Exposure to Individuals' Race on Instagram and Body Image among Adolescents

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INTRODUCTION

- Body dysmorphic disorder is a mental health disorder that typically starts in adolescents as early as 12-13 years of age
- Numerous psychiatric illnesses have been reported to occur alongside body image concerns: the most common disorder being depressive disorder
- Use of the popular social networking site Instagram is associated with body image concerns.

Gap in Literature

- The connection between body image and Instagram use for different racial and ethnic groups remains unknown

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to understand associations between time spent on Instagram and body image among adolescents from different races and associations between viewing individuals perceived as having a similar race or ethnicity to the adolescent on Instagram and body image.

METHODS

Setting

- Participants completed a cross-sectional, online survey study

Recruitment

- Adolescent women age 14-24 who used Instagram accounts were eligible
- Participants were recruited through social media platforms that included the researcher's Instagram, Snapchat, Tik Tok, and Reddit over the course of a week in July 2021.

Measures

Demographics	Body Image	Instagram Use
Demographic questions included: 1) Whether the participant was an Instagram user (Out of 164 who completed the form, 149 were Instagram users) 2) Age 3) Gender Identity 4) Ethnicity (Hispanic: yes or no) 5) Race	Measured using the *Body Image Scale* - Consist of four questions - Scaled from does not apply at all to applies exactly	1) Frequency → Participants were asked how long they use Instagram on a weekday **Measured in thirty-minute intervals** - ex. 0- ½ hour, 1 hour – 1 ½ hours, 2 hours – 2 ½ hours, 3 hours – 3 ½ hours, … 5+ hours
	I would like to change a great about my looks ○ 1 = does not apply at all ○ 2 = does not apply well ○ 3 = applies somewhat ○ 4 = applies fairly well ○ 5 = applies well ○ 6 = applies exactly	2) Exposure to SIMILAR racial/ethnic individuals on Instagram a) "I feel that when I use Instagram, I see individuals whose ethnic or racial appearance is similar to my own." → Scaled from not at all to a lot of the time a) Participants were also asked what percent of individuals do they see on Instagram posts that have similar racial or ethnic backgrounds to them. - Measured in intervals of 10% from 0%- 100%

Analyses

- Descriptive statistics were calculated
- An ANOVA test was used to assess differences in body image scores among participants who recorded different frequencies and percentages of seeing individuals with similar perceived racial and ethnic backgrounds.
- An ANOVA test was used to assess differences in body image scores between participants with different levels of Instagram use among participants identifying as White, Black, and Asian.
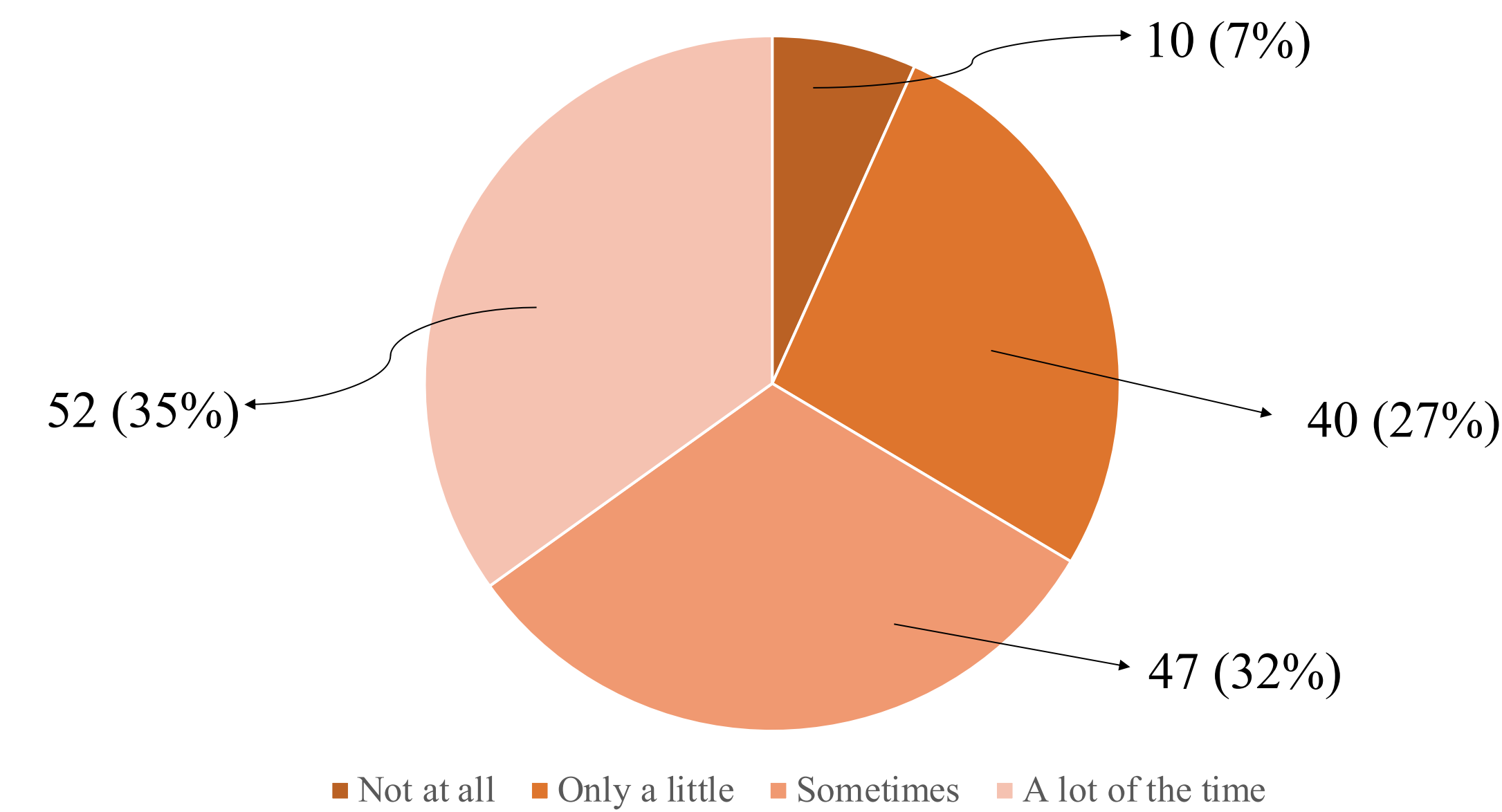
RESULTS

Demographic Information

Race	Number (%)
White/Caucasian	32 (22%)
Black/African American	32 (22%)
Asian	41 (28%)
American Indian/Native American	2 (1%)
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0 (0%)
Multiracial	9 (6%)
Other	17 (11%)

N = 149

Age
Mean: 16.83
Std. Dev: 3.09

Gender	Number (%)
Female	126 (85%)
Male	11 (7%)
Non-Binary	9 (6%)
Genderfluid	2 (1%)

Frequency of Exposure to Individuals with Similar Racial/Ethnic Backgrounds

10 (7%), 40 (27%), 47 (32%), 52 (35%)

Legend: ■ Not at all ■ Only a little ■ Sometimes ■ A lot of the time

Body Image Between Individuals with Different Rating for Frequencies of Seeing Individuals whose Racial/Ethnic Appearance is Similar to Theirs

Scale	n	Mean	Std. Dev.
Not at All	10	4.28	1.010
Only a Little	40	3.70	0.951
Sometimes	47	3.87	1.197
A lot of the Time	52	3.42	1.246
Total	149	3.69	1.158

F = 2.251
p = 0.085

Body Image Between Individuals with Different Ratings for Perceived Percent of Individuals seen on Instagram with Similar Racial/Ethnic Appearance to Theirs

Percentages	n	Mean	Std. Dev.
0-25%	54	3.93	1.082
26-50%	44	3.61	1.184
51-75%	38	3.59	1.220
76-100%	13	3.31	1.133
Total	149	3.69	1.158

F = 1.384
p = 0.250

Body Image and Instagram Frequency for Different Racial Groups

White Individuals

Time (hrs.)	n	Mean	Std. Dev.
0-1/2	15	3.93	1.083
1-1.5	13	3.81	1.415
2-2.5	3	3.42	0.520
3-3.5	1	3.75	N/A
4-4.5	0	N/A	N/A
5+	0	N/A	N/A
Total	32	3.83	1.160

F = 0.156
p = 0.925

Black Individuals

Time (hrs.)	n	Mean	Std. Dev.
0-1/2	13	3.65	1.434
1-1.5	4	3.13	1.507
2-2.5	7	3.07	1.484
3-3.5	4	3.50	1.137
4-4.5	3	2.92	1.010
5+	1	3.00	N/A
Total	32	3.35	1.312

F = 0.279
p = 0.920

Asian Individuals

Time (hrs.)	n	Mean	Std. Dev.
0-1/2	14	3.95	1.153
1-1.5	12	4.04	0.730
2-2.5	11	3.55	1.089
3-3.5	2	3.25	1.768
4-4.5	2	5.00	0.000
5+	0	N/A	N/A
Total	41	3.88	1.037

F = 1.159
p = 0.345

CONCLUSIONS

Findings

- Findings did not suggests that body image concerns among adolescents are influenced by seeing individuals similar to them on Instagram.
- We did not find evidence that body image concerns are associated from adolescents who identify as White, Black, or Asian reporting different time spent on Instagram
- It may be that races and ethnicities portrayed in other media or other experiences have greater impacts on body image.

Limitation

- This study had a small sample size

Implications/Future Work

- Future studies with larger sample sizes should examine the connection between body image and Instagram use among adolescents of different racial and ethnic backgrounds.

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