisfaction with appearance, weight, and insecurity (McComb &

Mills, 2021). Therefore, the body image of individuals exposed to the media tends to be negative.

The rise of problems with body image has made several researchers focus on studying how to have a positive body image. Positive body image focuses on appreciating and accepting the body's uniqueness rather than thinking about the imperfections of the body itself (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015). Positive body image protects individuals from excessive pressure on appearance (Halliwell, 2013). Previous researchers have studied ways to have and increase positive body image in individuals. For example, self-compassion has been studied to improve and promote positive body image (Rodgers, Franko, Donovan, Cousineau, Yatesa, McGowan, Cooka, & Lowy, 2017). In addition, self-compassion can overcome body shame (Wollast, Riemer, Bernard, Leys, Kotsou, & Kelin, 2019).

Self-compassion is the ability to be kind and understand one's situation (Neff, 2003). Previous researchers (Lathren, Bluth, & Park, 2020; Tylka, Russell, & Neal, 2015) have suggested that self-compassion can reduce individual pressures towards the ideal internalization of thinness (Lathren, Bluth, & Park, 2020; Tylka, Russell, & Neal, 2015). Internalization and self-compassion have also been shown to weaken the relationship between body appearance and social comparison behavior (Homan & Tylka, 2015; Rodgers et al., 2017). It can be concluded that media pressure on body image can be overcome by self-compassion (Tylka, Russell, & Neal, 2015).

Thus, the researcher aims to see how much self-compassion contributes to body image, especially for Instagram users in emerging adulthood. Previous research on self-compassion and body image has been conducted. Previous researchers (Anggraheni & Rahmandani, 2019) reported that self-compassion contributed 21.5% to female student body image. In addition, Yamani (2020) says that self-compassion contributes to 10.8% of students who are in high school. Although self-compassion and body image have been studied simultaneously, the selection of Instagram users, especially in emerging adults as research participants, has not yet been found because it is generally studied in adolescents. The research hypothesis upheld is a contribution of self-compassion to body image in emerging adult Instagram users.

2 METHOD

This research used a quantitative approach to see how self-compassion contributes to the body image of emerging adult Instagram users. Participants in this study (N=276) were Instagram users of emerging adulthood obtained through snowball sampling. Emerging adulthood Instagram users are in the age range of 18-25 years (M=21.11 years; SD=1.42) and have given consent to researchers to be involved in this research. After providing consent, participants were then asked to fill in demographic statements in age, gender, body mass index obtained from height and weight, and time spent on Instagram. See Table 1 for a description of the participants in this study.

Table 1: Gender, Instagram usage time, and body mass index (BMI) among emerging adults who use Instagram (N=276).

	N	%
Gender		
Male	72	26,08 %
Female	204	73,92 %
Instagram Usage Time*		
30min – 1h	99	35,87 %
1h – 2h	63	22,83 %
3h – 4h	58	21,01 %
5h – 6h	25	9,06 %
> 6h	31	11,23 %
Body Mass Index (BMI)**		
Underweight – Heavy (< 17,0)	11	3,99 %
Underweight – Light (17,0 – 18,4)	45	16,30 %
Normal Weight (18,5 – 25,0)	177	64,13 %
Overweight – Heavy (25,1 – 27,0)	20	7,25 %
Overweight – Light (> 27,0)	23	8,33 %

*Instagram usage time per day.

**BMI was categorized by Direktorat P2PTM, Indonesia Health Ministry.

Furthermore, participants in this study were invited to complete the self-compassion scale and body image scale online via Google form. The body image scale used in this study was compiled by researchers based on five body image dimensions pioneered by Cash and Pruzinsky (2002), namely appearance evaluation (6 items), appearance orientation (5 items), body areas satisfaction (10 items), overweight preoccupation (6 items), and self-classified weight (4 items). The body image scale in this study obtained an Alpha coefficient, $\alpha = 0,88$.

Furthermore, the researchers used the self-compassion scale by Renggani and Wideasavitri (2018), tested previously. Participants were given a self-compassion scale consisting of 31 items to measure three components of self-compassion, namely self-kindness (13 items), common humanity (7 items), and mindfulness (11 items). The self-compassion scale in this study obtained an Alpha coefficient, $\alpha = 0,88$.

The research data obtained were then analyzed using the IBM SPSS Statistics 25.0 for Windows program. Before testing the hypothesis, the researcher looked at the normality of the data distribution by using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistical test. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistical test showed that data were normally distributed ($p=0.20$; $p>0.05$). Furthermore, simple linear regression analysis was used to test the research hypotheses.

3 RESULTS

Based on research conducted on emerging adulthood Instagram users, it was found that the participants' self-compassion was generally in the moderate category (63.4%). These results indicate that participants have sufficient ability to provide self-compassion in dealing with events that occur in participants' lives. Furthermore, the results showed that participants generally had a body image in the moderate category (83%). This indicates that participants evaluate their body appearance quite positively. The distribution of participant categories can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Self-compassion and body image among emerging adults who use Instagram (N=276).

	Category		
	High (%)	Moderate (%)	Low (%)
Self-Compassion	96 (34,8)	175 (63,4)	5 (1,8)
Body Image	41 (14,9)	229 (83)	6 (2,1)

Furthermore, the results of hypothesis testing with regression analysis are shown in Table 3. The results indicate a contribution of self-compassion to body image in emerging adulthood Instagram users with a coefficient of determination that is $R^2 = 0.231$ ($p=0.00<0.05$). These results indicate that self-compassion effectively contributes 23.1% towards body image among Instagram users of emerging adulthood. The remaining 76.9% is influenced by other variables not examined in this study, such as self-esteem (Shahyad, Pakdaman, & Shokri, 2015),

social comparison (Ho, Lee, & Liao, 2016), and other variables. Based on the results of statistical calculations, the regression model obtained is as follows.

$$Y = 57,353 + 0,500X \quad (1)$$

Based on the regression equation above, the constant 57.353 indicates that if self-compassion is in a constant state or the value is equal to zero, and the body image has a value of 57.353. Furthermore, a positive regression coefficient of 0.500 indicates that for every increase in self-compassion of zero units, an increase in body image will occur in 57.353. Therefore, based on hypothesis testing, it can be concluded that the hypothesis upheld in this study is accepted.

Table 3: Linear regression model summary.

	Self-Compassion			
	R	R ²	B(Cons.)	B(SC)
Body Image	0,480	0,231	57,353	0,500

In addition to testing the primary hypothesis upheld in this study, the researchers further studied the participants' body image based on the demographic information obtained, namely gender, BMI, and time of using Instagram, by conducting different tests. Based on the results of the additional analysis, the results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: The significance value of differences in body image based on gender, BMI, and Instagram usage time.

	Sig.		
	Gender*	BMI**	IUA***
Body Image	0,414	0,005	0,988

*The analysis used is independent sample t-test.

**The analysis used is one-way ANOVA.

***Instagram usage time.

Based on the significance value of the different tests shown in Table 4, the significance value of body image based on gender was $p = 0.414$ ($p>0.05$), based on BMI, $p = 0.005$ ($p<0.05$), and based on the time of using Instagram, $p = 0.988$ ($p>0.05$). Thus, it can be concluded that the body image of emerging adulthood Instagram users in this study did not show any difference when viewed based on gender and time of Instagram usage. Furthermore, the body image of emerging adulthood Instagram users in this study showed differences based on the participants' BMI. Comparison between all research results with

previous research will be discussed in the discussion section.

4 DISCUSSION

This research aims to see the magnitude of the contribution of self-compassion to body image. Based on the study results, it was found that self-compassion contributed positively to the body image of emerging adult Instagram users. This means that with every increase in the self-compassion of Instagram users in emerging adulthood, the individual's body image will increase. On the other hand, the decline in self-compassion will reduce the body image of emerging adult Instagram users. This is in line with the results of previous research (Rodgers et al., 2017), which reported that self-compassion was a protective factor that played a role in the body image of emerging adulthood.

The body image of emerging adulthood Instagram users in this study was generally in the moderate category, although some participants had a low body image. The majority of the participants in this study who were in the medium category were in line with the research results by Gattario and Frisén (2019), which stated that body image in emerging adulthood tends to be stable and begins to begin move in a positive direction during emerging adulthood. The rest, the low body image of some Instagram users in emerging adulthood, can be caused by factors that can affect an individual's body image, such as the media. Media as a factor that influences body image can reduce body image in individuals. The low body image of Instagram users is caused by the exposure of Instagram users to photos or pictures that contain the ideal appearance of other users. This causes Instagram users to feel negative emotions that cause dissatisfaction with body image Instagram users (Brown & Tiggemann, 2016). Thus, this causes the body image of Instagram users to be below.

In the context of body image, self-compassion has been studied to foster a compassionate view of oneself and the individual's body (Ferreira, Pinto-Gouveia, & Duarte, 2013). In addition, previous research (Siegel, Huellemann, Hillier, & Campbell, 2020) reported that self-compassion is negatively related to appearance, self-esteem, and body comparison. That is, self-compassion helps individuals deal with stress related to body appearance. Self-compassion contribution to body image can also be seen from the scores category, which generally moves from medium to higher. That is, the higher the self-compassion, the higher the body image. This is consistent with previous research (Albertson, Neff, & Dill-Shackleford, 2015; Seekis,

Bradley, & Duffy, 2017), which reported that increasing self-compassion behavior can help improve the condition of body image in individuals.

Self-compassion is an individual's ability to accept, respect, and forgive all problematic situations encountered in life (Neff, 2003). As self-compassion as a variable has been investigated to influence body image, previous research has explained how each component of self-compassion, namely self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness, contributes to the body image of Instagram users in emerging adulthood.

Self-kindness as a component of self-compassion refers to the tendency of individuals to behave well towards themselves (Neff, 2003). Self-compassion through self-kindness can make individuals not judge themselves continuously, especially when critical thinking and judgment arise when the condition of their body appearance fails to meet their ideals or ideal standards. Toole and Craighead (2016) report that a change in negative judgments aligns with individual dissatisfaction with body image changes. So that by reducing personal negative judgments and thoughts, the individual's body image will be better than before.

Common humanity as a component of self-compassion refers to recognizing that all individuals are imperfect (Neff, 2003). Self-compassion through common humanity teaches individuals that there is no universal standard of beauty because beauty is diverse (Homan & Tylka, 2015). So that negative emotions can be minimized when there is a difference between the situation experienced and the situation owned by other individuals, especially when the condition of the body's appearance is different from the conditions possessed by other people.

Mindfulness as a component of self-compassion refers to being aware of painful experiences and not ignoring those experiences (Neff, 2003). Swami, Barron, Todd, Horne, and Furnhamd (2020) report that mindfulness is related to how individuals appreciate their bodies. In addition, the application of mindfulness to individuals can improve body image, especially to body satisfaction (Lavender, Gratz, & Anderson, 2012). Additionally, mindfulness interventions can be provided to people who focus on body image (Alberts, Thewissen & Raes, 2012; Taylor & Daiss, 2015).

Based on the discussion on how each component of self-compassion affects the body image, individuals should consider the importance of increasing self-compassion in each individual. Kelly and Stephen (2016) reported that self-compassion predicts a person's acceptance of their body condition. Not only is accepting their body condition, but self-compassion in individuals is present as an adaptive emotion regulation (Bluth, Roberson, Gaylord,

Faurot, Grewen, & Arzon, 2016; Neff, 2003), especially in body image. This indicates that self-compassion can protect individuals from social stress, especially those exposed to pictures of their ideal body appearance, and cause a lack of self-appreciating behavior (Tiggemann & Anderberg, 2020).

Furthermore, these findings support the importance of self-compassion on body image in emerging adult Instagram users as individuals who actively use Instagram. This is because Instagram users tend to make social comparisons. The social comparisons often made, mainly based on appearances on social media, are more damaging than social comparisons of appearances in the real world every day (Fardouly, Pinkus, & Vartanian, 2017). Therefore, self-compassion has been used as an effective emotion regulation strategy for human experience (Oudou & Brinker, 2015).

In addition to the regression analysis performed on self-compassion and body image variables, additional research in the form of body image in terms of participant demographic information was carried out as a further analysis in this study. The results show that gender does not affect body image. Consistent with previous research, Shaheen, Kumar, Dev, Parkash, and Rai (2016) reported no difference in body image for both male and female participants. Furthermore, through additional analysis, it was found that the time of using Instagram did not make a difference to the participants' body image. This is in line with the results of a study by Stein, Krause, and Ohler (2021), who reported that using Instagram did not affect an individual's body image.

Meanwhile, there are differences in body image based on participants' BMI. The more normal the participant's BMI category, the higher the participant's body image. This is in line with the results of previous studies (Paans, Bot, Brouwer, Visser, & Penninx, 2018), which reported that the higher an individual's BMI, the lower the individual's body image. Thus, the low body image can be caused by the BMI category of individuals not being ideal or not in the normal category.

Although this study provides insight and evidence that self-compassion plays a role in body image, this study has some limitations. First, the researcher did not ask for information about what content the participants saw. So that future research can study further whether the range seen in daily use of Instagram affects self-compassion and/or body image of Instagram users. Second, researchers have limitations in ensuring the accuracy of the data obtained based on a scale distributed online. So that future researchers can consider additional data collection methods to verify the accuracy of the data that has been received. In addition, future researchers

need to study how the dynamics of body image are influenced by self-compassion and/or other factors.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Self-compassion plays an essential role in body image in emerging adults as individuals who actively use social media, especially Instagram. Emerging adults who apply minimal self-compassion feel the negative impact of exposure to Instagram, such as having a problematic body image. This is because self-compassion is an emotional regulation that can be adapted to what is faced by individuals, especially when events are not in line with individual desires. Therefore, individuals need to implement and promote self-compassion to minimize the perceived negative impact of the events encountered, for example, low body image after being placed on ideal body content. Instagram users, in this case, can make moves to promote self-compassion so that other Instagram users can recognize the meaning of self-compassion and how self-compassion minimizes the negative impact of Instagram exposure.

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