

## The Role of Body Image Satisfaction and Self-Awareness on Social Functioning of Female Adolescents

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### Abstract

*This study examined the role of body image satisfaction and self-awareness in shaping the social functioning of female adolescents in Nigeria. The objectives were to investigate the influence of body image satisfaction on social functioning, assess the effect of self-awareness on social functioning, determine their combined influence, and analyze differences in social functioning based on the frequency of social media use. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted, involving 300 female adolescents aged 13–18 years from SS1–SS3 classes in public and private senior secondary schools in Yaba, Lagos, Nigeria. Participants were selected using stratified random sampling and completed a structured questionnaire comprising validated scales for body image satisfaction, self-awareness, and social functioning, alongside items on demographic details and social media use frequency. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, simple linear regression, multiple linear regression, and one-way ANOVA at a 95% confidence level. Findings revealed that body image satisfaction significantly influenced social functioning ( $R = 0.934$ ,  $R^2 = 0.872$ ,  $p < .001$ ), indicating that adolescents with higher body image satisfaction demonstrated better social adjustment. Similarly, self-awareness had a strong positive influence on social functioning ( $R = 0.959$ ,  $R^2 = 0.920$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The combined effect of body image satisfaction and self-awareness explained 93.4% of the variance in social functioning ( $R^2 = 0.934$ ,  $p < .001$ ), demonstrating a strong synergistic impact. Additionally, there was a significant difference in social functioning based on the frequency of social media use ( $F(4,295) = 3953.83$ ,  $p < .001$ ), with those who used social media “very often” recording the lowest social functioning scores. The study concludes that body image satisfaction and self-awareness are critical determinants of social functioning, with their joint influence producing the highest levels of social competence.*

**Keywords:** Body Image Satisfaction, Self-Awareness, Social Functioning, Social Media

### Background to the Study

Adolescence is a period when someone’s body, feelings, and relationships with people go through many significant changes. Being satisfied with their bodies and self-aware is very important for female adolescents in Nigeria, where cultural background plays a major role in social life. A person has body image satisfaction when they are comfortable with their physical appearance and factors such as their weight and body shape (Grogan, 2021). To be self-aware, a person should understand their feelings and how they influence their social life (Okeke & Anene, 2023). Because of these factors, female teenagers have certain challenges when dealing with friendships, social programs, and being accepted in society where modern and traditional practices overlap.

In Nigeria, people give great importance to how they look and often highlight distinct traits through special practices and traditions. To give an example, Yoruba culture refers to beautiful people as “adúmáadán” (dark and smooth), indicating an age-old attention to important body traits that still plays a role in today’s standards (Oloruntoba, 2007). Yet, globalisation and all of the Western media in the world have led people to accept certain beauty standards like being slim or having certain facial features, which may clash with previous traditions and put pressure on females to fit in (Adekunle & Okorie, 2023). Feeling this way can bring about displeasure with a person’s body and might have negative effects on both their self-esteem and interactions with others (Omoponle, 2020).

While previous studies in Nigeria have largely described people’s views on body image and social life, they have not paid much attention to how self-awareness plays a role. Koleoso et al. (2018) discovered that when adolescents have limited health literacy, they usually feel worse about their body, yet their study did not look at the effects of self-awareness. On the same note, although Asagba et al. (2016) pointed out the effects of society’s beauty ideas on Nigerian youth, they failed to research the partnership between body image satisfaction, self-awareness, and social results. In addition, many studies show that social media and selfitis influence females’ body image. But so far, they have not explored their impact on social relationships in detail (Ayanadele & Popoola, 2020). This research is designed to address these matters by studying how body satisfaction and self-knowledge affect social relationships of female adolescents in Nigeria.

### **The Current study**

The way females interact in their society in Nigeria matters a lot, and it is guided by their body image and self-awareness. During adolescence, females are extra sensitive about their appearances and what others think, so they become more prone to poor body image thoughts (Omoponle, 2020). Nigeria’s cultural clashes and the influence of media cause people to become dissatisfied with their bodies, which leads to less self-esteem and disruption in social interactions (Adekunle & Okorie, 2023). Those unhappy with their body are more likely to feel lonely, unconfident, and keep away from social meetings, where it becomes harder to make strong friendships and easier to let others reject them (Jung & Lee, 2006; Omoponle & Olanrewaju, 2019). Values and trends in culture that highlight certain body features, as well as the culture of posting many selfies on social media, tend to make these issues worse and reduce open communication with people (Oloruntoba, 2007; Hamed et al., 2022).

Both self-awareness and reflection help us achieve smooth relationships with people. Because of low self-awareness, negative body image may encourage someone to isolate themselves or rely on what others think of them (Packiaselvi & Malathi, 2017). Since adolescents in Nigeria learn mainly about academics and do not address their emotional development, along with negative views toward mental illness, these rising pressures can result in more anxiety and depression among teens (Malik et al., 2017; Adewuyi, 2021). Being raised in an authoritarian manner can make bad outcomes in children become worse (Kanmodi, 2020). Although these factors matter a lot, different studies have not adequately addressed how body image satisfaction and self-awareness influence social life among Nigerian female adolescents, which is why our study is necessary and focused on solving this gap. The main objective of this study is to investigate the influence of body image satisfaction and self-awareness on the social functioning of female adolescents in Nigeria. Specific objectives include to: (a) examine the influence of body image satisfaction on the social functioning of female adolescents, (b) determine the effect of self-awareness on the social functioning of female adolescents (c) assess the joint influence of body image satisfaction and self-awareness on the

social functioning of female adolescents (d) analyse differences in social functioning based on the frequency of social media use.

### **Literature Review**

The review of literature looks into studies conducted on body image satisfaction, self-awareness, and social functions in female adolescents. Adolescence brings many changes, so females need to develop their body image and be conscious of who they are.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

This concept of self-awareness involves many sides, for example, emotions, thoughts, personality, goals, appearance, and things such as self-evaluation, self-regulation, and having a sense of agency (Morin, 2011; Ben-Artzi et al., 1995). In contrast to consciousness, self-awareness calls for focusing inward, during which individuals reflect on what happens to them (e.g., “I am feeling anxious” or “I acted confidently”). Adaptation to the world and introspection back home are both needed for an adolescent’s growth; while consciousness provides the former, self-awareness provides the latter (Natsoulas, 1996). Self-awareness can be simple or much more sophisticated. To illustrate, representing your thoughts and feelings is part of conceptual self-consciousness, and including memories and theories about other people’s opinions is featured in meta-representational self-consciousness. On the highest level, meta-self-awareness, a person is aware that they are aware of themselves, which benefits their ability to control their behavior and interact with others. As Nigerian adolescents deal with peers and what society expects, they need to think about who they are and see things from others’ viewpoints (Rahmayanti et al., 2020).

### **Self-Evaluation and Social Adjustment**

Being conscious of one’s actions encourages individuals to look at their traits and find ways to match them with their hopes, which mostly leads to being hard on themselves or making an effort to fix any differences. Silvia and Duval (2001) believed that gaps between actual and ideal selves can make people avoid learning new things, yet high expectations for a positive result can help them work on themselves. Given this, if a student sees that her results are below her goals, she might either shut down (by not studying) or engage in efforts to get better, depending on her self-belief (Carver, 2002).

Self-evaluation has the ability to positively or negatively affect a person’s well-being in social situations. Teenagers who are aware of themselves and behave respectfully often get accepted by their peers (Rahmayanti et al., 2020). But constantly judging ourselves wrongly, mainly about appearance, can cause people to stay away from others, as research reveals (Vannucci & Ohannessian, 2018). When self-aware students change their behaviour to fit in with their peers in Nigeria, where everyone supports the same values, they might form solid bonds of friendship (Akinola et al., 2022).

### **Body Image Satisfaction**

Body image (BI) refers to a person’s mental perspective about how they look physically and reflects aspects of the mind, body, and emotions (e.g., Secchi et al., 2009 and Malette et al., 2013). These dimensions are perceptive, cognitive, affective, and behavioral: the first concerns the general perception of the entire body, the second looks at detailed thoughts about different body parts, the third covers feelings about one’s body, and the fourth appears as actions related to those thoughts and feelings (Thompson et al., 2002). The meaning of beauty is flexible since it is affected by many factors and may not resemble a person’s body

(Vaquero-Cristóbal et al., 2013). In Yaba, Lagos, female adolescents in senior secondary schools are especially affected by these issues as they go through major changes and deal with expectations from the people around them (Beesdo-Baum & Knappe, 2012).

Satisfaction with how a person looks is very important, as it affects social skills and relationships in adolescents (Thompson et al., 1999). Confidence acquired from a good body image encourages girls in their teens to get involved with their peers, take part in positive activities, and remain involved in social gatherings (Boberová & Husárová, 2021). Alternatively, not being happy with body image, often because of a mismatch between what someone sees and would like, tends to make people, especially adolescents, feel anxious in social settings, alone, unaccepted by their peers, and unable to connect well with them (Omoponle & Olanrewaju, 2019).

### **Socio-Cultural Influences on Body Image Satisfaction**

Body image is always changing, as it depends on individual opinions, experiences, and self-views, plus the influence of society and the media (Vaquero-Cristóbal et al., 2013; Santos et al., 2014). In urban parts of Lagos, such as Yaba, access to information is vast, and because of this, female adolescents are more affected by images that show what beauty should look like, mostly thin and perfect (Akinola et al., 2022). Most of the time, they cause teenagers to think they are not enough by contrasting themselves with images that are too hard to achieve (Lôbo et al., 2020). In her opinion, social and cultural standards of the body designate certain traits as important, which ends up forming a “usual” body for every culture. In this country, traditional Yoruba values for elegance and beauty contrast with the current media’s standards of being thin, so young people feel influenced by both pressures (Oloruntoba, 2007).

Being able to notice your own actions and process information about yourself is called self-awareness, and it plays a significant role in a person’s social life, mostly during adolescence (Duval & Wicklund, 1972). Thanks to having this skill, people can understand their minds and their actions better, which helps them handle challenging social situations.

Self-awareness makes emotions stronger, which can increase both happiness and sadness in a person (Carver & Scheier, 1981). If an adolescent is aware of how they feel, they might take part in the event with their peers and build stronger relationships (Silvia, 2002). Turning our attention to shame about appearance often increases social anxiety and lowers the person’s involvement in social activities (Scheier, 1976). Since social media highlights physical appearance, students who pay a lot of attention to perceived weak points may end up feeling more inadequate and less confident with others (Heiman & Olenik-Shemesh, 2019).

In adolescence, the emotions people feel are especially strong and can cause more problems, which is a key aspect of the amplification effect (Beesdo-Baum & Knappe, 2012). Those school students who are aware of their distress after being rejected by peers may skip school events (Twenge et al., 2003). Mindfulness practices and other such interventions could help people reduce these effects by making them reflect on good qualities, encouraging them to interact socially (Alleva et al., 2018).

### **Self-Knowledge and Social Confidence**

Nigerian girls need to know themselves as they deal with beauty pressures. People who focus on their inner qualities instead of how they look are less likely to conform to society’s ideals and behave more healthily in social life (Okeke & Anene, 2023). Still, since modesty is valued in many cultures, building this skill without help may be difficult for students (Malik et al., 2017). Activities such as journaling that help a person describe themselves might add to

their social sense and maybe encourage them to work better with others (Davis & Franzoi, 1986).

### **Interplay of Body Image Satisfaction, Self-Awareness, and Social Functioning**

Researchers say that understanding the link among body image satisfaction, self-awareness, and social functioning matters a lot, especially for urban adolescent girls living in Yaba, Lagos, Nigeria. Satisfaction with one's body and self-awareness are, respectively, the individual's contentment with physical looks and the ability to think about emotions and thoughts (Duval & Wicklund, 1972; Thompson et al., 1999). The term social functioning means a person's ability to connect with others, notice social behaviors, and take part in activities with groups (Rahmayanti et al., 2020). All of these factors together play a role in guiding adolescents' interactions with people and how they change and adapt.

### **Body Image Satisfaction and Its Socio-Cultural Context**

Body image satisfaction covers different mental, emotional, and behavioural reactions to a person's physical image (Cash et al., 2004). Out of adolescents, almost three-quarters are expectedly unsatisfied with how they look, with females seeking a thinner look and boys wanting to be more physically strong (Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health, 2020). Adolescents are much more displeased in their early teenage years, which coincides with many changes to their bodies (Bosacki, 2019). The cultural belief in Nigeria that women should have smooth, slim, or special shapes adds more stress to the situation for females (Oloruntoba, 2007). Living in places like Yaba gives teens many chances to see global images on social media that encourage girls to be thin and boys to be muscular, which leads to comparing themselves with the ideal and lowering their regular satisfaction with their own appearance (Akinola et al., 2022; Lôbo et al., 2020).

### **Social Functioning: The Role of Body Image and Self-Awareness**

Being satisfied with body image and understanding oneself helps people interact socially with others, take part in group activities, and manage their emotions. Young people who are satisfied with their appearance and self-aware are more confident, caring, and adaptable, which allows them to create valuable relationships (Adeyemi & Salami, 2021; Rahmayanti et al., 2020). If a woman is self-aware and cares for her appearance, she often tends to do prosocial acts and cooperate with people in school, which boosts her place in the social group (Yavuzer, 2015). Alternatively, when adolescents are dissatisfied with their body and also lack self-awareness, this can cause them social issues since they may either assume others judge them wrongly or pull away secretly (Jung & Lee, 2006; Vannucci & Ohannessian, 2018).

### **Gender and Cultural Influences in Nigeria**

Gender plays a big role in body image; how we see ourselves and how we relate to others are connected. Girls in Nigeria often have to focus on their looks, since it is culturally expected for women to look neat and slim (Oloruntoba, 2007). Because Nigerian society puts importance on community, people must be aware of their behaviours to live in harmony with the group (Rahmayanti et al., 2020). The double expectation to follow age-old virtues and today's commercial idea of thinness may leave female teens in Yaba easily discouraged about their looks if they lose track of who they are (Akinola et al., 2022). If parents are involved and guide their children accordingly, it increases self-esteem and appreciation for the body, especially in the case of authoritative parenting. By contrast, authoritarian methods can lead to more dissatisfaction with one's body (Kanmodi, 2020; Caron et al., 2016). The use of

social media leads to more deep thoughts as images shared by others are not realistic, which lowers self-esteem (Okoro et al., 2021).

## **Neuropsychological and Developmental Perspectives**

When we watch someone do something or when we do it ourselves, mirror neurons get activated and allow for empathy and understanding of social situations in our lives (Rizzolatti & Sinigaglia, 2008). Among girls, this process enables them to read others' feelings correctly, which improves their relationships as long as they have a good body image (Wallon, 1959b). Nonetheless, when someone has a negative body image, their brain can mix up feelings and become less empathetic, something that is especially common in places that are full of media (Heiman & Olenik-Shemesh, 2019).

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Social Comparison Theory**

According to Leon Festinger's (1954) Social Comparison Theory (SCT), individuals usually compare themselves to other people since clear objective standards are generally not available. Using this theory, the psychological feelings of body satisfaction, how students pay attention to themselves, and how they act among fellow students. In adolescence, people are especially aware of others' opinions and are greatly influenced by the examples and standards they see in the media (Jones, 2001; Mussweiler, 2003). Because of Nigeria's mix of tradition and modern life, SCT plays an important role in dealing with teenage issues.

Body image dissatisfaction is widespread among adolescents, with studies reporting that 76% of children are dissatisfied with their appearance; females often aspire to be thinner due to societal pressures (Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health, 2020). In Nigeria, traditional Yoruba ideals valuing slender figures and modern media portrayals of slimness exacerbate this issue, particularly in urban centres like Yaba (Oloruntoba, 2007; Akinola et al., 2022). SCT explains these dynamics as follows:

**Upward Comparisons with Media Ideals:** Female adolescents frequently compare themselves to idealised media images, such as slim models, leading to feelings of inadequacy if they perceive unattainable discrepancies (Jones, 2001; Lôbo et al., 2020). For example, a student scrolling through social media might think, "I'll never look like her," lowering body satisfaction.

**Peer Comparisons:** In school settings, adolescents engage in comparisons with classmates, particularly regarding appearance traits like body shape or skin tone, which are culturally significant in Nigeria (Okoro et al., 2021).

### **Improving Social Functioning Through Social Comparison**

Social functioning, encompassing peer relationships, group participation, and emotional regulation, is heavily influenced by social comparisons, as adolescents assess their social standing relative to others (Rahmayanti et al., 2020; Baldwin & Mussweiler, 2018). Negative body image driven by unfavourable comparisons can lead to social withdrawal, while constructive comparisons can enhance integration (Vannucci & Ohannessian, 2018).

In Nigeria's tight culture, adolescents use comparisons to align with group norms, such as respectful communication or appropriate dress, enhancing social acceptance (Gelfand et al., 2011; Adeyemi & Salami, 2021). For instance, a student might observe peers' confident posture and emulate it, improving her social presence. Collectivist cultures emphasise interdependent self-construal, where adolescents define themselves through group relations, making comparisons essential for social coordination (Markus & Kitayama, 2010; White & Lehman, 2005). Positive comparisons with supportive peers can boost social confidence and empathy. Interventions can teach adolescents to engage in downward or lateral comparisons to alleviate fears of judgment, encouraging participation in school activities like debates or sports (Yavuzer, 2015). This is crucial in Yaba, where communal events demand active involvement (Ayanadele & Popoola, 2020).

The provided study highlights that adolescents with better social competencies and body satisfaction engage more effectively in social settings, a process SCT can enhance by guiding comparison choices. Professional services, such as peer-led CBT groups integrating SCT principles, can foster adaptive comparisons, strengthening social bonds in Nigeria's collectivist context (Jent et al., in press; Turner & Mohan, 2016).

## **Method**

### **Research Setting**

The study was conducted in an urban setting in Nigeria, characterised by socioeconomic diversity and a blend of traditional cultural values with influences from globalised media. This urban environment exposes female adolescents to both local cultural standards and Western media portrayals of body image, making it an appropriate context for examining the relationships between body image satisfaction, self-awareness, social media use, and social functioning. The inclusion of participants from both public and private secondary schools ensures a diverse sample, capturing variations in socioeconomic and educational backgrounds that may influence adolescents' perceptions and social interactions. Population/Sample and Sampling Procedures

The target population consisted of female adolescents aged 13 to 18 years enrolled in senior secondary school levels (SS1–SS3) across selected urban secondary schools in Lagos Mainland. This age group is critical due to its heightened susceptibility to media influences and ongoing self-concept development, which can shape body image and social behaviours.

The study utilized a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to investigate the relationships between body image satisfaction, self-awareness, social media use, and social functioning at a single point in time. This design is effective for identifying correlations among variables without requiring longitudinal data, aligning with the study's objectives to examine psychological and social dynamics among female adolescents. The approach reflects a positivist framework, emphasizing objective analysis of empirical data to understand factors influencing social functioning in an urban Nigerian context.

### **Research Instruments**

Three validated psychometric instruments, previously used in Nigerian studies and adapted for cultural relevance and the young age of the participants, were employed to measure the key constructs. The adaptations involved simplifying language and adjusting item phrasing to ensure comprehension by adolescents aged 13–18, while maintaining the instruments' psychometric properties. These instruments have been successfully used in prior Nigerian research, confirming their suitability for this context:

**Body Shape Questionnaire (BSQ):** Developed by Cooper et al. (1987), this 34-item Likert-scale instrument (1 = Never, 6 = Always) measures body image satisfaction, with higher scores indicating greater dissatisfaction. The BSQ has high reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.95) and validity in adolescent populations. It has been used in Nigerian studies, to assess body image perceptions among adolescents, demonstrating its cultural applicability.

**Self-Reflection and Insight Scale (SRIS):** Developed by Grant et al. (2002), this 20-item questionnaire assesses self-awareness through subscales for self-reflection and insight, rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). With a Cronbach's alpha of approximately 0.87, it is reliable for adolescent populations. Adeyemi (2021) used the SRIS in Nigeria to evaluate emotional awareness among adolescents, supporting its relevance for this study.

**Social Adjustment Scale-Self Report (SAS-SR):** Developed by Weissman & Bothwell (1976), this Likert-scale instrument (1 = Never, 5 = Always) evaluates social functioning in areas such as peer relations and school adjustment, with a Cronbach's alpha of approximately 0.80. The instruments were adapted to ensure accessibility for younger adolescents by simplifying wording and providing clear instructions, while retaining their validity and reliability, as evidenced by their prior use in Nigerian studies.

### **Ethical Considerations**

This study will adhere to established ethical guidelines for research involving human participants, ensuring the protection of participants' rights, welfare, and dignity throughout the research process. All participants were provided with information about the study's purpose, procedures, duration, and potential risks and benefits. Participants will be clearly informed that their participation is entirely voluntary and that they can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or negative consequences to their academic standing. Strict measures were implemented to protect participant confidentiality. Given the sensitive nature of questions related to body image satisfaction and self-awareness, particular attention was given to participant privacy. Data collection will be conducted in private settings to ensure participants feel comfortable responding honestly. All completed questionnaires will be stored in locked cabinets, and electronic data files will be password-protected. Participants were explicitly informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without justification. They will be assured that partial completion or withdrawal will not result in any academic or personal consequences. This information will be emphasized during the questionnaire administration.

### **Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 26). Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarise demographic variables (age, class level, school type, social media use frequency) and key constructs (body image satisfaction, self-awareness, social functioning).

### **Results**

The results of the data analysis of the study. 300 female adolescent students were sampled in public and private secondary schools in Yaba, Lagos. The findings are presented in the form of descriptive statistics of demographic and study variables and then inferential statistics to answer the research objectives and questions. The results are presented in tables and

discussed regarding the objectives of the study, that is the role of body image satisfaction, self-awareness, and social media use in determining social functioning.

### Descriptive Statistics

#### Respondents' Socio-Demographic Data

The demographic profile puts the sample into perspective about the objectives of the study. The age distribution, level of classes, school type, and the frequency of using social media provide an idea of the features of the respondents, which can affect their body image satisfaction, self-awareness, and social functioning. The fact that the age groups and level of classes are relatively even indicates a balanced sample, whereas the almost equal division between the public and the private schools shows a variety of educational backgrounds. The relevance of social media as a variable that may influence social functioning is highlighted by the high frequency of its use among the respondents.

### Inferential Statistics

#### Zero-Order Correlation Matrix Using Pearson's Correlation

This section presents the zero-order correlation matrix using Pearson's correlation coefficients to examine the relationships between the study variables (body image satisfaction, self-awareness, social functioning, and frequency of social media use) and demographic variables (age, class level, and school type). The correlations provide preliminary insights into the associations relevant to the research objectives, setting the stage for further inferential analyses to test the hypotheses.

*Table 1: Zero-Order Correlation Matrix Using Pearson's Correlation*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Age	1						
2. Class Level	.939**	1					
3. School Type	.050	.073	1				
4. Frequency of Social Media Use	.212**	.145*	-.101	1			
5. Body Image Satisfaction	-.219**	-.175**	.058	-.870**	1		
6. Self-Awareness	-.226**	-.155**	.078	-.948**	.926**	1	
7. Social Functioning	-.231**	-.167**	.061	-.960**	.947**	.980**	1

**Note:** \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). Bootstrap results are based on 1000 bootstrap samples.

Age and Class Level: A strong positive correlation (.939,  $p < .01$ ) indicates that older adolescents are typically in higher class levels (e.g., SS3), reflecting the expected progression

through secondary school. This strong relationship suggests that age and class level may have similar influences on the study variables and can be considered together in further analyses.

**Age and Study Variables:** Age has significant negative correlations with body image satisfaction (-.219,  $p < .01$ ), self-awareness (-.226,  $p < .01$ ), and social functioning (-.231,  $p < .01$ ). These findings suggest that older adolescents may experience lower body image satisfaction, self-awareness, and social functioning, possibly due to increased academic pressures or heightened social comparisons as they progress through adolescence.

**Class Level and Study Variables:** Similar to age, class level shows significant negative correlations with body image satisfaction (-.175,  $p < .01$ ), self-awareness (-.155,  $p < .01$ ), and social functioning (-.167,  $p < .01$ ). This reinforces the idea that later stages of secondary education may be associated with challenges in self-perception and social interactions, aligning with developmental changes in adolescence.

**School Type:** School type (public vs. private) shows no significant correlations with any variables ( $p > .05$  for all), with weak coefficients (e.g., .058 with body image satisfaction, .078 with self-awareness, .061 with social functioning). This suggests that school type may not strongly influence the study variables, possibly due to similar social and cultural contexts in Yaba, Lagos.

**Frequency of Social Media Use:** Social media use has a strong negative correlation with body image satisfaction (-.870,  $p < .01$ ), self-awareness (-.948,  $p < .01$ ), and social functioning (-.960,  $p < .01$ ). These robust negative associations indicate that more frequent social media use is associated with lower body image satisfaction, reduced self-awareness, and poorer social functioning. This aligns with Objective 4, suggesting that social media exposure may exacerbate body image concerns and hinder social interactions, possibly through social comparison or idealized beauty standards.

**Body Image Satisfaction and Self-Awareness:** A strong positive correlation (.926,  $p < .01$ ) suggests that adolescents with higher body image satisfaction tend to have greater self-awareness. This relationship supports the idea that positive self-perceptions may enhance emotional and self-reflective capacities, relevant to Objectives 1 and 2.

**Body Image Satisfaction and Social Functioning:** A strong positive correlation (.947,  $p < .01$ ) indicates that higher body image satisfaction is associated with better social functioning. This supports Objective 1, suggesting that adolescents who feel satisfied with their body are more likely to engage confidently in social interactions.

**Self-Awareness and Social Functioning:** An extremely strong positive correlation (.980,  $p < .01$ ) highlights that higher self-awareness is strongly associated with better social functioning. This supports Objective 2, indicating that adolescents who are more aware of their emotions and actions are better equipped to navigate social contexts effectively.

Body image satisfaction will significantly influence social functioning.

**Table 2: Simple Linear Regression Predicting Social Functioning from Body Image Satisfaction**

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.934	.872	.871	.26418

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Regression	141.331	1	141.331	2025.05	.000
Residual	20.798	298	0.070		
Total	162.129	299			

  

Predictor	B	SE B	$\beta$	t	p
Constant	-4.641	0.183	—	-25.389	.000
Body Image Satisfaction	2.500	0.056	.934	45.001	.000

Note. Dependent Variable = Social Functioning.

The regression analysis,  $R=.934$ ,  $R^2=.872$ ,  $F(1,298) = 2025.05$ ,  $p<.001$ , indicates that body image satisfaction explains 87.2% of the variance in social functioning. The effect is positive and statistically significant,  $\beta = .934$ ,  $t(298) = 45.00$ ,  $p < .001$ , supporting  $H_1$ . Female adolescents with higher body image satisfaction demonstrate better social functioning, suggesting that positive self-perception enhances confidence, participation in group activities, and peer relationships.

There will be a significant influence of self-awareness on social functioning.

Table 3: Simple Linear Regression Predicting Social Functioning from Self-Awareness

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.959	.920	.920	.20831

  

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	p
Regression	149.197	1	149.197	3438.21	.000
Residual	12.931	298	0.043		
Total	162.129	299			

  

Predictor	B	SE B	$\beta$	t	p
Constant	-0.286	0.067	—	-4.293	.000
Self-Awareness	1.095	0.019	.959	58.636	.000

The regression analysis,  $R=.959$ ,  $R^2=.920$ ,  $F(1,298) = 3438.21$ ,  $p<.001$ , shows that self-awareness explains 92.0% of the variance in social functioning. The positive standardized coefficient,  $\beta = .959$ ,  $t(298) = 58.64$ ,  $p < .001$ , confirms a very strong relationship, supporting  $H_2$ . This implies that Female adolescents with higher self-awareness (greater emotional insight and reflection) display better social functioning.

There will be a significant joint influence of body image satisfaction and self-awareness on social functioning.

Table 4: Multiple Linear Regression – Predicting Social Functioning

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.966	.934	.933	.19027		
Source	SS		df	MS	F	p
Regression	151.376		2	75.688	2090.58	.000
Residual	10.753		297	0.036		
Total	162.129		299			
Predictor	B	SE B	$\beta$	t	p	
Constant	-1.865	0.212	—	-8.779	.000	
Self-Awareness	0.765	0.046	.670	16.657	.000	
Body Image Satisfaction	0.835	0.108	.312	7.757	.000	

The model,  $R=.966$ ,  $R^2=.934$ ,  $F(2,297)=2090.58$ ,  $p<.001$ , explains 93.4% of the variance in social functioning. Both predictors are significant: self-awareness ( $\beta = .670$ ,  $p < .001$ ) has a stronger effect than body image satisfaction ( $\beta = .312$ ,  $p < .001$ ). These findings support  $H_3$ , indicating that the combination of high self-awareness and positive body image produces the highest levels of social functioning among female adolescents.

There will be a significant difference in social functioning based on social media use.

**Table 5: One-Way ANOVA – Social Functioning by Frequency of Social Media Use**

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	p
Between Groups	159.160	4	39.790	3953.83	.000
Within Groups	2.969	295	0.010		
Total	162.129	299			

Levene’s test indicated unequal variances,  $p < .05$ , so Games–Howell post hoc comparisons were used. Results showed significant differences in social functioning between all pairs of social media use frequency ( $p < .001$ ). Mean scores increased as frequency decreased:

Frequency of Use	Mean Social Functioning
Very often	2.28
Often	3.01
Sometimes	3.81

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Rarely	4.04
Never	4.49

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The ANOVA results,  $F(4,295) = 3953.83$ ,  $p < .001$  support H<sub>4</sub>. These findings suggest that frequent social media use is linked to poorer social functioning, possibly due to reduced in-person interaction and increased social comparison.

### Discussion

The results of the study have a solid empirical backing to the hypotheses that body image satisfaction, self-awareness and the frequency of using social media have significant impacts on the social functioning of the female adolescents. These findings are consistent with the aims of the study: to investigate the impact of body image satisfaction, determine the contribution of self-awareness, determine the collective effect, and analyze the effect of social media use on social functioning.

The regression findings reveal that there is a very strong positive relationship between body image satisfaction and social functioning, with the latter explaining a percentage of the variance in the former. This implies that more satisfied female adolescents with their appearance are more confident, interested, and comfortable in social situations. The cultural context in Nigeria has been reported to have local beauty ideals, such as the appreciation of fuller body types, which gives social confidence to the community (Akinwale 2025). Collectively, these studies support the finding that body image satisfaction is a key factor that facilitates healthy peer relationships among female adolescents in Yaba, probably because it minimizes the anxiety of social interactions and enhances self-perception.

Self-awareness had a near-perfect positive correlation with social functioning, validating its significance in positive social functioning. This confirms the theory of emotional intelligence by Goleman (1995) that emphasises self-awareness as the basis of emotional regulation and empathy. Previous research, including Neff and Vonk (2009) and Brackett et al. (2011), demonstrated that adolescents with self-awareness are more competent in managing conflicts and are more socially competent. In the study of the Nigerian context, Adeyemi (2021) identified that self-awareness can assist adolescents in managing their relationships with their peers, especially in urban areas such as Lagos. On the same note, Salovey and Mayer (1990) pointed out that self-awareness permits behavioural adaptations according to the emotional signals, and this improves social functioning. The present study establishes the fact that self-awareness is a key determinant of social competence in Nigerian adolescent girls.

The multiple regression analysis showed a very strong synergistic effect between body image satisfaction and self-awareness, which explains 93.4 per cent of the variance in social functioning. Self-awareness and body image satisfaction were both significant predictors; however, the former was more influential than the latter. The results are consistent with those of Stice et al (1994), who found that positive self-perception, coupled with emotional awareness, contributes to the enhancement of social outcomes, and the findings of Furnham et al (2002), who revealed self-esteem (related to body image) and emotional intelligence as predictors of social adjustment. Similar to African studies by Akinwale (2024), self-esteem and emotional awareness have also been identified as important factors in enhancing peer interactions. Grabe et al. (2008) have also noted that the advantage of self-awareness is enhanced by body image satisfaction, which lowers the anxiety related to appearance. The

findings of this study emphasize the importance of combined interventions focusing on emotional awareness and body image to enhance social competence in adolescents.

The frequency of social media use has a significant effect on social functioning, and the higher the score, the lower the frequency of usage. The lowest social functioning scores were recorded among adolescents who use social media very often, whereas those who never use it had the highest scores. Regression results also showed that there was a significant negative correlation between social media use and body image satisfaction, which means that excessive exposure to idealized online images hurts self-perception. Similar trends were observed in Nigeria, where Akinwale & Ogunleye (2021) found similar trends among urban adolescents, especially Instagram and TikTok.

The negative correlations between age/class level and the main study variables indicate that older adolescents or those in higher grades of schooling have low body image satisfaction, self-awareness, and social functioning. This could be due to higher academic pressure and more exposure to social comparison pressure, as is indicated in the identity development theory by Erikson (1968), who observed that social pressures are stronger at later adolescence. It was also discovered by Adebayo (2020) that academic requirements in senior secondary school impact negatively on social functioning in Nigeria. The lack of meaningful differences by school type indicates that the wider social urban context of Yaba, as opposed to institutional context, determines these outcomes, as was previously found by Adebayo (2020).

### **Conclusion**

This research supports the fact that body image satisfaction and self-awareness are important predictors of social functioning among female teenagers in Yaba, Lagos, Nigeria, with their interaction accounting for per cent of the variance in social functioning. The regularity of use of social media has a high degree of negative influence on body image satisfaction, which indirectly affects social functioning. The findings point to the importance of the interconnection of personal self-conception and emotional awareness and external factors such as social media in the development of social competence in adolescents. The findings form a strong basis for comprehending the factors that affect social functioning in a Nigerian context, as well as the necessity of interventions to encourage a positive body image, self-awareness, and to address the negative impacts of social media to enable healthy social interactions among female adolescents.

### **Recommendations**

To address the issue of negative body image, the Nigerian Ministry of Education should design and introduce school-based initiatives to facilitate the development of positive body image by conducting workshops that embrace different appearances and criticise unrealistic beauty ideals. To improve self-awareness and social functioning of female adolescents, School Administrators should implement emotional intelligence training in secondary schools.

Media literacy education that will help adolescents to learn how to analyse social media content critically and diminish its adverse effects on body image should be included in the curriculum.

Parents and Guardians must actively monitor social media use of their adolescents, as monitoring and open communication on body image and self-esteem is recommended to build resilience in adolescents.

Awareness campaigns in the community should be established to sensitise adolescents and parents regarding the impact of social media on mental health and social functioning.

### Contributions to Knowledge

This research adds a great deal to the knowledge of social functioning amongst female adolescents in Nigeria. It offers empirical data from a Nigerian setting, where most of the body image and social functioning studies are done on the Western population. The confirmation by the study of an almost perfect relationship between self-awareness and social functioning ( $r = 0.980$ ) points to the relevance of emotional awareness in social competence of adolescents, which has been understudied in Nigerian studies. The synergetic influence of body image satisfaction and self-awareness is an innovative element as the combined effect has a high explanatory power, which creates the basis of integrated interventions. Moreover, the high negative association between social media use and body image satisfaction adds to the discussion of the effects of social media on the rest of the world, including the urban youth in Nigeria, where the penetration of social media is high.

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