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Abstract: This article examines the influence of social media, particularly the use of filters, on the perception of body and beauty in adolescent girls. It highlights how the questioning of physical appearance becomes prevalent in adolescence, exacerbated by exposure to retouched images and unrealistic beauty standards conveyed online. We argue that the intensive use of filters can damage young people's self-esteem, creating a dissonance between their real appearance and their online representation, and potentially leading to body image problems and inferiority complexes. Our research highlights the importance of analyzing the effects of digital representations on the perception of beauty standards and body representations, proposing a mixed research methodology that examines the interactions between online and offline spaces. We also examine the psychological implications of adopting these digital norms, which

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can lead to unrealistic expectations and body dissatisfaction among adolescent girls. Based on the intersection of the state of the art on this issue, a questionnaire and a qualitative survey, the article explores how the filters used in social media contribute to the construction of a gendered and stereotyped body image, and questions the continuity between digital and real identities. We propose an epistemological reflection on how digital data and body perceptions are interpreted and integrated into studies of the body and identity construction.

Keywords: beauty standards, digital filters, self-esteem, adolescence, body image

Filtres virtuels, pressions réelles : l'impact des médias sociaux sur l'image corporelle des adolescentes

Résumé : Cet article examine l'influence des médias sociaux, particulièrement l'utilisation des filtres sur la perception du corps et de la beauté chez les adolescentes. Il souligne comment la « remise en question » de l'apparence physique devient prédominante à l'adolescence, exacerbée par l'exposition aux images retouchées et aux standards de beauté irréalistes véhiculés en ligne. Nous soutenons que l'utilisation intensive de filtres peut nuire à l'estime de soi des jeunes, en créant une dissonance entre leur apparence réelle et leur représentation en ligne, ce qui peut entraîner des problèmes d'image corporelle et des complexes d'infériorité. Notre recherche souligne l'importance d'analyser les effets des représentations numériques sur la perception des normes de beauté et des représentations corporelles, en proposant une méthodologie de recherche mixte qui examine les interactions entre les espaces en ligne et hors ligne. Nous examinons également les implications psychologiques de l'adoption de ces normes numériques, pouvant mener à des attentes irréalistes et à une insatisfaction corporelle chez les adolescentes. En s'appuyant sur le croisement de l'état de l'art sur cette question, d'un questionnaire et d'une enquête qualitative, l'article explore la manière dont les filtres utilisés dans les médias sociaux contribuent à construire une image corporelle genrée et stéréotypée et questionne la continuité entre les identités numériques et réelles. Nous proposons une réflexion épistémologique sur la manière dont les données numériques et les perceptions corporelles sont interprétées et intégrées dans les études sur le corps et les constructions identitaires.

Mots-clés : normes de beauté, filtres numériques, estime de soi, adolescence, image corporelle

Introduction

The widespread increase in social media use and the intensive use of digital filters among teenagers, particularly adolescent girls, raise important questions about self-perception and self-esteem. Filters and retouching of photos, which make it possible to modify the appearance to often unrealistic standards of beauty, can create

significant distortions in the way young people perceive their own bodies and those of others.

Constant exposure to idealized images can fuel body dissatisfaction and complexes, contributing to a decline in self-esteem. This dynamic is exacerbated by the fact that teenagers spend a great deal of their time on social media, which have become a major way of interacting at this age.

Moreover, the connection between online and offline self-representations is at the heart of the issues facing young social media users. The sometimes striking differences between the self-image projected online and reality can lead to identity confusion and profound questions about self-worth and authenticity. It is therefore crucial to explore these themes to better understand the consequences of the digital environment on the psychosocial development of adolescents. This involves examining not only the negative aspects, but also potential resilience strategies that young people might be able to develop. This field of study has received very little attention in the literature. The work of Claire Pescott at the University of Wales (Pescott, 2020) is a precursor. Among what she considers to be the most worrying findings of her research, are the discussions with 8-11 year-olds on Snapchat filter use that revealed that the surveyed girls admitted using filters to "look prettier" and improve their appearance.

In terms of methodology, we based our study on a structural analysis of the use of social media that proposed filters in their application, combined with questionnaires answered by young people in four age groups (under 15 years old, 15 to 20 years, 20 to 25 years and over 25 years old). These four groups enable a comparative analysis of the results concerning representations of the female body and, in particular, the perception of beauty standards among teenage girls in France. The survey was combined with four focus groups to refine the results.

1. Digital Uses and Non-Formal Education on the Gendered Body

Gendered education profoundly shapes our society. As a result of new reconfigurations based essentially on the immediacy of messages, digital media now play an important role in the construction of gender norms and the transmission of stereotypes. This influence extends far beyond mere entertainment, shaping perceptions, social interactions and standards of beauty. The media have an undeniable power (Tudor and Bendahan, 2022), whether positive or negative, over self-perception and the construction of gender identities. We are witnessing the implementation of a non-formal education system that uses info-education as a lever for learning about gender stereotypes (Desfriges and Szoniecky, 2022). Thus, critically examining the media's influence on gendered education, promoting positive and egalitarian representations of gender and raising awareness of harmful stereotypes are essential to fostering a more balanced and emancipatory gendered education.

Social media applications and online communities provide non-formal learning spaces, offering users the opportunity to learn from each other and access educational content outside the traditional learning setting (Almeida and Morais, 2024). Social media can be an important source of both positive and negative information. Users can learn from each other and from influencers, experts and peers. These dynamics play a decisive role in gender interactions and representations of beauty models online.

Much research suggests that these platforms profoundly influence self-perception and body image. Laurence Allard (2019) analyzes how digital practices influence self-expression and social recognition. These platforms enable users to represent themselves digitally and shape their online identities (Georges, 2009), including their gender identities, using visual and textual media to communicate their self-image. Structural approaches to social media demonstrate an ongoing reconfiguration of public and private spaces (Tudor and Bratosin, 2020) influencing modalities of self-exposure and social interactions (Cardon, 2012). The use of smartphones by young people has led to a "mobile life" (Allard, 2019), highlighting how these technical devices become tools of self-expression and identity constructions.

In this context, at the time of adolescence, these digital interfaces can become highly sensitive, conveying models and standards of beauty through the staging of a self that is sublimated by images that can be retouched and filtered images. Virtual interactions can become a means of affirmation and social validation (Scully, Swords and Nixon, 2020). The profusion and ease of use of filters and photo editing tools available on these platforms enables an idealized image of the self to be presented, contributing to digital identity constructions that are often far removed from reality. This dichotomy between real and digital identities can give rise to tensions and dissatisfaction, particularly in terms of body image and self-esteem. But these analyses are not Manichean, as the interactions between the individual and social media are complex. Digital media can have positive effects on the construction of adolescents' body identities by offering spaces for self-expression and social recognition (Balleys, 2017). They enable the exploration and affirmation of diverse identities, promoting greater acceptance of self and others. It is therefore necessary to understand these dynamics in order to grasp the contemporary challenges linked to identity, autonomy and the social inclusion of young people in digital spaces.

According to the study by Fardouly et al. (2015), constant exposure to idealized images on social media can lead to body dissatisfaction in young girls, leading them to internalize unrealistic and unattainable beauty standards. Beauty standards are no longer reachable references but an absolute utopia that refers back to gender hierarchies and stereotypes.

Moreover, gendered body education via social media manifests itself in the reinforcement of gender stereotypes. Tiggemann and Slater (2014) found that engagement with appearance-oriented content on platforms such as Instagram is positively related to concerns about weight and appearance. This dynamic is

exacerbated by these platforms' algorithms, which tend to promote content that fits dominant female beauty stereotypes, creating a cycle of reinforcement.

However, there are points of disagreement regarding the extent of the impact of social media and the exact mechanisms by which they influence body image. Some researchers, such as Choukas-Bradley et al. (2019), emphasize the complexity of online social interactions and propose that effects vary considerably depending on individual characteristics, such as self-esteem and susceptibility to social pressure. Others, such as Tiggemann et al. (2020), suggest that social media can also offer opportunities for counterculture and resistance to oppressive body norms, highlighting movements such as body positivity.

Looking at the question of the "uncontrollable need for control", Claire Balleys (2017) examines how young girls use the YouTube platform to express, shape and negotiate their feminine identity through digital performances. Her analysis is based on a corpus of videos produced by adolescent girls on YouTube. The results highlight the link between the need for control and "performances of femininity". Through their videos, adolescent girls seek to exert a degree of control over the representation of their identity and femininity. The author identifies themes such as the construction of an idealized body image, the use of visual aesthetics, and the management of audience interaction as key elements of these performances. The results also reveal the diversity of strategies used by adolescent girls to negotiate their relationship with the gaze of others and social norms. Finally, social media can be both a means of emancipation and perpetuation of gender norms. They offer a space where individuals can creatively express their gender identities, but they can also reinforce pre-existing stereotypes. Digital features (such as profiles, pseudos, gifs and avatars) open up avenues of emancipation or enslavement to a model. Paveau's (2015, 2019) work focuses on portrayal online, highlighting how individuals embody and express their gender identities through social media.

They highlight how tools and platforms are used to present themselves, reinforcing the relationship between gender identity and online interactions. Pescott (2020) explores identity and subjectivity on social media. The study reveals that even at a young age (children aged 10 to 11), individuals begin to shape their online identities, including their gender identities, through their interactions on social media, which have become spaces for gender performance, self-representation and enunciation. The processes of gender identity construction are constantly evolving.

These findings underline the need to consider social media as contributing to education on body and gender identities, with significant implications for self-perception and identity processes in the digital world. It is also a question of understanding the modalities of digital education, which often take intuitive and resonant forms of education to provide models, impose stereotypes or open up avenues of expression in a gendered education in the midst of digital evolution.

2. Self-esteem, a Multifactorial Approach Strongly impacted by the Comparison Process

Cultural (Casilli, 2012) and social (Kaziga et al., 2021) factors highlight the link between online appearance-related activities and time spent on social comparisons (Scully, Swords and Nixon, 2020). Scully, Swords and Nixon (2020) highlighted that engagement in appearance-related activities on social media, such as viewing friends' photos, is closely related to body dissatisfaction in adolescent girls. This relationship is amplified by upward social comparisons with various female groups. It is along the same lines as Brown and Tiggemann (2016), who argue that the use of filters is directly linked to an increase in body dissatisfaction, as it creates an even greater gap between the real self and the ideal self. Verrastro, et al, (2020) claim that the use of photo editing features on Instagram influences the internalization of beauty standards and contributes to body image anxiety in adolescents. This research addresses the concept of "digitized dysmorphia", where users wish to look like their filtered real-life version (Ramphul and Mejias, 2018). Their research suggests that adolescents who edit their photos before publishing them online internalize beauty stereotypes to a greater extent and feel greater social pressure to adhere to these standards, leading to increased anxiety and discomfort with their body image.

Anqi Ling (2022) reinforces this perspective by highlighting the pervasiveness of distorted body standards conveyed by social media and its implications for body image anxiety in young women. She argues that social media serve as a primary vehicle for the transmission of distorted body standards, specifically targeting young women and leading to body image anxiety. Ling calls for greater awareness to reject the unrealistic beauty ideals propagated on social media platforms.

The findings of Ahmad et al. (2019) highlight a multi-factorial approach to this phenomenon by considering significant correlations between self-esteem, the influence of friends via social media, and body image in children. Children with a lower self-esteem baseline were more likely to be negatively influenced by their peers via social media, which could lead to negative perceptions of their own bodies. Qualitative findings also highlighted the complexity of interpersonal dynamics and media influences on children's body perception.

The work of Ahmad et al (2019) corroborates the study conducted the same year by Chang, Li, Loh and Chua. The latter examines the relationship between regular selfie posting practices on Instagram, body perceptions and self-esteem among adolescent girls in Singapore. The survey is based on a questionnaire distributed to 303 adolescent girls in three secondary schools in Singapore. The results show that self-esteem is not necessarily linked to the number of selfies posted. The results suggest that objectifying beauty standards can permeate adolescent girls' value systems through frequent appearance comparisons on social media. When peer influence comes in the form of appearance comparisons, it has a strong negative association with body esteem, regardless of the direction of the comparisons. Our

article focuses particularly on filter features, but these are closely correlated with the use of selfies.

Further, mental health is questioned through psychological well-being, depression or anxiety (Koronczai and Demetrovics, 2022). Analyzing the link between the use of social media, particularly filters, and self-esteem is a matter of understanding the psychological consequences of intensive social media use on self-image and body perception. Some studies go further. For example, Rodgers et al (2020) have proposed a biopsychosocial model to understand the connection between social media use and body image concerns, eating disorders and bodybuilding behaviors in adolescents. This model highlights the importance of considering a range of biological, psychological and social factors to fully grasp the impact of social media on body image and self-esteem.

Thus, the relationship between the body and its representations among young people is questioned through the use of social media, which can be a source of significant ills from a social (Ahmad et al, 2019), psychological (Koronczai and Demetrovics, 2022) and even medical (Rodgers et al., 2020) point of view.

Therefore, cognitive internalization and appearance comparisons represent factors widely shared in the international literature review (Yang et al., 2020). However, the studies cited converge towards a more nuanced understanding of the impact of social media on adolescent girls' body image and self-esteem, highlighting the need for intervention and education strategies to promote positive body image. While the current consensus emphasizes the negative effects of social media, the potential positive impacts, such as peer support, discovery of inclusive communities or exposure to content promoting self-acceptance, are less explored. This research highlights the dual impact of digital media on adolescents: on one hand, they can exacerbate concerns about body image and self-esteem through the use of filters and online self-presentation; on the other, they offer opportunities for learning and creativity. It is essential to adopt a balanced approach in analyzing these impacts, recognizing both the challenges and opportunities that the digital environment offers for young people's development.

3. Survey Methodology

To understand social uses in a digital universe, in particular by studying the links between the use of digital filters and gendered education, it is essential to adopt a methodology and epistemology that capture the complexity and dynamics of these interactions.

To examine feminist epistemological choices when addressing the impact of gendered digital practices on the body, and the effects on young people living in a non-neutral society, it is essential to refer to key theories and concepts from feminist epistemology. These approaches highlight the ways in which gender, as a social construct, influences digital and bodily experiences, and how these are integrated and

represented in digital environments. Donna Haraway offers a critique of traditional objectivity. She emphasizes that all knowledge is situated, marked by the specific positions of those who produce it. Applied to the study of digital practices, this perspective invites us to analyze how young people's digital identities are shaped by specific social and cultural contexts, influencing the way they perceive and use technologies, such as digital filters on social networks. From this situated perspective, we integrate the methodological reflections of Patricia Hill Collins, taking intersectionality into account when analyzing the effects of digital filters (Collins, 1990). Collins encourages us to examine how gender identities are affected not only by gender itself, but also by race, class and other axes of identity. This enables us to understand how different groups of young people interact with digital filtering technologies in different ways, some finding ways to resist oppressive norms, while others may experience greater marginalization. Finally, Judy Wajcman's technofeminist approach allows us to explore how technologies, such as digital filters, are themselves gendered artifacts that can reinforce or subvert gender norms (Wajcman, 2004).

Our methodology is mixed, combining a questionnaire and focus groups, both offering a broad and deep understanding of the phenomena in this study. Quantitative data on the use of digital filters, with closed questions, enabled us to carry out statistical analysis to identify trends, frequencies and potential correlations.

Methodologically, we use a mixed-methods approach based on a quantitative study and focus groups. The online questionnaire was distributed on social media via Facebook and LinkedIn posts on personal pages of the researchers involved. We also asked three young intermediaries to ensure sufficient responses from adolescent girls in different age brackets: under 15 years old, 15 to 20 years old and 20 to 25 years old, corresponding to middle school, high school and young adult university students. These three persons sent the questionnaire link to their friends via other channels: SnapChat and WhatsApp. We also organized four face-to-face focus groups: for the 18-21 year-olds, an all-girls group, a boys' group and a mixed group. This distribution enabled us to take into account gendered interactions upstream, given the composition of the groups. Finally, a 15-18 year-old girls' group was set up to explore comparisons between the two age categories. The young people who took part in the focus group were recruited outside of social media on a voluntary basis, following announcements made by our young intermediaries.

Focus group discussions helped us explore social norms, gender expectations, and how young people are influenced or reinforced by digital filters. Our method relies on a combination of statistical techniques for the questionnaires, and thematic content analysis for the focus group transcripts, enabling quantitative trends to be linked to strong qualitative themes.

4. Results

The population studied in our research included 112 young boys and girls who voluntarily participated on the basis of online recruitment. The survey population included significantly more women (77%) than men (23%). The age distribution of respondents is diverse, with a significant presence of young adults and teenagers (under 15s: 7%, 15-20s: 35%, 20-25s: 35% and over 25s: 23%). A large proportion of the respondents (56%) spend more than 3 hours a day on social media, indicating considerable engagement with these platforms. However, the frequency of filter use varies, with a notable proportion of respondents rarely or never using filters (38%), while others use them more frequently (52%) and even very frequently (10%), revealing diverse attitudes towards this feature.

Table 1. Answers to questions on media and gendered education

Variable	Terms and conditions	(%)
How do you perceive the beauty standards conveyed by social media?	Unrealistic	73
	Inspiring	17
Do you think social media has influenced your perception of your own appearance?	No	54
	Yes	46
Have you ever felt pressure to match social media beauty standards?	No	65
	Yes	35
Do you think social media influence your perception of gender roles and relations?	No	65
	Yes	35
Are you under pressure because of stereotypes, behaviors, judgments or prejudices about the image of girls or boys in social media?	No	31
	Yes	69
Do you think social media influence relationships between girls and boys?	Very, very much	54
	Moderately	20
	A little, not at all	26
Have you ever felt pressure to fit particular gender stereotypes on social media?	Yes	73
	No	27
Have you ever modified your appearance or online behavior to match a specific image?	No	76
	Yes	24

The table above highlights the perception and influence of social media on appearance, self-image and gender relations.

A large majority of respondents (73%) perceive the beauty standards conveyed by social media as *Unrealistic*, underlining a significant concern about the gap between

these standards and reality. This perception may contribute to increased pressure on individuals to match these unattainable ideals.

Nearly half of all respondents (46%) admit that social media have influenced their *perception of their own appearance*, reflecting the considerable impact of these platforms on self-image. However, a majority (54%) claim not to be influenced, which could reflect a resilience to or critical distance from social media content. Only a third of participants (35%) feel *pressure* to match social media beauty standards, highlighting the tension between online expectations and personal self-esteem for this population. An equivalent proportion (35%) perceive an influence of social media on their *understanding of gender roles and relationships*, suggesting that these platforms can shape gender expectations and norms.

Finally, an overwhelming majority (69%) feel the *pressure of gender stereotypes* conveyed by social media, highlighting the profound impact these platforms have on the way gender is perceived and experienced. This pressure is further underlined by the fact that 73% of respondents have felt pressure to match particular gender stereotypes on social media.

More than half (54%) believe that social media have a strong influence on relationships between girls and boys, reflecting the potential impact of these platforms on social interactions and relationship expectations, and a significant portion (24%) of respondents have modified their appearance or behavior online to *match a specific image*, reflecting the pressure to adapt to perceived norms and expectations.

These findings depict a complex landscape where social media play a significant role in shaping perceptions of appearance, self-esteem and gender norms. They reveal the challenges users face in navigating between self-expression and the pressure to conform to the often unrealistic and stereotypical ideals presented online.

Table 2. Answers to filter questions

Variable	Terms and conditions	%
The frequent use of filters has an influence on my self-esteem.	No, there's no influence	38
	Yes, I have less confidence in myself	62
Filters make me feel more confident or better about myself.	Yes	17
	No	83
How do you perceive your appearance without the use of filters?	I prefer my look with filters	23
	I prefer my appearance without filters	65
	There are no differences	12

Table 2 presents respondents' perceptions and attitudes regarding the use of social media filters and their impact on self-esteem and confidence. A significant majority of respondents (62%) felt that frequent use of filters had a negative influence on their self-esteem, indicating that they felt "less confident" as a result. This suggests that

reliance on filters to enhance online appearance can have a negative impact on how individuals perceive themselves in real life.

The overwhelming majority of respondents (83%) say that filters do not make them feel more confident or better about themselves, highlighting a distinction between the occasional use of filters for fun or aesthetics and their actual impact on self-confidence. Only 17% feel their confidence is boosted by using filters, which may reflect an appreciation of the aesthetic enhancements made by filters, or a better presentation of oneself on social platforms.

A majority of 65% of participants prefer their appearance without the use of filters, which may indicate that authenticity and self-acceptance is valued more than digital embellishments. However, 23% of respondents admit to preferring their appearance with filters, revealing a certain dependence on these tools to feel aesthetically satisfied or to match the beauty standards conveyed by social media.

The data reveal a fairly clear awareness among young people between the perceived benefits of using filters to improve the aesthetics of online publications and the potential negative effects of this practice on self-esteem and confidence. Although a proportion of users derive some benefit in terms of confidence from the use of filters, a larger proportion feel a negative influence on their self-esteem, and the majority prefer their natural, unfiltered appearance. Focus groups results, particularly those for the group of girls aged 18-21, showed that young teenage girls from the age of 12-13 use filters, which appeal enormously at this age. Awareness of the issues involved in using filters is often revealed at the age of 16-17, when girls return to a natural look and use them less and less. These results underline the importance of promoting thoughtful, critical use of filters on social media, with an emphasis on authenticity and self-acceptance.

To create our clusters we worked in two stages: first, from the quantitative data we built a PCA (Principal Component Analysis) to reduce the dimensionality of the data while retaining the most significant information. Once the principal components had been identified, we used a cluster analysis (K-means algorithm) to group respondents into different clusters based on similarities in responses. Each cluster represents a group of respondents with similar characteristics. Finally, using qualitative information, we interpreted the data to construct the clusters. We then performed a systematic classification of types or categories, based on patterns observed in the data. The clusters were named "Digital Conformists" and "Digital Authenticists" to reflect their dominant characteristics. This methodical process produced a clear typology in two clusters, offering insights into behaviors and attitudes towards social media and filters, and highlighting the influence of these platforms on individual's self-image and online practices.

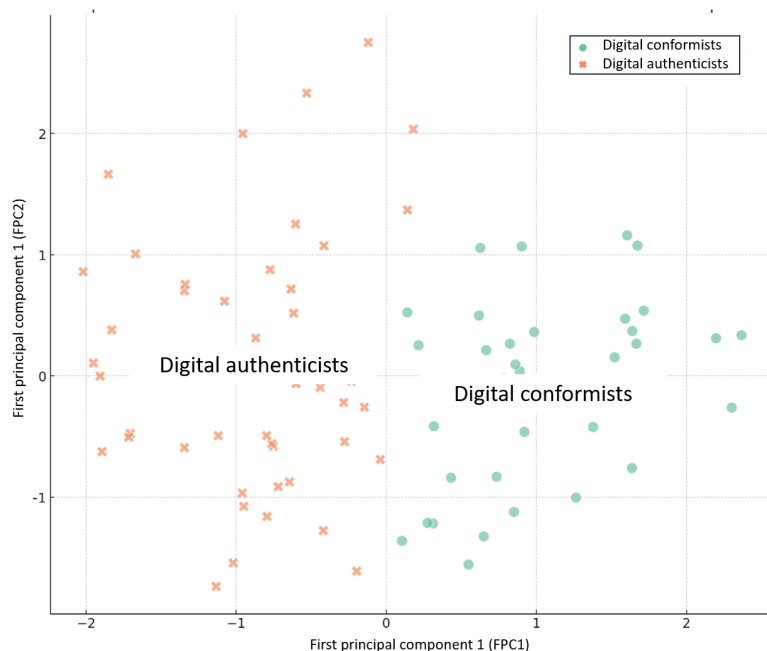


Figure 1. Representation of the first two principal components.

4.1. Digital Conformists (45% of behaviors)

“Digital Conformists” are characterized by their adherence to the norms and models conveyed by digital media, particularly with regard to gender relations and self-image. This cluster is predominantly female (95%) and lives mainly in urban areas.

These young people are highly influenced by social media, which is reflected in their tendency to modify their appearance to match beauty ideals. They feel pressure to match online beauty standards, and are likely to compare their appearance to that of other social media users. In this cluster, the use of filters is very frequent, with a majority indicating they use them to improve the appearance of their skin or to match specific beauty ideals. This suggests a quest for visual perfection online, influenced by the aesthetic norms of digital media. The frequent use of filters and comparison with others online has an impact on their self-esteem, and can lead to less confidence in their natural appearance.

This population expresses an adherence to traditional gender stereotypes, influenced by social media representations. These girls are inclined to perceive and reproduce stereotypical gender behaviors and expectations in their online interactions.

4.2. *The Digital Authenticists (55% of behaviors)*

On the contrary, the "Digital Authenticists" represent a group that seems to adopt a more authentic approach, less influenced by strict social media norms. Older than the other cluster (around 21), this group includes most of the boys in the sample.

The "Digital Authenticists" seem less influenced by social media pressures regarding appearance and beauty standards. They show a tendency to use filters less and to compare themselves less with others online. This group shows greater confidence in their natural appearance and less tendency to modify their behavior or appearance to conform to online expectations. This may reflect greater self-esteem and a commitment to authenticity. The "Digital Authenticists" are less likely to reproduce or adhere to gender stereotypes in their online interactions, favoring more diverse expressions of identity and gender relations.

4.3. *Text Data and Focus Group*

To better describe the two clusters, we then carried out an analysis of the open questions and focus groups to identify the arguments of these two groups. We highlight and analyze the most characteristic phrases in the following discussion.

Digital Conformists. "No real impact. However in terms of facial beauty, yes. We compare ourselves a lot." These sentences show that, although social media do not have a significant impact on an individual's clothing choices, they do exert a considerable influence on the perception of facial beauty. The reference to "comparing oneself a lot" reveals a tendency to evaluate one's own appearance by comparing it with that of others on these platforms. This suggests a source of social pressure to align oneself with potentially unattainable or digitally retouched beauty standards.

"Appearance plays a big part in this, and social networks accentuate this phenomenon." This phrase highlights the central role of appearance in online social identity, an aspect exacerbated by social media. The use of the word "accentuate" suggests that these platforms amplify existing standards of beauty and appearance, increasing the pressure on individuals to conform to these ideals.

"Less pretty by comparing ourselves to retouched or filtered women, we feel less beautiful." This sentence highlights the deleterious effect of social comparison on self-esteem. Frequent confrontation with retouched or filtered images on social media can distort the perception of one's own beauty, leading to feelings of inferiority. The expression "we feel less beautiful" indicates a drop in self-esteem resulting from these incessant comparisons.

Digital Authenticists. "By blaming women who don't work for gender equality." This phrase criticizes the societal expectations placed on women to achieve gender equality. It suggests that the responsibility for fighting for equality should be shared and not exclusively imposed on women. This critique of traditional gender roles is representative of "Digital Authenticists", who challenge stereotypes and advocate a more balanced and nuanced view of social responsibilities.

"By blaming more sensitive men, or men who don't follow the 'norms'." This phrase highlights the challenge to stereotypes of masculinity, defending the right of men to express sensitivity and move away from rigid gender norms. It reflects the attitude of "Digital Authenticists" towards the diversity of individual expression and the rejection of stereotypical gender expectations.

"Social networks push us to follow unrealistic standards that don't correspond to everyone's reality." Although this sentence is hypothetical, it sums up the critical stance of the "Digital Authenticists" towards social media. It underlines an awareness of the potentially harmful impact of standards of beauty and success promoted online, which may be unattainable or unrealistic for the majority of users. This stance indicates a willingness to resist the pressure to conform to these ideals, and to value more authentic and diverse expressions of identity.

4.4. *Synthesis of opinions*

The analysis of the focus group discussions highlights the contrasting opinions of the two clusters. The opinions of the "Digital Conformists" reflect a strong influence of social media on their self-perception and social interactions. This group is deeply influenced by the images and standards of beauty conveyed by social media, and tends to follow popular trends, frequently comparing themselves to other users, particularly celebrities and influencers who present idealized and often retouched images. This practice is driven by a desire to conform to the beauty standards perceived as desirable on social media platforms, and to receive positive validation from their online community.

However, this experience is not entirely positive. Constant comparisons with retouched or filtered images can damage the self-esteem of "Digital Conformists", making them feel pressure to achieve unrealistic beauty standards, which can lead to dissatisfaction with their actual appearance and a decrease in self-confidence. In addition, they may be more inclined to adhere to traditional gender stereotypes, adopting behaviors and attitudes that reinforce conventional gender roles. They may value and reproduce stereotypical representations of men and women in their online content.

From a feminist point of view, it is crucial to criticize the way these interactions reinforce gender norms, and to propose strategies of resistance and reappropriation of digital identity. This analysis should include a discussion of the role of social media algorithms in promoting content that reinforces these stereotypes, and the ways in which individuals can navigate and challenge these influences. For them, the approval and reactions of other social media users are very important; they may actively seek likes, comments and shares as a form of social validation, which can influence their online content and self-presentation.

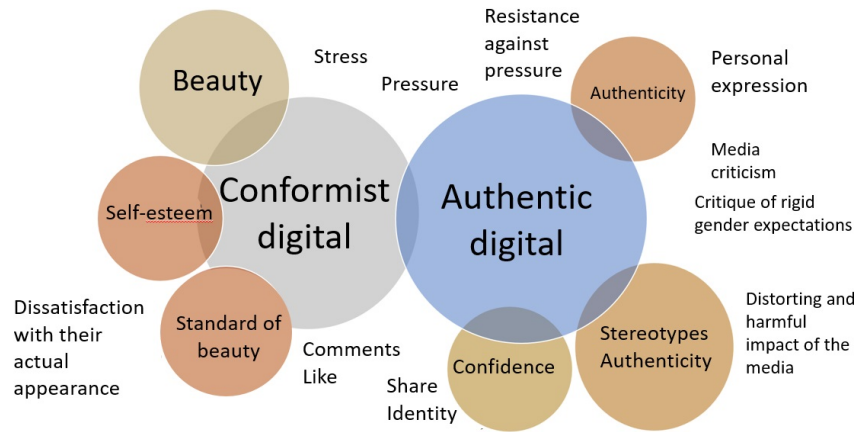


Figure 2. Opinion graph for the two clusters

“Digital Authenticists” embody a more critical and thoughtful approach to social media, emphasizing authenticity and diversity of individual expression. They are aware of the potentially distorting and harmful impact of social media on self-perception and social norms. They are critical of the way these platforms promote unrealistic beauty standards and unattainable ideals of success for most people. This group strongly values authenticity and genuine self-expression. They are more inclined to share content that reflects their true identity and daily life, without excessive use of filters or retouching. Authenticity is seen as a form of resistance against the pressure to conform to unrealistic ideals conveyed online. “Digital Authenticists” embrace the diversity of individual identities and expressions. They reject gender stereotypes and encourage a more inclusive representation of different forms of beauty, bodies, and gender and sexual identities. They aspire to an online environment where everyone can feel represented and valued. This group actively criticizes gender stereotypes and traditional roles imposed by society. They support more fluid and flexible patterns of behavior, allowing individuals to express themselves freely without being constrained by rigid gender expectations. In contrast to the search for social validation through likes and comments, “Digital Authenticators” prioritize meaningful and authentic online interactions. They value deep conversations and real connections, which transcend the superficiality often associated with social media.

Conclusion

The influence of social media on self-image and gender roles has been a significant area of research in recent years. Studies consistently show that social media can have

profound effects on users' perception of beauty standards, self-esteem and gender norms. Our research into the use of filters among teenagers confirms this. Social media platforms, with their ubiquitous use of filters and retouched images, often present unrealistic beauty standards that can have a negative impact on users' body image and self-esteem. Frequent comparison to these idealized images can lead to dissatisfaction with one's appearance and a decline in self-confidence (Fardouly et al., 2015). The population we term "Digital Conformists", which is strongly represented among 13 to 15 year-olds, is truly in a situation of dependency when faced with the negative educational effects of social media¹. For this audience, social media play an essential role in reinforcing traditional gender roles and stereotypes. The content consumed can influence users' perceptions of how men and women should look and behave, potentially limiting the expression of gender identities and contributing to gender inequality (Manago et al., 2015). While teenagers and toddlers, in particular, are vulnerable to the effects of social media on self-image and gender perceptions, young adults, and apparently more boys, distance themselves from these influences and will seek to construct a more authentic and personal gender identity. In conclusion, the scientific consensus indicates that social media can have significant impacts on self-image and perceptions of gender roles. These effects are particularly pronounced among very young users, who are more likely to be influenced by digital media. Very young people who use filters and other technological tools very frequently are more likely to be influenced by the content they consume on these platforms. Hyper-consumption can have a significant impact on their self-esteem and development of gender identities (Vandenbosch & Eggermont, 2016). This represents a challenge for education. Promoting critical media literacy and creating environments that encourage positive self-image and diverse expressions of gender identity are essential steps in mitigating these impacts.

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¹ We have worked with classes of young secondary school students, with the agreement of their parents, to raise awareness of sexist and sexual discrimination.

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