

## Understanding a research paper

### Seminar reading (this must be read before the seminar):

Cohen, R., Newton-John, T., & Slater, A. (2017). The relationship between *Facebook* and *Instagram* appearance-focused activities and body image concerns in young women. *Body Image, 23*, 183-187. doi: 10.1016/j.bodyim.2017.10.002

### Pre-seminar instructions

You must prepare for the seminar by reading the above paper and preparing answers to the questions below. These will be discussed in the seminar, alongside a discussion of the broader issues the paper raises about the role of social media in the self-concept. To gain most from the seminar, you must read the paper and complete the questions below.

*We recognize that this may be the first research paper you have read. Do not worry if there are parts that you do not understand, especially in the Method and Results sections. While you should read the paper in its entirety, the questions below can be addressed without deciphering the Results section.*

### Pre-seminar task: Deciphering the paper

Although the paper will be a challenging read, extracting and understanding key components of research papers will be a vital skill as you progress through your BSc. Most of the following questions can be answered by reading the paper carefully, though some require you to think independently or conduct some background searching. To help you find the information you will need, we have broken the questions down according to the section to which it most closely relates.

#### Introduction

Q1: Why, according to the authors, is exposure to a 'thin-ideal' appearance problematic for society?

Q2: Many research studies have *hypotheses*, i.e. predictions that the study has been set up to test. What are the hypotheses that guided this study?

Q3: The authors describe findings from a review by Holland and Tiggemann (2016), which also looked at relationships between social media use and body image. **Why, according to the authors, is Holland and Tiggemann’s review not adequate for addressing questions about the effects of ‘appearance exposure’ on Facebook and Instagram?**

#### Method

Q4: This paper uses a correlational survey *design*. **Describe, in your own words, what this means.** (*Hint: this is not stated in the paper - you will need to do some background research on this.*)

Q5: The authors report that their measure of Thin-Ideal Internalization (i.e., the Internationalisation General subscale of the SATAQ-3), had a ‘Cronbach’s alpha’ of .93. **What does Cronbach’s alpha tell us about a measure, and what does a value of .93 indicate?** (*Hint: this is not stated in the paper - you will need to do some background research on this.*)

#### Results and Discussion

Q6: **What were the main results of this study?** (*Hint: if the Results section is difficult to understand, a summary of the main results can usually also be found in the first paragraph of the Discussion.*)

Q7: **What are the practical implications of these findings?** (*Hint: see final paragraph.*)

*Discussion:*

How do these findings relate to your own experiences of using social media?