



## The Influence Of Social Comparison In Social Media On Self-Esteem In Early Adulthood

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### Abstract

This study aims to determine the influence of social comparison on social media on self-esteem in early adulthood. Based on the results of research on the influence of social comparison on social media on Self Esteem in early adulthood in Medan City, the following conclusions can be drawn: The results of the study indicate that social comparison on social media has a significant and negative effect on self-esteem in early adulthood individuals. This means that the more often someone compares themselves to others on social media, the greater the likelihood of their self-esteem or self-esteem decreasing. Most respondents in this study had a high level of self-esteem, even though they also had a high level of social comparison. This shows that not all social comparisons have a direct negative impact, because some individuals are still able to maintain a positive view of themselves, perhaps due to other factors such as social support, personality, or strong internal values. When viewed based on the social comparison aspect, it is known that physical attractiveness and lifestyle are the two aspects that are most often compared by respondents when they use social media. This means that many respondents feel triggered to compare their appearance and lifestyle with what is seen in other people's posts. While aspects of personality and wealth are also compared, but not as much as these two aspects.

**Keywords :** Social Comparison, Social Media, Self-Esteem

### INTRODUCTION

Social media has a significant influence on people's lives today, and one of the most popular platforms is TikTok. TikTok is an application that allows users to create lip-sync videos with a duration of 2-15 seconds initially, and now the duration can be extended to 3 minutes (Alifa & Rizal, 2020).. TikTok is now one of the most popular social media platforms among teenagers, even surpassing other social media platforms. This is evident from data showing that there are approximately 217.7 million active TikTok users in Southeast Asia aged 18 years and above, with Indonesia recording 87.5 million active users, making it the second most popular country in the world and the first in Southeast Asia. Of these, approximately 41% are users aged between 16 and 24 (Apriliani, Burmanajaya, Widyarti

Utami, & Wahyudi, 2020). This age is included in the late adolescent development period, where many emotional changes occur, such as the formation of self-identity, interests, idealism, and ego.

However, excessive use of social media can have a negative impact on mental development, especially in adolescents. One of the negative impacts is decreased self-esteem. Delamater et al. (Syafina & Retnaningsih, 2021) revealed that social comparison can influence how high or low a person's self-esteem is. Social media equipped with photo and video sharing features allows users to showcase themselves, which can trigger social comparison. Research conducted by Gonzales and Hancock (Intan Dinata & Pratama, 2022) revealed that the more often someone compares their social media profile with others, the less likely they are to feel satisfied with themselves, which ultimately can lower self-esteem. This also applies to TikTok, where users can display their best image through videos or photos that show off their beauty, success, or wealth. The TikTok algorithm's constant exposure to similar content can exacerbate this impact, as users will continually see idealized images of others, which can increase the tendency to compare themselves negatively.

However, self-presentation behavior through social media such as Instagram not only has an impact on communication and sharing experiences, but can also affect an individual's psychology, including self-esteem. When someone posts content that displays themselves, whether it be photos, videos, or personal stories, this will be seen by others, which can have a psychological impact, both positive and negative. In some cases, expressing oneself on social media can increase an individual's self-esteem, especially if the response received from others is positive and supportive. This is because the attention and recognition received, such as the number of likes, positive comments, or sharing of content by others, can provide feelings of appreciation and acceptance, which directly contribute to increasing an individual's self-confidence and self-esteem. Research by Valkenburg, Peter, & Schouten (Dinata & Pratama, 2022) also shows that the behavior of showing off oneself on social media, if accompanied by a positive response from others, can have a very beneficial effect on an individual's self-esteem, because they feel accepted and viewed positively by others.

Self-esteem refers to a person's overall positive or negative assessment of themselves. It can also be described as a mirror that reflects how a person views themselves or how others view them. Individuals with high self-esteem tend to view themselves positively and feel satisfied with themselves, while those with low self-esteem tend to view themselves negatively (Utami, 2023). shows that college students who are addicted to social media tend to have lower self-esteem. People with low self-esteem are vulnerable to various psychological problems, such as anxiety, loneliness, eating disorders, substance abuse, as well as social problems and poor academic performance.

A person's self-esteem is influenced by various factors, such as gender, level of mindfulness, social support, parenting style, and social media platforms. Quatman & Watson explained that men tend to have higher self-esteem than women. Furthermore, research by Apaolaza et al. shows that individuals with high levels of mindfulness have better self-esteem because they are better able to manage negative emotions and achieve personal well-being in daily life. Social support also plays an important role in shaping self-esteem, especially in fulfilling the need for affection that supports positive self-esteem.

Individuals in various settings frequently engage in social comparison processes, such as evaluating others and themselves, recognizing that they are not completely free to act, and forming impressions of others. These various social behaviors have been discussed by several social psychologists in their research, resulting in various social theories. One such theory is the social comparison theory proposed by Festinger in 1954. This theory developed from ideas about social communication and opinion change within groups. In general, this theory states that certain social influences and competitive behaviors arise from individuals' need to evaluate themselves, which is done by comparing themselves with others. The main principles of the social comparison theory proposed by Festinger consist of hypotheses, conclusions, and derivations related to the need for evaluation, sources of evaluation, choices in making comparisons, factors influencing change, the reduction of comparisons, and the drive to achieve unity (Flores, Inan, Han, & Koontz, 2019).

Kruglanski and Maysel (Kalman, Macias Esparza, & Weston, 2020) explain social comparison as a process of comparative assessment of social stimuli along certain dimensions. Festinger proposed the theory of social comparison processes to explain comparative comparisons related to a person's opinions and abilities. Festinger (1954) argued that individuals are driven to compare themselves with others, both specific and general, to evaluate their social situation. Individuals tend to compare themselves with others with whom they have similarities because this way, they can obtain a more accurate evaluation of their opinions and abilities.

Early adulthood is often considered a crucial transitional period in a person's life, as they transition from adolescence to adulthood. During this stage, individuals not only experience physical and cognitive changes but also begin to engage in various self-discoveries and explorations of their personal identity. Santrock (van der Kleij, 2019) further explains that early adulthood, spanning the ages of 20 to 40, is a time when individuals begin to more seriously shape their life direction, including social relationships, work, and personal achievement. Social media plays an increasingly significant role in this process of identity discovery and formation.

Individuals in early adulthood tend to use social media as a means to communicate, share information, build social networks, and express their thoughts and feelings publicly. Social media is not just a communication tool, but also a strategic platform for self-exploration and how they want to be seen by others (Hasanati & Aviani, 2020). This is important because social media gives users the freedom to choose how they want to represent themselves, whether through uploaded photos, status updates, or other personal information.

A person's self-esteem can be influenced by their interactions on social media, particularly through the process of social comparison. Research conducted by Vogel et al. (Ifadloh, Warsono, & Faridi, 2021) revealed that social media has a significant impact on an individual's self-esteem, as through these platforms, people tend to compare themselves to others, which can either enhance or degrade their feelings about themselves. In this context, a study by Wang et al. (2017) showed that passive use of Instagram, that is, simply observing the activities or content of others on the platform without actively participating, can predict social comparison behavior that has the potential to affect the emotional and psychological state of its users. These findings suggest that when someone constantly sees the lives of

others, especially those who are considered more successful or happier, they tend to compare themselves to the standards displayed by those others.

Similar research conducted by Lup et al. (Szcześniak, Mazur, Rodzeń, & Szpunar, 2021) found that this social comparison habit can trigger various negative psychological symptoms, such as depression. This is especially true when individuals actively engage in comparing themselves to people who appear more ideal or happier on social media, which can exacerbate feelings of self-dissatisfaction. The findings also suggest that the habit of following strangers who appear to live more attractive or successful lifestyles can increase feelings of low self-esteem and anxiety, leading to increased depressive symptoms in Instagram users. This phenomenon demonstrates that social media, while offering a means for interaction and sharing, can also have negative impacts if the use of these platforms is closely linked to persistent social comparison behavior.

However, this social comparison process does not apply equally to everyone. Factors such as personality, personal motivations, and the intensity of Instagram use play a significant role in how individuals are affected by the content they see on the platform. As explained by Verduyn et al. (Li & Wang, 2022) individuals with certain personality traits or motivations may be more susceptible to the negative impacts of social comparison, while others with different perspectives or behavioral patterns may be unaffected or even inspired by the content they see. Therefore, social comparison on social media platforms like Instagram can have varying impacts on each individual, depending on how they use the platform and how they interpret the information they receive.

Furthermore, interactions on social media can also encourage and inspire those who view shared content to do the same. When someone sees others portraying successful, enjoyable, or accomplished lives, this can motivate them to strive harder and achieve similar things, which in turn can improve their quality of life. Thus, social media not only serves as a means of self-expression but can also be a tool for mutual inspiration and motivation. Ultimately, while self-presentation on social media platforms like Instagram has the potential to boost self-esteem, its impact depends on how individuals manage the social interactions that occur and how they interpret the responses they receive from others.

In the context of social media, social comparison refers to a person's tendency to compare various aspects of themselves, such as appearance and abilities, with others. This comparison can occur with individuals in higher positions (upward social comparison) or lower positions (downward social comparison) (Tjahyadi & Ersan Lanang Sanjaya, 2021). Such comparisons often lead individuals to feel that external standards or socially accepted images are more important than their personal traits and qualities.

When someone begins to feel that their personal characteristics are no longer relevant in gaining social recognition, this can lead to a decline in self-esteem. Teenagers, in particular, often fall prey to biased social media content as they seek self-validation through social comparison. This can negatively impact self-esteem, especially for those who rely heavily on the approval or recognition of others.

With the increasing number of celebrities and peers displaying attractive appearances, this phenomenon is further exacerbating body dissatisfaction, especially among Instagram users (Nuryani, Susanto, & Hidayati, 2023). A similar phenomenon may also occur among TikTok users, given that TikTok has similar features to Instagram. Empirical research shows

a link between social media use and social comparison, which is often considered a contributing factor to low self-esteem. The idealized information displayed on social media reinforces this norm of social comparison. The more time a person spends on social media, the more likely they are to perceive that others out there are having better, happier, and more successful lives. This can lead to decreased self-esteem for these social media users.

Research conducted by Vogel, Rose, Okdie, Eckles, & Franz (Selfilia Arum Kristanti & Eva, 2022) on social comparison and self-esteem on Facebook revealed that social comparison behavior can lead to a decrease in individual self-esteem and create a negative view of themselves. Furthermore, research by Vogel, Rose, Roberts, & Eckles (2014) showed that individuals who frequently access Facebook tend to have lower self-esteem because they often evaluate themselves negatively. The frequency of Facebook use is also related to the level of intensity of individuals in making social comparisons with others, whether they are considered better or worse than themselves. Research by Alfasi (Grenadi & Mardi Rahayu, 2024) also supports these findings, which shows that social comparison through Facebook can decrease self-esteem and increase symptoms of depression. This decrease in self-esteem is closely related to the type of content viewed; individuals who frequently access social content (such as Facebook feeds) have lower self-esteem than those who do not access such content (National Geographic).

Social comparison isn't always positive. In some cases, it can actually trigger detrimental negative effects. When individuals frequently compare themselves to others they perceive as superior or more successful, this can lead to decreased self-esteem. Individuals may begin to feel dissatisfied with themselves and see flaws in themselves that they weren't previously aware of. This often leads to negative self-evaluations, where individuals feel they aren't good enough or aren't as successful as the others they're comparing themselves to. Furthermore, social comparison can also trigger feelings of envy, where individuals feel envious or displeased with others' achievements, which can exacerbate their negative feelings about themselves. Feelings of dissatisfaction, anxiety, or even frustration can also arise as a result of persistent social comparison, especially when individuals feel they can't measure up to the standards they see on social media or in the lives of others.

Researchers also conducted interviews with several children among generation Z in Medan City, the following are the interview results:

"You're right, nowadays there are many young people who are active in social media, there are many trends that are always on TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, even WhatsApp, so when I see people posting their happiness, for example, going to the mall and then the clothes they wear are also like luxury brands, so I feel insecure, why are they so happy in their lives while I'm just like this, and also what I see are friends who are the same age as me and are still funded by their parents but their lifestyle is high, luxurious so I think how can they be like that, so I feel my self-esteem is down. And also for example, when they go out they definitely post about themselves going to the mall, they post about their shopping sprees buying luxury goods so I feel like oh well, I can't live like them I feel insecure sometimes to the point of limiting social media, meaning I hide their posts. And also when I see on TikTok they create TikTok trends and make TikTok videos using iPhones 15

examples so I feel insecure, jealous, and anxious, and feel like my self-esteem has gone down, you know, from me."

"Seeing my friends on social media, I think like this, sis, nowadays they can buy anything they want, like their life is filled with luxury, they can buy anything they want, they can go anywhere they want, they can eat delicious food in expensive places like that, they can go out, travel with their friends, so that makes me feel insecure, like their life must be good, they can buy anything they want, their life must be good, they can go out anywhere, they can buy this and that as they please, right, so it makes me feel insecure and also makes me lack of self-confidence that grows in me, but sis, behind my insecurity and lack of self-confidence, by seeing them grow, it also becomes an inspiration for me to try to be like them too, for example by trying and working hard, for example by creating content on TikTok just like the people I see on social media." (Fatmawati et al., 2023).

Based on the interviews above, it can be concluded that individuals who feel insecure or lack self-confidence are often influenced by the phenomenon of social comparison that occurs on social media. When someone sees the seemingly perfect lifestyles of friends or others on social media, such as vacations to luxurious destinations, wearing brand-name clothing, or purchasing expensive items, this can trigger feelings of dissatisfaction with their own personal lives. In this case, these feelings affect self-esteem.

This is in line with research conducted by Vogel, Rose, Okdie, Eckles, & Franz (Sembiring, 2021) which revealed that social comparison behavior can result in a decrease in individual self-esteem and create a negative view of themselves. Another study by Vogel, Rose, Roberts, & Eckles also showed that people who frequently use Facebook tend to have lower self-esteem, because they tend to evaluate themselves negatively. The level of Facebook use is closely related to how often a person engages in social comparison, both with people who are considered better or worse. Research by Alfasi (2019) also shows that social comparison through Facebook can decrease self-esteem and worsen symptoms of depression. This decrease in self-esteem is related to the type of content viewed, where individuals who more frequently view social content on Facebook (such as feeds) have lower self-esteem than those who do not access such social content, as found in a study by National Geographic.

Based on the explanations and phenomena that have been presented, researchers want to test whether there is really an impact of social comparison on social media on self-esteem in early adulthood.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey research design that collects data using questionnaires. Sugiyono (Yanditini & Wiyasa, 2021) explains that the survey method is a quantitative research technique used to collect information related to beliefs, characteristics, opinions, behaviors, and relationships between variables, both related to past and current conditions, as well as to test hypotheses regarding psychological variables in certain samples and populations.

According to Nurdin et al. (Rachman & Rosnawati, 2021) an operational definition refers to a way of describing a variable by referring to directly observable characteristics. This allows researchers to make careful and precise observations or measurements of the

object or phenomenon being studied. This operational definition serves to convert abstract concepts into something more concrete, allowing the research process to be conducted more systematically and the results obtained to be more accountable.

The subjects of this research are early adults in the city of Medan:

1. Aged 20-29 years
2. Men and women
3. Users of social media applications Instagram, Tiktok, Twitter, Facebook etc

According to Sugiyono (Tiwari, Narula, & Mathur, 2022) a population refers to a group or region containing objects or subjects with certain qualities and characteristics determined by the researcher. These objects or subjects are selected for further analysis so that researchers can draw relevant conclusions based on the findings obtained in the study. Therefore, the population becomes the primary target of research. A population can also be defined as all units or individuals within the scope of the study who possess certain characteristics in accordance with the objectives and focus of the study. As a result, researchers can obtain more comprehensive information and generalize findings from the studied sample to the broader population.

In this study, the population studied was young adults aged 20-29 who are social media app users. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS, 2022), the number of young adults aged 20-29 in Medan City reached 407,237.

According to Sugiyono (Journal & Issn, 2022) a sample is a subset of a population that has similar numbers and characteristics to the population as a whole. Sampling is the process of determining the number of samples to be taken in a study. This process is crucial to ensure that the samples taken can provide valid and generalizable results. In selecting a sample, researchers need to ensure that the selected sample reflects the characteristics of the population being studied. Therefore, sample selection must be carried out carefully to accurately describe the population's condition. A good sample is a representative sample, meaning that the sample can represent the population as a whole, so that the research results obtained can be applied or generalized to a wider population.

The technique used for sample determination in this study is Probability sampling, with the Simple Random Sampling method. Simple Random Sampling is a sampling technique in which each member of the population has an equal opportunity to be selected as a research sample. In this method, sample selection is carried out randomly without considering certain characteristics or attributes of individuals in the population, so that each element of the population has an equal opportunity to be selected. Sampling was determined using G-Power 3.1.9.7.

In this study, data analysis was conducted using simple linear regression. This method was used to identify whether there is an influence between two variables: the independent variable (social comparison) and the dependent variable (self-esteem). In other words, this analysis aims to determine whether social comparison affects an individual's level of self-esteem. To process the data, the researcher used SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 20.0 on the Windows operating system.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Research Subject Overview**

This research was conducted on young adults in Medan who are social media users, a sample of 135 college students. The following describes the characteristics of the sample:

### **Description of research subjects based on gender**

30 of the respondents were male. early adulthood with a percentage of 22.22% , while the female gender numbered 105 early adults with a percentage of 77.78 % , with the total number of respondents being 135 early adulthood . So it can be concluded that overall, the number of male respondents is less than the number of female respondents.

**Table 1. Description of research subjects based on gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Man	30	22.22
Woman	105	77.78
<b>Total</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>100</b>

### **Hypothesis Testing**

Hypothesis testing uses simple linear regression which aims to see the influence of independent variables on dependent variables in this study.

The hypothesis in this study is:

HI: There is an influence of social comparison on social media on *Self Esteem* in early adulthood

HO: There is no influence of social comparison on social media on *Self Esteem* in early adulthood

To test this hypothesis, calculations can be carried out using the SPSS 20.0 for Windows program, then the following values are obtained:

**Table 2. Hypothesis Test Results**

<b>Model</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	<b>Std.Error of the Estimate</b>
1	.647	.419	.414	4.27519

It can be seen in the table above that the magnitude of the correlation/relationship value (R is 0.647 ) and it is explained that the percentage of influence between the independent variable and the dependent variable is called the coefficient of determination which is the result of squaring the R value. From the SPSS results, the coefficient of

determination (R) is 0.419 which means that the influence of the independent variable ( social comparison ) on the dependent variable ( *Self Esteem* ) is 41.9 . Meanwhile, the remaining 58.1 is influenced by other factors outside the research variables .

**Table 3. T-Results**

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized		Sig
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std.Error	Beta	T	
1 (Constant)	10,365	2,588	.647	4,005	.000
Social Comparison	.764	.078		9,786	.000

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that in column B the constant (a) is 10.365, while the social comparison value is 10.365. is 764. So the regression equation/ model can be written:

Y: Dependent variable ( *Self Esteem* )

X: Independent variable (Social Comparison)

a: Constant

$$Y = a + Bx$$

$$Y = 10,365 + ( 764 X)$$

$$Y = 10.365 + 764 X$$

Based on the results of the correlation regarding the relationship between social comparison and self-esteem The correlation coefficient obtained was 0.647 and  $p=0.000$  ( $p<0.05$ ), which indicates that  $H_0$  (null hypothesis) is rejected and  $H_a$  (working hypothesis) is accepted. This means that there is a very significant relationship between the two variables. The correlation coefficient in this study is negative, indicating a negative relationship between the two variables. This means that the higher *the social comparison* conducted by early adults, the higher the social comparison. the lower *the self-esteem*, conversely the lower *the social comparison* made by early adulthood, the higher *the self-esteem* they have .

## Discussion

This study aims to determine whether social comparison on social media influences self-esteem in early adulthood individuals in Medan City. Based on the results of the study, a correlation coefficient (R) value of 0.647 was obtained, with a significance value of  $p = 0.000$  ( $p < 0.05$ ), with an  $R^2$  value of 0.419. This means that 41.9% of the variation in self-esteem can be explained by the level of social comparison, while the remaining 58.1% is influenced by other factors outside the variables studied.

These findings support the alternative hypothesis (Ha), namely the influence of social comparison on *self-esteem* in early adulthood, and simultaneously reject the null hypothesis (Ho). These results align with Leon Festinger's (1954) *Social Comparison Theory*, which states that individuals tend to evaluate themselves by comparing themselves to others to determine their own worth and abilities. In today's digital era, social media has become the primary means for this comparison process, particularly in terms of physical appearance, lifestyle, wealth, and personality, which are often selectively displayed on social media.

In this study, the majority of respondents had a high tendency towards social comparison (74 people), while 59 people were in the medium category and only 2 people were in the low category. This indicates that social comparison on social media is a common phenomenon among young adults in Medan City. Interestingly, despite the high level of social comparison, the self-esteem of the respondents was actually high (101 people), and 34 people were in the medium category, with none being low. This indicates that although many respondents experienced pressure from social comparison, most were still able to maintain a positive perception of themselves.

When examining social comparison, physical attractiveness was found to be the most important, followed by lifestyle, wealth, and personality. This means that young adults compare themselves more with others in terms of physical appearance and the lifestyles they display on social media. This makes sense, given that platforms like Instagram and TikTok heavily emphasize visuals and glamorous lifestyles, which are often used as benchmarks for success or happiness.

Meanwhile, in terms of self-esteem, virtue (obedience and the ability to set an example) was the most prominent, followed by individual strength, competence, and self-worth. This indicates that despite frequent social comparisons, individuals maintain moral principles, strength in facing challenges, and confidence in their abilities and self-worth.

When compared with previous studies, the results of this study are in line with several previous studies. One of them is research by Clara Moningga & Ratih Eminiari P., which stated that the more often individuals compare themselves on social media, the greater the likelihood of experiencing a decrease in self-esteem. These results are also consistent with research by Uswah Hasanati & Yolivia Irna Aviani, which showed a negative relationship between social comparison and self-esteem with a correlation coefficient of -0.369 ( $p < 0.01$ ). In fact, their research showed that social comparison has a 13.6% influence on self-esteem, while in this study found a larger contribution of 41.9%. This indicates that the phenomenon of social comparison is increasingly prominent in the context of current social media use.

This study also corroborates findings from Vogel et al. (Tiwari et al., 2022) which suggest that intensive and passive social media use (e.g., simply observing others' posts without interacting) can trigger social comparisons, which can lead to lower self-esteem and even depressive symptoms. However, this study did not find low self-esteem, suggesting that protective factors such as support systems, religiosity, or strong self-confidence may help mitigate these negative impacts.

In terms of subject characteristics, the majority of respondents were female (105), compared to 30 males. This aligns with previous research showing that women tend to be more active on social media and are more influenced by visual content related to physical

appearance and lifestyle. This tendency also increases the likelihood of women engaging in intense social comparison, particularly in the context of appearance and social status.

In terms of age, most respondents were between 20 and 22 years old, with 54 people aged 20, 33 people aged 21, and 36 people aged 22. This age group falls within the transitional period of early adulthood, which, according to Santrock (Anggraini, 2021) is a phase of identity exploration, life goal setting, and the search for social validation. At this stage, individuals are highly susceptible to the influence of social media and are highly likely to experience the effects of social comparison on the formation of their self-esteem.

Meanwhile, based on domicile, Medan Perjuangan had the highest number of respondents, with 40, followed by East Medan with 25, and Medan Tembung with 10. Other areas, such as Medan Petisah, Medan Baru, Medan Area, Medan Johor, Medan Kota, and Medan Helvetia, had fewer respondents, ranging from 7 to 9 per area. The tendency for respondents to dominate from Medan Perjuangan and East Medan suggests that these areas have a high level of participation, possibly reflecting their denser, younger populations and high levels of technology and internet access. These environments also tend to be more socially and digitally active, allowing for more intense social media exposure. In this context, the more frequently a person is exposed to social media content from their environment, the more likely they are to engage in social comparison. As a form of education that can be implemented based on the research results, areas with the highest respondent participation, such as Medan Perjuangan and East Medan, can be targeted for organizing outreach activities, seminars, or webinars that discuss the negative impact of social comparison on social media on self-esteem in early adulthood. In addition, education can also be carried out through the distribution of informative and reflective content on social media in the form of infographics or short, easy-to-understand videos, which contain tips for building self-confidence and how to avoid detrimental social comparisons.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that social comparison on social media does have a significant influence on self-esteem in young adults, particularly in visual contexts such as physical appearance and lifestyle. This aligns with previous research that suggests that exposure to idealized content on social media often triggers upward social comparison, which can lower self-esteem (Tjahyadi & Ersa Lanang Sanjaya, 2021). However, the persistence of high self-esteem in some individuals indicates that many are able to filter information healthily, maintain a positive self-perception, and are not completely influenced by social standards displayed visually on social media. Therefore, it is important to develop digital literacy programs and mental health awareness programs, particularly regarding how to use social media wisely to avoid being trapped in detrimental social comparisons that negatively impact individual self-esteem.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of research on the influence of social comparison on social media on self-esteem in early adulthood in Medan City, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Research results show that social comparison on social media has a significant and negative impact on self-esteem in young adults. This means that the more frequently someone compares themselves to others on social media, the greater the likelihood of their self-esteem declining.

2. Most respondents in this study maintained high levels of self-esteem, despite also experiencing high levels of social comparison. This suggests that not all social comparisons are directly detrimental, as some individuals are still able to maintain a positive view of themselves, perhaps due to other factors such as social support, personality, or strong internal values.
3. When looking at the social comparison aspect, it was found that physical attractiveness and lifestyle were the two aspects respondents most frequently compared when using social media. This means that many respondents felt compelled to compare their appearance and lifestyle with what they saw in other people's posts. Personality and wealth were also compared, but not to the same extent.
4. Meanwhile, in terms of self-esteem, the highest scores were obtained for virtue (related to moral values and the ability to exert positive influence), individual strength (resilience in facing challenges), and competence (feelings of ability and confidence in doing something). This indicates that most respondents still have a positive attitude towards themselves and are able to recognize their potential and values despite the pressures of social media.
5. Based on the characteristics of the research subjects, the majority of respondents were female, with the majority aged 20–22 years, and residing in the Medan Perjuangan and East Medan areas. This reflects the early adulthood age group, which is highly active on social media and is in a phase of life where they are forming their identity and future direction, making them more susceptible to external influences, including those from social media.

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