

Filter Up: Magnetic Photo Collage about the impact of Beauty Filter to Filipino Gen Z Ages 15 to 24

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Abstract

This thesis project explores the detrimental impact of beauty filters on the mental well-being of the Generation Z population, focusing on young women and non-binary individuals. As social media and beauty filters become integral to daily life, the project delves into how these tools contribute to self-consciousness and the pursuit of unattainable beauty standards. The artist employs photography collage art as a medium, combining self-portraits with cut-out elements from magazines and other sources. Through an interactive exhibition, the project aims to raise awareness about the negative effects of social media filters, promoting self-acceptance and challenging societal expectations. The research design includes a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, with surveys targeting fifty participants to gather insights into personal experiences and opinions. The creative framework visually presents the project's components, emphasizing its goal of fostering self-awareness and embracing natural beauty. Ultimately, the thesis seeks to contribute to the ongoing dialogue on toxic beauty standards and their impact on mental health in the context of the evolving digital landscape.

Keywords: Toxic beauty standards, Social media, Beauty filter, Snapchat dysmorphia, Plastic Surgery, Photography collage art

Introduction

Today's generation marks the zenith of social media and beauty filters. Recently, we been staring at our gadgets' mirrors a lot more than the real ones. Over the years, as our lives have moved more and more to screens, we have grown especially self-conscious of our appearances. While technology may be contributing to our increased feelings of insecurity, it also provides enticing solutions: facial filters and editing applications allow you to quickly tap and swipe away imperfections (Haines A., 2021). This shows how individuals lean more towards the beauty centric standard of living. Individuals are being influenced by social media, relying more on other people's opinion through comments, likes, and views.

Viewers are encouraged to reflect on the unclear boundaries that exist between the real world and the digitally enhanced beauty standards that are widely used on social media. It acts as an unsettling reminder of the social and psychological effects of continuously striving for an unachievable ideal of beauty. "Filter Up" is a photography collage art that explores the impacts of beauty filters affect today's generation. This also raises important questions about self-perception,

authenticity, and the effects of digital tampering on our conception of beauty. Continuous exposure to edited content and filters that distort faces contributes to unrealistic beauty ideals and sustains a culture centered on unachievable perfection. Our peers also consistently reinforce these standards of beauty, leading many individuals to feel compelled to conform to these unrealistic ideals (NØIE, 2023).

In this generation, face filters are now known worldwide and a lot of individuals are using face filters or beauty filters, whether through some social media platforms or mobile filter application. The Snapchat filters from back in the day appeared harmless enough, with their big bug eyes and colorful rainbow that would pop out of your mouth at the touch of a screen. Since then, those amusing filters have been joined by new, less innocent ones. Rainbow lips gave way to nose shapes resembling rhinoplasties. These days, a lot of people have two faces: the two-dimensional one shows the world online and what they are. According to the company, there are over 200 million users of Snapchat's filters each day (Bindra M., 2023). A study conducted in 2021, showed that the "desires to undergo facial cosmetic procedures" of people were linked to face-altering technology. Previous mental diagnosis history was also independently linked to the mentioned issue (The American Journal of Cosmetic Surgery, 2021).

The impact of social media filters on our own perception has become an addiction towards the people, if you edit a photo and the outcome is a better version of yourself staring back, you will start to believe that is how you should look. Cosmetic surgeons are seeing a rise in patients who bring in images that have been altered—whether by filtering, face tuning or in some other way—or who pull up unmodified selfies to highlight issues. They call it "Snapchat Dysmorphia" (Willingham A., 2018). According to Migala J. (2023), stress towards social media is what drives people into plastic surgery. A survey has done in 2022 from the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (AAFPRS), revealed that the view of "looking better in selfies continues to trend upward" is held by 79% of facial plastic surgeons. A paper that was published in 2018 by JAMA Facial Plastic Surgery, noted that people saw how models and celebrities looked perfectly on magazine covers, that undoubtedly influenced our society's standards of beauty. However, today's events are different from the previous day's. The possibility of perfection has been made available to the masses through filters, lighting, and other tactics on social media.

When asked if they felt horrible about their appearance for whatever reason, most participants in Everyday Health's United States of Stress narrative answered emphatically "yes." Approximately 22% of participants stated they felt unhappy about themselves daily. Any person can experience extreme anxiety by obsessing on those apparent defects or shortcomings. This may result in a negative mental pattern that repeats itself. You spend time and money trying to modify your appearance because you feel like you should, but this just makes you feel worse about the fault (Migala J., 2023).

In accordance with, knowing and understanding this kind of issue led me to come up with the idea of making a photography collage art. My project output will focus on creating a collage cut-out or ripped parts of the human body and faces and putting them on top of a self-photographed portrait, creating a mixed media collage art. This thesis project will be showcasing a self-awareness

message about wanting to change something onto yourself, losing the sense of identity, for as people wanted to fit in what beauty standards fits in the society.

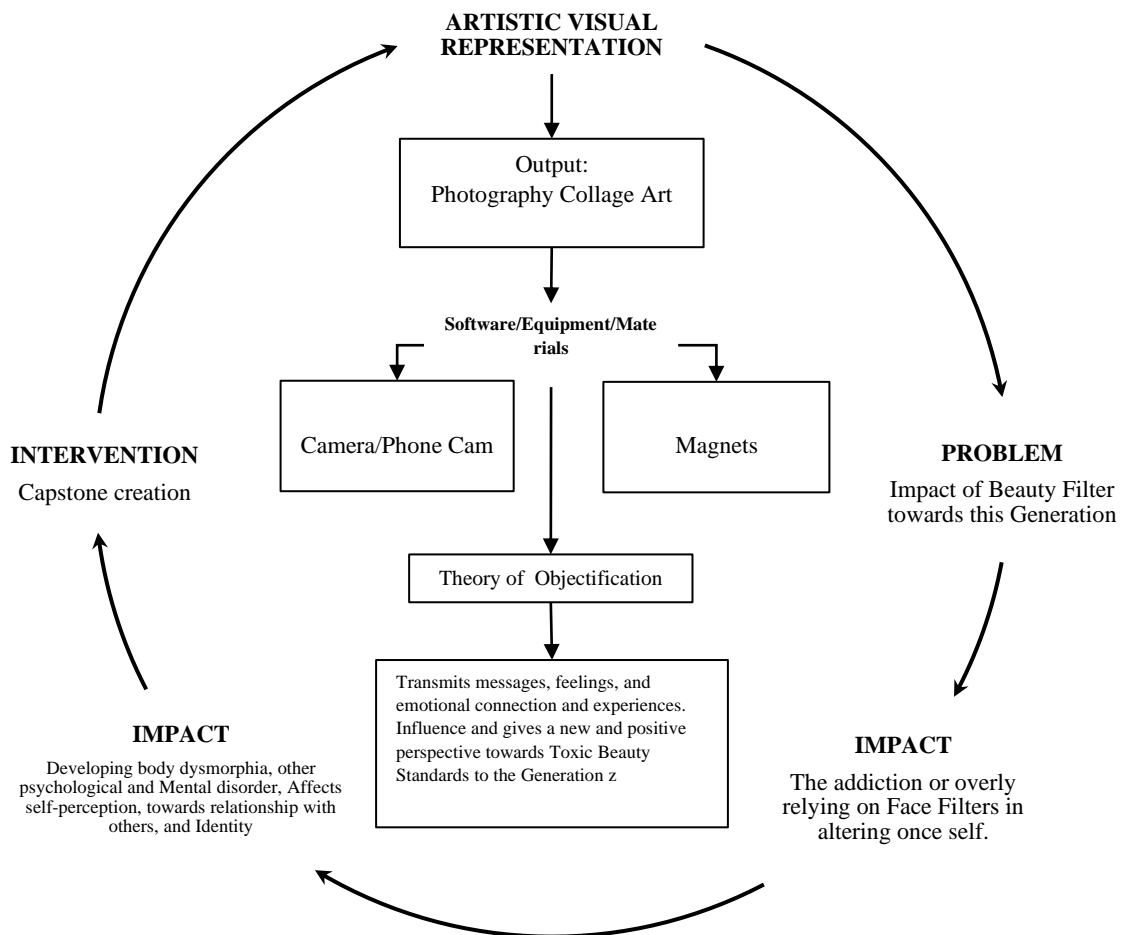
As I grew up in a society where face filters are now starting to become the part of the toxicity of beauty standards, creating a new set of insecurities and anxiety not only for me but also for other individuals who has become dissatisfied towards their appearances. I aim to influence and for myself to accept what having a natural beauty is, a self-acceptance towards what was given to us, by loving and embracing our own beauty.

I chose this medium, to express the meaning of embracing our true and unfiltered appearances and also interact with my audiences. Photography Collage art has already been widely known through decades as Mixed Media Assemblage, there are also some Mixed Media collage arts made by some Filipinos. Working with this type of project is going to be a very challenging and fun thing to do, considering some of the possibilities in expressing through colors, images, and the way of execution.

Toxic Beauty Standard is an issue that has already been born from the post-colonialism in the Philippines by the Spaniards, Americans, and Japanese. And, it has been still an issue but with a wider branch of cause and effects on everyone. It also targets the mental health and self-esteem of the people living in a judgmental and Neocolonialist world.

Figure 1

Framework Visual Presentation of the Impact of Beauty Filter Towards This Generation



The creative framework that I created visualized the process and components of the project that I will be making. This section offers a visual overview of my multimedia project's materials, target audience, theory, issues, implications, goals, and solutions. The creative framework and other following ideas are all thoroughly assessed based on the context of the study.

Regarding the method and process of my thesis project, I have first researched -my topic carefully and understood all possible cause and effects, while envisioning the outcome of my process. Because my first main topic was only focused on Toxic Beauty Standards, then I came into realization that that topic alone seems too general, so I had chosen to focus on the latest issue regarding it, which is the Face Filters. I, at first, had second thoughts for the chosen medium, considering all the errors and problems that can be pointed out and giving solutions to it. The topic is also relatable for me, since the start of the day I had been given a phone and started to also keep up with the trends.

Then, after gathering all the reliable and relevant sources needed for the said issue, I was able to correlate it to my own experience and also towards others. Because face filters or social media filters are becoming famous and trendy through technology, people in this modern technology, tend to get excited and easily influenced by what is trending in social medias such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok. In line with this, people are now experiencing problems in their mental health such as depression, insecurities, social anxiety, appearance anxiety, and body image concerns or body dysmorphia, that will greatly affect their lives.

Given this point, I have chosen Photography as a medium in whereas I can express and interact with my own project, while conveying the message that one must realize that we do not need to change our outer appearance to make ourselves be appreciated by others. As for my target audience, I choose the Generation Z. This project is for them to be aware of the negative effects and impacts of social media Filters to everyone, since according to the study of Sharma M, Kaushal D, and Joshi S (2023), with the growth of social media, Generation Z consumers' addiction to smartphones and other gadgets is growing, and as a result, their behavior has fundamentally changed. These days, behavioral problems include anxiety, tension, exhaustion, "fear of missing out" and "phubbing," among other things. I came up with a Photography Collage art, because first photographs are associated with toxic beauty standard and that it is also a tool that shows us our true selves, while the printed and cut-outs are to point out the flaw of using social media filters.

This thesis output will consist of series of filtered mirrors organized by how people may be able to interact with it. My thesis project will be able to convey the message of acceptance in an interactive and meaningful way. Using self- portraits and cut-outs, I will be able to show and influence my audiences what social media filters may have impacted our lives and the way we express and show ourselves, especially through posting filtered photos or videos online, in which will be supported by the Theory of Objectification.

According to Neagu A. (2015), in media, objectification refers to dehumanizing representations that turn people into things or entities that are primarily valued for their physical characteristics, frequently for profit or visual appeal. When someone is objectified, their identity or worth is mostly based on how they seem, with physical attributes taking precedence over traits

like intelligence, personality, or feelings. Advertising and the media frequently propagate unattainable beauty ideals while ignoring the complexity of the human condition. Neagu's objectification viewpoint is in line with more general feminist views, emphasizing the dehumanizing effects of treating people—especially women—as nothing more than objects or entities that are primarily valued for their physical characteristics.

Collage art including portraits becomes a powerful tool for questioning and criticizing damaging ideals of beauty. Artist's challenge conventional beauty conventions by integrating varied visual elements artistically, thereby highlighting the adverse impacts of unattainable standards. Collages honor variety using images that defy conventional conventions, promote self-acceptance, and reject harmful beauty standards. This art form highlights the beauty in flaws through deconstruction and rebuilding, provoking thought-provoking conversation on social pressures. Essentially, portrait collage art is a means of encouraging inclusivity and a more tolerant view of beauty. Collages are used in design to assess product usage, communicate moods, and choose color schemes. They combine aspects to foster creativity and support visual thinking. Reliable and adaptable, collages influence color selections and user goals when it comes to design (Delft Design Guide, n.d.).

Furthermore, the thesis output process will be done using a series of two (2) 3ft by 2ft photo printed in a sticker paper that will be put on a Metal Plate as its base and cut-out or ripped magazines, posters, newspapers, etc. Will also be using Adobe Illustrator for some of the layout design of the project, for a clearer and cleaner execution of ideas.

Date Gathering Method

Primary Data Gathering: Survey

For the data gathering, I will be doing and spreading out online survey forms to fifty (50) participants to gather their own insights, opinions, and experiences, as a proof into how face filters have a negative effect in an individual's mental state. Survey research offers cost-effective, versatile, and flexible data collection methods, ensuring extensive reach through online surveys. The data's dependability is enhanced by respondent anonymity, fostering honesty, and accurate information (SurveyMonkey, 2024).

The surveys will be spread out through online social medias, with a permission letter stating my intentions and the purpose of this survey. Their personal information will be kept anonymous, and the gathered data from their responses will be utilized for the thesis project only. There will be an overall description for each output project that I can gather in the survey responses, and the focus of this survey is more on the experiences, opinions, and story of each subject. Doing so, will give me clear and more insights into what is commonly the insecurities of each individual towards their selves, and what they think of themselves.

Secondary Data Collection Method

The secondary data is information gathered by a party other than the original user. It indicates that the data has already been analyzed and is available. Books, journals, periodicals, magazines, and newspapers are examples of secondary data. Either published or unpublished data

may be involved (BYJU'S, 2022). I will also be using this type of data gathering method to gather other more studies and articles that will further support my thesis, for a better understanding about my topic.

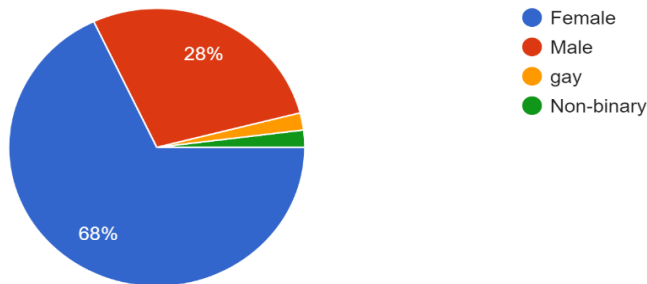
Design Process Creative Framework

For the **research design** of the thesis output, will be a qualitative and quantitative type of research, whereas I will be sending out online survey forms to my chosen audiences, and then gathering articles and literatures that can support my topic and will also help answer questions about what the problem is in my topic. The research materials that I will be using will all come from online articles and studies that are related to my topic or the problem of my topic.

Figure 2 & 3

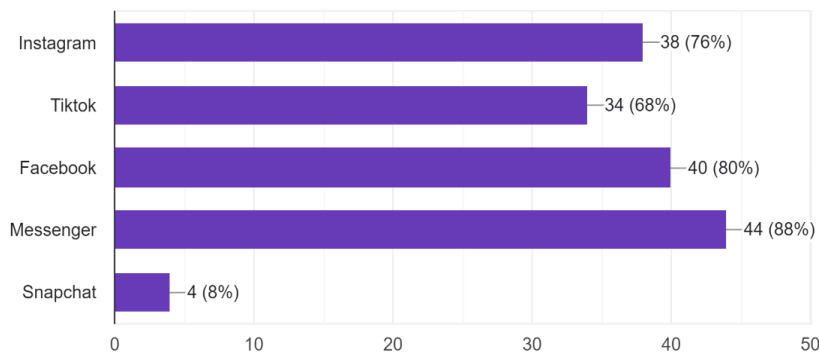
Survey results collected from an actual conducted survey, 2024.

Gender
50 responses



2. What Social Media Platform/s do you often use?

50 responses



My **target audiences** are the Gen Z or the Generation Z, which age range from eleven (11) to twenty-six (26) years old, I will be focusing on young women but, I will also include other genders with different sexual orientations as audiences. According to the studies of Sharma M, Kaushal D, and Joshi S (2023), this generation is the most affected by social media, the ones that struggles to stay and keep up with the latest trends online.

For my **design process**, I have already made two (2) prototypes of the Photograph Collage art. The actual photo will be printed on a 3ft x 2ft size sticker paper that will be put on a metal plate as base, and then I will gather photos of the certain facial parts for the cut-out parts that I will be using. For the process of the actual output, will consist of magnetic type of execution. I will exhibit photographs in the said sizes, then I will be making magnetized cut-out parts for the photo.

Figure 4

Actual Prototype printed out in an A4 sized paper, 2024.



Pre-production Stage

For the Pre-production stage, I focused on planning about the process of Photography Collage art, where I will be doing some consultations with my thesis adviser, for a better guidance in my output. This is where I will start doing my Gantt Chart to organize and set my schedule, and to make sure that I will be able to meet the deadlines and to also be able to finish the output on time. This is also where I will start budgeting the expenses that I needed for the pre-production, production, and post-production stage. After this, I will be making online survey Google forms for

my primary data gathering method, to gather opinions and other helpful data for my output, and then I will also be collecting more articles and studies to support my topic as a secondary data collecting method, since my output is also a qualitative type, a lot of researching and article gathering is to be done.

Figure 5

MMAPRO1 Printed 16 x 20 Output with magnet parts, 2024.



Figure 6

MMAPRO2 edited photo collage, Picasso style, 2024.



Production Stage

My production stage is mainly about creating the output, I will first be sending online surveys forms to my chosen audiences and gather their opinions, and their own insecurities in their face and body. Next is to do the photography production; after which I will print out four (4) photographs in a 16 x 20 size photo on magnetic sheets and put it on the same size sintra board. Then, I will start gathering the materials that I will be needing and start layering out the ideal artwork that I will design, using some sketches and illustrations. I will be making the layout design of the outputs and then, gather certain facial parts for the printed magnetic part designs.

Figure 7

MMAPRO2 Final Printed 16 x 20 portrait photography with Magnet parts, 2024.



Post-production Stage

The post-production stage is the finalization of the output. I will be turning my output into an interactive project in where I will be exhibiting my four (4) outputs, but it will be on a magnetic sheet so that the cut-out magnetic parts can switch to whatever the audiences like. Then I also plan to ask my audiences or participants to write their opinions and experiences about toxic beauty standards and filters, on a sticky note and put them on the mirrors that I will be placing in my exhibit.

Review of Related Literatures

In relation to my Photography Collage Art, this part will discuss related literatures that further tackles about the impact of Face Filters towards this generation and its effect on an individual's mentality. This allows me to strengthen the objective of my output's goal. Furthermore, I also discuss the how social media fuels the toxicity of beauty standards. This will also show the type of Mixed Media Collage techniques to be used in my thesis project.

The Mental Health Impacts of Beauty Filters on Social Media Shouldn't Be Ignored

The article highlights the prevalence of beauty filters on various platforms and the potential negative consequences they may have on individuals' well-being. It acknowledges the widespread use of filters to enhance or alter appearances, leading to a distorted sense of self-image. The article delves into the psychological effects of continuous exposure to digitally manipulated images, emphasizing the pressure to conform to unrealistic beauty standards. It discusses the phenomenon of "Snapchat Dysmorphia," where individuals seek cosmetic procedures to resemble

their filtered online selves. The piece also explores the psychological stress induced by the desire to look perfect in selfies, citing data from surveys conducted by facial plastic surgeons. Overall, the article underscores the growing concern about the mental health implications of social media filters, shedding light on the potential link between edited images, self-perception, and the rise in cosmetic procedures driven by digital ideals.

Social Media Addiction Statistic

Many people deal with the negative impacts of social media addiction daily as a result of the growing acceptance and expectation of social media use. Although most internet users are millennials and Gen Z, anyone can become addicted to social media, regardless of age, gender, or ethnicity. Unfortunately, the prevalence of social media addiction is rising yearly. Given that 56.8% of people worldwide use social media, it is anticipated that in the upcoming years, the prevalence of social media addiction would also increase. According to Hoffman K. (2023), concerns over the impact of social media addiction on youth is on the rise. Professionals in mental health are concerned that adolescents and teenagers are especially vulnerable to developing a social media addiction. The reason for this worry is from the way social media platforms promote compulsive behaviors, incessant scrolling, and the desire for rapid satisfaction. He also mentioned that children aged 8 to 12 receive an average of four (4) hours and 44 minutes of screen time each day, while teenagers average seven (7) hours and 22 minutes. Social media addiction varies across platforms and demographics. YouTube and Facebook lead in usage, with Facebook being used daily by 70% of US adults. Demographically, addiction rates differ by ethnicity, with 32% of White users reporting addiction. Teens and young adults show higher addiction rates (40%), and women tend to self-report higher addiction rates than men. Unfortunately, there is currently no data on those who have recovered from social media addiction, but there are some recommended therapies for them. The way that all therapies function is by teaching patients to become more conscious of their addictive tendencies and to create plans for abstaining from harmful or problematic social media use in the future (Hoffman K., 2023).

The “INSTAFACE EFFECT”: How Social Media Shapes PLASTIC SURGERY EXPECTATIONS

The article explores the influence of social media on individuals' perceptions of beauty and the subsequent impact on their decisions to undergo cosmetic procedures. The blog emphasizes the role of platforms like Instagram, where users are exposed to curated and often filtered images, setting unrealistic beauty standards. It discusses the concept of “Instagram face” and the pressure individuals feel to achieve a certain look popularized on social media. The article acknowledges that while social media can inspire people to pursue cosmetic enhancements, it also contributes to the phenomenon of “Snapchat Dysmorphia,” where individuals seek surgeries to resemble their filtered online selves. It highlights the importance of realistic expectations and urges individuals to consult with qualified professionals before deciding on any cosmetic procedure. In summary, the blog post from Saber Plastic Surgery explores the impact of social media on shaping beauty ideals and how it influences individuals' perceptions, potentially leading to an increased interest in plastic surgery procedures. The piece advocates for a balanced and informed approach to cosmetic enhancements.

Dove Self-Esteem Project (2022)

This research talks about how social media affects the wellbeing of people, especially young women. It is said that social media allows us to document memories, learn about people from other origins, keep in touch with friends and family, and even discover the newest dance fad. But it seems that young adults are more likely to suffer from low self-esteem, mood swings, and a lack of body confidence the more time they spend on social media. Some scientists claim to think that this is how much social media affects the young ages, it leads to whether it will become or will have a positive or negative influence in their lives. Regarding the correlation between low self-esteem and social media, comparing oneself to others and pursuing approval from likes and comments can also be detrimental. The fact that many of the images we view online are digitally altered and unrepresentative of actual life is one of the primary causes of this. On social media, we typically only see the highlights of other people's life, and most users only post the "best" photos of themselves. Posting the "ideal selfie" can seem more like a chore than a little fun, as four (4) out of five (5) girls claim to compare their appearance to others on social media.

Mixed Media Collage by Veerle Symoens

Veerle Symoens is a mixed-media artist, painter, and maker of original collages. She began instinctively tearing out the pictures that drew her attention from every magazine she came into contact with while working as a journalist, making incredibly intimate collages. Veerle's mixed-media artwork is characterized by feminine vitality, a love of color, and powerful yet poetic compositions. She draws inspiration for her paintings from her travels and from nature. The absorbing energy of vibrant healing forests, azure lagoons, untamed oceans, and lush woodlands is captured by Veerle. Her work is intuitive, vibrant, and full of energy (YUST, n.d.). Throughout her career in media and public relations, Veerle Symoens developed an innate habit of pulling out pictures that drew her attention from every magazine she encountered. She started working to produce a unique ambiance and composition from these photos using scissors, glue, paint, markers, pencils, and any other materials she could find. In addition to being sold all over the world, Veerle Symoens' mixed-media collages have already been featured in ELLE, De Standaard, De Morgen, ABSoluut, Knack Weekend, and other publications. She displayed her collages and made sales through Bezar and Saatchi Art in a.o. Bermuda Island, Tashkent, Bermuda Island, London, Essaouira, Antwerp, and Brussels (TRENDLAND, 2022).

Review of Related Works

This part of my study shows the different techniques and uses of Photography Collage Art, materials used, and relation of aesthetics that will serve as my guide in creating my visual art. There are also some works that may be related to my topic also in a form of Mixed Media Assemblage art, the symbolism in every art piece, and the meaning of their usage.

Figure 8

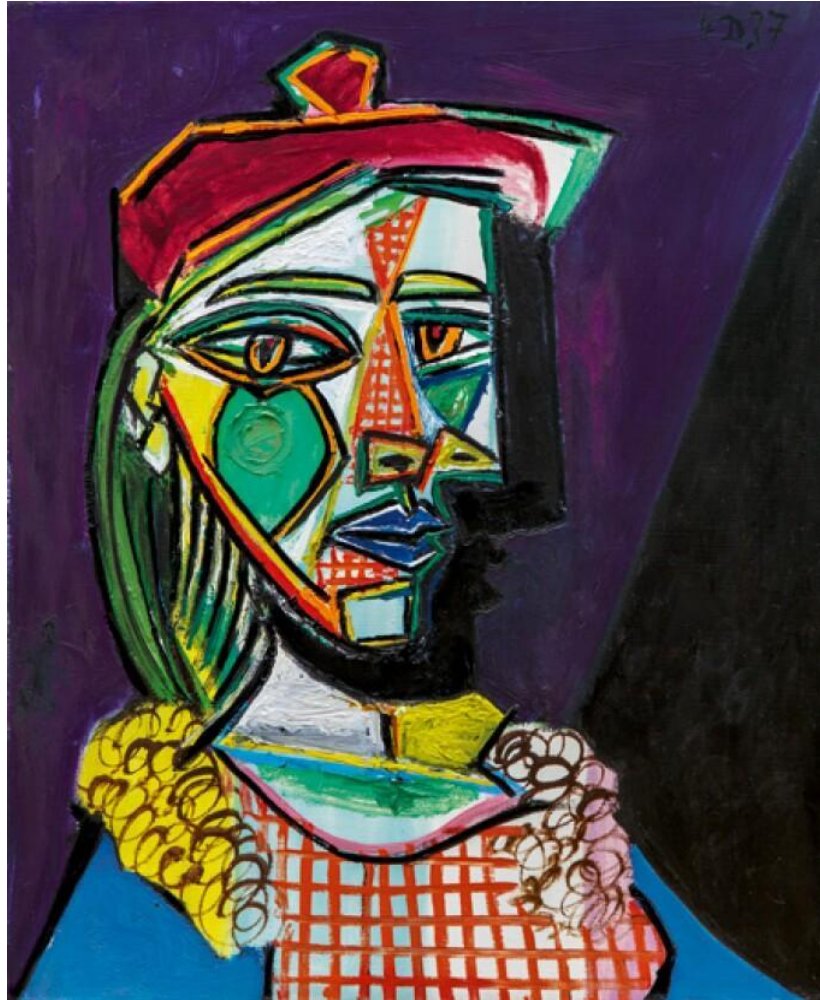
Veerle Symoens, "Face The Feminine" Mixed Media Collage Art 2019.



Paintings, mixed-media pieces, and collages are the works of Belgian artist Veerle Symoens. She began instinctively taking out pictures that drew her attention from every magazine she met while working as a journalist, making incredibly intimate collages. Veerle's mixed-media artwork was centered around feminine energy, a passion for color, and powerful yet lyrical compositions. She draws inspiration for her paintings from her travels and the natural world. The absorbing energy of vibrant healing forests, azure lagoons, untamed oceans, and lush woodlands is captured by Veerle. Her work is intuitive, vibrant, and full of energy. This collage is about empowering women advancement, to show support towards women giving them the boost in their life, in whatever they may be problems that they are struggling with they can do it, they can solve them. To show that women are not just any other women, that we also deserve to be treated fairly and equally with men.

Figure 9

Pablo Picasso, "FEMME AU BÉRET ET À LA ROBE QUADRILLÉE" (MARIE-THÉRÈSE WALTER), 1937.



In the last month of that historic year, 1937, he painted this bright, dramatic, and powerful portrait of his "golden muse," Marie-Thérèse Walter, which became the great masterwork of his career. Picasso's relationships with the ladies in his life were undoubtedly the center of his creative genius and were vital to both his intellectual and artistic processes. Picasso's painting *Femme au béret et à la robe quadrillée* (Marie-Thérèse Walter) depicts the changing dynamic between his new partner Dora Maar and his muse Marie-Thérèse Walter, to whom he was reportedly still committed at that time. In fact, it seems that he explored his feelings for the two ladies through the art. There is a conscious blurring of styles inspired by the two muses, reaching its zenith in the 'other' that appears behind the main figure in silhouette. Regardless of whether the shadow is a self-portrait, or a representation of Maar, conflict and dualism are implied. Picasso is quoted: "It must be painful for a girl to see in a painting that she is on the way out."

Figure 10

Irina Lesik and Andrei Shushvalyuk, "Pablo Picasso' inspired by cubist paintings", 1960.



Photo project by Pablo Picasso. Pablo Picasso, a Spanish painter, would undoubtedly have approved of these "reproductions" of his works. "Paintings by Pablo Picasso" is the name of a project by Irina Lesik and Andrei Shushvalyuk in which real individuals are captured in vivid colors and theatrical attire, just like the cubist works of the renowned Spanish artist. Photoshop or any other graphic editing program was not used in the creation of the artwork by the gifted photographers from the Moldovan city of Kishinev.

Figure 11

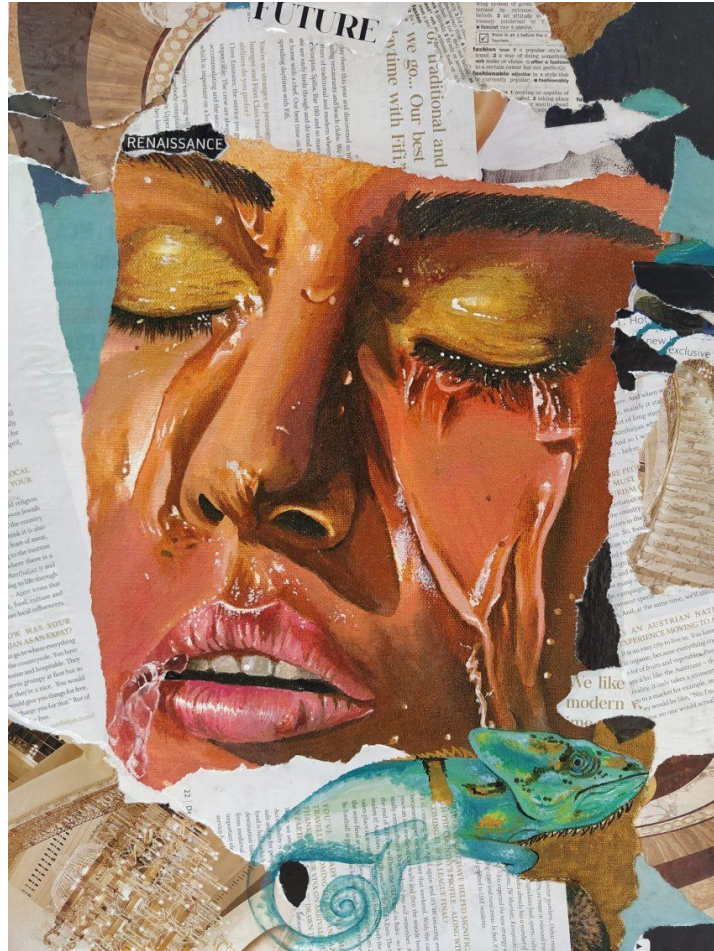
Peter Horvath, "Frida" Mixed Media Assemblage Art 2021.



Canadian artist Peter Horvath specializes in colorful and emotive mixed-media pieces that are based on photography. Peter uses both digital and analog approaches to make art that reinterprets narrative and meaning, driven by his desire to deconstruct and recontextualize. Peter uses a vibrant, dynamic style that highlights the beauty in chaos with juxtaposition. With a concentration on materials such as vintage American advertising materials and pop culture icons, Peter explores the bizarre, the nostalgic and the hypnagogic. Horvath's latest series "Heroes" combines street ephemera, movie posters, photographs, ink, acrylic, and spray paint. These densely layered assemblage portraits, which are reminiscent of the *Décollage* of the *Nouveau Réalistes* Mimmo Rotella and Jacques Villeglé from the 1960s, reflect Horvath's fascination with media consumption, cultural icons, and urban decay.

Figure 12

Kriti Dwivedi, "Chameleons" The medium is acrylic on canvas. 2021.



Despite the vast development and adaptation that human bodies have undergone over countless years, we frequently try to resist nature by placing unattainable beauty standards on people, especially women. Dwivedi discusses the ever-changing beauty standards for women, portrayed artistically with an acrylic on canvas painting titled “Chameleons.” The piece reflects on the unrealistic beauty standards set for women despite the evolution and adaptation of human bodies throughout ages. The narrative emphasizes the impact of highly edited lifestyle magazines and social media on women, drawing parallels with historical beauty practices like foot binding in China and Victorian corsets. The current gold standard, exemplified by Kim Kardashian’s body type, leads many women to seek plastic surgery to conform. The article notes the vulnerability of teenagers, excessively glamorizing youth and promoting an exclusive version that perpetuates feelings of inadequacy. The painting is framed with a collage, featuring hidden keywords related to fashion, eye-catching symbolism, and a chameleon, symbolizing the reduction of individuals to conformity. The artist advocates for fashion as a choice rather than a necessity, encouraging individuality and creativity.

Figure 13

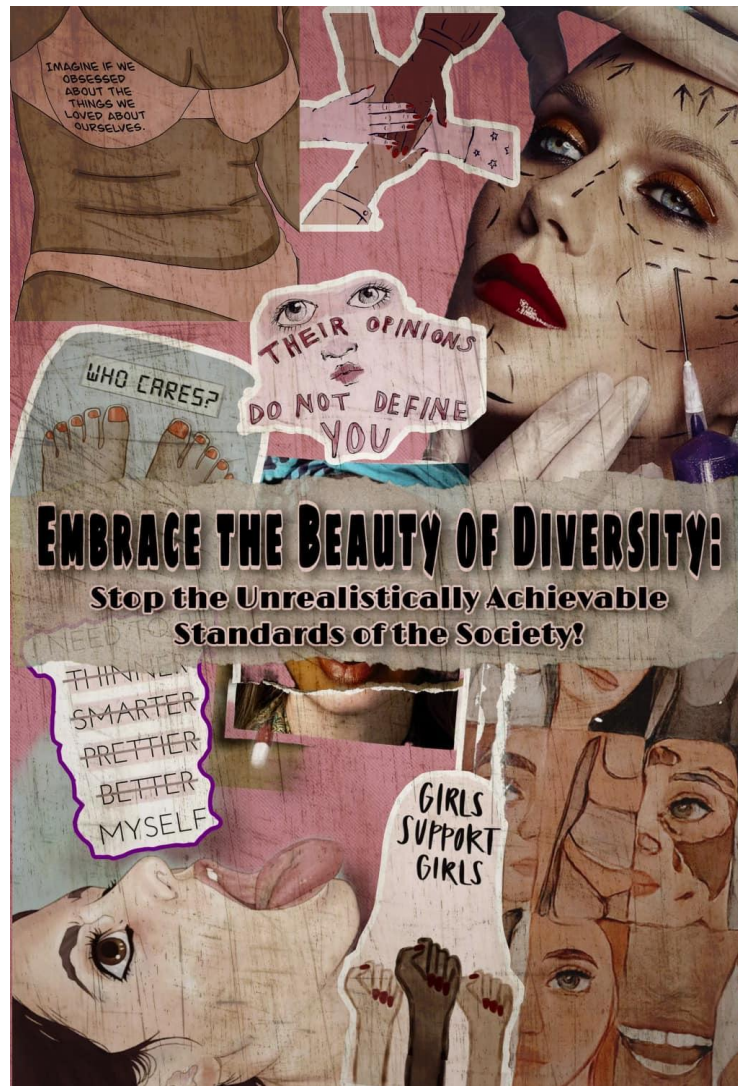
Wangechi Mutu, "You Are My Sunshine", 2015. Collage painting on paper,



To create unsettling figures that don't inspire aspiration but instead make the viewer consider some of the underlying assumptions of our world, such as race, gender, and antiquated colonial certainties, Mutu draws inspiration from a variety of sources, including pornography, anatomical texts, and style magazines. Through her Pin-Up series, which debuted at the start of the twenty-first century, Mutu initially made an impression on the traditional Western art world with her reflections on the body conflicted by racial ideology, injustice, war, and desire.

Figure 14

The World is One, “Embrace the Beauty of Diversity: Stop the Unrealistically Achievable Standards of Society!”, 2022.



Diversity extends beyond skin color, encompassing gender, sexuality, age, lifestyle, and varied needs. Globalization brings conveniences like online shopping and diverse cuisines but also introduces racialized beauty standards. Influenced by cultural factors, beauty ideals often include specific features, leading to issues like depression, low self-esteem, eating disorders, and cosmetic surgeries. Access to global shows perpetuates unrealistic beauty standards, especially affecting teenagers. To counter this, using social media to raise awareness about the harmful effects of such standards is essential. Advocating body positivity and embracing diverse beauty forms a united front against unrealistic norms. The call is to reject unrealistic standards, fostering an inclusive society that values all races, body shapes, hairstyles, and scars. Embracing uniqueness and self-love becomes the foundation for a healthier perspective on beauty in a globalized world.

Figure 15

Melanie Martinez, "Mrs. Potato Head", A song featured as the twelfth track on her debut album, Cry Baby, 2015.



This music video was one of her many famous songs in which she talks about a woman undergoing plastic surgeries to achieve and fit in the beauty standard that was set in the society. Her reference is the "Mrs. Potatohead" doll from the 1990s, which contains several stick-on characteristics to depict ladies who change their body parts through plastic surgery. She then inquires as to whether they are content knowing that such deeds cannot be undone. She thinks that to feel more confident and conform to the media's ideal of beauty, these ladies alter their natural appearance. The final consequence, though, is a lifelong sense of insecurity about one's own appearance and if a significant other will still be there when their altered portions start to degrade.

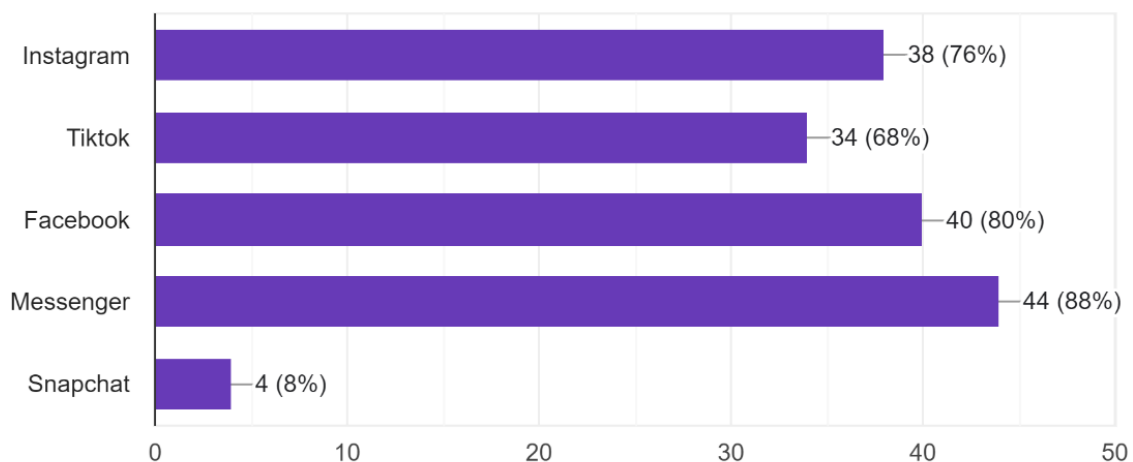
Results and Discussions

Survey

For the Primary Data Gathering of the thesis, I conducted an online survey and sent in to 50 participants in all genders and sexual orientation. And among the participants, 68% of the respondents are Female, 28% of them are Male, 1% is Gay, and another 1% for a non-binary respondent. For the ages of the respondents are ranging from fifteen (15) to twenty-four (24), 16% of the respondent are fifteen (15) and sixteen (16), 80% are twenty (20) to twenty-two (22) respondents, and 6% are ages twenty-three (23) and twenty-four (24) years old. The right target ages that I needed for my thesis since they are part of the Generation Z and all of them have social media accounts and has since in the date bellow this are the percentages of the social medias that they are currently have and using.

Figure 16

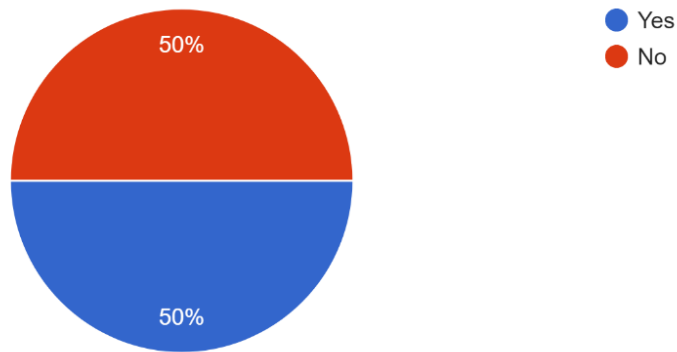
Survey Question no. 2.



Shown above were the results of how many among the respondents are using the given social media platforms, and scene in the graph that only four (4) out of fifty (50) of them has snapchat. This shows that there are some individuals are no longer using snapchats since the development filters that are now can be used directly through some of the social medias.

Figure 17

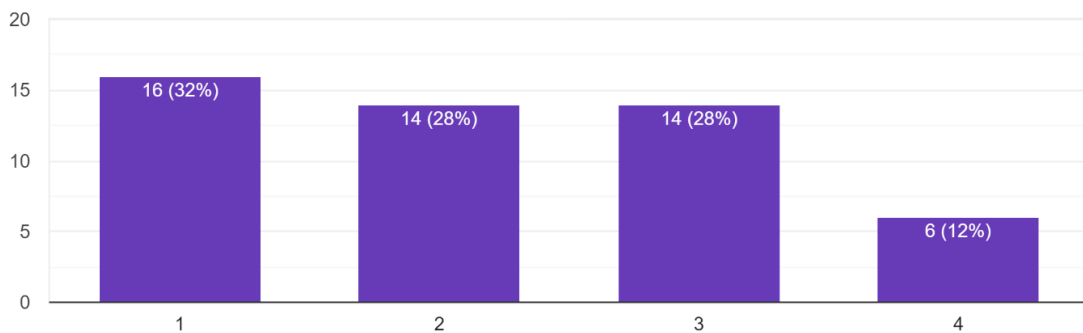
Survey Question no. 3.



In this graph, shows that the response and opinions of the respondents are in half both resulting for each to have 50% “Yes” and 50% for “No”. This explains that both sides have different opinions and reasons for using and not using filters on the photos that they post on their social media. Showing that there are still some individuals who are confident enough in their own unfiltered appearances, but that does not mean that the other individuals who still use filters on their photos are not confident with themselves; this just means that they have their own ways as to why they use filters.

Figure 18

Survey Question no. 4.



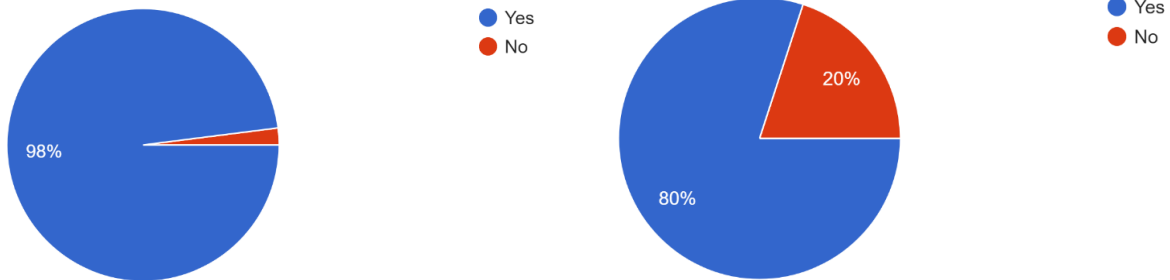
This graph shows the result of how often the respondents are on relying to filters whenever they post photos online, being one (1) as “Never” and four (4) as “Very Often.” And as seen in the results that only 12% of the respondents rely very often to filters in editing or posting their photos on social medias and a majority of 32% of them never relayed on filters.

For the remaining results, both show a 28% result, indicating that some individuals “Often” or “Almost Never” use filters or edit their photos before posting them on their social media accounts. This shows that some individuals are divided when it comes to their own views

and uses of filters in their daily lives; some use filters for editing to create a specific style and to make the photo much more pleasing to the audience's eyes.

Figure 19 & 20

Survey Question no. 5 & no. 6.

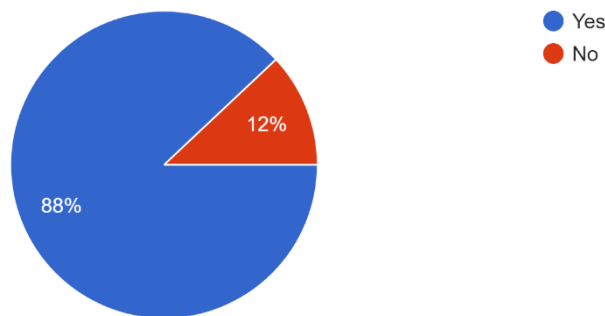


The graph on the left shown above is the result of where the respondents were asked whether they had posted their own unfiltered photos online, and it was seen in the result that only 2% of the respondents answered “no,” while the rest said “yes.”. This shows that the individuals were still able to show their unfiltered selves online and be confident about it.

While the graph shown on the right shows the result of the responses to the question asking each individual about having to look in the mirror and complimenting themselves, as shown in the graph, only 20% of them answered “no,” that they have never looked in the mirror to complement their appearances, and 80% of them agreed to have looked themselves in the mirror and were able to give compliments for their appearance.

Figure 21

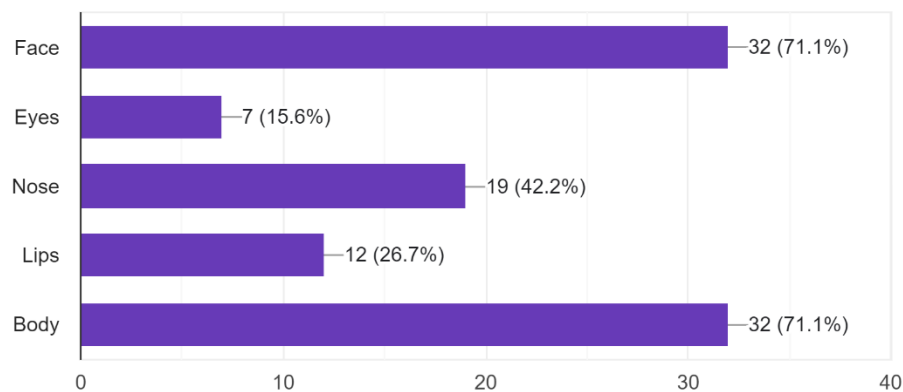
Survey Question no. 7.



But, as shown in this result, a majority of 88% of respondents answered that they had insecurities among themselves and had to struggle with the fact that, despite having confidence inside, insecurities still reside inside each of us. This explains that even if we are somewhat confident enough to show and post ourselves on different social media sites, we still cannot deny the thought of being judged by millions of eyes that will see our photos, even considering the fact that some individuals have become conscious of the likes and reactions of others. Resulting in having insecurities and also being conscious of their own facial features and body.

Figure 22

Survey Question no. 8.



In the graph above shows the number of percentages about which parts about themselves do they fill insecure about, and as we can see here a lot of the responses are about the “Face” and “Body”. This shows that despite the confidence they have in posting photos of themselves on social medias, the filling of insecurities will still linger within us. That through social media, insecurities of people worsen while looking at pictures of other people with attractive facial features and body portions, and how AI programmed filters that can fix face features are being used as a basis by some to achieve their perfect beauty standard.

People use filters for a multitude of reasons. And in the last two questions in whereas, the respondents were asked about their opinion about “Why do people use filters?”, the responses follow as, some people do it to improve their appearance, such as when applying makeup to appear young and appealing on camera. It helps people feel better about themselves by disguising insecurities and promoting confidence. Filters work as a digital beauty kit, cleaning skin, making faces appear slimmer, and enhancing presentation in general. They act as a kind of mask, hiding imperfections but allowing the true self to show through. People use filters to hide their flaws and project their best selves onto the world to find confidence and contentment. It is a tool for amusement, aesthetic enhancement, and inflating one's self-confidence. In the end, filters provide a way for people to project a version of themselves that satisfies their standards of presentation and attractiveness and to feel good about their image, both online and offline.

In the last question about filters being able to help in boosting one's self-love, a total of 56% answers "Yes", 10% answers "No", and 34% answers "It depends" or have half opinions for both, one even called Filters as a "Double edged sword", saying that as filters can be as easy as adjusting the hue of your face to fully blur out any imperfections. While receiving affirmations from people online might boost one's self-esteem, it can also have the opposite effect by making one excessively critical of perceived flaws. Views on whether filters can increase self-love are divided. Some people think they do because filters can improve appearance and make people feel more attractive, which boosts confidence. They might provide you a brief boost of confidence, particularly if you feel good about the altered photo or get praises. On the other hand, some contend that an over-reliance on filters can erode one's sense of self-worth. Overuse might result in inflated notions of one's actual appearance and unattainable ideals of beauty. Comparing filtered and unfiltered photos all the time might undermine self-esteem and exacerbate insecurities. Ultimately, a person's perspective, usage, and the balance they strike between accepting who they are and wanting to improve themselves will determine whether filters have a positive or bad impact on their ability to love themselves.

In conclusion, the survey conducted among 50 participants revealed insights into the relationship between individuals, social media, and filter usage. While opinions on filters were divided, with some using them for aesthetic enhancement and others preferring natural appearance, the majority posted unfiltered photos online. Despite this, insecurities regarding facial and bodily features were pervasive, exacerbated by comparisons to filtered images and societal beauty standards. Regarding the impact of filters on self-love, opinions varied. While some believed they could enhance self-esteem by improving appearance, others cautioned against over-reliance, noting the potential for filters to distort reality. Ultimately, the findings highlighted the complex interplay between filters, self-perception, and self-love in the digital age, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach that promotes authenticity and genuine self-acceptance.

Secondary Data Collection

In this part, I have gathered reliable studies and literature supporting my topics, somewhat answering the problem caused by filters and the influence of social media on us. I aim to have a deeper insight into the chosen topic, understand the cause and effect of the said problem, and expand my knowledge about filters, social media, and their effects on mental health.

An article titled "*Snapchat filters changing young women's attitudes*" written by Habib, A., Ali, T., Nazir, Z., and Mahfooz, A. (2002) from *Annals of Medicine and Surgery*, stated that 4.48 billion people use social media worldwide, with Snapchat being one of the most popular platforms with a vast range of filters and editing capabilities. As of early 2022, Snapchat has 332 million daily active users and over 6 billion snaps made daily, making it the 12th most popular social media platform globally. Of its user base, 54.4% are female. Although women manage their profiles and publish photos more frequently than men do, little research has been done on how these images affect female viewers. It is critical to comprehend how women's

perceptions of reality are impacted by exposure to highly filtered photographs on social media sites like Snapchat. Furthermore, disparities between online personas and real-life identities may be seen by offline contacts, potentially drawing criticism. Additional investigation is required to comprehend how these filters and editing tools have significantly changed the way that young women view beauty. Several indicators suggest that young women are using Snapchat filters and photo-editing techniques in an alarming way, altering their appearance in photos to the point where their true selves are no longer acceptable. They start noticing flaws in their looks, like a large forehead or an odd facial shape, that nobody else even observes. To acquire the perfect selfie, they spend a lot of time shooting, retaking, and editing them. Young women often look through old pictures to conceal any flaws or blemishes. They act in this way, which aggravates them, makes them feel miserable, and damages their sense of self-worth. In the end, people want to modify the way they seem because they think that's how they should appear in the filtered version of themselves. This suggests that they are losing the ability to evaluate how they seem in the real world. When young women see an unfiltered snapshot of themselves, they often respond by feeling self-conscious (Habib, A. et al., 2002).

Another study conducted by Tenorio, A. (2023), about the complex effects of artificial intelligence (AI) on cultural norms of beauty as perceived by the Philippines' Generation Z. It examines the ways in which various cultural and societal ideas of beauty in the Philippines interact with AI-powered picture augmentation, filters, and beauty algorithms. The intricate interaction between societal values and technical advancement is demonstrated by these AI-enhanced images that have been widely shared online. AI-powered technologies have the potential to unintentionally reinforce dominant beauty standards or maintain various cultural aesthetics by faithfully augmenting and expressing them. To guarantee that the development and application of AI raises the global standards of beauty that users perceive while preventing cultural appropriation, a balance between innovation and cultural sensitivity is essential.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the awareness of and use of AI beauty and image enhancing techniques. From social media and advertising to DIY or “Do it yourself” photo editing, these technologies are becoming more and more commonplace in many facets of our life. The extensive application of artificial intelligence (AI) methods for picture augmentation has brought up moral questions about arbitrary beauty standards, particularly for the varied aesthetic tastes of the Filipino people. This essay has looked at how it gives Generation Z false beauty standards and encourages comparison, which has an impact on mental health. These tools can impact people's views of beauty by amplifying the emphasis on specific physical traits, particularly in the Philippines where colonial influences have led to a widespread image consciousness. This younger generation's perceptions and usage of these tools will probably not change in the future due to the continuous development and regulation of them (Tenorio, A., 2023).

A journal article by McComb, C., Vanman, E., and Tobin, S. (2023), about a Meta-Analysis of the Effects of Social Media Exposure to Upward Comparison Targets on Self-Evaluations and Emotions. This analysis tackles about how a rising number of individuals consider social media to be an indispensable part of their everyday life, and it has become a

ubiquitous component of modern culture. Due to its widespread use, there are countless possibilities to evaluate oneself against others. The purpose of this meta-analysis was to produce causal conclusions on the effects of exposure to upward comparison goals on self-evaluations and emotions in the setting of social media by combining and summarizing the results of earlier experimental research.

Nearly 15 years of study on the effects of social comparison on social media are compiled in this meta-analysis. The findings showed that looking at upward comparison objectives has a detrimental impact on users' feelings and opinions of themselves. Users who were exposed to upward comparisons reported negative consequences on their self-esteem, mental health, body image, and subjective well-being. The results of the current study indicate that there is a propensity to not integrate on social media and that it is more typical for users to suffer the negative consequences of a contrastive response, which is consistent with earlier social comparison studies conducted in other contexts. In the future, it will be critical to develop strategies to counteract the detrimental impacts of being exposed to upward comparison objectives on social media (McComb, C., et al., 2023).

A journal article about “Social Media and Its Effects on Beauty” written by Henriques, M. and Patnaik, D., (2021). Given how closely linked mental and physical health are, beauty is concerned with both. Regardless of a person's genetic makeup, environment, profession, or dietary requirements, making snap decisions to change one's body composition can have medium- and long-term consequences. The impact of social media on beauty standards is examined in this chapter. The literature on how social media influences beauty trends, body image, and self-esteem issues has been compiled by the scholars. There is evidence to suggest that social media has a detrimental impact on people, encouraging them to follow dangerous beauty trends to fit in and be accepted by society.

Social media instantly affects attractiveness, as more apps appear online and technology advances minute by minute. People are looking to social media handles for acceptance and support because of the constantly shifting body images that are portrayed online. Both positive and bad changes in self-perception have been brought about by the selfie culture. While most of the current study concentrates on the detrimental effects of social media on attractiveness, body positivity and the use of social media as a platform for self-acceptance—whether or not one is beautiful—should receive greater attention (Henriques, M. & Patnaik, D., 2021).

An article by Defino, J. was released in 2023 about the issue where as numerous states filed lawsuits against Instagram and Facebook owner Meta, alleging the corporation intentionally causes harm to its customers. From the perspective of psychological health, studies and surveys undoubtedly demonstrate that women of all ages, but especially adolescent girls, are more likely to suffer from anxiety and depression related to appearance, body dysmorphia, facial dysmorphia, compulsive beauty behaviors, disordered eating, self-harm, and even suicide. And a lot of things can be linked, in one way or another, to the increasingly virtual, visual environment in which we live. The beauty business is seeing a lot of developments that are directly influenced by Instagram. An excellent illustration of this, in my opinion, is the phenomena known as

"Instagram face," a term that was created to characterize how real-world operations and procedures have been influenced by Instagram filters.

Cosmetic surgeons and injectors frequently see that patients change their own photographs using photo-editing apps and filters, which are widely available on social media sites like Instagram. Occasionally, patients express a wish to acquire the altered appearance shown in these digitally enhanced photos, which are displayed during consultations with plastic surgeons or injectors. Thus, that is a medical opinion that a real doctor is providing to patients. Of course, there are a plethora of possible hazards and negative consequences associated with all these habits, including mortality, as well as the procedures that are being done in response to Instagram filters. Teenage females' problems have always been disregarded and brushed under the rug. Beauty and other such things are viewed as trivial hobbies. And if they are disregarded, we don't receive enough research or data regarding the negative effects of beauty culture, even though these issues have significant and detrimental cultural ramifications (Defino, J., 2023).

Conclusion

The survey findings indicate a decrease in Snapchat usage among respondents, likely due to filters available on other platforms. Opinions on photo filters were evenly split, with 50% for and against their use, suggesting varying perspectives on self-image and confidence. While only 12% relied heavily on filters, 32% never used them, highlighting diverse preferences. Additionally, most respondents posted unfiltered photos online and complimented themselves in the mirror, yet 88% admitted to insecurities, revealing a complex relationship between online presentation, confidence, and societal judgment. The opinions of the responses in the question 'can filters boost self-love?' are both in-half, some agrees, and some disagrees—in here, their responses vary to different views in using filters and what filters are form them.

Thus, I provide visual representation using the medium of a photography collage to raise self-awareness of Generation Z and the other younger audiences regarding the effects of filters and social media to us. For the result of the study, based on the post-survey, I was able to assess and gain other opinions from the responses of my participants in accordance with their own experiences about using filters.

Recommendations

Research Topic

This research topic is still open for improvements in terms the timeline of how preliminary surveys were created and conducted. The first plan in my survey was to gather 100 responses but given the time and considering the possibility that some participants may not be able to answer the survey form due to lack of time, I limited the number of responses to 50. Thus, proper planning of survey question should be considered to be able to gain more responses, giving out survey questions earlier and considering the participants who the survey should be given.

Creative Process

The process of creating a photography missed media collage art as the thesis output of my study can still be enhanced in term of the how it will be created and executed. The collage art can still be improved by using different other materials to be used as a collage, may it be by photoshop, or a better way of making it interactive other than magnets. I have explored different materials to use to in the photography mixed media collage art, trying to look for better ideas and materials to execute the project properly.

By then, the Gantt chart and the production timeline can help me plan a more effective way of working and producing the output, preparing the materials, art studies, and style that would make the creation of the output much easier. **Lastly**, it showed that eight (8) of the responses' opinion about filters are still undecided and considers two possibilities depending on the situation and use of filters. These recommendations are vital for the future references and future researchers upon creating an effective visual representation that can help communicate the problem to their target audiences.

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