

**ASSOCIATION OF PROBLEMATIC INTERNET USE WITH CELEBRITY
WORSHIP, SOCIAL COMPARISON AND BODY DYSMORPHIA**



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Approval for Examination

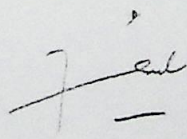
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DEDICATION

To my beloved Family and Friends,
Who supported me throughout the degree,
Who motivated me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise to Allah Almighty, the most glorious and the most gracious who bestowed his mercy upon me and guided me to the right path. First of all, I would like to thank the supreme Power of Allah Almighty, who has enlighten my mind with knowledge and understanding to conduct this research. All praise to Allah, who has enabled us to read, write and reflect. Without Allah Almighty and his Beloved Prophet Muhammad (SAW) guidance and teaching, I would be unable to reach my goals.

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Ezza Shahab

ABSTRACT

This study explores the association between problematic internet use, celebrity worship, social comparison, and body dysmorphia. The objective is to investigate the potential relationships and their implications for individuals' psychological well-being. A sample of 179 participants consisting of 87 male and 92 females, aged 16-21 years, completed self-report measures assessing problematic internet use, celebrity worship, social comparison tendencies, and body dysmorphia symptoms. The data were analysed using correlation, t-test analysis to examine the relationships between these variables. For assessing the Problematic internet use, problematic internet use questionnaire (Thatcher and Goolam, 2005) was used, for celebrity worship, celebrity attitude scale (McCutcheon et al., 2002) was used, for social comparison, social comparison scale Allan and Gilbert (1995) was used and for body dysmorphia, body dysmorphia disorder questionnaire Wilhelm (2006) was used. Hence, the findings of this study indicated a significant positive link between problematic internet use and celebrity worship, indicating that higher problematic internet use was associated with increased engagement in celebrity worship. Moreover, the mediation analysis demonstrated that celebrity worship partially mediated the relationship between problematic internet use and body dysmorphia, revealing its role in connecting excessive internet use to concerns related to body image.

Furthermore, social comparison tendencies were found to mediate the association between celebrity worship and body dysmorphia, implying that individuals with higher levels of celebrity worship might experience heightened body image issues due to social comparison processes.

However, when considering the overall indirect effects of problematic internet use on body dysmorphia through both celebrity worship and social comparison, the impact was found to be negligible. This suggests that other factors may also play a role in shaping the relationship between problematic internet use and body dysmorphia.

Additionally, gender differences emerged in the relationships among these variables, indicating that the influences of problematic internet use, celebrity worship, and social comparison on body dysmorphia might differ between males and females.

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ABBREVIATIONS

PIUQ	Problematic Internet Use Questionnaire
CAS	Celebrity Attitude Scale
SCS	Social Comparison Scale
BDDQ	Body Dysmorphic Disorder Questionnaire
AAS	Anabolic- Androgenic Steroids
SNS	Social Networking Sites
HVSM	Highly Visual Social Media
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences

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Annexures-A	Permission letter for Data Collection
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Imagine a world in which the internet and famous people have a significant influence on how we perceive ourselves. Many people in our digital age become involved in excessive internet use and celebrity obsession. We are often exposed to photos of flawless bodies on social media platforms, which exerts pressure on us to compare our bodies to unrealistic ideals. This might cause us to feel self-conscious about how we look and to always strive for an unrealistic standard.

In this chapter, we investigate the relationships between excessive online use, celebrity worship, comparison with others, and body dissatisfaction. We desire to comprehend the causes of these occurrences as well as how they impact our mental well-being. In order to better comprehend this complicated problem, we plan to evaluate previous research and provide our own conclusions.

1.1. Background

Due to the Internet's extensive accessibility and availability, an increasing number of people are using it excessively, compulsively, or in ways that are problematic. This condition, which is also known as internet addiction or problematic internet use, includes actions like spending too much time online, neglecting real-world obligations, and suffering negative effects in a variety of areas of life as a result of using the internet (Spada, 2014).

In today's society, celebrity culture has grown significantly in importance. Media content about celebrities, including their lives, accomplishments, and appearances, is widely available to the public. The term "celebrity worship" is an intense and even

obsessive desire with famous people that is characterised by idolization, adulation, and emotional investment in their lives (Maltby et al., 2003).

The emergence of social media websites and online communities has changed how people interact with celebrities. Celebrities may be followed, interacted with, and affected by people on a more direct and immediate level through these digital platforms. The distinction between the virtual and physical worlds is blurred by regular exposure to selected photos, updates, and discussions about celebrities.

Different psychological processes may be responsible for the connection between problematic internet use and celebrity worship. Some people use the internet excessively as a form of escape or as a coping mechanism to handle their own problems or feelings of unhappiness. On the other hand, celebrity worship offers a source of motivation, approval, and social connection. Social media's interactive features and the attractiveness of the celebrity lifestyle can create an endless cycle of constant involvement and fixation.

Celebrities frequently stand in for excessively advertised and romanticised media ideals of success, beauty, and achievement. People may engage in social comparison by contrasting themselves to these celebrities' idealised representations of themselves and their objectives. The perceived standards set by celebrities and one's own self-perception may differ, which may have an impact on a person's confidence and perception of their bodies.

Social comparison in connection to celebrity worship has been intensified by the growth of social media and online platforms. Celebrity-related content, including as selected photographs, lifestyle updates, and presumed looks into their private lives, is readily accessible to the public and encourages engagement. This frequent contact

might encourage comparisons and strengthen the urge to imitate the mannerisms, persona's, and accomplishments of famous people.

Celebrities are frequently portrayed in the media, especially on social media and in traditional media, in idealised and inaccurate ways. These carefully chosen, heavily edited photographs might not adequately depict reality. By making people compare themselves negatively to the spotless and idealised representations of celebrities, exposure to such images could worsen body image issues and possibly contribute to body dysmorphia.

Different populations have been shown to utilise the internet in problematic ways. According to the sample and measurement criteria used in the studies, different prevalence rates have been reported. For example: Teenagers: According to research, problematic internet use is prevalent among teenagers at rates ranging from 1.7% to 18.3% (Laconi et al., 2014). Higher rates are caused by elements including excessive online gaming, social media use, and a lack of off-line social support. Young Adults: According to Laconi et al. (2014), prevalence rates of problematic internet use among young adults range from 4.2% to 27.6%. Higher rates in this demographic are a result of variables including loneliness, sadness, and stress as well as the accessibility and availability of internet platforms. Specific Cultural Contexts: Different cultural contexts can have different prevalence rates of problematic internet use. Studies have shown that rates are greater in Asian nations like China and South Korea, for instance, where internet use is more pervasive and integrated into daily life (Cheng & Li, 2014). However, when comparing prevalence rates between cultures, it is crucial to take into account cultural considerations and variations in measurement techniques.

Additionally, levels of celebrity worship are reported in various age groups and cultural situations, with prevalence rates varying among populations. Some

conclusions are: Young Adults and Adolescents: Teenagers and young adults exhibit higher levels of celebrity worship than older age groups, according to studies (McCutcheon et al., 2002). This could be attributed to developmental variables like developing an identity, peer culture, and media influence. Influences of culture: Culture can have an impact on the prevalence of celebrity worship. As an example, due to the emphasis on personal identity and self-expression, individualistic civilizations, like Western countries, may display higher levels of celebrity worship (Maltby et al., 2003). However, there hasn't been much research on how celebrity worship varies among cultures.

Social comparison is a universal phenomenon, yet different groups may have different prevalence rates for particular social comparison patterns. Here are a few findings: Young Adults and Adolescents: In terms of looks and social position, adolescents and young adults are particularly vulnerable to social comparison (Fardouly et al., 2015). These age groups seem to have higher rates of upward and appearance-based social comparison. Influences of culture: The prevalence of social comparison can be influenced by cultural values and conventions. For instance, upward social comparison rates may be higher in individualistic cultures that value success and competition (Festinger, 1954). To examine the cultural variations in social comparison tendencies, more study is necessary.

The prevalence of body dysmorphia varies between populations, with some age groups and cultural situations being more prone to it. Think about the following discoveries: Young Adults and Adolescents: ⁵⁸ Adolescents and young adults are more likely to suffer from body dysmorphia, especially if they feel pressured by society to meet unattainable beauty standards (Phillips & Diaz, 1997). In clinical samples, prevalence rates are greater and range from 1% to 2% in the general population

(Veale, 2004). Influences of culture: Body image standards and cultural ideas of beauty can have an impact on how common body dysmorphia is. For example, cultures where being slim is valued may have greater incidences of body dysmorphia involving issues with weight and shape (Cash & Smolak, 2011).

1.1.1. Problematic Internet Use

The term "problematic internet use" describes the excessive, uncontrollable, or obsessive use of the internet that has a negative impact on a person's life in many different areas (Shapira et al., 2000). It includes various dimensions and subtypes, such as:

- a. Internet addiction, is characterised by a compulsive need to be online, withdrawal symptoms when online use is interrupted, and lack of concern for other commitments and interests.
- b. Online Gaming Addiction is a specific type of problematic internet use that is characterised by excessive and compulsive use, impairing functionality and having unfavourable effects.
- c. Social Media Addiction: This subtype is concerned with the excessive use of social media sites, which can be harmful to one's mental well-being, sense of self, and interpersonal connections.

1.1.2. Celebrity Worship

Worship of celebrities is characterised by a passionate and frequently excessive admiration, curiosity, and affiliation with them (Maltby et al., 2004). It can be understood on various levels and in various dimensions:

- a. Celebrity worship for entertainment and social interaction: At this level, people have a more casual and moderate interest in celebrities and like following their lives and antics.

b. Intense-Personal Celebrity Worship: This level displays a more intense and intimate engagement with celebrities and is characterised by powerful emotions, fantasies, and a desire for a one-sided interaction with the celebrity.

c. Celebrity Obsession: This level of celebrity worship is more intense and potentially harmful. It is characterised by compulsive activities, obsessive thoughts, and a major negative influence on daily functioning.

²⁹ 1.1.3. Social Comparison

Social comparison is the process of comparing oneself to others, especially in terms of traits, skills, looks, and status in society. It can be examined in a variety of ways: (Gibbons & Gerrard, 1989).

a. Upward Social Comparison: This aspect entails contrasting oneself with those who are viewed as superior or possessing greater attributes. This comparison frequently results in feelings of inadequacy or low self-esteem.

b. Downward Social Comparison: This dimension entails contrasting oneself with those who are viewed as inferior or possessing lower attributes, which may increase one's self-esteem or cause them to feel superior.

c. Body Comparison: This dimension focuses on comparing one's physical appearance to others, and is frequently influenced by media representations and cultural beauty standards.

²⁰ 1.1.4. Body Dysmorphia

Body dysmorphia, often known as body dysmorphic disorder (BDD), is a psychological illness characterised by an obsession with one's perceived physical flaws or defects. It can appear in several subtypes and dimensions: (Schulte et al., 2021).

a. Muscle dysmorphia is a kind of body dysmorphia characterised by an excessive preoccupation with a fictitious lack of muscle mass or muscularity, which results in intensive efforts to enlarge and reshape the muscles.

b. Skin dysmorphia: This subtype is characterised by an extreme focus on perceived flaws or imperfections in the skin, such as acne, scars, or wrinkles. As a result, the person may groom themselves excessively, pick at their skin, or seek out regular dermatological treatments.

c. Face Dysmorphia: This type of body dysmorphia focuses on a person's perception of flaws or defects in their face features, which frequently results in excessive grooming, cosmetic surgeries, or social withdrawal.

According to ¹¹ the Absorption Addiction Model described by McCutcheon et al. (2002), people who have deficiencies in their real lives turn to para-social (One-sided, especially of a relationship, as is the case with celebrities and their audience and admirers) relationships to make up for those deficiencies. Celebrity relationships are perceived as an attempt to cope with or run away from reality. Three layers make up celebrity worship level 1: entertainment-social two: intense interpersonal, and three: emotional dysregulation. Each of these levels has distinctive characteristics and is connected to numerous cognitive, behavioural, emotional, and social factors, according to Maltby et al. (2002).

1.2. Rationale

The rationale for studying the relationship between celebrity worship, problematic internet use, social comparison, and body dysmorphia is rooted in the potential negative impact that celebrity culture and social media can have on mental health and well-being. People now have unprecedented access to the lives of celebrities thanks to social media platforms, which may heighten interest in them to

the point of obsession. According to research, this kind of celebrity worship ¹ is associated with higher levels of anxiety, sadness, and other mental health problems.

Additionally, social media and the internet have been connected to problematic internet use, which can have detrimental effects like social isolation and functional impairment. Social comparison, which is common in the social media age, can worsen negative perceptions of one's body and self-worth issues. Body dysmorphia, a mental illness marked by an obsession with one's perceived flaws or defects in their looks, has also been connected to adoration of public figures and social comparison.

Given the potential drawbacks of body dysmorphia, social comparison, celebrity worship, and problematic internet use, it's critical to comprehend how these elements interact and create solutions that support mental health and well-being. This study can help develop prevention plans for the damaging ⁵⁹ effects of social media and celebrity culture on mental health and well-being.

1.3. Research Gap

While some studies have examined the cross-sectional relationships between these variables, there is a need for more longitudinal research. Longitudinal studies would allow for the examination of the temporal sequence and changes over time in problematic internet use, celebrity worship, social comparison, and body dysmorphia. This would provide a clearer understanding of the directionality and potential causal relationships among these variables.

Existing research has identified associations between problematic internet use, celebrity worship, social comparison, and body dysmorphia. However, there is a research gap in understanding the underlying mechanisms and potential mediators or moderators of these associations. Exploring factors such as self-esteem, body image

dissatisfaction, social support, and coping strategies could shed light on how these variables interact and influence one another.

While research has highlighted the negative impact of problematic internet use, celebrity worship, social comparison, and body dysmorphia, there is a need for more studies on effective intervention and prevention strategies. Understanding which interventions or prevention programs are most effective in reducing problematic internet use, mitigating celebrity worship, and promoting positive body image could help inform the development of evidence-based interventions.

1.4. Conceptual Gap

⁴² There is a growing body of literature that has established a correlation between celebrity worship and problematic internet use (Kandell et al., 2019), social comparison (Abbas et al., 2020; Park et al., 2017), and body dysmorphia (Lam and McManus, 2018). Celebrities are often presented as idealized versions of themselves in the media, creating an unrealistic standard of beauty and success, which can lead to envy among their admirers. This envy, in turn, can lead to social comparison and a drive to attain an unattainable level of perfection. Furthermore, celebrity worship can lead to an excessive amount of time spent on the internet, searching for more information about the celebrity, which can lead to problematic internet use. Lastly, celebrity worship can lead to a distorted body image, as individuals attempt to emulate the bodies of their idols, leading to body dysmorphia.

1.5. Problem Statement

Celebrity worship impact many aspects of people's life. Specially it affects mental and physical health and work. Hence, a better understanding of it is important. Additionally, this research seeks to understand how these activities impact different age groups and cultural contexts.

1.6. Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between celebrity worship and problematic internet use?
2. How does social comparison relate to celebrity worship and body dysmorphia?
3. To what extent does body dysmorphia relate to celebrity worship and social comparison?
4. What are the underlying mechanisms that explain the relationships between celebrity worship, problematic internet use, social comparison, and body dysmorphia?
5. Can interventions be developed to reduce the negative impact of celebrity culture and social media on mental health and well-being?
6. How effective are existing interventions in reducing the negative impact of celebrity culture and social media on mental health and well-being?
7. How can individuals and society as a whole be educated to promote healthy social media use and reduce the negative impact of celebrity culture on mental health and well-being?

1.7. Research Objectives

1. To examine relationship between celebrity worship and social comparison among the students who are involved in using the problematic internet use.
2. To investigate the relationship between celebrity worship with body dysmorphia among the students who are involved in using the problematic internet use.
3. To analyse the role of social comparison in relation between celebrity worship and body dysmorphia among students using problematic internet use.

1.8. Significance

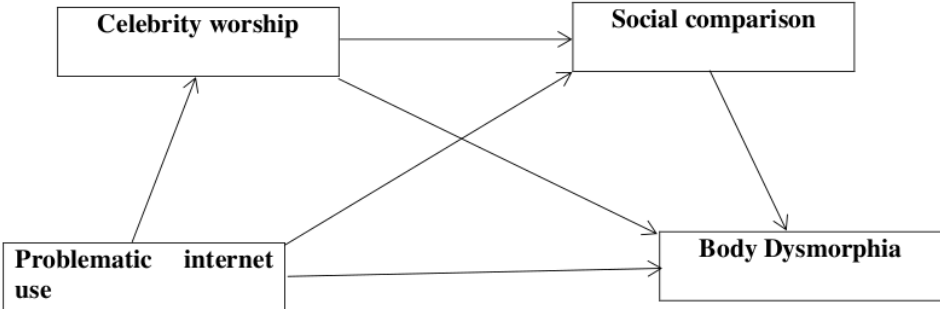
The significance of the relationship between celebrity worship, problematic internet use, social comparison, and body dysmorphia lies in its potential impact on

¹ mental health and well-being. Given the prevalence of social media and the widespread availability of celebrity culture, understanding the potential negative consequences of celebrity worship is important for promoting mental health and well-being. Individuals who engage in excessive celebrity worship may be at risk of developing problematic internet use, social comparison, and body dysmorphia, which can all have negative consequences for mental health and well-being. These consequences may include anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and impaired functioning. Therefore, this research highlights the importance of promoting healthy social media use, encouraging positive self-image and dignity, and reducing the influence of celebrity culture in our society. It may also inform the development of ³² interventions aimed at reducing the negative impact of celebrity worship on mental health and well-being.

1.9. Hypothesis

1. There would be a significant ¹¹ relationship between problematic internet use and celebrity worship.
2. Celebrity worship would mediate ⁷ the relationship between problematic internet use and body dysmorphia.
3. ¹ Social comparison tendencies would mediate the relationship between celebrity worship and body dysmorphia.
4. There would be indirect ⁷ impact of problematic internet use on body dysmorphia.
5. There would be gender differences in the relationships ²² between problematic internet use, celebrity worship, social comparison and body dysmorphia. The associations may vary between males and females, indicating differential impacts of these variables.

1.10. Conceptual Model



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of body dissatisfaction among Arab adolescents and young adults is on the rise, particularly among Jordanian adolescent girls, as highlighted in a study by Mousa et al. (2010). This increase in dissatisfaction is influenced significantly by media exposure, which is prevalent among Arab youth, as noted by Melki (2010). Western media, including TV shows, films, and music, often present unrealistic and idealized portrayals, such as overly thin female models (Fouts & Burggraf, 1999) and overly muscular male models (Hatoum & Belle, 2004). While Arab audiences are exposed to similar Western media images and messages as their Western counterparts, they lack the benefit of awareness programs, consumer protection regulations, and media literacy curricula, as pointed out by Melki (2013). In light of these issues, a study by J. P. Melki et al. (2015) aims to investigate the connection between the use of anabolic-androgenic steroids (AAS) and dominant sociocultural factors, specifically media exposure to idealized images of male muscularity and mediated social comparison trends, among a sample of young Arab adults in Lebanon who frequent fitness centers.

Andreassen et al. (2017) found that problematic internet use was linked to body dysmorphia symptoms, celebrity worship, and social comparison. Moreover, higher levels of body dissatisfaction and appearance-based social comparison were associated with increased problematic internet use. However, little is known about the extent of psychological attachment to celebrities that influences a consumer's willingness to undergo cosmetic surgery. Prior research has not explored this aspect in the context of cross-cultural views towards cosmetic surgery and body satisfaction.

To address this gap, the current study investigated the relationships between views towards cosmetic surgery, celebrity adoration, and body image among female college students in South Korea and the United States. A total of 370 female undergraduates from a central university in Seoul, South Korea (n = 196), and a mid-Atlantic university in the United States (n = 174) participated in the survey. Results showed that South Korean participants were more accepting of cosmetic surgery, while US participants showed higher admiration for their favorite celebrities (Jung & Hwang, 2016).

Furthermore, the study examined the association between social media use, particularly on Instagram, and symptoms of orthorexia nervosa, an eating disorder characterized by an obsession with healthy eating. The research surveyed 680 social media users who follow health food accounts (N = 680). The ORTO-15 assessment was used to measure their social media use, eating habits, and orthorexia nervosa symptoms (Turner & Lefevre, 2017).

Another investigation explored the cognitive-affective paradigm concerning the relationships between social media and smartphone use and body esteem, mediated by cognitive internalization of an ideal body image, appearance comparisons, and social appearance anxiety. The study focused on female adolescents aged 13 to 18 and revealed that excessive social media use negatively impacted body esteem through increased cognitive internalization, leading to heightened appearance comparisons and concern over negative appearance evaluations. Additionally, specific smartphone activities' screen time affected body esteem, independent of social media use, but when accounting for social media, overall smartphone screen time had no impact (Yang et al., 2020).

In a separate study in Ireland, Prejban (2021) investigated the influence of social media participation, social comparison tendencies, and self-objectification on appearance anxiety among young adults aged 18-29. The research involved an online survey with questionnaires to assess participants' social media usage, social comparison tendencies, self-objectification, and social appearance anxiety.

According to Maltby et al. (2003), celebrity worship is connected with increased levels of social comparison, body dissatisfaction, and body dysmorphic symptoms. Celebrity worship and appearance-based social comparison had a beneficial link. The survey-based investigation used established scales with a sample of 303 British adults (Aruguete et al., 2014).

On October 11, 2013, the 'Journal of Women and Ageing' published an online survey that indicated that just 12.2 percent of women aged 50 and up were satisfied with their physical size. The researcher came to the conclusion that it was quite difficult to locate people who had positive feelings about their bodies and regard them with respect and love. Another study looked at gender and other factors that influence body image satisfaction. The findings revealed that both men and women have various ways and levels of discontent with their bodies, which was mostly determined by the cultural ideology outlined for men and women. The findings also revealed that women's self-perception was more likely to be associated with low self-worth and despair, which were related to body image fulfilment (Ryding & Kuss, 2020).

In recent times, there has been a notable surge in people's interest in cosmetic surgery. To understand the factors influencing this trend, we conducted a study focusing on the relationship between body discourse on social networking sites (SNS), body surveillance, body shame, and the consideration of cosmetic surgery, utilizing the objectification theory as the theoretical framework. We particularly explored the

mediating roles of body surveillance and body shame in the association between SNS body discourse and the consideration of cosmetic surgery. Additionally, we examined potential gender differences in this serial mediation model.

The study involved Chinese male and female college students (N = 309), who were asked to complete questions about SNS body talk, body surveillance, body shame, and their thoughts regarding cosmetic surgery. The results revealed positive associations between SNS body talk, body surveillance, body shame, and cosmetic surgery consideration (Wang et al., 2022).

Furthermore, we investigated the motivations behind young people's engagement with highly visual social media (HVSM) platforms such as Snapchat, Instagram, and TikTok, and the potential impact of HVSM's fundamental features on their mental health. To explore this, we conducted nine semi-structured focus group sessions with boys and girls aged 14 and 15 (n = 47) from five secondary schools in Northern Ireland. Thematic analyses were performed to derive the findings, and a conceptual model was developed. The study revealed that features like receiving likes/comments on visuals and scrolling through a feed were associated with the role of being a 'viewer,' which led to feelings of jealousy, inferiority, and the pressure to be accepted for an extended period (McCrary et al., 2022).

According to studies, celebrity attitudes among individuals are currently gaining popularity. The purpose of this study is to look into the relationship between celebrity attitudes and body image in college students aged eighteen (18) to twenty-two (22) from the University Belt Consortium. Six hundred (600) respondents, 225 males and 375 females, were gathered through convenience sampling and categorised according to gender. Both female and male respondents received high rankings in the

entertainment/social level, according to the results. Furthermore, the study found that respondents felt their physical attributes largely matched their physical ideals, and that they understand the importance of achieving these physical ideals (Janne Andre G et al., 2012-2013).

According to McCreary et al. (2004), problematic internet use is connected with body dissatisfaction and appearance comparison. Celebrity worship was discovered to be a mediator between problematic internet use and body dissatisfaction. The approach used was a cross-sectional study with self-report measures and a sample size of 640 Canadian university students (Kim & Chock, 2015).

As internet media technology continues to advance and become more accessible, women are increasingly paying attention to their body image and physical behavior. The objective of this study was to examine the impact of online sexual objectification on physical activity among female college students and to investigate whether body-image depression acts as a mediator between them. A cross-sectional sample of 882 female college students from four universities in Hubei Province participated in an online survey. Data were collected using the Online Sexual Objectification Experience Scale (OSOES), the Body-Image Depression Questionnaire, and the Physical Activity Rating Scale (PARS). The results showed a significant positive association between the experience of online sexual objectification and physical activity ($r = 0.420, p < 0.01$) (Du et al., 2022).

There is growing concern about the increasing number of young people worldwide seeking cosmetic procedures, which are associated with both medical and psychological risks. This study explored the influence of mediated celebrities on young people's desire for cosmetic surgery in Singapore. Two psychological concepts from the celebrity influence model, namely parasocial interactions and identification,

were used to analyze media effects. A survey of 555 college students revealed that exposure to mediated celebrities directly and indirectly influenced young people's attitudes towards cosmetic surgery. Parasocial interactions and identification played a mediating role in this relationship. The study contributes valuable insights into celebrity influence and provides data that can enhance future health communication efforts (Wen, N. 2017).

While there has been an increasing focus on body satisfaction among heterosexual White males in research, limited attention has been given to the experiences of heterosexual Black men. To address this gap, a quantitative survey study was conducted to investigate body satisfaction experiences among college-aged heterosexual Black (n = 220, 55%) and White (n = 180, 45%) men. The study examined whether race moderated the relationship between sociocultural influences and body satisfaction in the two groups. Guided by the social comparison theory, the research explored sociocultural factors known to be associated with body satisfaction, such as media images, parental influences, peer influences, internalization of cultural beauty norms, and desires for muscularity (Renfro, 2015).

2.1. Theoretical Framework

2.1.1. Social Comparison Theory

According to Leon Festinger's Social Comparison Theory, people naturally assess themselves by comparing their talents, features, and perspectives with those of others. In the context of problematic internet use, people may engage in excessive online behaviour to look for approval, compare themselves to idealised social media representations, or enhance their self-esteem by comparing themselves to others.

Negative effects include body dissatisfaction, which may lead to the development of body dysmorphia (Suls & Wheeler, 2013).

2.1.2. Tripartite Influence Model

According to the Tripartite Influence Model, which is frequently utilised in body image research, peer, familial, and societal pressures all have a role in body dissatisfaction and disordered eating habits. Media's representation of idealised bodies and celebrity influence can impact people's conceptions of beauty standards in the context of celebrity worship and social comparison. Internet exposure to these factors can result in internalisation of beauty standards, social comparison, and ultimately, body dysmorphia and dissatisfaction (Shroff & Thompson, 2006).

2.1.3. Cognitive Behavioural Models

A framework for explaining the cognitive and behavioural processes behind body dysmorphia is provided by cognitive-behavioral models, such as the Cognitive-Behavioural Model of Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD). These models claim that the emergence and maintenance of body dysmorphia are significantly influenced by erroneous body image beliefs, cognitive biases, and maladaptive coping mechanisms. These cognitive biases can be strengthened by problematic internet use, celebrity worship, and social comparison, which may worsen symptoms of body dysmorphia (Veale, 2004).

2.1.4. Media Social Comparison Processes

This approach focuses primarily on how media exposure and social comparison affect issues with body image and physical appearance. It implies that being exposed to idealised depictions of peers and celebrities online might result in upward social comparison, where people judge themselves against those they think to be more successful or attractive. As people seek to meet the unattainable beauty standards

promoted by the media and internet platforms, this can lead to body dissatisfaction (Sohn, 2009).

2.1.5. Self-Discrepancy Theory

According to the Self-Discrepancy Theory, people may experience emotional pain as a result of their perceptions of their actual self (how they currently see themselves) and their ideal self (how they aspire to be). People may online compare themselves to their idealised famous figures or their peers in the context of celebrity worship and social comparison, highlighting differences between their real-life self and their ideal self. Negative feelings, body dissatisfaction, and body dysmorphia can all be brought on by these disparities (Szymanski & Cash, 1995).

CHAPTER 3

17 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is on investigating the association of problematic internet use and celebrity worship along with social comparison and body dysmorphia among college students from different colleges of Twin cities (Rawal-pindi- Islamabad) and Multan, Pakistan.

3.1. Research Epistemology

In the present study primary used data was collected directly by distributing online and by hand forms.

3.2. Research Design

The study was based on correlational, cross-sectional design. It involves the purposive sampling technique to collect data.

3.3. Research Approach

The methodological approach used in the study was quantitative research method. The goal of quantitative research method was to find the association of problematic internet use with celebrity worship, social comparison and body dysmorphia. Questionnaires of variables were used to collect data for the study in order to find out the relationship among variables.

3.4. Research Strategy

In quantitative research, survey technique was used in which online and by hand surveys were employed to collect data for the current study.

3.5. Population and Sampling

Data was collected from different colleges of Twin cities(Rawalpindi-Islamabad) and Multan. Both boys and girls (16-21 years) were the part of the study. A permission letter was taken from different colleges for data collection. Appropriate instructions were given to the participants. No time limit was determined to complete

the questionnaire. Participants were acknowledged and appreciated after their voluntary participation. G-power software (Faul, 2007) was used to calculate the sample size of 179 college students. Proposed sample for this study was 16-21 years of age of college students.

3.5.1. Inclusion Criteria

Individuals who comes under the age of 16-21 years, enrolled in different colleges of twin cities(Rawalpindi-Islamabad) and Multan were included. Individuals who was having a history of regular internet use of 40 hours per week online and feels excited in using internet and depressed, anxious and irritable when log off (Aboujaoude, 2010), excessive engagement with social media, especially following celebrities and engagement in self-comparisons with celebrities or other peers on social media. Difficulty in controlling the amount of time spent on the internet and social media.

3.5.2. Exclusion Criteria

Individuals who have less time spend on the internet and not fulfil the criteria of internet use and who have already been diagnosed with body dysmorphic. Individuals who were not actively engaged in the worship of celebrities were not included to participate in filling the questionnaire. The individuals whose age was above 21 or below 16 were not included.

3.6. Data Collection and Data Analysis

Data was collected from different colleges. Analysis conducted using SPSS version 27.0 and PROCESS. Before administering the quantitative instruments, Socio-demographic data about the participants was gathered first through a Socio-Demographic Information form, then the quantitative data was collected by administering closed-ended, self-report questionnaires, Celebrity Attitude Scale

(CAS), Problematic Internet Use Questionnaire (PIUQ), Social Comparison Scale (SCS) and Body Dysmorphic Disorder Questionnaire (BDDQ).

3.6.1. Operational Definition

3.6.1.1. Celebrity Worship

A psychological phenomenon known as "celebrity worship" is characterised by an intense and even obsessive interest or admiration for celebrities. It involves a person's concern with the careers, accomplishments, and personas of celebrities on an emotional and cognitive level.

3.6.1.2. Problematic Internet Use

The term "problematic internet use" refers to a situation where a person engages in excessive and uncontrolled internet activity, which has negative impacts on various aspects of their life.

3.6.1.3. Social Comparison

Social comparison is a psychological process in which people evaluate themselves by comparing their characteristics, abilities, accomplishments, and status in society to those of others.

3.6.1.4. Body Dysmorphia

Body dysmorphia is a mental health problem characterised by an obsessive fixation on perceived imperfections in one's appearance, which causes severe distress and impairment in daily functioning.

3.7. Instruments

This section entails complete and multiple set of measures that was used to collect data related to each variable.

3.7.1. Informed Consent Form

A consent form was provided to the participants. The form included briefing points regarding research and information.

3.7.2. Demographic Data Sheet

The demographics information sheet was consisted of age, gender, favourite celebrity and internet usage time, residential area, socio-economic status, time spent on mobile and on work that match to the literature.

3.7.3. Celebrity Attitude Scale

The celebrity attitude scale (McCutcheon et al., 2002) was created to assess the extent to which a responder admires or worships a preferred celebrity. It consists of 34 items and has been shown in multiple studies to have high psychometric qualities. It is divided into three sub-scales. 1. Social entertainment 2. intense interpersonal 3. Pathological on the verge of being pathological. The Celebrity Attitude Scale's internal consistency reliability estimate (coefficient alpha) is .89 (Aruguete et al., 2019; Brooks, 2018).

3.7.4. Problematic Internet Use

Problematic internet use is a very common occurrence. The scale was produced using the Problematic Internet Use Questionnaire (Thatcher and Goolam, 2005), and its psychometric qualities were tested in the study by (Kelly & Gruber, 2010). The three-factor structure was generally verified in the latter investigation. 1. Obsession - obsessing over internet activities (item 2 or 6), 2. Neglect - neglecting non-internet activities (item 1 or 5), 3. Control disorder - unable to stop using the internet (item 3 or 4). Internal consistency reliability (coefficient alpha) for the Problematic Internet Use Questionnaire is estimated to be .94.

3.7.5. Social Comparison

⁶ Allan and Gilbert (1995) created this scale to assess self-perceptions of social rank and relative social standing. This 11-item scale employs a semantic differential methodology. ²⁴ Participants must conduct a worldwide evaluation of themselves in comparison to others and rate themselves on a ten-point scale. The 11 criteria address ¹² rank, attractiveness, and how well the respondent believes they 'fit in' with others in society. Low scores indicate sentiments of inferiority and general low self-esteem. The Social Comparison Scale's internal consistency reliability estimate (coefficient alpha) is .91.

¹ 3.7.6. Body Dysmorphic Disorder

The Body Dysmorphic Disorder Questionnaire ⁴ is a new self-report measure intended to assess the severity of a wide range of body dysmorphic symptoms. The Body Dysmorphic Disorder Questionnaire was created to determine the number of symptoms endorsed and their severity for each set of symptoms. Wilhelm (2006) created the questionnaire, which has only four sections and nine yes/no questions. It requests further answers for some of the questions in order to assess the specifics and severity of specific symptoms. Body Dysmorphic Disorder Questionnaire has an internal consistency reliability estimate (coefficient alpha) of .80 (Phillips et al., 1997).

3.8. Procedure

This study was conducted after the approval from departmental ethical board of Bahria University. Scales were administered after the permission of authors and approval from different colleges. Informed consent was signed by each participant. The data was kept confidential and utilized for research purpose only.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Quantitative data collected from all participants were entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Certain statistical analysis were run on data; descriptive analysis, bivariate correlation and t-test analysis etc. These analysis were run to meet the hypothesis of the study.

The results of statistical analysis are illustrated below:

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics Of The Sample Of The Study (N=179)

Demographics		<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Age	16	6	3.4
	17	22	12.3
	18	28	15.6
	19	44	24.6
	20	40	22.3
	21	24	13.4
	Gender	Male	87
Female		92	51.4
Education	1st year	33	18.4
	2nd year	43	24.0
Internet usage time in one day	5 hours	52	29.1
	10 hours	55	30.7
	15 hours	43	24.0
	20 hours	29	16.2

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Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage of the participants with respect to age, Gender, Education and Internet usage time in one day.

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Table 2

Psychometric Properties Of Study Variables (N=179)

	M	SD	Range	Cronbach's alpha a
Celebrity Attitude Scale	94.19	15.12	10-25	.81
Problematic Internet use scale	17.51	3.10	44-137	.77
Social Comparison scale	59.22	10.14	29-85	.54
Body Dysmorphic Disorder Questionnaire	13.67	1.58	10-18	.53

Table 2 Shows the Psychometric properties of the study variables used in present study. The Cronbach's alpha value for Celebrity Attitude Scale was .81 ($> .70$) which indicated satisfactory internal consistency. The Cronbach's alpha value for Problematic internet use was .77 ($> .70$) which indicated satisfactory internal consistency. The Cronbach's alpha value for Social comparison scale was .54 ($< .70$) which indicated low internal consistency. The Cronbach's alpha value for Body dysmorphic disorder scale was .53 ($< .70$) which indicated low internal consistency.

Table 3

Inter-Scale Correlation Of Study Variables (N=179) The Bivariate Correlation

Problematic	Celebrity	Social	Body
-------------	-----------	--------	------

	Internet use	worship	Comparison	Dysmorphia
Problematic	1	-	-	-
Internet use				
Celebrity	.31	1	-	-
worship				
Social	.17	-.80**	1	-
Comparison				
Body	-.063	.66**	-.66**	1
Dysmorphia				

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2- tailed)

The table 3 shows that problematic internet use is positively correlated with celebrity worship ($r = .31, p < 0.001$) and social comparison tendencies ($r = .17, p < 0.05$). Additionally, celebrity worship is negatively correlated with social comparison tendencies ($r = -.80^{**}, p < 0.001$) and positively correlated with body dysmorphia symptoms ($r = -.66^{**}, p < 0.001$). Moreover, social comparison tendencies are negatively correlated with body dysmorphia symptoms ($r = -.66^{**}, p < 0.001$).

Table 4

t-Test Analysis Between Male And Female Individuals On Study Variables (N=179)

	Male (n=89)		Female (n=90)		t	p	95% CI		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL	
PIUQ	17.38	3.23	17.65	2.98	-.588	-.088	-.381	.205	3.11
CAS	86.28	16.35	99.52	10.98	-6.36	-.95	-1.26	-.64	13.91
SCS	64.04	8.88	58.62	7.52	4.40	.65	.35	.95	8.22
BDDQ	13.67	1.40	14.46	1.30	-3.85	-.57	-.87	-.27	.35

Table 4 revealed that there are significant gender differences in celebrity attitude, social comparison, and body dysmorphic disorder symptoms. Females tend to have higher scores on the Celebrity Attitude Scale, indicating a greater interest or preoccupation with celebrities. However, males and females differ in their social comparison tendencies, with males showing higher scores. Furthermore, females exhibit higher levels of body dysmorphic disorder symptoms compared to males. The problematic internet use questionnaire value of Cohen's d was 3.11 indicating small size effect. The celebrity attitude scale value of Cohen's d was 13.91 indicating large effect size. The social comparison scale value of Cohen's d was 8.22 indicating medium effect size. The body dysmorphic disorder questionnaire value of Cohen's d was .35 indicating medium effect size.

Table 5

t-Test Analysis Between Education Individuals On Study Variables (N=179)

	1 st year(n=95)		2 nd year (n=84)		t	p	95% CI		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL	
	PIUQ	17.57	3.13	16.93			3.26	.870	
CAS	90.78	14.22	93.27	13.23	-.787	-.182	-.63	.27	13.67
SCS	62.06	7.72	61.81	7.45	.141	.033	-.421	.486	7.57
BDDQ	13.79	1.21	14.09	1.34	-1.02	-.237	-.691	.219	1.29

Table 5 revealed that there are no significant differences between 1st year and 2nd year students in terms of problematic internet use, celebrity attitude, social comparison, and body dysmorphic disorder symptoms. The effect sizes of the scales are generally small, suggesting that the differences observed between the two groups are minimal and unlikely to have substantial practical significance (it means that the variations in the measured variables between the two groups are small and not practically meaningful or substantial).

Table 6

One-Way Analysis Of Variance Of Age In Individuals Of Study Variables (n=179)

	³¹ 16 years(n=6)		17 years(n=22)		18 years(n=28)		F	p	η^2
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
BDDQ	13.83	1.47	13.82	1.59	14.04	1.13	1.27	.273	.042

	⁴⁷ 19 years(n=44)		20 years(n=40)		21 years(n=24)		F	p	η^2
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
BDDQ	13.95	1.38	14.58	1.59	13.75	.989	1.27	.273	.042

The ANOVA results show that there is a statistically significant difference in age among individuals in the study variables (BDDQ) across the different age groups (16 years, 17 years, 18 years, 19 years, 20 years, and 21 years). The F-value (1.27) is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the mean age is significantly different among the six age groups. The effect size (η^2) is small (0.042), suggesting that only a small proportion of the variance in age is accounted for by the group differences. This indicates that the variable of age may not be strongly associated with the study variables related to body dysmorphic disorder (BDDQ).

Table 7

One-Way Analysis Of Variance Of Internet Usage Time In Individuals Of Study

Variables (n=179)

		M	SD	F	p	η^2
PUIQ	5	17.64	3.42	.759	.518	.012
	hours(n=57)					
	10	17.91	2.84	-	-	-
	hours(n=48)					
	15	17.38	3.15	-	-	-
	hours(n=39)					
	20	16.91	2.85	-	-	-
	hours(n=35)					

The ANOVA results show that there is no significant difference in internet usage time among individuals in the study variables (PUIQ) across the different groups (5 hours, 10 hours, 15 hours, and 20 hours). The F-value (0.759) is not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$), indicating that the mean internet usage time is not significantly different among the four groups. The effect size (η^2) is small (0.012), suggesting that only a small proportion of the variance in internet usage time is accounted for by the group differences. This indicates that the variable of problematic internet use (PUIQ) may not be strongly associated with different levels of internet usage time.

Table 8

Linear Regression Analysis Of Problematic Internet use On Body Dysmorphia(N=179)

Variable	B	β	SE
Constant	14.57***		.605
Problematic Internet Use	-.029	-.063	.034
R^2	.004		

Note. N=179

The constant term in the regression equation is 14.57*** with a standard error (SE) of 0.605. The constant represents the predicted value of body dysmorphia when problematic internet use is zero. The coefficient (B) for problematic internet use is -0.029, indicating a negative relationship with body dysmorphia. The standardized beta (β) is -0.063, which means that a one-unit increase in problematic internet use is associated with a decrease of 0.063 standard deviations in body dysmorphia. The standard error (SE) for problematic internet use is 0.034. The R-squared value is 0.004, indicating that only 0.4% of the variance in body dysmorphia can be explained by problematic internet use in this model. This value suggests that problematic internet use is not a strong predictor of body dysmorphia in the given sample.

Table 9

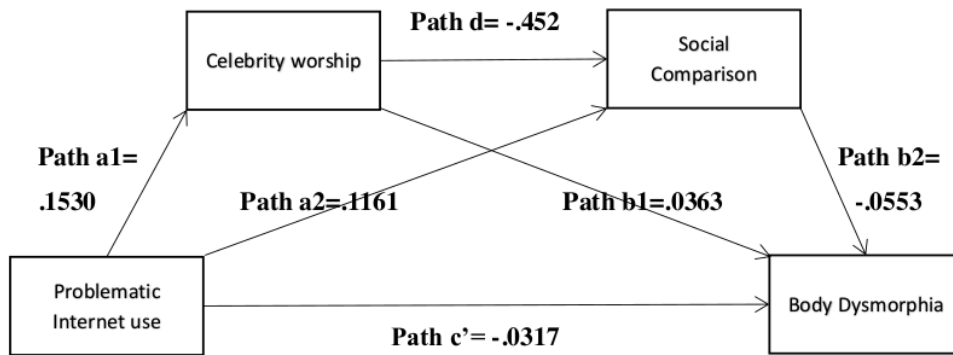
Mediating Effect of celebrity worship and Social Comparison for the relationship between Problematic Internet use and Body Dysmorphia (N=179)

Variables	Body Dysmorphia		
	β	95% CI	
		LL	UL
Indirect			
Problematic Internet use → Celebrity worship	.012	-.083	.099
Problematic Internet use → Social Comparison	-.014	-.068	.012
Problematic Internet use → Celebrity worship → Social comparison	.008	-.035	.064

The coefficient (β) for the indirect effect of problematic internet use on body dysmorphia through celebrity worship is 0.012. The 95% confidence interval (CI) ranges from -0.083 to 0.099. Since the CI includes zero, the indirect effect is not statistically significant. This suggests that celebrity worship does not mediate the relationship between problematic internet use and body dysmorphia. The coefficient (β) for the indirect effect of problematic internet use on body dysmorphia through social comparison is -0.014. The 95% confidence interval (CI) ranges from -0.068 to 0.012. Again, since the CI includes zero, the indirect effect is not statistically significant. This indicates that social comparison does not mediate the relationship between problematic internet use and body dysmorphia. The coefficient (β) for the indirect effect of problematic internet use on body dysmorphia through both celebrity worship and social comparison is 0.008. The 95% confidence interval (CI) ranges

from -0.035 to 0.064. Once again, since the CI includes zero, the combined indirect effect is not statistically significant. This suggests that neither celebrity worship nor social comparison, when considered together, mediate ⁷ the relationship between problematic internet use and body dysmorphia.

Figure 4.1



CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

⁵² The present study investigated the intricate relationships between problematic internet use, celebrity worship, social comparison tendencies, and body dysmorphia in a sample of 179 individuals. The findings give light on the potential interactions between these variables and provide insight on their combined influence on body image concerns.

The first finding, ¹⁹ that there is a significant positive link between problematic internet use and celebrity worship, is consistent with past studies. Excessive internet use, particularly on social media platforms, has been shown in studies to establish parasocial relationships with celebrities and increase levels of celebrity worship (McCutcheon et al., 2020). This research emphasises the impact of the digital era on people's perceptions of and interactions with celebrities.

Celebrity worship, according to the mediation analysis, ⁷ partially mediates the ⁴⁵ association between problematic internet use and body dysmorphia. This finding is consistent with previous research that has emphasised the function of celebrity parasocial contacts in influencing body image concerns (Maltby et al., 2003). It implies that those who participate in problematic internet use and have close relationships with celebrities may be more prone to body dysmorphia due to the perceived effect of these celebrities on appearance ideals.

The study also discovered that social comparison tendencies influence the relationship between celebrity worship and body dysmorphia. ²⁸ This finding is consistent with previous research that emphasises the significance of social comparison in the development and maintenance of body dissatisfaction and dysmorphia (Thompson et

al., 2004). The need to compare oneself to idealised images of celebrities displayed on social media platforms may create negative body evaluations.

However, the overall indirect effects of problematic internet use on body dysmorphia were shown to be minimal through both celebrity worship and societal comparison. This data implies that, while celebrity worship and social comparison are factors in association between problematic internet use and body dysmorphia, they are not the only ones. Individual characteristics, cultural influences, and self-esteem may also play a substantial role (Fardouly et al., 2017).

The gender differences observed in the relationships among the variables are consistent with prior research indicating that body image concerns and celebrity worship can vary between males and females (Mulgrew et al., 2019). Cultural norms and societal pressures may play a role in shaping these gender differences, warranting further investigation.

5.1. Limitations

This particular study has a variety of limitations, much as other studies. They are categorized on the basis of higher potential values and lower potential values. First, the study sample was rather small, chosen from a particular age group, had a certain level of education, and may not have been representative of a wide range of ethnic and racial origins. As a result, the results could not be typical of the larger population, which limits the applicability of the study findings to other contexts.

Second, the study cross-sectional methodology limits the development of causal links between the variables under investigation. Any causal arguments obtained from the results are weakened by the inability to identify the temporal order of occurrences.

Thirdly, response bias and social desirability bias are potential outcomes of the study dependence on self-report measures for all study variables. The results of the

study may be influenced by participants' subjective perceptions and desire to provide truthful information.

Fourth, there may be common method variance if all study variables are self-reported. The correlations between the variables could be inflated by the shared evaluation procedure, thereby hiding the actual relationships.

Additionally, ²⁵ the study did not take into consideration any potential confounding factors that might have affected the connections between study variables, such as personality traits, socio-economic position, or particular internet habits. If these factors are not taken into account, potential confounding effects could be introduced.

5.2. Recommendations

To strengthen the study validity and comprehensiveness, several important recommendations are put forth. First, enlarging the sample size and diversifying participant demographics, including individuals from various age groups, educational levels, and cultural backgrounds, would enhance the findings general applicability. Second, adopting a longitudinal research design would allow for investigating the temporal connections between problematic internet use, celebrity worship, social comparison, and body dysmorphia, offering deeper insights into causality and changes over time. To minimize common method bias, utilizing multiple data collection methods, such as objective measures and observer ratings, in addition to self-report questionnaires, is crucial.

Moreover, accounting for potential confounding variables, such as personality traits and socio-economic status, would improve the study internal validity. Clinical assessments for body dysmorphia, along with self-report questionnaires, would provide more accurate prevalence and severity information. Qualitative data collection would also complement quantitative findings, delving deeper into

participants' experiences and perspectives. Exploring the connections between problematic internet use and specific online activities would further elucidate the impact of diverse internet behaviours on psychological well-being. Additionally, considering the influence of cultural and social contexts on study variables would yield a broader understanding across different populations. Finally, conducting subgroup analyses based on relevant characteristics would reveal potential variations in the relationships among study variables within specific subgroups. By incorporating these recommendations in future research, the study can address its limitations and contribute to a more comprehensive comprehension of the associations between problematic internet use, celebrity worship, social comparison, and body dysmorphia, ultimately guiding targeted interventions to promote healthier online behaviours and overall well-being.

5.3. Conclusion

This study provides insight into the complicated interplay of problematic internet use, celebrity worship, social comparison, and body dysmorphia. According to the findings, problematic internet use can lead to increased celebrity worship, which, in turn, may contribute to body dysmorphia through the influence of idealised celebrity pictures and social comparison tendencies. It is crucial to emphasise, however, that while these characteristics contribute to the link between problematic internet use and body dysmorphia, other individual and cultural factors may also be at work.

The findings of this study emphasise the necessity of addressing body image concerns and problematic internet use in both male and female, particularly in the context of celebrity worship and social comparison. The independent sample t-test shows that females are more prone to celebrity worship as compared to men. Healthcare professionals and practitioners should be aware of the possible effects of excessive

internet use and celebrity worship on body image concerns, and they should think about including therapies that promote good body image and self-worth.

5.4. Implications

It emphasises the importance of therapies and prevention efforts that address the complex relationships that exist between problematic internet use, celebrity worship, social comparison, and body dysmorphia. Interventions that target these elements collectively may be more helpful in fostering positive body image and well-being. Second, the study emphasises the significance of taking gender-specific characteristics into account and altering interventions accordingly. Recognising the differences in how these characteristics affect males and females can lead to more targeted and individualised responses. Finally, ¹ the findings of the study have implications for developing therapies, encouraging body positivity, and improving psychological well-being.

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