

Exploring the Discrepancy: The Influence of Instagram in Shaping Idealized Lifestyles and Self-Perceptions Among Indian University Students

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Abstract : The survey aims to explore the impact of Instagram on the perception of lifestyle aspirations (such as social life, fitness, trends followed in fashion, etc.) and perception of self in relation to an idealized lifestyle: Amidst today's media-saturated environment, university students are constantly exposed to idealized portrayals of lifestyles, often leading to unrealistic expectations and dissatisfaction with their own lives. This study investigates the impact of media on university students' perceptions of their own lifestyle, the discrepancy between their self-perception and idealized lifestyle, and their mental health. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study combines quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to understand the issue comprehensively. A literature review was conducted in order to determine the effects of idealized lifestyle portrayal on Instagram; however, less attention has been received in the Indian setting. The researchers wish to employ a convenience sampling method among undergraduate students from India. The surveys that would be employed for quantitative analysis are Negative Social Media Comparison (NSMCS), Lifestyle Satisfaction Scale (LSS), Psychological Well-being Scale (PWB), and Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents (SPPA). The qualitative aspect would include in-depth interviews to provide deeper insights into participants' experiences and the mechanisms by which media influences their lifestyle aspirations and mental health. With the aim of being an exploratory study, the basis of the idea is found in the social comparison theory described by Leon Festinger. The findings aim to inform interventions to promote realistic expectations about lifestyle, reduce the negative effects of media on university students, and improve their mental health and well-being.

Keywords : declined self-perception, idealized lifestyle, Instagram, Indian university students, social comparison

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