INSTAGRAM AND BODY IMAGE: FACTORS OF OBJECTIFICATION AMONG ADOLESCENT GIRLS IN SPAIN

NATALIA MARTÍNEZ PÉREZ [1], NEREA CUENCA ORELLANA [2], SONIA DUEÑAS MOHEDAS [3]
[1] University of Burgos, Spain
[2] Juan Carlos King University, Spain
[3] Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Spain

KEYWORDS

ABSTRACT

This research project examines the role of Instagram in shaping adolescent girls' body image perceptions. First, it analyses the representations conveyed by the network and the gender discourses it articulates, in order to identify the strategies - visual and linguistic - used by the most popular influencers to understand the discourses on corporeality. The structural-semiological content analysis of the five Instagram profiles of the most followed influencers in Spain of the so-called Z-generation provides insights into the prevalence of gender stereotypes and roles and offers a reflection on the prevention of the phenomenon of objectification and self-objectification.

1. Introduction

I n addition to serving as a conduit for information, social networks also function as arbiters of consumption and lifestyles, exerting a profound influence on the formation of youth identity. The social media platforms YouTube, TikTok and Instagram, which are widely used by teenagers in Spain, provide an avenue for them to present their image, express their personal experiences and identify with specific messages. It can be argued that social networks are configured as new spaces in which young people re-signify and develop their identity.

This research is specifically focused on the use of Instagram and its relationship with the construction of body image in adolescent girls. It is based on the consideration that the social network Instagram is a prescriber of consumption and lifestyles that influence and determine the construction of youth identity (Pérez). (Torres et al., 2018, pp. 62-63) and, more specifically, in the so-called "Generation Z" or "centenials", which includes all those young people born after 1995[1]. This paper specifically examines the ways in which adolescents use the Internet and the relationship between this use and the construction of body image. It pays particular attention to the issues of self-image, comparison and the self-objectification of the body. This concept regarding Instagram usage was initially proposed by Australian academics Jasmine Fardouly, Brydie Willburger and Lenny Vartanian in an empirical study conducted in 2018, with the study subjects comprising young women. The authors concluded that high exposure to this network could have a detrimental impact on beliefs and concerns about one's appearance.

As indicated in the 2023 Annual Digital Report published by the consultancy firm, We Are Social, 18.5% of Spanish social media users access these platforms to follow celebrities and/or influencers, representing a significant motivation for their use. For this reason, this study focuses on the most influential social media users in Spain, as identified by the number of followers they have on Instagram. The decision to focus on this platform was primarily driven by three considerations. Firstly, Instagram is the second most utilized social network by the Spanish population, with a penetration rate of 74.9%, trailing only WhatsApp, which has a penetration rate of 89.7% (We Are Social, 2023). Secondly, most Instagram users are young and predominantly female. In Spain, 60.08% of users of this network are under 39 years old, and women represent most of the platform (53.78% compared to 46.22% of male profiles). Additionally, Instagram has witnessed an increase in its user base in Spain, in contrast to the declines observed in both Facebook and X (previously Twitter). In recent years, Instagram has exhibited the highest growth rate among social networks, with an increase from 7.4 million users in 2015 to 23.8 million users in 2022[2]. In conclusion, the selection of this network is justified by the fact that it enables the exploration of issues related to image, video, and photography, as well as the construction of body image and the gender discourses, they convey. The target audience for these discourses is predominantly young and female. Additionally, it provides insight into the internalisation of the cultural ideal of beauty among adolescents.

1.1. Objectives

The principal objective of this study is to identify and analyse the discourses conveyed by images on social networks, with a particular focus on Instagram, from a gender perspective. This approach allows us to evaluate the extent to which the messages facilitate the positive construction of adolescent identity and self-esteem. Besides, the study will examine the profiles of the most prominent influencers on the Instagram social network in Spain, with the objective of establishing parameters that facilitate an understanding of the phenomenon of objectification and the self-objectification of individuals. Furthermore, it is important to gain insight into the

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[1] According to the report issued by Nielsen Media Research, with a sample of more than 30,000 respondents from 60 countries, the social generations can be classified into: Generation Z (born after 1995), Millennials (1981-1995), Generation X (1965-1980), Baby Boomers (born during the population boom: 1946-1964) and the Silent Generation (1928-1945). See: https://www.nielsen.com/es/insights/2015/explore-life-between-the-generations/

[2] These data come from the *IX Report on the use of social networks in Spain 2023*, published in February 2024. This report is produced annually by the online marketing agency The Social Media Family (TSMF) and can be consulted at the following link: https://thesocialmediafamily.com/informe-redes-sociales/. To get to know Spanish Instagram users in detail, the study follows the evolution of the social network in the country, taking into account the total number of profiles and segmentation according to age, gender, marital status and university studies.

social and media context in which these practices occur. This study aims to investigate the underlying causes of the emergence and production of such images in the contemporary context, as well as their impact on adolescent audiences.

In order to achieve the aforementioned objectives, a series of research questions have been formulated as a preliminary point of departure for this study.

Q1: What are the defining characteristics of the most popular female influencers among Generation Z?

Q2: What visual and linguistic strategies do the profiles of these influencers employ to capture the attention of young people?

Q3: What are the primary dynamics of objectification and self-objectification from a gender perspective on the Instagram accounts of these influencers?

2. The Study of Social Networks and Adolescent Users

The level of academic attention devoted to social networks has increased in line with the growth of these online platforms. As illustrated in the following section, most analyses pertaining to users' utilisation of networks originate from the disciplines of psychology and advertising. The latter is particularly prevalent due to its significant economic and marketing implications. For over a decade, studies have been conducted on the motivations for network use in adolescents and their influence on self-esteem (Barker, 2009), the effects of social networks on academic and social development in adolescents (Ahn, 2011), and the creation of bonds of trust and closeness between adolescents and influencers (Borchers, 2022).

It is therefore essential to conduct further research into the figure of the influencer and the motivations of adolescents in network consumption. For example, Rachel Grieve and Jarrah Watkinson (2016) conducted research into self-representation and identity construction in this context, while Cecilie Schou Andreassen et al. (2017) examines the variables of belonging and validation in the community, while the work of Manuel Montes-Vozmediano et al. (2020) focuses on the motivations for consumption, namely fun, socialisation and expression.

Regarding the topic of body image and its association with social networks, it is possible to cite the work of Niclas Heider et al. (2018) on body dissatisfaction and that of Grace Holland and Marika Tiggemann (2016), which reviews the impact of social networks on body image and its relationship with eating disorders. It is worth noting the specific focus on the Instagram network in the research conducted by Chandra E. Feltam and Dawn M. Szymanski (2017), which examined the use of Instagram and selfies from a gender perspective. Similarly, the article by Wondwesen Tafesse and Bronwyn P. Wood (2021) on engagement strategies around influencers' content is a valuable contribution to this area of study.

Similarly, the study of social networks in Spain has constituted a significant area of research for over a decade. It is also worth noting the publications by Antonio García Jiménez et al. on the Internet and social networking habits of Spanish teenagers (2013) and on the creation of content, participation and consumption of teenagers on YouTube (2016). In this regard, the aforementioned article by Vanesa Pérez Torres et al. (2018) also analyses the content of the videos of the YouTubers with the greatest impact among teenagers and their relationship with the construction of identity. The authors conclude that the messages about personal identity delivered by influencers through social networks seek to offer a self-definition of themselves and to explore the relationship between that self-image and their gender identity, sexual orientation and vocational identity (p. 61). In this manner, adolescent followers may identify with such messages and express their support in the form of comments, thereby "exposing their personal experiences and expressing the same concerns regarding the shaping of their identity" (2018, p. 61). More recently, the work of Rebeca Suárez-Álvarez et al. (2023) on the preferences and motivations of young people when following certain influencers represents an interesting complement to the study carried out by Marian Blanco-Ruiz (2021), which addresses these preferences in the field of affective relationships. Additionally, Leire Gómez Rubio and Nereida López Vidales (2024) examine the trust and intentionality of young people when following the profiles of experts and certain influencers on social networks.

2.1. The Use of Social Networks by Young Women

The term 'youth' is one that is open to a multitude of interpretations, given the diverse range of subjects that it encompasses. It refers to a broad population group that has been undergoing a process of expansion in recent decades, with new individuals joining the ranks of those considered to be young. This is largely due to the fact that, in the modern era, people are able to maintain their youthful status for a considerably longer period of time than was previously the case (Menéndez Menéndez, 2008, p. 356). In light of the aforementioned evidence, it can be concluded that the primary users of Instagram are individuals under the age of 39. This represents an extension of the conventional concept of youth, encompassing not only adolescence but also the initial stages of adulthood. Indeed, the concept of youth is one that is in a state of flux, and it is particularly within the younger age groups that one can observe the formation of personality and identity. "For this reason, it is often asserted that young people are susceptible, in need of self-affirmation and experiencing considerable feelings of insecurity" (Menéndez Menéndez, 2008, p. 357) as a consequence of the pervasive socio-economic shifts in their environment.

Most young Instagram users are female, which prompts an examination of the implications from a gender perspective. Firstly, during adolescence, girls are required to undergo a particularly challenging and contradictory transition, whereby they are expected to sexualise themselves, a process that commences at this developmental stage. In the view of Ana de Miguel, "adolescence represents the advent of the devaluation of the female body in the context of the prevailing standards of beauty" (2015, p. 68). This process, which implies by extension a devaluation of people, is in accordance with the "law of pleasing" proposed by Amelia Valcárcel or the "tyranny of beauty" put forth by Naomi Wolf, which dictate that women's bodies are never sufficient.[3] . Valcárcel (2008, p. 114) posits that "a female body must resemble or nearly border on its pornographic presentation in order to be understood as feminine". Similarly, Wolf (1991) asserts that images of feminine beauty are used as a political weapon to impede women's progress (p. 14).[4] .

It is somewhat paradoxical that in societies such as that of Spain, where formal equality has been achieved for decades and there seems to be a consensus on the desirability of feminism, such phenomena occur. Indeed, patriarchal power is continually reconstituted within political systems, underlying historical changes and maintained across diverse cultures. Currently, as evidenced by this case study, it is also perpetuated through social networks. "Its effectiveness lies in its capacity to remain invisible and yet simultaneously exert a pervasive influence" (Bernárdez Rodal, 2018, p. 15). This concept aligns with the notion of "patriarchies of consent," as postulated by Alicia H. Puleo (2005), which elucidates the manifestations of patriarchy in developed societies. In other words, it is the subject herself who is driven by an anxious desire to fulfil the mandate, in this case women, through the images of contemporary normative femininity (such as compulsory youth, strict canons of beauty, and the superwoman who does not exhaust herself with the double working day). Indeed, "the assumption of the desire circulating in the media plays a fundamental role in this new historical configuration of the gender-sex system" (Puleo, 2005, p. 39).

These practices align with the contemporary multi-screen society, wherein "there is a demand for a continuous and codified presence from the perspective of sexual seduction, a public display embraced by men and women, including girls, who showcase themselves repeatedly on social networks, reproducing the codifications initially established by the sex industry" (Menéndez Menéndez, 2017, p. 4). This phenomenon is particularly evident in the case of Instagram usage by adolescent girls, whereby the notion of autonomy is exploited to facilitate a relentless display of the female body, resulting in the phenomenon of "objectification".

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[3] The body is always a political terrain, traversed by meanings. The Mexican Marcela Lagarde points out that "women's bodies also include the bodies and lives of children and spouses, the legal and political institutions and the mythological, philosophical and ideological conceptions that give them names, attribute functions, prohibit or assign obligations, sanction and punish" (2011, p. 233).

[4] Wolf, in addition to pointing out that diet is the most important sedative in women's lives, emphasises that "the beauty myth always actually prescribes behaviour and not appearance. Competition between women is part of that myth, so that the division between them is created" (1991, p. 17). This idea is in tune with the rivalry between women as a patriarchal mandate. Marcela Lagarde has reflected on this issue and coined the concept of "sorority" (2005), defining it as the friendship between different women and peers, accomplices who aim to work, create, convince, who meet and recognise themselves in feminism in order to live life with a profoundly libertarian sense.

2.2. The Role of Social Networks in the Phenomenon of Objectification

In her 2003 work, philosopher Martha Nussbaum defines objectification as the reduction of people to objects, treating them in images as if they were inert beings and then denying them autonomy. Although not all forms of objectification are sexual, it is evident that this formula has a particularly adverse impact on women. This phenomenon "occurs when individuals are treated as objects of pleasure, their subjectivity denied and they are represented as interchangeable merchandise, as if they have no physical integrity or space of their own" (Bernárdez Rodal, 2018, p. 71). The sexualisation of women objectifies them, "transforming them into objects for the public gaze. In this gaze, there is a power. In our culture, the act of looking at something is tantamount to possessing it" (Bernárdez Rodal, 2018, p. 71).

In a similar vein, the theory of objectification, as postulated by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997), provides a theoretical framework for understanding the effects of being a woman in a society that employs sexual objectification of the female body. In accordance with this theory, objectification transpires when an individual's body is observed and, most notably, when a woman's body, or specific body parts, such as her sexual organs, are assessed independently of the woman herself and treated as if they were representative of the woman as a subject. Such uses of the body therefore imply the existence of underlying power relations. These images engender a "fantastic imaginary of sexual availability in which women desire nothing more than to be desired (and dominated) by men" (Bernárdez Rodal, 2018, p. 72). Another strategy to achieve the objectification of bodies is "to make them appear aesthetic, desirable, and artificial. This is done in order to make bodies seem as though they are objects that can be manipulated and altered according to the desires of their possessor" (Bernárdez Rodal, 2018, p. 73).

In this sense, cosmetic surgery and diets are configured as devices that contribute to the creation and recreation of bodily ideals, which adolescent girls attempt to emulate. The concept of beauty[5] , as it pertains to femininity, is integral to the regulatory frameworks that govern the intelligibility of female bodies. These frameworks necessitate that female bodies adhere to the standards[6] set forth by the accepted and promoted models of beauty[7] (Muñiz, 2010). These images of women's bodies undoubtedly influence the formation of imaginaries that are disseminated and reflected back into social networks. Consequently, the concept of "Fitspiration images" emerges, comprising photographs, videos, advertisements, and other media with the objective of motivating individuals to pursue physical fitness through rigorous exercise and dietary modifications, typically with the aim of attaining an ideal and attractive body (Robinson et al., 2017). The study concluded that exposure to these images can result in adverse outcomes, including low self-esteem and poor body image (2017, p. 71). Concurrently, exposure to such images has been demonstrated to precipitate negative body image dissatisfaction in women (Prichard et al., 2020).

In conclusion, the research conducted by Chandra E. Feltman and Dawn M. Szymanski (2017) on the utilisation of Instagram by young American college girls demonstrated the internalisation of cultural standards of beauty and self-objectification (p. 78). Consequently, it was imperative to devise programmes to enhance awareness of the potential risks and consequences associated with this network for its users.

3. Methodology

This research employs a structural-semiological content analysis to examine the visual and linguistic strategies utilized by influencers on the Instagram social network in the context of discourses on corporeality, with an emphasis on interpretative aspects. As Berelson (1952) asserts, content analysis is an objective, unbiased, and equitable instrument, as well as a systematic and organized approach. The objective is thus to identify stereotypes and gender roles that facilitate reflection on the phenomenon of objectification and self-objectification. The methodological design is based on content analysis as the primary analytical technique, with

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[5] Elsa Muñiz, who has reflected on body transformations and "ethnosurgery", explains that "the 'politics of beauty' also does its work and the dissemination and promotion of stereotypes of feminine and masculine beauty reach massive dimensions and exercise their power of domination over what Foucault calls the 'collective body'" (2010, p. 38).
[6] For more than a decade, studies such as that of John Maltby et al. (2005) have pointed out that the ideal female figure has become increasingly thin, so that the rise in eating disorders and general body dissatisfaction in adult women has been attributed to the proliferation of thin female images (p. 18). Indeed, "the desire for thinness is most problematic during adolescence when the body is still growing" (Maltby et al., 2005, p. 18).
[7] "The model of feminine beauty promoted by all discourses, but above all by the profusion of images, continues to be that of the white, blonde woman, with sophisticated facial features and slim bodies" (Muñiz, 2010, p. 39).

the publications on this social network serving as the unit of registration. This approach is based on the proposal made by Antelo Gutiérrez (2017) with the aim of incorporating specifications to adapt it to the study of corporeality representation, thus allowing for an in-depth study of the object of study.

1) Morphological analysis: an examination of the components that constitute the Instagram profiles of influencers, including the frequency and quantity of published content, as well as the utilisation of each element, based on four key considerations:

Table 1. Morphological analysis

Main space	Undetermined	Officer	Public	Private	Media	Other
Staging	Institutional	Strategic spontaneity	Amateur	Artificial posing		Other
Technical aspects	Duration	Type of plan	Angle			Other
Impact	Number of *likes*					Other

Source: own elaboration, 2024.

2) Structural-semiological analysis: the frequency with which influencers publish posts related to physical aspects is recorded, as is the study of visual and linguistic strategies. These strategies are as follows:

a. Visual strategies: the most common visual strategies are identified based on the purpose of the publication of the image and the degree of display and self-reference to its physicality, as set out in Table 2:

Table 2. Analysis of visual strategies

Depending on the purpose of the published image:	
Explanatory	The *influencer* publicly exposes her experiences, experiences or trips.
Advertising	The *influencer* uses the platform to publish commercial content as the subject of the post.
Everyday life	The *influencer* shows different moments of her routine
According to the *influencer*'s body display:	
Description of the body	Posture, pose and percentage of body displayed
Description of the image	Costume and make-up, context and environment
Description of the staging	Ways in which the *influencer* appears to give meaning to the image (colour, gestures, personal details).

Source: own elaboration, 2024.

b. Linguistic strategies: use and function of language in the accompanying text of the publication, which addresses the aspects indicated in Table 3:

Table 3. Analysis of language strategies

Emotional	Feelings, moods, desires, wishes, wills and attitudes
Poetic	Aesthetic purpose
Appellative/conative	Invite the receiver's participation through commands, questions, etc.
Referential	Concrete ideas and facts to objectively represent reality and to inform
Phatic	Appeals to the communication channel with the aim of initiating, prolonging, interrupting or terminating a conversation.

Source: own elaboration, 2024.

The study employs a temporal delimitation spanning the period between 1 and 29 February 2024. This approach enables the observation and analysis of each post published during the designated month.

Consequently, each profile can be reviewed individually, with the first post serving as a point of reference and the second post representing the most recent content added to the profile during the observation period. Similarly, the selection of influencers for analysis was based on a corpus of five profiles of young female influencers. This corpus was created using an article that identified the most followed influencers among Generation Z in Spain (Alba et al., 2023). The article highlighted 15 young content creators. Subsequently, the sample was limited to female profiles, specifically those with the highest number of followers. The study corpus comprises five influencers: The selected sample comprises five influencers: Lola Lolita (21 years old, Alicante – 3.4 million followers), Marta Díaz (24 years old, Seville – 3.4 million followers), Marina Rivers (21 years old, Madrid – 2 million followers), Sofía Surferss (20 years old, Alicante – 1.5 million followers) and Nadia Vilaplana (20 years old, Valencia – 1.2 million followers).

3. Results

Table 4. Results of the analysis of the sample for the defined period

	Lola Lolita	**Marta Díaz**	**Marina Rivers**	**Sofia Surferss**	**Nadia Vilaplana**
Number of publications	14	2	4	7	28
Publications resources	8 videos 6 carousels of photographs	1 video 1 carousel of photographs	4 photographs	5 videos 2 carousels of photographs	26 videos 2 carousels of photographs

Source: own elaboration, 2024.

Table 5. Structural analysis of the representative sample of *Influencer* No. 1

	Visual strategy		**Language strategy**	**Impact**
	Purpose of the image	**Body exhibition**		
Initial post 1 February 2024	Explanatory	Yes	Emotional	115.175 likes
Final post 29 February 2024	Everyday life	Yes	Appellative	325.456 likes

Source: own elaboration, 2024.

In the month of February 2024, Lola Lolita published a total of fourteen posts on her Instagram profile. These included six still photo carousels and eight videos. The initial post is a 60-second video in which the most influential social media personality is seen in her pyjamas, remaining in her underwear in order to change her outfit within the confines of a private, main space (her home). The post, titled "Blackie ASMR", makes reference to the term "Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response"[8] , and includes a detailed description of the preparation process, despite the fact that her hair and makeup are already complete. The video employs a technique of editing known as "jump cuts," which remove superfluous frames and amplify sound effects to a high volume. The objective is to elicit a shock response from fans in order to prompt emulation.

The final publication of the month was released on 29 February 2024. It consisted of a series of five images of the most influential individual in a swimming costume. The images were captured in a private, open-air setting, specifically a hotel balcony. They showcase the subject's physique, prompting engagement from her followers. The content is primarily explanatory, as the subject discloses her experiences from the trip. Indeed, this is further expanded in two subsequent posts: the initial post features the influencer with her partner, while the subsequent post serves as a promotional platform for a perfume.

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[8] ASMR, in this case, refers to a psychological and physical experience to explain how it feels or what it wants to convey.

Table 6. Structural analysis of the representative sample of *influencer* no. 2

	Visual strategy		Language strategies	Impact
	Purpose of the image	**Body exhibition**		
Initial post 6 February 2024	Explanatory and everyday life	Yes	Emotional	550.425 *likes*
Final post 14 February 2024	Everyday life	Yes	Appellative	266.212 *likes*

Source: own elaboration, 2024.

With regard to Marta Díaz, she published two posts during the month of February, the first on the 6th. The video comprises a series of clips, each illustrating a stage in the subject's recovery from an accident that resulted in impaired mobility of the leg. The images illustrate various public settings, including the gymnasium and the hospital, which serve a dual purpose. Firstly, they provide an explanatory dimension, reflecting her personal experience. Secondly, they offer insights into everyday life, showcasing her routine. Furthermore, the text employs a triangulation of linguistic strategies, appealing to both emotional and objective perspectives. The author evokes a sense of emotional appeal, conveying her determination to recover, while simultaneously presenting an objective account of her progress.

In comparison to the previous publication, the image of overcoming presented in the final post is in stark contrast. The latter is composed of a carousel of five photographs, in which the subject displays a range of facial gestures that evoke eroticism and provocation. Although the location is not revealed, the visual context suggests a private setting, such as a hotel room. An explanatory visual strategy is evident, accompanied by a clear display of her facial gestures, which appear to convey desire and emotional attitude. His participation in the television programme El Desafío (Antena 3: 2021-) has limited his exposure on networks, but this has been compensated for by increased visibility through both media.

Table 7. Structural analysis of the representative sample of *influencer* no. 3

	Visual strategy		Language strategies	Impact
	Purpose of the image	**Body exhibition**		
Initial post 1 February 2024	Explanatory	Yes	Appellative	171.063 *likes*
Final post 17 February 2024	Advertising	Yes	Emotionally charged	275.580 *likes*

Source: own elaboration, 2024.

In the case of Marina Rivers, an examination of her profile reveals the presence of four posts published in February. Most of these posts are presented in a carousel format, comprising photographic content and two videos. The initial post references a transformation in her appearance, characterised by a poetic new hairstyle, and provides an explanatory account of this change. It focuses exclusively on the description of her image from a private space, namely her home. In this way, she seeks to engage her followers and ascertain their opinions, thereby encouraging interaction. Conversely, the final post, dated 17 February, features the influencer's experience at the Esland Awards (advertising). This allows the audience to gain insight into the media space in which the event is held. Additionally, photographs are employed to illustrate the gala attire, accompanied by a detailed description of the image. The publication includes a video of the live performance of the Catalan duo Estopa and a subsequent interview, in which the influencer conveys a nostalgic emotional message.

Table 8. Structural analysis of the representative sample of *influencer* no. 4

	Visual strategy		Language strategies	Impact
	Purpose of the image	**Body exhibition**		
Initial post 4 February 2024	Explanatory	Yes	Emotionally charged	74.786 *likes*
Final post 22 February 2024	Everyday life	No	Emotional	62.446 *likes*

Source: own elaboration, 2024.

In the month of February 2024, Sofia Surferss, sister of Lola Lolita, published a total of seven items. These comprised five videos and two photo carousels. The initial publication, dated 4 February, comprises a 15-second video in which the subject is seen dancing with her partner (also an influencer) in a public setting. This video forms part of a series of publications intended to convey the subject's affective experiences. Similarly, her linguistic strategy is emotive, as evidenced by the final publication on 22 February, in which she once again presents a video featuring her pet on the beach in Alicante (a public space). The emotional function employed by Influencer No. 4 is sustained throughout the remainder of the month, as evidenced by the continued presence of images depicting her visits to an exotic animal rescue centre, her travels to Lanzarote with her sister, and other similar activities. It is noteworthy that in all of the aforementioned publications, Sofia Surferss is depicted with her hair styled and make-up applied in a manner that is typically associated with conventional standards of beauty. Additionally, she displays a high degree of physical exposure, particularly of her shoulders, abdomen, buttocks, and most of her breasts.

Table 9. Structural analysis of the representative sample of *influencer* no. 5

	Visual strategy		Language strategies	Impact
	Purpose of the image	**Body exhibition**		
Initial post 1 February 2024	Everyday life / Advertising	Yes	Fática	30.734 *likes*
Final post 29 February 2024	Everyday life / Advertising	Yes	Fática	209.444 *likes*

Source: own elaboration, 2024.

Nadia Vilaplana's publications are primarily focused on the analysis of dance videos, with a total of 28 posts published during the period under examination. Some aesthetic tendencies may be discerned, such as the use of monochromatic photography in some instances (poetics). In regard to her inaugural post, it is a video in which the young woman is seen wearing makeup and attire that does not reveal her silhouette within the confines of a private space, namely her bedroom. Indeed, dancing constitutes an integral aspect of Nadia Vilaplana's daily routine, particularly in light of her recent release of her inaugural music album. This activity has become a central element of her daily life, serving as a conduit for promoting her work and engaging in a form of social interaction.

In her final post of the month, the influencer, number five, once again displays her dancing abilities in a video, this time in the confines of a private space, namely her bedroom. In this instance, the subject displays a greater degree of bodily exposure through the wearing of a T-shirt with a low-cut neckline, which reveals her abdomen. It is noteworthy that the camera angle and framing consistently emphasise the hips and buttocks. Furthermore, the movements of her body are clearly sexualised, allowing for a bodily description that fulfils a function of everyday life and advertising. This linguistic strategy is once again phatic.

3. Discussion and Conclusions

A comparative analysis of the profiles of the five influencers reveals the existence of a number of visual and linguistic strategies that can be grouped together. From a gender perspective, the images of the most followed influencers of the Z generation have been analysed in order to identify and examine phenomena of objectification and self-objectification. The utilisation and display of the female body, which has historically been conceptualised as an oppressive element, now serves as an emblem of women's liberation and decision-

making capacity. This gives rise to discursive tensions in which adolescent girls conflate emancipation with domination (Menéndez Menéndez, 2017, pp. 3-4), precisely at a stage in their lives when they are developing their identity and projecting their future. The pervasive presentation of the female body gives rise to a phenomenon of "pornification" or hypersexualisation, which young and adolescent girls are prone to emulating.

In this context, the results of the morphological analysis demonstrate that the impact of the followers is contingent upon the manner of bodily display. This is exemplified by the case of Nadia Vilaplana, whereby an exponential increase in likes is observed between her initial publication (30,734 likes), in which she is depicted wearing loose-fitting attire, and her latest post (209,444 likes), in which she is shown wearing a top that displays her cleavage and a significant portion of her abdomen. A similar phenomenon can be observed in the cases of Marina Rivers, Marta Díaz and Lola Lolita. With regard to Sofía Surferss, although her initial and final publications do not illustrate this phenomenon, it is evident in other posts uploaded to her profile wall (feed) during the same period. One such example is the post made on 18 February. The photograph in question, in which the subject is depicted in front of the camera wearing a top that only covers her arms and nipples, received 100,760 likes, which is almost double the number of likes she typically accumulates.

According to De Miguel, the number of cultural products shared by young people is declining, with the pink and blue worlds becoming increasingly distinct. However, traditional stereotypes persist, since "gender socialisation is undergoing an involution in formally egalitarian societies" (2015, p. 68). The author introduces the concept of the "myth of free choice" (2015) to highlight that contemporary society is witnessing the emergence of novel forms of inequality reproduction, characterised by an uncritical return to values and gender roles that were previously perceived to have been overcome. This theory of false consent is predicated on the assertion that the commodification of women's bodies represents the most efficacious means of disseminating and reinforcing neoliberal ideology. "Now that women are 'already free' and 'already have equality', they can now 'choose' to engage in commercial activities related to their bodies, or specific parts of their bodies" (De Miguel, 2015, p. 11).

The visual strategies analysed demonstrate a considerable degree of variation in the functions they serve in relation to the purpose of the image. Regarding the exhibition of the body, it is common practice among influencers to solicit engagement from their followers on matters pertaining to their physical appearance. For example, the linguistic strategy employed by Lola Lolita in her post, entitled "MIAU", includes the message "one is sexyyyyt mannnn if I don't show off my hot body when am I going to do it?" ("una de sexyyyyt hombreeee que sii no enseño mi cuerpo serrano ahora cuando lo voy a hacer?"), which alludes to both her tattoo and her "feline" attitude. The image in question depicts the influencer attired in a swimming costume that displays her buttocks in a fully exposed manner. It is notable that the publication in question garnered 325,456 likes, a significantly higher figure than that of her previous post, in which she was seen in a long-sleeved dress in front of the Santiago Bernabeu stadium, with her legs concealed, and which received 224,388 likes. It is evident that the influencer is self-objectifying while simultaneously perpetuating an ageist discourse by assuming that she can only showcase her body while she is young.

Additionally, Marina Rivers employs this type of message to articulate her self-definition, as evidenced by the following examples: ''I look beautiful on the white carpet ready'', ''Beautiful again,' and ''Look how cute I am''. ("Yo bien guapa en la alfombra blanca ready", "Guapa again," and "Es q mira q mona")in the February 17th post about the Esland Awards. Indeed, the aforementioned post serves to draw particular attention to the video of an interview conducted by another influencer with the musical group Estopa. Marina is depicted alongside the other individuals but does not engage in any verbal interaction. Instead, she is represented as a mere visual presence. This perpetuates the stereotype of the silenced woman with a "decorative" function, in contrast to the active participation of the male influencer. It is noteworthy that the most followed influencers among Generation Z articulate or propose identity strategies that resonate with and impact adolescents through their communities of followers. Furthermore, they disseminate values pertaining to desirability and gender discourses that are based on objectification and self-seeking during a period of vulnerability. This is particularly pertinent given that they are at a stage of identity construction that is susceptible to low self-esteem and the onset of potential disorders such as depression and anxiety (McLaughlin and King, 2015).

In light of the findings from this study, it is imperative to advocate for initiatives and develop intervention projects at the initial stages of education to prevent the internalisation of objectification and the cultural ideal of beauty, with a particular focus on social networks such as Instagram. As emphasised by Woods and Scott (2016), it is crucial to acknowledge the existing interconnection between social networks and psychological disorders. In this way, a contribution can be made to the deconstruction of gender roles and stereotypes. It is therefore important to encourage young people to adopt a critical approach to social networks, equipping them

with the necessary strategies for their appropriate use. This is because the use of these communication channels plays a significant role in the construction of identity and socialisation. It is incumbent upon educational institutions to raise awareness among adolescent students about the issue of body image, thereby fostering cognitive, emotional, and behavioural changes. Young girls, in particular, require the capacity to identify which images objectify them and which disempower them, and to gain confidence by developing an awareness of the myths surrounding body image that avoids situations of exclusion and victimisation. It is therefore imperative to alert young women to the dangers of internalising the prevailing standards of bodily perfection, given that they are the most susceptible to the development of eating disorders and other related pathologies. In conclusion, it is essential to encourage adolescents to critically examine their own media consumption in order to foster more equitable and egalitarian environments.

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