Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine relationships among early adolescents’ self-perceptions, Instagram use (viewing photographs, posting photographs, and importance of getting “likes”), and self-reported impacts of Instagram use on feelings about physical appearance and peer relationships. Harter’s (2012) Self Perception Profile for Adolescents and The Instagram Questionnaire (developed for the present study) were administered to 104 (male = 51; female = 53) grade eight students. Eighty four percent of participants had an Instagram account, and the majority reported viewing Instagram more than once daily. There were no gender differences in Instagram use. Boys reported more positive self-perceptions than girls in the social, athletic, appearance, and general self-worth domains. Girls reported Instagram use having a greater negative impact on their feelings about their appearance than did boys. Correlations revealed those who viewed Instagram more frequently were more likely to have negative self-perceptions about their behavioral and academic competence. Boys and girls who were more concerned with getting “likes” on their photos had more negative perceptions of their appearance, behavior, and overall self-worth. Students who reported negative impacts of Instagram use tended to have less favorable self-perceptions, an effect that was more pervasive in girls than boys. Among girls only, frequency of viewing Instagram was associated with greater perceived negative effects of Instagram. Results are discussed in relation to implications for parents, teachers, and counselors, as well as suggestions for future research.

Keywords: early adolescent; self-perception; Instagram