The influence of social media portrayal on the self-presentation of women in the digital era

La influencia de la representación de las redes sociales en la autopresentación de las mujeres en la era digital

Don Antonio Velez
The College of Arts and Sciences, Xavier University - Ateneo de Cagayan, Philippines
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0089-5954
dvelez@xu.edu.ph

Louisse Gertrude Adis Pastrano
The College of Arts and Sciences, Xavier University - Ateneo de Cagayan, Philippines
https://orcid.org/0009-0000-5005-5964
yanna.pastrano@gmail.com

Abstract

Social media serves as a powerful force in shaping societal norms and values, often presenting idealized and unrealistic images of womanhood. This study explores how social media influences women's gender roles and identities, particularly its impact on their aspirations and self-esteem, while also providing opportunities for self-expression and empowerment. Using a phenomenological approach, the research involved focus group discussions with young women aged 18–25 living in Cagayan de Oro City, Mindanao, Philippines. The findings reveal that women respond differently to social media content based on their values, beliefs, and backgrounds. The results highlight social media's dual impact: it can both reinforce traditional gender norms and serve as a tool for self-empowerment. This complexity demonstrates the need to recognize individual differences in social media engagement and their effects on shaping gender identities. By exploring these diverse interactions, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the multifaceted relationship between social media and gender role formation.

Keywords: Social media, Gender Roles, Influence, Conformity, Gender Identity, Individuality, Self-Identity, Empowerment.

Resumen

Las redes sociales sirven como una fuerza poderosa para dar forma a las normas y valores sociales, y a menudo presentan imágenes idealizadas y poco realistas de la feminidad. Este estudio explora cómo las redes sociales influyen en los roles e identidades de género de las mujeres, particularmente su impacto en sus aspiraciones y autoestima, al mismo tiempo que brindan oportunidades para la autoexpresión y el empoderamiento. Utilizando un enfoque fenomenológico, la investigación involucró discusiones de grupos focales con mujeres jóvenes de entre 18 y 25 años que viven en la ciudad de Cagayán de Oro, Mindanao, Filipinas. Los hallazgos revelan que las mujeres responden de manera diferente al contenido de las redes sociales según sus valores, creencias y antecedentes. Los resultados resaltan el doble impacto de las redes sociales: pueden reforzar las normas de género tradicionales y servir como una herramienta para el autoempoderamiento. Esta complejidad demuestra la necesidad de reconocer las diferencias individuales en la participación en las redes sociales y sus efectos en la configuración de las identidades de género. Al explorar estas diversas interacciones, el estudio contribuye a una comprensión más profunda de la relación multifacética entre las redes sociales y la formación de roles de género.

Keywords: Redes Sociales, Roles de género, Influencia, Conformidad, Identidad de género, Individualidad, Autoidentidad, Empoderamiento.

Introducción

The influence of social media has garnered considerable attention in contemporary research, as scholars have delved into its impact on self-concepts and gender perceptions, given its significant role and influence within society (Rodgers & Rousseau, 2022). Social media can shape public opinions and values, particularly with its convergence across various platforms and technological advancements. In the modern era, the media has transcended its conventional role as a mere information provider and has gained the ability to mold perceptions and "create reality." Consequently, the media wields immense power in influencing ideologies, thought processes, and socialization methods. However, within this intricate relationship between gender and social media, a prevalent issue arises concerning the misrepresentation and stereotyping of women. The portrayal of women in media often subjects them to negative stereo-

types, wherein their worth is contingent upon their perceived (sexual) attractiveness to men or their portrayal as submissive individuals (Arias, 2018). Such misrepresentations not only perpetuate gender biases but also marginalize women within society. Moreover, women are portrayed as passive and emotional, while men, on the other hand, are assertive and rational (Askanius & Hartley, 2019). Current literature highlights the stereotypical nature of gender representations in media and emphasized their substantial role in shaping attitudes toward gender and gender relations. The purpose of this study is to explore social media's impact on women's self-perception and behavior. Social media platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, are pervasive in today's society, influencing various aspects of daily life. This study aims to understand how these platforms affect women's views of themselves and their subsequent beha-

vior: acting manner and behaving, speaking manner, and dressing and grooming.

The portrayal of gender in media holds profound implications for individuals' perceptions of gender roles and identities. The reinforcement of existing gender stereotypes through media representation perpetuates societal biases and shapes the broader cultural understanding of gender. Therefore, exploring the multifaceted relationship between gender and media becomes crucial in fostering a more inclusive and equitable society (Askanius & Hartley, 2019; Santoniccolo et al., 2023). Women's representation in social media has garnered attention, influencing how women perceive themselves and their societal role (Rodgers & Rousseau, 2022). The portrayal of women in social media is often criticized for perpetuating gender stereotypes and limiting women's roles to traditional, domestic spheres (Arias, 2018). For instance, Lindner & Barnard (2020) found that women are portrayed in advertisements as homemakers or sexual objects, and women are narrated as passive and submissive, and their worth is often tied to their physical appearance. This representation can lead to a negative self-image and limit women's aspirations and opportunities. Moreover, studies have shown that media exposure can influence women's self-esteem, body image, and perceptions of their gender roles. In a study by Spassky et al., 2019, researchers found that exposure to thin, attractive female models in advertisements increased body dissatisfaction among college-aged women. Furthermore, social media has been found to perpetuate traditional gender roles and stereotypes.

Some studies have explored the impact of media literacy programs on women's perceptions of gender roles in the media. A media literacy program promoting critical thinking about media representations of gender roles improved self-esteem and a more positive body image among adolescent girls (Rodgers & Rousseau, 2022). These studies suggest that social media plays a significant role in shaping women's gender roles and identities. The research highlights the need for greater awareness and critical thinking about

media representations of women and the potential benefits of media literacy programs to promote positive gender role models in the media. As discussed, the media can also provide positive role models for women, showcasing strong, independent women who challenge traditional gender roles and expectations (Askanius & Hartley, 2019). These representations can inspire women to challenge societal norms and expectations and give them a positive self-image. There is a need for media literacy programs that promote critical thinking about gender representation in media (Aladi & Okoro, 2021).

For example, the impact of Instagram usage on young women's body esteem explicitly focuses on the mediating role of beauty perception. Increased Instagram usage was associated with lower body esteem among young women, and their perception of beauty mediated this relationship (Mahmood & Malik, 2022). Studies like these highlight the potential adverse effects of Instagram on body esteem and emphasize the role of beauty perception as a mediating factor. However, exposure to body-positive posts on Instagram led to more positive body image outcomes in women (Nelson, Harriger, Miller-Perrin, & Rouse, 2022). This study suggests that social media platforms are a tool to promote body positivity and challenge traditional beauty standards. As for Ando, Giorgianni, Danthinne, and Rodgers (2021), beauty ideals portrayed on social media significantly impacted young women's body image and self-esteem. It provides valuable cultural insights into the influence of social media on women's body image and highlights the importance of considering cultural contexts. Hogue and Mills (2019) examined the effects of active social media engagement with peers on body image in young women. This study suggests that how social media social media platforms and their content can impact womens' body image and well-being.

Additionally, Huber and Baena (2023) focused on women scientists on TikTok and explored how this platform provides new opportunities for visibility and challenges to gender stereotypes. Their study highlights the potential of social media platfor-

ms like TikTok to empower women in traditionally male-dominated fields and contribute to shifting gender roles and stereotypes. In addition to that, their study contributes to our understanding of the factors influencing social media usage, which can indirectly influence how women perceive themselves and their societal roles. Mills, Musto, Williams, and Tiggemann (2018) investigated the effects of selfies on mood and body image in young women. In other words, it interprets the potential negative consequences of its impact on women's well-being. Overall, these studies provide a comprehensive picture of the influence of social media on women's gender roles and identity. They highlight the potential adverse effects of social media on body image and self-esteem and the positive role that social media platforms can play in promoting body positivity, challenging stereotypes, and providing visibility to underrepresented groups. The studies collectively emphasize the need to critically identify and describe social media's influence and develop strategies to mitigate potential negative impacts on women's well-being and identity formation.

The functionalist perspective proponed by Giddens on his concept of agency as discussed by Karp in 1986 help better understand the influence of social media on women's gender roles and identities in Giddens' Structuration Theory. This theory emphasizes the interconnectedness of social structures and individual agency. Rawal in 2022 discusses that young people's use of social media shapes these platforms and is, in turn, shaped by them. The article highlights how social media reflects structuration theory through its role in creating and maintaining social relationships, offering opportunities for self-presentation, enforcing existing social norms, and allowing young people to challenge these norms. This analysis provides valuable insights into the dynamic interplay between established structures and individual agencies in the digital age. Moreover, Hans-Georg Gadamer would argue how media play a significant role in shaping our behaviors and understanding of the world. According to Gadamer (2013), media is not merely a tool for communication but rather a fundamental aspect of our being. Mediated communication using language shapes our perception of reality, influencing our thoughts, actions, and values. The words we use, the stories we tell, and the media we consume all contribute to our understanding of the world. Social media can thereby be considered mediated language and creates a particular way of seeing the world, limiting a person's perspectives and shaping interpretations. Social media, as a form of language and communication, plays a crucial role in shaping our behaviors. The messages conveyed through social media, whether through news, entertainment, or advertising, influence our beliefs, values, and desires and can reinforce existing stereotypes, promote certain ideologies, and even manipulate our perceptions of reality.

Literature and theory urge one to see that society is a well-structured system with interconnected parts. These theoretical focus on shared norms and values aligns with the goal of this study to illustrate how social media content shapes women's gender perceptions and behaviors. Knowing how women are represented in media and the influence that this representation has on women's self-image and aspirations enables them to work towards creating more positive and inclusive representations of women in media. Hence, it can lead to a more positive and empowering environment for women and contribute to greater gender equality. Likewise, the Performative Theory has been widely influential in helping to shift understanding of gender from a fixed category to a fluid and dynamic performance. Performativity challenges traditional notions of gender as a fixed, biological category. Instead, she argues that gender is a socially constructed performance that is constantly being enacted and reproduced through our everyday actions and interactions (Butler, 2020). This performative understanding of gender has significant implications for understanding how social media creates an opportunity for women to reflexively negotiate themselves with language and other symbolic systems that shape our understanding of reality and normative expectations. Women can subvert and challenge these norms through their own performances (Butler, 2020).

Furthermore, McRobbie (2015) argues that the enforcement of "perfect femininity" in neoliberal times is a strategy to enforce existing power structures. This ideal of perfection, often characterized by physical attractiveness, domesticity, and self-sufficiency, is promoted through various cultural channels, including media, advertising, and education (McRobbie, 2015). Social media has played a significant role in both reinforcing and challenging the ideal of perfect femininity. On the one hand, social media platforms can amplify and normalize unrealistic beauty standards, leading to feelings of inadequacy and self-objectification among women (McRobbie, 2015; Maftei & Merlici, 2023). The constant pressure to maintain a "perfect" appearance can be particularly intense on social media, where users are constantly comparing themselves to others (Lane, 2023; Maftei & Merlici, 2023). On the other hand, social media has also provided a platform for feminist activism and the dissemination of alternative beauty ideals. Women can use social media to challenge traditional beauty standards, celebrate body diversity, and create supportive communities (McRobbie, 2015). Additionally, social media has made it easier for individuals to connect with like-minded people and share their experiences of body image struggles and discrimination (McRobbie, 2015; Lane, 2023). Lane (2023) further emphasizes the strategic nature of women's engagement with social media. Women may consciously navigate gendered discourses on social media, using platforms to challenge traditional norms or to reinforce them. This strategic femininity can be a form of resistance or a way to navigate the complexities of gendered expectations.

The functionalist approach to understanding the influence of social media on women's gender roles and identities draws parallels to the key concepts that say (1) social media is a Modern Social Institution wherein functionalism theory views institutions like family, education, and religious, as essential components of society that serve specific functions. This includes analyzing the roles played by different social media platforms (e.g., TikTok, Instagram, Facebook) and how they contribute to maintaining or changing women's gender roles and identities; (2) Norms and Values on social media, which emphasizes the importance of shared norms and values in maintaining social cohesion. It identifies how the norms and values propagated through social media influence women's gender roles and identities. This involves analyzing the content, messages, and narratives present on these platforms and how they align with or challenge societal norms and values related to gender. (3) Deviance and Change on Social Media, the theory acknowledges that deviance, or violating established norms, can lead to social change. It explores instances of deviance on social media and how they impact women's gender roles and identities. (4) Social Integration and Belonging shows that the theory emphasizes social integration, which refers to individuals' connections to society. It assesses how social media plays a role in integrating women into society and providing them with a sense of belonging.

Hence, functionalism emphasizes how norms, values, deviance, and social integration communicated through social media may shape women's gender roles and identities. It provides a framework for understanding the role of social media within the broader context of society and social stability.

Methodology

The phenomenological research design of this study aims to capture the lived experiences and subjective meanings attributed to gender roles and identity in the context of social media use. Phenomenology and functionalism, though seemingly disparate, can complement each other effectively in qualitative research. Phenomenology provides a deep dive into individual experiences, while functionalism offers a broader societal context. By combining these perspectives, this study was able to gain a more nuanced understanding of the exploration of both micro-level subjective meanings and macro-level social structures, leading to a more comprehensive and holistic analysis.

Data collection consists of narratives obtained through Three (3) Focus Group Discussions (FGD) involving a total of fourteen (14) undergraduate and graduate female university students aged 18 to 25 from Cagayan de Oro City, Mindanao, Philippines. Convenience sampling was used to recruit participants due to their accessibility in the research setting. Coding was employed to identify recurring themes in social media portrayals and women's perceptions. Data was analyzed using thematic coding techniques to identify patterns in social media portrayals and women's perceptions. Themes were derived from codes such as conformity to perceived norms and alignment with personal beliefs, reflecting the influence of social media algorithms on identity formation. These codes align with theoretical frameworks like normative and informational influences, indicating how behaviors and beliefs are shaped by social contexts (Arias, 2018; Hogue & Mills, 2019). The themes were established based on the frequency and significance of these elements, ensuring a significant understanding of the informants' experiences.

The study protocol was vetted against a rigorous review process of making sure that universal ethical guidelines for the conduct of research involving human participants. Care was given in the conceptualization and approved by the academic department's ethics reviewer before it was submitted for ethics review at the institutional level. The study adheres to strict ethical guidelines for protecting participants' identity and anonymity. Informed consent forms have been developed to provide participants with the research project's details, potential risks, and confidentiality measures. Participants are informed of their right to withdraw consent at any time. The project complies with legal limitations concerning confidentiality. Measures to address potential risks are outlined, including debriefing and participant support. The study was conducted over three months, from June to August 2023. Data collected is stored in a password-protected computer, accessible only to the researchers. Data will later be destroyed or discarded 3 years after the study.

Findings of the study

Social media have become influential tools that shape behaviors, language choices, and fashion preferences, among other things. Therefore, the study's findings emphasize the pervasive impact of stereotypical portrayals, societal norms, and idealized body images prevalent in online spaces. These findings underscore a nuanced relationship wherein social media acts as both an empowering tool, enabling self-expression and confidence-building, and a vehicle that perpetuates traditional gender roles and unrealistic beauty standards. Understanding the depth of this influence is crucial in comprehending its significance in shaping societal perceptions and reinforcing or challenging gender norms. The findings of the study that which will be presented here will provide a discourse on social media and its influences on women's (1) manner of acting and behaving, (2) manner of speaking, and (3) manner of dressing and grooming. All of these factors produce the phenomenon by which we observe women's self-presentation in the digital era.

Manner of Acting and Behaving.

In this context, some women tend to follow what they see on social media. They may say something like, "The content I see in my social media feed is customized for me, so it affects how I act and behave" Informant 3 (Focus Group 3, June 2023). In 2022, Ren et al. discussed a widely held notion that social media and advertisements often use stereotypes to shape a specific image of women that aligns with societal expectations and supports traditional gender roles. When the media consistently uses these stereotypes, it can make it challenging for women to break away from traditional roles and can reinforce the idea that men should be in charge. This might result in women having fewer opportunities and less freedom, which can make achieving gender equality more difficult. As a result, some women tend to compare themselves to the portrayals of women in social media, which can influence their behavior and self-perception.

Manner of Speaking.

In this context, some people tend to adjust the way they talk based on what they see on social media. Many of them are influenced by the latest slang and trends on social platforms. Some of what they encounter on social media can have a positive impact; likewise, as relatable quotes that encourage them to be better. However, not everyone is influenced in the same way; some view social media as pure entertainment without much influence on them. Women informant's responses vary. A common answer is, "I have gained a bit of knowledge on [social] media when I speak the English language or Tagalog; you can learn from social media..." Informant 2 (Focus Group 1, July 2023). Ren et al. (2023) point out that women now have a platform to express their thoughts and desires, which has contributed to a certain level of gender equality. However, the influence of traditional ideas and societal norms formed in the context of a patriarchal society is still strong on social media. As a result, there's a lack of a distinct "female consciousness" in the media despite the progress made toward gender equality. This suggests that while women have more opportunities to voice their opinions, deeply rooted gender norms still shape the content and tone of discussions on social media.

Manner of Dressing and Grooming.

In this context, most people's responses are connected to how social media influences their fashion choices and grooming, aligning them with their interests and current trends. It's not just about how they dress; what they see on social media also boosts their confidence. Social media often portrays women of various body types as beautiful, encouraging women to be confident in their skin, regardless of their clothing choices and style. Women commonly say things like, "It helped me discover my style that fits for me. Although, I'm still discovering what fits me, it helped me with my OOTD/s (outfit of the day/s) and all other things that make me feel confident" Informant 1 (Focus Group 2, July 2023). This idea is supported by Zhang (2021), who suggests that women from various cultures often strive to attain the culturally prescribed notion of an attractive body and often struggle with low self-confidence about their bodies. This implies that many women feel pressured to conform to specific body images dictated by their societies and cultures.

On one hand, the ideal female body and social image portrayed on social media act as a significant model for women. To attain this perceived "beauty" as defined by societal standards, some women disregard their health and may even resort to risky methods like plastic surgery and eating disorders, which can have serious detrimental effects on their well-being (Ren et al., 2022). This highlights how social media can play a dual role - empowering women to embrace their bodies and style while, at the same time, subjecting them to unrealistic beauty standards that can lead to harmful behaviors.

Women's Self-presentation in the Digital Era.

In group discussions, most women regarded social media as a platform with both advantages and disadvantages. They could relate to both social media's positive and negative effects on their lives. Some of the women mentioned: "It is like a double edge sword... I shouldn't be so tactless so that is negative because sometimes it just automatically places in your head" and "We don't figure out everything at once like we need much influence, we need help, and for me social media is helpful in terms of how I build myself" Informant 1 (Focus Group 3, June 2023), "I think the influence would be is it has its positive and negatives sides" Informant 3 (Focus Group 2, July 2023).

Women informants of the study perceive social media as having both benefits and drawbacks. It's like a tool that can work for or against them, depending on how they use it. The potential implication here is that women are aware of the mixed effects of social media, which could lead to a more balanced approach to its influence on their understanding of gender roles. They may become more discerning in how they engage with social media content, weighing the positive and negative aspects to make informed choices. This awa-

reness might contribute to a more nuanced and empowered perspective on gender roles.

A significant majority of these women acknowledged the influence of social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook, so it becomes evident that the findings align with the alternative hypothesis. For them, social media represents a multifaceted realm that enables self-discovery and growth. Whether exploring fashion trends, aspiring to the idealized portrayal of an "independent and powerful" woman, or adopting self-improvement habits, these women primarily utilize social media as a catalyst for personal enhancement. Essentially, their engagement with social media drives them to aim for elevated standards of future independence and empowerment. The portrayal of women on social media substantially shapes the interviewed women's behavior, speech patterns, and grooming choices. Concerning behavior and demeanor, there's a prevalent inclination to conform to the expectations set by social media. This entails navigating a delicate balance between projecting grace and empowerment, with a constant need for adjustment to align with evolving trends. Regarding language usage, most participants not only adopt the communication styles seen on social media but also incorporate contemporary slang terms to remain relevant and connected to current trends.

Additionally, many utilize social media as an educational resource, seeking insights into life-smart strategies and self-improvement techniques. In fashion and grooming, social media empowers them to explore and refine their styles, including aspects like skincare. These choices are guided by the confidence they gain from emulating the standards set by empowered, confident, and independent women portrayed on social media. Overall, the findings from this focus group discussion recognize that women have complex and nuanced views about how social media affects their understanding of gender roles. It is clear from their responses that social media can have both positive and negative influences, depending on how it is used and the content that individuals engage with.

Discussions

Social media has always had a significant role in people's lives. One area where social media has had a growing impact is how it portrays female beauty, making it a definitive tool that results in outcomes that may not necessarily be controlled but can be considered constrained by normative standards. The findings of this study emphasize the existence of what we call "normative expectations," which communicate what society expects people to conform to, such as a certain idea of beauty (Arias, 2018). This issue has been a concern for a long time, and the media's influence on it is getting stronger. A functionalist perspective that can help explain the phenomenon can be drawn from the study done by Ward and Grower in 2020, which asserts that individuals interact with social media as a tool and think about its content; it influences their beliefs, ideas, and what they consider normal. These beliefs, in turn, shape their behavior in the future (Ward & Grower, 2020). In simple terms, social media functions as a powerful and impactful tool by which women perceive beauty, often promoting unrealistic standards. This influence of media can be understood in the context of the social cognitive theory, which suggests that what we see and think in media affects how we view the world and ourselves, shaping our future actions (Ward & Grower, 2020). The implication is that social media has a significant role and responsibility in shaping societal beauty ideals.

In the context of women in this study, a central point can be drawn from the phenomenon of normative influence, where individuals often adjust their actions and behaviors to align with societal norms, driven by an urge for acceptance and approval (Arias, 2018). This manifests in the comparison individuals draw between their own identities and the idealized portrayals of women on social media platforms. When social media presents an idealized version of what a beautiful woman should look like (Garcia, 2019), this portrayal can make young women feel unhappy with their appearance, as observed in a study by Krones et al. in 2005. As women encounter these hyper-idealized images, they may perceive

them as the prevailing societal norms and, consequently, indicate a preconception to conform (Arias, 2018). This kind of conformity isn't merely a superficial adoption of appearances; it extends to the alignment of personal beliefs with the ideals projected on social media. Women may find that their intrinsic values, whether intentionally or subconsciously, converge with the narratives seen online (Arias, 2018). This alignment is a key factor that prolongs normative beliefs, where perceived social pressures and subjective norms derive not from immediate social circles but from the curated content of the digital realm. This underscores the profound influence of social media as a platform that doesn't just mirror existing norms but actively shapes and reinforces them. Being aware of this can help individuals and society make more informed and balanced choices about what is considered beautiful, potentially reducing the pressure on women to conform to unrealistic standards (Arias, 2018).

It is noteworthy that the data from this study suggest that women perceive social media as something that connects with their authentic selves, but their responses deviate from the norms and standards depicted on these platforms. Women informants in this study view social media only as a source of self-improvement inspiration and resist making it the sole arbiter of their identity. Instead, women in this study maintain a solid commitment to their personal beliefs and values, not allowing social media to entirely dictate who they should be as females, as would have been supported by the study done by Aladi & Okoro in 2021. This further confirms the context by which the Performative Theory can help understand how gender is a non-fixed but rather a fluid and dynamic performance. That is constantly being enacted and reproduced through our everyday actions and interactions (Butler, 2020). Findings also suggest how social media has also provided a possible platform for feminist activism and the dissemination of alternative beauty ideals. Women can use social media to challenge traditional beauty standards, celebrate body diversity, and create supportive communities (McRobbie, 2015). The context by which women become reflexive to

social media alludes to Lane's (2023) assertion of the strategic nature of women's engagement with social media. Thereby making social media a strategic tool by which femininity resists or navigates the complexities of gendered expectations.

However, the findings do not in any way discount the fact that social media remains a potent platform of influence for most women, irrespective of their gender identities. The key distinction lies in how they choose to respond to this influence. For some, social media serves as a benchmark for achieving societal expectations of womanhood (Arias, 2018), while others break away from these norms, seeking value consensus through individuality and self-determination (Aladi & Okoro, 2021). In essence, social media plays a pivotal role in shaping perceptions and behaviors, but the degree to which it influences individuals varies based on their unique identities and beliefs (Rodgers & Rousseau, 2022).

Conclusions

This study has provided valuable insights into the complex relationship between social media and women's perceptions and portrayals of their gender roles. The findings indicate that social media influences but does not entirely control how women understand and portray their gender roles. The portrayal of women on social media has a profound impact on various aspects of their lives, including behavior, speech patterns, grooming choices, and self-esteem. These influences can be both positive and negative, depending on how individuals engage with social media and the content they consume. The study has revealed that social media serves as a powerful platform for shaping societal norms and values, with many women negotiating their actions and beliefs to respond to the idealized images and narratives they encounter online. This form of conformity to perceived norms underscores the normative influence of social media and its role in reinforcing existing societal expectations of womanhood.

However, the research also highlights that not all women conform to these norms to the same extent. Some individuals exhibit more reflexivity to normative expectations and prioritize individuality and self-determination. This diversity of responses underscores the complexity of the relationship between social media and gender roles, as individual identity, beliefs, and values influence it. Furthermore, the study underscores the significance of social media as a source of information and guidance for women in shaping their self-identity and understanding of gender roles. It emphasizes the role of collective consciousness in the digital realm, where shared beliefs and ideas are fostered through online interactions and contribute to the evolution of societal constructs.

It is essential to critically examine and raise awareness of the influence of social media on gender roles. Additionally, strategies such as media literacy programs can be employed to empower individuals to navigate social media more critically and promote positive gender role models in the digital space. As social media continues to evolve, future research should include diverse populations and adapt to new trends, ensuring it remains a tool for positive change and gender equality.

Contribuciones de los autores

Don Antonio Velez: Conceptualization, Methodology, Validation, Formal Analysis, Writing the - Original Draft, Writing – Review and Editing, Visualization, Supervision, Project Administration

Louisse Gertrude Adis Pastrano: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Resources, Data Curation, Writing the - Original Draft

References

Aladi, J. A., & Okoro, N. (2021). Media Representation of Nigerian Women in the News: Evidence from Selected Newspapers. *Journal of Internaitonal Women, Volume 22* (Issue 5), 437–452. https://www.proquest.com/docview/2551252849/fulltextPDF/2859BEA120AD4DA3PQ/6

Ando, K., Giorgianni, F. E., Danthinne, E. S., & Rodgers, R. F. (2021). Beauty ideals, social media, and body positivity: A qualitative investigation of influences on body image among young women in Japan. *Body Image, 38*, 358-369. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2021.05.001

Arias, E. (2018). How Does Media Influence Social Norms? Experimental Evidence on the Role of Common Knowledge. *Political Science Research and Methods, 7*(3), 561–578. https://doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2018.1

Askanius, T., & Hartley, J. M. (2019). Framing Gender Justice. *Nordicom Review, 40*(2), 19–36. https://doi.org/10.2478/nor-2019-0022

Butler, J. (2020). Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay in phenomenology and feminist theory. In S. R. Ortner (Ed.), *Feminist theory reader* (pp. 353-361). Routledge.

Gadamer, H. G. (2013). *Truth and method*. A&C Black.

Garcia, J. (2019). *When Pretty Hurts: A Critical Look into the Roles and Stereotypes Young Women Experience across Social Media Sites and How the Pressure to Be Pretty Impacts Their Lives* [Doctoral Dissertation]. Saybrook University. https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/when-pretty-hurts-critical-look-into-roles/docview/2377663622/se-2

Hogue, J. V., & Mills, J. S. (2019). The effects of active social media engagement with peers on body image in young women. *Body Image, 28*, 1–5. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2018.11.002

Huber, B., & Baena, L. Q. (2023). Women Scientists on TikTok: New Opportunities to Become Visible and Challenge Gender Stereotypes. *Media and Communication, 11*(1), 240–251. https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v11i1.6070

Karp, I. (1986). Agency and Social Theory: A Review of Anthony Giddens [Review of New Rules of Sociological Method: A Positive Critique of Interpretative Sociologies; Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis; A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism. Vol. 1. Power, Property and the State]. *American Ethnologist, 13*(1), 131–137. http://www.jstor.org/stable/644591

Lane, L. (2023). Strategic femininity on Facebook: Women's experiences negotiating gendered discourses on social media. *Feminist Media Studies, 23*(5), 2440-2454. https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2022.2056754

Lindner, A. M., & Barnard, S. R. (2020). All media are social. *All Media Are Social*, 3–10. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315796055

Maftei, A., & Merlici, I. A. (2023). Am I thin enough? Social media use and the ideal body stereotype: The mediating role of perceived socio-cultural pressure and the moderating role of cognitive fusion. *Current Psychology, 42*(24), 21071-21084. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-022-02938-x

Mahmood, S., & Malik, F. (2022). Impact of instagram usage on young women's body esteem: Mediating role of Beauty Perception. *PJPR Vol. 37 No. 3 (2022), 37*(3), 351–364. https://doi.org/10.33824/pjpr.2022.37.3.21

McRobbie, A. (2015). Notes on the perfect, competitive femininity in neoliberal times. *Australian Feminist Studies, 30*(83), 3-20. https://doi.org/10.1080/08164649.2015.1011485

Mills, J. S., Musto, S., Williams, L., & Tiggemann, M. (2018) "Selfie" harm: Effects on mood and body image in young women. *Body Image, 27*, 86–92. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2018.08.007

Nelson, S. L., Harriger, J. A., Miller-Perrin, C., & Rouse, S. V. (2022). The effects of body-positive Instagram posts on body image in adult women. *Body Image, 42*, 338-346. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2022.07.013

Rawal, S. (2022). Use of Social Media Among Youth: The Reflection of Structuration Theory. *Patan Prospective Journal, 2*(2), 241–253. https://doi.org/10.3126/ppj.v2i2.53124

Ren, S., Wu, Y., & Zheng, Y. (2022). Exploring the Impact of Social Media on Female Self Image. In *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research* (pp. 213-218). Atlantis Press. https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220504.213

Rodgers, R. F., & Rousseau, A. (2022). Social media and body image: Modulating effects of social identities and user characteristics. *Body Image, 41*(1), 284–291. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2022.02.009

Santoniccolo, F., Trombetta, T., Paradiso, M. N., & Rollè, L. (2023). Gender and Media Representations: A Review of the Literature on Gender Stereotypes, Objectification and Sexualization. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 20*(10), 5770. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20105770

Spassky, E. N., Stremilova, O. V., & Stremilov, D. S. (2019). Mass Media Influence on the Population of the Khabarovsk Krai. *ProQuest, 272*(3). https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/272/3/032128

Ward, L. M., & Grower, P. (2020). Media and The Development of Gender Role Stereotypes. *Annual Review of Developmental Psychology, 2*(1), 177–199. https://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev-devpsych-051120-010630

Zhang, J. (2021). The Effects of Conformity on Women's Body Images Under Different Social Norms and Different Cultures. In *Proceedings of the 2021 4th International Conference on Humanities Education and Social Sciences* (ICHESS 2021) (pp. 238-241). Atlantis Press. https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.211220.039