

**INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BEAUTY AND LIFESTYLE
CONTENT ON SELF-PERCEPTION AMONG FEMALE
UNDERGRADUATES IN ENUGU METROPOLIS.**

**UGELE MMESOMACHI STEPHANIE
GOU/U22/MAS/472**

**DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION
FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES,
GODFREY OKOYE UNIVERSITY, UGWUOMU-NIKE, ENUGU
STATE, NIGERIA.**

JULY, 2026

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**BY
UGELE MMESOMACHI STEPHANIE
GOU/U22/MAS/472**

**DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION
A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION,
FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES, GODFREY OKOYE
UNIVERSITY, UGWUOMU-NIKE, ENUGU
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.Sc) DEGREE IN MASS COMMUNICATION**

**PROJECT SUPERVISOR:
DR. BENJAMIN ONWUKWALONYE**

JULY, 2026

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this project entitled, Influence of Social Media Beauty and Lifestyle content on Self-Perception Among Female Undergraduates in Enugu Metropolis, presented by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Science (B. Sc) degree in the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, Godfrey Okoye University, Ugwuomu-Nike, Enugu, is my original work and has not been submitted either in part or full for any other degree or diploma either in this or any other tertiary institution.

Ugele Mmesomachi Stephanie

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Date

CERTIFICATION PAGE

I, Ugele Mmesomachi Stephanie with the registration number, GOU/U22/MAS/472 of the department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, Godfrey Okoye University, Ugwuomu Nike, Enugu State, have satisfactorily completed the requirements for the award of B.Sc Degree in Mass Communication.

The project is original and has not, to the best of my knowledge, been submitted in part or full for any other certification, diploma or degree programme of this or any other university.

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Dr. Benjamin Onwukwalonye
(Project Supervisor)

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Date

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Mr. Nnamdi Nzekwe
Head of Department of Mass Communication

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Date

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Prof. John Odo
Dean, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences

.....
Date

DEDICATION

This project is especially dedicated to God Almighty for His grace, strength, wisdom, provision and guidance throughout this study. I also dedicate this project to my parents, Mr. Uzodinma and Mrs. Chinwe Ugele. Your unwavering support has brought me this far.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I sincerely thank God Almighty for His continued favour, strength, protection and provision over me throughout the course of this research work and my entire academic journey. Without His divine grace and mercy, this feat would not have been possible. I remain forever grateful.

I want to express my heartfelt appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Benjamin Onwukwalonye, for his patience, guidance, encouragement and constructive corrections given throughout this study. Your mentorship played a major role in the successful accomplishment of this project.

My profound gratitude goes to the Head of the Department of Mass Communication, Mr. Nnamdi Nzekwe for continually pushing us to be better versions of ourselves, while guiding us in this journey. I also want to thank my lecturers, Prof. Cosmas Nwokefor, Prof. Ike Ndolo, Rev. Fr. Prof. Paul Obayi, Rev. Fr. Benjamin Achi, Dr. Alexander Onyebuchi, Dr. Benjamin Onwukwalonye, Dr. Michael Nwosu, Dr. Godwin Okoye, Mr. Godwin Umeh, Mr. Nnamdi Nzekwe, Mr. Ejiofor Ugwu, Mrs. Obioma Ozioko, Miss Miriam Odoh, Miss Chiamaka Ezeugwu, Mrs. Jane Mba, Mrs. Adaeze Onuorah, Mrs Kosi Ene. Each and every one of you have had a great impact on my academic journey.

My deepest appreciation goes to my amazing parents, Mr. Uzodinma Ugele and Mrs. Chinwe Ugele, for their endless support, sacrifices, prayers, guidance, words of encouragement and reassurance. Thank you for being my biggest supporters, morally, spiritually and financially. To my children by choice, Yadichimma, Munachimso, Chioma and Yagazie Ugele, thank you all for your constant motivation and trust in me, I do not take any of you for granted.

In a special way, I would like to thank my grandmother, Mrs. Martina Agukwe, my aunts, Mrs. Ifeoma Nwosu, Mrs. Onyinyechi Onwuegbu and Mrs. Chioma Okpegbuo, and my uncles, Mr. Nnamdi, Emeka, Uche, Chibuike and Kelechi Agukwe. Your constant love and support contributed vastly to the completion of this academic journey, God bless you all.

I also express my sincere appreciation to the management and staff of Rapid Broadcasting Network, Umuahia, for the opportunity to get practical tutelage under their establishment. The experience, guidance, and knowledge gained during the training contributed greatly to my academic and personal development.

To my incredible friends who made this journey a memorable one, Amarachi, Emmanuella, Sophia, Flourish, Ogechi, Favour, Chidera, Eucharia, Ugochukwu and Tennyson. I want to say a big thank you for making these years livable, for always pushing me to do my best and always believing in me, your love does not go unnoticed. To everyone who I am unable to mention, I sincerely appreciate you for your support.

Finally, I want to thank myself for holding on despite the barriers and hurdles. I am extremely grateful for the perseverance and willingness to keep pushing.

ABSTRACT

This study sought to examine the influence of social media beauty and lifestyle content on self-perception among females in Enugu Metropolis. The study was conducted to ascertain the extent to which female undergraduates are exposed to beauty and lifestyle content on social media, the extent to which exposure to beauty and lifestyle content affect beauty and lifestyle perceptions among female undergraduates, the extent to which beauty and lifestyle content influence self-perception and self-esteem among female undergraduates, and the extent to which such content affect beauty and lifestyle practices among female undergraduates. The researcher anchored the study on the Social Comparison Theory. The survey research method was used for the study, the population of the study was drawn from the population of female undergraduates in Godfrey Okoye University and University of Nigeria Enugu Campus. The questionnaire was employed as the instrument for data collection, and the collected data was analysed using simple tables, percentages and mean analysis. The study found out that the level of exposure of female undergraduates to beauty and lifestyle content is high. Female undergraduates' exposure to beauty and lifestyle content on social media has affected their perceptions of beauty and lifestyle. Beauty and lifestyle content influence the self-perception and self-esteem of female undergraduates. Lastly, beauty and lifestyle content affect the beauty and lifestyle practices of female undergraduates. The researcher recommended that tertiary institutions organise seminars and campaigns on media literacy in order to educate female undergraduates on how to critically evaluate social media content. The researcher also suggested that female undergraduates be encouraged to reduce excess exposure to beauty and lifestyle content that may negatively affect their self-perception and self-esteem, and parents, guardians, and guidance counselors should give emotional support and guide young ladies regarding their self-worth, body image and the curated nature of some online beauty standards.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

The use of social media has become a great part of the daily lives of Nigerians, particularly the youth. A study conducted by the Nigeria Data Protection Commission (NDPC, 2024) shows that over 40 million Nigerians spend an average of six hours daily on social media, with about 65 per cent of young Nigerians actively engaging on social media, either for personal or business purposes.

While there are no specific data for the population of female Nigerian youth who use social media, a great deal of these females actively use social media for different reasons.

Mobile platforms which allow individuals to interact, create or share digital content (messages, photos, videos) and connect with others are known as social media platforms (Ahmed et al, 2019). Sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, etc, have become very popular, drawing billions of users from across the globe. These platforms have been used to make new connections, debate ideas, stay in touch with family and friends, share interests and opinions, distribute real time news and information, spread research, promote businesses, and so much more (Özkent, 2022).

Although social media has great advantages, it also has its downside. Issues such as cyberbullying, social media addiction, low self-esteem, misinformation, spread of inappropriate content, etc, have been on the rise. A lot of young women use social media platforms to express themselves and identify with a community. They follow influencers, content creators or celebrities whose content corresponds with their interests.

While creating content for social media, content creators usually narrow down to a niche, which is some sort of community that is built around a specific area of interest, which people with similar interests can relate to and engage with. Instead of putting out content to appeal to everyone, these creators just select an area they would like to specialise in, and create content tailored for that niche. Some social media niche examples are fashion, beauty, lifestyle, technology, finance, education, arts and crafts, music and dance, and so much more.

The lifestyle niche is said to be the most broad, consisting of sub-niches such as: fashion, beauty, travel, health and wellness, home decoration or design, cooking, etc.

Lifestyle content could be simple fashion tips, daily make-up routine, cooking tutorials or recipes, exploring new places (restaurants, tourist attractions, countries), religious activities, work-out routines or tips for healthy living, and so on.

Beauty content, a sub-niche of lifestyle content, focuses more on skincare, make-up, hair tips and ideas, reviewing of beauty products and recreating viral beauty trends.

Skincare influencers, lifestyle bloggers/vloggers, beauty influencers, make-up artists, etc, have become prominent online. Their content shapes audience perception and behaviour, by pushing out ideologies that may be totally different from what the audiences are used to, therefore causing some sort of shift in the mentality of these viewers.

While consuming these posts, female youths are exposed to various images and videos which depict the 'ideal' lifestyle; the purchase of new cars, new clothes each day, 'perfect' relationships, regular vacations, or idolised body figures. They engage massively (views, likes, comments or reshares) with such posts and frequent consumption can make some individuals perceive themselves as less; especially when they see people within their age bracket living lavishly, it could invoke feelings of inferiority in them.

Due to the era of digitization, a lot of things have been made possible. Most posts put out by these creators are sometimes modified to fit into certain aesthetics and appeal to the audience.

Apps like Adobe Photoshop, Facetune, Snapchat and Instagram filters can be used to retouch pictures to remove blemishes or brighten the face, to create an illusion of clear, even skin. Users reshape facial features and alter body shapes; shrink waist size, enlarge hips, elongate legs, and so on. Some creators also use these tools to change the background of their pictures to luxurious looking ones.

When young females engage with these curated posts, it can affect or change their perceptions of beauty and themselves (Rajanala, Maymone and Vashi, 2018).

Self-perception is the mental image or concept or idea that a person has about themselves and typically is a combination of personal experiences with cultural norms and social interaction (Ibrahim et al., 2025).

It is connected to bodily awareness, identity and social experiences. Individuals understand themselves through sensory experiences, interactions and social feedback which all shape personal identity and self-perception (Reynolds and Subasic, 2016).

There are several factors that could influence the way individuals see or view themselves. People can judge themselves based on the lifestyles of others and especially when they engage with posts containing narrow ideals.

Young females engage a lot with these spaces online. Many of them may use social media as a means of understanding themselves and their environment. Platforms like Tiktok and Instagram which contain a plethora of visuals (images and videos), enable frequent comparisons with creators, influencers and even peers. This may affect how these women assess their physical appearance, fashion and lifestyle choices.

Thus, this study seeks to examine the influence of these beauty and lifestyle content on the self-perception of female undergraduates in Enugu Metropolis.

1.2 Statement of Problem

In the digital era today, social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Tiktok, Snapchat, etc., are now spaces where different people come across numerous contents. The frequent use of social media comes with its own pitfalls, just as it has its benefits. One challenge which social media users –especially the young female audiences– face in the present times is the pressure to conform to certain lifestyle standards online.

Beauty and lifestyle creators and influencers frequently project the ‘ideal’ beauty standards, fashion trends, body figure and even the ideal definition of success, through pictures and videos, which most times are edited or modified for online appeal.

Despite the fact that such content can be used as a source of inspiration or motivation, it can also lower self-esteem, enable constant comparisons and cause unrealistic expectations. It could also lead to body dysmorphia; people getting dissatisfied with their bodies. All these could lead to taking extreme measures to look a certain way or to live certain lifestyles.

This study seeks to explore the influence of beauty and lifestyle content on social media among female undergraduates in Enugu metropolis.

1.3 Research Objectives

This study is geared towards assessing the overall influence of social media beauty and lifestyle content on Enugu female undergraduates’ self perception. However, the specific objectives of the study are:

1. To ascertain the extent to which female undergraduates are exposed to beauty and lifestyle content on social media.

2. To determine the extent to which exposure to beauty and lifestyle content affect beauty and lifestyle perceptions among female undergraduates.
3. To ascertain the extent to which beauty and lifestyle content influence self-perception and self-esteem among female undergraduates.
4. To determine the extent to which beauty and lifestyle content affect beauty and lifestyle practices among female undergraduates.

1.4 Research Questions

1. To what extent are female undergraduates exposed to beauty and lifestyle content on social media?
2. To what extent does exposure to beauty and lifestyle content on social media affect beauty and lifestyle perceptions among female undergraduates?
3. To what extent do beauty and lifestyle content influence the self-perception and self-esteem of female undergraduates?
4. To what extent do beauty and lifestyle content affect the beauty and lifestyle practices of female undergraduates?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research work is relevant for several reasons.

First, it will help build media literacy and better social media engagement habits for young women who are active users of social media, by underscoring the use of various modification techniques by creators and influencers to depict idealised lifestyles, and how these depictions may impact self-perception.

Second, this study contributes to the developing knowledge base on media effects, especially in Nigeria where the empirical research on the influence of beauty and lifestyle content on the

self-perception of young women, is still surfacing. It will give an outlook on how beauty and lifestyle content on social media can influence the self-perception of those who make use of these platforms.

The study will be of use to psychologists, guidance counsellors, therapists and student affairs departments within tertiary institutions to understand how beauty and lifestyle content influences the way female students perceive themselves. This can aid in the creation of programmes that promote good self-esteem.

In conclusion, the findings in this study will be beneficial to scholars of communication and researchers looking to conduct further research in this area, to help increase the understanding of how highly curated beauty and lifestyle content affect audience behaviour.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This research work was focused on determining the influence of social media beauty and lifestyle content on the self-perception of female undergraduates in Enugu Metropolis. The researcher centered their evaluation on Tiktok and Instagram, which are the most popular social media platforms for curated beauty and lifestyle content, and are prevalent among female undergraduates.

Geographically, the study was conducted among female undergraduates in selected tertiary institutions within Enugu Metropolis. Specifically, University of Nigeria Enugu Campus (UNEC) and Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu (GOUNI), were selected to represent public and private universities respectively.

1.7 Operational Definition of Terms

i. Beauty content: Images and videos on social media that showcase physical appearance; makeup, skincare, fashion, body aesthetics or beauty enhancement techniques.

ii. Enugu Metropolis: The capital of Enugu State which comprises Enugu North, Enugu South and Enugu East Local Government Areas.

iii. Influence: The ability to have an impact on the behaviour of someone or something.

iv. Lifestyle content: Social media posts that show the daily activities of people; fashion choices, travel posts, luxury living or fitness goals.

v. Self-Perception: The Idea or view that people have about themselves.

vi. Social Media: Digital platforms where users share information, interact and connect with various individuals and communities.

vii. Undergraduates: Students in GOUNI and UNEC.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Overview of Social Media Beauty and Lifestyle Content

Social media beauty and lifestyle content includes digital materials shared on social networking platforms that focus on appearance, fashion, skincare, personal grooming, wellness, and everyday practices. Mwangi and Buvár (2024) define social media beauty content as curated digital representations of beauty standards, lifestyle choices, and personal appearance shared through visual and textual formats on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. This content often depicts ideals of attractiveness, fashion trends, and daily routines that audiences may view as desirable or socially acceptable. Beauty and lifestyle posts typically feature makeup tutorials, skincare routines, fashion inspiration, fitness practices, and aesthetic lifestyle presentations. This type of content has become a popular way for young adults, particularly female users, to engage with media. Beauty content on social media often creates idealized standards of femininity and attractiveness that audiences might internalize (Mwangi & Buvár, 2024). This concept is important for the current study because female undergraduates are among the most active consumers of beauty and lifestyle content on social media.

Social media beauty and lifestyle content often includes carefully curated images and narratives aimed at presenting an idealized version of personal life and physical appearance. Uti and Marcella-Hood (2025) explain that beauty trends on social media evolve through cycles, where influencers, celebrities, and brands introduce aesthetic standards that audiences gradually adopt. The visual nature of platforms like Instagram encourages highly stylized content that emphasizes

physical attractiveness, fashionable living, and aspirational lifestyles. These visual representations create a mediated reality where beauty and lifestyle practices are shown in heavily edited and filtered forms. The "Instagram body" trend illustrates how beauty content can normalize specific body shapes and lifestyle aesthetics among online audiences (Uti & Marcella-Hood, 2025). Regular exposure to these curated beauty ideals may influence how individuals assess their appearance and lifestyle choices.

Beauty and lifestyle content on social media also helps shape consumer identities and personal self-presentation. Mahlakaarto and Suanse (2024) define beauty-focused social media content as digital narratives that influence how individuals build their identities, especially regarding fashion, grooming, and personal appearance. This content often includes product promotions, beauty tutorials, and lifestyle storytelling that encourage audiences to adopt specific beauty practices. Social media influencers often act as intermediaries who translate beauty standards into everyday practices for their followers. The interaction between influencers and audiences helps form consumer identities centered on beauty and lifestyle aesthetics (Mahlakaarto & Suanse, 2024). Female university students often follow influencers who showcase beauty routines and lifestyle habits that are seen as aspirational.

Beauty and lifestyle content on social media is also linked to digital marketing and branding strategies in the beauty industry. Maharani and Sumadi (2023) define beauty-related social media content as promotional and informational digital material used by brands and influencers to highlight beauty products, skincare routines, and lifestyle aesthetics. These contents often blend entertainment, advertising, and personal storytelling to engage audiences and encourage consumer involvement. Beauty brands strategically partner with influencers who share lifestyle

narratives that match their brand identity and aesthetic ideals. This integration of marketing communication in lifestyle content makes beauty narratives more persuasive to audiences on social media platforms (Maharani & Sumadi, 2023). Such content may impact how young women understand beauty standards and personal attractiveness.

Another important aspect of social media beauty and lifestyle content is its ability to shape perceptions of body image and attractiveness. Seekis and Barker (2022) describe beauty content on social media as a collection of images and narratives that highlight appearance-focused ideals, often prompting users to compare their bodies to digitally mediated standards. The frequent display of idealized beauty images can lead audiences to engage in appearance comparisons with the content they view online. Regular interaction with beauty content may heighten concerns about physical appearance and encourage individuals to seek aesthetic changes (Seekis & Barker, 2022). Social media platforms thus become spaces where beauty norms are continuously reinforced through visual communication. Female university students who engage with such content regularly may be particularly influenced by these trends.

Beauty-centered social media communities also play a significant role in sharing and reinforcing beauty trends. Yupelmi et al. (2023) define social media beauty communities as online networks where users exchange makeup techniques, fashion ideas, and lifestyle experiences related to beauty culture. These communities often offer platforms for individuals to share beauty tips, review products, and discuss personal experiences related to appearance and lifestyle. Interaction within these communities can amplify the visibility of certain beauty ideals and influence how audiences perceive attractiveness. Social media marketing strategies often leverage these digital communities to promote beauty culture and lifestyle trends (Yupelmi et al., 2023). Female

undergraduates who engage in these communities may adopt beauty practices aligning with the dominant norms shared online.

Social media beauty and lifestyle content can also shape the broader cultural understanding of femininity and personal freedom. Dong (2025) explains that digital lifestyle narratives often depict beauty practices and personal appearance as expressions of individuality and empowerment among women. These narratives present beauty routines, fashion choices, and lifestyle practices as means for women to shape their identities in digital spaces. However, the same content may also reinforce societal beauty ideals that shape expectations about women's appearances. Representations of femininity on social media often reflect both empowerment and conformity to aesthetic standards (Dong, 2025). These narratives may influence how young women view beauty norms and assess their self-image.

The growing popularity of lifestyle content on social media has broadened the scope of beauty-related narratives. Seanpin and Rawd-ard (2022) define lifestyle content as digital storytelling that combines beauty, fashion, travel, wellness, and everyday experiences into visually appealing narratives shared on social media platforms. These narratives often illustrate idealized daily routines that portray luxury, elegance, or aesthetic living as desirable lifestyles. Social media audiences often engage with lifestyle influencers who merge beauty practices with broader lifestyle experiences like travel, fitness, and social activities. Lifestyle content has become one of the most consumed categories of digital media on current social platforms (Seanpin & Rawd-ard, 2022). This widespread consumption increases the chances that users will internalize the values and aesthetics presented in such content.

Beauty and lifestyle content can also present alternative views of body image, including body-positive narratives. Stein et al. (2024) define body-positive social media content as digital messages that promote acceptance of diverse body shapes and challenge traditional beauty ideals. This content aims to foster inclusivity by highlighting self-acceptance and appreciation of body diversity. Exposure to body-positive narratives can expand women's understanding of ideal body weight and lessen the impact of unrealistic beauty standards (Stein et al., 2024). Despite these positive aspects, body-positive content still exists within a broader digital landscape dominated by idealized beauty images. Female undergraduates may encounter conflicting messages about beauty and body image on social media platforms.

Overall, social media beauty and lifestyle content represents a powerful digital phenomenon that shapes perceptions of appearance, identity, and lifestyle aspirations among young women. The ongoing circulation of beauty narratives on social media contributes to normalizing specific beauty ideals and lifestyle practices (Mwangi & Buvár, 2024). These narratives often prompt audiences to evaluate themselves based on visually appealing standards presented online. Beauty culture on social media has thus become a central factor in shaping current views of

attractiveness and femininity (Mwangi & Buvár, 2024). For female undergraduates, regular engagement with this content may affect how they perceive their physical appearance and personal value. Therefore, examining social media beauty and lifestyle content is crucial for understanding its impact on self-perception among female undergraduates in universities in Enugu Metropolis.

2.1.2 Social Media Exposure among Female Undergraduates

Social media exposure refers to how much individuals encounter, interact with, and consume content on social networking platforms over time. Pink et al. (2022) define social media exposure as how often and how long individuals engage with digital content on platforms like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and Twitter. This exposure includes browsing posts, watching videos, reading comments, and engaging with content through likes or shares. The level of exposure differs based on how much time users spend online and the types of content they engage with. Social media platforms have become essential communication tools for young adults, especially university students. Regular interaction with social media content can affect emotional responses and views related to body image and lifestyle ideals (Pink et al., 2022).

Social media exposure among female undergraduates is often connected with extensive interaction with digital platforms. Oyinbo et al. (2024) describe social media exposure as continuous interaction with platforms that provide access to various forms of information, entertainment, and social communication. Female college students often use social media to follow fashion trends, beauty influencers, and updates from peers and celebrities. This constant engagement leads to repeated encounters with appearance-focused content. Long-term social media use among female college students is linked to higher levels of stress and emotional pressure related to self-presentation (Oyinbo et al., 2024). These pressures may stem from comparisons with idealized images commonly found on social media.

Social media exposure also affects how female undergraduates view and evaluate beauty standards online. Precious et al. (2025) define social media exposure as interaction with online content that shapes individuals' views on appearance, lifestyle, and social identity. Female

undergraduates often use social media to explore fashion trends, makeup tutorials, and lifestyle inspirations. This engagement increases their exposure to appearance-related content in their daily lives. Social media exposure significantly shapes how female students perceive their body image and attractiveness (Precious et al., 2025). Ongoing exposure to curated beauty images can prompt comparisons between personal appearance and digital standards.

The widespread availability of digital technology has increased social media exposure among university students. Dumford et al. (2023) explain that college students increasingly depend on social media for communication, sharing information, and entertainment. The integration of mobile devices into daily life enables students to access social media at any time and from anywhere. As a result, exposure to online content has become a regular part of students' daily experiences. The frequent use of social media among college students creates many opportunities for digital content to impact their attitudes and views (Dumford et al., 2023). Female students often engage more with visually oriented platforms that highlight beauty and lifestyle content.

Social media exposure can shape behavioral attitudes and social views among university students. Onyechi and Chukwuani (2022) define social media exposure as the process through which individuals encounter digital messages that may influence their beliefs, attitudes, and intentions. Continuous interaction with online content lets users internalize messages presented in digital settings. Exposure to social media messages can affect how undergraduates view social behaviors and lifestyle choices (Onyechi & Chukwuani, 2022). For female students, exposure to beauty-related content can shape their views on attractiveness and femininity. Therefore, the digital space becomes a powerful area where appearance norms are reinforced.

Social media exposure plays a role in shaping emotional well-being and psychological outcomes among young users. Pop et al. (2022) define social media exposure as repeated engagement with digital platforms that can affect users' self-esteem, emotional states, and relationships. Female students are particularly sensitive to the psychological effects of appearance-focused social media content. Comparisons with idealized images on social media can harm body esteem and self-confidence among young women (Pop et al., 2022). The visual nature of social media increases the impact of appearance-related comparisons. Such comparisons may lead individuals to judge their own bodies against unrealistic beauty standards.

Another important aspect of social media exposure among female undergraduates is peer influence within digital spaces. Nwaoboli et al. (2022) define social media exposure as participation in online environments where users interact with peers, influencers, and broader digital communities. These interactions often shape the type of content users see on their social media feeds. Peer engagement can reinforce certain lifestyle choices, beauty practices, or social behaviors that become normalized in online communities. Social media platforms often shape behavioral attitudes among students through peer interactions and shared digital experiences (Nwaoboli et al., 2022). As a result, female undergraduates may encounter beauty and lifestyle content from both influencers and peers.

Social media exposure also provides access to various digital narratives related to body image and personal appearance. Mironica et al. (2024) define social media exposure as interaction with digital environments that present multiple views of beauty, attractiveness, and physical appearance. Female university students often see a mix of idealized beauty standards and cosmetic enhancement stories on social media. Social media exposure can influence decisions

about cosmetic treatments and body modification among young women (Mironica et al., 2024). This exposure can raise awareness about aesthetic procedures and appearance-enhancing practices. These influences underscore the significant role of social media in shaping views on beauty and attractiveness.

Overall, social media exposure among female undergraduates is a significant factor in how young women see themselves and their bodies. The constant presence of social media in students' lives increases the chances that digital content will shape their emotional and psychological experiences (Pink et al., 2022). Frequent engagement with visually oriented platforms exposes users to curated images of beauty, lifestyle, and personal success. Exposure to this content can affect body dissatisfaction and self-evaluation among university students (Pink et al., 2022). Consequently, female undergraduates experience social media as a strong source of social comparison and identity formation. This study examines how such exposure may influence self-perception among female undergraduates in universities in Enugu Metropolis.

2.1.3 Self-Perception among Female Undergraduates

Self-perception refers to how people evaluate and interpret their personal traits, abilities, appearance, and social identity. Rana et al. (2024) describe self-perception as the personal awareness and assessment individuals have of their physical condition, behavior, and overall well-being. For female university students, this often includes views about health, appearance, and self-competence. Self-perception develops through ongoing interaction with social environments and personal experiences. Palenzuela-Luis et al. (2022) note that self-perception is

closely linked to self-concept and reflects how individuals understand their own traits in social situations. Female students frequently evaluate themselves against social expectations and peer standards. This internal assessment is a key part of identity formation during university years.

Self-perception among female undergraduates also involves how they view their physical appearance and body traits. Rojo-Ramos et al. (2023) refer to body self-perception as the way individuals understand their body shape, size, and general appearance. Cultural norms, personal experiences, and environmental interactions commonly influence this perception. Female students often compare their appearance to societal beauty standards. Kapoor and Upadhyay (2022) point out that how female students view their body image is closely linked to self-esteem and eating habits. These perceptions can impact confidence and emotional health. Thus, self-perception plays a crucial role in shaping how female undergraduates see their physical identities.

Self-perception also involves assessing personal abilities, skills, and emotional strengths. Herrera-Granda and Yepes (2023) note that self-perception among university students includes how they view their social, emotional, and interpersonal skills. Students frequently evaluate their communication skills, confidence, and ability to interact effectively in academic settings. Such evaluations affect their academic involvement and social relationships. Deng and Yi (2025) highlight that students' self-perception may not always reflect their actual skills or performance. Sometimes, perceived abilities differ from real abilities due to psychological and social factors. This discrepancy underscores the subjective nature of self-perception among female undergraduates.

Physical activities and lifestyle choices also affect self-perception among university students. Yang et al. (2024) explain that engaging in physical activities and developing routines can change how students view their physical skills and attractiveness. Participating in these activities can boost confidence and body satisfaction. Female students who engage in physical activities often report more positive views of their bodies. Tsartsapakis and Zafeiroudi (2025) stress that physical self-perception connects to self-esteem and feelings about body attractiveness. Those who see themselves positively often enjoy better psychological well-being. This connection shows how lifestyle choices influence self-perception.

Self-perception among female undergraduates can also be shaped by academic and technological settings. Cachero et al. (2025) state that perceptions of personal competence often affect how students assess their knowledge and abilities in school contexts. Students sometimes develop skewed views of their abilities based on their confidence levels and social expectations. These views can impact their participation in academic activities and professional growth. Tahir et al. (2023) suggest that self-perception is closely linked to academic confidence and personal motivation among female students. Those who believe in their competence typically show greater academic involvement. This connection emphasizes self-perception's role in academic and personal growth.

Self-perception is also tied to emotional and psychological experiences in young adults. Kapoor and Upadhyay (2022) explain that how someone views their body image can influence emotional responses like confidence, anxiety, or dissatisfaction. Female students who perceive their appearance negatively may have lower self-esteem. Such feelings can affect their relationships and social involvement. Rojo-Ramos et al. (2023) note that the link between body mass index

and body perception often impacts how students view their attractiveness. These perceptions can shape attitudes towards personal appearance and lifestyle. Understanding this dynamic is important for examining how self-perception develops among female undergraduates.

Social environments at universities also impact self-perception development. Herrera-Granda and Yepes (2023) explain that interactions with peers, instructors, and social networks shape how students interpret their abilities and identities. University settings expose students to varied opinions and expectations about success and personal achievement. These interactions help shape personal identity and self-assessment. Deng and Yi (2025) indicate that motivation and social feedback significantly influence how students view their competence. Female undergraduates may adjust their self-perceptions based on social experiences and academic feedback. This shows the interactive process of self-perception development.

Cultural and societal factors also influence how female students see themselves. Palenzuela-Luis et al. (2022) state that self-perception often reflects social expectations related to gender roles and personal identity. Cultural views of beauty, success, and behavior affect how individuals evaluate themselves. Female undergraduates may internalize societal expectations about attractiveness and personal presentation. Rana et al. (2024) emphasize that self-perception often arises from personal interpretations of social feedback and environmental factors. Such interpretations can either boost confidence or lead to feelings of inadequacy. These cultural influences thus shape the formation of self-perception.

The university years mark a time when self-perception continues to change. Yang et al. (2024) explain that young adults refine their identities through experiences related to studies, social interactions, and lifestyle choices. Female undergraduates often reassess their personal values

and abilities during this period. This process includes continuous reflection on physical appearance, emotional strengths, and social identity. Tsartsapakis and Zafeiroudi (2025) highlight that positive self-perception fosters emotional stability and personal growth. Individuals with healthy self-perceptions tend to show greater confidence and resilience. This developmental process underscores the importance of self-perception during university years.

Overall, self-perception among female undergraduates is a complex concept that includes evaluations of physical appearance, personal competence, emotional health, and social identity. Rojo-Ramos et al. (2023) explain that body perception and self-assessment significantly affect psychological experiences in university students. Female students often evaluate their worth based on both internal and external feedback. Kapoor and Upadhyay (2022) indicate that body image and self-esteem perceptions play a crucial role in shaping young women's identities. These perceptions can influence behavior, confidence, and emotional health. Therefore, understanding self-perception is vital for examining how social media beauty and lifestyle content may affect female undergraduates in universities in Enugu Metropolis.

2.1.4 Influence of Beauty and Lifestyle Content on Self-Image and Body Image

Digital media beauty and lifestyle content has become a key factor in the formation of individual self-image and body image perceptions. According to Ramos Hernandez et al. (2025), engagement with appearance-related media content tends to guide individuals' appraisals of physical attractiveness and identity relating to lifestyle choices. These media narratives commonly showcase aesthetic or beauty-oriented portrayals that the target audience would seek to mimic. The prevalence of lean physique-related ideals or appealing lifestyle elements can create certain standards for physical appearance, and it is posited that individuals continually

exposed to these themes compare their own attractiveness to others' appearances and to elements that define the self (Xie, 2024). This process can lead to changes in the evaluation of personal body image, thus contributing to the development of young women's self-image due to the effect of beauty and lifestyle-related content.

Self-image can be described as the mental self-representation that individuals have of their physical appearance and personal identity (Jain et al., 2023). Negative self-image can be brought about by the comparison between an individual's own appearance and the beauty ideals propagated by online media sources. Digital beauty-related platforms frequently emphasize flawless complexions, slender body shapes and chic lifestyles, thereby leading to dissatisfaction with one's appearance. The presentation of a certain lifestyle and attractive features in Digital Lifestyle Narratives may contribute to influencing individuals' attitudes toward body image and attractiveness (Singh and Sidana, 2024). Consequently, the female students in question may feel inclined to conform to such representations in an effort to portray a satisfactory self-image. These outcomes serve to illustrate the effect of digital beauty content on the self-image of young women.

Body image can be impacted by the numerous images depicting the ideal physical shape and lifestyle promoted in Digital Beauty Content. As noted by Tennfjord et al. (2025), social media presents a steady stream of depictions of 'perfect' bodies and lifestyles, with social media users often internalizing these beauty and lifestyle norms, which could impact an individual's body satisfaction. In essence, representations of ideal beauty as promulgated on Digital Media and associated with psychological well-being through impacting on individuals' evaluation of their selves will result in dissatisfaction if an individual's physical appearance does not correspond to those norms, and thereby influence their self perception in relation to that representation (Tufail

et al., 2024). Thus, beauty content can influence an individual's perceptions of their body image. Beauty and lifestyle content can have a profound impact on individuals' consumer habits and lifestyles. Ramos Hernandez et al. (2025) suggest that consumers' purchase decisions on beauty products and lifestyle items are often related to an effort to consolidate their self-image and conform to what are considered ideal physical appearances. Moreover, the increased exposure to appearance-related content can stimulate an urge among consumers to modify their consumption behaviors or personal upkeep patterns so as to align with socially desirable body ideals. As described by Zaharia (2025), beauty standards portrayed through digital platforms establish body image perceptions that may drive adjustments in behaviors related to one's physical presentation. Digital beauty and lifestyle content can also be considered an important contributor to individuals' mental health, impacting the processes of self-evaluation. Sekar et al. (2026) explain how Digital Beauty Narratives foster idealised standards of attractiveness, potentially undermining self-esteem, and creating adverse psychological states. In situations where a perceived gap emerges between how an individual looks and the prevalent notions of idealised attractiveness, sentiments of worthlessness may take hold and undermine their self-confidence and acceptance of themselves. It has also been found that individuals may compare their body image and personal identity as a result of engaging with representations of beauty, particularly in social media contexts (Xie, 2024). Hence, it could be predicted that female undergraduate student individuals' mental health may be altered by engaging with this content.

Digital Lifestyle Narratives, found within social media contexts, may also impact lifestyle ideals and the sense of personal identity. Singh and Sidana (2024) highlight that such narratives often intertwine aspects of beauty, health, and fashion, potentially inspiring individuals to adopt certain consumption and lifestyle choices to align with standards of perceived desirability. Furthermore,

these narratives may also influence how individuals perceive themselves, including their social standing and identity, by providing archetypes to which they can aspire, thereby altering young women's lifestyle choices.

Another crucial influence of digital beauty narratives on body image stems from their embedding of cultural ideals. Zaharia (2025) discusses how digitally produced images often reinforce cultural ideals that dictate certain body shapes and qualities, often with an emphasis on visual perfection, even if such ideals vary across cultures. Those who are constantly exposed to such visual content in online environments, where imagery is continually shared, may adopt these culturally prescribed beauty norms as a basis for evaluating their own appearance (Tennfjord et al., 2025).

Beauty and Lifestyle Content also impacts the behaviors in relation to personal care and health that can shape individuals' body images. Ramos Hernandez et al. (2025) emphasize that, the images of idealized bodies in the Digital Media could influence dietary habits, exercise routines, or grooming practices; leading to behaviors that attempt to mold individuals to what is presented as an ideal beauty standard, and the potential effects of these altered behaviors may influence individuals' self images (Tufail et al., 2024).

In sum, the beauty and lifestyle content present on digital media platforms exerts a substantial influence on the self-image and body image of young women. Singh and Sidana (2024) posit that digital beauty-related narratives contribute to altering the perception of attractiveness and lifestyle aspirations among consumers, who may compare their appearance and life choices to perceived standards of beauty through continuous interaction with these portrayals. Sekar et al. (2026) also conclude that such comparisons may affect one's sense of psychological well-being

and personal identity. Accordingly, the female undergraduates studied are likely to experience changes in how they view their own appearance as a result of exposure to this content.

2.2 Review of Empirical Studies

Various empirical studies have been done on how the nature of social media content may affect young adults, specifically female students, and their body image, beauty standards and self-perception. From this, several insights may be obtained as to how exposure to digital beauty narratives could mould perceptions of appearance and personal identity among university students and young adults.

Ogunlade, et al. (2015) conducted a study titled *“Assessment of Undergraduates’ Addiction to Social Media Sites: A Case Study of Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria”*. The aim of the research was to assess the level of undergraduates’ addiction to social media sites. The study adopted a quantitative survey research design and was conducted in Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria. Data were gathered from the female and male students, using structured questionnaires given to the students. The findings from this research indicated that the majority of undergraduates had access to social media sites, while female undergraduates were more addicted to social media sites usage than males. The similarity between this study and the present study is that both sought to determine the level of exposure of undergraduates to social media. The difference is that Ogunlade et al. explored the addiction level of both male and female undergraduates to social media, while this study focused on the exposure of female undergraduates to social media.

Precious, et al. (2025) conducted a study called *"Social Media Exposure and Perceived Body Image among Female Undergraduates of Select Universities in Kwara State, Nigeria"*. The aim of the study was to assess the extent of which social media exposure influences the body image perception of female undergraduates. The study utilized a descriptive survey research design and the study was carried out in selected universities within Kwara State, Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of female undergraduates enrolled in the selected universities. Data were collected by means of structured questionnaires given to the students and analyzed to achieve the objectives of the study. The findings revealed that increased and constant exposure to beauty content on social media affected the evaluation of body image and personal attractiveness among female students. There is a similarity in both studies as they seek to examine the influence of social media beauty content on female undergraduates. The difference being that Precious et al. focused on universities in Kwara State, whilst this present study explored those within Enugu Metropolis.

Ogunseyi, et al. (2024) carried out a study titled *"Social Media Use and Its Impacts on Body Image Perception among Female Students in Southwest Nigeria Universities"*. The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between social media use and body image perception among female students. The study adopted a quantitative survey research design and was conducted in universities located in Southwest Nigeria. The population consisted of female undergraduate students from selected institutions. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to the participants. The findings indicated that exposure to idealized beauty images on social media platforms significantly influenced female students' body image perceptions and self-evaluation of attractiveness. The similarity between this study and the present study lies in the focus on social media influence on body image among female students. However, the

difference is that Ogunseyi et al. examined universities in Southwest Nigeria, whereas the present study concentrates on universities in Enugu Metropolis.

Aroso, et al. (2025) conducted a study titled *“Social Media Use, Self-Esteem, Body Image and Psychological Well-Being of Female Undergraduates in Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti”*. The purpose of the study was to examine how social media usage relates to self-esteem, body image, and psychological well-being among female undergraduates. The study adopted a survey research design and was conducted at Ekiti State University in Nigeria. The population consisted of female undergraduate students enrolled in the university. Data were collected using structured questionnaires administered to the respondents. The findings revealed that exposure to social media beauty standards influenced female students’ self-perception and psychological well-being. The similarity between this study and the present study lies in the investigation of social media influence on self-perception and body image among female undergraduates. However, the difference is that Aroso et al. examined broader psychological well-being variables, while the present study specifically investigates self-perception among female undergraduates.

Ugwuanyi, et al. (2023) carried out a study titled *“Body Image Dissatisfaction among Female Undergraduates of Faculty of Social Sciences in Enugu State University of Science and Technology”*. The purpose of the study was to examine the prevalence of body image dissatisfaction among female undergraduate students. The study adopted a survey research design and was conducted at Enugu State University of Science and Technology in Enugu State, Nigeria. The population consisted of female undergraduates within the Faculty of Social Sciences. Data were collected using questionnaires administered to the respondents. The findings

indicated that exposure to modern beauty ideals through social media and digital platforms contributed to feelings of dissatisfaction with body image among female students. The similarity between this study and the present study lies in the focus on body image perceptions among female students within Enugu State. However, the difference is that Ugwuanyi et al. focused on body image dissatisfaction, whereas the present study focuses on overall self-perception among female undergraduates.

Hafeez and Zulfiqar (2023) conducted a study titled *“How False Social Media Beauty Standards Lead to Body Dysmorphia”*. The purpose of the study was to investigate how unrealistic beauty standards promoted on social media influence body image perceptions among women. The study adopted a quantitative survey research design and was conducted among young female social media users. The population consisted of women who actively use social media platforms. Data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to the participants. The findings revealed that unrealistic beauty portrayals on social media contribute to body dissatisfaction and distorted self-perception among young women. The similarity between this study and the present study lies in the focus on the influence of social media beauty standards on self-perception. However, the difference is that Hafeez and Zulfiqar examined women generally, while the present study focuses specifically on female undergraduates.

Feijoo and Vizcaíno-Verdú (2024) carried out a study titled *“To Be Fit, or Not to Be: How Influencer-Driven Advertising Reinforces Idealized Beauty Standards in Adolescents”*. The purpose of the study was to examine the role of influencer advertising in shaping body image perceptions among adolescents. The study adopted a mixed-method research design and was conducted among adolescent social media users. The population consisted of young social media

followers who frequently interact with influencer content. Data were collected using surveys and content analysis methods. The findings revealed that influencer-driven advertising significantly reinforces idealized beauty standards and shapes the body image perceptions of young audiences. The similarity between the study and the present study lies in the examination of influencer content and beauty standards. However, the difference is that Feijoo and Vizcaíno-Verdú focused on adolescents, whereas the present study examines female university students.

Liang (2023) conducted a study titled “*The Construction of Beauty Ideals on Social Media: A Frame Analysis of Chinese Influencers on Red*”. The purpose of the study was to analyze how influencers construct beauty ideals through social media content. The study adopted a qualitative content analysis method and examined influencer posts on the Red social media platform in China. The population consisted of influencer content and digital posts shared online. Data were collected through analysis of selected influencer posts and digital narratives. The findings revealed that influencers deliberately construct beauty ideals through curated visual content and lifestyle narratives. The similarity between this study and the present study lies in the examination of beauty ideals promoted through social media platforms. However, the difference is that Liang analyzed influencer content through content analysis, whereas the present study examines students’ perceptions of such content.

Preda (2025) conducted a study titled “*The Role of Social Media in Structuring Beauty Standards*”. The purpose of the study was to examine how social media platforms shape societal beauty standards. The study adopted a qualitative research approach and analyzed social media narratives related to physical attractiveness and body image. The population consisted of digital media content and online beauty discussions. Data were collected through document analysis and

review of online media content. The findings revealed that social media platforms contribute significantly to the construction and dissemination of beauty standards among young people. The similarity between the study and the present study lies in the focus on social media's role in shaping beauty standards. However, the difference is that Preda examined general social media discourse, while the present study focuses specifically on female undergraduates.

Xie (2024) conducted a study titled *“The Influence of Social Media on Perception of Body Image and Beauty Standards on Young People”*. The purpose of the study was to examine how social media exposure influences young people's perceptions of body image and beauty standards. The study adopted a survey research design and was conducted among young social media users. The population consisted of youths who actively engaged with digital media platforms. Data were collected using questionnaires administered to the respondents. The findings revealed that exposure to social media beauty images encourages comparison with idealized bodies and influences perceptions of attractiveness. The similarity between the study and the present study lies in the focus on social media influence on body image perception. However, the difference is that Xie examined young people generally, while the present study focuses specifically on female undergraduates.

Mironica, et al. (2024) conducted a study titled *“Social Media Influence on Body Image and Cosmetic Surgery Considerations: A Systematic Review”*. The purpose of the study was to examine how social media influences body image perceptions and decisions regarding cosmetic procedures. The study adopted a systematic review research design and analyzed previous empirical works on social media and body image. The population consisted of research articles related to social media and body image perceptions. Data were collected through systematic

analysis of existing literature. The findings revealed that exposure to influencer and celebrity content on social media significantly shapes body image perceptions and may influence cosmetic surgery considerations among young people. The similarity between the study and the present study lies in the focus on social media influence on body image. However, the difference is that Mironica et al. conducted a systematic review, while the present study uses a survey approach among female undergraduates.

Ekinci, et al. (2025) conducted a study titled “*The Dark Side of Social Media Influencers: A Research Agenda for Analysing Deceptive Practices and Regulatory Challenges*”. The purpose of the study was to examine the negative consequences associated with influencer marketing on social media. The study adopted a conceptual and analytical research design and reviewed existing literature on influencer practices. The population consisted of studies related to social media influencer activities. Data were collected through literature analysis and theoretical evaluation. The findings indicated that influencer marketing often promotes unrealistic beauty standards and idealized lifestyles that can negatively influence audience perceptions of self-image. The similarity between the study and the present study lies in the focus on influencer-driven beauty standards on social media. However, the difference is that Ekinci et al. focused on the regulatory and ethical dimensions of influencer marketing, while the present study investigates its influence on self-perception among female undergraduates.

Unlike many of the previous studies that examined social media influence on body image among general youth populations, the present study specifically focuses on female undergraduates in universities in Enugu Metropolis. Additionally, while several earlier studies concentrated primarily on body image dissatisfaction or influencer marketing, the present study examines the

broader concept of self-perception in relation to social media beauty and lifestyle content. This focus provides a more context-specific understanding of how social media exposure influences female undergraduates within Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on a psychological theory that explains how media exposure and social interaction influence individuals' perceptions and attitudes. This theory provides a conceptual basis for understanding how social media beauty and lifestyle content may shape the self-perception and body image of female undergraduates. The theory adopted for this study is the **Social Comparison Theory**.

2.3.1 Social Comparison Theory

Social Comparison Theory explains the means in which people evaluate their abilities, qualities and attributes by comparing themselves with others, and was first put forth by Leon Festinger in 1954. Festinger asserted that everyone had a need to evaluate personal characteristics and opinions, and if objective standards were not available, people would seek social standards of comparison (Wheeler, 2024). Social comparison theory focuses on how people's evaluation of their abilities, attitudes, and appearance is based on the comparative assessments that people make of themselves with others (Wheeler, 2024).

The Social Comparison Theory holds that individuals engage in social comparison for a number of reasons. In the context of this study, female undergraduates are engaged in social comparison to decrease the level of uncertainty they feel about their own characteristics and position in social hierarchy. This comparative act will help females to gauge their own attributes and compare it

against others and see whether they live up to expectations (Crusius et al., 2022). “A social comparison often takes place for the purposes of evaluation, specifically to know one’s opinion, ability or physical characteristics” (Powdthavee, 2024). Therefore, a female student uses the information from social comparisons as a gauge for measuring her worth.

One central tenet of Social Comparison Theory is that individuals will seek out those whom they view as having characteristics that are equivalent or relevant. That is, a female undergraduate will seek out a friend for social comparison, rather than, say, a highly successful and respected business tycoon. For instance, compare personal qualities against those who appear similar in nature, thus resulting in a relative judgement of self in social comparisons. People generally make these comparisons with those who share similar interests and social context to evaluate how “normal” they are (Wheeler, 2024). Thus, social comparison is important because it becomes an instrument of how one is perceived and measured by the other.

Another important factor of the theory is the assumption of two kinds of social comparisons, upward and downward comparison. “Upward social comparison occurs when one’s skills or attributes are contrasted with someone who is considered superior whereas downward social comparison refers to one’s comparison with someone considered lower than oneself” (Tong and Shakibaei, 2025). In most upward comparisons the comparison individual generally compares well, leading to some sort of motivation, however some comparison groups lead to self-deprecation, “this may well lead to lower happiness levels as you evaluate against those with much greater skills” (Tesser, 2024). The comparison of someone with less skills, abilities or wealth usually results in feelings of relief and well-being, hence, they feel more confident. Inward comparison, such as that which occurs as women compare their body shape with other women in the study, often enhances confidence because a person usually feels that they are in a

better position relative to other comparison targets. For example, a woman may feel her body shape is ‘better’ than others they encounter and thus it is likely to boost their confidence or sense of self. Comparison results in better self-appraisal and increased positive social sentiment.

The emotional effects of the comparative process are significant under the social comparison theory. In many cases comparisons result in emotions such as envy, admiration, pride or dissatisfaction according to how one’s character or position relates to the position of those of others. A person constantly comparing himself/herself to some more “successful” person with a seemingly perfect life, is more likely to fall victim to feelings of dissatisfaction and self loathing (Tesser, 2024). “The process of comparing yourself to other individuals leads to emotional reactions (satisfaction, dissatisfaction, admiration, envy)” (Powdthavee, 2024).

With increasing accessibility of social media over the past decade, social comparison is often carried out using content encountered online. On a daily basis, people expose themselves to information through online media. The ability to present carefully chosen and well curated images of their appearance and lifestyle on the web leads many to compare their life to those of their online contacts (Kumar and Kumar, 2025). Digital platforms create an environment for self-comparison and a constant source of information about appearance, lifestyle and achievement relative to peers, acquaintances and even strangers (Kumar and Kumar, 2025).

The relevance of the Social Comparison theory in the context of this study lies in its explanation on how female undergraduates may evaluate their physical attributes in relation to what they see online and thus how their physical attractiveness and their self-worth may be impacted. Social media and other online platforms often portray female influencers or beauty content creators presenting idealised images of bodies and lifestyles that many young women will likely attempt to emulate, either directly or indirectly. This will prompt female undergraduates to make

comparisons between their own attributes and those of other individuals, which could result in changes to their perception of themselves and their bodies. The Social Comparison Theory is therefore suitable for evaluating how female undergraduates in universities in Enugu Metropolis perceive themselves relative to beauty and lifestyle standards influenced by social media content.

2.4 Summary of Review of Related Literature

The review of related literature examined key concepts relevant to the study, including social media beauty and lifestyle content, social media exposure among female undergraduates, self-perception, the influence of beauty and lifestyle content on body image, and the role of social media influencers in shaping beauty standards. Literature reviewed shows that social media platforms have become major channels through which beauty ideals and lifestyle narratives are communicated to young people, particularly female university students. Continuous exposure to curated images, influencer content, and idealized portrayals of beauty often encourages comparison and may influence how female undergraduates perceive their physical appearance, lifestyle, and personal identity. Scholars also note that the increasing popularity of influencer culture and digital lifestyle branding has intensified the promotion of particular beauty standards that may shape users' attitudes toward body image and self-worth.

The theoretical framework for the study was anchored on the Social Comparison Theory. Social Comparison Theory explains how individuals evaluate themselves by comparing their appearance, lifestyle, and achievements with those presented by others on social media.

Gaps in Literature

Empirical studies reviewed generally revealed that exposure to social media beauty and lifestyle content significantly influences body image perception, self-esteem, and self-evaluation among female students and young women. However, most of the previous studies focused on general youth populations or students in other regions. Therefore, the present study seeks to fill this gap by specifically examining the influence of social media beauty and lifestyle content on self-perception among female undergraduates in Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted the survey research design. This research design was chosen because it enables the researcher to evaluate the influence of social media beauty and lifestyle content on the self-perception of female undergraduates in Enugu Metropolis, by collecting quantitative data, through instruments such as questionnaires.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of this study was drawn from two selected tertiary institutions in Enugu Metropolis; University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus (UNEC) and Godfrey Okoye University (GOUNI). Information gathered from the Admissions Unit of these two institutions, shows that the population of the female undergraduates in the University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus as of the 2024/2025 academic session is 7024 , while that of Godfrey Okoye University is 1492 .

Therefore, the population of the study is 8516.

UNIVERSITY	POPULATION
Godfrey Okoye University	1492
University of Nigeria Enugu Campus	7024
Total	8516

3.3 Sample Size

A sample is a fraction or subset of the entire population from which information about the full population may be derived. The researcher used the Australian Calculator, with a confidence interval of 95% to determine the sample size for the study.

Determine Sample Size

Confidence Level:

95%▼

[i](#)

Population Size:

8516

[i](#)

Proportion:

0.5

[i](#)

☒ Confidence Interval:

0.05

[i](#)

Upper

0.55000

Lower

0.45000

☐ Standard Error

0.02551

[i](#)

☐ Relative Standard Error

5.10

[i](#)

☐ Sample Size:

368

[i](#)

Calculate

Clear

3.4 Sampling Techniques

Multi stage sampling technique was employed in this study to select the tertiary institutions in Enugu Metropolis and determine the method of questionnaire distribution.

Stage 1: The researcher employed a purposive sampling technique to select two universities in Enugu Metropolis.

UNIVERSITIES
Godfrey Okoye University
University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus

Stage 2: Using the systematic sampling, the researcher first listed out the faculties and departments from each institution.

FACULTIES AND DEPARTMENTS IN GOUNI

- **Faculty of Management and Social Sciences** - Accounting, Banking and Finance, Marketing, Public Administration, Economics, Business Management, Political Science, International Relations, Psychology, Sociology, Mass Communication.
- **Faculty of Law**- Law
- **Faculty of Allied Health Sciences** - Nursing
- **Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences** - Applied Biology, Biotechnology, Microbiology, Chemistry, Biochemistry, Industrial Chemistry, Physics, Architecture, Industrial Design.
- **College of Medicine** - Medicine and Surgery
- **Faculty of Arts** - History and International Studies, Music, English and Literary Studies, Philosophy and Religious Studies.
- **Faculty of Education** - Biology Education, Chemistry Education, Mathematics Education, Physics Education, English and Literary Studies Education, History and International Studies Education, Economics Education, Political Science and Government Education, Social Studies Education, Business Education, Computer Science Education.
- **Faculty of Computing and Information Technology** - Computer Science, Data Science, Software Engineering, Cybersecurity.

FACULTIES AND DEPARTMENTS IN UNEC

- **Business Administration** - Accountancy, Banking and Finance, Management, Marketing
- **Dentistry** - Dentistry

- **Law - Law**
- **Medical Sciences - Medicine**
- **Health Sciences and Technology - Medical Laboratory Sciences, Medical Radiography and Radiological Sciences.**
- **Environmental Studies - Architecture, Estate Management, Geoinformatics and Surveying, Urban and Regional Planning.**

The researcher then selected a faculty by skipping four faculties each from both institutions.

UNIVERSITY	FACULTY
Godfrey Okoye University	Management and Social Sciences
	Arts
University of Nigeria Enugu Campus	Business Administration
	Environmental Studies

Stage 3: The researcher further picked two departments from each of the universities' faculties, using the simple random sampling technique.

UNIVERSITY	FACULTY	DEPARTMENT
Godfrey Okoye University	Management and Social Sciences	Mass Communication
		Psychology
	Arts	English and Literary Studies
		History and International Studies
University of Nigeria Enugu Campus	Business Administration	Accountancy

		Management
	Environmental Studies	Estate Management
		Architecture

Stage 4: The researcher calculated the number of questionnaires to be distributed to each of the universities using proportional sampling.

$$\text{GOUNI} = 1492 / 8516 \times 368 = 64$$

$$\text{UNEC} = 7024 / 8516 \times 368 = 304$$

3.5 Description of Research Instrument

The instrument used for this study was a structured questionnaire. The purpose of this instrument was to obtain the views and opinions of the respondents on the required topics. The instrument was divided into two sections; Section A comprising the demographic data of the respondents and Section B comprising the psychographic data of the respondents.

3.6 Validity of the Instrument

In this study, the face validity was adopted. The questionnaire was subjected to face validity by two experts in the field of Mass Communication to ensure relevance, clarity and appropriateness. All corrections and suggestions given by them were carefully incorporated before the final version of the questionnaire was produced and subjected to the reliability test.

3.7 Reliability of the Instrument

To determine the reliability of the questionnaire, the researcher conducted a pilot study among 20 female undergraduates in Enugu Metropolis. These respondents were not included in the main study, and they were selected because of their similarities with the main respondents.

The Cronbach's alpha was found acceptable at a value of 0.72

$$a = \frac{k}{k-1} \left[1 - \frac{\sum s^2 y}{s^2 x} \right]$$

k = number of items

Summation $s^2 y$ = sum of the item variance

$s^2 x$ = variance of the total score

a = Cronbach's alpha

3.8 Method of Data Collection

The data used in the study were collected from primary sources with the use of questionnaire.

While administering the copies of questionnaire, the researcher physically gave the instrument to the respondents and collected them as soon as the respondents were done filling them. A research assistant was also engaged to help with distribution and collection of questionnaire. Although the process was time consuming, this method allowed for easy retrieval of the instrument, while giving respondents the opportunity to ask questions and get immediate response from the researcher.

3.9 Method of Data Analysis

In carrying out this research work, the methods of data analysis employed by the researcher were the Mean analysis and Percentage analysis. The mean analysis was used to address the psychographic aspect of the study, while the demographic data was analysed using the percentage analysis. The tables included well-structured columns and rows to prevent confusion about the data presented. The criterion mean score for this study is 2.5; it showed the extent to which respondents accept or reject the variables. Mean score of 2.5 and above is accepted, while a mean score of less than 2.5 is rejected.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

The data presentation and analysis was done using the quantitative method, where information from the respondents was obtained through the questionnaire. Out of 368 copies of the questionnaire shared, the researcher retrieved and used 348 for this study. 7 copies were incompletely filled and found invalid, while 13 were not returned.

The responses gotten from the questionnaire were analysed in this section; the items in the questionnaire were formulated to address the four research questions in the study. In this study, 368 copies of questionnaire were distributed to the various respondents. The questionnaire was close-ended and divided into two segments; Sections A and B.

Section A was made up of an item that focused on the demographic data of the respondents, while section B answered questions on the psychographic data.

Tables and simple percentages were used to illustrate the data gathered for section one. In section two, the research questions were stated and explained, followed by the presentation and analysis of relevant data gathered in the form of tables, mean scores, and percentages. The number of questionnaire distributed and recovered for this study was shown in the first table.

4.1.1 Analysis of Demographic Data

The analysed data in the table below comprises the age bracket of the respondents. This was achieved by using item 1 of the questionnaire.

Table 4.1: Age bracket of Respondents

Option	Frequency	Percentage %
15 - 19	109	31.3%
20 - 24	201	57.7%
25 - 29	38	11%
30 and above	0	0%
Total	348	100%

The data presented shows that the majority of the respondents' age bracket was between 20-24 years old.

4.1.2 Analysis of Psychographic data

This section focused on analysing the psychographic data which centered on the level of exposure of female undergraduates in Enugu Metropolis towards social media beauty and lifestyle content, the influence such exposure has had on their perceptions of beauty and lifestyle, the extent to which beauty and lifestyle content has influenced their self-perception and self-esteem, and the extent to which such content affect their beauty and lifestyle practices.

The questionnaire was formulated using a four point likert scale. The options are; **SA - Strongly Agree, A - Agree, D -Disagree, SD - Strongly Disagree** . The data were also analysed using simple tables, percentages and mean analysis.

Criterion mean: 2.5

Decision Rule: *If the calculated mean is equal or greater than the criterion mean (2.5), then the decision is accepted, but if the calculated mean is lower than the criterion mean (2.5), the decision is rejected.*

Research Question One: To what extent are female undergraduates exposed to beauty and lifestyle content on social media?

To answer this research question, items number 4-7 of the questionnaire were used.

Table 4.2: Summary of Research Question One

Option	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision
I spend a significant amount of time watching beauty and lifestyle content.	98	137	71	42	348	2.8	Accepted
Beauty and lifestyle posts frequently appear on my social media feed.	108	151	55	34	348	3.0	Accepted
I deliberately follow beauty and lifestyle influencers on social media.	87	128	84	49	348	2.7	Accepted
I often like, comment on, and share beauty and lifestyle posts	77	142	75	54	348	2.7	Accepted
Total						2.8	Accepted

Results from the table above show that at an average mean of 2.8, female undergraduates in enugu metropolis are exposed to beauty and lifestyle content on social media

Research Question Two: To what extent does exposure to beauty and lifestyle content on social media affect beauty and lifestyle perceptions of undergraduates?

To answer this research question, items number 8-11 of the questionnaire were used.

Table 4.3: Summary of Research Question Two

Option	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision
Beauty contents influence my idea of physical attractiveness.	82	145	86	35	348	2.8	Accepted
Lifestyle content affects my perception of what a good lifestyle should look like.	103	129	78	38	348	2.9	Accepted
Beauty influencers shape my opinions about fashion and beauty standards.	78	162	72	36	348	2.8	Accepted
Social media promotes unrealistic beauty and lifestyle expectations.	106	129	72	41	348	2.9	Accepted
Total						2.8	Accepted

The aforementioned table's analysis shows that female undergraduates' exposure to beauty and lifestyle content on social media has affected their perceptions of beauty and lifestyle, with an average mean of 2.8

Research Question Three: To what extent do beauty and lifestyle content influence the self-perception and self-esteem of female undergraduates?

To answer this research question, items number 12-17 of the questionnaire were used.

Table 4.4: Summary of Research Question Three

Option	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision
Beauty and lifestyle content affect how I feel about myself.	72	128	99	49	348	2.6	Accepted
I compare my looks and lifestyle with people I see online.	78	114	105	51	348	2.6	Accepted
I sometimes feel pressured to look a certain way because of the beauty content on social media.	49	86	129	84	348	2.3	Rejected
Watching beauty-related content can reduce my confidence.	87	143	62	56	348	2.8	Accepted
Beauty contents motivate me to improve my appearance.	72	116	108	52	348	2.6	Accepted
I feel more confident when I follow beauty trends online.	66	143	88	51	348	2.6	Accepted
Total						2.6	Accepted

Results from the table above show that at an average mean of 2.6, beauty and lifestyle content influence the self-perception and self-esteem of female undergraduates.

Research Question Four: To what extent do beauty and lifestyle content affect the beauty and lifestyle practices of female undergraduates?

To answer this research question, items number 18-23 of the questionnaire were used.

Option	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision
Social media influences the beauty products I purchase and use.	64	136	97	51	348	2.6	Accepted
I have adopted skincare and make-up routines from influencers online.	62	138	103	45	348	2.6	Accepted
Beauty and lifestyle content affect my way of dressing.	70	89	134	55	348	2.5	Accepted
I spend a significant amount of money trying to keep up with beauty and lifestyle trends on social media.	53	139	98	58	348	2.5	Accepted
Social media has changed some of my daily lifestyle habits.	60	141	97	50	348	2.6	Accepted
I have not developed some harmful habits (e.g; skin bleaching, eating disorders, body dysmorphia, etc) due to exposure to beauty and lifestyle content.	60	58	116	114	348	2.1	Rejected
Total						2.5	Accepted

Results from the above table show that at an average mean of 2.5, beauty and lifestyle content affect the beauty and lifestyle practices of female undergraduates.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

This section discussed the findings of the study in relation to the four research questions raised.

Research Question One: To what extent are female undergraduates exposed to beauty and lifestyle content on social media?

From the analysis of data generated under the research question one, it was discovered that female undergraduates spend a significant amount of time watching beauty and lifestyle content on social media, beauty and lifestyle posts frequently appear on their social media feeds, they intentionally follow beauty and lifestyle influencers and they often engage with beauty and lifestyle posts through likes, comments and shares. The researcher holds the view that those who spend more time engaging with beauty and lifestyle content on social media, are more likely to have their self-perception influenced.

This result aligns with the findings of Ogunlade, et al. (2015), who revealed that the majority of the undergraduates had access to social media sites and female undergraduates were more addicted to social media sites usage than males.

Research Question Two: To what extent does exposure to beauty and lifestyle content on social media affect beauty and lifestyle perceptions among female undergraduates?

From the analysis of data generated under research question two, it was discovered that beauty content influences female undergraduates' ideas of physical attractiveness, lifestyle content affects their perception of what a good lifestyle should look like and beauty influencers shape their opinions on fashion and beauty standards.

The study conducted by Xie (2024) is in agreement with the result. The findings of the study revealed that exposure to beauty images encourages comparison with idealized bodies and influences perceptions of attractiveness. Preda (2025) conducted a study which revealed that

social media platforms contribute significantly to the construction and dissemination of beauty standards among young people. Hafeez and Zulfiqar (2023) discovered that unrealistic beauty portrayals on social media contribute to body dissatisfaction and distorted self-evaluation among women. Ogunseyi et al. (2024) also found out that exposure to idealised beauty images on social media platforms significantly influenced the body image perceptions and self-evaluation of attractiveness among female students.

Research Question Three: To what extent do beauty and lifestyle content influence the self-perception and self-esteem of female undergraduates?

Findings under this research question three showed that beauty and lifestyle content affect how female undergraduates feel about themselves, they compare their looks with people they see online, however, female undergraduates do not always feel pressured to look a certain way due to such content on social media. It was also discovered that watching beauty-related content can reduce their confidence and motivate them to improve their appearance. They also feel more confident when they follow beauty trends online.

The result agreed with a study conducted by Aroso et al. (2025), which revealed that exposure to social media beauty standards influenced female undergraduates' self-esteem and psychological well-being. Hafeez and Zulfiqar (2023) disclosed that unrealistic beauty portrayals on social media contribute to body dissatisfaction and distorted self-esteem among women. Xie (2024) also revealed that exposure to social media beauty images encourages comparison with idealised bodies and influences perceptions of attractiveness.

Research Question Four: To what extent do beauty and lifestyle content affect the beauty and lifestyle practices of female undergraduates?

From the analysis of data generated under this research question four, it was discovered that social media influences the beauty products female undergraduates purchase and use, they have adopted skincare and make-up routines from influencers, and beauty and lifestyle content affect their way of dressing. Female undergraduates also spend a significant amount of money trying to keep up with beauty and lifestyle trends, social media has changed some of their daily lifestyle habits and they have developed some harmful habits due to exposure to beauty and lifestyle content.

The study conducted by Mironica et al. (2024) is consistent with the above result. It disclosed that exposure to influencer and celebrity content on social media significantly shapes body image perceptions and may influence cosmetic surgery considerations among young people. Hafeez and Zulfiqar (2023) found out that unrealistic beauty portrayals on social media contribute to body dysmorphia or dissatisfaction and distorted self-esteem among women. Ugwuanyi et al. (2023) also showed a positive correlation in their study, which revealed that exposure to modern beauty ideals through social media and digital platforms contributed to feelings of dissatisfaction with body image among female students.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

The research was conducted to determine the influence of Social media beauty and lifestyle content on the self-perception of female undergraduates in Enugu Metropolis. The study was driven by four distinct objective and research questions. A decision was reached based on the average responses of the participants. The analysis of the collected data shows the following findings;

1. Female undergraduates are highly exposed to beauty and lifestyle content on social media, as most agreed to frequent viewing and engagement with such content.
2. Exposure to beauty and lifestyle content affects female undergraduates' idea of physical attractiveness and their perception of a good lifestyle. They agreed that social media can promote unrealistic beauty and lifestyle standards.
3. Beauty and lifestyle content affect how female undergraduates feel about themselves, causing them to compare their looks with people online, although they do not always feel pressured to look a certain way. They also agreed that watching beauty content can reduce their confidence, but they feel more confident when they follow the trends online.
4. Exposure of female undergraduates to beauty and lifestyle content has influenced the products they purchase and use, the beauty routines they follow, their way of dressing, and some lifestyle habits . They also agreed to having developed some harmful habits due to such content.

5.2 Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it has been discovered that female undergraduates in Enugu Metropolis are highly exposed to beauty and lifestyle content on social media platforms, and they regularly engage with them. The study also showed that exposure to these contents significantly shapes the perceptions of beauty and lifestyle standards among female undergraduates.

In addition, findings revealed that beauty and lifestyle content influence the self-perception and self-esteem of female undergraduates, as a high number of respondents tend to compare themselves with online influencers and content creators. The study also disclosed that beauty and lifestyle content affect the beauty and lifestyle practices of female undergraduates, having an effect on their beauty routines, fashion choices and lifestyle habits.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher proposed the following recommendations:

1. Female undergraduates should be encouraged to reduce excessive exposure to beauty and lifestyle content that may negatively affect their self-perception and self-esteem.
2. Tertiary institutions should organise seminars, workshops and campaigns on media literacy in order to educate female undergraduates on media literacy and how to critically evaluate social media content.
3. Young people, especially female undergraduates, should be trained to develop positive self-esteem, to avoid a negative impact of media content on their self-perception and self-esteem.
4. Producers and marketers of beauty products should step up using social media contents to reach female target audience, because it is proved to be effective.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies

The researcher suggests that further studies be conducted on the following:

1. Long-term psychological effects of exposure to beauty and lifestyle content among young adults.
2. Influence of selected social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube and Tiktok, to determine which one has the highest influence on self-perception among undergraduates.
3. Influence of social media beauty and lifestyle content in other regions of Nigeria to compare the findings with those obtained from Enugu Metropolis.

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