

ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS AND FASHION BRANDS PLAY IN SHAPING BEAUTY STANDARDS AMONG YOUNGSTERS



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MARCH 2025

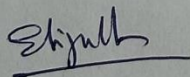
ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS AND FASHION BRANDS PLAY IN SHAPING BEAUTY STANDARDS AMONG YOUNGSTERS

Thesis submitted to St. Teresa's College (Autonomous), Ernakulam in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Masters of Arts in Sociology**

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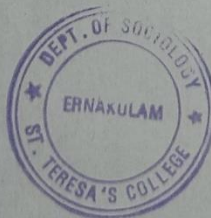
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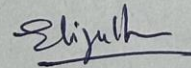
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CERTIFICATE

I certify that the thesis entitled “**Role of social media influencers and fashion brands play in shaping beauty standards among youngsters**” is a record of bonafede research work carried out by NIKITHA S MANKESH, under my guidance and supervision. The thesis is worth submitting in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the postgraduation of masters in Sociology.



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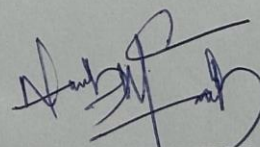
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DECLARATION

I, NIKITHA S MANKESH, hereby declare that the thesis entitled **“Role of social media influencers and fashion brands play in shaping beauty standards among youngsters”** is a bonafide record of independent research work carried out by me under the supervision and guidance of Mrs. ELIZABETH ABRAHAM. I further declare that this thesis has not been previously submitted for the award of any degree, diploma, associate ship or other similar title.

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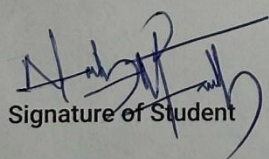
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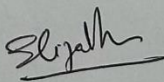


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Total Pages	68
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With immense gratitude and heartfelt appreciation, I take this opportunity to acknowledge all those who have supported, guided, and inspired me throughout this project journey.

Special appreciation goes to our Provincial Superior & Manager, Rev. Sr. Nilima CSST, Director of Main block, Rev. Sr. Tessa CSST, Director of Anugraha Campus, Rev. Sr Francis Ann CSST, Principal, Dr. Alphonsa Vijaya Joseph, and Vice Principal Dr. Lebia Gladis N P for granting me this opportunity.

I am deeply thankful to Dr. Leela P.U, the head of the Sociology department, and all the teachers for their invaluable encouragement and guidance.

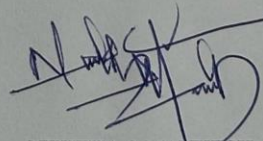
First and foremost, I extend my deepest thanks to my supervisor, Mrs. Elizabeth Abraham whose invaluable guidance, constant encouragement, and insightful feedback have shaped this study in ways I could not have imagined. Her patience and unwavering support have been a source of motivation, pushing me to refine my work with greater clarity and depth. Her expertise and suggestions have significantly enriched my understanding and strengthened the foundation of this study.

A special note of appreciation goes to the respondents who generously shared their time, experiences, and knowledge with me. Their willingness to open up about their experiences has been the very essence of this project. Without their trust and cooperation, this study would not have been possible.

I also wish to acknowledge the help provided by the librarians of St. Teresa's College.

Last but not the least I extend my appreciation to everyone—family, friends, faculty members, and well-wishers—who, in one way or another, contributed to this research, offering their support, encouragement, and constructive feedback.

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MARCH 2025



NIKITHA S MANKESH

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Social media's impact on how young people view beauty has significantly increased in recent years. As digital platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and Tik Tok have grown in popularity, fashion businesses and social media influencers have emerged as significant players in influencing standards of beauty. These influencers, who frequently have huge fan bases, produce content that supports particular body appearance, fashion trends, skincare regimens, and beauty trends. Their partnerships with fashion firms and advertisements have a big influence on how young people view beauty and value. In this dynamic, fashion brands are also quite important because they actively collaborate with influencers to promote their goods. Brands make sure that their ideals of beauty are widely recognised and adhered to by youthful audiences through sponsored campaigns, paid promotions, and exclusive partnerships.

Many of these advertisements promote specific body shapes, face traits, and fashion preferences that are seen to be "ideal," which can occasionally cause children to have irrational expectations. These beauty standards can have both beneficial and detrimental impacts. On the one hand, social media has contributed to the democratisation of beauty by bringing new races, body kinds, and unusual fashions into the public eye. Influencers who support inclusion, body positivity, and self-love have questioned conventional standards of beauty and inspired young people to value their uniqueness. On the other side, young people may have problems including low self-worth, anxiety, and body image issues as a result of their continuous exposure to "picture-perfect" models and influencers.

Many young people feel inadequate or undeserving when they compare themselves to fake photographs that have been altered by filters, editing software, and cosmetic surgeries. The purpose of this research is to investigate how fashion companies and social media influencers affect young people's perceptions of attractiveness. It will look at how young people's fashion choices, shopping behaviour, and self-image are influenced by these online figures and businesses. The psychological impacts of these norms, both good and negative, will also be examined in this study. It will also look on the expanding trend in the fashion and cosmetics industries towards inclusivity and body acceptance.

This study will bring important light on how young people today define beauty by examining the connection between social media, fashion labels, and beauty standards. It will also draw

attention to the duty of companies and influencers to promote more realistic and health-conscious beauty standards. This research will provide a thorough understanding of how beauty standards change in the internet age and how they affect young culture through surveys, case studies, and expert perspectives.

SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS

Social media influencers have become key figures in shaping beauty standards, mainly among young audiences. With their strong online presence on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, they create and promote beauty trends, skincare routines, and fashion styles that influence millions of followers. Their endorsements of products, collaborations with fashion brands, and viral beauty challenges make them powerful trendsetters. While some influencers advocate for inclusivity and body positivity, others contribute to unrealistic beauty ideals through filters, edited images, and cosmetic enhancements, leading to self-esteem issues among youngsters. The rise of influencer culture has also shifted traditional marketing strategies, as brands now rely heavily on influencers to shape consumer preferences and drive sales.

Despite their impact, social media influencers face ethical concerns related to transparency, authenticity, and mental health effects on their audience. Many followers, particularly young individuals, struggle with self-image due to constant exposure to idealized beauty portrayals. The pressure to conform to these standards has led to issues like body dysmorphia, anxiety, and excessive consumerism. However, the growing demand for authenticity has led some influencers to embrace natural beauty, self-acceptance, and ethical fashion, challenging traditional beauty norms. As social media continues to evolve, influencers and brands carry the responsibility of promoting healthier and more realistic beauty ideals to foster a positive digital environment.

FASHION BRANDING AND MARKETING

Fashion brands play a significant role in shaping beauty standards through their marketing strategies, often setting trends that influence how young people perceive beauty and style. These brands use social media, influencer partnerships, and digital campaigns to promote their products and establish aspirational aesthetics. By collaborating with social media influencers, celebrities, and models, fashion brands ensure their designs and beauty ideals reach a wide audience. Platforms like Instagram and TikTok have become essential marketing tools, allowing brands to engage directly with consumers through visually appealing content, trend-driven campaigns, and interactive promotions. High-end

luxury brands and fast fashion companies alike leverage influencer marketing, endorsements, and exclusive collaborations to maintain their relevance in a competitive industry.

While fashion brands have the power to set new trends and promote self-expression, they also contribute to unrealistic beauty ideals and excessive consumerism. Many brands create an exclusive image by featuring models and influencers who fit a narrow definition of beauty, often emphasizing slim figures, flawless skin, and Eurocentric features. This has led to concerns about body image issues and social pressure among youngsters who aspire to match these unattainable standards. However, in recent years, there has been a growing shift towards inclusivity and body positivity, with brands embracing diversity in their campaigns. Many fashion companies now promote plus-size models, diverse skin tones, and gender-neutral clothing to reflect a broader representation of beauty. This shift indicates that while fashion brands continue to shape beauty standards, there is increasing awareness of the need for more realistic and inclusive portrayals in the industry.

BEAUTY STANDARDS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Beauty standards have long been shaped by society, media, and fashion trends, but the rise of social media has intensified their influence, particularly among young individuals. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have become powerful spaces where beauty ideals are constantly evolving and being reinforced. Social media influencers, celebrities, and fashion brands showcase specific beauty trends—such as clear skin, slim bodies, and symmetrical facial features—that often become aspirational for their followers. Filters, photo editing apps, and beauty-enhancing technologies further distort reality, making these standards seem even more unattainable. As a result, many young people feel pressured to conform to these digitally enhanced images, leading to self-esteem issues, body dissatisfaction, and unrealistic beauty expectations.

Despite these concerns, social media has also played a positive role in challenging conventional beauty standards and promoting diversity. Movements like #BodyPositivity, #SkinPositivity, and #SelfLove have gained traction, encouraging individuals to embrace their natural appearance and reject unrealistic ideals. Many influencers and brands are now advocating for inclusivity by featuring models of different body types, ethnic backgrounds, and unique features in their campaigns. Additionally, there is a growing emphasis on authenticity, with some influencers choosing to showcase unfiltered, makeup-free content to promote self-acceptance. While social media continues to shape beauty norms, there is an ongoing shift toward a more inclusive and realistic portrayal of beauty, allowing young individuals to redefine beauty on their own terms.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study on the role of social media influencers and fashion brands in shaping beauty standards among youngsters is highly relevant in today's digital era, where online content significantly influences self-perception, fashion choices, and consumer behavior. Young individuals are constantly exposed to idealized beauty norms through influencer culture and brand marketing, which can impact their self-esteem, mental health, and purchasing decisions. By analyzing the extent of this influence, the study will provide valuable insights into how beauty standards are formed, reinforced, and challenged in the digital age. Understanding these dynamics can help educators, parents, psychologists, and policymakers address the negative effects of unrealistic beauty expectations and promote a healthier self-image among youngsters.

Additionally, this study is significant for brands and influencers themselves, as it sheds light on the ethical responsibilities they hold in promoting body positivity, diversity, and authenticity. With the growing demand for inclusivity in fashion and beauty marketing, this research will help businesses understand the importance of representing real, diverse beauty rather than perpetuating unattainable ideals. It will also contribute to the ongoing conversation about responsible digital marketing and social media consumption. Ultimately, this study aims to create awareness about the impact of beauty standards and encourage a shift toward more positive, inclusive, and empowering representations in the fashion and beauty industries.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The influence of social media influencers and fashion brands on beauty standards among youngsters has been extensively studied in recent years. Researchers have analyzed how digital platforms shape perceptions of attractiveness, self-image, and fashion trends, leading to both positive and negative psychological and social impacts. This review explores the key literature on social media's role in beauty standards, influencer culture, fashion brand marketing, and the effects of beauty ideals on young individuals.

Social media has revolutionized the way beauty standards are created and reinforced. According to Tiggemann & Zaccardo (2018), platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have increased the visibility of idealized beauty norms, which are often unrealistic and digitally enhanced. The study found that repeated exposure to edited images and beauty filters influences young users' self-perception, making them more likely to compare their appearance with influencers and celebrities.

Similarly, Perloff (2014) applied the Social Comparison Theory to social media, arguing that individuals evaluate their self-worth based on comparisons with others, particularly those perceived as more attractive. This process leads to an increased desire to conform to prevailing beauty trends. The impact is particularly strong among adolescent girls and young women, who are more susceptible to beauty-related content on social media. The study highlights the role of algorithm-driven content in reinforcing these ideals, as users are constantly exposed to images that align with societal beauty expectations.

A more recent study by Fardouly et al. (2020) examined the psychological effects of social media engagement, concluding that frequent exposure to beauty content increases body dissatisfaction, self-esteem issues, and even eating disorders. The authors suggest that the widespread use of filters and editing apps (such as FaceTune and Photoshop) has created an unattainable standard of beauty, affecting users' confidence and mental health.

Social media influencers play a crucial role in shaping modern beauty standards by promoting specific looks, skincare routines, and fashion trends. Abidin (2016) defines influencers as "digital celebrities" who build personal brands through relatable content and audience engagement. Unlike traditional celebrities, influencers cultivate a sense of authenticity and trust, making their beauty recommendations more impactful.

Djafarova & Rushworth (2017) conducted a study on young women's perception of influencer content and found that followers view influencers as more credible and relatable than traditional advertisements. This explains why beauty brands increasingly collaborate with influencers to market their products. However, the study also noted that while influencers claim to promote authenticity, many rely on sponsored content, excessive photo editing, and cosmetic procedures to maintain an idealized appearance.

Furthermore, Chae (2021) explored the psychological effects of influencer culture on self-esteem and body image. The study found that followers who engage with beauty influencers frequently experience higher levels of self-objectification and dissatisfaction with their own appearance. However, it also highlighted the positive impact of self-love and body positivity influencers, who promote a more inclusive definition of beauty.

Fashion brands have historically dictated beauty norms through advertising and media representation. According to Schroeder & Zwick (2004), fashion marketing strategies are designed to create an aspirational image, making consumers desire certain beauty standards and lifestyle choices. Luxury brands and fast fashion companies alike use slim models, clear skin, and Eurocentric features in their advertising to maintain exclusivity and desirability.

However, recent studies suggest a shift in branding strategies toward inclusivity. Gill (2020) analyzed marketing campaigns from leading fashion brands and found that companies are increasingly incorporating diverse body types, ethnicities, and gender identities in their advertisements. Brands such as Dove, Fenty Beauty, and Aerie have embraced body positivity and inclusivity to cater to a more socially conscious audience. Despite this progress, many brands still face criticism for tokenism and for continuing to promote unrealistic beauty ideals through digital manipulation and selective representation.

A study by Cohen et al. (2019) examined the relationship between fast fashion, social media trends, and beauty ideals. The researchers found that fashion brands use trend-driven influencer marketing to push rapid consumerism, encouraging young individuals to constantly update their wardrobes and beauty routines. This cycle contributes to pressure to conform to beauty trends, often at the cost of financial well-being and self-esteem.

The impact of beauty standards on mental health has been widely documented. According to Fardouly & Vartanian (2016), social media-driven beauty norms contribute to higher rates of anxiety, depression, and body dissatisfaction among young people. The researchers found that women who frequently engage with appearance-focused social media content report lower self-esteem and a greater desire for cosmetic enhancements.

The American Psychological Association (APA, 2021) released a report highlighting the role of social media in shaping negative self-perception among adolescents. The report found that excessive engagement with beauty influencers, fashion models, and fitness content often leads to distorted body image, particularly among teenage girls. Young individuals who fail to meet social media-driven beauty standards experience increased social anxiety and self-worth issues.

However, some studies suggest that social media can have a positive influence when used for empowerment. Frederick et al. (2021) found that exposure to body-positive and self-acceptance content helps counteract the negative effects of traditional beauty norms. Influencers who promote realistic beauty, self-love, and diverse representation contribute to improved self-esteem and confidence among their followers.

In recent years, there has been a significant shift in beauty standards due to the rise of body positivity movements. Cohen et al. (2019) studied the impact of campaigns such as Dove's "Real Beauty" and Rihanna's Fenty Beauty, which challenge narrow beauty ideals by featuring models of all skin tones, body types, and backgrounds. These campaigns have sparked a cultural shift towards inclusivity, leading many brands to reassess their marketing strategies.

According to Sastre (2016), social media has allowed marginalized beauty standards to gain visibility. The emergence of hashtags such as #BodyPositivity, #SelfLove, and #SkinPositivity has encouraged individuals to embrace their natural appearance and reject unattainable beauty expectations. This movement has also influenced social media policies, with platforms like Instagram and TikTok implementing anti-filter and anti-body-shaming guidelines to create a healthier digital environment.

Despite these positive developments, critics argue that the commercialization of body positivity has led to performative inclusivity, where brands claim to promote diversity but continue to digitally enhance their marketing materials. Jones & Pittman (2022) suggest that while inclusivity in fashion and beauty is improving, true change requires systemic shifts in representation and marketing ethics rather than temporary diversity campaigns.

The literature suggests that social media influencers and fashion brands have a profound impact on shaping beauty standards among young individuals. While social media allows for diverse beauty representation and self-expression, it also reinforces unrealistic beauty ideals, leading to body dissatisfaction and mental health challenges. Influencer culture plays a key role in shaping self-perception, as young people often look to online figures for beauty guidance. Additionally, fashion brands contribute to this phenomenon through their advertising strategies, which historically promoted Eurocentric and idealized beauty norms. However, recent shifts toward body positivity and inclusivity indicate progress in redefining beauty standards. As this topic continues to evolve, further research is needed to explore how responsible marketing and social media policies can create a more positive and empowering beauty culture.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Social media influencers and fashion brands play a significant role in shaping beauty standards among youngsters by promoting and normalizing specific aesthetics and lifestyles. Influencers, with their large followings and relatable personas, often set trends and endorse products, creating an aspirational image that many young people strive to emulate. Fashion brands collaborate with these influencers to market their products, leveraging their influence to reach and engage a wider audience. This symbiotic relationship amplifies the visibility of certain beauty standards, often emphasizing unrealistic ideals of perfection that can impact self-esteem and body image among young people. As a result, the continuous exposure to these curated images and endorsements helps define and reinforce contemporary notions of beauty.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

General objective

The general objective of this research is to investigate the influence of social media influencers and fashion brands on the beauty standards of young people, analyzing the mechanisms through which these entities shape perceptions and self-image, and assessing the psychological and social impacts of these standards on the youth demographic.

Specific objective

- To assess the impact of social media beauty trends on youngsters' self-esteem, confidence, and body image.
- To analyse the psychological effects of beauty standards promoted by influencers and fashion brands on youngsters' mental well-being.
- To explore how age, gender, and socioeconomic background influence youngsters' perception of social media beauty standards.
- To study the socioeconomic profile of youngsters and its link to their engagement with beauty trends and influencers.

THEORITICAL AND OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF MAJOR CONCEPTS

Social Media Influencer

Theoretical Definition: A social media influencer is someone who is popular on platforms like Instagram, YouTube, or TikTok and can influence their followers' opinions and choices. They build trust with their audience by sharing relatable content and often promote products or ideas, shaping trends and encouraging people to act or buy based on their recommendations.

Operational Definition: A person who has the ability to affect the opinions, behaviours, or purchase decisions of others through their social media presence, usually due to their large following and perceived expertise or popularity in a specific area.

Fashion Brands

Theoretical Definition: companies that design and produce clothing and accessories, establishing a unique identity and style that sets them apart from others. These brands create and promote trends, influencing what people wear and how they perceive fashion.

Operational Definition: Companies that create and sell clothing, accessories, and other fashion items. These brands use marketing and branding strategies to influence consumers' tastes and preferences, often collaborating with social media influencers to reach and engage a wider audience.

Beauty Standards

Theoretical Definition: The ideas and rules about what looks are considered attractive in a society. These standards are created by cultural and social influences and can change over time. They tell us what features and styles are seen as beautiful and affect how people see themselves and others.

Operational Definition: the specific traits and features that are promoted as attractive by media, fashion, and society. These include things like certain body shapes, skin tones, and facial features that are often highlighted in advertisements, social media, and popular culture as the ideal look.

Youngsters

Theoretical Definition: People in their teens and early twenties, learning, growing, and finding their place in life.

Operational Definition: In this study, the term ‘youngsters’ are defined as people in between 18-26.

VARIABLES

Independent Variables

Socio-economic background

Social media usage

Peer influence

Fashion brands

Dependent Variables

Perception of beauty standards

Body image satisfaction

Self Esteem

Conformity to Trend

UNIVERSE

Youngsters influenced by social media content creators in Kochi city

SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING METHOD

The sampling method used here is Simple Random Sampling

The sample size of this study is 100 youngsters of two colleges of kochi

TOOL FOR DATA COLLECTION

Quantitative Method- Online survey and questionnaire are suitable

A structured questionnaire with a mix of closed and openended questions

PRETEST

Pretest has been done on 10 youngsters from two colleges in kochi

ANALYSIS OF DATA

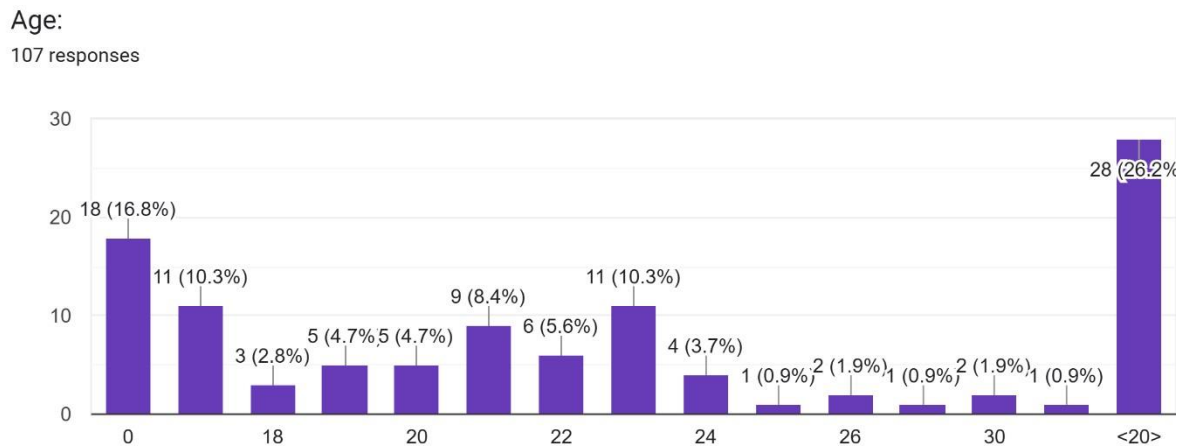
Data is analysed through graphs and diagrams from the data collected through questionnaire

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Figure 1

Age

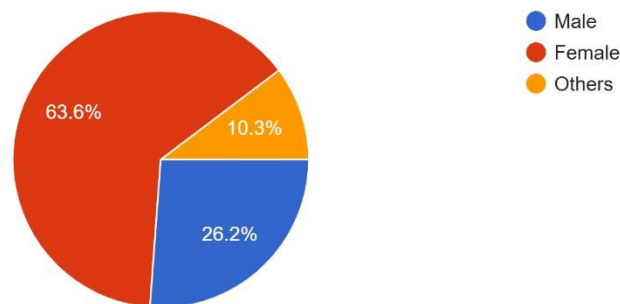


The figure 1 shows the age distribution of 107 people who responded to the survey. Most of the responses came from individuals aged 30 and above, making up about 26% of the total. This suggests that a good number of older adults were interested or involved in the topic. Interestingly, there's also strong participation from young adults, especially those around 18, 21, and 22 years old. These age groups seem to be quite engaged, possibly because they're students or just starting out in their careers. However, there's a noticeable drop in responses from people in their mid-to-late 20s, which could be due to a variety of reasons—maybe they were simply less reached or less interested in the survey. One odd detail is that 11 responses are marked as age "0," which is likely a mistake or placeholder in the data. Overall, the responses show a healthy mix of younger and older individuals, giving the survey results a well-rounded perspective.

Figure 2

Gender

Gender
107 responses

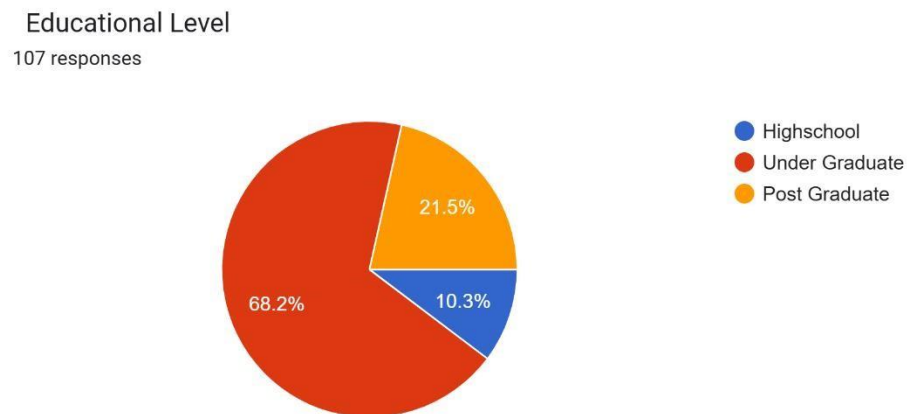


This pie chart shows the gender breakdown of the 107 people who took part in the survey. Most of the respondents — about 63.6% — identified as female, which suggests that women were more engaged or found the topic more relevant. About 26.2% of the participants were male, making up just over a quarter of the group.

Interestingly, 10.3% of the respondents selected “Others” for their gender identity. This could include individuals who identify as non-binary, gender-fluid, or who simply don’t fit into traditional categories. It’s encouraging to see that the survey was inclusive and allowed space for diverse gender identities.

Overall, the responses came from a wide mix of people, with a clear majority being women. This kind of gender diversity can offer richer insights and help us better understand how different groups might think or feel about the topic.

Figure 3
Educational level



In our survey, we received 107 responses about the educational levels of participants. The results show that the majority — about 68.2% — are undergraduates. Meanwhile, 21.5% of the respondents have completed postgraduate studies, and 10.3% have finished their education at the high school level. Clearly, most of the people we reached out to are either currently pursuing or have recently completed their undergraduate degrees.

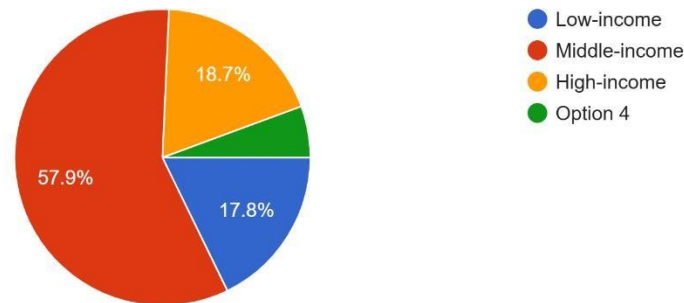
Seeing such a high percentage of undergraduates tells us that our audience is mostly made up of young adults who are actively engaged in higher education. It's also worth noting that a good portion — just over one-fifth — have gone on to pursue postgraduate education, showing that many are interested in taking their academic journey even further. On the other hand, only a small number of respondents have stopped at high school, which suggests that higher education is a common path among this group.

Overall, the data paints a picture of a highly educated and ambitious group. If we're thinking about creating programs, services, or content for this audience, it makes sense to focus mainly on undergraduate needs while also keeping in mind the aspirations of those who are pursuing or have completed postgraduate degrees. Efforts aimed at high school graduates might not resonate as strongly with this particular crowd.

Figure 4

What is your socioeconomic background?

107 responses



In this survey, 107 people shared information about their socioeconomic backgrounds. Most of them — about 57.9% — come from middle-income families, showing that the group overall tends to have a fairly stable financial situation. Meanwhile, 18.7% identified as coming from high-income backgrounds, and 17.8% from low-income backgrounds. A small group, around 5.6%, chose "Option 4," which isn't clearly explained but likely represents those who don't fit neatly into the usual income categories.

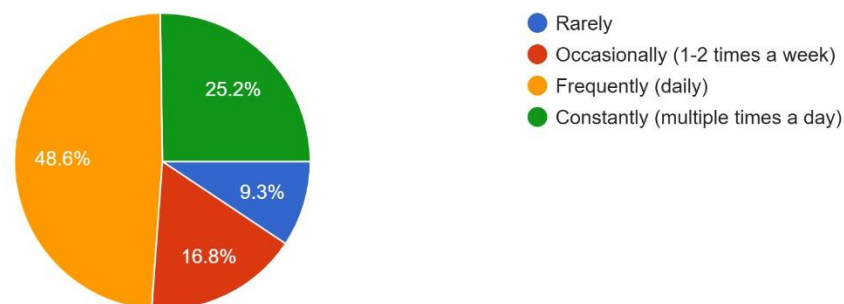
The responses reveal a community that's mainly middle class, with a healthy mix of individuals who have experienced different levels of financial comfort. The close numbers between the low-income and high-income groups suggest that this audience brings a wide range of financial experiences to the table. It's also important to recognize the small group that selected "Option 4," as they might have unique circumstances that aren't captured by traditional income labels.

Overall, the results show that while most participants live in financially stable environments, any programs or initiatives should be designed to be inclusive — keeping in mind the diverse backgrounds, and ensuring that people from both higher and lower-income situations feel supported and represented.

Figure 5

How often do you use social media?

107 responses



107 people shared how often they use social media. Nearly half of them — about 48.6% — said they use social media every day, while another 25.2% admitted to using it multiple times throughout the day. On the other hand, 16.8% mentioned they use it only occasionally, maybe once or twice a week, and just 9.3% said they rarely use it at all.

These results clearly show that social media is a big part of everyday life for most of the group.

Whether it's scrolling through feeds, chatting with friends, staying updated with news, or even using it for work or study, social media seems to be woven into their daily routines. The fact that such a large portion uses it either daily or constantly suggests that online platforms are a major way they stay connected, entertained, and informed.

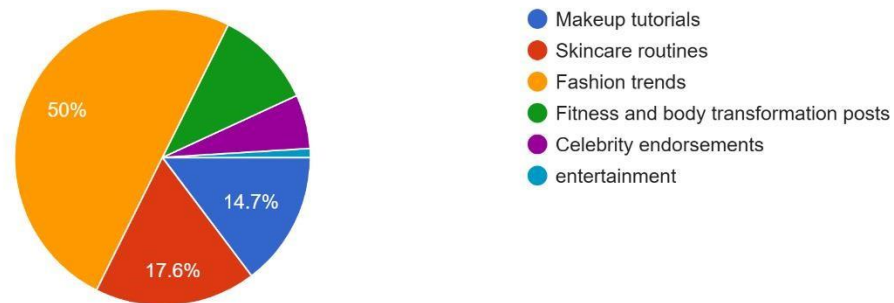
At the same time, there's still a small group of people who are less active or more mindful about their usage. They might be choosing to limit their screen time or simply not feel the need to check in as often.

Overall, it's clear that if we want to reach or engage this group, social media would be the most effective way to do it — because for most of them, it's a space they're already spending a lot of their time.

Figure 6

Which type of content from influencers influences your beauty perception the most?

102 responses



In this survey with 102 responses, we wanted to find out which type of influencer content has the biggest impact on how people view beauty. Interestingly, half of the participants (50%) said that fashion trends influence them the most. It shows just how much what influencers wear — and how they style themselves — shapes what many people consider beautiful today.

Coming in next, 17.6% of people said they're most influenced by skincare routines, while 14.7% pointed to makeup tutorials. This suggests that while skincare and makeup are definitely important, they're not quite as powerful as fashion when it comes to changing people's ideas about beauty. Fitness and body transformation posts also had some influence, with 10.8% choosing them, showing that body image still plays a role, but it's not the biggest factor.

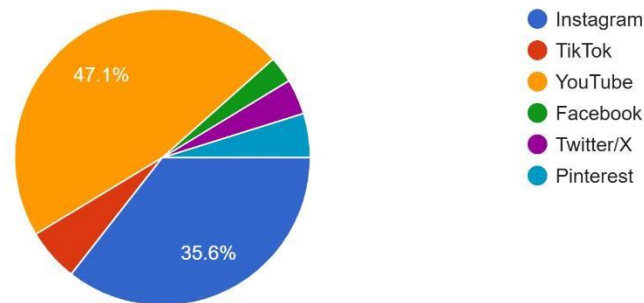
On the other hand, celebrity endorsements had the least impact, influencing just 5.9% of respondents. It's pretty clear that people today might value relatable, everyday influencer content over big celebrity promotions. Content focused mainly on entertainment had such a small percentage that it barely made a mark.

In short, fashion clearly leads the way when it comes to influencing beauty standards, followed by skincare and makeup. If brands, creators, or marketers want to connect with people's ideas of beauty, focusing on style and trends would be the smartest move.

Figure 7

Which social media platform do you use the most for beauty and fashion-related content?

104 responses



ut of 104 people, almost half (47.1%) said YouTube is their number one place. It makes a lot of sense — YouTube has tons of detailed tutorials, honest product reviews, and longer videos that really let you dive deep into beauty and fashion topics.

Instagram was the second most popular, with 35.6% of people saying they use it the most. Honestly, that's not surprising either. Instagram is all about visuals — quick reels, polished photos, aesthetic feeds — it's the perfect spot to get quick inspiration without having to spend too much time.

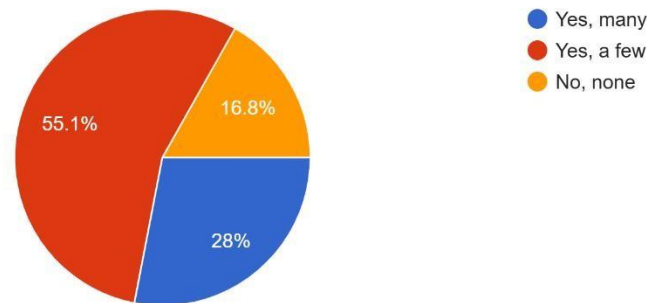
TikTok did get some love too, but not as much as you might expect given how viral it is for trends. And platforms like Pinterest, Twitter/X, and Facebook barely made a dent. It's pretty clear from this that when it comes to beauty and fashion, people really want to see things — detailed videos, cool photos, and creative visuals matter a lot.

In short, if you're a brand or an influencer trying to make an impact in beauty or fashion, YouTube and Instagram are definitely where you want to focus your energy. People are looking for content that's not just quick, but also visually inspiring and really well put together.

Figure 8

Do you follow beauty and fashion influencers on social media?

107 responses



A little over half of the respondents — 55.1% — said they do follow influencers, but only a few. This shows that while people are definitely influenced by online creators, they tend to be selective about who they follow, choosing just a handful whose style, tips, or personalities they genuinely enjoy.

On the other hand, 28% of people said they follow many beauty and fashion influencers. This group seems to be more deeply involved with online trends, possibly looking to influencers for inspiration, product recommendations, or the latest fashion updates on a regular basis.

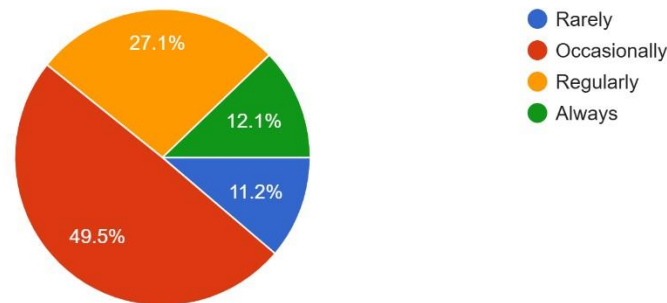
Interestingly, 16.8% of respondents said they don't follow any beauty or fashion influencers at all. This tells us that despite the massive popularity of influencer culture, it's not something that appeals to everyone — some people either find their style inspiration elsewhere or simply aren't very engaged with beauty and fashion content on social media.

All in all, the data paints a picture of a community that is connected to influencer culture, but on their own terms. Whether they follow a few or many, most people are curating their feeds to fit their personal preferences, while a smaller group chooses to opt out completely.

Figure 9

How often do you engage with beauty-related content (likes, shares, comments, saves)?

107 responses



Nearly half of the participants (49.5%) said they engage occasionally. This shows that for a lot of people, beauty content is something they interact with when it catches their eye — not necessarily every day, but enough to stay in the loop.

About 27.1% of the people said they engage regularly, meaning beauty content is a consistent part of their scrolling habits. They probably enjoy keeping up with the latest trends, product recommendations, and beauty tips on a more steady basis.

Meanwhile, 12.1% of respondents shared that they always engage with beauty content. These are the true beauty enthusiasts who are constantly liking, commenting, sharing, or saving posts. For them, beauty content might be a daily source of inspiration or entertainment.

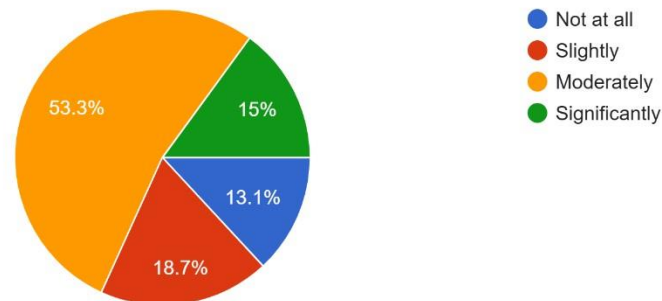
On the flip side, 11.2% said they rarely engage with beauty-related posts. Maybe they enjoy looking but don't feel the need to interact, or perhaps beauty isn't a major interest for them compared to other types of content.

In short, beauty-related content definitely grabs people's attention, but the way they interact with it varies — from occasional interest to daily enthusiasm. It's clear that beauty remains an important, yet flexible, part of people's social media experience.

Figure 10

Do you think social media influencers influence your perception of beauty?

107 responses



When we asked people if social media influencers shape how they see beauty, the majority — about 53.3% — said influencers have a moderate impact on them. So while influencers don't completely dictate their beauty standards, they definitely leave a noticeable impression. It's clear that influencer culture seeps into people's ideas about beauty without totally taking over.

Around 15% of the respondents admitted that influencers significantly affect their perception of beauty. For this group, influencers seem to play a big role in how they view themselves and others when it comes to looks and trends.

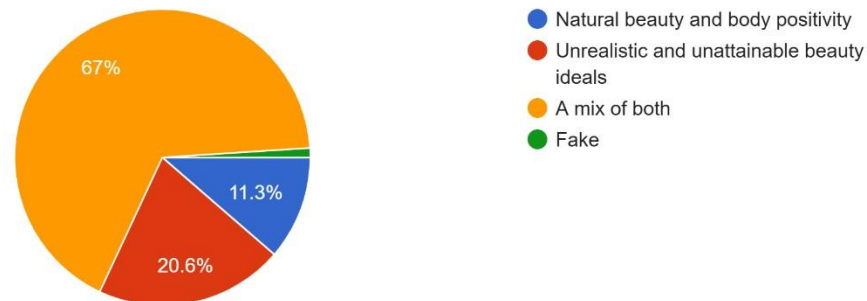
Meanwhile, 18.7% of people said influencers only slightly impact them. They might enjoy influencer content, but it doesn't really shift their personal standards. And 13.1% felt that influencers don't affect them at all, showing there's still a strong sense of independence when it comes to defining beauty for themselves.

Overall, the results paint a picture of a community that's influenced — but not entirely controlled — by what they see online. Influencers are important voices in shaping beauty trends, but for many people, they're just one of many sources they turn to for inspiration.

Figure 11

What kind of beauty standards do influencers promote the most?

97 responses



When we asked people what kind of beauty standards influencers are really pushing, most people — like two out of three — said it's honestly a bit of everything. Influencers are mixing natural beauty messages with those super polished, almost impossible-to-reach beauty ideals. It's like, yes, they'll post about body positivity one day, but the next day it's a heavily edited photoshoot. So people are seeing both sides.

About 21% of people feel that influencers are mostly promoting unrealistic standards — those perfect looks that don't even seem real. So, for a lot of people, there's still that pressure to look a certain way because of what they see online.

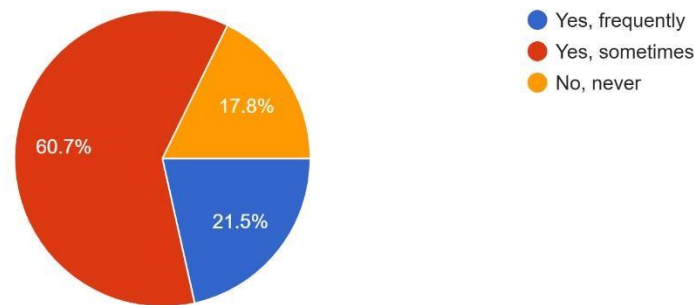
On a positive note, 11% said they mainly see natural beauty and body positivity being promoted. It's not a huge number yet, but it's a start — it shows that more influencers are being real and encouraging others to love themselves as they are.

Hardly anyone said influencers are promoting beauty that's just totally fake, which is kind of good news. It shows that even if things are a bit filtered or idealized, most people don't feel like they're being totally lied to.

Overall, people seem to understand that what they see online isn't 100% real, but it's not 100% fake either. It's somewhere in the middle — and audiences today are way more aware and thoughtful about it.

Figure 12

Have you ever changed your beauty routine or fashion style due to social media influencers?
107 responses



When we asked people if they've ever switched up their beauty routines or fashion styles because of something they saw from a social media influencer, most people said yes — but in different ways. About 61% of respondents said they've sometimes been influenced. That means even if it's not a total transformation, a lot of people are picking up little tips and trends here and there from the influencers they follow.

Interestingly, around 22% of people admitted they frequently change their beauty or fashion habits based on what influencers are doing. These are the trendsetters and experimenters — the ones who love keeping up with the latest looks and aren't afraid to try something new.

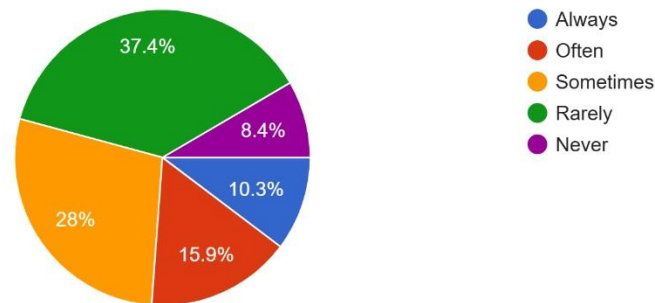
Meanwhile, about 18% of the respondents said they've never let influencers affect their personal style. These individuals seem pretty confident in their choices and prefer to stick to what feels authentic to them, no matter what's trending online.

In short, the data shows that while influencers don't always completely reshape people's styles, they definitely spark inspiration. For most, it's about picking and choosing what fits their vibe, rather than copying trends blindly.

Figure 13

Do you compare your appearance to influencers and celebrities on social media?

107 responses



When we asked people if they ever compare their appearance to influencers and celebrities on social media, the answers told a story that many of us can relate to. A good number — around 37.4% — said they rarely compare themselves. This shows that while the pressure is definitely out there, a lot of people are building resilience. They're learning to enjoy social media without letting it dictate how they feel about their own looks.

At the same time, 28% of people said they sometimes fall into that comparison trap. And honestly, who can blame them? Social media is filled with carefully curated photos, filters, and angles that are designed to look flawless. It's only human to occasionally glance at those images and wonder if we measure up — even when we know deep down that it's not always real.

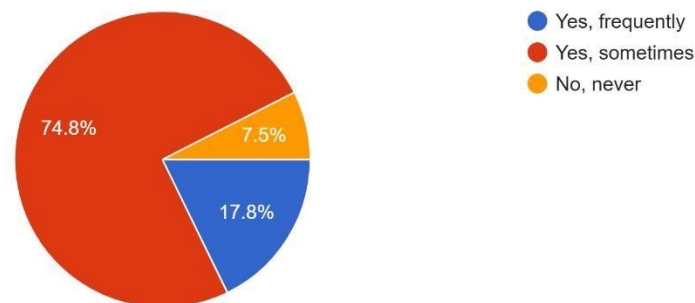
Then there's a group that's feeling the pressure more heavily. About 15.9% said they often compare themselves, and another 10.3% said they always do. For these people, social media isn't just something fun to scroll through — it can quietly chip away at their confidence. Seeing endless images of "perfection" day after day makes it hard not to be tough on yourself.

But there's also a powerful minority — about 8.4% — who said they never compare their looks to influencers or celebrities. These individuals seem to have found a strong sense of self-worth, reminding us that it is absolutely possible to exist online without letting it shape how we view ourselves.

Overall, this survey shows something important: comparison is a natural part of being human, especially in a world dominated by social media. But it also shows hope — more and more people are recognizing the difference between real life and the carefully curated worlds they see online. It's a journey toward healthier self-image, one small step at a time.

Figure 14

Have social media beauty trends ever made you feel insecure about your appearance?
107 responses



When asked if social media beauty trends have ever made them feel insecure about their appearance, the majority of people—about 75%—said yes, they sometimes feel that way. This really shows how much influence online beauty standards have on how we view ourselves. Social media isn't just about fun trends and inspiration; for most people, it quietly shapes their self-esteem too.

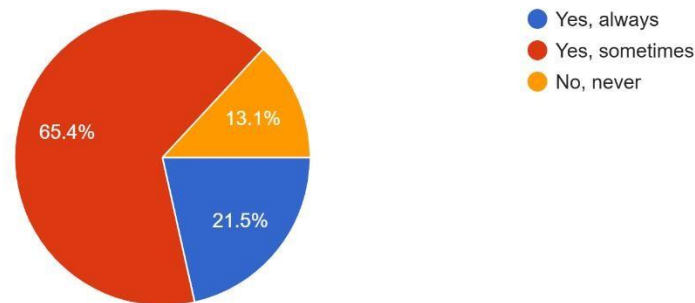
About 18% of respondents said they frequently feel insecure because of what they see online. That's almost one in every five people regularly battling feelings of self-doubt triggered by beauty trends. It's a reminder that these platforms can have a deeper emotional impact than we might realize. On the flip side, only 7.5% of people said they've never felt insecure because of social media beauty trends — a small group that seems to have built a strong sense of self-worth, despite the pressures around them.

Overall, the responses make it clear: while social media can be a place for creativity and connection, it often comes with hidden costs to how we feel about ourselves. It highlights why it's so important to push for more real, diverse, and inclusive representations of beauty online — because a lot of people are quietly being affected every single day.

Figure 15

Do beauty influencers make you feel pressured to achieve a certain look?

107 responses



When asked whether beauty influencers make them feel pressured to achieve a certain look, most people — about 65% — said *yes, sometimes*. That’s a big number, and it shows something important: even if we don’t always realize it, a lot of us are quietly measuring ourselves against the images we see online. Influencers, who often seem so effortlessly perfect, are shaping the way many people think they *should* look.

Another 21.5% of people said they *always* feel pressured. That’s one in every five people constantly carrying the weight of unrealistic expectations. Imagine scrolling through your feed and feeling, every single time, that you’re not enough. It’s exhausting, and it really highlights how damaging beauty trends can be when they’re not grounded in reality.

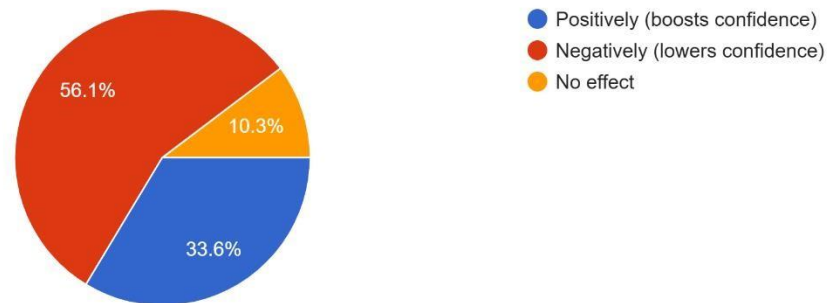
On a more positive note, 13% of respondents said they *never* feel pressured by influencers. It’s refreshing to know that there are people who can engage with social media without letting it affect their self-worth. Maybe they’re more aware of how edited and curated those images are, or maybe they’ve just built up a strong sense of self-confidence.

Overall, these responses paint a pretty clear picture: beauty influencers have a big impact on how people feel about themselves. Even if it’s unintentional, the pressure to look a certain way is very real for most people — and it’s something we need to talk about more openly.

Figure 16

How does exposure to beauty influencers on social media affect your self-confidence?

107 responses



When we asked people how beauty influencers on social media impact their self-confidence, the results painted a very real and emotional picture. A little over half of the respondents — 56.1% — admitted that seeing these influencers actually makes them feel worse about themselves. It's a tough reminder of how powerful and sometimes overwhelming social media can be, especially when we're constantly bombarded with images of "perfect" looks and lifestyles.

However, it's not all negative. About 33.6% of people shared that following beauty influencers actually gave them a boost in confidence. For these individuals, influencers might serve as sources of inspiration — helping them feel empowered, more stylish, or even more accepting of their own unique beauty. It shows that positive, relatable content still has a strong place and impact.

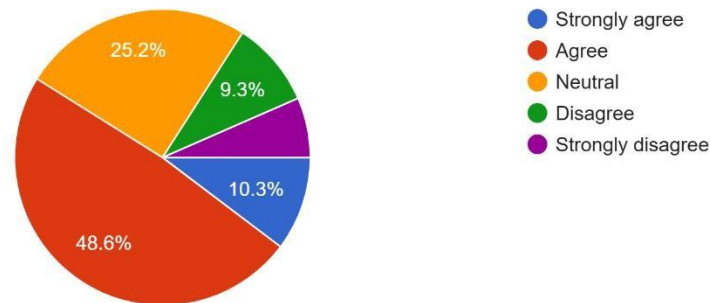
Meanwhile, 10.3% of participants said that seeing beauty influencers doesn't really affect their confidence one way or the other. For this group, social media seems to be just a space for fun and trends, without it digging too deeply into their self-image.

Overall, these results really show the double-edged nature of social media. While it can lift some people up, it can also leave others feeling not good enough. It's a clear sign that we need more real, raw, and inclusive voices in the beauty world — voices that remind everyone that confidence should never be about fitting into a mold, but about celebrating who you already are.

Figure 17

Do you feel that social media promotes an unrealistic standard of beauty?

107 responses



When we asked people how they feel about beauty standards on social media, the answers spoke volumes. Nearly 60% of people — that’s the majority — feel that platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and others are pushing completely unrealistic ideas of beauty. Almost half simply agreed, and another big chunk *strongly* agreed, showing just how much pressure people are feeling every day when they scroll.

At the same time, about a quarter of the people said they felt neutral — maybe because they’ve learned to take what they see online with a pinch of salt, or maybe because they’re still figuring out how much it actually affects them.

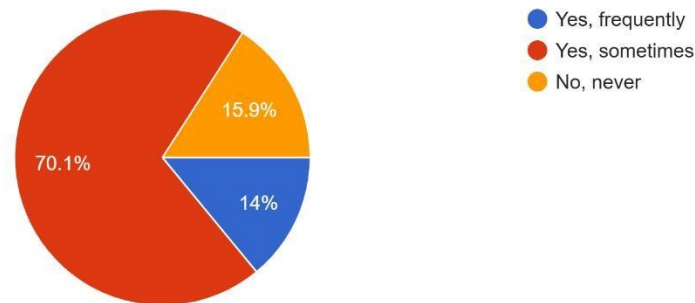
Then there’s the small group, about 15% combined, who disagreed or strongly disagreed. It’s possible that they’ve found a way to build a healthier relationship with social media, maybe by following more real, body-positive, and diverse creators. Or maybe they just don’t internalize those beauty standards the way others do — and that’s pretty refreshing to see too.

Overall, though, the big takeaway is clear: most people recognize that what they’re seeing online isn’t real — and it’s impacting how they view themselves. It’s a reminder that we desperately need more realness on social media — more real bodies, real skin, real beauty — so that people don’t feel like they have to live up to an impossible standard just to feel good about themselves

Figure 18

Have you ever felt anxious or depressed because of beauty trends on social media?

107 responses



Scrolling through social media, it's easy to get swept up in beauty trends — the perfectly contoured faces, the flawless skin, the unattainable “standards” that flood our feeds every day. And according to this survey, it's not just harmless scrolling. It's taking a real emotional toll.

Out of 107 people, a heartbreaking 70% admitted that they sometimes feel anxious or depressed because of what they see. It's not occasional discomfort; it's a constant, lingering pressure that quietly chips away at their mental health. For 14% of respondents, this sadness isn't even "sometimes" — it's frequent. Imagine waking up, opening your phone, and almost immediately feeling like you're not good enough. That's the reality for so many people today.

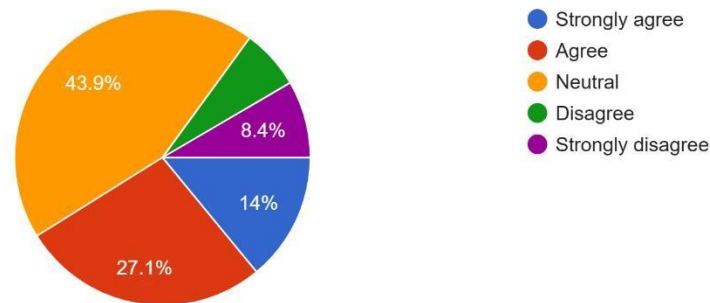
Only about 16% said they never felt affected. A small number, considering how loud and powerful the beauty trends are online. Their resilience is admirable, but it also shows just how isolating the experience of insecurity can be for the majority.

This data paints a very raw, very real picture: beauty trends on social media aren't just shaping how we look — they're shaping how we feel about ourselves deep inside. It's a quiet kind of harm, one that builds over time and stays with us far longer than a double-tap on a post ever could.

It's a call to action for all of us: to be kinder to ourselves, to rethink what we call "beautiful," and to remember that real beauty doesn't come from fitting into a trend — it comes from being unapologetically yourself.

Figure 19

Do you think excessive exposure to beauty standards on social media affects your mental health?
107 responses



In this survey of 107 people, a significant number shared how seeing constant beauty standards online has touched their mental health.

About 41% — those who either "strongly agree" (14%) or "agree" (27.1%) — admitted that excessive exposure has genuinely affected their mental well-being. That's not just a number; that's dozens of people feeling the silent pressure to look a certain way, questioning their own worth because of curated, filtered images they see every day.

Interestingly, the largest group — 43.9% — said they feel "neutral." Neutrality can mean many things: maybe they've built a shield to protect themselves, maybe they're unsure, or maybe they're just numb from seeing these images so often that it no longer registers. It's not necessarily a sign that everything's fine — sometimes, it's a sign of quiet fatigue.

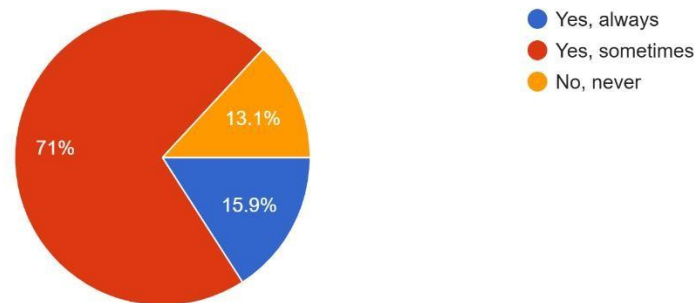
On the other side, a much smaller portion — about 14.9% — said they "disagree" or "strongly disagree" that beauty standards have any effect on their mental health. Their voices remind us that not everyone is impacted in the same way, and that resilience, confidence, and a strong sense of self are powerful protectors.

Altogether, the responses paint a real, vulnerable picture: that while beauty content can seem harmless or even inspiring at times, it also has the power to quietly shape how people feel about themselves — sometimes without them even realizing it.

Figure 20

Do you feel the need to edit or filter your photos before posting on social media?

107 responses



When it comes to posting photos on social media, it's clear that for most people, it's not just about snapping a picture and uploading it. Out of 107 people surveyed, a huge majority — 71% — said they sometimes feel the need to edit or filter their photos before posting. Another 15.9% said they always do it, showing just how common it is to make changes before sharing a post.

This reveals an important reality: for many, there's an underlying pressure to look "better" or more polished online. Whether it's smoothing out skin, brightening colors, or tweaking angles, editing photos has almost become a natural part of the social media routine.

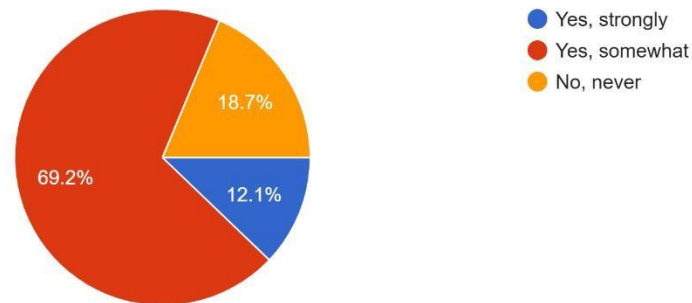
On the flip side, about 13.1% said they never feel the need to edit their photos. While this is a smaller group, it shows that there are still people who are confident enough — or perhaps intentionally rebellious enough — to post pictures just as they are, imperfections and all.

Overall, these results show that editing photos before posting is extremely normalized. It speaks to how deeply social media has influenced how people view themselves and how they believe they should present themselves to the world. It's no longer just about capturing memories; it's about managing an image.

Figure 21

Have you ever considered cosmetic procedures due to social media influence?

107 responses



When we asked people if they had ever thought about getting cosmetic procedures because of what they see on social media, the answers painted a powerful picture.

Nearly 7 out of 10 people — 69.2% — said they had somewhat considered it. That's a huge number, showing how quietly but deeply social media can get under our skin. Even if it's not something people act on, the idea lingers — that maybe, just maybe, they should look more like the filtered faces they see every day.

About 12.1% of people went even further, saying they had strongly considered cosmetic procedures. For them, the pressure isn't subtle. It's loud, personal, and sometimes overwhelming.

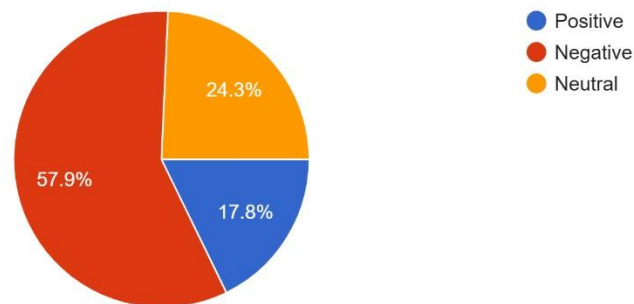
Only 18.7% said they had never thought about it. In a world where scrolling often feels like flipping through an endless highlight reel of perfection, holding on to that self-confidence is no small thing.

This glimpse into how people really feel reminds us: behind every like, every filter, and every post, there are real insecurities being stirred — and real people questioning if they're enough.

Figure 22

Do you believe social media beauty trends promote a positive or negative mindset towards self-acceptance?

107 responses



When we asked people how beauty trends on social media affect their mindset about self-acceptance, the results were eye-opening.

A majority — 57.9% — said that these trends push a negative mindset. It shows just how often the constant stream of "perfect" images makes people second-guess themselves, compare, and feel like they don't measure up. Instead of boosting confidence, many trends seem to chip away at it.

Only 17.8% of people felt that beauty trends actually promote a positive sense of self-acceptance — a small but important group that maybe found spaces online that are more about celebrating realness over perfection.

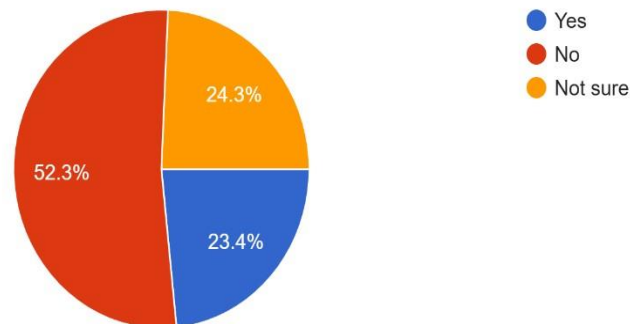
Meanwhile, 24.3% of respondents said they feel neutral. They might see both sides — moments where social media uplifts, and other times when it feels toxic.

At the end of the day, these numbers are a reminder that behind every like, comment, and share, real people are navigating a complicated relationship with beauty, worth, and self-love.

Figure 23

Do you think influencers should disclose editing or filters used in their posts?

107 responses



A little over half of the respondents (52.3%) said no — they don't believe it's necessary. For many, social media is seen as a creative outlet, where a little polishing or tweaking is just part of the fun.

On the flip side, about 23.4% said yes, influencers should be upfront about any edits. For them, it's about honesty and helping set more realistic expectations, especially for younger audiences who might not realize just how much photos can be altered.

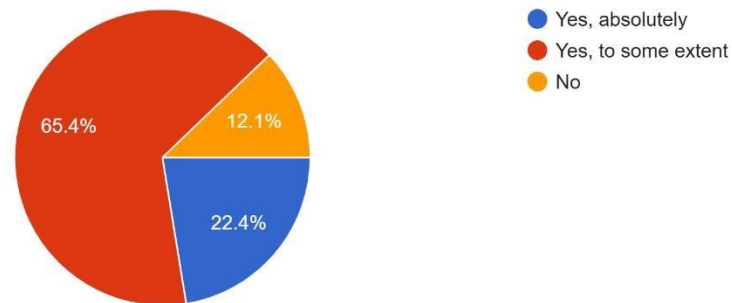
Then there's the 24.3% who were not sure — showing that a good number of people feel caught somewhere in the middle. Maybe they understand both sides: the need for creativity and the importance of transparency.

It's clear that while editing is now a norm, people are still figuring out how they feel about the balance between authenticity and aesthetics.

Figure 24

Should brands and influencers promote diverse and inclusive beauty standards?

107 responses



When it comes to beauty standards, most people agree: it's time for more diversity.

In this survey, 65.4% of respondents said that brands and influencers should promote diversity and inclusivity, at least to some extent. Another 22.4% felt even stronger about it, saying yes, absolutely — no ifs, ands, or buts.

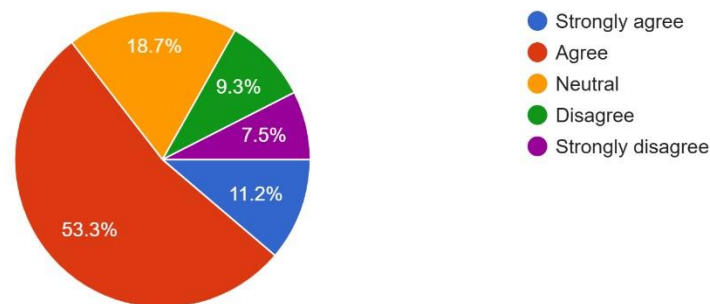
Only 12.1% believed that no changes are needed, showing that the overwhelming majority wants to see a broader, more inclusive definition of beauty reflected in media.

At the end of the day, most people seem ready for a world where beauty isn't one-size-fits-all it's about celebrating real, beautiful differences.

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Figure 25

Do you think influencers should be held accountable for promoting unrealistic beauty standards?
107 responses



When it comes to holding influencers accountable for promoting unrealistic beauty standards, most people aren't staying quiet.

More than half (53.3%) of the respondents agreed that influencers should be called out, and another 11.2% strongly agreed.

Around 19% sat on the fence, choosing a neutral stance, while a smaller group — 9.3% disagreed and 7.5% strongly disagreed — felt influencers shouldn't be blamed.

The takeaway? A big chunk of people believes influencers have a real impact and should own up to it.

Quantitative Analysis

1. Data analysis on steps that should influencers and fashion brands take to promote healthier beauty standards.

When asked how influencers and fashion brands can help promote healthier beauty standards, people shared a wide range of thoughts.

Many emphasized that brands and influencers should highlight inner beauty, encouraging a shift from focusing solely on appearance to celebrating personal qualities. Stopping discrimination — whether

based on body type, skin color, height, or other factors — was a strong theme, along with the use of inclusive, positive language in beauty messaging.

Some felt that leading by example is key — by being more realistic, genuine, and transparent, influencers can inspire healthier attitudes toward beauty. There was also a call for featuring diverse models of all shapes, sizes, and backgrounds, promoting body positivity, and rejecting toxic diet culture.

A few people pointed out the challenges, acknowledging that being too realistic could impact influencers' earnings. Others expressed indifference, simply saying "No" or "Nothing," suggesting not everyone feels connected to these changes.

Many suggested that brands should focus on realistic advertising, quality content, and creative storytelling, while encouraging self-expression and celebrating individuality. Breaking harmful stereotypes and supporting mental well-being were also seen as essential steps in building a healthier, more inclusive vision of beauty.

In the end, the message was clear: people want to see a world where authenticity is celebrated, differences are embraced, and beauty is defined by more than just appearances.

2. Data analysis on personal opinion on the impact of social media on youngsters' beauty standards.

When people were asked about the impact of social media on youngsters' beauty standards, most felt that the influence has been more harmful than helpful.

Many pointed out that social media constantly pushes unrealistic beauty ideals, often through edited and filtered images. This endless exposure can really take a toll, making young people feel insecure about their bodies, lowering their self-esteem, and even leading to a noticeable rise in cosmetic procedures. Instead of celebrating natural beauty, platforms often create a false image of perfection that's impossible to reach.

A lot of people expressed frustration, calling the situation "harmful," "pathetic," and even "adverse" to mental health and creativity. They mentioned how the pressure to look 'Instagram-perfect' has made it

harder for youngsters to feel confident in who they truly are. Some added that algorithms are partly to blame, constantly showing the same narrow version of beauty and limiting real diversity.

While a few respondents admitted that social media has the potential to spread positive messages about body acceptance, most agreed that it still does more harm than good. It often makes youngsters overly conscious about their appearance — including things like skin color and body shape — while taking the focus away from inner talents and unique individuality.

A few voices were neutral or indifferent, but the general feeling was clear: social media needs to be more real, more transparent, and more supportive. Instead of setting impossible beauty standards, it should encourage young people to embrace who they are, flaws and all.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGD AND CONCLUSION

FINDINGS

As we gathered responses from 107 individuals, a complex yet heartfelt story began to unfold a story about how social media has crept into the personal lives of youngsters, influencing how they view beauty, self-worth, and even creativity. What became immediately clear is that social media has created an environment where external appearances are often valued more than inner qualities. However, it's also important to note that while many impacts are negative, there are glimpses of positive change and resilience too. Let's dive deeper into these findings, one layer at a time.

• Social Media and the Distortion of Beauty Standards

One of the strongest themes that emerged was just how much social media distorts beauty standards. Many participants expressed that social media often portrays a very narrow and unrealistic version of beauty — one that's almost impossible to achieve naturally.

Daily exposure to filtered, edited, and perfected images sets an unfair benchmark. Instead of celebrating real skin, natural bodies, and diverse faces, platforms often flood feeds with a single kind of "ideal" — flawless skin, thin bodies, symmetrical features.

Youngsters, seeing these images repeatedly, begin to internalize them. Comparison becomes inevitable — and with it, dissatisfaction. Many respondents shared that they often felt less attractive or less worthy simply because they did not match these unrealistic visuals. Over time, this pressure fosters an environment where young people believe that external appearance defines personal success, confidence, and even happiness.

A few even linked the rise in cosmetic procedures among youth to the constant visual pressure created by social media trends. Sadly, instead of embracing uniqueness, many youngsters feel compelled to "fix" themselves, believing they are not enough as they are.

• Emotional and Mental Health Struggles

Another deeply concerning pattern that surfaced is the emotional toll these beauty standards are taking. Many responses painted a picture of lowered self-esteem, heightened anxiety, and damaged confidence.

Several participants voiced that the constant chase for perfection often leads to frustration and sadness, especially when they feel they can never truly measure up.

Notably, the idea of "hyper-reality" was mentioned — the notion that the beauty seen online isn't real at all, but people still feel compelled to strive for it. This creates a cruel cycle: knowing the images are fake doesn't stop the emotional impact.

Respondents also highlighted a loss of creativity and authenticity, explaining that instead of focusing on personal growth, hobbies, or talents, many now spend more time worrying about how they appear online.

Some participants even described the experience as "pathetic" or "really bad," suggesting that it has gone beyond being an annoyance and has become a serious mental health concern. While a few respondents acknowledged some positive influences, such as body positivity movements, most agreed that the negatives currently outweigh the positives.

• The Powerful Role of Influencers and Brands

When it comes to responsibility, respondents pointed a firm finger at influencers and fashion brands. Many felt that those with large platforms should be doing much more to promote realistic and healthier beauty standards.

Suggestions included using diverse models of all shapes, sizes, skin colors, and backgrounds, as well as promoting messages that highlight inner qualities over physical perfection.

Several participants also emphasized the need for influencers to be more genuine and responsible. Instead of selling an unattainable image, they should showcase authenticity — their flaws, their real lives, their challenges.

A common belief was that if influencers lead by example, it would inspire young followers to feel more confident in their own skin. However, some were also realistic, noting that financial incentives often make influencers hesitant to move away from idealized images, since "perfection" often sells better.

Additionally, respondents called for more transparency — for example, labeling edited images clearly or refusing to promote harmful weight-loss products. The demand is clear: youngsters want role models who are honest, relatable, and focused on promoting true selfworth, not just aesthetic ideals.

• The Double-Edged Sword of Social Media Influence

While much of the feedback was critical, it's important to acknowledge that respondents also recognized that social media isn't all bad. Some noted that platforms can be used to spread positive messages — for example, campaigns celebrating body positivity, self-expression, and diversity.

When handled thoughtfully, social media can help normalize different body types, celebrate different skin tones, and empower youngsters to feel beautiful in their natural state. However, the overwhelming view is that currently, these positive efforts are not strong enough to outweigh the harmful standards that dominate most content.

The issue, therefore, lies not in social media itself, but in how it is being used. Participants urged influencers, brands, and even everyday users to use these platforms more responsibly, promoting real, diverse, and healthy images of beauty instead of reinforcing narrow, toxic ideals.

• The Role of Influencers and Brands

It's also very clear that influencers and fashion brands have a massive role to play. People expect them to do better. Many respondents said that influencers should lead by example by showing real, unedited images and promoting diverse types of beauty. A lot of the answers

stressed the need for brands to use models of all shapes, sizes, skin tones, and backgrounds, not just the "typical" ones.

Some also pointed out that influencers and brands often care more about money and popularity than about promoting healthier messages. There's a bit of a love-hate relationship here — people admire the reach and impact influencers have, but they're also frustrated that so many still choose profit over authenticity. Respondents want brands and influencers to be more responsible and challenge the old, tired beauty stereotypes instead of reinforcing them.

• The Good and Bad Sides of Social Media

While a lot of the feedback was critical, it wasn't all negative. Some respondents recognized that social media can also do good things. It has helped spread body positivity and given a platform to different kinds of beauty that weren't visible before. It can encourage people to express themselves, try new looks, and be proud of who they are.

But, most people agreed that the negatives still outweigh the positives. Too often, the dominant message on social media is still about fitting into unrealistic, "Instagram-perfect" beauty ideals. The pressure to always look flawless is exhausting and damaging. Young people are calling for more consistent efforts from brands and influencers to celebrate realness, not just jump on diversity trends for marketing when it suits them.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the course of this project, it became clear that social media has an undeniable influence on how today's youngsters view beauty, success, and even their own self-worth. The 107 responses we gathered provide valuable insights — not just numbers or facts, but real feelings, struggles, and hopes for change. This conclusion brings together the findings to reflect on what they mean, why they matter, and how they point toward a more positive future. The majority of responses highlighted that social media has, in many ways, distorted beauty standards for youngsters. Instead of encouraging acceptance and individuality, platforms often flood users with highly curated, edited, and unrealistic portrayals of what beauty should look like.

Participants shared that constant exposure to these standards can lead to feelings of insecurity, low self-esteem, and dissatisfaction with their natural appearance. It is concerning that many respondents pointed out the rise in cosmetic procedures among youth, driven by the desire to match the beauty ideals seen online. The emotional toll is equally worrying. As comparison becomes part of daily life, many youngsters experience anxiety, depression, and a constant pressure to meet "Instagram-perfect" looks. Respondents also linked this to a decline in creativity and individuality, as social media subtly encourages people to conform to one narrow image of attractiveness rather than celebrating unique traits. Interestingly, while most feedback was critical, some participants acknowledged that social media can also be a source of positivity when used responsibly — spreading messages of body positivity, self-acceptance, and diversity. However, the consensus remains that much work is still needed to shift the overall narrative. The role of influencers and fashion brands in shaping beauty standards came through loud and clear in the data. Participants believe that those with a platform hold tremendous power to either reinforce harmful stereotypes or challenge them. Many urged influencers to be more genuine, more transparent, and more responsible with the content they share. The call for diversity and inclusivity was loud and urgent. Youngsters want to see models and influencers of different body types, skin tones, abilities, and backgrounds. They want campaigns that show the beauty of *real people* — not just heavily edited, one-dimensional images. Respondents stressed the importance of highlighting inner beauty, promoting self-expression, and valuing personal qualities over physical perfection. Several participants acknowledged the financial pressure influencers face, admitting that promoting a "perfect" image often earns more engagement and revenue. Still, there was a strong hope that influencers and brands will lead by example, choosing authenticity over profit in order to build healthier and more empowering beauty standards for the next generation.

While much of the feedback was understandably critical, it is important to recognize that social media is not entirely negative.

Participants pointed out that social platforms have the potential to foster movements like body positivity, mental health awareness, and diverse beauty representation.

Some respondents shared that they had discovered influencers who promote realness and self-love — proof that positive change is possible when there is conscious effort. The issue, however, lies in balance. Right now, positive influences are often drowned out by the overwhelming flood of unrealistic and idealized content. Youngsters are not inherently against social media. Instead, they are seeking healthier spaces within it — spaces that uplift rather than compare, that celebrate differences rather than pressure conformity. Ultimately, whether social media becomes a tool for empowerment or a source of insecurity depends heavily on how it is used and by whom.

This project has revealed something powerful: Youngsters are aware.

They are not blindly absorbing the messages thrown at them. They are questioning, challenging, and even resisting. There is a growing desire among the youth to redefine beauty standards — to break away from harmful ideals and to create a world where authenticity, kindness, and individuality are celebrated. However, this cannot happen through individual effort alone. Influencers, brands, and media creators must share in the responsibility.

They must use their platforms to model realness, acceptance, and diversity, because when those in power choose authenticity, they give permission for their followers to do the same. At the same time, youngsters must continue to build their own self-worth based on who they are, not just how they look. They must remember that beauty is multifaceted — it shines through confidence, creativity, kindness, and resilience.

The findings of this project call for urgent reflection and action. While social media has made the world more connected, it has also created invisible chains — tying beauty, success, and happiness to unattainable ideals. It is now up to all of us — users, influencers, brands, and society — to reshape the digital world into one that nurtures rather than harms, that uplifts rather than diminishes. By embracing diversity, promoting self-love, and celebrating authenticity, we can create a future where every young person feels beautiful — not because they fit into a narrow mold, but because they are seen, valued, and accepted exactly as they are.

SUGGESTIONS

After going through all the responses and analysing the patterns, it's clear that social media has a massive influence on how youngsters perceive beauty. Sometimes it inspires, but many times it creates unrealistic expectations and pressure to look a certain way. Based on everything we've learned, here are some suggestions that could really help make the beauty world healthier and more positive for young people.

- **Show Real Diversity:**

Influencers and brands need to showcase a real range of people — all shapes, sizes, skin tones, abilities, and backgrounds. When people see someone who looks like them, it sends a powerful message: "You are beautiful just the way you are."

- **Talk About Inner Beauty:**

Instead of only focusing on perfect looks, they should also highlight qualities like kindness, intelligence, creativity, and confidence. These are the traits that truly define a person's beauty.

- **Be Honest:**

If a photo is edited or filtered, say so. Being transparent about how content is created can help youngsters realize that a lot of what they see online isn't real.

- **Challenge Beauty Stereotypes:**

Fashion campaigns should break free from outdated norms and celebrate imperfections. Scars, wrinkles, cellulite — these are part of real life and should be seen as beautiful too.

- **Start Conversations:**

Brands and influencers should open up discussions about body image, self-esteem, and mental health. Creating spaces where followers feel safe and heard can have a huge positive impact.

- **Be Smart About What You See:**

Not everything on social media reflects reality. Learning to question what you see — knowing that many posts are edited or staged — can protect you from unnecessary self-doubt.

- Follow Positive Influencers:

Choose to follow people who inspire self-love, confidence, and authenticity. Curate your feed so that it uplifts you, not tears you down.

- Celebrate Your Own Style:

Instead of copying trends, young people should be encouraged to explore and celebrate their own unique sense of style. Real beauty comes from being true to yourself.

- Take Care of Your Mental Health:

If you ever feel overwhelmed or pressured by what you see online, it's okay to take a break. Your mental health always comes first.

- Teach Media Literacy:

Schools should teach kids how social media works — how images are edited, how marketing plays on emotions, and how to recognize fake versus real content. Understanding the system can make it less powerful over their self-esteem.

- Create Safe Spaces for Dialogue:

There should be more open discussions about beauty standards, mental health, and body image where youngsters can share their feelings without fear of judgment.

- Promote Body Positivity:

Campaigns that celebrate all types of bodies and appearances should be encouraged everywhere — in media, advertising, and schools.

- Change the Algorithm:

Social media companies should tweak their algorithms to promote a wider variety of beauty, not just one type. Everyone deserves to be seen.

- Support Wellness:

Platforms could introduce features like reminders to take breaks, highlight positive mental health content, and collaborate more with mental health organizations.

Creating a healthier beauty culture on social media won't happen overnight, but with consistent effort, it is possible.

If influencers, brands, users, educators, and tech platforms all play their part, social media can become a place that boosts confidence instead of breaking it.

When we start celebrating authenticity, diversity, and kindness over "perfection," we help build a generation that is proud of who they are — not just how they look.

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APPENDIX

What is your age?

What is your gender?

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ Non-binary/Other

☐ Prefer not to say

What is your socioeconomic background?

☐ Low-income

☐ Middle-income

☐ High-income

How frequently do you use social media?

☐ Rarely

☐ Occasionally (1-2 times a week)

☐

Frequently (daily)

☐ Constantly (multiple times a day)

Which social media platform do you use the most for beauty and fashion-related content?

☐ Instagram

☐ TikTok

☐ YouTube

☐ Facebook

☐ Twitter/X

☐ Pinterest

☐ Other (please specify) _____

Do you follow beauty and fashion influencers on social media?

☐ Yes, many

☐ Yes, a few

☐ No, none

How often do you engage with beauty-related content (likes, shares, comments, saves)?

☐ Rarely

☐ Occasionally

☐ Regularly

☐ Always

Do you think social media influencers influence your perception of beauty?

☐ Not at all

☐ Slightly

☐ Moderately

☐ Significantly

What kind of beauty standards do influencers promote the most?

☐ Natural beauty and body positivity

☐ Unrealistic and unattainable beauty ideals

☐ A mix of both

Have you ever changed your beauty routine or fashion style due to social media influencers?

☐ Yes, frequently

☐ Yes, sometimes

☐

☐ No, never

Do you compare your appearance to influencers and celebrities on social media?

☐ Always

☐ Often

☐ Sometimes

☐ Rarely

☐ Never

Have social media beauty trends ever made you feel insecure about your appearance?

☐ Yes, frequently

☐ Yes, sometimes

☐ No, never

Do beauty influencers make you feel pressured to achieve a certain look?

☐ Yes, always

☐ Yes, sometimes

☐ No, never

How does exposure to beauty influencers on social media affect your self-confidence?

☐ Positively (boosts confidence)

☐ Negatively (lowers confidence)

☐ No effect

Do you feel that social media promotes an unrealistic standard of beauty?

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neutral

☐ Disagree

☐
Strongly disagree

Have you ever felt anxious or depressed because of beauty trends on social media?

☐ Yes, frequently

☐ Yes, sometimes

☐ No, never

Do you think excessive exposure to beauty standards on social media affects your mental health?

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neutral

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

Do you feel the need to edit or filter your photos before posting on social media?

☐ Yes, always

☐ Yes, sometimes

☐ No, never

☐

Have you ever considered cosmetic procedures due to social media influence?

☐ Yes, strongly

☐ Yes, somewhat

No, never

Do you believe social media beauty trends promote a positive or negative mindset towards self-acceptance? ☐ Positive

☐ Negative

☐ Neutral

Do you think influencers should disclose editing or filters used in their posts?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure

Should brands and influencers promote diverse and inclusive beauty standards?

☐ Yes, absolutely

☐ Yes, to some extent

☐ No

☐

Do you think influencers should be held accountable for promoting unrealistic beauty standards?

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neutral

☐ Disagree

Strongly disagree

What steps should influencers and fashion brands take to promote healthier beauty standards?

(Open-ended)

What is your personal opinion on the impact of social media on youngsters' beauty standards?