

# The Effects of Time Spent on TikTok & Instagram on Body Image in Young College Women

Zhang, Lina; Jurek, Kate

Faculty Facilitator: Summer Davies, MD

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## Study Question and Background

One third of women world-wide have grappled with mental health issues (Reba-Herlson, 2009) and a study published in Journal of Public Mental Health indicates that the rate of mental health issues including disordered eating and body dysmorphia has greatly increased between 2000 and 2010 (Dowds, 2010). This rise in incidence has been attributed in part to the unrealistic and often unattainable beauty standards (Powell, 2018) formulated and reinforced by social media outlets such as Instagram and Facebook (Fardouly, 2015). However, there is little known about the effect of social media giant TikTok on body image.

The purpose of this study is to determine whether there is a relationship between the time spent on two independent social media sites, TikTok and Instagram, and body image. Body image will be assessed by the standardized Body Shape Questionnaire (BSQ). We hypothesize that body dissatisfaction, as represented by a high BSQ score, will increase with increasing time spent on sites.

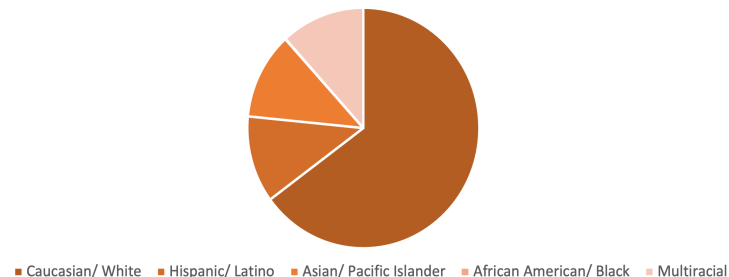
## Data Collection Methods

Data was collected via anonymous survey administered to female Texas Tech University Honors College students. The study sampled female students between the ages of 18 and 26 years old (N= 36). This population was asked questions about the frequency and duration of their use of social media apps TikTok and Instagram. The survey also consisted of 8 questions from the Body Shape Questionnaire and asked questions about the women's feelings about their bodies within the last 4 weeks.

## Participants

- 36 participants (ages 18 – 26) with an average age of 21 took part in this study.
- The ethnic make up for participants are as follows:
  - 61% Caucasian/White
  - 11% Hispanic/Latina
  - 11% Asian/Pacific Islander
  - 5% African American/Black
  - 11% Multiracial/Other

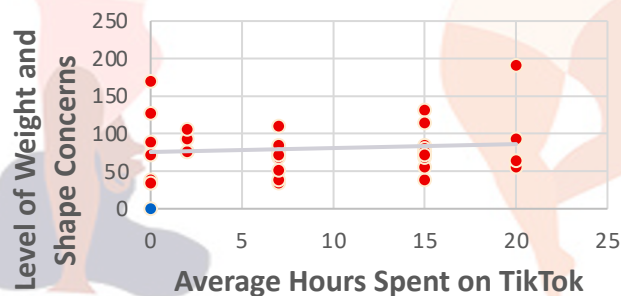
Participant Ethnicity Information



## Results

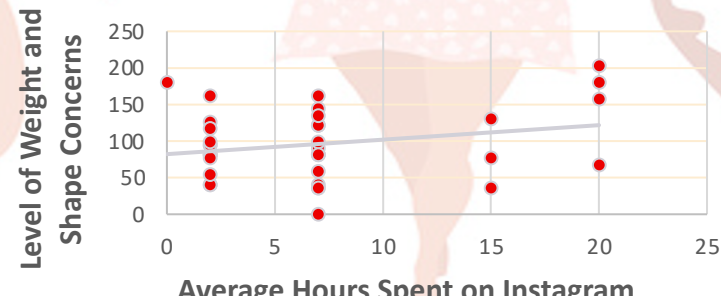
Based on our results for negative effects of Instagram on body image, we see that there is a slight general upward trend in level of weight and shape concern with the increase in hours spent on Instagram ( $p = 0.149$ ). Meanwhile, with TikTok there is no relationship between time spent on TikTok and level of weight and shape concern ( $p = 0.5517$ ).

TikTok's Effect on Body Image



$P = 0.552$

Instagram's Effect on Body Image



$P = 0.149$

## Conclusions

In conclusion, there is no definitive evidence that time spent on TikTok influences level of weight and shape concerns. However, a slight positive trend was observed between time spent on Instagram and level of weight and shape concern. We attribute the lack of relationship between variables in part to insufficient sample size.

In the future, a larger sample size may produce more reliable results. Additionally, we used a shortened version of the BSQ (BSQ-8a), in subsequent studies, it would be best to use the full 34 question survey instead.

## References

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- Powell E., Wang-Hall J., Bannister J.A., Colera E., Lopez F.G. Attachment security and social comparisons as predictors of Pinterest users' body image concerns. *Comput. Hum. Behav.* 2018;83:221–229. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2018.01.039.
- Reba-Harrelson L., von Holle A., Hamer R.M., Swann R., Reyes M.L., Bulik C.M. Patterns and prevalence of disordered eating and weight control behaviors in women ages 25–45. *Eat. Weight Disord.* 2009;14:e190–e198. doi: 10.1007/BF03325116.