



**International Journal of Biology, Pharmacy
and Allied Sciences (IJBPAS)**

'A Bridge Between Laboratory and Reader'

www.ijbpas.com

EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA EXPOSURE AND COSMETIC USE AMONG YOUTH: A CROSS- SECTIONAL STUDY

**YAMUNA PRIYA P^{*1}, SWAPNA MADHURI K¹, JAI DIVYA T², BHARATH G² AND
RAMA RAO N³**

1: Department of Pharmacy Practice, Chalapathi Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Lam,
Guntur-522034, Andhra Pradesh, India

2: Assistant Professor, Department of Pharmacy Practice, Chalapathi Institute of
Pharmaceutical Sciences, Lam, Guntur-522034, Andhra Pradesh, India

3: Professor & Principal, Chalapathi Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Lam, Guntur-522034,
Andhra Pradesh, India

***Corresponding Author: Dr. Yamuna Priya Pedomallu: E Mail: yamunapriyapedamallu@gmail.com**

Received 14th Dec. 2025; Revised 9th Jan. 2026; Accepted 27th April 2026; Available online 1st Oct. 2026

<https://doi.org/10.31032/IJBPAS/2026/15.10.10506>

ABSTRACT

Background: Social media, especially through sites such as Instagram, have assumed the role of key drivers of consumer behavior, particularly among the youth. Cosmetic companies are increasingly using these sites to market their products and shape perceptions of good looks and lifestyles. Understanding this influence is crucial in analyzing marketing ethics and youth behavioral patterns.

Objective: The study investigates whether advertisement through Instagram influences the use of cosmetic products amongst the youth.

Methods: We administered a cross-sectional survey to 180 young participants, 58.3% of whom were female, using a structured questionnaire to assess cosmetic usage patterns and exposure to advertisements on Instagram. Descriptive statistics and correlation analyses were applied to assess the relationship between the extent of social media exposure and cosmetic product use.

Results: 75% of the total respondents reported using cosmetics that were influenced by social media ads, especially on Instagram. There existed a strong relationship between gender, time spent on Instagram, from 2 to 5 hours daily, and the likelihood of purchasing cosmetics due to online ads.

Conclusion: The study finds that cosmetic consumption among youth is significantly influenced by Instagram advertisements. Most affected are females and those who spend more time on Instagram. These findings point to the increasing impact of digital media on consumer behavior among the young population.

Keywords: Cosmetics, social media, Instagram, youth behavior, beauty marketing

INTRODUCTION

During the 21st century, social media has turned into a powerful channel for shaping attitudes toward lifestyles and consumption, especially for youngsters [1]. Nowadays, such basic channels as Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat serve to represent beauty and fashion marketing and are changing the way people develop their notion of beauty standards and make cosmetic purchasing decisions [1]. Given the growth in the popularity of visual content, social media facilitates the process by which individuals can compare their appearance with idealized images [2-4]. This fosters self-presentation and cosmetic consumption patterns [1, 5]. The global cosmetics industry has seen exponential growth over the last ten years,

driven by the accessibility of online marketing and influencer culture. Influencer marketing, which involves the promotion of beauty products by individuals who have substantial followings online, builds consumer trust and directly influences purchase intentions [6-8]. The perceived authenticity and attractiveness of influencers significantly affect brand attitude and product choice [6-8].

This trend has gone on overdrive with the integration of social media and e-commerce, especially in developing nations like India [9, 11]. Besides this, any exposure to flawless images that have been curated and cropped leads to shifts in self-perception; many young people today believe beauty products are used

for self-confidence and social acceptance [10, 12].

On the other hand, while social media offers a domain for creativity and self-expression, it also creates unrealistic ideals of beauty and consumerism. Continued exposure to filtered content and sponsored promotions may create pressure to conform to digitally constructed standards acceptance [3, 4, 12].

The present study, therefore, investigates the influence of social media, particularly Instagram, on the use of cosmetic products among youth and quantifies the same. Exposure patterns, influencer engagement, and purchasing behavior are looked into to estimate the effect of social media on cosmetics consumption in the digital era.

METHODOLOGY

Study Design and Setting: A cross-sectional, descriptive design^{18,19} was followed to identify the impact of social media, particularly Instagram, on cosmetics usage among young people. The research was both online and across selected colleges, representing a rich demographic segment of youth aged 15–25 years. It was from JANUARY 2025 to JUNE 2025.

Study Population and Sample Size: The study's population was based on young people aged 15-25 years who were either currently active users of Instagram or those who had

exposure to social media-based cosmetic promotions. A sample size of 180 participants was considered for the study. Participants were chosen using a convenience sampling method from colleges and social media to reflect the broad perspective on the use of cosmetics that has been influenced by Instagram advertisements.

Study Tool: Materials for this research were collected via a self-administered, structured questionnaire of 32 items in all.²⁰ The instrument had been pre-designed to assure clarity and completeness of responses and was divided into four major sections:

1. Demographic data,
2. Social Media Use,
3. Application of cosmetics, and
4. Influence of social media on cosmetics usage.

Data Collection Procedure: Data collection was carried out through both printed questionnaires and an online version created through Google Forms. The participants were approached individually, and informed voluntary consent was sought before questionnaire completion. To ensure privacy and increase the chances of honest responses, no identifying information was collected, and all responses were treated as anonymous.

Data Analysis: The data collected were compiled and analyzed using descriptive

statistical tools such as frequency distributions and percentages to summarize participants' characteristics and key study variables. Where possible, correlation analysis and chi-square tests to investigate the relationship between social media exposure and cosmetic usage.

Ethical Consideration: The study followed the accepted ethical guidelines that surround research with human subjects. The respondents were informed of their voluntary

participation, the right to withdraw at any time, and full confidentiality of the information they provide. Also, no personal identifiers were collected, and all procedures in the study protected the privacy of participants. All data were anonymised before analysis, ensuring that subject's confidentiality was upheld in line with the Declaration of Helsinki and national biomedical research regulations.

RESULTS

Table 1: Demographics, Social media usage, Cosmetic Usage, Influence of Social Media, and the over all Impact.

Category	Variable	Findings
Demographics	Total Participants	180
	Age Group	Majority between 18–24 years
	Gender	Female: 110 (61.1%); Male: 70 (38.9%)
	Residence	Predominantly urban areas
Social Media Usage	Instagram Use	85% use Instagram daily for 2–5 hours
	Morning Activity	72% check social media first thing in the morning
	Cosmetic Ads Exposure	90% frequently come across cosmetic ads on social media
	Frequency of Use	75% use cosmetic products daily or weekly
Cosmetic Use	Common Products	Lip balm/lipsticks, moisturizers, eyeliners
	Purchase Mode	65% buy cosmetics online
	Monthly Spending	70% spend ₹1,000–₹5,000 per month
	Purchase after Exposure	135 (75%) bought cosmetics after Instagram ads exposure
Influence of Social Media	Follow Beauty Influencers	120 (67%) follow beauty influencers
	Follow Influencer Recommendations	110 (61%) follow influencer recommendations
	Changed Perception of Natural Beauty	95 (53%) say social media changed their perception
	Disappointed with Influencer-Recommended Products	80 (44%) disappointed with purchased products
Overall Impact	Positive Impact	70%
	Neutral Impact	20%
	Negative Impact	10%

Demographic analysis of 180 participants revealed that the majority were aged 18–24 years, with 61.1% females and 38.9% males, most residing in urban areas. The social media usage was incredibly high: 85% use Instagram

daily for 2–5 hours, and 72% reported that the first activity they do every morning was to check social media. About 90% reported frequently viewing cosmetic advertisements on social media. Regarding cosmetic use, 75%

reported using cosmetics daily or weekly, most commonly lip balm/lipstick, moisturisers, and eyeliners-and 65% preferred online purchases and spent ₹1,000-₹5,000 per month. Social media influence was prominent, and 75% of participants reported buying cosmetics after viewing Instagram ads, 67% followed beauty influencers, and 61% followed their recommendations. More than

half, 53%, reported that social media changed their perception of natural beauty, while 44% expressed disappointment with products promoted by influencers. Overall, 70% perceived the impact of social media on cosmetic use as positive, thus confirming a strong positive relationship between social media influence, especially Instagram, and cosmetic consumption among youth.

Table 2: Statistically significant Association Between Age and Influence

Statistic	Value
Chi-square (χ^2)	16.04
Degrees of Freedom (df)	2
p-value	0.0003

Since $p < 0.05$, there is a statistically significant association between gender and influence by Instagram advertisements. This

supports the statement that females are more influenced by social media in purchasing cosmetics.

Table 3: Statistically significant Association Between Instagram time spend and monthly spend

Statistic	Value
Pearson correlation coefficient (r)	0.983
p-value	0.017

The correlation is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). This is a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.98$) between time spent on Instagram and monthly cosmetic spending — meaning participants who spend more time on Instagram tend to spend more on cosmetics.

DISCUSSION

These findings clearly establish the influence of social media, especially Instagram, on cosmetic usage patterns among youth [6-8, 16]. More than two-thirds of the respondents in the current study reported having purchased

cosmetics influenced by advertisements that they viewed on social media.

The majority were females, and the young women are more vulnerable to appearance-based marketing and influencer endorsement [4, 5, 17]. This further establishes how e-commerce platforms, along with social media promotion, create convenience-driven purchasing behavior.

Whereas 70% of participants saw social media's influence as positive, citing confidence and self-expression, more than

40% reported product dissatisfaction or side effects, reflecting a duality where social media empowers self-presentation at the same time as being used to create unattainable beauty ideals [3, 14, 15].

These findings are supported by international research. Even though social media does provide empowerment, on the other hand, it promotes pressure. Higher Instagram exposure was associated with increased cosmetic spending [16, 17].

CONCLUSION

Based on the identified factors, therefore, this study concludes that social media, such as Instagram, play a vital role in influencing cosmetic usage behavior in the youth. Almost all respondents responded that exposure to advertisements and influencers is among the main driving elements for the decision to purchase cosmetics.

These findings confirm that youth are highly influenced by social media to use cosmetics, reflecting the changing perceptions of beauty and self-presentation in the digital era.

DECLARATIONS:

Consent for Publication: Not applicable, as the manuscript does not contain any identifiable patient data, images, or videos that would require individual consent.

Availability of Data and Materials: The datasets generated and/or analysed during the

current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

Funding: This study did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Ethical Approval: Since this is an observational, non-interventional study, no ethical approval was required. The study was performed in accordance with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki (2013 revision).

Authors' Contributions: YPP, SMK conceptualised and designed the study, collected data and performed statistical analysis. The paper was drafted by YPP, JDT and BG, while RRN provided critical review and gave final approval of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final version of the paper.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to give their sincere thanks to the Chalapathi Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Lam, Guntur, for all the academic and technical support rendered in this study.

REFERENCES

- [1] Perloff RM. Social media effects on young women's body image concerns: Theoretical perspectives and an agenda for research. *Sex Roles*. 2014;71(11–12):363–377. Doi: 10.1007/s11199-014-0384-6. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11199-014-0384-6>
- [2] Fardouly J, Vartanian LR. Social media and body image concerns: Current research and future directions. *Curr Opin Psychol*. 2016;9:1–5. Doi: 10.1016/j.copsyc.2015.09.005. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2015.09.005>
- [3] Holland G, Tiggemann M. A systematic review of the impact of the use of social networking sites on body image and disordered eating outcomes. *Body Image*. 2016;17:100–110. Doi: 10.1016/j.bodyim.2016.02.008. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2016.02.008>
- [4] Tiggemann M, Slater A. NetGirls: The Internet, Facebook, and body image concern in adolescent girls. *Int J Eat Disord*. 2013;46(6):630–633. Doi: 10.1002/eat.22141. <https://doi.org/10.1002/eat.22141>
- [5] Fox J, Vendemia MA. Selective self-presentation and social comparison through selfies. *Comput Human Behav*. 2016;66:246–253. Doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2016.09.028. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.09.028>
- [6] De Veirman M, Cauberghe V, Hudders L. Marketing through Instagram influencers: The impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitudes. *Int J Advert*. 2017;36(5):798–828. Doi: 10.1080/02650487.2017.1348035. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2017.1348035>
- [7] Djafarova E, Rushworth C. Exploring the credibility of online celebrities' Instagram profiles in influencing purchase decisions. *Comput Human Behav*. 2017;68:1–7. Doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2016.11.013. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.11.013>
- [8] Lou C, Yuan S. Influencer marketing: How message value and credibility affect consumer trust and purchase intention. *J Interact Advert*. 2019;19(1):58–73. Doi: 10.1080/15252019.2018.1533501.

- <https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2018.1533501>
- [9] Xie Z. The influence of social media on perception of body image and beauty standards on young people. *Trans Soc Sci Educ Humanit Res.* 2024;5:143–148. Doi: 10.62051/67rvhh97. <https://doi.org/10.62051/67rvhh97>
- [10] Sharma B, Chotia A, Yadav I. Impact of social media on buying behavior of consumers. In: *Marketing Perspectives on Phygitalization*. Boca Raton: CRC Press; 2024. P. 313–323. Doi: 10.1201/9781003569008-22. <https://doi.org/10.1201/9781003569008-22>
- [11] Nair SR, Pillai R. Impact of social media on buying behavior of youth in India. *Int J Appl Bus Econ Res.* 2018;16(2):1–15. Available from: https://serialsjournals.com/abstract/61218_ch_1.pdf
- [12] Chae J. Explaining females' envy toward social media influencers. *Media Psychol.* 2018;21(2):246–262. Doi: 10.1080/15213269.2017.1328312. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15213269.2017.1328312>
- [13] Duffy BE, Hund E. Gendered visibility on social media: Navigating Instagram's authenticity bind. *Soc Media Soc.* 2019;5(4):1–12. Doi: 10.1177/2056305119878771. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305119878771>
- [14] Santarossa S, Woodruff SJ. #SocialMedia: Exploring the relationship of social networking sites on body image, self-esteem, and eating disorders. *Soc Media Soc.* 2017;3(2). Doi: 10.1177/2056305117704407. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305117704407>
- [15] Cohen R, Duarte C. Instagram use and body dissatisfaction: The mediating role of social comparison. *Body Image.* 2017;23:183–187. Doi: 10.1016/j.bodyim.2017.10.002. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2017.10.002>
- [16] Pan W, Mu Z, Tang Z. Social media influencer viewing and intentions to change appearance: A cross-sectional survey. *Front Psychol.* 2022;13:846390. Doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.846390.

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.846390>

- [17] Sherman LE, Greenfield PM, Hernandez LM, Dapretto M. Peer influence via Instagram: Effects on brain and behavior in adolescence. *Child Dev.* 2018;89(1):37–47. Doi: 10.1111/cdev.12838.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12838>

- [18] Setia MS. Methodology series module 3: Cross-sectional studies. *Indian J Dermatol.* 2016;61(3):261–264. Doi: 10.4103/0019-5154.182410.

<https://doi.org/10.4103/0019-5154.182410>

- [19] Creswell JW, Creswell JD. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches.* 5th ed. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications; 2018. Available from:

<https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/research-design/book255675>

- [20] Polit DF, Beck CT. *Nursing research: Generating and assessing evidence for nursing practice.* 11th ed. Philadelphia: Wolters Kluwer; 2021. Available from:

<https://shop.lww.com/Nursing-Research/p/978197515414>