Self-Identity and Social Media: Analytical Study of Content and its Influence on Ideal and Imperative Self Development

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This research examines the negative influence of social media content over the development of "Self" in young members of the society. The question is mired in analogous and cultural nuances and the constructs of Ideal and Imperative Self were chosen to be investigated further. The study posits that Ideal and Imperative Self in the youth are largely distorted due to negative influence of social media content. The study employed a survey method of research and inferential analysis. Stratified sampling technique was used, and 384 responses were collected from schools, colleges, and universities. An important finding was that Ideal Self was perceived to be having a lean body type which was seen as crucial to looking beautiful and glamourous. Respondents also considered their Imperative Self to be orthodox gender roles.

Keywords: Social Marketing, Social Media Influences, Social Media Content, Self -Perceptions.

1. Introduction

Social Marketing; its Impact and Definition

Social Marketing, often referred to as Societal Marketing, has long been considered the modern view of marketing in the contemporary world. By its very definition Social Marketing becomes the focus of companies and organizations wishing to interact with modern day consumers but it is too often thought of in its downstream applications as a tool to influence "bad behaviours- smoking, not recycling" which is a very narrow view of the implications of social marketing and revision in its definition are necessary to expand it beyond its private sector origins (Andreasen, 2002). Contemporary societies require new forms of social discourse that looks beyond the development, provision and design of policy, products, and services to better solve social problems by understanding what citizens and customers value, believe, feel, and need. (French & Gordon, 2019). Lee & Kotler (2015) define Societal Marketing as "delivering superior *value* to customers in a way that maintains or improves the consumers' and the societies' well-being". This view in the long run holds that mere satisfaction of existing customer needs and wants is insufficient and organizations must serve the social well-being of all associated entities. This essentially includes customers, potential customers as well as non-customers who form social makeup. This broader view of the customer bases is essential to the understanding of impact of societal marketing activities on entire social setups. Additionally, consumer is impacted by multiple forces to bring about required behavioural changes leading to

the greater good of the society. While social marketers are the active influencers to the consumers' behaviour, upstream factors including technological innovations, scientific discoveries, media, and midstream forces including family, friends, or social media, are also considered as predominant influencers on the markets. Certain vulnerable sectors of society like children, young adults, and disadvantaged consumers can be greatly affected if marketing organizations do not follow the societal marketing concepts. Sharon Beder (1998) in her paper also raises similar concern: *"*There are questions about the ability of children so young to understand advertising and its intent and not be deceived and manipulated by it*"*. Therefore, views, aspirations, priorities, and tendencies of societies at large are affected by the marketing functions and if these functions are not ethical or socially responsible, interests of certain vulnerable groups and societies in general can be compromised.

This study intends to make marketers aware of the potential risks in immersive marketing activity that engages customers specifically and society at large and influences their behaviour with special emphasis to vulnerable groups of society. It presents societal marketing as a more clarified method of impacting upon the target audiences or societies.

2. Social Media and its Impact on Societal Marketing

In this section, arguments will be presented to show how social media is the most proliferated media used by marketers to communicate to their target audiences and the resultant deleterious effects from this modern form of communication to consumer and societies.

Social Media in its various formats of community sites (Facebook), video platforms (YouTube) or discussion/opinion sharing platforms (Twitter) is used by nearly all the marketers for creating buzz, data mining, and customer profiling for targeting activities (Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi, 2012). Social Media usage has been linked to several health and psychological issues in the recent years (Thai, Davis & Mehboob et al., 2023). Increased usage of technology and information derived from social media is not only a major factor in consumer decision-making but is also impacting how these consumers draw influences from digital environments, where their digital experiences are part of their daily lives (Stephen, 2016). Innovative ways of communicating with publics are making rapid advancements in social media and the interaction patterns of communications that require no direct or reciprocated communication (Lee & Horsley, 2017)

Hence, many organizations, including non-profit organizations, as part of their strategic capacities now adopt and manage social media interactions with their external publics to build relationships through dialogic messages (Nah & Saxton, 2013). On this platform, consumers experience brands at both conative (evoking subjective, internal responses, feelings, and cognitions) and behavioural levels induced by brand's design and identity (Wang, Cao & Park, 2019). Because of the proliferation of digital media and its unique influence on societies, with special emphasis to the vulnerable groups, social marketing activities not only are presented through this platform but are increasingly gaining impetus due to societal issues created by the social media or digital experiences. The negative influence of social media on people and societies is especially apparent in the changes in social interactions as people spend more time connecting to digital experiences. The youngsters and teenagers also gather information from their digital consumption of social media, web, and

gaming communities. (Siddiqui & Singh, 2016). Social Media influencers also have sizable communities of followers and their influence over these followers extends to creating engagement, drive conversations, and/or sell products/services. At the fundamental level, the "peer" nature of these influencers not only assists greatly in product recommendations, but its intended goal involves much broader outcomes of influencing social debate (Kim & Kim, 2021).

Hence, social media as a tool for marketing activity is greatly immersive and its influence on the audiences is not just limited to brand level, but at a societal level, consumers, are influenced in their values, preferences, and ideologies. Over the past few years, marketing activity on social media has integrated Influencer Marketing (IM) into the frameworks for customer communications. More specifically, consumer attitudes and behaviours are impacted upon through the influential power underlying the appeal of social media influencers (SMIs) (Vrontis, Makrides & Christofi, 2021) and marketers use influencers as part of their strategy to achieve marketing objectives (Pradhan, Kishore & Gokhale, 2023). The main thrust of this study is to describe the effects of marketing activity on the cohort of young women and their self-image to establish how social media features enable marketers to develop highly immersive content for their communications and how this has a contrary impact on the audience as well as their value systems.

a. Role of Social Media Marketing in Guiding Social Thought

The shift in the loci of activity in marketing communications from traditional advertising to digital advertising has resulted in the revisitation of understanding of advertising in the broader orientation of digital presence. Marketers are recognising the potential of social media as an integral driver of communication that can create engaged communities through dialogic or two-way conversations (Shawky, Kubacki, & Dietrich et al. 2019). Under this new paradigm shift, advertising now plays the role of customer engagement by embracing technology and all the opportunities social media presents to new age marketers. To help the managers in this deeper and more impactful market interactions, advertising needs to develop technology-enabled creative consumer actions and creations (Berthon & Pitt, et.al. 2012). The passive approach of focusing on the utilisation of social media domain as source of customer voice and intelligence, should be paired with an active approach of engaging the social media as channels of customer influence (Constantinides, 2014). The most common influences of social media are from advertising activities and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). As a more interactive platform with large community sizes, social media has increased the impact and prevalence of WOM and with the same token, advertising and promotional activities are also showing an enhanced impact on customer's awareness and perception (Alalwan & Rana, et.al. 2017). To mobilise communications activities through the immersive social media while reducing its deleterious impact, societal marketing that is geared towards building stronger and well-balanced societies can be an effective tool.

b. Portrayals of Women in Social Media Marketing

Depictions of women in advertising have been long researched and criticised and abundant literature is available to understand how advertising has misrepresented the women and portrayed them in certain typecasts. The sheer weight of exposure to such depictions is enough to cause concern but when taken in the context of social

media, which is more influential and impactful due to its immersive nature, the negative depictions and their influence become even more formidable. There is evidence of time spent on social media by women especially when viewing women that have undergone cosmetic surgeries, affecting young women's desire for cosmetic procedures (Walker & Krumhuber, et.al. 2021). As more and more women shift from traditional media like television, print, and magazines to online media like social media, they become more vulnerable to the negative impacts of social media including but not limited to self-objectifying, internalising societal emphasis on outward appearance, and conforming to stereotypes (Perloff, 2014).

3. Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate how social media marketing creates negative Self-perception in youth and to also propose the utilisation of Societal Marketing as a way forward. Herewith, societal marketing is presented as a tool useful in limiting the negative effects of social media inherent in its immersive nature that renders audiences vulnerable to negative messages given by marketing activity either explicitly or implicitly.

In this study, a cohort of women between the ages 15-26 is used as a case in point to determine how social media marketing has affected their self-perceptions by establishing a correlation between social media content exposure and precepts of "Self". The study then aims to propose Societal Marketing as a possible solution to bring about social behavioural change. Following objectives are, therefore developed to this intent:

- To examine a correlation between social media content exposure on precepts of self in the sample audience.
- To propose societal marketing as a tool to advance the field as well as to bring about positive social change.

4. Theoretical Framework of the Study

The theoretical framework of this paper is based on two theories: Self and Social Marketing. Self-Identity exists over multiple time frames and matures to become nearer to the true identify existing in a person. This identity of a person within a culture is a complex and multiple self-experiences guided through social interactions and emerge as layers of *person schematisation* (Horowitz, 2012)

Self, therefore, is defined as the view we have of ourselves and it comprises

- Real-Self: reflection of one's true qualities and attributes.
- Ideal-Self: characteristics that one aspires to achieve.
- Imperative -Self: what one feels one must be based on perceptions of what society wants one to be.

It is appropriate to specify that most of our concept of self is guided by both our inward thoughts and outward events that shape these thoughts. Individuals compare the internal guides of positive or negative feelings with external exposures that create a self-awareness which in turn shapes our beliefs about ourselves. (Durbano & Irtelli, 2021). According to Self-Theory, if there is a disbalance between how you see yourself and what you'd like to be (ideal self) then this is likely to affect how much you value yourself (Sahni & Fakhr, 2022). In this study, the view of Self is fundamental to defining self-esteem that an individual holds internally and it drives their social

interactions. Consequently, the way self is defined becomes the theoretical basis of framework development.

The second theory that this paper draws heavily from is Social Marketing (also known as Societal Marketing) which is believed to have a major impact on society's myriad social problems. From its initial definitions that focused on programs designed to influence acceptability of social ideas, Social Marketing is now defined as programmes designed to influence the behaviour of target audience to improve their personal welfare and that of the society to which they are part of (Andreasen, 1994). A new paradigm shift in power from state to citizens has been brought about via citizen empowerment occurring due to a wide range of social, economic, scientific, and technical developments. Previous approaches to social policy are no longer tenable due to confluence of these factors (French & Gordon, 2019).

An amalgamation of these two concepts was the logical outcome for this paper which attempts to establish that marketing activities prevalent in the lives of consumers through social media are creating negative impact on the self-concept of these target groups. Research shows that social media usage effects proximal social comparison and intermediate self-esteem that plays a mediating role in creating social anxiety particularly among younger population (Jiang & Ngien, 2020). Marketing programs designed to influence the target audience with a "healthy" orientation to social issues caused hence, would have long-term implications and benefits for the organizations and societies. Currently, marketing practices are experiencing the shift from "big data to big impact" and social engineering practices are applied to influence people for social impact by generating content marketing (Lies, 2019).

The paradigms of "Self" derived from theoretical background are conceptualised in the following two constructs for this paper.

- Ideal-Self Perceptions in youth community- *IdSPC*: that is comprised of characteristics aspired by an individual.
- Imperative- Self Perceptions in youth community -*ImSPC*: what an individual feels they must be based on their societal interactions.

Underlying these two constructs are corresponding behavioural, psychological, and social beliefs held by members of youth community. The resulting Research Framework is presented as follows in Figure 1 and its details are presented in section 4.1.

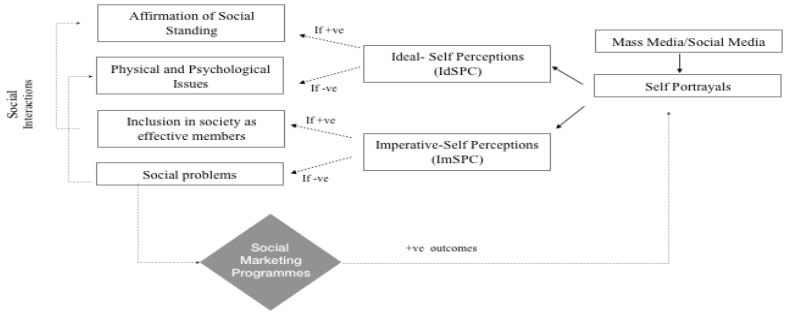

Figure 1 *Proposed Research Framework: Modelling of Ideal and Imperative Self through Social Media Content Analysis*

a. Research Issues and Questions

Social Media presents various audiences in categorised typesets as caricatures of self-portrayals. Different forms of media play their part in naturalising the social order, especially when representing women, thus reiterating societal norms and cultural assumptions that confine women to "role traps" (Ivan-Mohor & Ivan-Mohor, 2021). When target audiences view these profiles, they develop an internal understanding of how societies view them (ImSPC) and internally develop aspirations towards these portrayals (IdSPC). A negative aspiration towards impossible targets sets off physical and psychological issues but positive aspirations can improve social standing. Similarly, if target believes that society views their roles as positive, they integrate into the society as useful members through social interaction process, but on contrary, if they have negative perception of their roles as dictated by society, an emergence of physical and psychological problems occurs during social interactions. Finally, these negatives flows will result in larger social problems. Societal marketing programmes designed to address these social problems can readjust these flawed self -perceptions by bringing these target audiences into positive social portrayals, hence calibrating their "Self" towards more positive outcomes. The main thesis of this research has three tenets. Firstly, to establish that most content (glamour, beauty, shopping, body image-discussed further in section 5.1) targeting the young women leads to development of negative self-image Secondly, to examine if the young women consider these content areas to be important determinants of their future roles. Thirdly, this research intends to examine if theory of social marketing provides any solution for these negative effects. To these ends, the study presents the following 5 descriptive research questions:

Q1. Do young women consider having a lean body crucial to looking beautiful?
Q2. Do young women consider being glamourous to be most important indicator of beauty?
Q3. Is most time online by young women spent on shopping for beauty and fashion products?
Q4. Are good looks considered an important criterion for marriage by young women?
Q5. Are gender roles of being a wife and/or mother the most important for young women?

5. Research Design and Methodology

a. Sampling and Research Variables

The scope of the research is limited to young females, ages 15-26 for enhanced analytical conclusions drawn from the primary data collected. The sample size by employing stratified sampling technique is deemed to be 384 using Cochran formula with margin of error (E) at 5% and z-score of 1.96. The six study variables for the most prevalent social media content are selected after analysing YouTube shorts for three different female accounts over a period of 2 weeks. The resulting variables were then assessed through published research and categorised into; Glamour, Beauty (Kempen, 2022), Shopping (Saputra & Fadhilah, 2022), Lean Body (Carrotte, Prichard & Lim, 2017), Marriage, and Gender Roles (Rodgers & Rousseau, 2022), corresponding to each question statement.

b. Research Instrument Design

Primary data is collected using 179 questionnaires distributed in Dubai, UAE university of which 129 were accepted, among schools 130 questionnaires were distributed of which 129 were used, and from colleges a total of 129 questionnaires were collected and used. In small groups of 30-35, the researcher first played random YouTube Shorts, which was selected because individuals born between 1997-2012 who access their account via any device made heavy use of Snapchat and TikTok as most popular social network in year 2021(Source: Insider Intelligence: eMarketer (2021), for 5 minutes and then self-administered a 3-minute questionnaire comprising of 6 statements evaluated on a 7-point Likert Scale with anchors "Strongly Disagree (1) and "Strongly Agree" (7). In all the total contact time with each group was roughly 10-15 minutes therefore, to maintain the interest and comprehension of respondents (Sharma, 2022), the questionnaire was intentionally kept short.

Table 1 *Face Validity of Test Statements*

Test Item	Test Statement	Survey Questions:
Lean Body	Do young women consider having a lean body crucial to looking beautiful?	1. Having Lean Body is crucial to looking beautiful.
Shopping	Is most time online by young women spent on shopping for eauty and fashion products?	2. My favorite activity is shopping for dresses and cosmetics
Glamour/ Beauty	Do young women consider being glamourous to be most important indicator of beauty?	3. My biggest wish is to look glamourousBeautifu l women gain success and status
Marriage	Are good looks considered an important criterion for marriage by young women?	4. To gain a husband/boyfriend one must look beautiful
Gender Roles	Are gender roles of being a wife and/or mother the most important for young women?	5. Most important role for women is to be a wife and a mother

c. Instrument Validation

The pre-validated questionnaire's construct validity was confirmed through factor analysis. The scale proved to have a very good internal consistency with a Cronbach's α coefficient of 0.8 (Cronbach's α on standardised items: 0.813; n=52) (Kolkailah et.al., 2012). The instrument also has Face Validity as presented in Table 1 and was confirmed by three academics.

6. Data Findings and Analysis

To determine the answers to the research issues, the analytical section of this study would draw conclusions for the previously stated descriptive questions.

a. Social Media Content Targeting Young Women.

Social media content was examined among the adolescent to mid 20s age bracket and Table 2 shows that across all these ages an agreement was found that lean body was considered crucial to looking beautiful ($\bar{x}$ = 5.16,5.21,5.55). Shopping for clothes and cosmetics was cited as a favourite online activity ($\bar{x}$ = 4.74,5.56,5.36) while Glamour ($\bar{x}$ = 4.86,5.02,5.45) their most common wish. Trend is also present

of the data cluster around the mean scores with the σ scores remaining relatively low (Table 2). Variability of the sample is also hovering around >1.2<2.7 which indicates low spread of data. Succinctly, the young women in all three age groups are exposed most to themes gyrating around Glamour, Shopping, and dicta of Lean body types.

Table 2 *Descriptive Statistics for all Study Variables. Source: Field Survey, 2023*

Descriptive Statistics for all Study Variables - Consolidated				
	Mean	Standard Error	Standard Deviation σ	Sample Variance σ^2
Age 15-18				
Lean Body	5.16	0.12	1.31	1.71
Shopping	4.74	0.12	1.31	1.72
Glamour	4.86	0.11	1.26	1.59
Marriage	3.68	0.16	1.79	3.21
Beauty	4.59	0.13	1.44	2.09
Gender Roles	4.68	0.15	1.65	2.72
Age 19-22				
Lean Body	5.21	0.1	1.17	1.38
Shopping	5.56	0.13	1.49	2.22
Glamour	5.02	0.16	1.85	3.41
Marriage	4.68	0.14	1.57	2.47
Beauty	5.1	0.15	1.65	2.71
Gender Roles	4.76	0.15	1.67	2.78
Age 23-26				
Lean Body	5.55	0.1	1.1	1.21
Shopping	5.36	0.15	1.69	2.86
Glamour	5.45	0.1	1.16	1.34
Marriage	4.35	0.15	1.71	2.92
Beauty	5.2	0.13	1.53	2.33
Gender Roles	4.62	0.13	1.52	2.32

Table 3 recapitulates the statistics of Table 2, and the level of confirmation increases for beauty and glamour *to be most prevalent themes on social media which translates to the statement that looking glamourous is considered important for beauty. These themes are mostly popular in age brackets 23-26 but ages 15-18 also show a similar trend. Additionally, shopping** shows a high level of agreement as to its being among popular social media content designed to target young women whereas there is an encouraging negative response to the statement that "beauty is important for marriage and status" *** among the age bracket 15-18, however, the data is inconclusive here as there is an offsetting agreement to this statement too as the age reaches 26 where this negative belief shows 38% agreement. Gender roles^{++} of being

a wife and mother are viewed as significantly important by young women and when paired with other data, it can be concluded that young women are developing a perception of their Ideal Self (IdSPC) as a glamourous and beautiful individual whose primary gender role through their social interactions is to be a wife and a mother. This IdSPC has a power over their present actions and future decisions and hence, we see more focus on sublunary pursuits of shopping and body "perfection", a negative derivative of
Lean Body.

Table 3 *Results of Study Variables based on 7-point Likert Scale. Source: Field Survey, 2023*

Percentage % of Respondents on the Likert Scale for all variables arranged by age						
	Lean Body	Shopping	Glamour	Marriage	Beauty	Gender Roles
Age 15-18						
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%	9%	5%	5%
Disagree	2%	4%	5%	22%	5%	12%
Somewhat Disagree	10%	23%	11%	26%***	14%	7%
Don't Know	13%	0%	13%	4%	13%	7%
Somewhat Agree	41%	52%**	43%*	19%	35%*	38%++
Agree	13%	11%	20%	14%	26%	21%
Strongly Agree	21%	10%	9%	6%	3%	11%
Age 19-22						
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	3%	8%	6%	6%
Disagree	0%	5%	9%	0%	7%	6%
Somewhat Disagree	9%	10%	9%	16%	3%	9%
Don't Know	14%	0%	13%	9%	3%	14%
Somewhat Agree	41%	26%	27%*	34%***	27%	27%++
Agree	18%	24%	17%	25%	41%*	24%
Strongly Agree	18%	34%**	16%	8%	13%	13%
Age 23-26						
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%	11%	5%	5%
Disagree	1%	5%	2%	5%	2%	8%
Somewhat Disagree	3%	20%	4%	16%	9%	7%
Don't Know	8%	3%	5%	5%	0%	15%
Somewhat Agree	42%	16%	45%*	38%***	34%*	33%++
Agree	20%	17%	20%	19%	34%*	28%
Strongly Agree	26%	38%**	23%	6%	16%	4%

b. Research Question Analysis

Table 4 and Table 5 more particularly help in answering the research questions. ANOVA (Table 4) calculations lead to a confirmation that all the sample strata are

showing similar trend in their responses. Research question responses based on Table 5 are as follows:

Q1. Do young women consider having a lean body crucial to looking beautiful?
Inferential analysis presented previously leads to the conclusion that young women between the ages 15-26 consider having lean body type crucial to looking beautiful and glamourous.
Q2. Do young women consider being glamourous to be most important indicator of beauty?
Data points to the conclusion that most young girls consider the standard for beauty is set against the parameter of glamour.
Q3. Is most time online by young women spent on shopping for beauty and fashion products?
Shopping for beauty products and clothes remains a key activity for young girls to engage in when they are online.
Q4. Are good looks considered the most important criteria for marriage by young women?
The results are inconclusive in determining whether young women consider beauty to be an important criterion for marriage as there are offsetting responses in both agreement and disagreement. However, there is a definite agreement with this statement as age reaches 26.
Q5. Is Gender Role of being a wife and/or mother the most important for young women?
Young women consider their role as a wife and mother to be among the top important social interactions they will hold in the society.

Table 4 *ANOVA Calculations Indicating no Significant Difference between means of Different Age Groups. Source: Field Survey, 2023*

ANOVA ***Compare means of All Study Variables for All Age Groups***						
Source of Variation	**SS**	**df**	**MS**	**F**	**P-value**	**F crit**
Between Groups	0.84	2.00	0.42	2.16	0.16	3.89
Within Groups	2.32	12.00	0.19			
Total	3.15	14.00				

For simplicity, the visual representation of these data is presented in Figure. 2. The precept of Gender Roles is a strong determinant of Imperative Self (ImSPC), and the Figure shows that there is a tendency among the young women to view their role of being a mother and wife as imperative or dictated by the society. Notably, our sample was born between 1999-2008, which makes this sample “Gen Z”, making this study both relevant and timely. As this generation takes its place in life-cycle stage of young adults partaking important positions in organizational and personal environments, the social and mental health of the entire society is determined by their beliefs and values. Any distortion to their perception of self renders them inadequate to apply their abilities to their full potential. The findings of the research at this stage leads one to wonder if society should be in an ethical alarm concerning the impact social media is having on youth.

Table 5 *Pivot Table for sample responses for all Study Variables. Source: Field Survey, 2023*

Pivot Table for Study Variables- Coded Responses						
Row Labels	Shopping	Lean Body	Glamour	Marriage	Beauty	Gender Roles
7	397	363	427	331	361	292
6	420	426	438	353	382	381
5	632	781	735	480	627	570
4	207	177	156	177	212	213
3	163	126	93	133	177	188
2	110	101	42	105	106	123
1	28	28	4	12	4	4
Grand Total	1957	2002	1895	1591	1869	1771

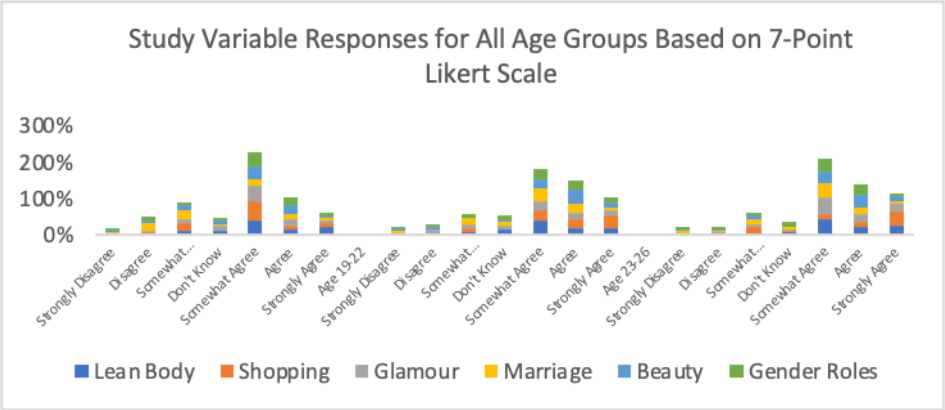

Figure 2 *7-Point Likert Chart of Research Constructs of Social Media and Perceptions of Self between the ages 15-26. Source: Field Survey, 2023*

c. Correlation Analysis for IdSPC and ImSPC

Grounded in the findings of the previous discussions, this sub-section establishes whether the perceptions of Ideal Self and Imperative Self in this sample group are of a negative or positive nature.

This sample group considers having a "perfect" body, which is a negative derivative of Lean Body to be a significant constituent of "Glamour". This has led to various negative social implications of body dysmorphia, depression, and anxiety. (Coyne et.al. 2020). There is also a high correlation between Glamour and Beauty and between Glamour and Gender roles which indicates a pattern of consumptions based around negative pursuits of "perfection" hoping that it would assist in performing important life roles (Fig. 3). It appears that more and more young women are considering Glamour to be associated with unachievable body shapes and to appear glamourous they shop for products that can compensate for their "imperfect" bodies. It is important to note here, that the most common shopping ads during a 5-

minute social media shorts session were of cosmetics and clothing but surreptitiously, Glamour was also exhibited in the houses, travel destinations, reconstruction surgeries on bodies and faces, of the social media influencers. Indeed, a young audience looking at the social media for a major part of their day would invariably be influenced negatively to hold their Ideal Self as appearing glamourous and "fit".

Furthermore, this negative development of IdSPC can also be seen in the way young women view the most important gender role for them to be that of a wife and a mother which in turn is highly correlated to their belief that beauty is a significant factor in marriage (Fig. 3). This research is inconclusive regarding this belief as there are equal opposing views, nonetheless, the view is noteworthy that gender roles for them are seen as restricted and compartmentalized to limited definitions. The Imperative Self (ImSPC), as a result, is negatively developed.

Correlation Analysis for all Study Variables - Ages 15-26, n=384						
Age 15-18	*Lean Body*	*Shopping*	*Glamour*	*Marriage*	*Beauty*	*Gender Roles*
Lean Body	1					
Shopping	-0.0176576	1				
Glamour	0.5444793	0.087505649	1			
Marriage	-0.0490685	0.212478617	-0.0619751	1		
Beauty	-0.0488775	0.18838959	-0.3178621	0.52927407	1	
Gender Roles	0.20960409	-0.13303197	-0.0786659	0.41499287	0.54173074	1
Age 19-22	*Lean Body*	*Shopping*	*Glamour*	*Marriage*	*Beauty*	*Gender Roles*
Lean Body	1					
Shopping	0.16571406	1				
Glamour	0.00496275	0.115476031	1			
Marriage	0.25002689	0.222250551	0.20877991	1		
Beauty	-0.1619116	-0.00421972	0.28956718	0.12837858	1	
Gender Roles	0.01421679	-0.23002928	-0.2460979	0.3124381	0.17830494	1
Age 23-26	*Lean Body*	*Shopping*	*Glamour*	*Marriage*	*Beauty*	*Gender Roles*
Lean Body	1					
Shopping	0.18402626	1				
Glamour	0.46961883	0.41130737	1			
Marriage	0.29331098	0.375242662	0.32514946	1		
Beauty	0.37571512	0.371920487	0.21265006	0.49229492	1	
Gender Roles	0.23602368	-0.05623549	0.04565789	0.48785642	0.44911959	1

Figure 3 *Pearson Correlation matrix for Study variables (n=384)*

As shown in previous conclusions, here also we can see a pattern of perceptions where, to be more "Glamorous", young women engage in mindless consumption (Figure. 3). Remarkably, they also see "Shopping" as a vehicle to perform their Gender Role. During the shorts viewing session, it was observed that the roles depicted on social media of mothers and wives often comprised of expenditure on clothes and

cosmetics to "look" the part. During one session there was a comment by a participant, "*These girls with their perfect bodies make me so self-conscious*", in another comment after seeing a brand plug in a YouTube short, "*Only this mom can afford this kind of nursery for her kid*". Such comments show that not only is there a strong correlation between Glamour and Shopping with Gender Role, but these are also believed to be imperative but impossible dreams. Hence, such social media portrayals, lead to distortions in Imperative and Ideal Self, especially in young women.

7. Social Marketing as a Way Forward

Much research concerning Social or Societal Marketing has been trying to eliminate confusion surrounding the term. This study aims to use the overarching principle of social marketing concept "*the facilitation of personal and social good*" (ISMA, AASM, & ESMA, 2017, p.2) in its attempt to develop a standing of social marketing as an ethical and improved practice considering the negative impact of social media on youth and societies.

One way to address the social problems resulting in physical and psychological issues presented in Fig. 1 as a theoretical framework of this research is by countering the negative Ideal Self and Imperative Self perceptions. Social marketing strategies play a role in value creation process and in increasing the focus on wellbeing and social change for social good (Zainuddin & Gordon, 2020). Social marketing strategies can be used at socio-cultural and public levels to exert influence beyond the individual levels to societies at large. A broader focus on objectives that go beyond profit maximisation to "greater good" with emphasis on value creation through positive social interactions that create social good. (French & Gordon, 2019). Brand experiences can mediate the relationships individuals have with social media and marketing activities and positive Self Perceptions resulting from brand experiences that enrich individual capacities can create healthy societies.

8. Conclusion

Social Media portrayals of youth markets are increasingly resulting in negative perceptions of Ideal and Imperative Self. The research set out to find answers for pertinent questions of our times most important being if social media content most prevalent for youth market is leading to negative impact (Adu, Ismail & Noor, 2022) particularly on their perceptions of "Self". The research can conclude confidently that youth negatively perceive their Ideal Self to be defined by the impossible standards of beauty, glamour, and body type. Likewise, their Imperative Self-perceptions are also adversely formed around the limited gender roles defined by orthodox opinion.

The future roles that young markets expect themselves to hold are also identified as arising from gender categorisations. This makes sense as much of our intelligence of what society expects our role to be in our interactions within it, comes from our understanding developed through communication with society at large, most notably, through media.

If there is one central learning from this research, it is that markets can be influenced positively via the same channels that are employed for negative influence. Social Media is a powerful tool, and its reach can be used effectively through Social Marketing campaigns that strongly and positively engage markets to counter these

negative self-perceptions thus, reducing physical and psychological problems at both individual and societal levels.

9. Theoretical and Managerial Implications

This study contributes to the field of social media research and marketing literature by its application of Self-Identity Theory (Horowitz, 1991) and Social Marketing Theory (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971), (Andreasen, 1994) to highlight the negative outcomes of social media content on the development of Self among youth. In doing so, the study provides beneficial insight into negative influence of social media content over youth markets. Building on social marketing theory it reinforces that marketing activities targeting certain markets can play a more positive role in self-development by altering its content to areas that engage these audiences in more positive routes thus bringing about positive social change.

10. Limitations and Future Research Suggestions

This study is cross-sectional in nature and its outcomes were a snapshot of a defined moment in time. A longitudinal approach could be applied in future research to explore the relationships of study variables over time and over multiple age groups. Specifically, this study targeted age groups 15-26 to identify the impact of social media. Further studies can explore other age groups that show the changes in these findings as other potential influencers affect them. For instance, changes in self - identity occurring at different social roles or types of professional relationships at a different age level. Experimental investigation of actual self-definitions in the population as ordained by social media can provide more clarification into the complex relationship between self-development and media exposure.

11. Declaration of Interests

The author reports there are no competing interests to declare.

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