How Aesthetic Lifestyle Content Creates Unrealistic Life Expectations.

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Abstract –

Aesthetic lifestyle content is one of the essential components of social media and plays a significant role in determining the way individuals think about success, beauty, and life in general. The concept of the aesthetic lifestyle, which includes well-planned lifestyles, homes with great interior designs, amazing experiences, etc., gives us a glimpse of the ideal reality that is not only attainable but also not entirely perfect. The main aim of this study is to identify the impact of the aesthetic lifestyle content on the audience's perception of life. The study is qualitative in nature as the findings of the study are based on the analysis of the content of the various social media posts and feedback from the audience, specifically the young audience who are the major consumers of the aesthetic lifestyle content. The findings of the study revealed that the audience perceives the ideal reality in such a way that they are not only dissatisfied with life but are also feeling as though they are "falling behind" when they are actually doing great in life. At the same time, however, there were some who recognized that this type of content could actually be motivating in small doses, and as such, some acknowledgment of the other side of the coin was made. As such, this study has demonstrated the ability of the aesthetic media of the lifestyle aesthetic to create a situation in which inspiration and expectation could become blurred, and as such, it is clear that these types of media need to be engaged with in a much more critical fashion.

Key Words: *Aesthetics, Social media, perception, Idealism ,Dissatisfaction , Youth Motivation.*

1.INTRODUCTION

A major change in the pattern of engagement of the audience with the content related to their lifestyle has been observed with the advent of digital media. In the recent past, it has been observed that the audience is highly engaged with the content related to the aesthetic lifestyle, which includes visually appealing content or the idealized representation of the lifestyle of the audience.

From the highly organized workspace and flawless morning routine of the audience to the luxurious experiences that the audience experiences during their travel and the idealized images of the bodies of the audience, this type of content includes the lifestyle of the audience in such a manner that it is not only desirable but also unattainable. The driving force behind the aesthetic form of lifestyle content is algorithm-based media channels that are focused on the development of content that not only has an aesthetic appeal but also has an emotionally stimulating effect on the user as well. This has created a very immersive and stimulating environment, as the user is encouraged to constantly scroll through these media channels, which are filled with the perfect representation of life. This perfect representation of life has been created in order to immediately capture the user's attention, as well as stimulate their interest through repetition and relatability. This has created some key concerns with regards to the reality of the user.

This could also lead to the way in which the person perceives success, beauty, productiveness, and happiness. The audience could also start perceiving the idealized life in comparison to the way in which they are living. It

could also lead to the development of unrealistic expectations, as the audience could perceive that the idealized life is perfect. It could also lead to dissatisfaction and low self-esteem, as the audience could perceive that they are forced to be perfect, as the idealized life is perfect.

The influence of aesthetic lifestyle content is particularly significant on youth as they tend to be more active on social media and are at a stage in life when they are in the process of building their personal values and identities. The competitive nature of online media, wherein individuals compete with one another to prove that their lifestyle is better compared to others, is another factor that adds fuel to this. The influence is not just limited to content on entertainment but is also on lifestyle. This is an illustration of the basic idea that forms the concept of the attention economy, as the main focus is on ensuring that the attention of the audience is achieved. As aesthetic content remains at the top in terms of dominance in the online platforms, it is imperative that the implications that aesthetic content has on the audience's perception be analysed. Therefore, the study aims at analysing the implications that aesthetic lifestyle content has on the creation of unrealistic expectations in life and its effect on the audience's perception of reality in the modern world.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1.   Issue: 2025 Kiki Virenanda Pitaloka

This study looks at how digital media has changed content consumption, particularly with the rise of short-form material. With the rise of smart phones and fast-paced online platforms, material has grown shorter, more graphic, and geared towards instant engagement. This trend reflects evolving user behaviour, in which individuals prefer quick and easy to understand information. The attention economy theory outlines how digital platforms compete for consumers' limited attention
by consistently providing intriguing and fastmoving material. As a result, individuals frequently transition between information, limiting their capacity to focus for extended periods of time. The study also examines how short-form content influences cognitive engagement and attention span. While it improves accessibility and amusement, it may impair deep thought and patience with complex information.

Finally, algorithm-driven platforms influence user behaviour by personalising material and encouraging ongoing consumption, resulting in compulsive scrolling and fragmented attention patterns.

2) Issue 7, October 2015 Annapoorna Shetty1, Reshma Rosario2, Sawad Hyder2

This study uses a questionnaire-based survey of 100 participants to investigate the impact of social networking sites on youth, notably in the sector of education. It seeks to comprehend the consequences of social media, identify the most popular platforms, and investigate the attitudes and usage habits of young people. The data indicate that Facebook is the most popular platform, followed by Skype, Twitter, YouTube, and Myspace. The study examines both the positive and negative sides of social media. On the plus side, it promotes education, improves communication, and raises political consciousness among youth. It does, however, provide a number of issues, including exposure to unwelcome messages, unethical content, and hurtful posts that may cause social and religious conflict. Overall, the study suggests that social media has a significant impact on youth, having both positive and negative consequences for their schooling and social behaviour.

3) Social Comparison & Identity

Issue: 2018 chia-Chen Yang
This study investigates how social media affects youth identity formation, particularly during their transition to college life. It focuses on two sorts of social comparisons: ability comparison and opinion comparison, as well as the
psychological consequences. The findings show that comparing abilities on social media causes rumination, which raises identity discomfort among young people. In contrast, comparing opinions fosters introspection, which has no negative impact on identity. The study concludes that different types of social comparison have diverse effects on mental processes and are crucial in shaping youth identity.

4)FOMO & Social Media

JP Abel, CL Buff, SA Burr 2016
This study looks into the idea of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and its association with social media use. It creates and evaluates a scale for measuring FOMO based

on survey data collected from participants. The findings indicate that those with higher levels of FOMO spend more time on social media and are more influenced by what they see online. It is also linked to negative emotions including worry, irritation, and feelings of inadequacy. The study suggests that FOMO has a major impact on the behaviour and emotional well-being of social media users.

5) Lifestyle & Media Influence

Issue 2002 Patrick Vyncke

This study investigates the concept of lifestyle in marketing communication and how it affects customer behaviour and media usage. It emphasises psychographic segmentation, which is based on activities, interests, and opinions, to better understand audience preferences. The study also provides novel techniques for creating more meaningful lifestyle categories by combining values, aesthetic trends, and life visions. According to the findings, these characteristics provide more in-depth insights than standard demographic variables such as age or gender, and they are extremely successful in analysing consumer decisions across many sectors such as media, tourism, and products.
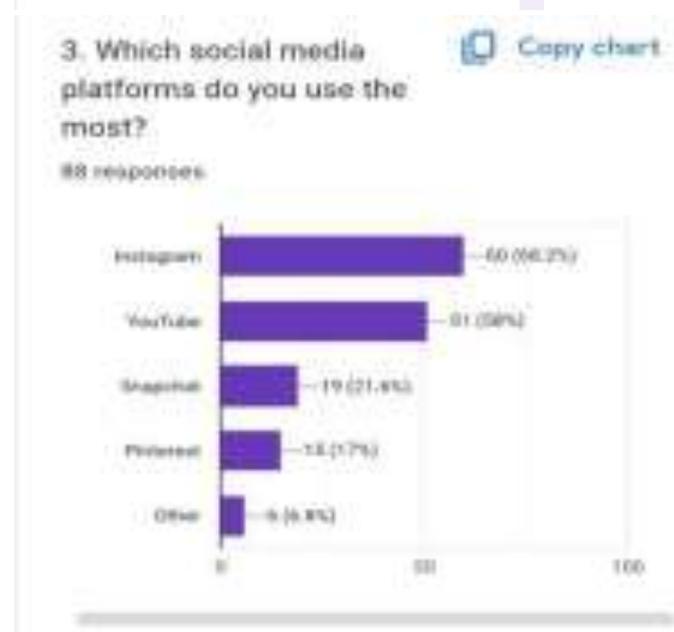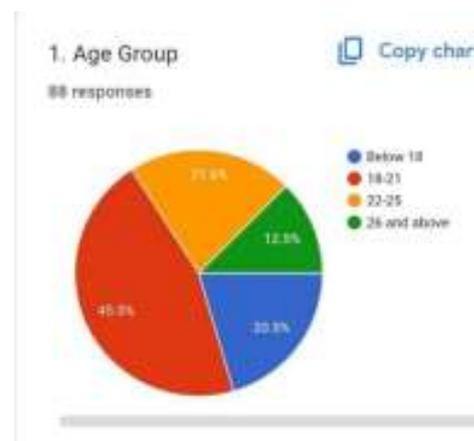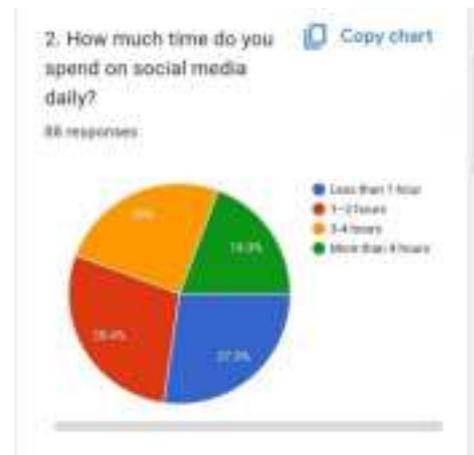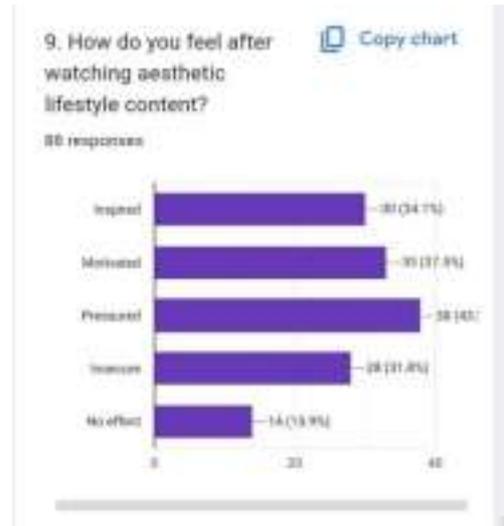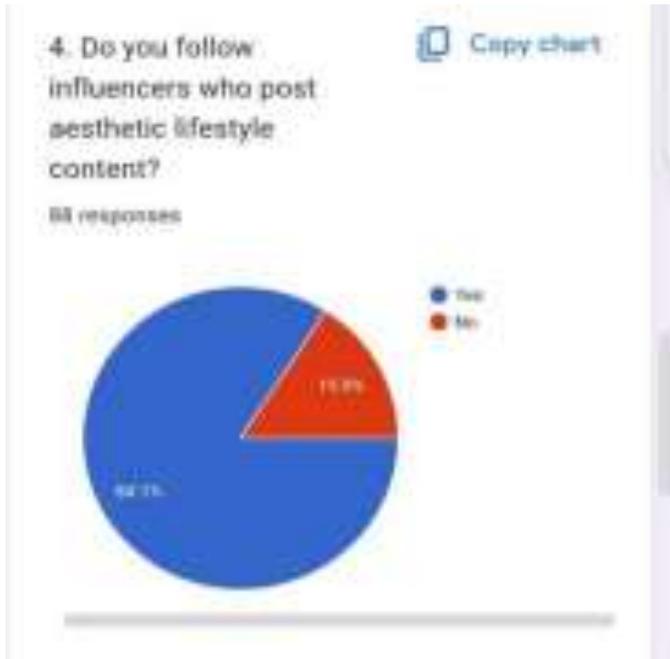
METHODOLOGY

In this research, a quantitative research design was used to study how aesthetic lifestyle content creates unrealistic life expectations among social media users. The main data collection method involved a structured questionnaire to gather primary information on the audience's social media usage patterns and their views on aesthetic content.

The questionnaire was shared through WhatsApp, which made it easy for respondents to access. The questions were structured and closed-ended to collect clear and consistent information. It was designed to gather data on the audience's age group, time spent on social media, preferred platforms, exposure to influencers, types of aesthetic content consumed, and emotional responses such as comparison, pressure, and motivation.

A total of 88 responses were collected for the study, providing a sufficient sample to analyse general trends. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics, mainly percentage analysis, to identify patterns in the

responses. Frequency distribution was also used for questions that had multiple responses. The quantitative method allowed for the assessment of trends in a measurable way. It helped to provide a systematic understanding of how aesthetic lifestyle content influences perceptions and contributes to unrealistic life expectations in the current digital environment.

4. Do you follow influencers who post aesthetic lifestyle content?

88 responses

9. How do you feel after watching aesthetic lifestyle content?

88 responses

5. What type of aesthetic content do you usually watch?

88 responses

7. Have you ever compared your life with people you see on social media?

88 responses

FINDINGS

The survey results show that respondents strongly engage with aesthetic lifestyle content. A large portion of those surveyed are aged 18 to 21 (44.5%), which means young people are the main consumers of this type of content. Regarding time spent on social media, 28.4% of respondents reported spending 1 to 2 hours each day. Additionally, 27.3% spend less than 1 hour, 25% spend 3 to 4 hours, and 19.3% spend more than 4 hours daily. This indicates regular exposure to digital platforms.

When looking at platform usage, Instagram (68.2%) and YouTube (58%) are the most popular, emphasizing the importance of attractive content for engaging audiences. Furthermore, 84.1% of respondents follow influencers who share aesthetic lifestyle content, suggesting a strong exposure to curated lifestyles. In terms of content preference, 42% primarily consume fashion and beauty content, while 22.5% Favor travel and lifestyle posts. This highlights a clear interest in aspirational visuals. When asked if social media showcases a perfect lifestyle, most respondents agreed, reflecting their belief in idealized realities. Moreover, 59.1% of respondents often compare their lives with those they see on social media. Others admitted to doing this sometimes or rarely, showing how common this behaviour is. Additionally, 75% of respondents believe aesthetic lifestyle content creates unrealistic expectations, while fewer were unsure or disagreed, indicating a widespread perception of its effects.

The emotional responses were varied, with 33 individuals (37.5%) feeling motivated and 30 (34.1%) feeling inspired. However, a larger number reported negative emotions, with 38 respondents (43.2%) feeling
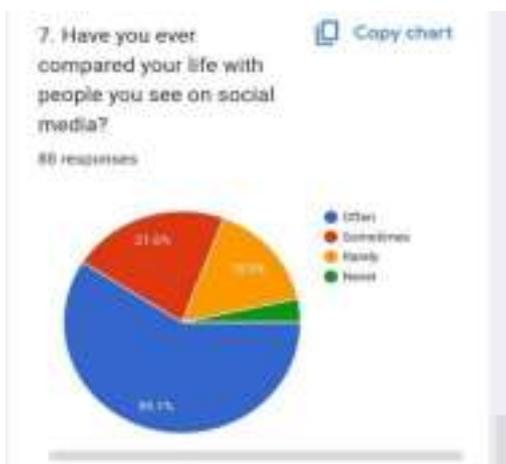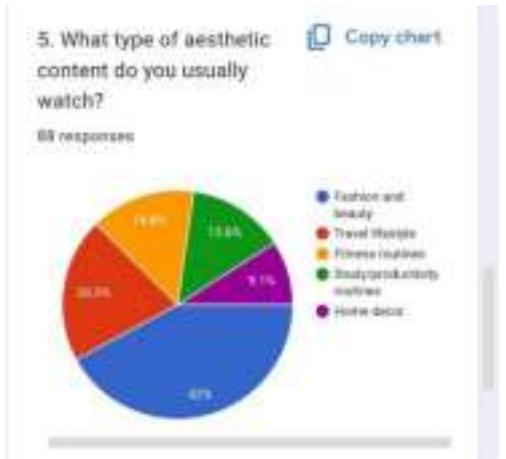
pressured and 28 (31.8%) feeling insecure. This shows the psychological impact of such content. The results indicate that consistent exposure to aesthetic lifestyle content leads to comparison, pressure, and unrealistic life expectations. They also suggest that this content significantly influences how individuals perceive success, beauty, and lifestyle in the digital age, revealing a strong link between social media use and perceptions of reality.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, this study demonstrates how aesthetic lifestyle content has become a decisive influence over the way individuals view their lives within our contemporary digital landscape. With platforms like Instagram and YouTube often displaying lifestyles of the rich and famous, users mostly young people are seeing an ideal vision of reality that is hardly real more than ever.

Our findings are telling, noticing how motivating and inspiring certain content can have drawbacks, common expectations that become unrealistic. A lot of people look at the lives they see online and compare themselves, which creates pressure, insecurity and dissatisfaction. This exposure over time influences how people perceive success, beauty and happiness. The impact of social media algorithms is also hugely significant.

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