



International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Journal homepage: www.ijrpr.com ISSN 2582-7421

Study of Social Media's Role in Shaping Unrealistic Fashion Expectations

Aniket Gaikwad¹, Shivaki Shahi², Dr. Rahul Kushwaha³

¹PG Scholar, National Institute of Fashion Technology, Daman

²PG Scholar, National Institute of Fashion Technology, Daman

³Assistant Professor, National Institute of Fashion Technology, Daman

ABSTRACT

This research explores how social media is changing the fashion industry and, at the while at the same time creating expectations that often feel impossible to live up to. The study, titled "Study of Social Media's Role in Shaping Unrealistic Fashion Expectations," centres around how the images and videos we see online influence the way People think about beauty, spending, and lifestyle. Today, social media is not just about promoting cloth, but it has transformed to become a space where whereby cultural ideals are built and reshaped. But what is often shown online is not everyday reality. Instead, we see polished, filtered, and staged versions of fashion that make perfection look normal. These constant portrayals can affect the way people view themselves and others, pushing them toward standards that are difficult, if not impossible to achieve. This is more than a question of style. For many, particularly younger consumers, it seems insecure, less confident, or pressured financially to keep pace with fast-moving trends. This need to "fit in" with what is online often leads to overspending and dissatisfaction with one's own lifestyle.

Through this research, an attempt is made to highlight the gap between real-life fashion practices and the polished versions often seen online. More importantly, the need for authentic, inclusive, and responsible communication in fashion is stressed. By drawing attention to these critical issues, the study encourages brands, influencers, and platforms to promote fashion in ways that not only inspire creativity but also actively support confidence and well-being.

INTRODUCTION

Fashion is among the oldest industries in the world. What started as a basic need Has grown to be much more important an industry formed on excess and Reinvention. Although social media is one of the youngest industries, it booms.in excess. It started off for connecting with friends and family over long distances, but nowadays, it connects people from different parts of the world with anyone, whether it's a brand, influencer, or even a stranger. Social media has been one of the most powerful forces shaping the world over the last decade. Fashion Industry trends are no longer dictated by glossy magazines alone. Seasonal Campaigns, or designer runways. Today they're coming from Instagram feeds and from YouTube hauls and influencer collaborations. These platforms do more than introduce new Looks shape how people understand beauty, style, and even their own identities. A single viral post can catapult a local fashion choice into a global sensation, affecting How millions think they ought to look, dress, and live.

The democratization of fashion because of the Internet's wide availability, has also created challenges. Most images people view through social media are not genuine images; they are images that are digitized by media editing software, curated through an extensive process and filtered through extensive processes of digital manipulation to create a single image that represents an idealistic view of beauty and an extreme idealistic lifestyle. It is difficult for anyone to connect with these images due to their extremes of perfection and the perception that these are unattainable levels of perfection. Examples of this include flawless appearance and appearance as illustrated by social media timelines of perfect skin, slender bodies, luxurious wardrobes, and polished appearance.

These representations leave little room for the everyday diversity of people or the reality of the everyday lives of individuals. Many people develop negative thoughts and emotions from the perceived difference between the ideal body and the real body (Grogan, 2008; Heider, Spruyt, & De Houwer, 2018). Media representations of the unrealistic beauty standard in the media, fashion, and marketing depict idealistic representations of perfect bodies. Young girls obsess over celebrities' international celebrity-like lifestyles and often turn to very unhealthy means to try to attain a very skinny body together with adopting many unhealthy habits to maintain one (Mooney, Farley, & Strugnell, 2009; Moy, 2015). For many, but especially younger people, the overwhelming amount of input that includes images of unattainable lifestyles generates a pressure to be perfect when it comes to how one dresses and looks. Fashion, in the eyes of many people, equates to being able to wear the most expensive clothing brands, to be able to always follow the trends, and to be completely put together in the way in which they are portrayed. This pressure is magnified by the pace of trends.

It wasn't so long ago that fashion moved with the rhythm of seasons. Now, trends rise and fall in weeks, sometimes even days, thanks to between viral posts and fast-moving algorithms; this relentless cycle pushes consumers to This means that people in fashion-conscious cultures constantly renew their wardrobes, often at considerable budgetary expense. Apart from the money, it affects one's confidence and emotional state since people compare their daily live with idealized versions online and end up feeling inadequate or left behind.

This is the vulnerability of young people. Those who have low self-esteem or High perfectionist tendencies often find themselves looking to social media for reassurance, validation or escape. They can spend hours comparing their photos to others, checking how they look online, or idolizing influencers without an idea of how much digital alteration goes into those images. This constant comparison can build up to dissatisfaction with their bodies and personal appearances, reinforcing negative beliefs that beauty means slim bodies, tall height, perfect skin, and fashion is always on. Look. The influence of social media also extends deeply into buying behaviour. Platforms do Not only do they showcase fashion, but they also drive decisions.

The peer recommendations and recommendations of influencers is a significant aspect of the purchasing decisions of young consumers. Young consumers tend to be very impulsive buyers because of being exposed to discount promotions, haul videos and very trendy marketing strategies (them). The experience of shopping on Social Media has changed from one of merely obtaining clothing to a repeated cycle of gaining validation and support for their purchases (as well as their lifestyle), creating identity, affiliation and belonging through the purchase of clothing, creating cycles of fast fashion and haul culture, increasing purchases of inexpensive, trendy items that tend to create financial stress and provide minimal sustained value.

Other generational attitudes towards the practice of visibly consuming products through social media is a form of contemporary conspicuous consumption, allowing young consumers to exhibit visible wealth and to show off their purchasing power and social status (Duan & Dholakia, 2017). Social Media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram do allow users to establish direct contact with brands and enable users to portray themselves as educated and informed consumers, through various means. On the whole, these interactions have resulted in a culture where individuals are constantly comparing themselves, feeling insecure, and consuming more than they need. Social media is supposed to be a platform for self-expression, but most of the time, it ends up being the opposite as it puts pressure on people to fit in with the limited beauty and fashion standards. This study acknowledges these issues and examines the impact of body image expectations, lifestyle pressures, affordability, rapid trend adoption, and beauty ideals on the people's way of living and fashion consumption. It really wants to figure out not only the influence patterns but also the emotional toll of those beautiful pictures and viral videos that people see.

Keywords: Body Image Satisfaction, Social Media Influence, Psychological Well- Being Physical Measurements, Over Consumption, Trend Adoption, Speed Beauty, Styling pressure.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Influencers and Body Image Dissatisfaction Panjraht & Tiwari (2024)

International journal of Indian psychology examined Instagram's impact on body image satisfaction among adolescent girls and middle-aged women. The study underscored that following fashion influencers often erodes self-image, particularly when idealized thus linking social media influence, body image satisfaction, and styling pressure.

Findings show just how deeply social media and the world around these girls shape the way they see themselves. Many of them spoke about feeling unhappy with parts of their appearance whether it was their weight, complexion, or a specific feature they wished they could change. Apps like Instagram and Snapchat were a big part of their everyday life, and scrolling through perfectly edited photos of celebrities and influencers often made them feel like they weren't "good enough."

Some girls admired certain influencers or idols so much that they began to compare their own bodies to them, which chipped away at their confidence. This didn't just happen with celebrities' comparisons with friends and classmates were just as common. They often worried about how they looked online, how their peers would judge them, and whether they fit into the beauty standards around them. Overall, the findings show that constant comparison both with celebrities and with people in their own circles made many girls feel insecure and dissatisfied with their bodies. This mirrors what social comparison theory suggests: when young people are repeatedly exposed to idealized images, it's easy for them to feel like they fall short.

Appearance-focused Engagement & Adolescent Body Dissatisfaction:

A study in Journal of Youth and Adolescence (2025) highlighted that engaging with appearance-centric content on platforms like Instagram and TikTok increases body dissatisfaction among adolescents, reinforcing unrealistic beauty ideals and styling Pressure.

Findings of the study found that while teenagers often spend time on social media looking at or posting appearance-focused content, this doesn't automatically mean they will become more dissatisfied with their bodies over time. On the surface, teens who engaged more with appearance-related posts were also more likely to compare themselves with others and internalize beauty ideals but when researchers looked closer at how these changes happened within everyone, the pattern wasn't consistent. In other words, just because a teen spent more time with appearance content at one point, it didn't necessarily lead to increased body dissatisfaction six months later. The study also showed that girls and boys were affected in very similar ways. Overall, the findings suggest that the relationship between social media and body image is not as straightforward as often assumed teens may already be used to this type of content, or many other factors may play a role in how social media shapes their body confidence.

The Role of Social Media Usage on Conspicuous Online

Consumption among Millennial Consumers The concept of consumption, which has an important place in people's lives, is generally expressed as the use of produced goods and services in line with needs. Consumption now includes the psychological needs of people as well as their physical needs. Consumers can buy things they do not need by acting pleasure-oriented, and they exhibit consumption behaviours to provide psychological satisfaction.

One of the consumer-purchase patterns is found to demonstrate others in the social environment. Therefore, non-need consumption focused on pleasure and display causes excessive consumption; this situation can also cause wastefulness. Accordingly, in the study, the aim was to examine the effect of conspicuous consumption behaviour on wasteful consumption behaviour and the mediating role of hedonic consumption behaviour in this effect.

Findings: The research revealed that those consumers who indulge more in conspicuous consumption, i.e. buying things to show off one's status, are also more inclined to wasteful consumption, which means that they buy beyond their needs. Besides, the study indicated that conspicuous consumption leads to increase in hedonic consumption that is buying for pleasure, excitement, or emotional satisfaction.

Eventually, the increased level of hedonic consumption becomes a further wasteful buying habit. Significantly, the research pointed out that hedonic consumption is a partial mediator between conspicuous and wasteful consumption which means that people are not just buying excessively to show off but also because these purchases make them feel good. In summary, all hypotheses were affirmed, indicating a strong association between the exhibiting-off behaviour, pleasure-seeking purchases, and wastefulness.

Irma Lidya A Sastra, Siti Halida Zia, Muhammad Fadel Asyahid

Journal of Economics, Business, and Accountancy Ventura Vol. 26, No. 2, Agustus – November 2023 the study set out to understand how people's urge to display status through their purchases known as conspicuous consumption affects their tendency to buy more than they need, which is wasteful consumption. Another key objective was to explore whether hedonic consumption, or buying things for pleasure and enjoyment, plays a role in connecting these two behaviours. In simple terms, the researchers wanted to see how showing off, pleasure-driven shopping, and wastefulness are linked in today's changing consumer environment. The study set out to understand how people's urge to display status through their purchases known as conspicuous consumption affects their tendency to buy more than they need, which is wasteful consumption. Another key objective was to explore whether hedonic consumption, or buying things for pleasure and enjoyment, plays a role in connecting these two behaviours. In simple terms, the researchers wanted to see how showing off, pleasure-driven shopping, and wastefulness are linked in today's changing consumer environment.

Johnson et al. (2023) Exposure to Hegemonic Beauty Ideals vs. Diverse Representation on Instagram (Frontiers in Psychology Results showed that exposure to hegemonic beauty ideals (slim bodies, flawless skin, conventionally attractive features) significantly increased body dissatisfaction and negative self-comparison. The study set out to explore how different types of Instagram content influence young adults' body image and mood. Specifically, the researchers wanted to compare the impact of viewing idealized beauty images like slim, toned, or muscular bodies with the impact of viewing more diverse and realistic body types. They also aimed to understand whether personal tendencies, such as comparing oneself to others or internalizing beauty standards, affect how strongly these images influence a person's self-perception.

The study found that exposure to idealized beauty images increased body dissatisfaction and lowered mood, especially among women. On the other hand, viewing images that showcased diverse and realistic body types helped improve body satisfaction, making participants feel more positive about their appearance. The findings also showed that people who often compare themselves to others or strongly believe in societal beauty ideals were more negatively affected by idealized images. Overall, the research suggested that even a short exposure to inclusive, body-diverse content can support healthier body image, while idealized beauty content can quickly undermine confidence and self-worth.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

- (1) To study how social media shapes beauty standards.
- (2) To study how social media affects consumer behaviour of people.
- (3) To study how social media influences the speed of trend adoption.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employs primary and secondary methods to grasp the impact of social media on fashion as well as the creation of 'unrealistic' expectations. The study is descriptive because it looks at existing trends and exploratory, as it reveals the reasons for the expectations.

Primary Research – Firsthand data was obtained through interviews and focus group discussions with students, consumers, and micro-influencers. Besides these, fashion-related posts on social media were studied to pinpoint the common patterns and trends that lead to create the unrealistic standards.

Secondary Research – The researchers have gone through the previously done studies, the books, and the reports of the industry to get the knowledge of the background and to compare the present findings with the previous research on social media, body image, and fashion.

Sampling – non-probability purposive sampling method was employed to pick out participants who are active on social media and frequently engage with fashion content. The intended age group is 18-35 years as this group represents the most active online audience for fashion 207 participants were included in this research.

SCOPE OF STUDY

This research investigates the social media as the source of the fashion industry's negative impact, and mainly, how these factors lowered body image satisfaction, psychological wellbeing, and the feeling of being stylistically pressed consumers' experience. Moreover, the investigation debunks the way the carefully selected online content propagates the most demanding and at the same time the most unrealistic standards of beauty which inextricably relate to physical aspects such as slim figures, perfect skin, and idealized looks. They, furthermore, talk about the overconsumption phenomenon, explaining how the individuals are being consumed by the rapid adoption of trends and the cramming pace of fashion cycles, thus, they are driven to unnecessary buying and the making of unsustainable choices. By confronting the problem, the study uncovers the negative effects on consumer lifestyles, their self-esteem, and mental health, as well as points out the increasing distance between genuine, everyday fashion concepts and the highly polished, staged accounts that are present on the social media platforms.

DATA ANALYSIS

Table No-01

		Age Of the respondents	Gender of the respondent	Occupation	Monthly income of the respondent
N	Valid	207	207	207	207
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		1.63	1.56	1.86	1.62
Median		2	2	2	1
Mode		1	2	2	1
Std. Deviation		0.698	0.508	1. 0.487	1.196
Skewness		1.177	-0.113	-0.333	1.966
Std. Error of Skewness		0.169	0.169	0.169	0.169

Every question in the survey was answered by all 207 respondents. Most of them were people aged 18-26 years, approximately half of them were females, and the greatest number of them were students. About fifty percent of the participants were from the lowest income group. So, the survey can be considered as a sample of predominantly young, female, student, and low-income individuals. (ref table no 01).

Table No-02

Gender of the respondent					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	male	93	44.9	44.9	44.9
	female	113	54.6	54.6	99.5
	prefer not to say	1	.5	.5	100.0
	Total	207	100.0	100.0	

Based on info from table no 01, 207 people were surveyed, 113 (54.6%) identified themselves as females, and 93 (44.9%) as males. Just one individual (0.5%) decided to keep their gender a secret. Of the people participating in the survey, 0.5% opted not to disclose their gender, and 99.5% provided their gender identity. Besides that, graph no 01 illustrates the overall gender distribution (ref-table 01, Chart No.02).

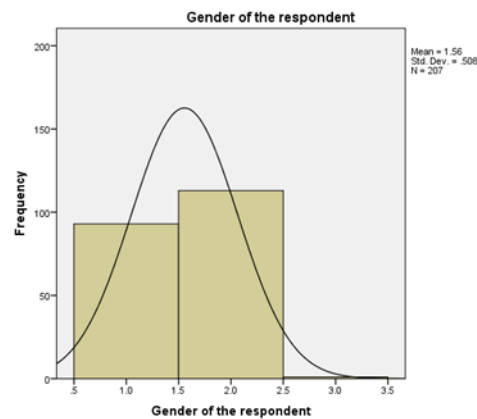


Chart No-01

Table No-03

Age Of the respondents					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-21	97	46.9	46.9	46.9
	22-26	96	46.4	46.4	93.2
	27-30	8	3.9	3.9	97.1
	31-35	6	2.9	2.9	100.0
	Total	207	100.0	100.0	

Out of 207 respondents, all but a handful were young adults. Close to 93% of the participants were in the 18-26 age range, and just a few were 27-35 years old. Therefore, the findings primarily reflect the opinions and lifestyles of those aged 18-26. (ref Table 02, Chart No.03).



Chart No-02

Table 04

Occupation					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	employed	41	19.8	19.8	19.8
	student	154	74.4	74.4	94.2
	unemployed	12	5.8	5.8	100.0
	Total	207	100.0	100.0	

Of the 207 people who answered, 41 (19.8%) said they were working, and the majority, 154 (74.4%), said they were students. A smaller group of 12 respondents (5.8%) said they were not working. This indicates that most participants are students, while fewer of them are currently employed or unemployed (ref- Table 03, Chart No.04).

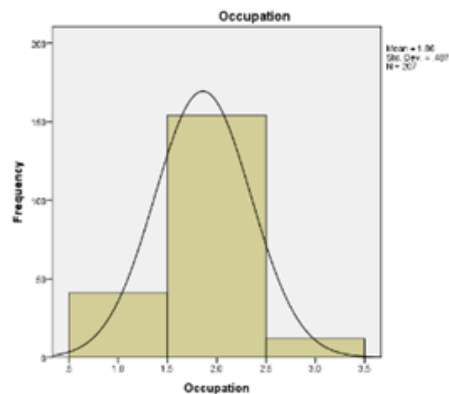


Chart No.03

Table 05

Monthly income of the respondent					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	less than 20000	148	71.5	71.5	71.5
	20000-31000	25	12.1	12.1	83.6
	32000-41000	15	7.2	7.2	90.8
	42000-51000	2	1.0	1.0	91.8
	above 50000	17	8.2	8.2	100.0
	Total	207	100.0	100.0	

Among the 207 people who answered the question, 148 (71.5%) mentioned their monthly income is less than 20,000. 25 respondents (12.1%) reported their income to be between 20,000 and 31,000, and 15 (7.2%) said that their income was between 32,000 and 41,000. Just 2 individuals (1.0%) disclosed that their income was between 42,000 and 51,000, and 17 people (8.2%) said that they made more than 50,000. It follows that most of the respondents are those with a monthly income of less than 20,000, and only a few have higher income (ref- Table 04, Chart No.05).



Chart No.04

1) Crosstabulation of Age with Respect to Satisfaction from Social Media Influencer Product Recommendations

Table No-06

		How satisfactory do you find products recommendation from social media influencers.					Total
		very satisfied	satisfied	Neutral	dissatisfied	very dissatisfied	
Age Of the respondents	18-21	5	22	65	5	0	97
	22-26	13	23	55	4	1	96
	27-30	0	2	5	0	1	8
	31-35	0	2	3	0	1	6
Total		18	49	128	9	3	207

Among 207 people, 128 (62%) stated that they are indifferent to influencer product recommendations, i.e., they neither trust nor reject them. Additionally, 49 people (24%) reported that they were pleased with the recommendations. Only a handful of respondents were either ecstatic or miserable with the influencers' suggestions. Generally, most people do not have a strong opinion but rather most of them are neutral towards influencer advice. (ref.-table 06)

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	24.977a	12	0.015
Likelihood Ratio	17.326	12	0.138
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.016	1	0.899
N of Valid Cases	207		

Table No-07

The Pearson Chi-Square value is $p = 0.015$, which is below 0.05 and therefore, statistically significant. This indicates that age has a meaningful effect. On the factor being studied, with different age groups showing varied responses. (ref-table no-07)

2) Crosstabulation of Age with Respect to the Affordability of Social Media Trends

Table No-08

		Do you feel all the social media trends are affordable to you personally?					Total
		strongly approved	approved	neutral	disapproved	strongly disapproved	
Age Of the respondents	18-21	9	7	53	20	8	97
	22-26	3	19	39	27	8	96
	27-30	0	1	6	0	1	8
	31-35	0	1	3	0	2	6
Total		12	28	101	47	19	207

Nearly 50% of people (101 out of 207) didn't take a side regarding the affordability of social media trends and thus chose the neutral option. However, a considerable number of people (47 disagreed and 19 strongly disagreed) thought that these trends are costly. A few individuals (12 strongly agreed and 28 agreed) considered that trends are affordable. In general, most people, young ones in particular, think that it is hard to afford to follow social media trends. (ref – table no 08)

Chi-Square Tests

Table

No-09

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	21.516 ^a	12	0.043
Likelihood Ratio	23.92	12	0.021
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.726	1	0.394
N of Valid Cases	207		

The results show a Pearson Chi-Square value of $p = 0.043$, which is less than 0.05 indicating a significant relationship in data. This means age genuinely influences how people view the affordability of social media trends.

3) Crosstabulation of Gender with Respect to the Preference for Using Social Media to Follow Beauty-Related Content.

Table No-10

		Do you prefer social media to follow beauty related content?					Total
		always	often	sometimes	rarely	never	
Gender of the respondent	male	13	12	28	25	15	93
	female	27	22	47	10	7	113
	prefer not to say	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total		40	34	76	35	22	207

Among 207 people, 76 (37%) stated that they sometimes follow beauty content, 40 (19%) said they always do, and 34 (16%) often do. In contrast, 35 (17%) follow it very infrequently and 22 (11%) have never followed it. Females are more active than males. 27% of the female respondents stated that they always follow beauty content as opposed to 14% of the males, while most males chose sometimes or rarely. (ref-table no 10)

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	22.047 ^a	8	0.005
Likelihood Ratio	22.542	8	0.004
Linear-by-Linear Association	13.215	1	0
N of Valid Cases	207		

Table No-11

The results show a Pearson Chi-Square value of $p = 0.005$, indicating a statistically significant relationship in data. This means age has a clear influence on how respondents view the affordability of social media trends.

4) Crosstabulation of Gender with Respect to How Often People Follow Fashion Influencers, Brands, or Celebrities

		How often do you follow any fashion influencers /celebrities/brands?					Total
		always	often	sometimes	rarely	never	
Gender of the respondent	male	10	11	33	31	8	93
	female	22	23	46	18	4	113
	prefer not to say	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total		32	34	79	50	12	207

Table No-12

Among 207 individuals, most of them stated that they sometimes follow fashion influencers (38%). Nearly one third of people indicated that they always or often follow them, whereas almost one third of people said that they follow them rarely or never. It is usually the case that women are keener on fashion and beauty content as more of them select “always” and “often” whereas men mostly agree with “sometimes” or “rarely”. In general, female users of fashion and beauty influencers are more than male ones. (ref-table no 12)

Chi-Square Test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig.(2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.938 ^a	8	0.031
Likelihood Ratio	16.851	8	0.032
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.934	1	0.002
N of Valid Cases	207		

Table No-13

The Chi-Square test shows a significant link between gender and how often people follow fashion influencers ($p = 0.031$). This means men and women don't follow influencers in the same way, and women tend to follow them more frequently than men. (ref table no 13)

5) Crosstabulation of Gender with Respect to the Type of Beauty Content People Engage with Most

		What type of beauty content do you engage with most?				Total
		make up tutorials	GRWM (get ready with me) videos	fashion and styling tips	celebrity or influencer beauty routines	
Gender of the respondent	male	3	12	65	13	93
	female	11	24	70	7	112
	prefer not to say	0	0	1	0	1
Total		14	36	136	20	206

Table No-14

Individually fashion and styling tips are what the majority of people (66%) have their highest engagement with, thus becoming the top pick for all genders. After that, there are 17% of people watching GRWM videos, then 10% interested in celebrity beauty routines, and finally, 7% of people as the least makeup tutorial's fans. It is a fact that both males and females fashion tips are their major focus, and in addition, females are a little bit more into GRWM and makeup content. (ref-table no 14).

The Pearson Chi-Square value is $p = 0.151$, which is not significant. This means age does not have a meaningful effect, though there may be a slight trend across age groups ($p = 0.004$).

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.429 ^a	6	0.151
Likelihood Ratio	10.02	6	0.124
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.105	1	0.004
N of Valid Cases	206		

Table No-15

The Pearson Chi-Square value is $p = 0.151$, which is not significant. This means age does not have a meaningful effect, though there may be a slight trend across age groups ($p = 0.004$).

6) Crosstabulation of Occupation with Respect to the Products that Influences to Buy on Social Media.

		What influences you to buy products from social media?					Total
		recommendation from influencers	discounts	trending products	limited time offer	visually appealing posts	
Occupation	employed	3	11	16	4	7	41
	student	33	41	49	6	25	154
	unemployed	2	0	3	2	5	12
Total		38	52	68	12	37	207

Table No-16

Majority of people purchase products that they come across on social media because the products are either trending (33%) or on discount (25%). Nearly 18% are persuaded by the beautiful posts or the influencer's recommendation, whereas only a handful of people are motivated by the limited time offers. As the largest portion of respondents are students, it can be said that they are particularly attracted to trends and discounts. Basically, consumers take better notice of the most popular and cheapest products rather than what is being promoted by influencers. (ref-table no16)

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.045 ^a	8	0.042
Likelihood Ratio	17.887	8	0.022
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.015	1	0.903
N of Valid Cases	207		

Table No-17

The Pearson Chi-Square value is $p = 0.042$, which is statistically significant. This indicates that age has a meaningful effect on the factor being studied, with responses varying across different age groups.

7) Crosstabulation of Occupation with Respect to Satisfaction from Social Media Influencer Product Recommendations

Table no -18

		How satisfactory do you find products recommendation from social media influencers.					Total
		very satisfied	Satisfied	neutral	dissatisfied	very dissatisfied	
Occupation	employed	3	14	20	2	2	41
	student	15	34	99	6	0	154
	unemployed	0	1	9	1	1	12
Total		18	49	128	9	3	207

Out of 207 respondents, 128 individuals (62%) expressed a neutral opinion regarding influencer recommendations. Additionally, 49 individuals (24%) reported that they were satisfied, whereas only a few were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. The identical trend was visible across occupations where students and employed people, in general, opted for the neutral choice. (Ref -table no 18)

Chi-Square Tests

Table No-19

The Pearson Chi-Square value is, $p = 0.039$, which is statistically significant. This shows that age has a meaningful effect on the factor being studied, with responses differing across age groups. (ref -table no 19).

8) Crosstabulation of Monthly Income with Respect to What Encourages Participants to Follow or Adopt Social Media Trends

		To what extent do you feel encouraged to follow or adopt trends you see on social media ?					Total
		always	often	sometimes	rarely	never	
Monthly income of the respondent	less than 20000	15	25	58	41	9	148
	20000-31000	1	3	17	3	1	25
	32000-41000	2	4	5	4	0	15
	42000-51000	0	0	0	1	1	2
	above 50000	0	7	4	5	1	17
Total		18	39	84	54	12	207

Table no -20

41% out of 207 people responded that they are sometimes encouraged to follow the trends of social media, 19% often feel the same, and 9% always do. However, 26% of people report that they are only rarely encouraged to do so, and 6% never. Those who make less than ₹20,000 are the most trend-sensitive, whereas the higher-income groups have exhibited a mixed but moderate level of engagement. On average, many people consider themselves to be somewhat influenced by social media trends, with the lower-income groups showing a bit more interest. (Ref-table no 20)

Chi-Square Test

Table no-21

The Pearson Chi-Square value is $p = 0.047$, which is just under 0.05 and significant. This means age plays a role in the responses, with different age groups showing varying patterns.

9) Crosstabulation of Income with Respect to How Often Respondents Follow Influencers, Celebrities, or Brands

	How often do you follow any fashion influencers /celebrities/brands?					Total
	always	often	Sometimes	rarely	never	
Monthly income of the respondent	22	24	51	44	7	148
	3	4	16	1	1	25
	4	2	7	2	0	15
	0	0	0	2	0	2
	3	4	5	1	4	17
Total	32	34	79	50	12	207

Table No-22

Seventy-nine respondents (38%) out of 207 people said that they sometimes follow fashion influencers. Among the lowest income group (under ₹20,000), 97 out of 148 people said that they always, often, or sometimes follow fashion pages which made them the most active group. The number of people following influencers decreased with income groups in all categories. (ref- table no 22)

Chi-Square Test

Table No-23

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	33.631 ^a	16	0.006
Likelihood Ratio	32.24	16	0.009
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.099	1	0.753
N of Valid Cases	207		

The Pearson Chi-Square value is $p = 0.006$, which is significant. This means age clearly affects the responses, with different age groups showing noticeable differences. (ref -table no 23)

10) Crosstabulation of Monthly Income with Respect to What Influences Respondents to Buy Products from Social Media

		What influences you to buy products from social media?				
		recommendation from influencers	Discounts	trending products	limited time offer	visually appealing posts
Monthly income of the respondent	less than 20000	32	35	43	6	32
	20000-31000	3	8	9	2	3
	32000-41000	1	2	8	3	1
	42000-51000	0	2	0	0	0
	above 50000	2	5	8	1	1
Total		38	52	68	12	37

Table no -24

The majority of 207 people who answered the question said that they purchase via social media mainly because products are trending (33%) or are getting discounted (25%). Nearly 18 percent are attracted to the beautiful posts or the influencer's suggestion, and only 6 percent feel compelled to react to the offer for a short time. Those with a monthly income of less than ₹20,000 were the most affected, particularly by trends and discounts. To sum up, the main reasons for buying are trends and good deals, which are especially the case for users belonging to the lower-income group. (ref -table no 24)

Table no -25

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	24.400 ^a	16	0.081
Likelihood Ratio	23	16	0.114
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.12	1	0.729
N of Valid Cases	207		

The Pearson Chi-Square value is $p = 0.081$, which is not statistically significant. This means age does not have a meaningful effect on the responses. (ref-table no 25).

FINDINGS

Throughout the entire procedure, 207 survey data were received, the findings from the study reveals the complex interplay of participants experiences, how social media shapes beauty standards, affects consumer behaviour of people and influences the speed of trend adoption.

- 1) Most respondents felt neutral about influencer product recommendations. The 18–21 age group showed the highest share (46.9%), indicating that younger users generally accept these recommendations without strong enthusiasm.
- 2) Respondents generally felt neutral about the affordability of social media trends. Most people in both major age groups 18–21 (46.9%) and 22–26 (46.4%) chose neutral or disagreed, suggesting that younger users tend to see these trends as somewhat pricey rather than truly affordable.
- 3) Many respondents (36%) follow beauty-related content on social media at least sometimes. Females who make up about 55% of the sample are more likely than males to choose “always” or “often,” showing stronger overall engagement with beauty content.
- 4) Most respondents follow fashion influencers at least sometimes, with 79 out of 207 choosing this option. Females about 55% of the sample are more likely than males to choose “always” or “often,” showing stronger and more consistent engagement with fashion-related content.
- 5) Most respondents engage the most with fashion and styling tips. Females, who make up about 54% of the sample, slightly outnumber males, but both genders show the same interest, making fashion and styling tips the clear favourite.
- 6) Trending products are the biggest influence on purchases, followed closely by discounts at about 25%. With students making up around 74% of the sample, the results show that younger audiences are especially responsive to social media driven cues.
- 7) Most people feel neutral about influencer product recommendations, and this is especially true for students, who make up about 74% of the sample. Only around 4% express dissatisfaction, showing that these recommendations are generally accepted but not very persuasive across different occupations.
- 8) Most respondents say they are only sometimes encouraged to follow social media trends. Those earning less than ₹20,000, who make up about 71% of the sample, show the most interest, while higher income groups are clearly less engaged.
- 9) Most respondents only sometimes follow fashion influencers, and this is most common among those earning below ₹20,000, who make up about 71% of the sample. Higher-income groups show lower engagement, with only about 10% saying they always or often follow them, highlighting a clear difference based on income.
- 10) The results show that trending products have the strongest influence on purchases, followed by discounts at about 25%. Lower-income respondents, who make up around 71% of the sample, are the most affected, showing how price and popularity shape buying behaviour.

LIMITATION

The study had certain limitations considering it was done in a limited time frame, which restricted the sample size. Additionally, the study was also limited to certain age groups from which data could be collected in the time frame, therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to a broader population. The sample had more female participants than male, and only one participant representing the other gender identities. Future research should aim for a more inclusive participant selection from a diverse range of varied backgrounds to enhance the study's external validity.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals a dynamic interplay of individual experiences, societal pressure, and the negative impact of social media on beauty standards, fashion engagement, and consumer behaviour among young adults. Many feel neutral about influencer recommendations and the affordability of trends, while women tend to engage more with beauty content, and lower-income groups are drawn to trending products and discounts. Social media clearly influences daily choices, style, and self-image, though the effects vary depending on age and income. Navigate this influence more positively, people can focus on following diverse and realistic content, be mindful of impulsive purchases, and prioritize personal comfort over trends.

Reference & Citation

- 1) Bath, R. (2024). *Masking Hegemony with Makeup: How Social Media Influencers Enforce Hegemony via Corporate Sponsored Beauty Products Submitted To The Faculty Of Arts In Partial Fulfillment Of The Requirements For The Degree Of Ba Honours In Communication And Media Studies Department Of Communication, Media And Film Calgary, Alberta.* <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/sites/default/files/teams/21/R.%20Bath%20Honours%20Thesis.pdf>
- 2) Khosla, S. (2024). Exploring the Influence of Social Media on Body Image: A Study on Adolescent Girls. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 12(1), 1112-1124. DIP:18.01.104.20241201, DOI:10.25215/1201.104
- 3) Kvardova, N., Machackova, H., Maes, C., & Vandenbosch, L. (2025). Navigating Beauty Standards on Social Media: Impact of Appearance Activity on Adolescents' Body Dissatisfaction. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 10.1007/s10964-02502159-y. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-025-02159-y>
- 4) Sastra, I., Zia, S., Asyahid, M., Damayanti, N., (2023). The Role of Social Media Usage on Conspicuous Online Consumption among Millennial Consumers. Universitas Bina Nusantara. <https://doi.org/10.14414/jebav.v26i2.3508>
- 5) Jackson, T. (2023). The perceived impact of Instagram on a coloured female's body image. Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg. <https://www.proquest.com/openview/91a04b7ef8ebc9ad7920d0c9a592c276/1?pqorigsite=gscholar&cbl=2026366&diss=y>