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The Impact of Beauty and Lifestyle Content Consumption on Young Women's Self-Esteem

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Abstract: *Scroll through the content on social media platforms, significantly impacts social, emotional, and economic spheres of life. In particular, beauty and lifestyle content influences young women's daily media consumption, shaping their beauty standards and self-esteem. While such content undoubtedly offers opportunities. However, habitual indulgence encourages users to create content, seeking fame and social validation through likes, comments, and shares which leads to the dangerous use of social media. As supported by previous studies, exposure to beauty ideals through social media is strongly associated with body dissatisfaction, social comparison, and emotional complexity. Given these concerns, the present study explores how engagement with such content affects young women's self-esteem, social comparison, and emotional responses. The study employs a mixed-method approach with a descriptive cross-sectional design and data is collected through semi-structured questionnaire from the women in the age group of 18-25, using random sampling. For the analysis of quantitative data chi-square test of independence, and for the qualitative responses, thematic analysis has been done manually. The analysis highlights how social media generates unrealistic expectations of beauty, causes interpersonal challenges, followed by psychological distress. The findings*

stress the urgent need for social media literacy and advocacy for more regulated and diverse representation in digital spaces.

Keywords: social media, beauty standards, self-esteem, social comparison, media literacy, social validation

Introduction

Social media has become integrated to a young women's daily lives with **Beauty and Lifestyle Content (BLC)** emerging as a dominant influence on their self-esteem or self-worth. Platforms like Instagram gain popularity (Vogels, Gelles-Watnick, and Massarat 2022) and all such platforms flood users with idealized images and luxury lifestyles that not only set unattainable beauty standards but also promote continuous self-verification (Cast and Burke 2002) through social comparison. The young women are in constant contact with social media platforms and are frequent consumers of beauty and lifestyle content (BLC). As their engagement with such content increases, they tend to spend more time on these platforms, leading to a natural process of social comparison which often leads to a cycle of seeking validation from self and others impacting self-esteem and triggering emotional responses such as insecurity and inadequacy. However, the happiness and motivation are also some key outcomes in the form of emotions out of BLC consumption. This study aims to examine the relationship between BLC consumption and its effects on social comparison, self-esteem, and emotional responses after watching BLC among young women aged 18–25. Through a mixed-method approach and cross-sectional survey to better understand the social behavioural shifts associated with social media use in general and BLC consumption in particular. The findings suggest that the frequency of BLC consumption has significant influence on social comparison behaviour, and self-esteem of young women. In addition, the study confirms that the type of beauty and lifestyle content (BLC) consumed, significantly affects the emotional responses of young women, indicating a psychological significance. These findings highlight the urgent need to promote greater self-awareness, self-worth, and appreciation for natural beauty, as well as to encourage

social media literacy and promoting healthier digital engagement among young women.

Literature Review

According to 2022 Pew research on U.S. teens, girls are more likely to use TikTok, Instagram and Snapchat than boys. It is also reported that adolescents who are almost constantly online admitted that they spend too much time on social media and especially girls who reported that it would be hard to give it up (Vogels et al. 2022). Among young women, the use of social networking sites begins at an early age and it would be difficult for them to remain inert from its influence, which has significant influence on their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours (Weisskirch 2025) in general and their self-esteem in particular. According to Cast and Burke's theory of self-esteem, they suggest "self-esteem is an outcome of, and necessary ingredient in, the self-verification process that occurs within groups, maintaining both the individual and the group." (Cast and Burke 2002) The **concept of self-esteem** was first explored by William James (1890) is closely tied to individuals meeting personal and social goals. It gained prominence due to its association with issues like drug abuse, violence, and academic failure (Zeigler-Hill 2013). self-esteem represents one's sense of self-worth. In simple words, it is a kind of feeling good about oneself. However, Girls during adolescence, are often experience a more noticeable drop in self-esteem due to factors like classroom sexism, gender equality, appearance related concerns, and gender norms like expectation of female modesty (Zeigler-Hill 2013). In present study the self-esteem of young women is studied in relationship to their consumption of beauty and lifestyle content on some of the popular social media platforms. Among them, the Most popular and commonly used Instagram use was not initially found to be directly associated with low self-esteem, research has indicated that the intensity of use plays a crucial role, particularly when an individual's self-worth is dependent on approval from others online (Stapleton, Luiz, and Chatwin 2017). This research further proves that, it has been indicated that social comparison on Instagram also mediated the relationship between self-worth. Although Facebook's popularity has declined in comparison to Instagram and

YouTube, its use was associated with negative psychological outcomes. Facebook use was linked to **lower self-esteem**, mediated by **social comparison and self-objectification**. (Hanna et al. 2017) A study by Sherlock and Wagstaff (2018) was conducted in two parts, consisting of both a correlational design and a mixed design which demonstrated that heavier Instagram use was positively correlated with lower self-esteem, body image disturbance and physical appearance anxiety, which was mediated by social comparison. (Sherlock and Wagstaff 2019)

As it is pointed out, Social comparison has been repeatedly identified as the mediating factor it actually it is a the psychological mechanism through which the negative outcomes emerge (Ryding and Kuss 2020) and they further noted that social media platforms use leads to things like lower self-esteem and body dissatisfaction. It also highlighted that without the comparison process, just using platforms and social networking sites might not have the same negative effects. Social comparison acts as a mediating factor across various aspects of well-being, including self-esteem and body dissatisfaction, often relates to weight and shape concerns (Ryding and Kuss 2020) which further causes mental health issues in the form of anxiety and depression among young female. Previous research shows that even brief exposure to idealized images of thin, attractive individuals on social networking sites can cause body dissatisfaction among young female viewers (Fardouly et al. 2015; Fioravanti et al. 2022). Young women reported higher tendencies for appearance comparison in categories like facial, hair and skin beauty (Fardouly et al. 2015). These effects are especially pronounced when users compare themselves to these unattainable beauty standards. Which has a detrimental effect on body image satisfaction (Fioravanti et al. 2022). A study on young Chinese women confirmed that the upward social comparison with beauty and lifestyle influencers occurs unconsciously (Ma 2023) in the process of browsing information. Gradually, most young women will spend more than an hour to make themselves more like their ideal selves, and even have imitation dressing, imitation plastic surgery and making irrational beauty-seeking behaviours.

Beyond frequency of use, other factors such as the **fear of missing out (FOMO)** also play a significant role in adolescents' mental health. (Weisskirch 2025) found that among females, FOMO is a predictor of depressive symptoms. Which confirms social media influence among women. Likewise, social validation pressures from peers and users are evident; that one in four adolescents indicated that not being popular on Facebook was stressful to extremely stressful (Beyens, Frison, and Eggermont 2016). These popularity concerns highlight the mental health implications of social media use. A study reported that use of Facebook was associated with both increased social comparison and self-objectification, which was subsequently associated with lower self-esteem, in addition to greater body shame and poorer mental health (Hanna et al. 2017). Moreover, heavy Instagram use is correlated with depressive symptoms, body image disturbance, and physical appearance anxiety (Sherlock and Wagstaff 2019) apart from ideal beauty content, idealized luxury and branding set unattainable standards to achieve. Especially in Asian youth, high engagement with celebrity culture and luxury branding also influences body ideals and mental strain (Wu et al. 2015). This process typically begins with content exposure, which activates psychological behaviours such as appearance-based social comparison. The outcomes of this process may include low self-esteem, self-objectification, and body dissatisfaction which often leading to anxiety and depression.

Despite the growing popularity and usage of social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube and Facebook in India, there is insufficient research on change in social comparison level or behaviour change in young women. Although, past studies extensively explored the impact of beauty and lifestyle content (BLC) on self-esteem and mental health but there is inadequacy in the research in Indian context. The current study addresses this gap by examining the impact of type **and frequency** of BLC consumption on emotional responses, self-esteem, and social comparison behaviours among young Indian women.

Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To examine the association between the frequency of BLC (Beauty and Lifestyle Content) consumption and the level of social comparison among young women.
2. To explore the impact of BLC consumption on social comparison behaviour of young women.
3. To examine the association between the frequency of BLC consumption and change in self-esteem among young women.
4. To explore the relationship between the type of BLC consumed and the emotional responses triggered among young women.

Hypothesis

Key hypotheses formulated for the study objectives are as follows:

H₁: There is a significant association between the frequency of BLC consumption and the level of social comparison among young women.

H₂: There is a significant association between the frequency of BLC consumption change in self-esteem among young women.

H₃: There is relationship between type of beauty and lifestyle content consumption and emotional responses among young women.

Research Questions

Based on the objectives of study, the following research questions are proposed:

RQ.1 - Is there a significant association between the frequency of BLC consumption and the level of social comparison among young women?

RQ.2- How does BLC consumption impact the social comparison behaviours among young women?

RQ.3- Is there a significant association between frequency of BLC and change in their self-esteem?

RQ.4- How does different types of BLC consumption (selfcare, luxury and wellness) affect the emotional responses (insecurity, happiness and inspiration) of young women?

Research Methodology

This study employs a descriptive research design with cross-sectional method for survey. The approach adopted is mixed-methods,

combining quantitative and qualitative data collected over a period of a two-months. A review of literature from the secondary sources like research papers & articles in journal, books and reports has been studied. For the primary data the sample of 150 young women aged 18 to 25years from Gwalior district, including college students and working professionals has been studied. Other category reported after data collection which does not lie in any mentioned occupation category. Using convenience sampling, participants were selected based on their availability and willingness to respond. Out of the 150 distributed Google Forms, 116 completed responses were included in the final analysis after excluding incomplete or unsubmitted forms. Data were gathered using an online questionnaire via Google Forms, contains both closed-ended multiple-choice questions for quantitative analysis and open-ended questions for qualitative analysis of social comparison. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS by applying Chi-Square test of independence/association and cross-tabulations to examine relationship between variables, while qualitative responses were analysed manually by thematic analysis to identify key themes related to social comparison behaviours. Ethical considerations were maintained by obtaining informed consent before distributing the questionnaire via WhatsApp and email and keeping confidentiality of responses.

Association between BLC and Social Comparison

To understand the impact of Beauty and Lifestyle Content (BLC) on social comparison, it is essential to examine the basic characteristics of the respondents, including their occupation, social media platforms they preferred for BLC and frequency of BLC consumption.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Occupation, Platform Used, and Frequency of BLC consumption (n = 116)

Table 1. shows that student young women dominate the sample with 82.8%. Instagram is the most used platform for BLC consumption followed by YouTube and Pinterest. Facebook is least popular. The daily consumers of BLC are highest followed by alternative consumers and weekly ones.

To examine the association between the frequency of beauty and lifestyle content consumption and the level of social comparison among young women. A cross-tabulation analysis was conducted using SPSS, and the results are presented below.

Variable	Category	Frequency (%)
Occupation	Student	96 (82.8%)
	Working	16 (13.8%)
	Other	4 (3.4%)
Platform	Instagram	39 (33.6%)
	YouTube	34 (29.3%)
	Pinterest	27 (23.3%)
	Facebook	16 (13.8%)
Frequency	Daily	55 (47.4%)
	Alternatively	32 (27.6%)
	Weekly	29 (25.0%)

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents Frequency wise and Comparison with Influencers (n=116)

frequency * comparison with influencers					
Crosstabulation					
Count					
		comparison with influencers			Total
		Always	Never	sometime	
Frequency of consumption	Daily	17	12	26	55
	Alternately	5	15	12	32
	Weekly	2	17	10	29

Total	24	44	48	116
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The results from the table 2 indicates Daily users who compare them always (17) and sometimes (26) constitute 43 out of 116 of young women respondents, clearly indicates that **those who are daily consumers of BLC are more likely to involve in comparison behaviour with influencers.** Overall, 72 out of 116 involve in comparison who consume BLC content.

A Chi-Square Test of Independence was conducted using SPSS to examine the association between the frequency of beauty and lifestyle content consumption and the level of social comparison among young women. The results are presented below:

Table 3. Chi square test results for association Between Frequency of BLC consumption and comparison with influencers.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.463 ^a	4	.006
Likelihood Ratio	15.241	4	.004
N of Valid Cases	116		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.00.			

The chi square test results from table 3 reveals that the $\chi^2 = 14.463$, $p = .006$. ($\alpha = 0.05$) as the p value is less than the 0.05 level of significance and the expected count assumptions were met, Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is significant association between the frequency of BLC consumption and comparison with influencers.

To explore the association between BLC consumption and social comparison behaviour of young women, further analysis by cross-tabulation was conducted using SPSS with variables including frequency of BLC consumption, following of BLC influencers by

young women and comparison with influencers. The results are presented below:

Table 4. Crosstabulation of Respondents' Frequency, Following of BLC Influencers, and Comparison with Influencers. (n=116)

Frequency * Follow BLC influencers * Comparison with influencers Crosstabulation.					
Count					
comparison with influencers ↓			Follow BLC influencers		Total
			No	Yes	
Always	frequency	Daily	3	14	17
		Alternatively	0	5	5
		Weekly	1	1	2
	Total	4	20	24	
Never	frequency	Daily	9	3	12
		Alternatively	14	1	15
		Weekly	17	0	17
	Total	40	4	44	
sometimes	frequency	Daily	11	15	26
		Alternatively	8	4	12
		Weekly	5	5	10
	Total	24	24	48	
Total	frequency	Daily	23	32	55
		Alternatively	22	10	32
		Weekly	23	6	29
	Total	68	48	116	

From the above Table 4. It has been clear that 68(58.62%) out of 116 young women are not following, majority of these not following any influencers. However, 72 out of 116 (62.1%) respondents report

comparing themselves with influencers either *always* or *sometimes*. This indicates that comparison occurs even among those who do not follow influencers. Daily users of BLC 32 (58.2%) are tend to follow BLC influencers. On the other hand, Irregular users in weekly (23) or alternative (22) categories largely do not follow influencers. This suggest that those who consume BLC more frequently are more likely to follow BLC influencers, while irregular users are more likely not to follow the influencers. From the above it is clear that of the 72 who compare themselves with influencers, 44 (61.1%) in always (20) and sometimes (24) category. Thus, indicates who follow influencers show a higher tendency to compare themselves with influencers as well. The findings suggest that **Frequent BLC consumers** (especially daily users) are **more likely to follow BLC influencers and to compare themselves with them. Irregular users, on the other hand, are less likely to follow or compare, likely due to reduced exposure to influencer content.**

In order to explore the impact of BLC consumption on social comparison behaviour of young women, and how does this social comparison levels give produce various themes related to self esteem was analysed by a thematic analysis approach which was conducted on the qualitative responses collected from respondents on consumption of BLC and their social comparison behaviour. The question to respondent was *In what ways you compare yourself with the influencer's? write your perceptions.* Only responses that were clear, relevant to the research objective were included in the analysis to maintain the validity.

Table 5. Distribution of qualitative responses for thematic analysis are presented below:

Response no.	Statement	Social Comparison level	Theme
1	"Pratham main apni tulna kisi se nahi karti kyunki main shreshth hoon..."	No comparison	High self-esteem/ confidence
2	"Main doosron se prabhavit hokar	No comparison	Inspiration without comparison

	prerna leti hoon lekin tulna nahi karti."		
3	"I compare myself with them as competitors..."	High comparison	Low self-esteem/insecurity
4	"I don't believe in comparison, influencers are here to influence..."	No comparison	Not influenced
5	"When these people can do it then why can't I?"	Moderate comparison	High self-esteem/confidence
6	"Unki lifestyle, fashion sense... kash main bhi aisa kar paati."	High comparison	Low self-esteem/insecurity
7	"With their lifestyle or depends on the content they deliver"	Moderate comparison	Inspiration without comparison
8	"Their beauty and attractive personality"	High comparison	Low self-esteem/insecurity
9	"I want to live my life my way"	No comparison	Not influenced

Thematic Analysis Summary

Theme 1. High Self-Esteem / Confidence – Respondents 1 and 5 are indicating that no and moderate comparison reported high self-esteem or self-worth with confidence on themselves. They are using influencers for personal development. Moreover, they have self-fulfilling tendency, giving value to themselves.

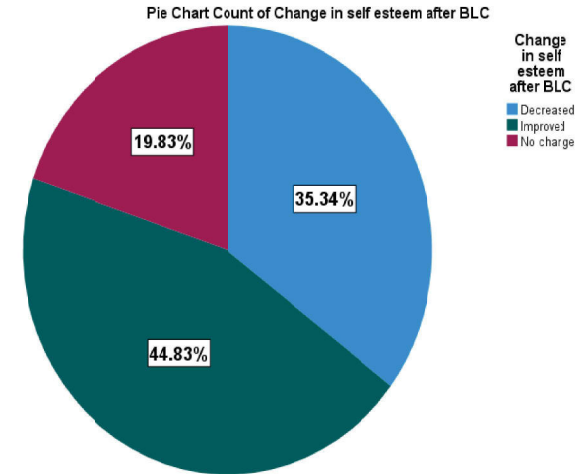
Theme 2. Inspiration Without Comparison-respondents 2 and 7 are demonstrating that they are watching influencers for motivation, drawing inspiration for personal growth.

Theme 3. Low Self-Esteem / Insecurity - Respondents 3,6 and 8 are demonstrating high comparison tendency and reveals idealization of beauty, personality and lifestyle of influencers. They are showing the feeling of inadequacy, envy and body dissatisfaction emerged (response 6)

Theme 4. Not Influenced - - Respondents 4 and 9 are demonstrating that they are not comparing themselves with influencers at all. They believe in independent choices and rational decision making.

Association between BLC and Change in Self-Esteem

Figure 1. Distribution of respondents representing change in self esteem



To examine the association between the frequency of BLC (Beauty and Lifestyle Content) consumption and change in self-esteem among young women. A cross-tabulation analysis was conducted using SPSS, and the results are presented below.

Table 6. Distribution of respondents' frequency wise and changes in self-esteem after BLC. (n=116)

Crosstab		Change in self esteem after BLC			Total
Count		Decreased	Improved	No change	
frequency	Daily	15	31	9	55
	Alternatively	10	16	6	32
	Weekly	16	5	8	29
Total		41	52	23	116

Table 6. shows that among weekly consumers, a majority 16 out of 29 which is (55.2%) reported decreased self-esteem, and only 5 (17.2%) out of 29 reported improvements. Alternative consumers showed a more balanced outcome, with 31.3% reporting decreased and 50% reporting improvement. Whereas **the Daily consumers were most likely to report improved self-esteem** 31 out of 55 (56.4%).

A Chi-Square Test of Independence was conducted using SPSS to examine the association between the frequency of beauty and lifestyle content consumption and change in self-esteem. The results are presented below:

Table 7. Chi-Square Test results for association between frequency of BLC consumption and changes in self-esteem after BLC

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.370 ^a	4	.015
Likelihood Ratio	13.304	4	.010
N of Valid Cases	116		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.75.			

The chi square test results from table 7 reveals that $\chi^2 = 12.370$ and $p = 0.015$ ($\alpha=0.05$) p value is less than 0.05, which means we reject null hypothesis in favour of alternative which states that there is significant association between frequency of beauty and lifestyle content consumption and perceived changes in self-esteem. All cells met chi-square assumptions (no expected counts < 5), making the test statistically reliable. It is clear from the above results that frequency of BLC consumption of young women does affect self-esteem outcomes. The findings lead to study not just the pattern of

consumption but the type of content that have varying emotional outcomes on young women.

To explore the association between the frequency of BLC consumption and change in self-esteem among young women, further analysis by cross-tabulation was conducted using SPSS with variables including- Type of BLC content viewed and change in self esteem after BLC. The results are presented below:

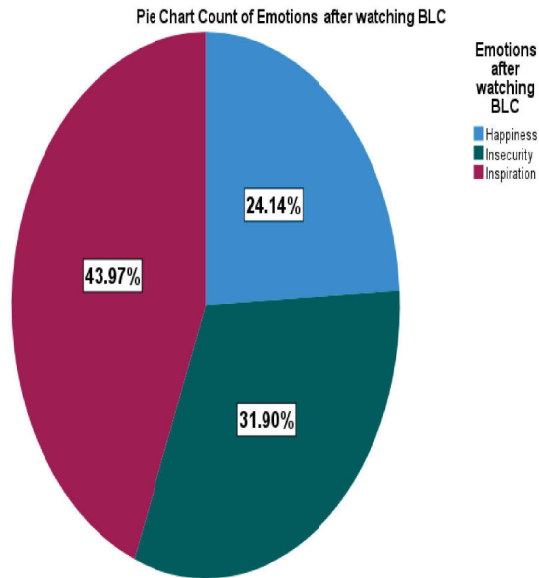
Table 8 Cross tabulation of respondents' Type of BLC content viewed and Change in self esteem after BLC

Type of BLC content viewed * Change in self esteem after BLC Crosstabulation					
		Change in self esteem after BLC			Total
		Decreased	Improved	No change	
Type of BLC content viewed	Health and wellness	7	10	7	24
	Luxury lifestyle and fashion	19	7	6	32
	Selfcare and Makeup	15	35	10	60
Total		41	52	23	116

Table 8 reveals that **Luxury Lifestyle & Fashion content had the highest number of self-esteem declines (19 out of 32, or 59.4%).** whereas **Self-care and Makeup was associated with the highest number of improved self-esteem (35 out of 60, or 58.3%).** Health and Wellness showed a relatively balanced in all three outcomes high in improved self esteem still. **Highest consumer of self-care and makeup 60 (51.72) among young women suggest the popularity of content** and they are trying to pay attention on their self-care and looks good this show thy are more likely into the culture of beauty and

makeup, spend more or hope to look good and always feel comparison. It suggests that the beauty is idealized by content creators and influencers, which affect their social behaviour.

Figure 2. Distribution of respondents representing change in emotions after watching BLC



To explore the relationship between the type of BLC consumed and the emotional responses triggered among young girls. A cross-tabulation analysis was conducted using SPSS, with variables Occupation, Type of BLC content viewed, and Emotions after watching BLC. The results are presented below:

Table 9. Cross tabulations of respondents' occupation, Type of BLC content viewed, and Emotions after watching BLC

Occupation * Type of BLC content viewed * Emotions after watching BLC Crosstabulation

Emotions after watching BLC			Type of BLC content viewed			Total	
			Health and wellness	Luxury lifestyle and fashion	Selfcare and Makeup		
Insecurity	Occupation	student	Count	4	7	15	26
		% within Occupation	15.4%	26.9%	57.7%	100.0%	
	working	Count	4	4	3	11	
		% within Occupation	36.4%	36.4%	27.3%	100.0%	
	Total	Count	8	11	18	37	
		% within Occupation	21.6%	29.7%	48.6%	100.0%	
Happiness	Occupation	student	Count	4	10	12	26
		% within Occupation	15.4%	38.5%	46.2%	100.0%	
	working	Count	0	0	2	2	
		% within Occupation	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	Total	Count	4	10	14	28	
		% within Occupation	14.3%	35.7%	50.0%	100.0%	
Inspiration	Occupation	other	Count	0	0	4	4
		% within Occupation	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	student	Count	12	1	21	44	
		% within Occupation	27.3%	25.0%	47.7%	100.0%	
	working	Count	0	0	3	3	
		% within Occupation	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total	Count	12	1	28	51		
	% within Occupation	23.5%	21.6%	54.9%	100.0%		
Total	Occupation	other	Count	0	0	4	4
		% within Occupation	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	student	Count	20	28	48	96	
		% within Occupation	20.8%	29.2%	50.0%	100.0%	
	working	Count	4	4	8	16	
		% within Occupation	25.0%	25.0%	50.0%	100.0%	
Total	Count	24	32	60	116		
	% within Occupation	20.7%	27.6%	51.7%	100.0%		

The results from table 9. shows that students are mostly watch *Selfcare and Makeup* (50%) Followed by *Luxury Lifestyle* (29.2%) and *Health & Wellness* (20.8%) and 50% working young women too inclined for selfcare and makeup. And rest 50% divided into other categories. Across all groups, **Selfcare and Makeup content is the most viewed**, especially by students and others. **Insecurity is most common in Selfcare and Makeup consumers** which is 48.6%, followed by *Luxury Lifestyle* which is 29.7%. where Students reported insecurity most (15) 57.7% out of the total students (26) feeling insecure, followed by working young women. it is also noted that 44 and 26 young women from student category draw inspiration and happiness respectively from BLC consumption.

Key Findings and Discussion

The aim of the study is to examine the relationship and impact of BLC consumption on social comparison behavior, self-esteem and emotional wellbeing of young Indian women. The key findings and their implications are discussed below:

- Instagram is the highest used and popular platform for BLC consumption, followed by YouTube.
- A significant portion of respondents reported daily consumption of BLC, followed by alternate day and weekly users which indicates high level of engagement on the side of young women.
- It was observed that those who are frequent users and follow BLC influencers showing a trend of social comparison. Further confirmed by Chi-square results revealed a significant association between frequency of BLC and comparison with influencers.
- It has been noted that respondents who consumed BLC daily and followed influencers were significantly more likely to report frequent social comparison ("always" or "sometimes"). In contrast, those with less frequent BLC consumption or who did not follow influencers were **never** engage in such comparisons.
- Thematic analysis on social comparison and self-esteem revealed that those with high levels of comparison reported lower self-esteem, greater insecurity. Conversely, those with moderate or no comparison tendencies described higher self-esteem, confidence, and inspiration.

- The finding suggests that less exposure results into decreased self-esteem of young women possibly due to heightened social comparison or lack of coping strategies. It is interesting to note that, some frequent BLC consumers reported higher self-esteem, suggesting healthy normalization or resilience built through frequent consumption, or selective exposure to empowering content and that lead to happiness. Moreover, Chi-square results showed a statistically significant association between frequency of BLC consumption and changes in self-esteem.
- Self-care and makeup content was the most consumed category followed by luxury and lifestyle. Among occupation categories, selfcare and makeup content is more popular in students. On the other hand, among working young women they consume BLC content almost equally in health and luxury categories but slightly more inclined towards selfcare and makeup.
- This reflects a growing beauty culture, where appearance and grooming are prioritized. However, it also reinforces idealized beauty standards, driving more frequent comparison and pressure to look a certain way. Such content tends to idealize luxury lifestyles, which affects social behaviour by promoting unrealistic expectations.
- As it is revealed that student group is the highest consumer of BLC (96 out of 116) and showing highest percentage of inspiration after consuming BLC this is on the account of high hopes from future and idealization of beauty, fantasy living, distance from harsh reality, and easy influenced from unrealistic standards of beauty and luxury. On the other hand, working young women are showing high percentage of insecurity 68% on account of their experience of sharper contrast between their offline reality and the "ideal" images they see online. Other's category is insignificant for the discussion.

Limitations and Scope

Given the above findings of the study, there are several limitations of the present study too, which must be acknowledged. Area wise it is limited to only Gwalior district, where data is collected in an single time by cross sectional survey, which making it difficult to assess the long-term effects. A relatively small sample size restricts the

generalizability of findings. Future research should adopt longitudinal methods to track changes over time and a relatively larger and more diverse (includes housewives) sample across various regions and educational backgrounds would enhance the representativeness of the study. Moreover, deeper qualitative exploration is needed to understand how social comparison works, the factors responsible, and its relationship with self-esteem. The research leaves room to study the cause of improved self-esteem among young non-working women. Gathering more in-depth narratives will allow researchers to analyse the emotional and psychological impacts of BLC consumption with much clarity.

Conclusion and Suggestions

In a nutshell, the study concludes that the frequency and type of (BLC), has significantly affect the social comparison behaviour, self-esteem, and emotional well-being among young Indian women. While some respondents, interestingly, esp. from the student's category reported feeling inspired and happy due to selective exposure or idealization, on the other hand, working women experienced insecurity due to the stark contrast between online portrayals and real life. These findings underline the need to promote body-positive content (Fioravanti et al. 2022) which encourage natural beauty and appreciating the worth of every unique self. Apart from that media literacy into educational curricula to foster critical media engagement from an early age (Ehsan and bin Ahsan 2024) would be a good tool to increase social media literacy and be a rational users of it. There must be a awareness among young women regarding how not to set unattainable beauty and luxury standards; in fact, they must be worthy of their existence and high on self-esteem.

Expert Panel Suggestions

The expert panel provided valuable suggestion during the presentation of paper. They recommended the larger and more diverse sample, since the data was collected online. The focus on students was noted as a limitation, with a very small representation of working women and negligible number of other, who does not lie in any category. The expert panel suggested including women from varied backgrounds

such as professionals which is to categorize as government, private and self-employed, homemakers, and unemployed. Also, defining each subgroup using operational definitions to ensure clarity and analytical accuracy. Further, they identify the importance of considering peer influence as a mediating factor that may affect the beauty and lifestyle media consumption. They suggested analysing how peer dynamics affect self-esteem and media perception, considering age, gender, and individual personality traits. These suggestions offer more comprehensive insights into the subject matter and can be considered for future research.

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Feminist Public Intellectuals: Emerging Trends In Social Sciences

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Abstract: *The 21st century has brought significant transformations across various fields, including the social sciences, where feminist perspectives have become increasingly influential. Feminist approaches play a vital role in advocating for gender equality, challenging patriarchal norms, and highlighting the importance of understanding women's experiences and viewpoints. Emphasizing intersectionality, these perspectives promote diversity, inclusivity, and reflexivity. Feminist scholars draw from multiple disciplines—such as sociology, psychology, political science, economics, and philosophy—to explore how gender intersects with other forms of social inequality and to devise strategies for reshaping power dynamics and societal norms. This paper focuses on gendered experiences aiming to explore emerging trends of feminism in the social sciences, like transnational feminism, digital feminism. Additionally, the paper will critically examine the contributions of contemporary public intellectuals to feminist theory during rapid social change in global context.*

Keywords: Feminism, Public intellectuals, Intersectionality, Gender equality, Social norms.

Introduction

The 21st century has brought significant transformations across various fields, including the social sciences, where feminist perspectives have become increasingly influential. The social sciences