



Social media addiction and daytime sleepiness as predictors of body dissatisfaction in Peruvian university students: A cross-sectional study

Adicción a redes sociales y somnolencia diurna como predictores de la insatisfacción corporal en estudiantes universitarios peruanos: Un estudio transversal

Authors

Edwin Gustavo Estrada-Araoz ¹
Elizabeth Orfelía Cruz Laricano ¹
Marisol Yana-Salluca ²
Marceliano Arias-Jalire ¹
Isaías Immer Tello-Peralta ¹
Reynaldo Cutipa-Luque ²
Gilber Chura-Quispe ³
Jhemy Quispe-Aquise ¹

¹ Universidad Nacional Amazónica de Madre de Dios (Perú)

² Universidad Nacional del Altiplano (Perú)

³ Escuela de Posgrado Newman (Perú)

Autor de correspondencia:
Edwin Gustavo Estrada-Araoz
gestrada@unamad.edu.pe

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Abstract

Introduction: currently, body dissatisfaction represents a growing concern among university population due to its impact on psychological and emotional well-being.

Objective: to determine whether social media addiction and daytime sleepiness predict body dissatisfaction in university students from southern Peru.

Methodology: a quantitative approach was used with a non-experimental predictive design. The sample consisted of 654 university students who completed the Social Media Addiction Questionnaire, the Epworth Sleepiness Scale, and the Body Shape Questionnaire (BSQ-14), instruments with adequate psychometric properties.

Results: it was found that both social media addiction ($\beta = 0.287$, $p < 0.05$) and daytime sleepiness ($\beta = 0.174$, $p < 0.05$) have a significant predictive effect on body dissatisfaction in university students. Furthermore, the model adequately fit the data ($F = 56.511$, $p < 0.05$) and explained 14.8% of the variability in body dissatisfaction ($R^2 = 0.148$), highlighting the relevance of these factors in understanding body image-related distress.

Discussion: while some studies support these findings, further research is needed to confirm these results and analyze how social media addiction and daytime sleepiness interact with other psychological variables in shaping body dissatisfaction.

Conclusions: Social media addiction and daytime sleepiness are significant predictors of body dissatisfaction in university students from southern Peru.

Keywords

Body dissatisfaction; daytime sleepiness; social media addiction; university students; well-being.

Resumen

Introducción: en la actualidad, la insatisfacción corporal representa una preocupación creciente entre la población universitaria, debido a su impacto en el bienestar psicológico y emocional.

Objetivo: determinar si la adicción a redes sociales y la somnolencia diurna predicen la insatisfacción corporal en estudiantes universitarios del sur del Perú.

Metodología: Se empleó un enfoque cuantitativo, con un diseño no experimental de tipo predictivo. La muestra estuvo conformada por 654 estudiantes universitarios, quienes respondieron el Cuestionario de Adicción a Redes Sociales, la Escala de Somnolencia de Epworth y el Body Shape Questionnaire (BSQ-14), instrumentos con adecuadas propiedades psicométricas.

Resultados: se halló que tanto la adicción a las redes sociales ($\beta = 0.287$, $p < 0.05$) como la somnolencia diurna ($\beta = 0.174$, $p < 0.05$) tienen un efecto predictivo significativo sobre la insatisfacción corporal en estudiantes universitarios. Además, el modelo ajustó adecuadamente los datos ($F = 56.511$, $p < 0.05$) y explicó el 14.8% de la variabilidad en la insatisfacción corporal ($R^2 = 0.148$), lo que resalta la relevancia de estos factores en la comprensión del malestar relacionado con la imagen corporal.

Discusión: si bien algunos estudios respaldan estos hallazgos, se requieren más investigaciones que confirmen estos resultados y analicen cómo la adicción a redes sociales y la somnolencia diurna interactúan con otras variables psicológicas en la configuración de la insatisfacción corporal.

Conclusiones: la adicción a redes sociales y la somnolencia diurna son predictores significativos de la insatisfacción corporal en estudiantes universitarios del sur del Perú.

Palabras clave

Adicción a redes sociales; bienestar; estudiantes universitarios; insatisfacción corporal; somnolencia diurna.

Introduction

Currently, social media has become an omnipresent tool in the lives of university students, shaping not only their modes of interaction and communication but also their daily habits and mental health (Hussenoeder, 2022). While these platforms offer opportunities for information exchange, entertainment, and socialization, their excessive or problematic use has raised growing concerns within the academic field due to their potential psychological, emotional, and behavioral repercussions (Zubair et al., 2023). The constant need for connectivity, continuous exposure to idealized social standards, and dependence on external validation can negatively affect students' emotional balance (Flores & Castellano, 2024). This dynamic has led social media addiction to be considered a relevant variable in the analysis of various phenomena associated with university lifestyle (Bou-Hamad, 2020).

Social media addiction is a form of behavioral dependency characterized by compulsive and dysregulated use of digital platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, to the extent that it interferes with daily activities, psychological well-being, and interpersonal relationships (Amirthalingam & Khera, 2024). This type of addiction is marked by a persistent need to connect to social networks, even at inappropriate times or despite experiencing negative consequences (Pellegrino et al., 2022). Unlike substance-based disorders, social media addiction stems from continuous interaction with virtual social stimuli that activate the brain's reward systems (He et al., 2017).

Although social media addiction is not officially recognized as a clinical disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), it exhibits manifestations similar to other behavioral addictions, including difficulty controlling usage, emotional dependence, and negative effects on daily life (Stănculescu & Griffiths, 2022). Key features include loss of control over connection time, interference with academic, work, or social responsibilities, and the persistence of the behavior despite awareness of its adverse consequences (Zhao, 2023). Individuals experiencing this issue often show strong emotional attachment to the digital environment, anxiety when unable to access platforms, and in some cases, symptoms akin to withdrawal during periods of disconnection (Colonio, 2023). This usage pattern, reinforced by immediate gratification, can develop into an addictive behavior that progressively affects the individual's well-being (Whiting & Williams, 2013).

The causes of social media addiction are multifactorial and include individual, social, and technological factors (Zewude et al., 2025). Personal factors include low self-esteem, need for social approval, anxiety, and impulsivity (Zhao et al., 2022). Contextually, easy access to mobile devices, social pressure, and the culture of immediacy promote intensive use of social networks (Xu et al., 2023; Capilla et al., 2021). Additionally, the platforms themselves are designed with algorithms that maximize interaction and user retention, increasing the risk of developing dysfunctional usage patterns (Lewandowsky et al., 2023).

The consequences of social media addiction can be significant, impacting psychological, physical, and social domains (Estrada et al., 2024). It has been associated with symptoms of anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, mental fatigue, concentration difficulties, and reduced academic performance (Feng et al., 2025). On a social level, it may lead to isolation, interpersonal conflicts, and decreased face-to-face communication skills (Ahmed, 2023). Furthermore, it may influence body image construction by fostering constant comparisons and distorted perceptions of reality, ultimately affecting body satisfaction and emotional health (Jiotsa et al., 2021).

Within the university context, social media addiction is an issue of increasing concern (Hurley et al., 2024). University students, as they navigate a transitional period of identity formation, are particularly vulnerable to the effects of constant connectivity (Astleitner & Schlick, 2024). Academic demands, coupled with the need for social belonging, may drive excessive social media use as a coping or emotional regulation strategy (Marino et al., 2023). Moreover, the high digital presence in this demographic complicates the distinction between functional and problematic use, highlighting the need for preventive and research approaches that consider the specific characteristics of this population group (Cheng et al., 2022).

In recent years, an increase in sleep-related disturbances has also been observed among university students, who face a variety of academic, social, and emotional challenges that impact their physical and mental well-being (Schlarb et al., 2017). The pressure to meet academic demands, combined with stress, anxiety, and intensive use of technology, may contribute to the disruption of healthy sleep patterns



(Cabral et al., 2022). In particular, prolonged exposure to mobile devices—especially at night—has drastically altered rest habits, disrupting the natural sleep-wake cycle (Arshad et al., 2021). This behavior results in irregular sleep patterns, often leading to daytime sleepiness, a phenomenon increasingly common among university students (Hershner & Chervin, 2014).

Daytime sleepiness is defined as the excessive tendency to feel sleepy during the day, regardless of the circumstances in which the individual finds themselves (Slater & Steier, 2012). This sensation of extreme fatigue or need for sleep may occur even during periods when alertness is required, such as academic, occupational, or social activities (Chero et al., 2020). Unlike regular fatigue, typically associated with temporary sleep loss or physical exertion, daytime sleepiness is considered a persistent symptom that may be linked to various sleep disorders or psychosocial factors (Pérez et al., 2022). One of the main features of daytime sleepiness is the difficulty staying awake and focused during the day, even after seemingly adequate sleep (Murray, 2016). Individuals experiencing this condition may display inappropriate sleepiness during routine activities such as reading, studying, or driving (Rosales & Rey, 2010). This can result in episodes of involuntary drowsiness, known as “microsleep,” which may compromise safety and performance in daily environments (Gandhi et al., 2021).

The causes of daytime sleepiness are varied and may include both physiological and behavioral factors (Peña et al., 2019). Chronic sleep deprivation is one of the primary causes, wherein individuals fail to obtain sufficient rest due to irregular schedules, excessive workloads, stress, or poor sleep hygiene habits (Borquez, 2011). Additionally, sleep disorders such as obstructive sleep apnea, insomnia, and restless leg syndrome are common contributors to disrupted sleep cycles, resulting in poor nighttime sleep quality (Verbraecken, 2022). Unhealthy habits, including excessive caffeine intake, use of electronic devices before bedtime, and lack of physical activity, also negatively affect sleep quality (AlShareef, 2022; Gardiner et al., 2023).

The consequences of daytime sleepiness are far-reaching and affect various aspects of human functioning. First, it negatively impacts academic performance, as sleep loss impairs concentration, memory, and problem-solving abilities (Hershner & Chervin, 2014). Moreover, daytime sleepiness is associated with a higher risk of accidents, particularly while driving or engaging in tasks that demand constant attention (AlShareef, 2021). Emotional effects are also significant; irritability, anxiety, and mood changes are common among those who suffer from excessive daytime sleepiness (Whiting et al., 2023). In the long term, this condition may contribute to the development of psychological disorders such as depression and chronic stress (Yasugaki et al., 2025). Within the university context, these effects may reduce students’ motivation to participate in academic and social activities, ultimately impairing their overall quality of life (Maithani et al., 2024).

The university environment can also expose students to multiple factors that influence their overall well-being, among which body dissatisfaction is particularly noteworthy (Cunha et al., 2023). Body dissatisfaction refers to the negative evaluation an individual has of their own body, based on perceived discrepancies between their current physical appearance and an internalized ideal body image (Heider et al., 2018). This psychological construct is multidimensional and involves perceptual, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects related to body image (Quittkat et al., 2019). In contexts where unrealistic aesthetic standards prevail—particularly those promoted by social media and digital platforms—individuals may develop a distorted perception of their figure, leading to discomfort and persistent concern about their appearance (Laughter et al., 2023).

Body dissatisfaction is a complex psychological experience characterized by a negative or distorted perception of one’s own body, which can significantly impact mental health and behavior (Rodgers et al., 2023). One of the main contributing factors to the development of body dissatisfaction is constant exposure to aesthetic ideals promoted by the media and, more recently, by social media platforms (Aparicio et al., 2019). These platforms reinforce unrealistic body standards, fostering social comparison and generating dissatisfaction with one’s own image (Brasil et al., 2024). Additionally, influences from family and peers, as well as early experiences of body criticism or teasing, can foster negative attitudes toward the body (Rodgers et al., 2021).

On the individual level, low self-esteem, perfectionism, and internalization of normative body ideals are significant predisposing factors (Kapoor et al., 2022; Blanco et al., 2022). Furthermore, women tend to report higher levels of body dissatisfaction than men, which has been linked to greater sociocultural

pressure concerning physical appearance (Esnaola et al., 2010). Among university students, these pressures may intensify due to lifestyle changes, increased autonomy, and academic and social demands, all of which can influence body perception, eating behaviors, and exercise routines (Ferreira et al., 2024).

The consequences of body dissatisfaction are diverse and affect multiple dimensions of human functioning (Estrada et al., 2025). Emotionally, it is associated with higher levels of anxiety, depression, shame, and low self-esteem (Merino et al., 2024). Behaviorally, it has been linked to dysfunctional eating habits, compulsive exercise, or conversely, sedentary behavior, as well as avoidance of social or academic activities (Yang et al., 2022; Miranda et al., 2018). Body dissatisfaction can also lead to the development of eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, or binge eating disorder, particularly when accompanied by obsessive thoughts about body image (Mallaram et al., 2023).

Addressing body dissatisfaction requires interventions that encompass cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions (Abdoli et al., 2024). Cognitive-behavioral therapy-based interventions have proven effective in challenging distorted body-related beliefs, promoting a more realistic body image, and strengthening self-esteem (Butters & Cash, 1987). Psychoeducational programs that foster critical thinking toward media messages and encourage body acceptance have also shown positive outcomes (Ong et al., 2022). Within the university setting, the development of preventive strategies and the promotion of healthy lifestyles may be essential for mitigating the impact of body dissatisfaction and preventing associated disorders (Yager & O'Dea, 2008).

The relationship between social media addiction, daytime sleepiness, and body dissatisfaction can be understood through the negative effects that excessive social media use has on sleep patterns and body image perception. Prolonged use of social networks—especially before bedtime—can interfere with sleep cycles, leading to increased levels of daytime sleepiness (Pirdehghan et al., 2021). This fatigue may reduce concentration and affect the students' daily quality of life (Hershner & Chervin, 2014). Furthermore, constant exposure to social media content promoting beauty standards and idealized lifestyles can heighten body dissatisfaction, as students often compare themselves negatively to the images they see online (Aparicio et al., 2019). In turn, body dissatisfaction may lead to increased social media use in search of external validation or as a means of escape from reality, potentially exacerbating social media addiction (Castellanos & Steins, 2023). In this way, the three variables interact and reinforce each other's effects, creating a cycle that impacts both the physical and mental health of students.

The relevance of this research lies in the growing concern for the well-being of university students, who face various stressors throughout their academic and personal development. In a context of high academic and social demands, students often experience emotional and physical health difficulties that affect their quality of life and academic performance. This study has the potential to provide empirical evidence on factors that directly influence student well-being, offering a basis for the development of support strategies and programs that promote holistic health. By addressing these aspects, this research aims to contribute to the design of psychoeducational interventions that support students' adaptation to the university context, promoting their general well-being and their ability to face the challenges of professional training.

Finally, the objective of this study was to determine whether social media addiction and daytime sleepiness predict body dissatisfaction in university students from southern Peru.

Method

This research was conducted using a quantitative approach, which enabled the collection and analysis of numerical data to objectively examine the variables. The study employed a non-experimental design, as the variables were not deliberately manipulated but rather observed within their natural context. Additionally, the study was predictive in nature, as it aimed to determine whether social media addiction and daytime sleepiness predict body dissatisfaction.

Participants

The sample consisted of 654 students enrolled in the 2025-I academic term at a public university in southern Peru. Participants were selected through probabilistic sampling with a 95% confidence level and a 5% significance level. According to the data presented in Table 1, 55.2% of the participants were female and 44.8% were male. Regarding age, 52.8% of the students were between 17 and 21 years old, while 47.2% were over 21. In terms of employment status, 61.9% were not engaged in any form of work, whereas 38.1% were employed. Concerning relationship status, 90.2% of the students did not have a stable partner, while 9.8% reported being in a stable relationship.

Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics of the sample

Variables		n= 654	%
Sex	Male	293	44.8
	Female	362	55.2
Age	Between 17 and 21 years	345	52.8
	Over 21 years	309	47.2
Employment status	Employed	249	38.1
	Unemployed	405	61.9
Relationship status	In a stable relationship	64	9.8
	Not in a stable relationship	590	90.2

Procedure

Data collection was carried out during March and April 2025, following a pre-established protocol. First, authorization was obtained from the university authorities to conduct the study. Subsequently, students were contacted via the WhatsApp messaging application, where they received a message containing the survey link, along with a detailed explanation of the study's objectives and instructions for properly completing the questionnaire. Once the expected participation of 654 students was reached, and after nearly two months of data collection, access to the form was disabled, marking the end of this phase of the study.

Instrument

Data were collected using a structured digital questionnaire developed through the Google Forms platform, which facilitated efficient and accessible organization and processing of the information. The questionnaire was divided into four specific sections. The first section gathered sociodemographic data from the participants, including sex, age, employment status, and relationship status. The second section administered the Social Media Addiction Questionnaire; the third section applied the Epworth Sleepiness Scale; and the fourth section utilized the Body Shape Questionnaire (BSQ-14).

Social Media Addiction Questionnaire

This instrument was developed by Ecurra & Salas (2014) and consists of 24 items rated on a Likert scale, with responses ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). The questionnaire assesses three dimensions: obsession with social media (10 items), lack of personal control in the use of these platforms (6 items), and excessive social media use (8 items). A previous study conducted in Peru by Estrada et al. (2020) found that the instrument demonstrated adequate psychometric properties (Aiken's $V = 0.886$; $\alpha = 0.909$).

Epworth Sleepiness Scale

Created by Johns (1991), this scale aims to assess participants' level of daytime sleepiness, i.e., the likelihood of dozing off in various everyday situations. This unidimensional scale consists of 8 items describing different contexts in which a person might experience sleepiness, each rated from 0 (would never doze) to 3 (high chance of dozing). Higher scores indicate greater daytime sleepiness. In a previous study conducted in the Peruvian context, Rosales et al. (2012) reported adequate internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.790$).

Body Shape Questionnaire (BSQ-14)

This unidimensional questionnaire is designed to evaluate body dissatisfaction and concerns about body shape, measuring the level of distress experienced in relation to physical appearance. The short version comprises 14 items, each rated on a six-point Likert scale ranging from "never" (1) to "always"



(6). Higher scores on the BSQ indicate greater body dissatisfaction, reflecting increased discomfort with body image. A previous study conducted in Peru by Izquierdo et al. (2021) found the instrument to have adequate internal consistency ($\omega = 0.962$).

Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS statistical software, version 25. In the first stage, descriptive statistics were calculated for the variables involved. Subsequently, the independent samples Student's t-test was applied to compare the variables according to sociodemographic characteristics. To complement this analysis, effect size was calculated using Cohen's d coefficient. Following the criteria proposed by Dominguez (2018), values of 0.20, 0.50, and 0.80 were interpreted as small, medium, and large effects, respectively. Next, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to examine statistically significant relationships between the variables, with a significance level set at $p < 0.05$. Finally, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether social media addiction and daytime sleepiness serve as significant predictors of body dissatisfaction.

Ethical Considerations

This research was conducted in strict accordance with the ethical principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki. Participants were provided with clear and understandable information regarding the objectives, scope, and conditions of the study, ensuring their voluntary and informed participation. They were also guaranteed the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. To protect students' privacy, confidentiality measures were implemented through the anonymous handling and secure storage of data, thereby ensuring the ethical integrity of the research process throughout all its phases.

Results

Table 2 shows that the mean score for the variable social media addiction was 59.66 (SD= 14.462), which, when compared to its possible minimum and maximum values, corresponds to a moderate level. Regarding daytime sleepiness, the mean score was 17.09 (SD= 4.550), also indicating a moderate level. For the variable body dissatisfaction, the mean score was 35.51 (SD= 16.878), which corresponds to a mild level. Additionally, the skewness and kurtosis coefficients for all three variables fall within the acceptable range of ± 2 , suggesting that the data distribution approximates normality (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2014).

Table 2. Descriptive results of the study variables

Variables	N	Minium	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation	Category	Skewness	Kurtosis
Social media addiction	654	24.00	120.00	59.66	14.462	Moderate	0.161	0.600
Daytime sleepiness	654	8.00	32.00	17.09	4.550	Moderate	0.122	-0.201
Body dissatisfaction	654	14.00	84.00	35.51	16.878	Mild	0.758	-0.066

Table 3 presents the comparative results by sex. A significant difference was found in social media addiction, with males scoring slightly higher than females ($t = -2.043$, $p < 0.05$), and a small effect size ($d = 0.160$). Regarding daytime sleepiness, no significant differences were observed between males and females ($t = 1.004$, $p > 0.05$), and the effect size was also small ($d = 0.079$). In contrast, for body dissatisfaction, females reported significantly higher levels than males ($t = 5.763$, $p < 0.05$), with a moderate effect size ($d = .449$).

Table 3. Comparative results for the study variables by sex

Variables	Male		Female		t	p	d
	M	SD	M	SD			
Social media addiction	60.94	14.883	58.62	14.047	-2.043	0.041	0.160
Daytime sleepiness	16.89	4.611	17.25	4.501	1.004	0.316	0.079
Body dissatisfaction	31.47	14.706	38.80	17.810	5.763	0.000	0.449

According to Table 4, no statistically significant differences were found in social media addiction between students aged 17 to 21 and those over 21 ($t = 1.728$, $p > 0.05$), with a small effect size ($d = 0.136$).



Similarly, no significant differences were observed in daytime sleepiness between the two age groups ($t= 0.696$, $p>0.05$), and the effect size was also small ($d= 0.055$). In contrast, a significant difference was found in body dissatisfaction ($t= 3.041$, $p<0.05$), with higher levels reported by the younger group (17 to 21 years). In this case, the effect size was moderate ($d= 0.238$).

Table 4. Comparative results for the study variables by age group

Variables	Between 17 and 21 years		Over 21 years		t	p	d
	M	SD	M	SD			
Social media addiction	60.59	13.608	58.62	15.317	1.728	0.084	0.136
Daytime sleepiness	17.20	4.474	16.95	4.638	0.696	0.487	0.055
Body dissatisfaction	37.40	16.518	33.40	17.052	3.041	0.002	0.238

As shown in Table 5, no statistically significant differences were identified in any of the variables analyzed between students who were employed and those who were not ($p>0.05$). These results suggest that employment status is not meaningfully associated with the study variables.

Table 5. Comparative results for the study variables by employment status

Variables	Employed		Unemployed		t	p	d
	M	SD	M	SD			
Social media addiction	59.29	15.072	59.88	14.089	.503	.615	.040
Daytime sleepiness	17.44	4.711	16.87	4.441	-1.553	.121	.125
Body dissatisfaction	35.14	16.931	35.74	16.863	.446	.656	.036

Table 6 presents the comparative results based on relationship status. No statistically significant differences were found in any of the analyzed variables between students in a stable relationship and those without one ($p>0.05$). These findings indicate that relationship status does not have a significant influence on the variables analyzed.

Table 6. Comparative results for the study variables by relationship status

Variables	In a stable relationship		Not in a stable relationship		t	p	d
	M	SD	M	SD			
Social media addiction	59.53	14.713	59.67	14.448	0.073	0.942	0.010
Daytime sleepiness	17.41	5.731	17.05	4.408	-0.481	0.632	0.070
Body dissatisfaction	34.25	16.519	35.65	16.925	0.630	0.529	0.084

Table 7 presents the correlation matrix among the study variables. A significant positive correlation was observed between social media addiction and daytime sleepiness ($r= 0.357$, $p<0.01$), suggesting that higher levels of social media addiction are associated with higher levels of daytime sleepiness. In addition, a significant positive correlation was found between social media addiction and body dissatisfaction ($r= 0.349$, $p<0.01$), indicating that students with higher levels of social media addiction tend to report greater body dissatisfaction. Finally, a significant correlation was also observed between daytime sleepiness and body dissatisfaction ($r= 0.276$, $p<0.01$), suggesting that higher levels of daytime sleepiness are associated with greater levels of body dissatisfaction.

Table 7. Correlation matrix among the study variables

Study variables	1	2	3
1. Social media addiction	1	-	-
2. Daytime sleepiness	0.357**	1	-
3. Body dissatisfaction	0.349**	0.276**	1

** $p<0.01$

According to Table 8, social media addiction and daytime sleepiness were identified as significant predictors of body dissatisfaction among university students. The results show a good model fit ($F= 56.511$, $p<0.05$), suggesting that the evaluated factors contribute to explaining the variability in body dissatisfaction. In this model, social media addiction emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta= 0.287$), followed by daytime sleepiness ($\beta= 0.174$). Together, both predictors accounted for 14.8% of the observed variability in body dissatisfaction, underscoring the relevance of these factors for students' health and well-being. Although the R^2 coefficient is moderate, it is meaningful considering the multifactorial complexity of the body dissatisfaction construct. These findings emphasize the importance of addressing these factors in interventions aimed at promoting student well-being.



Table 8. Predictors of body dissatisfaction

Predictors	B	SE	β	t	p
(Constant)	4.545	2.990		1.520	0.129
Social media addiction	0.334	0.045	0.287	7.399	0.000
Daytime sleepiness	0.645	0.144	0.174	4.487	0.000
R ²			0.148		
Adjusted R ²			0.145		
F				56.511	(p<0.05)

Note: Dependent variable = Body dissatisfaction.

Discussion

Currently, body dissatisfaction has become a prevalent issue among university students, who are undergoing significant physical, social, and emotional transformations. The university stage, in addition to being a period of academic growth, is marked by multiple demands and challenges that can influence how young people perceive themselves. Within this context, it is pertinent to study variables that may help explain this phenomenon. Accordingly, the present study focused on determining whether social media addiction and daytime sleepiness predict body dissatisfaction in university students from southern Peru.

A preliminary finding showed that the level of social media addiction was moderate, indicating that students frequently use these platforms and experience some difficulty controlling the amount of time spent on them, although not to the extent of extreme dependence. This suggests that, although social media is integrated into students' daily lives, it does not yet severely interfere with their personal, academic, or social functioning. Nevertheless, this usage pattern could serve as a warning sign, as sustained or increasing use may ultimately affect their overall well-being or ability to manage time effectively. Similar findings have been reported in previous studies (Estrada et al., 2024; Quevedo & Ponce, 2023; Arteaga et al., 2022).

A statistically significant difference was also observed in social media addiction by sex, with males scoring slightly higher than females. This finding contrasts with previous research suggesting that females tend to use social media more frequently and for longer periods than males (Zhao et al., 2022; Aparicio et al., 2020). This could be explained by the fact that women are more likely to use these platforms for social and emotional purposes, while men, although also active users, often focus more on interest-based or entertainment-related content (Ali et al., 2021).

Another emerging result indicated that the predominant level of daytime sleepiness among students was moderate, suggesting that a significant proportion of them experience difficulties remaining alert and energetic throughout the day—possibly due to insufficient quantity or quality of nighttime sleep. While this level is not considered severe, it may negatively affect their academic performance, concentration, and emotional state, thus compromising their daily functioning and overall well-being. This finding is consistent with previous studies (Niño et al., 2019; De la Portilla et al., 2019).

Regarding body dissatisfaction, the findings indicated that, in general, students reported a mild level of dissatisfaction. This suggests that while they do not exhibit a pronounced rejection of their physical appearance, they do show some degree of concern or discontent with specific bodily features. Although mild, this level of dissatisfaction may exert a subtle but meaningful influence on their self-concept, psychological well-being, and everyday decision-making—particularly in areas such as eating behavior, physical activity, and social interaction. Additionally, this form of dissatisfaction may affect perceptions of personal worth, with potential implications for mental health and predisposition toward healthy lifestyles. The results of this study are supported by previous research (Estrada et al., 2025; Solís & Vargas, 2024; Chasiquiza & Gavilanes, 2023).

It was also found that female students reported higher levels of body dissatisfaction than male students, likely due to stronger influences from sociocultural pressures and aesthetic expectations, which lead women to evaluate themselves more critically. This pattern has also been identified in previous studies (Rosenqvist et al., 2024; Quittkat et al., 2019; Latiff et al., 2018). Additionally, students aged 17 to 21 exhibited higher levels of body dissatisfaction than those over 21, possibly due to greater exposure to social and aesthetic influences, as well as the role that body image plays in identity formation and social

acceptance during this life stage. Similar findings have been reported in studies conducted in the North American context (Neumark et al., 2018; Bucchianeri et al., 2013).

An interesting finding from this study is that social media addiction and daytime sleepiness were significant predictors of body dissatisfaction among university students in southern Peru. This suggests that body image is not constructed in isolation, but rather is influenced by lifestyle factors and the psychosocial environment. In this sense, problematic social media use may intensify exposure to content that promotes unrealistic body ideals, fostering social comparison and negative self-evaluation. Likewise, daytime sleepiness—typically resulting from poor sleep quality—may impact mood, emotional self-regulation, and self-perception, thereby increasing vulnerability to body dissatisfaction.

This finding is aligned with Festinger's (1954) social comparison theory, which posits that individuals evaluate themselves based on comparisons with others, especially in domains deemed relevant such as physical appearance. In the context of social media, this comparison is intensified due to constant exposure to idealized and aesthetically appealing images, potentially generating feelings of inferiority and body dissatisfaction among students. Additionally, Cash's (2002) cognitive-affective model of body image supports this notion by emphasizing that body perception is influenced by emotional and cognitive factors, such as mood and fatigue. In this regard, daytime sleepiness, associated with inadequate rest, may negatively impact psychological well-being by diminishing emotional self-regulation and fostering a more negative body self-appraisal.

To date, few studies have simultaneously examined whether social media addiction and daytime sleepiness act as predictors of body dissatisfaction, highlighting the novelty and contribution of the present research. A previous study conducted in Turkey using structural equation modeling concluded that problematic smartphone use and sleep deprivation had a serial mediating effect in the longitudinal relationship between body satisfaction and psychological well-being (Yildirim et al., 2025). In contrast, a study conducted in India found that neither social media addiction nor sleep quality predicted body dissatisfaction (Nair & Maduvarshni, 2025). These mixed results underscore the importance of continuing to investigate these variables in different contexts and with diverse samples to draw clearer conclusions.

This research addresses a highly relevant topic in the current context, providing a deeper understanding of how behaviors and perceptions related to social media use, daytime sleepiness, and body image dissatisfaction influence the mental health of university students. This approach makes it possible to identify the psychological and behavioral factors involved in the construction of body image and overall well-being, highlighting the importance of considering both emotional and behavioral aspects in the development of these processes. In doing so, this study contributes to a better understanding of the mechanisms underlying body dissatisfaction and other related disorders, facilitating the identification of risk factors for mental health and behavioral issues in the university population.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations of this study that should be considered when interpreting the results. First, the study was conducted at a single university, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other academic institutions or student populations. Additionally, the use of self-administered instruments may have introduced response biases, particularly due to the influence of social desirability. Moreover, given the cross-sectional design of the study, the data collected represent only a snapshot in time, without the possibility of identifying changes or trends over a longer period. These limitations highlight the importance of interpreting the findings with caution and suggest that future research should adopt longitudinal designs, incorporate more representative samples, and employ complementary data collection methods. Doing so would provide a more comprehensive, dynamic, and in-depth understanding of the variables under study.

Conclusions

The findings of this study allow us to conclude that social media addiction and daytime sleepiness predict body dissatisfaction among university students in southern Peru. This means that higher levels of social media addiction and greater presence of daytime sleepiness are associated with increased body dissatisfaction perceived by students. Specifically, excessive use of social media may expose young people to unrealistic body standards and constant comparisons with others, which tends to foster



negative perceptions of their own bodies. On the other hand, daytime sleepiness, as a manifestation of poor sleep quality or insufficient rest, can affect mood and self-perception, including body image. The interaction of both factors may amplify feelings of dissatisfaction with one's own body, thereby affecting not only students' psychological well-being but also their academic performance and social life.

Therefore, it is recommended that universities implement counseling and support programs that promote conscious and regulated use of social media, as well as strategies to improve students' sleep quality. These actions could help reduce levels of body dissatisfaction, fostering better mental, emotional, and academic health. Moreover, it is important that such programs include psychoeducational components on the effects of constant exposure to digital content, social comparison, and beauty stereotypes, as well as guidelines for establishing healthy sleep routines. Including workshops on positive body image, emotional self-regulation, and stress management will not only help prevent potential distortions in body perception but also foster a healthier, more empathetic, and resilient university environment.

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Authors' and translators' details:

Edwin Gustavo Estrada-Araoz	gestrada@unamad.edu.pe	Author
Elizabeth Orfelía Cruz Laricano	22230024@unamad.edu.pe	Author
Marisol Yana-Salluca	myana@unap.edu.pe	Author
Marceliano Arias-Jalire	ariasj@unamad.edu.pe	Author
Isaías Immer Tello-Peralta	itello@unamad.edu.pe	Author
Reynaldo Cutipa-Luque	reynaldo.cutipa@unap.edu.pe	Author
Gilber Chura-Quispe	gilber.chura@epnewman.edu.pe	Author/Translator
Jhemy Quispe-Aquise	jhquispe@unamad.edu.pe	Author