



## The Effect of Size-o Instagram Beauty Carousels on Thin-Ideal Internalization among Generation Z

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### ABSTRACT

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This study examined the effect of size-o Instagram beauty carousels on thin-ideal internalization, affecting self-esteem, inferiority complex, beauty consciousness, and social appearance anxiety among Generation Z. The sample consisted of 300 university students aged 19 to 24 years and was randomly selected. Questionnaire comprised of demographic of thin ideal internalization that shared with the participants for engagement with size-o Instagram beauty carousel, modified Instagram Photo Activity Index – Appearance-Ideal Content scale and for Thin-Ideal Internalization SATAQ-4R (Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire-4-Revised) were used. It was found that most Gen Z are trend followers, so they internalize size-o beauty ideals, leading to lower self-esteem, more inferiority complex, and increased beauty consciousness, whereas personal experiences lead to fear of judgment, so they do not show social anxiety. The results are discussed under the Social Comparison Theory. Results indicated that the hypothesis is partially supported, which means that social anxiety is affected differently because participants do not want to show that they have social anxiety, so they show that there is no or very little effect.

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## Introduction

Carousels and other mixed multimedia elements are a lot more vibrant than photos, requiring followers to spend more time on a post to view every image (Jones & Lee, 2021, p.104).

Instagram carousel post is a collection of up to ten photos or videos (Alfonzo, 2019, p.33) uploaded in a day. According to Szeto, Instagram has over 1 billion active monthly users and 500 million daily users worldwide, and almost 40% of the US population reports using Instagram, an increase from around 30% in 2017 (2021, p.100). Users can swipe right or left to look at a carousel post, which increases potential post-interaction among Generation Z (Wahid & Gonarto, 2021, p.176). Instagram prefers image-based content, either in the form of photos or video updates, and provides an in-built tool that offers a variety of filters to enhance the appearance of a photo or video. According to studies, Instagram post likes are correlated with aesthetic preferences and act as a stand-in for favorable comments and a feeling of social approval (Ahmadi & Ieamsom, 2021, p.102).

Generation Z, or Zoomers, are familiar with the internet, as defined by Schwieger and Ladwig, the generation born between 1996 and 2012. The authors have referred to Generation Z as Tweens, Baby Boomers, The Founders, Plurals, Homeland Generation, Generation 9/11, iGeneration, and Post-Millennials (2018, p.46).

Generation Z is commonly called “digital Natives who grew up in the era of the internet, smartphones, and digitalized high technology, using social media aggressively daily (Yildiz et al., 2024). Imagine scrolling through Instagram and getting bombarded by size-0 models presenting the 'perfect' body in every carousel. The constant exposure to these ideal images and videos increases comparison that quietly reshaping self-esteem, increasing anxiety, and redefining what it means “to be beautiful.” Thin-ideal internalization is cognitively accepting, applying to oneself, and promoting low body fat appearance or size 0. According to Schaefer et al. (2015), thin body internalization is an image of the body you want to own, which is directly associated with self-esteem, eating habits, and appearance in young people. As Anixiadis et al. (2019) found that exposure to Instagram for thin ideal images has relationship with appearance comparison which negative responses and focusing on the importance to shape the perception of people about appearance. In 2024, Yao et al. (2024) revealed that there is relevance of thin ideal internalization to appear thin, size-0, which leads to social appearance anxiety. Further studies explored the size-0 phenomenon; for example, Cho et al. (2025) expressed that size-0 influencers are more persuasive and attractive compared to size-14 influencers. The perceived attractiveness was higher for size-0 ( $M=6.11$ ) than for size-14 ( $M=5.6$ ). According to researchers, people compare themselves to those they perceive as thinner. The body size-0 is considered wise and ideal in today's world, and the media is promoting it (Bian & Wang, 2015, p.1184-1185). The societal obsession with thinness began in the 1990s when the term "Size Zero" was introduced to describe the unhealthy and thin bodies of models like Kate Moss (Ferreday, 2013, p.797). After leaving the catwalk in 2006, fashion model Luisel Ramos died of problems brought on by anorexia nervosa. Her death was noteworthy because the fashion industry did nothing to stop it. Those who are slim have little to no visible fat, flat stomachs, prominent collarbones, and, in some cases, a visible jawline due to low face fat, a part of size 0 (McCann, 2022a, p.15). Empirical evidence suggests that the widespread representation of size-0 models negatively affects the self-assessments of adolescent girls and adult women, resulting in widespread body dissatisfaction among young women. As a result, size zero has become a global social issue that affects the daily lives of ordinary women (Bian & Foxall, 2013, p.485). Content producers, influencers, and marketers may choose the best formats to improve content strategy, reach, exposure, and audience interaction by taking into account these variants, which show how people connect with various post kinds (Rivadeneira & Loor, 2024, p.182604). Instagram Reels, which are made for really engaging material, have been incredibly effective in changing the way that Generation Z consumes content. Numerous studies have examined how short video clips affect user engagement, with a particular emphasis on user motives and behaviors (Doloi, 2024, p.21 and 22).

In the Western world, slimness or being thin is a beauty criterion. For the sake of acceptance and beauty consciousness, the Western world revolutionized the concept of beauty, whereas in Eastern societies, this phenomenon gained attention in the age of Instagram, where Size-0 became a symbol of beauty, and every model in advertisements tried to be seen in Size-0. Studies revealed various psychological, physical, and social impacts on females in Western societies.

### **Problem Statement**

Researchers found that it generates self-esteem, beauty consciousness, an inferiority complex, and social anxiety. Social scientists used two or three variables in their studies. Whereas this study surveys the effect of Size-0 Insta-Beauty Carousel on the Psychology of Gen-Z living in Islamabad, it's a demographic microcosm of the entire country. The city acts as a melting pot for Gen-Z migrating from rural and urban areas to the capital. People from all over Pakistan are represented in the form of admissions in college universities, and jobs. The cascading effect on self-esteem, social anxiety, and eating behaviors among Gen Z connects digital triggers to outcomes.

### **Objective of the study**

Therefore, the objective of the study is to examine the effect of size-0 Instagram beauty carousels on thin-ideal internalization among Generation Z.

### **Literature Review**

According to the chosen theory, that is, Social Comparison Theory, people are prone to evaluating themselves by making a comparison of their opinions, appearance, and abilities with those of others (Festinger, 1954b). This whole concept is described as a “core element of human conduct and experience” (Suls et al., 2002). According to Goethals (1986), disclosure of appealing or

successful people in everyday life automatically causes comparison, even if people try to avoid it. Social comparison is pervasive, but not everyone takes part in it with the same severity.

The inferiority complex is a discrepancy between self-concept and self-ideal (Selvi et al., 2024). Martin and Kennedy (1993) say that when people have an active approach, they critically analyze whatever is shown to them in the media and have knowledge of edited or exaggerated images; the negative impacts of comparison automatically reduce. Therefore, comparison is not harmful till they are emotionally intelligent and self-aware. When people assume that they no longer seem attractive to other people, they might experience an inferiority complex (Attah et al., 2022a).

According to Permana (2024), low self-esteem is defined as negative feelings about oneself, a lack of self-confidence, and a sense of failure to fulfill one's goals. A person's self-esteem is reduced, becomes dissatisfied with their body, and their psychological well-being is lower when the individual compares themselves with those who are seen to be more appealing or successful (Muller & Fayant, 2010a; Wheeler & Miyake, 1992a). According to Festinger (1954c), better self-esteem is likely to be seen when downward comparison is done.

According to McCann (2022b), the societal obsession with thinness began in the 1990s when the term "Size Zero" was used to describe the unhealthy and thin bodies of models. Women consider Insta size zero as ideal, real, and attainable (Fioravanti, 2023e), which causes escalating frustration with oneself. Major et al. (1991) say that upward comparison does not always have adverse effects; it depends on the thinking of a person. If he has a positive mindset instead of thinking this ideal body is unattainable, he will take it as motivation and achieve the impossible.

According to Wills (1981), individuals use downward social comparison as a coping mechanism, which makes them feel better and improves their self-esteem. Wheeler and Miyake (1992b) found that life satisfaction increases when individuals compare themselves to those who seem less successful. Despite the fact that downward comparison may offer short-term emotional relief, it does not address underlying body dissatisfaction or societal beauty pressures. Instagram is an image-based social media platform that promotes a new form of communication and self-expression (Malighetti, et.al, 2020). On apps like Instagram that focus on curated images that are perfect and well-designed, meaning that no one ever gets to see any "real" and diverse body types, which is why people never really get to compare themselves with those they think are "less attractive".

Different studies show that when people focus too much on looks, especially on social media like Instagram, it directly leads to body dissatisfaction (Saiphoo & Vahedi, 2019). A key risk of eating disorders can be seen when the adverse effect of psychologically appearance-driven social comparison occurs, which automatically leads to body dissatisfaction (Myers & Crowther, 2009a). Seeing those thin size zero images automatically leads to social comparison, which directly causes negative self-thoughts and accepting unrealistic beauty standards as real (Bocage-Barthélémy et al., 2018).

Thin-ideal internalization is closely related to social comparison, where people compare their bodies with culturally considered ideal bodies (Heinberg et al., 1995). Females who compare themselves to models and celebrities report higher body dissatisfaction and are more likely to engage in unhealthy eating habits (Stormer & Thompson, 1996a; Heinberg & Thompson, 1992a). ED refers to a psychological impairment characterized by body appearance concerns, intense distress, and disturbed eating behaviors (Fixsen, 2022b). According to Myers and Crowther (2009b), people suffering from eating disorders are at a higher chance to make social comparisons, which eventually leads to body dissatisfaction.

Mostly, women are engaged in editing and posting their pictures on Instagram, which leads to negative upward comparison (Fox & Vendemia, 2016). The increase in face-swap and photo-editing applications allows users to evaluate themselves against idealized standards, strengthening feelings of inferiority and dependence on digital enhancement (Ha et al., 2023). Editing photos does not always have something to do with their own insecurities or making other people feel insecure about themselves. For some people, it is a way of showing their creative experiments. Beauty consciousness (BC) involves both an internal (private) and an external (social) context in the pursuit of the ideal self-image and ideal social self-image (Sulhaini et al., 2023). Some feminists say that women get insecure about themselves when media and beauty industries promote their unattainable beauty ideal products and, in return, they gain profit (Biber, 1996a; Wolf, 1992a). Slimness is associated with success or beauty, whereas other body types are considered a failure (Bieber et al., 2006). This causes women to keep on buying these products. Meanwhile, our society also has a big impact on how we feel about ourselves. According to some researchers, when women are exposed to the ideal models and their ideal photographs, they become conscious about themselves, which leads to dissatisfaction with their own beauty (Evans & McConnell, 2003).

Social anxiety is related to perfectionism and fear of negative evaluation, especially on platforms like Instagram (Collonates, 2022). People who have high social anxiety are exposed to negative self-evaluations when they compare themselves with those who seem to be better than them (Mitchell & Schmidt, 2014a); therefore, limiting the usage of social media and other protective factors can limit negative outcomes. The development of Social Anxiety depends upon an individual's thinking of comparing to others (Jiang & Ngien, 2020a).

## **Research Questions**

### **Main Research Question**

**RQ1:** Whether and to what extent do size-o Instagram beauty carousels affect the thin-ideal internalization of Gen-Z?

### **Sub-Research Questions**

**RQ1a:** Whether and to what extent Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousel effect the self-esteem of Gen-Z?

**RQ1b:** Whether and to what extent Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousel effects the inferiority complex of Gen-Z?

**RQ1c:** Whether and to what extent Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousel effects the beauty consciousness of Gen-Z?

**RQ1d:** Whether and to what extent Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousel effects the social anxiety of Gen-Z?

**RQ1e:** Whether and to what extent Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousel effects the eating disorder of Gen-Z?

## **Hypotheses**

The hypothesis of the study is;

### **Main Hypothesis**

**H1:** The more the exposure to the size-o Insta-Beauty carousels, the more the effect on the thin-ideal internalization of Gen-Z.

### **Sub-Hypotheses**

**H1a:** The more exposure to the Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousels, the lower the self-esteem in Gen-Z.

**H1b:** The more exposure to the Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousels, the more the inferiority complex in Gen-Z.

**H1c:** The more exposure to the Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousels, the more beauty consciousness in Gen-Z.

**H1d:** The more exposure to the Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousels, more is the social anxiety in Gen-Z.

**H1e:** The more exposure to the Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousels, more is the eating disorders in Gen-Z.

## **Methodology**

A quantitative approach is adopted in this study, with a sample size of 300.

### **Sample size**

The sample size is 300 from three universities (Bahria University, AIR University, and COMSATS), including females only.

### **Sampling Technique**

A simple random sampling technique was adopted in this study, selecting females only.

### **Method**

A survey method was adopted to obtain the responses of 300 respondents.

### **Instrument**

A questionnaire was used as an instrument. The questionnaire consisted of twenty-five questions.

## Data Collection

Data were collected through a questionnaire, and the new version of SPSS was used for data entry and frequencies.

Latinamedspa is known for its plastic surgeries; therefore, in his reels, he showed before-and-after Lipo 360 bbl with JPLASMA of the abdomen of an influencer, marisol\_sandoval. Posting about the perfect body she achieved through surgery without telling about any consequences might mislead others and lead to body dissatisfaction. In one of her reels, she expresses her happiness about the results by stating;

*"I was most excited to see the after for this dress and omg!!! most of the time I wore either skims or compression underwear/shorts under outfits which i have told you guys, about... also i would take pictures with good angles... but in this after i literally don't need to wear anything under, thats all meee & and I'm sorry if you dislike surgeries but i really don't care bc it's my body". Source: @latinamedspa (Instagram)*

In the case of the slim body, a very well-known international brand, i.e., Skims by Kim Kardashian, is here. There are 6.6 million followers of Skims on Instagram. Now think, even if half of these followers have bought their product or wanted to buy were facing an inferiority complex and wanted to match these beauty ideals or standards. In a reel where @\_maskayla\_ tries their bodysuit, which they promoted as;

*"enhance your curves" Source: @skims (Instagram)*

This three-word sentence is powerful enough to make people crazy about it who are not satisfied with their bodies and want to achieve a good-looking body.

In some of their blogs, they are promoting waist trainers and body shapers to achieve a slim body and make their curves prominent. According to Skim, their claim is;

*"Where waist trainers cinch your waist to create an hourglass figure, and may have lasting effects even after you take it off, shapewear is designed to sculpt the entire area it's covering and doesn't generally offer lasting effects over time. For example, shaping shorts will offer compression around the hips, thighs, and tummy area, while shapewear body suits will sculpt your tummy and back as they support your chest". Source: skims(blog)*

@magicbodyfashionbv is a total body solution lifestyle brand. In a reel, they said that you can be confident when you wear well-fitted shapewear as it will enhance your curves and provide tummy support. In one of their posts, they are again talking about confidence that can be achieved by what you are wearing.

*"Because feeling confident starts with what you wear. With the perfect mix of support, comfort, and style, you can embrace your curves and shine from within. Let your confidence shine through". Source: @magicbodyfashionbv (Instagram)*

An influencer, @christendominique, in one of her reels, showed 4 contours that replace surgery using @fentybeauty contour stick to achieve that snatched, lifted face, skinny model cheekbones, and enhanced jawline, as these are the standards going right now. In a carousel, @doctorhasia from Dubai, who is a skin, aesthetics, and wellness doctor, showed the before-and-after results of collagen facelift treatment, which enhanced the cheekbones, sculpted the face, and achieved a more defined jawline. It is the ongoing standard of beauty that people want to achieve.

Dr. Fazeela Abbasi is a dermatologist and skin specialist based in Pakistan and Dubai. In one of her reels, she discusses the HIFU treatment and encourages individuals to achieve their dream facial appearance. She mentions,

*"Achieve the jawline you've always desired with HIFU." Source: @drfazeelaabbasi (Instagram)*

Additionally, the thumbnail of that reel is really attractive for those eager to eliminate their double chin, as it claims that a double chin can vanish in just minutes without surgery, featuring two attractive models one with a less defined jawline and the other with a well-defined one. She is more into giving people that slim face look that has become a beauty standard as well. In one of her blog articles titled Does HIFU Slim Your Face, Fazeela wrote

*"A well-defined, contoured face is a beauty standard that many aspire to achieve". Source: Dr. Fazeela Abbasi (blog)*

In another blog titled How to Get A More Defined Jawline, she writes

"A sharp, chiseled jawline is synonymous with youth, confidence, and elegance. Whether you're battling genetics, aging, or weight fluctuations, achieving a more defined jawline is possible through a mix of natural methods, non-surgical treatments, and advanced procedures". Source: Dr. Fazeela Abbasi (blog)

In a carousel on @eatbreathethrive (NPO), which works on preventing and helping people recover from eating disorders. The Carousel talks about the article written by Hadley Freeman in which she states,

"Anorexia is complicated: it's a mental illness that leads to physical complications, which exacerbate the mental ones, and so on. Even more complicated, the more ill a person becomes, the more they resist treatment (eating, in other words) and the more they want to die." Source: @eatbreathethrive (Instagram)

@alisiya.le, a dietitian and UGC creator, talks about the eating disorder and how underconfident a person feels with controlled eating behavior, which leads to a destroyed and helpless life. In one of her reels where she added a caption that says,

"The voice in my head every time when I am eating in public". Source: @alisiya.le (Instagram)

The sound she added states,

"look at how fat you are, you disgust me, fatty". Source: @alisiya.le (Instagram)

**Table 1; Content Categorization**

| Sr. no. | Variable   | Sub Variable         | Coding                   | Coding Scheme |
|---------|------------|----------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| 1.      | Size o     | Body size o          | Body size o = 1          | BS = 1        |
|         |            | Face fat o           | Face fat o = 2           | FF = 2        |
|         |            | Eating Disorder      | Eating Disorder = 3      | ED = 3        |
| 2.      | Insta      | Car Reels            | Car Reels = 1            | CR = 1        |
|         |            | Car posts            | Car posts = 2            | CR = 2        |
| 3.      | Psychology | Low Self-Esteem      | Low Self Esteem = 1      | LSE= 1        |
|         |            | Beauty Consciousness | Beauty Consciousness = 2 | BS = 2        |
|         |            | Inferiority Complex  | Inferiority Complex = 3  | IC = 3        |
|         |            | Social Anxiety       | Social Anxiety = 4       | SA = 4        |

### Data Analysis and Findings

This research "Effect of Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousel on Psychology of Gen-Z" examines the psychological response of female Gen-Z Instagram users towards size-zero beauty images. Based on the literature, three independent variables were measured: Instagram (e.g., how often, exposure to carousels), size-zero beauty ideals (e.g., body thinness, facial thinness, eating disorder), and psychological effects (sub-variables: low self-esteem, beauty consciousness, inferiority complex, social anxiety). Responses were collected from 300 female participants aged 18 to 29 to conduct the analysis.

Data Analysis of the twenty-five questions is given below;

Demographics of the respondents

**Qno1. What is your age?**

**1. 18-23**

**2. 24-29**

There are N=300 respondents. The majority of respondents are 223 (74.5%), falling within the 18–23 age range, followed by 77 (25.5%) respondents, i.e., the 24–29 age range. It has been revealed that most of the respondents, 223 (74.4%), are from 18 to 23 years of age.

**Qno2. Which university are you from?**

**1. Bahria University**

**2. Air University**

**3. Comsats**

Respondents: N=300. 158 (52.8%) respondents were from Bahria University, 82 (27.3%) respondents were from Air University, and 60 (19.9%) respondents were from COMSATS. It has been found that the maximum number of respondents, 158 (52.8%), belong to Bahria University.

**Qno3. What is your program of study?**

**1. Media Studies or Mass Communication**

**2. Psychology**

**3. Others**

The data from 300 respondents shows that Media Studies/Mass Communication was the most represented field, with 114 (37.9%) respondents, followed closely by Psychology, chosen by 84 (28.0%) respondents. Computer Science has 39 (13.0%) respondents, IT 5(1.8%), BBA 5(1.8%), Pharm-D 9(3.0%), DPT 2 (0.6%), LLB 2(0.6%), Management Sciences 2(0.6%), Finance 2(0.6%), Public Health 2(0.6%), Biomedical Engineering 2(0.6%), Financial Technology 4(1.2%), Commerce 2(0.6%), Medical 2(0.6%), Mathematics 2(0.6%), HND 2(0.6%), Economics 4 (1.2%), Geophysics 2(0.6%), Computer Arts 2(0.6%), and Environmental Science 2(0.6%). Some other subjects include 13(4.2%) respondents.

It has been revealed from the data analysis that there are 114 (37.9%) respondents from the Media Studies (Mass Communication) discipline, whereas the rest are 2 (0.6%) from LLB, Biomedical Engineering, Medical, Mathematics, HND, Geophysics, Computer Arts, Environmental Science, DPT, Management Sciences, Finance, Public Health, and Commerce.

**Qno4. What is your current level of education?**

**1. Bachelors**

**2. Masters**

**3. PhD**

Respondents are N=300. 219(73.2%) respondents hold a bachelor's degree, 58 (19.3%) have a master's degree, and 23 (7.5%) possess a PhD. It has been found that the maximum number of respondents, 219(73.2%) have a bachelor's degree.

**Qno5. I use Instagram frequently in my daily routine.**

**1. Strongly Disagree**

**2. Disagree**

**3. Neutral**

4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Respondents: N=300. 22 (7.5%) respondents strongly disagreed, another 34 (11.2%) disagreed, while 45 (14.9%) respondents remained neutral. 97 (32.3%) agreed, while 102 (34.1%) respondents strongly agreed. It has been revealed that 102 (34.1%) respondents strongly agreed to use Instagram frequently in their daily routine, whereas 22 (7.5%) respondents strongly disagreed with the use of Instagram daily.

**Qno6. I often view carousel posts featuring beauty influencers or size-zero models on Instagram.**

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Respondents are N=300. 24 (8%) respondents strongly disagreed, 48 (16.1%) disagreed, and 93 (31.1%) respondents remained neutral. On the other hand, 99 (32.9%) respondents agreed, and 36 (11.8%) strongly agreed with viewing such posts.

It has been revealed that 99 (32.9%) respondents agreed that they often view carousel posts featuring beauty influencers or size-zero models on Instagram, whereas 24 (8%) respondents strongly disagreed with viewing such posts.

**Qno.7. I frequently compare my appearance to influencers or models I see on Instagram.**

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Respondents are N=300. 43 (14.3%) respondents strongly disagreed, and 67 (22.3%) disagreed, while 101 (33.6%) respondents remained neutral, suggesting occasional or passive comparisons. 61 (20.5%) respondents agreed and 28 (9.3%) strongly agreed. It has been revealed that 101 (33.6%) respondents remained neutral about the appearance comparison with influencers or models they see on Instagram, whereas 28 (9.3%) strongly agreed, admitting to doing so regularly.

**Qno.8. After viewing size-o influencers/models on Instagram, I feel confident in my own appearance.**

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Respondents are N=300. 26 (8.7%) respondents strongly disagreed, 62 (20.5%) disagreed, while 119 (39.8%) respondents remained neutral. 63 (21.1%) respondents agreed, and 30 (9.9%) strongly agreed. It has been revealed that 119 (39.8%) respondents remained neutral about viewing size-o influencers/models on Instagram and the feeling of confidence in their own appearance, whereas 26 (8.7%) respondents strongly disagreed that their confidence was affected.

**Qno.9. I feel like I am not good enough compared to what I see on Instagram.**

1. **Strongly Disagree**
2. **Disagree**
3. **Neutral**
4. **Agree**
5. **Strongly Agree**

Respondents are N=300. 39 (13.1%) respondents strongly disagreed, and 82 (27.3%) disagreed. Meanwhile, 67 (22.4%) respondents remained neutral. 86 (28.6%) respondents agreed, and 26 (8.7%) strongly agreed. It has been revealed that 86 (28.6%) respondents agreed that they were affected, whereas 26 (8.7%) strongly agreed that they feel inadequate compared to the content they see.

**Qno.10. I find myself doubting my capabilities after viewing beauty content online.**

1. **Strongly Disagree**
2. **Disagree**
3. **Neutral**
4. **Agree**
5. **Strongly Agree**

N=300 respondents reveal that 43 (14.3%) strongly disagreed and 69 (23%) respondents disagreed, indicating they remain unaffected. Meanwhile, 63 (21.1%) respondents remained neutral. 91 (30.4%) respondents agreed, and 34 (11.1%) strongly agreed. It has been revealed that 91 (30.4%) respondents agreed that they find themselves doubting their capabilities after viewing beauty content online whereas 34 (11.1%) strongly agreed in viewing beauty content online.

**Qno.11. I spend extra time and effort to look a certain way after seeing beauty content on Instagram.**

1. **Strongly Disagree**
2. **Disagree**
3. **Neutral**
4. **Agree**
5. **Strongly Agree**

Respondents: N=300. 47 (15.5%) respondents strongly disagreed, while 73 (24.2%) respondents disagreed. Meanwhile, 74 (24.8%) respondents remained neutral. 74 (24.8%) respondents agreed, and 32 (10.6%) strongly agreed. It has been revealed that 74 (24.8%) respondents remained neutral and 74 (24.8%) respondents agreed that they spend extra time and effort to look a certain way after seeing beauty content on Instagram, whereas 32 (10.6%) strongly agreed on investing extra effort in their appearance.

**Qno.12. I believe physical appearance determines how people are treated on social media.**

1. **Strongly Disagree**
2. **Disagree**
3. **Neutral**
4. **Agree**
5. **Strongly Agree**

Respondents are N=300. 19 (6.2%) respondents strongly disagreed, and 35 (11.8%) disagreed, whereas 74 (24.8%) remained neutral. Meanwhile, 104 (34.8%) respondents agreed and 68 (22.3%) strongly agreed. It has been revealed that 104 (34.8%) respondents agreed that they believe physical appearance determines how people are treated on social media, whereas 19 (6.2%) respondents strongly disagreed how their appearance influences social media treatment. **Qno.13. I feel pressure to match beauty trends I see on influencer carousels.**

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Respondents: N=300. 32(10.5%) respondents strongly disagreed, and 93 (31.1%) disagreed. 73 (24.2%) respondents remained neutral. 73 (24.2%) respondents agreed, and 29 (9.9%) strongly agreed. It has been revealed that 93 (31.1%) disagreed, resisting this pressure, whereas 29 (9.9%) strongly agreed that they feel pressured to match beauty trends they see on influencer carousels.

**Qno.14. I often feel that others are more attractive or successful than me based on what I see on Instagram.**

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Respondents are N=300. 37 (12.4%) respondents strongly disagreed, and 76 (25.4%) disagreed. Meanwhile, 64 (21.2%) respondents remained neutral. 89 (29.8%) respondents agreed, and 34 (11.2%) strongly agreed. It has been revealed that 89 (29.8%) respondents agreed that they often feel that others are more attractive or successful than them based on what they see on Instagram, whereas 34 (11.2%) strongly agreed, not resisting such comparisons.

**Qno.15. Seeing beauty-focused posts makes me question my self-worth.**

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Respondents are N=300. 54 (18%) respondents strongly disagreed, and 73 (24.2%) disagreed, while 65 (21.8%) respondents remained neutral. 75 (24.9%) respondents agreed, and 33 (11.1%) strongly agreed. It has been revealed that 75 (24.9%) agreed that after seeing beauty-focused posts, they question their self-worth, whereas 33 (11.1%) respondents strongly agreed that they experience self-worth doubts from beauty content.

**Qno.16. I have considered or tried extreme beauty routines/products to improve my appearance.**

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral

4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Respondents are N=300. 48 (16.1%) respondents strongly disagree, while 80 (26.7%) disagree. 75 (24.8 %) respondents are neutral. 63 (21.1%) respondents agree, while 34 (11.2%) strongly agree. It has been revealed that 80 (26.7%) respondents disagreed, rejecting such practices, whereas 34 (11.2%) strongly agreed that they have been engaged in extreme beauty methods.

**Qno.17. I hesitate to post my own pictures on Instagram due to fear of judgment.**

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Respondents are N=300. 84 (27.9%) respondents strongly disagree and 65 (21.8%) disagree. Meanwhile, 60 (19.9%) respondents are neutral. 60 (19.9%) respondents agree, and 31 (10.5%) strongly agree.

It has been revealed that 84 (27.9%) respondents strongly disagreed, indicating they post confidently, whereas 31 (10.5%) respondents strongly agreed that they avoid posting photos due to fear of judgment.

**Qno.18. I feel anxious when I do not receive likes or positive comments on my posts.**

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Respondents are N=300. 54 (18.0%) respondents strongly disagree, and 77 (25.5%) disagree. Meanwhile, 67 (22.4%) respondents are neutral. Conversely, 69 (23.0%) respondents agree, and 33 (11.2%) strongly agree. It has been revealed that 77 (25.5%) disagreed, indicating they remain unaffected, whereas 33 (11.2%) strongly agreed that they experience anxiety when their posts receive little engagement.

**Qno.19. I avoid social events or group pictures because I think I don't look good enough.**

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Respondents: N=300. 60 (19.9%) respondents strongly disagree and 80 (26.7%) disagree. Meanwhile, 67 (22.4%) respondents are neutral. 60 (19.9%) respondents agree, and 33 (11.1%) strongly agree. It has been revealed that 25 (24.8%) disagreed, indicating they participate confidently, whereas 11 (10.9%) strongly agreed that they avoid social events or photos due to appearance concerns.

**Qno.20. I believe having a slim body is essential to look attractive.**

1. Strongly Disagree

2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Respondents are N=300. 39 (13.1%) respondents strongly disagree, and 62 (20.5%) disagree. 93 (31.1%) respondents are neutral. 78 (26.0%) respondents agree and 28 (9.3%) strongly agree. It has been revealed that 93 (31.1%) respondents were neutral, possibly reflecting evolving beauty standards whereas 28 (9.3%) strongly agreed that they associate slimness with attractiveness.

**Qno.21. I have considered using editing apps to make my face or body appear slimmer for Instagram.**

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Respondents are N=300. 65 (21.7%) respondents strongly disagree, and 91 (30.4%) disagree. 58 (19.3%) respondents are neutral. While 63 (21.1%) respondents agree and 23 (7.4%) strongly agree. It has been revealed that 91 (30.4%) disagreed, rejecting it, whereas 23 (7.4%) strongly agreed that they actively consider editing apps to make them look slimmer.

**Qno.22. I believe having a slim and defined face (sharp jawline, cheekbones) is an important beauty standard.**

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Respondents are N=300. 35 (11.8%) respondents strongly disagreed, and 52 (17.4%) disagreed. 84 (28.0%) respondents were neutral. However, 80 (26.7%) respondents agreed, and 49 (16.2%) strongly agreed. It has been revealed that 84 (28.0%) respondents were neutral, indicating evolving views of facial aesthetics, whereas 35 (11.8%) respondents strongly disagreed that having a slim and defined face (sharp jawline, cheekbones) is an important beauty standard.

**Qno.23. After viewing slim influencers/models, I sometimes restrict my eating to control my weight.**

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Respondents are N=300. 67 (22.3%) respondents strongly disagreed, and 73 (24.2%) disagreed. 71 (23.6 %) respondents were neutral. With 71 (23.6%) respondents agreeing and 18 (6.2%) strongly agreeing. It has been revealed that 73 (24.2%) respondents disagreed, resisting this behavior, and 71 (23.6%) respondents agreed with this behavior, whereas 71 (23.6 %) respondents were neutral after viewing slim influencers/models.

**Qno.24. I have skipped meals or gone on extreme diets to look slimmer after seeing social media posts.**

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Respondents are N=300. 80 (26.7%) respondents strongly disagreed, and 77 (25.5 %) disagreed. 46 (15.5%) respondents were neutral. 69 (23.0%) respondents agreed, and 28 (9.3%) strongly agreed. It has been revealed that 80 (26.7%) respondents strongly disagreed, rejecting this practice, whereas 28 (9.3%) strongly agreed that they engage in extreme dieting behaviors after viewing social media posts.

**Qno.25. I have experienced symptoms like extreme dieting, obsession with body weight, or fear of gaining weight, which are signs often linked with eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa.**

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Respondents are N=300. 73 (24.2%) respondents strongly disagreed, and another 63 (21.1%) disagreed. The remaining 50 (16.8%) respondents were neutral. 78 (26.1%) respondents agreed, and 36 (11.8%) strongly agreed.

It has been revealed that 78 (26.1%) respondents agreed, whereas 36 (11.8%) strongly agreed to experiencing symptoms related to eating disorders.

#### Statistical test (Chi-Square)

The first hypothesis, H1a, is tested through SPSS by applying SPSS between the Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousel and lower self-esteem.

**Table 3; Chi-Square Tests of Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousel and lower self-esteem**

|                              | Value                | df  | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|----------------------|-----|-----------------------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square           | 290.198 <sup>a</sup> | 187 | .000                              |
| Likelihood Ratio             | 179.867              | 187 | .633                              |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 40.990               | 1   | .000                              |
| N of Valid Cases             | 300                  |     |                                   |

Significant at level 0.05\*

Significant at level 0.01\*\*

According to Table 3. Exposure to the Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousels supports lower self-esteem in Gen-Z. The results are Chi-square 290.198<sup>a</sup>, p-value = 0.05, i.e., .633 (p=.000). Therefore, the hypothesis is supported.

The second hypothesis, H1b, is tested through SPSS by applying SPSS to Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousel and inferiority complex.

**Table 4; Chi-Square Tests of Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousel and inferiority complex**

|                    | Value                | df  | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
|--------------------|----------------------|-----|-----------------------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 291.061 <sup>a</sup> | 187 | .000                              |

|                              |         |     |      |
|------------------------------|---------|-----|------|
| Likelihood Ratio             | 191.895 | 187 | .388 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 48.556  | 1   | .000 |
| N of Valid Cases             | 300     |     |      |
| Significant at level 0.05*   |         |     |      |
| Significant at level 0.01**  |         |     |      |

According to Table 4. Exposure to the Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousels, the more inferiority complex in Gen-Z is supported. The results are Chi-square 291.061<sup>a</sup>,

p-value = 0.05, i.e., .388 (p=.000). Therefore, the hypothesis is supported.

The third hypothesis, H1c, is tested through SPSS by applying SPSS between Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousel and more beauty consciousness.

**Table 5; Chi-Square Tests of Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousel and beauty consciousness.**

|                              | Value                | df  | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|----------------------|-----|-----------------------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square           | 275.047 <sup>a</sup> | 204 | .001                              |
| Likelihood Ratio             | 198.360              | 204 | .598                              |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 44.186               | 1   | .000                              |
| N of Valid Cases             | 300                  |     |                                   |

Significant at level 0.05\*

Significant at level 0.01\*\*

According to Table 5. Exposure to the Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousels the more beauty consciousness in Gen-Z is supported. The results are Chi-square 275.047<sup>a</sup>, p-value = 0.05 i.e., .598 (p=.001). Therefore, the hypothesis is supported.

The fourth hypothesis, H1d, is tested through SPSS by applying SPSS between Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousel and more beauty consciousness.

**Table 6; Chi-Square Tests of Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousel and social anxiety.**

|                              | Value                | df  | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|----------------------|-----|-----------------------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square           | 256.246 <sup>a</sup> | 204 | .108                              |
| Likelihood Ratio             | 193.233              | 204 | .695                              |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 40.991               | 1   | .108                              |
| N of Valid Cases             | 300                  |     |                                   |

According to Table 6. Exposure to the Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousels does not support social anxiety in Gen-Z. The results are Chi-square 256.246<sup>a</sup>, p-value = 0.05 i.e., .695 (p=.108). Therefore, the hypothesis is not supported.

The fifth hypothesis, H1e, is tested through SPSS by applying SPSS between Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousel and more eating disorders.

**Table 7; Chi-Square Tests of Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousel and eating disorders.**

|                              | Value                | df  | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|----------------------|-----|-----------------------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square           | 326.256 <sup>a</sup> | 204 | .000                              |
| Likelihood Ratio             | 185.702              | 204 | .816                              |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 35.284               | 1   | .000                              |
| N of Valid Cases             | 300                  |     |                                   |

Significant at level 0.05\*

Significant at level 0.01\*\*

According to Table 7. Exposure to the Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousels, the more eating disorders in Gen-Z is supported. The results are Chi-square 326.256<sup>a</sup>, p-value = 0.05, i.e., .816 (p=.000). Therefore, the hypothesis is supported.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

This empirical study, it has examined the “Effect of Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousel on Psychology of Gen-Z” because of the rise in the influence of Instagram on young females’ body image. As a Gen-Z user, it has been analyzed through data analysis how edited photos, especially those with size-o ideals, can impact the psychology of Gen-Z. There have been five hypotheses all related to the Size-o Insta Beauty Carousel that has been analyzed with lower self-esteem, inferiority complex, beauty consciousness, social anxiety, and eating disorder. All the hypotheses were supported except for social anxiety.

**RQ1a:** Whether and to what extent Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousel affects the self-esteem of Gen-Z?

**H1a:** The more exposure to the Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousels, the lower the self-esteem in Gen-Z.

Exposure to the Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousels is supported by lower self-esteem in Gen-Z. The results are Chi-square 290.198<sup>a</sup>, p-value = 0.05, i.e., .633 (p=.000). Therefore, the hypothesis is supported because it causes adverse social comparison due to fake beauty standards and the stress to conform to society. As mentioned in the literature review, an individual's self-esteem is reduced, becomes dissatisfied with their body, and their psychological well-being is lowered when the individual compares themselves with those who are seen to be more appealing or successful (Muller & Fayant, 2010b; Wheeler & Miyake, 1992c).

**RQ1b:** Whether and to what extent Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousels effect the inferiority complex of Gen-Z?

**H1b:** The more exposure to the Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousels, the more the inferiority complex in Gen-Z.

The more exposure to the Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousels, the more the inferiority complex in Gen-Z is supported. The results are Chi-square 291.061<sup>a</sup>, p-value = 0.05 i.e., .388 (p=.000). Therefore, the hypothesis is supported because in the contemporary world, zero size is the ideal body. Gen Z, being the innovators, adopt these trends, making them feel doubtful of themselves, leading them to feel inferior and question their self-worth. According to Attah et al. (2022b), mentioned in the literature review, when people assume that they no longer seem attractive to other people, they might experience an inferiority complex.

**RQ1c:** Whether and to what extent Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousel effects the beauty consciousness of Gen-Z?

**H1c:** The more exposure to the Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousels, the more beauty consciousness in Gen-Z.

The more exposure to the Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousels, the more beauty consciousness in Gen-Z is supported. The results are Chi-square 275.047<sup>a</sup>, p-value = 0.05, i.e., .598 (p=.000). Therefore, the hypothesis is supported because Gen-Z gratify themselves with the models or zero-size looks, and they want to become like the models even in real and virtual life. The impression of the carousels and influencers pushes Gen-Z to follow the trend and act like them. According to Biber (1996b) and Wolf (1992b), some feminists believe that females get insecure when media and beauty industries promote their unachievable beauty ideal products.

**RQ1d:** Whether and to what extent Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousel effects the social anxiety of Gen-Z

**H1d:** The more exposure to the Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousels, more is the social anxiety in Gen-Z.

Exposure to the Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousels affects social anxiety in Gen-Z. The results are Chi-square 256.246<sup>a</sup>, p-value = 0.05 i.e., .695 (p=.108). Therefore, the hypothesis is not supported. According to Jiang and Ngien (2020b), social anxiety develops when an individual compares oneself with others. From this, it is concluded that people feel confident in their own skin and have no fear of judgment when posting or going in front of others, or maybe they have limited the usage of social media and used other protective factors to limit negative outcomes (Mitchell & Schmidt, 2014b)

**RQ1e:** Whether and to what extent Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousel effects the eating disorder of Gen-Z?

**H1e:** The more exposure to the Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousels, more is the eating disorders in Gen-Z.

Exposure to the Size-o Insta-Beauty Carousels is associated with more eating disorders in Gen-Z. The results are Chi-square 326.256<sup>a</sup>, p-value = 0.05, i.e., .816 (p=.000). Therefore, the hypothesis is supported because the carousels of the size zero models

shows their strict diet plans which they follow to achieve the size zero body which influences the people to become like them without considering the idea that certain diets are for certain body types, leading them to involve in unhealthy habits. Females who compare themselves to ideal or fake bodies report higher body dissatisfaction and are more likely to engage in unhealthy eating habits (Stormer & Thompson, 1996b; Heinberg & Thompson, 1992b)

**RQ1:** Whether and to what extent do size-o Instagram beauty carousels affect the thin-ideal internalization of Gen Z?

**H1:** The more exposure to the size-o Insta-beauty carousels, the more the effect on the thin-ideal internalization of Gen Z.

The main hypothesis H1 is partially supported because four are fully supported and one is not supported because most of Gen Z are trend followers, so they internalize size o beauty ideals, leading to lower self-esteem, more inferiority complex, increased beauty consciousness, and eating disorder behaviors. Hence, due to personal experiences and the fear of judgment, they do not express their social anxiety.

## Conclusion

Gen Z is zero size, but due to the fear of worthlessness, they are not claiming the beauty standards set by the Insta-Beauty Carousels. Their self-esteem is affected as well as they feel inferior. But due to mis-judgement they do not show their social anxiety but in actual they go through anxiety disorder.

## Recommendations

Future research should also include male beauty standards as well, as societal shifts also include male appearance and body image. Including the male point of view would provide a deeper understanding of how beauty norms impact all genders, especially in the age of social media and evolving gender roles.

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