The Ethical Concerns of Editing Photos in Media and Its Impact on Beauty Standards

[1]Faiza Bibi, [2]Dr. Shazia Hashmat, [3]Misbah Ilyas

Article Details

Keywords: Ethics, Photo Editing, Digital Manipulation, Social Media, Beauty Standards

Faiza Bibi
MPhil Student, Communication and Media Studies Department, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi, Pakistan

Dr. Shazia Hashmat
Assistant Professor, Communication and Media Studies Department, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi, Pakistan.
shazia.hashmat@fjwu.edu.pk
ORCID ID: 0009-0002-3384-670X

Misbah Ilyas
MPhil Student, Communication and Media Studies Department, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi, Pakistan

ABSTRACT

Editing photos is a powerful tool that can shape how people think about beauty. This review study highlights the impact of editing photos on beauty standards, necessitating an in-depth examination of subject. Drawing from a sample of n= 20 research articles selected through inclusion and exclusion criteria and the PRISMA approach, the study synthesizes results from articles published over the time period of 10 years , from 2015 to 2025. The findings show that it's important for people to learn how to understand and question what they see in the media. There should also be clear rules about how much editing is okay, and people need to be more honest about when and how photos are changed. It was concluded through selected literature reviewed that editing of photos especially on social media promotes narrow and often impossible beauty standards. It was concluded that photo editing isn't just about fun or creativity actually it is a powerful tool that shapes how people think about beauty.

INTRODUCTION

Photographs have the power to change the views of society through visual stimuli (Long, 1999). Photo editing is very common in the media industry, but it raises important ethical questions. Photo-editing software are mostly available to anyone, and many people use it on social media to make their pictures look more attractive. Professional photo editors and journalists often face challenges in keeping a balance between creativity, what the audience wants and honesty in their work. These challenges become more difficult when different employers have varying ethical standards. Photographers working in crisis zones, for example, often find themselves caught between conflicting ethical guidelines (Calain, 2013). People are now becoming more aware that most images in the media are edited to match western beauty standard. According to a study girls who compare themselves to the models of magazine and are under pressure of family and friends to look perfect feel worse than the girls who don't have such pressure (Sheldon, 2010, p. 291). Image modification before digital cameras was done by photographers, retouch artists, and prepress technicians who adjust tonal range, contrast, and color saturation through darkroom techniques (Irby, 2003a). Photoshop is used to to hide ones mistakes and physical imperfections and can change their look according to their wish (Alanka and Cezik 2016). Celebrities, Media, and influencers often show a perfect image of beauty as slim and smart which many women feel pressured to look same. From a study it was observed that women who edited their photos before posting them mostly felt unhappy with their bodies and there was a linked between self-image manipulation and high body anxiety (Pham et al. 2022). People who often edit their photos usually feel uncomfortable with their looks and don't adjust their behavior much based on their social surroundings. Studies show that those who worry about their appearance prefer editing their photos, while people adapt to social situations tend to edit less (Grogan, 2016; Holland and Tiggemann, 2016). Mostly people on social media judge their photos by looking the photographs of their friends and age fellows, not with the celebrities and models (Fardouly et al, 2015). Previously researches shows just females are seen for engaging in photo editing but now both males and females are engage in photo editing. (Ozimek et al., 2023). In some cases, individuals even seek cosmetic procedures to resemble their filtered selfies, a phenomenon known as "Snapchat dysmorphia" (Ramphul & Mejias, 2018). Posting photos for approval can lead to self-objectification, unhealthy social media use, and eating issues (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Mabe et al., 2014) Editing photos on social media can make people unhappy with how they look (Beos et al. 2021).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Beauty standards are now common and widely spread on mass media, social media, and emerging digital platforms. Multiple studies found that the use of social media and photo editing apps is strongly connected to both lower self-esteem and people get greater desire to cosmetic surgery (Chen et al., 2019; Lake, 2018). Many studies have been published on this. Present research looks at an overall literature published in recent years. Several studies have been carried out on how edited images, manipulated visuals and editing apps create images that show such looks which are either rare in real life and cannot possibly exist in reality. Different studies have looked at different angles and perspective regarding this issue but a unified analysis through reviewing literature is required in order to get a complete picture. So this research has tried to look at several studies that are carried on in this regard then in order to give a thorough, comprehensive and synthesized review, various researches were selected for review analysis.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

O_1 - To analyze the impact of photo editing on societal beauty standards and body image.

O_2 - To identify the ethical concerns linked with the digital image manipulation in media.

O_3 - To understand the role of influencers and celebrities in shaping beauty expectations.

O_4 - To explore how edited media images affect individual's mental health and influence their decision to undergo cosmetic procedures.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ_1 - How does photo editing in media influence societal beauty standards?

RQ_2 - What ethical concerns arise from the use of photo editing in media?

RQ_3 - What role do influencers and celebrities play in normalizing digitally enhanced beauty standards?

RQ_4 - How do the psychological effects of edited media images influence individuals' decisions to pursue cosmetic interventions?

METHODOLOGY

The study is based on the Data Review Approach. The review-based studies are an important part of the literature existed online.

ASSUMPTIONS AND JUSTIFICATION

Some assumptions were made to make it easier to study the selected research. These assumptions helped ensure the research was focused and consistent. Researcher has assumed

that photo editing in media creates unrealistic beauty standards. Many studies shows that edited images in media promote beauty ideals which leads to body dissatisfaction and low self-esteem especially on young people. By assuming this, the review focuses on how edited photos can raise beauty standards. Media outlets often use edited photos to grab attention, increase sales, ignoring the ethical implications of promoting unrealistic beauty standards as they forget their ethical main focus is profit.

EVALUATION OF ASSUMPTIONS

While these assumptions helped in doing the review process, it's important to understand that they might affect the results. The keywords for the research were (Ethics, Photo editing, digital manipulation, social media, Beauty standards). This might lead to some variations in results, and readers should keep in mind. The researcher used the PRISMA method for data review.

Table 1 gives the summary of inclusion and exclusion criteria used in this study:

Using the PRISMA method, the researcher collected 59 studies from the chosen databases. After removing duplicates 50 articles were further divided and articles that are published after 2015 are 22 selected for full text screening. By screening them and limiting this research to the media only social media 22 articles remained which are available in full text for review. The researcher selected 20 articles based on specific selection criteria.

TABLE 1: INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Studies based on impact of edited photos on beauty standards.	Studies based on other different impacts of edited photos.
Journals that are indexed from one database.	Journal that are not indexed in the relevant database.
Articles published after 2015 and onwards.	Articles published before the year 2015.

The methodology used in this study was double checked to make sure it is reliable and it covers everything needed.

PRISMA FIG.1 Flowchart Below Shows How The Articles Were Chosen For This Research. Firstly Number Of Databases Chosen That Are 2 To Search For Study.

```
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│      Total Database = 2          │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                │
                ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────┐        ┌──────────────────────────┐
│ Records from the Database Search=59│─────▶│  Duplicates Excluded = 9 │
└─────────────────────────────────┘        └──────────────────────────┘
                │
                ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────┐        ┌──────────────────────────┐
│ Records after Removing Duplicates= 50│──▶│   Articles Excluded       │
└─────────────────────────────────┘        │  published before        │
                │                           │   2015= 17               │
                ▼                           └──────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────────┐        ┌──────────────────────────┐
│ Articles Published after 2015 = 33│─────▶│   Articles Excluded       │
└─────────────────────────────────┘        │ with abstracts only =     │
                │                           │   13                      │
                ▼                           └──────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│ Final Number of Articles for the Analysis= 20│
└─────────────────────────────────┘
```
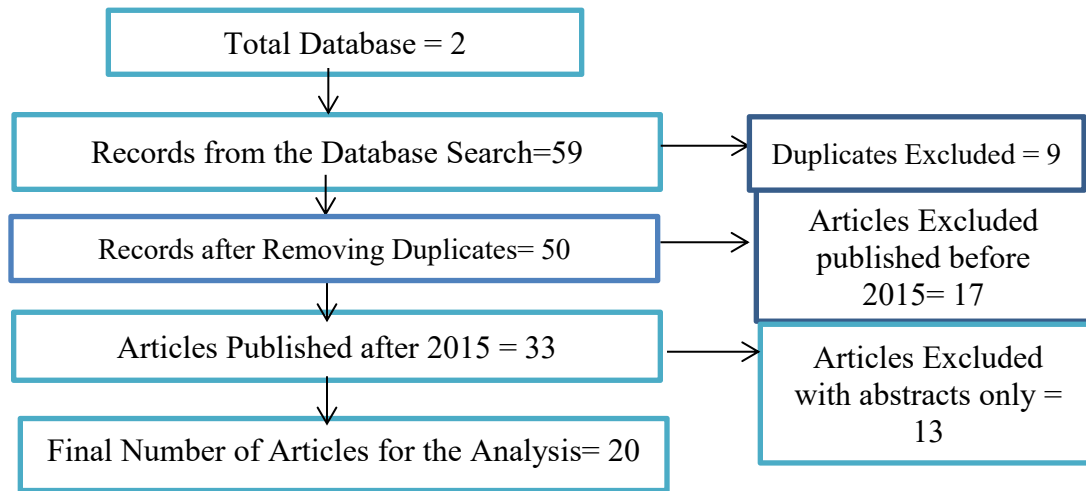
FIG. 1 PRISMA FLOW CHART FOR THE ARTICLES SELECTION PROCESS.

Out of 2 databases 59 articles were found. 9 articles were removed as they were duplicates and 50 articles left. Then, 17 articles that were published before 2015 were removed because this study focuses on recent articles and 33 were left for further working. After that, 13 more articles were excluded as they are not meeting the inclusion criteria and didn't match the study needs after reading them. In the end, 20 articles were selected for the final analysis. This process helped to pick only the important and recent studies for the research.

Table 2 shows the percentage of articles selected from data base. Mostly articles are selected from Google Scholar (n=15) and others from Scispace (n=5).

Table 3 shows the percentages of selected literature according to their publication years. As it is clearly shown that studies (n= 07) were published from 2015 to 2020, followed by (n=13) published from 2021 until this year 2025.

According to their designs keeping in mind the numbers and percentages of the literature, most studies (9) used an experimental design while (6) studies used case study, (3) number of studies used mixed method approach and smaller number of studies (2) were based on review approach. In terms of research methods (n=9, 45%) studies used quantitative approach, (n=6, 30%) studies used qualitative approach and (n=3, 15%) study used a mixed method approach.

The researchers looked at how the studies collected their data and calculated how many used each method.

TABLE 2: NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF LITERATURE ACCORDING TO THEIR DATABASE.

Database	Number	%
Google scholar	15	75%
Scispace	5	25%

TABLE 3: PERCENTAGES ACCORDING TO THE LITERATURE ACCORDING TO PUBLICATION YEAR.

Year	Number	%
2015-2020	7	35%
2021-2025	13	65%

TABLE 4: NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES ACCORDING TO THEIR PARADIGM MODEL

Study Design	Experimental	Case Study	Review	Others
	9 (45%)	6 (30%)	2 (10%)	3 (15%)
Paradigm Model	**Qualitative**	**Quantitative**	**Mixed method**	
	8 (40%)	9 (45%)	3 (15%)	

TABLE 5: FREQUENCIES OF THE LITERATURE ACCORDING TO DATA COLLECTION APPROACHES.

	Survey Method	Interviews	Review	Other
Data Gathering Approaches	9	2	4	4

VALIDATION OF SELECTED METHODOLOGY

The method used in this review was carefully checked to make sure it was reliable and covered everything needed. Here are main steps taken to validate it:

ADHERENCE TO PRISMA GUIDELINES

PRISMA guidelines are a set of rules that help researchers systematically collect, analyze, and report information from different studies in a clear and organized way. They ensure that the review process is thorough, transparent, and easy to understand.

INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA

The criteria for this study is designed to select those articles that specifically mentioned about the ethics related to uploading edited photographs, impact of edited images on beauty standards

and published after 2015.

SEARCH STRATEGY

The strategy for searching articles was to use two specialized platforms: Scispace and Google scholar. Researcher carefully chose keywords to cover it, ensuring no important studies were missed.

DATA TABULATION AND ANALYSIS

Researcher used Microsoft Excel to organize the data collected from the selected articles. The researcher made the grid and extract all the information that helped her sort the information clearly and calculate how often certain things appeared (frequencies and percentages). It made sure our results were correct and easy to understand.

PRISMA FLOW CHART

A PRISMA flowchart (Fig.1 above) is a visual way to represent how researchers select, review, and include articles in their study. It helps make the process clear and proves that the researchers was done carefully and systematically.

GRID OF SELECTED STUDIES

Data Base	Title	Author
Google Scholar	Posting Edited Photos of the Self: Increasing Eating Disorder Risk or Harmless Behavior?	Madeline R. Wick, Pamela K. Keel
Google Scholar	Role of Self-Monitoring and Social Appearance Anxiety in the Relationship Between Photo Editing and Social Withdrawal	Dilara Engin, M.Fatih Bükün, Rojbin Kundo, Devrim Tekin, Mervenur Çeti.
Google Scholar	To Study The Impact of Social Media on Body Image Dissatisfaction and Cyberbullying Among Young Adults	Kashish Arora, Dr. Sanjeev Kumar Gautam
Google Scholar	Will Photo Shopping Degree Indicates the Implicit Self-Esteem Level	Jiahui Liao
Google Scholar	AM I PRETTY? THE INFLUENCE OF MAINSTREAM MEDIA ON BEAUTY	Erin Nantais

	IDEALS	
Scispace	Photo Editing: Enhancing Social Media Images to Reflect Appearance Ideals	ELLA GUEST
Google Scholar	How False Social Media Beauty Standards Lead to Body Dysmorphia	Erum Hafeez, Fatima Zulfiqar
Google Scholar	AI in Image Editing and Enhancement: Revolutionizing Photography	Swapnil Upadhye
Google Scholar	Impact of Social Media and Photo-Editing Practice on Seeking Cosmetic Dermatology Care	Harshit Agrawal & Sudha Agrawal
Google Scholar	Photo Editing and The Risk of Anorexia Nervosa Among Children And Adolescents	Elena Bozzola, Tommaso Aversa, Elena Scarpato, Cinthia Caruso, Rocco Russo and Rino Agostiniani.
Google Scholar	How Photo Editing in Social Media Shapes Self-Perceived Attractiveness and Self Esteem Via Self-Objectification and Physical Appearance Comparisons	Phillip Ozimek, Semina Lainas, Elke Rohmann and Hans-Werner Bierhoff
Google Scholar	Selfie Editing and Consideration of Cosmetic Surgery Among Young Chinese Women: The Role of Self-Objectification and Facial Dissatisfaction	Qingqing Sun
Google Scholar	The Psychosocial Impact of Modifying Face and Body Photographs in Social Media	Alexandra Valéria Sándor
Google Scholar	The Influence of Social Media on Perception of Body Image and Beauty Standards on Young People	Zijing Xie*

Scispace	The Portrayal of Ideal Beauty Both in The Media and in the Fashion Industry and How These Together Lead to Harmful Consequences Such As Eating Disorders	Assistant Professor Dr. Gülçin İpek Kalender
Google Scholar	The Associations Between Photo-Editing And Body Concerns Among Females: A Systematic Review	Orla McGovern, Rebecca Collins, Simon Dunne
Google Scholar	Self-Presentation using Photo-Editing Apps on Social Media	Jaehee Jang
Scispace	The Impact of Snapchat Beautifying Filters on Beauty Standards and Self-image: A Self-Discrepancy Approach	Rania M. Alsaggaf
Scispace	The Relationship Between Beauty Standards On Social Media And Body Dissatisfaction	Ameera Natasya Bt Mohd Termizi ,Nureena Nabilah Binti Mohd Herwan
Google Scholar	Beauty Standards set by Social Media and their Influence on Women's Body Image	Fadi yamout, Jenny Issa, Alia Ghaddar
Google Scholar	Picture Perfect: The Direct Effect of Manipulated Instagram Photos on Body Image in Adolescent Girls	Mariska Kleemans, Serena Daalmans, Ilana Carbaat & Doeschka Anschütz

REVIEW OF THE SELECTED LITERATURE

All the themes mentioned below are related to the research questions given above. Each theme look at a different part of the topic to give a complete understanding. Each theme addresses a research question.

THEME 1: DIGITAL MANIPULATION AND BEAUTY STANDARDS

Editing photos on social media makes people feel more pressure to look a certain way, based on society's beauty standards. Wick and Keel (2020) found that when people share edited photos, they start to worry more about their weight and body image. But when they look at unedited,

natural photos, it can actually help them feel better about their own bodies at least for a little while. Guest (2016) emphasized that edited images in media and social media platforms shows cultural beauty standards, which directly influence how individuals see themselves. Bozzola (2024) said that it is harmful to use beauty filters for kids and teenagers as they want to look unrealistically perfect, which can lead to unhealthy ideas about how they should look. McGovern et al. (2022) conducted a systematic review showing that image editing increases body dissatisfaction among females. However, they noted that this issue is complicated and detailed research is needed on it. Kalender (2020) argued that to idealize slimness as the standard of beauty on main stream media promotes harmful behaviors, including those related to self-image and eating. Liao (2021) noted that with the advancement of technology, photo-editing apps have made it easier to internalize unrealistic appearance ideals. Jang (2022) said that people increasingly use editing apps to control how they look on social media, which makes changing your appearance seem normal and makes people believe they have to look perfect all the time

TABLE 6: DIGITAL MANIPULATION AND BEAUTY STANDARDS

Author's	Year	Key Points
Wick & Keel	2020	Edited photos increase body image concerns, unedited photos reduce temporary dissatisfaction.
Guest	2016	Edited images align with cultural beauty ideals, influence how people view themselves.
Bozzola et al	2024	Filters linked to harmful beauty standards in teens may lead to unhealthy appearance goals.
McGovern et al.	2022	Editing raises body dissatisfaction in females; complex link requires more research.
Kalender	2020	Media promotes slimness as ideal beauty, encouraging harmful behaviors.
Liao	2021	Editing apps help internalize unrealistic beauty ideals due to easier access and use.
Jang	2022	Photo editing for self-presentation reinforces normalized digital beauty manipulation.

THEME 2: SOCIAL MEDIA'S ROLE IN PROMOTING UNREALISTIC BEAUTY (HOW SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS SHAPE USER PERCEPTIONS OF BEAUTY)

Social media has a big influence on how people see beauty. It often shows images that are fake and AI generated through which users feel unhappy with themselves and affect their mental health. Arora and Gautam (2024) said that seeing these perfect pictures all the time makes people compare themselves and feel bad. In Lebanon, Yamout et al. (2019) found that women feel this pressure more than men, leading to more frequent body image concerns and lower self-esteem compared to men. Xie (2024) highlighted how idealized images of beauty in online spaces contribute to increased anxiety and low self-esteem among youth. Alsaggaf (2021) explored that how Snapchat make people feel good for a short period of time and also make them dislike their real appearance. Termizi and Herwan (2022) noted that peer pressure on social media plays a more powerful role than personal beliefs in shaping body dissatisfaction, as users idealize the beauty standards they see set by their social circles.

TABLE 7: SOCIAL MEDIA'S ROLE IN PROMOTING UNREALISTIC BEAUTY

Author	Years	Key Points
Arora & Gautam	2024	Social media promotes unrealistic beauty ideals; comparison leads to dissatisfaction
Yamout et al.	2019	Women in Lebanon more affected by social media; higher body image issues than men
Alsaggaf	2021	Snapchat filters cause confidence gaps and distorted self-perception
Xie	2024	Perfect images are connected to higher anxiety and lower self esteem.
Termizi & Herwan	2022	Peer pressure on social media is more influential than internal beliefs in shaping body image.

THEME 3: PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF EDITED IMAGES

By looking or engaging on edited photos on media can seriously affect people's mental health. Many studies have shown that these photos often make people feel worse about themselves. Engin et al. (2023) report that too much photo editing can lead to increase levels of depression, social appearance anxiety and even social withdrawal, as individuals become more preoccupied with presenting a digitally enhanced version of themselves. Similarly, Hafeez and Zulfiqar (2023) explore the harmful impact of unrealistic beauty standards propagated through edited

photos, highlighting how this leads to body dysmorphia (a mental health issue where someone becomes very worried about their appearance) and lowered overall well-being, especially among women. Sándor (2020) shows that modifying one's facial and bodily images is linked to higher depressive symptoms, suggesting that constantly altering appearance online may undermine self-acceptance. Ozimek et al. (2023) find that posting and engaging with edited selfies on social media reduces self-esteem and increases appearance-based comparisons, which can make them feel not good enough. Lastly, Xie (2024) confirms that idealized images shared on social platforms are major contributors to emotional distress, anxiety, and body image issues among young users. These studies show that it is important to think about ethics of editing images, especially since it can affect individual's mental health and how they feel about themselves.

Together, these studies emphasize the urgent need to consider the ethical implications of normalized image editing, especially given its influence on users' psychological health and self-worth.

TABLE 8: PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF EDITED IMAGES

Author	Year	Keypoints
Engin et al.	2023	Too much editing of photos leads to depression, anxiety and avoiding others.
Hafeez & Zulfiqar	2023	Unrealistic beauty standards from edited images contribute to body dysmorphia and low mental well-being.
Sándor	2020	Facial and body photo modifications are associated with increased depressive symptoms.
Ozimek et al.	2023	Edited selfies negatively affect self-esteem and increase comparison behaviors.
Xie	2024	Idealized images on social media cause emotional distress, anxiety, and body image concerns in youth

THEME 4: PHOTO EDITING & COSMETIC INTERVENTION

Photo editing on social media platforms is not only linked to internal psychological struggles but also to external behavioral outcomes, such as an increased interest in cosmetic procedures. Sun (2020) examines how selfie editing contributes to heightened self-objectification and dissatisfaction with facial appearance among young Chinese women. This dissatisfaction, in turn, drives the consideration of cosmetic surgery as a solution to bridge the gap between real

and digitally altered appearances. Agrawal and Agrawal (2021) take this argument further by suggesting that the combination of social media exposure and routine use of editing tools actively fuels the rising demand for cosmetic dermatology treatments. This demand is driven by the desire to appear in real life as one does online. Similarly, Ozimek et al. (2023) reveal that engaging with edited images increases comparison with others, indirectly nudging individuals toward cosmetic interventions to achieve the same idealized look. These studies suggest that digital beauty modification is not confined to the virtual world but spills into real-world health and aesthetic decisions, raising significant ethical and societal questions.

TABLE 9: PHOTO EDITING & COSMETIC INTERVENTION

Author	Year	Key Findings
Sun	2020	Editing leads to self-objectification and facial dissatisfaction, increasing interest in cosmetic surgery.
Agrawal & Agrawal	2021	Social media and photo editing boost demand for cosmetic dermatology treatments.
Ozimek et al.	2023	Engaging with edited photos increases appearance comparison, influencing cosmetic decisions indirectly

THEME 5: ETHICAL CONCERNS IN DIGITAL IMAGE CULTURE

The rise of digital photo editing, particularly in the context of beauty representation, has also raised ethical red flags regarding authenticity, responsibility, and cultural impact. Upadhye (2024) discusses how AI-powered photo enhancement tools can distort reality, blurring the lines between authenticity and fabrication. The ethical concerns here are tied to how easily altered images can deceive and pressure users to conform to unrealistic expectations. Nantais (2020) highlights that mainstream media, including social platforms take advantage of people's worries about how they look to make money. They do this by promoting unrealistic beauty standards that are hard or impossible to reach. Sándor (2020) says it's important for people to be more aware and careful when editing photos, and there should be clear rules to protect people's mental health and how they see themselves. Guest (2016) also stresses that we need strong ethical rules in the world of digital beauty to stop long-term harm caused by fake or edited images. Together, these studies suggest that the media should be more honest and responsible, showing real beauty while still looking good.

TABLE 10: ETHICAL CONCERNS IN DIGITAL IMAGE CULTURE

Author	Year	Key Points
Upadhye	2024	Photos edited with AI can change how things really look, as it raises concerns about fake and real.
Nantais	2020	Media profits from beauty-related insecurities; urges critical reflection on manipulated norms.
Sándor	2020	Calls for ethical responsibility and public awareness regarding photo modifications and their impacts.
Guest	2016	Stresses the need for ethical frameworks in digital beauty representation to prevent harm.

DISCUSSION OF ABOVE THEMES

Theme 1 and Theme 2 addresses Research Question 1 (RQ₁), which asks how photo editing in media influences beauty standards. These themes show that when people see edited and filtered photos on social media and in the media, they start to believe that these images represent the perfect or too normal way to look. Because of this, people especially young women and teenagers feel unhappy with their natural appearance as they think they need to match what they see online. These unrealistic beauty expectations become widely accepted in society, even though most of them are edited not even real. Theme 5 relates to Research Question 2 (RQ2), which focuses on the ethical problems that come from photo editing. The studies in this theme show that edited photos can be misleading because they often hide the fact that they've been changed. This creates pressure on viewers to meet unrealistic beauty goals, causing emotional harm. The use of advanced editing tools and AI filters also raises serious questions about honesty, responsibility, and the effect on young and vulnerable users. Theme 2 and partly Theme 1 addresses Research Question 3 (RQ3), which asks about the role of influencers and celebrities in spreading these edited beauty standards. Influencers and celebrities often post perfect-looking photos that are edited carefully. Because a lot of people follow them and look them as their role models. People copy what they see, believing that looking flawless is normal or necessary. This behavior leads to more editing and more pressure as it create a cycle where everyone feels they have to look perfect online which keep spreading fake beauty standards in society. Theme 3 shows that often seeing edited photos in the media can harm mental health. According to studies it can cause low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, and even body dysmorphia (a condition where people obsess over how they look). This happens because people

compare themselves to these unreal edited beauty photos and feel unhappy with how they naturally look. Theme 4 addresses about how individuals moving toward cosmetic procedures after dissatisfaction of their look. Studies highlight how edited selfies and online comparisons motivate people to seek surgery or treatments to resemble their online, filtered selves. This change from editing pictures to changing your real appearance is worrying. It shows that when people feel unhappy with how they look, they may start thinking about getting surgeries or treatments to fix it.

CONCLUSION

This review study explored how photo editing in the media affects beauty standards, what ethical problems it raises, and how influencers and celebrities play a part in shaping how people see beauty. The studies show that editing of photos especially on social media promotes narrow and often impossible beauty standards. Seeing these edited images makes people, especially young women, feel unhappy with their bodies, compare themselves to others, and even develop anxiety or low self-esteem. These edited photos make people believe that only a certain look is beautiful, increasing pressure to fit in. Using filters and editing tools also raises serious ethical concerns. These tools often show a fake versions of reality, which can trick people and make them to feel bad about themselves. Experts says that beauty is being treated like a product, and companies are taking advantage of people's insecurities to make money. To reduce harm, we need better media education, more honesty, and clear rules about how images are edited online. Influencers and celebrities play a big role in spreading these beauty standards. Because many people look upto them, their edited and filtered posts are often copied by followers usually without knowing how much editing was done. This makes the idea of "perfect" beauty seem normal and expected, which adds even more pressure on regular people to look a certain way. In short, photo editing isn't just about fun or creativity actually it is a powerful tool that shapes how people think about beauty. To reduce the harm it causes, everyone including social media companies, influencers, educators, and policymakers needs to work together to promote more honest, realistic, and healthy beauty standards online.

REFERENCES

Alsaggaf, R. M. (2021, September). The impact of snapchat beautifying filters on beauty standards and self-image: a self-discrepancy approach. In *The European Conference on Arts and Humanities*

Arora, K., & Gautam, S. K. (2024). *To Study "The Impact of Social Media on Body Image*

Dissatisfaction and Cyberbullying among Young Adults."
https://doi.org/10.62127/aijmr.2024.v02i02.1019

Agrawal, H., & Agrawal, S. (2021). Impact of social media and photo-editing practice on seeking cosmetic dermatology care. *Clinical, Cosmetic and Investigational Dermatology*, 1377-1385.

Bozzola, E., Scarpato, E., Caruso, C., Russo, R., Aversa, T., & Agostiniani, R. (2024). Photo editing and the risk of anorexia nervosa among children and adolescents. *Italian Journal of Pediatrics, 50*(1), 229

Engin, D., Bükün, M. F., Kundo, R., Tekin, D., & Çeti, M. (2023). Role of self-monitoring and social appearance anxiety in the relationship between photo editing and social withdrawal. *Psikiyatride Guncel Yaklasimlar - Current Approaches in Psychiatry*, 15(5), 741–753. https://doi.org/10.18863/pgy.1349780​:contentReference{index=11}

Guest, E. (2016). Photo editing: enhancing social media images to reflect appearance ideals. *Journal of Aesthetic Nursing*, 5(9), 444–446. https://doi.org/10.12968/JOAN.2016.5.9.444

Hafeez, E., & Zulfiqar, F. (2023). How false social media beauty standards lead to body dysmorphia. *Pakistan Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 11*(3), 3408-3425

İpek Kalender, G. (2020). The portrayal of ideal beauty both in the media and in the fashion industry and how these together lead to harmful consequences such as eating disorders. In *Proceedings of the 10th International Conference on Humanities, Psychology and Social Sciences.*

Jang, J. (2023). *Self Presentation using Photo-Editing Apps on Social Media* (Doctoral dissertation, 서울대학교 대학원).

Liao, J. (2021, December). Will Photoshopping Degree Indicates the Implicit Self-Esteem Level?. In *2021 4th International Conference on Humanities Education and Social Sciences (ICHESS 2021)* (pp. 1980-1984). Atlantis Press.

McGovern, O., Collins, R., & Dunne, S. (2022). The associations between photo-editing and body concerns among females: A systematic review. *Body Image, 43*, 504-517

MOHD TERMIZI, A. N., & MOHD HERWAN, N. N. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BEAUTY STANDARDS ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND BODY DISSATISFACTION. *Jurnal EVOLUSI, 2*(1).

Nantais, E. *Am I Pretty? The Influence of Mainstream Media on Beauty Ideals* (Doctoral dissertation, Toronto Metropolitan University).

Ozimek, P., Bierhoff, H.-W., & Rohmann, E. (2023). How photo editing in social media shapes self-perceived attractiveness and self-esteem via self-objectification and physical appearance comparisons. *BMC Psychology, 11*(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-023-01143-0

Sándor, A. V. (2020). The psychosocial impact of modifying face and body photographs in social media. *Journal of Advanced Research in Social Sciences, 3*(2), 41-46.

Sun, Q. (2021). Selfie editing and consideration of cosmetic surgery among young Chinese women: The role of self-objectification and facial dissatisfaction. *Sex Roles, 84*(11), 670-679

Upadhye, S. AI in Image Editing and Enhancement: Revolutionizing Photography

Wick, M. R., & Keel, P. K. (2020). Posting edited photos of the self: Increasing eating disorder risk or harmless behavior? *International Journal of Eating Disorders, 53*(6), 864–872. https://doi.org/10.1002/eat.23263

Xie, Z. (2024). The influence of social media on perception of body image and beauty standards on young people. *Transactions on Social Science, Education and Humanities Research, 5*, 143-

Yamout, F., Issa, J., & Ghaddar, A. (2019, June). Beauty standards set by social media and their influence on women's body image. In *Politics of the Machine Beirut 2019*. BCS Learning & Development