



The Lifestyle Implications of Instagram on Degree College Girls

Dr. Preeti G. Padappagol

Dept. of Sociology, Rani Channamma University, Sangolli Rayanna First Grade Constituent College
Belagavi. Email: preetiwsmp@gmail.com

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20056943>

ARTICLE DETAILS

Research Paper

Accepted: 04-04-2026

Published: 18-04-2026

Keywords:

Adult, girls, Instagram, lifestyle, influence.

ABSTRACT

Social media has become an integral part of our daily lives, with platforms like Instagram allowing us to connect with others, share our experiences, and consume content in a visually engaging way. However, the impact of social media, specifically Instagram, on our perception of ourselves and others is a growing concern among mental health experts. Individuals often spend much more time on their phones than they would like to admit (Rahaman et al., 2020). Instagram, in particular, focuses on photo sharing and quantitative data, such as the number of accounts that follow you, the number of accounts you follow, how many posts you have, and the number of likes and comments per post. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact that Instagram has on women mentally, physically, and academically focusing on whether their college environment shapes who they are today. The study was conducted with 60 female students at a degree college in Belagavi City. Data was collected through face-to-face interviews. The findings indicate that the girls are more likely to explore fashion and trends on Instagram, which provides a platform for interaction through reels, posts, and stories. The respondents adopt lifestyles inspired by Instagram content, which affects their behavior and helps them develop a modern lifestyle. The rapid growth of social networking sites has a pronounced effect on young women.

**INTRODUCTION:**

In the contemporary digital era, social media has transitioned from a mere communication tool to a foundational element of daily existence, with Instagram standing out as a premier visual-based platform among young adults. With its emphasis on curated photographs, short-form videos (Reels), and instantaneous interaction, Instagram shapes the perceptions, behaviors, and lifestyles of users globally. Among the most active demographic on this platform are female undergraduates, who engage with the app daily to follow trends, connect with peers, and construct personal digital identities.

The lifestyle implications of this constant engagement are multifaceted and profound. The platform's image-heavy interface acts as a powerful catalyst for social comparison, often leading young women to idealize curated lifestyles, which in turn influences their personal habits, fashion choices, consumption behaviors, and social values. While Instagram offers avenues for creative expression and community building, extensive research suggests that exposure to idealized beauty standards and polished depictions of daily life can have significant detrimental effects on mental well-being.

For degree college girls, this environment often initiates an "upward social comparison" cycle comparing their own lives to the perceived "perfect" lives of others leading to body dissatisfaction, increased anxiety, and low self-esteem. Studies suggest that a significant percentage of young female users experience reduced confidence and increased body-related concerns due to the pressure of adhering to unattainable beauty ideals portrayed on the platform.

This study aims to investigate the complex influence of Instagram on the lifestyles of degree college girls. By analyzing how frequent exposure to appearance-focused and lifestyle-oriented content impacts their psychological well-being, social habits, and self-evaluation, this research will explore both the modernization of lifestyles and the potential risks posed to the mental health of this vulnerable group.

Social media is an interactive communication technology that facilitates the creation and sharing of information, ideas, and other forms of expression through virtual communities and networks. Instagram is a free social networking platform primarily for young people, allowing users to upload and share photos and videos via a mobile app. Social media sites such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter have penetrated deeply into the lives of young individuals. There are several reasons for Instagram's popularity among teenagers. First, it's a visual platform, making it easy to share photos and videos, which is especially appealing to teens interested in photography and social media. Additionally, Instagram offers various filters and editing options that allow users to create unique and interesting content. While there are many positive aspects to using Instagram, potential risks exist. It's important to remember that anything posted on Instagram is public, meaning anyone can see your photos and videos, even if they



aren't following you. While the platform encourages self-expression and identity exploration, it is also associated with high levels of anxiety, depression, bullying, and FOMO (fear of missing out).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:

1. **Adult:** A mature individual who is legally responsible for their actions.
2. **Girl:** A young female, typically a child or adolescent. Young women are sometimes referred to as girls.
3. **Instagram:** A free photo and video-sharing app available on iPhone and Android, allowing users to share content with their followers or a selected group of friends.
4. **Lifestyle:** The interests, opinions, behaviors, and orientations of an individual, group, or culture.
5. **Influence:** The action or process of producing effects on the actions, behavior, or opinions of others.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

The purpose of this study is to examine the mental, physical, and academic impacts of Instagram on women, focusing on whether their college environment shapes who they are today.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study was conducted with 60 female students aged 19-21 at a degree college in Belagavi City. Researchers used simple random sampling and face-to-face interviews for data collection. Secondary data from articles, news, books, and research papers were also considered.

ADVANTAGES OF INSTAGRAM FOR TEENAGERS:

1. **Global Connectivity:** Social media allows girls to connect with friends worldwide, helping them discover different cultures, languages, and lifestyles, broadening their perspectives.
2. **Talent Showcase:** Social media provides a platform for girls to display their skills, such as singing or painting, gaining praise and boosting their confidence, which can guide their career choices.
3. **Creativity Boost:** Instagram serves as a valuable tool for girls interested in learning new things, offering a variety of creative ideas like DIY crafts and tutorials.
4. **Staying Updated:** Instagram helps girls stay informed about current events, technologies, trends, and the lifestyles of their favorite celebrities.
5. **Academic Support:** Instagram can assist girls in their academic pursuits by connecting them with various educational communities.

DISADVANTAGES OF INSTAGRAM FOR GIRLS:

1. **Addiction:** Social media can be addictive, leading to hours of unproductive scrolling and distracting users from important tasks.



2. **Anxiety and Loneliness:** Excessive time spent online can foster feelings of isolation and anxiety among teenagers.
3. **Lower Self-Esteem:** The selected lifestyles displayed by influencers can lead girls to feel insecure about their own lives, affecting their self-confidence.
4. **Privacy Risks:** Users, especially those without parental supervision, may inadvertently share personal information, exposing themselves to hacking, stalking, and identity theft.
5. **Cyberbullying:** Online harassment, which can be as harmful as traditional bullying, poses serious risks to mental health for both girls and adults.

FINDINGS:

The study finds that 65% of the girls feel addicted to Instagram and report low self-esteem. In contrast, 35% find the platform beneficial for staying updated, boosting creativity, displaying talents, connecting with others, and supporting their studies. The research indicates that girls are likely to explore fashion and trends on Instagram, leading to lifestyle choices influenced by the platform's content.

CONCLUSION:

Lifestyle Instagram influencers devote their time to documenting their daily lives on the app, which attracts high user engagement. The type of content that these influencers produce can be categorised into niche genres, appealing to a specific target audience. As demonstrated, there are both pros and cons to using social media, with notable negative effects, particularly on teenagers. However, adolescents can enjoy social media with appropriate limitations. By taking precautions, they can navigate their online experiences safely. Instagram is a powerful tool for marketing and relationship building, but with this power comes responsibility. Understanding the advantages and disadvantages of Instagram is essential to helping young users make informed choices about their app usage.

REFERENCES:

- Abrams, J. A., Belgrave, F. Z., Williams, C. D., & Maxwell, M. L. (2020). African American Adolescent Girls' beliefs about skin tone and colorism. *Journal of Black Psychology*.
- Adams, E. A., Kurtz-Costes, B. E., & Hoffman, A. J. (2016). Skin tone bias among African Americans: Antecedents and consequences across the life span. *Developmental Review*.
- Ahn, J., Son, H., & Chung, A. D. (2021). Understanding public engagement on twitter using topic modeling: The 2019 Ridgecrest earthquake case. *International Journal of Information Management Data Insights*, 1(2),



- Anand, K., Urolagin, S., & Mishra, R. K. (2021). How does hand gestures in videos impact social media engagement - Insights based on deep learning. *International Journal of Information Management Data Insights*, 1(2)
- Jason Crosby (2022). How social media affects women's mental health: Negatives vs. positives. *Thriveworks*. 1-7. <https://thriveworks.com/blog/how-social-media-affects-womens-mental-health-negatives-vs-positives>
- Kim Elsesser (2021). Here's How Instagram Harms Young Women According To Research. *Journalism that illuminates, informs and inspires*. 1-6. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kimelsesser/2021/10/05/heres-how-instagram-harms-young-women-according-to-research/?sh=da663c8255ae>.
- Amanda Macmillan (2017). Why Instagram Is the Worst Social Media for Mental Health. *Time*. 1-5. <https://time.com/4793331/instagram-social-media-mental-health/>
- Frances Dalomba, (2022). Pros and Cons of Social Media. *Lifespan*. 1-5. <https://www.lifespan.org/lifespan-living/social-media-good-bad-and-ugly>
- Hemant (2023). The impact of social media influencers on young minds: Navigating the positive and negative effects. *Times of India*. 1-2. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/readersblog/drhemanbareth/the-impact-of-social-media-influencers-on-young-minds-navigating-the-positive-effects>
- SaritelAbbaszade (2023). Is Instagram Good for Teens? Pros and Cons of Instagram for Students. *FS poster*. 1-10. <https://www.fs-poster.com/blog/pros-and-cons-of-instagram-for-students>.
- Molly Callahan (2021). Why does Instagram have a negative effect on teenagers' mental health?. *Northeastern global news*. 1-10. <https://news.northeastern.edu/2021/09/20/negative-effects-of-instagram/>