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WOMEN'S LIFESTYLE AND WELLNESS VISIBILITIES ON INSTAGRAM: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS FROM A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

A Master's Thesis

by
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University
Ankara
June 2024

To *my mother*

WOMEN'S LIFESTYLE AND WELLNESS VISIBILITIES ON INSTAGRAM: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS FROM A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
of
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
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THE DEPARTMENT OF
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ANKARA

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By Çağla Güç

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Media and Visual Studies.

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ABSTRACT

WOMEN'S LIFESTYLE AND WELLNESS VISIBILITIES ON INSTAGRAM: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS FROM A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

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June 2024

Wellness influencers and accounts on Instagram have reached large followers, a majority of which consist of women, by gathering engaging content that resonates with users seeking guidance on various topics and overall lifestyle improvement. Through a thematic content analysis of the most recent 200 posts from 20 of wellness and lifestyle Instagram accounts, this research examines the messages, communication strategies, and underlying feminist ideals presented to followers. Results indicated that the content fosters feelings of inadequacy for women, especially since they advise women to constantly self-improve. Although these accounts claim to aspire for the goal of empowerment, they often align with media-visible feminist perspectives characterized by postfeminism, neoliberal feminism, and popular feminism. They employ the term feminism as a motivational and trendy concept, which results in hollowing the term's meaning and certainly not following feminist ideals.

Keywords: Instagram, neoliberal feminism, postfeminism, self-care, wellness

ÖZET

KADINLARIN INSTAGRAM'DA SAĞLIK VE YAŞAM KÜLTÜRÜ: FEMİNİST BİR PERSPEKTİFTEN ELEŞTİREL BİR ANALİZ

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Instagram'daki bütünsel sağlıklı yaşam ve yaşam kültürü hesapları, çeşitli sağlık konularında ve genel yaşam kalitesini arttırma konusunda rehberlik arayan kullanıcılar için ilgi çekici içerikler toplayarak çoğunluğu kadınlardan oluşan büyük takipçi kitlelerine ulaştı. Bu araştırma, 20 bütünsel sağlıklı yaşam Instagram hesaplarından en son 200 gönderiyi tematik bir içerik analiziyle inceleyerek takipçilere sunulan mesajları, iletişim stratejilerini ve altta yatan feminist idealleri inceliyor. Sonuçlar, içeriğin özellikle kadınlara sürekli kendilerini geliştirmelerini tavsiye etmesi nedeniyle kadınlarda yetersizlik duygularını beslediğini gösterdi. Kadınları güçlendirme hedefini amaçladıklarını iddia etseler de, bu hesaplar sıklıkla postfeminizm, neoliberal feminizm ve popüler feminizm tarafından karakterize edilen, medyada görünür feminist perspektiflerle aynı çizgidedirler. Feminizm terimini motive edici ve modaya uygun bir kavram olarak kullanmaları terimin anlamını boşa çıkarmakla sonuçlanıyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Instagram, kişisel bakım, neoliberal feminizm, postfeminizm, sağlıklı yaşam.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to understand Instagram wellness accounts, their target audience, their content, the messages they offer to their audiences, and their popularity to evaluate their influences in the digital era. Within the last decade, there has been a major growth in wellness and lifestyle accounts. Recently, wellness and lifestyle Instagram accounts created by female celebrities and entrepreneurs have flourished. They mainly advertise their products, promote a "healthy" and "clean" lifestyle, and give some advice to accomplish this lifestyle. This study aims to analyze the contents of these accounts in terms of their similarities and differences, especially for evaluating their approaches to feminism.

The notions of "wellness" and "lifestyle" seem very similar, but they have specific differences. Merriam-Webster (n.d.a.) defines *lifestyle* as an adjective meaning "associated with, reflecting, or promoting an enhanced or more desirable lifestyle." In this sense, lifestyle accounts are about presenting a desirable lifestyle and giving advice about how to achieve that specific life. Again, on Merriam-Webster (n.d.b.), *wellness* is defined as "the quality or state of being in good health, especially as an actively sought goal." It is the condition of seeking good health as a nonstop goal in life. So, the wellness accounts focus more on advising about a healthy and holistic

life. In this sense, lifestyle can be understood as a broader term, and wellness falls under this umbrella term.

According to Baker (2022), our modern understanding of wellness was shaped by the countercultural movements of the 1960s and 1970s. These movements questioned mainstream beliefs of the time, mainly about medicine and health injustices, supported natural lifestyles and holistic approaches to human mental health, focused on alternative remediation, and emphasized the importance of self-actualization. Similarly, lifestyle advice has a substantial pre-digital history, rather than just being part of social media marketing and influencers. Baker and Rojek (2020) mention that lifestyle content dates back to the 1800s since various self-help books were written during that time. Lifestyle media and advice columns became even more popular in the 2000s, with almost all prestigious journalistic institutions regularly including lifestyle columns. Similarly, the influence of popular women's magazines such as *Cosmopolitan*, *ELLE*, *Vogue*, and *L'Officiel* is undeniable for providing various concerns about health, beauty, fitness, fashion, food, and travel. Lifestyle gurus are usually known for providing information about the management of the self and lifestyle, even though they do not have certified credentials (Baker & Rojek, 2020).

Recently, various self-improvement materials, such as books, seminars, videos, and makeover programs, have been on the market. These materials usually rely on combining specialist knowledge with practical advice (Baker & Rojek, 2020). Various makeover programs include style, beauty, fitness, housing, marriage, divorce, engagement, and childcare. These are about individuals seeking improvement in various areas of their lives, usually with the help of semi-popular TV

faces. The general marketing and promotion strategies of lifestyle and wellness accounts follow a similar structure by promoting a particular lifestyle for their audiences, advertising some products, giving self-affirming advice, and using celebrities or influencers to promote them.

This study uses wellness and lifestyle accounts together because most Instagram accounts combine both for their content. According to Baker (2022), wellness gurus are just a sub-genre of lifestyle gurus since both share the aim of giving lifestyle advice under the name of self-improvement; however, their main difference is that wellness gurus focus on emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being while mainly using holistic ways. Although wellness is more about a health-focused option and lifestyle is more about general well-being, these accounts usually provide all these together as their content. Since being active on social media results in more followers, these accounts want to share various content to expand their audience. So, this study preferred to focus on accounts that provide information on both of these contents in order to achieve the correct information since almost all of the target accounts combine both together.

In the 2000s, many celebrities began to offer various products by becoming the face of the products and building brands. Towards the beginning of this era, many celebrities provided beauty products and clothing brands. Victoria Beckham and Olsen Twins started their clothing lines, and many stars released perfume brands, such as Beyonce, Britney Spears, and Jennifer Lopez. Recently, celebrities have become keen on building skincare and makeup brands. Celebrities such as Ariana Grande, Gwyneth Paltrow, Lady Gaga, Kim Kardashian, Kylie Jenner, Jennifer

Lopez, Selena Gomez, and Rihanna are some names that built skincare and makeup brands. The spectrum of celebrity-owned products goes beyond these days since some celebrities own alcoholic drinks, energy drinks, healthy drinks, and children's products. Lately, celebrities have become more influential in the areas of lifestyle and wellness, even collaborating together. This idea of being a lifestyle and wellness guru first started with Oprah and Martha Stewart, and nowadays, it continues with names like Gwyneth Paltrow, Kourtney Kardashian, Reese Witherspoon, Ashley Tisdale, Halle Berry, and Kate Hudson.

Oprah achieved lifestyle guru status in the mid-1990s through her talk show, which no longer just focused on entertainment but also undertook a new role of providing solutions to psychological problems (Baker & Rojek, 2020). In her show, Oprah also shared her lifestyle choices, such as her breakfast preferences, exercise routines, clothing, and book advice, in order to present an example of a good life, and all of these have led to the release of her own magazine, *O*, The Oprah Magazine in 2000. However, Oprah not only promoted the steps of best life but also advocated consumerism secretively (Lofton, 2006). Oprah's magazine and talk show include various segments, allowing her to introduce her favourites and providing an undeniable place for her to invite her audiences to consume and turn her business into marketing for these products. Lofton (2006) points out that every piece of spiritual advice from Oprah encourages capitalist pragmatism, which is very similar to today's lifestyle and wellness Instagram accounts. It is also important to mention that now Oprah's magazine *O* continues to exist as an Instagram account.

Martha Stewart's position as a lifestyle guru belongs to domestic and traditional realms of everyday life, such as cooking, sewing, gardening, and renovating, similar to the early years of lifestyle advice. According to Leavitt (2002), Stewart's position as a lifestyle guru focused more on presenting the connection between women and the domestic sphere, even though her shows were aired in modern times. According to Baker and Rojek (2020), Stewart's position as a lifestyle guru presents an upper-class, white, and privileged position that discusses criticisms about wellness and lifestyle culture. Martha Stewart's most significant difference from components was her effective use of media, which made her America's first 'self-made' female billionaire (Baker & Rojek, 2020).

Recently, Gwyneth Paltrow became one of the pioneers of these popular wellness and lifestyle Instagram accounts with her brand Goop. Paltrow started Goop as a weekly newsletter giving advice about various topics from food to mental health for her friends and family and later enhanced this brand into a website, Instagram account, print magazine, pop-up shop, podcast, and finally created a docu-series for Netflix about the company called “The Goop Lab” (Dickinson, 2020; Genovese, 2023; Goop, n.d.; Lieber, 2015). This company blends personal growth, self-discovery, and beauty rituals and promotes consumption (Saunders, 2024). Gwyneth Paltrow’s image as a celebrity was directed towards this road since she wrote four clean-eating cookbooks in the early days of Goop and she filmed many cooking videos in her kitchen, especially using Goop-branded or other sponsored ingredients for people to purchase (Conor, 2021).

On the website, Goop as a brand defines itself as “We operate from a place of curiosity and non judgement, and we start hard conversations, crack open taboos, and look for connection and resonance everywhere we can find it” (Goop, n.d.). Although the definition does not directly categorize the brand as “wellness” or “lifestyle”, the site includes beauty, fashion, wellness, food & home categories on the home page. The success of Goop may be attributed to how it incorporates a sense of authenticity into its apparent personalized content and even into Goop-branded items. Through the years, Paltrow faced various backlash, such as being “‘pretentious’, ‘tone-deaf’, and ‘utterly obnoxious’” because she promoted a luxurious, organic lifestyle (Lieber, 2015). Also, the products of the brand caused much drama, especially the candle called “This smells like my vagina,” and eventually, it drew even more negative attention after the explosion of the products (Freeman, 2020; Lampen, 2021).

After the release of the Goop docu-series, the brand was accused of disseminating false information. These fraudulent claims include the use of egg-shaped stones for enhancing orgasm, the use of psychedelic mushrooms for mental illnesses, the use of blood facials to look younger, and the claim of energy healing as a treatment (Dickson, 2020). Many of these claims have the possibility of causing several issues for the user, according to licensed professionals, so suggesting them as treatments to ordinary people and disseminating them in a documentary is highly problematic (Dickson, 2020). More recently, in a podcast, Paltrow announced her eating habits, which include intermittent fasting, exercising, drinking bone broth for lunch, and eating early paleo dinner (Stokes, 2023). These claims were criticized by many internet users and experts, especially considering her position as a wellness and

lifestyle guru for promoting disordered eating (Stokes, 2023). What makes this issue even more problematic is that the former CCO of the Goop Company, Elise Loehnen, claimed that she had to redefine her relationship with her body after leaving the company (Mazziotta, 2022). All of these seem to be hypocritical to consumers since on the Goop social media account, they promote clean and healthy living and share content about self-love messages and body inclusivity. Despite these problematic issues, Goop is reportedly valued at $250M (Etozuo, 2023). Also the brand recently announced its new branch Goop Sex.

Another significant name in the wellness industry is Kourtney Kardashian. Kardashian launched Poosh as a wellness and lifestyle brand focused on women in 2019. The brand is usually operated from Instagram but also has a website. The website defines the brand as; “Poosh is the modern guide to living your best life. Our mission is to educate, motivate, create, and curate a modern lifestyle, achievable by all” (Poosh, n.d.). The brand is estimated to be worth US$15 million (Bradley, 2022). On the website, they approach the reader as “think of us as a really good friend…but way less judgy” (Poosh, n. d.). Similar to Goop, Poosh tries to create a personalized and authentic link with its audience, which is a tactic used by wellness influencers. Recently, Poosh has offered products and advice about nutrition, food, mindfulness, fitness, sexual health, relationships, and spirituality, and it usually partners with various companies. Poosh does not have its own line of products yet, but Kardashian recently released a brand of vitamins called Lemme, which will probably be promoted on Poosh. Right now, there are no big scandals about information posted on Poosh, but it has been accused of “being off-brand Goop” (Feldman, 2019). The main difference from Goop is Poosh’s extensive content about sexual desires some

articles on Poosh's website are; "'The Truth About Anal Sex'" (Saunders, 2024, p. 2009) and "'The Elusive Orgasm – How Women Can Attain Consistent Orgasm'" (Saunders, 2024, p. 2009). Over the years, the Kardashian family has been accused of black fishing and cultural appropriation (Lang, 2021), so it can be interesting to analyze their content on both racial and sexual inclusivity.

Today, the wellness and lifestyle industries are growing continuously. In 2020, the size of the wellness market worldwide stood at 4.37 trillion U.S. dollars and is estimated to grow to almost seven trillion U.S. dollars by 2025 (Gough, 2023). According to Baker and Rojek (2020), this sudden advancement of the market for self-improvement materials during the twentieth century happened, especially after women's involvement in the paid workforce and through the anxieties of economic uncertainty. The sudden popularity of the self-improvement market can be related to the social and economic uncertainties that caused various anxieties in people's lives. All of this money and popular names promoting these industries made them popular not only for consumers but also for creators as well. With the help of social media accounts, not only celebrities but also many people can share their knowledge and influence, mainly due to the increase of curiosity surrounding these areas. Since social media accounts became a great way for people to become micro-celebrities, many people are gravitating towards these areas and using Instagram to promote certain products. These Instagram accounts about lifestyle and wellness seem to be primarily directed toward female audiences, which can be interpreted from their content. For example, Goop's audiences are primarily female and predominantly in the 25 to 45 age range (Lieber, 2015).

Wellness and lifestyle accounts present particular advice to their target audience, presumably female consumers. These accounts usually claim to be feminist through their content; strong, independent female figures also create and manage them. The areas of wellness and lifestyle brands have become a way for women to become entrepreneurs since the audiences are predominantly female. This resulted not only in the growth of women entrepreneurs but also many of the lifestyle and wellness accounts started to include self-affirming quotes about being a woman, being assertive, living a healthy life, consuming the right foods, doing the right exercises but also being body positive, and being supportive of other women. In some circumstances, these posts can contradict each other in different ways since some of these posts are shared just to support the right ideologies of the current moment and not get cancelled by the consumers.

This study aims to evaluate popular Instagram wellness and lifestyle accounts' portrayal of feminism through their content and their values according to this perspective. Since wellness and lifestyle accounts on Instagram are created mainly by women and for women, I think their portrayal of specific issues and the messages they convey have a crucial impact on women's lifestyle choices. I believe this study is crucial because women's wellness and sexuality have always been a topic that is not necessarily considered. Most of these accounts started to pay attention to the wellness, health, and sexual health of women through promoting sex positivity and education. Throughout history, there was much false information about women's mental and sexual health, such as female hysteria and wandering wombs. The Greek philosopher Plato discussed that women not having children is the reason for the hysteria and that a childless womb would cause health problems and move

throughout the body (Horwitz, 2020). Many health issues of women were treated wrongly because most of the health knowledge was based on the male body. Many mental health issues of women were not understood during those times such as postpartum depression. Vibrators were found and used for the medical treatment of female hysteria (Horwitz, 2020). There were and still are many misconceptions about women's well-being and sexual approaches. With the history of feminism, many women's struggles became more visible along with other groups that have been mistreated, especially with third-wave feminism. Postfeminism, neoliberal feminism, and popular feminism are various branches discussing the condition of women today.

This is not an excessively studied topic in Turkey since these accounts and the wellness industry have become popular recently. Small accounts and influencers are heavily directed towards wellness and well-being, such as @mindfulnessinstitutetr, but they usually offer workshops rather than focusing on diversity. Also, in Turkey, most wellness-related accounts are directed towards wellness tourism under the name of "well-being getaway" or "yoga camp." There is a Turkish account called @YuvaLuna, which focuses on sexual health, sexual education, well-being, and lifestyle, created by a popular sexologist Gizem Onay. However, the account has not been active since November 2022 with 70k followers. Soon, these sorts of content will get more popular in Turkey through micro-influencers, and celebrities will dive into these industries. Also, a common assumption about wellness and lifestyle industries is that they are "the exclusive preserve of wealthy white women"(O'Neill, 2020, p. 629) since these industries mostly seem to be ruled by stereotypical people and often offer luxurious products. Analyzing these accounts from an outside look

could bring a different perspective to this issue. Also, as a woman, I want to explore the inclusivity of these accounts from every perspective.

This study touches upon various topics about popular trends, market products, celebrities and influencers, and social media marketing however, I believe the most crucial point of this research is its aspect of feminism. Main aim of this study is to dwell on how the wellness industry, specifically targeting women, promotes feminism through female subjectivity and power? Nowadays, feminism has many directions and sensibilities, as discussed by Rosalind Gill in Banet-Weiser et al. article (2020), and these directions can vary and built upon each other as popular feminism, postfeminism, and neoliberal feminism, especially for this kind of study. These accounts have a huge women following and it should be questioned whether their content correlates with feminist ideals to inspire women for their betterment. I believe that this is a critical study to reveal and assess how feminism is applied to these industries and accounts. The main aim of this question is to analyze whether the wellness industry really correlates with fundamental feminism ideals and whether it contributes to the broader feminist movement and advances the goal of gender equality and empowerment for all women. With the massive interest in these industries recently, most of these accounts have more than 50k followers, so their influence is undebatable, and their content should be evaluated since they have a large follower base.

Concerning this interest, this study also questions to what extent these wellness accounts promote wellness, well-being, and women’s sexual health? This question delves into the wellness industry's role in supporting women's health and mental

health since women's issues have never been regarded as a priority in society. Despite being largely led by female entrepreneurs aiming to aid women, the industry must address ongoing societal challenges for women such as caregiving burdens, health access, and body image issues. It's crucial to assess how effectively the wellness sector addresses these issues while ensuring inclusivity. The main reason for this sort of study is to understand the claims of these accounts and discuss how they adapt these claims into their content. Also, this is a great way to analyze the current popular products for the market and how they combine wellness trends with specific messages about inclusivity, feminism, power, and sexuality. With this aim, I want to discuss their positions, messages, ideology, and ideas, especially their standpoints on feminism, and be able to comment on their goals and consistency throughout their content while they convey particular messages.

This study started with another aim of mine, which was to work on female sexuality and the ways that it has been portrayed in mainstream media to explore how certain representations affect our understanding of sexuality and how new improvements in the representation of female sexuality can be beneficial for certain messages to change for the better. This topic is important for me, especially considering the geographical struggles that allow many women to live under oppression for many years and the creation of stigma around sexual issues. However, due to similar reasons, I have decided to change my topic because much of the sexual content and imagery is not allowed to be accessed legally, even though many people consume it through illegal websites. With this study, I have decided to work on mainstream media and the messages conveyed to women in another way with broadening the spectrum of my research. I believe many of us use social media and various accounts

as a way of distraction; however, it has also become a way to obtain knowledge and advice.

As I started to use Instagram, many of the lifestyle and wellness accounts grabbed my attention and popped into my explore page by offering various messages, especially regarding how to live happily, healthy, and aware. I realized that almost all of these accounts are addressed to women presenting content on how to transform themselves and their lives, and usually, men are not offered advice on how to better themselves. This study is important for me since it is another way of evaluating and analyzing the media messages presented to women but through social media. I believe that we should assess the benefits and drawbacks of the messages presented on wellness and lifestyle accounts, especially regarding the influence of neoliberal feminism, postfeminism, and popular feminism, as a way to question which crucial inequalities and struggles faced by women all over the world are silenced in order to present superficial messages for distraction.

The next chapter provides the literature review by first focusing on the approaches to feminism by focusing on our contemporary understanding of feminism and presenting a brief history of feminism. The second part of the literature review focuses mainly on new media visible feminisms, starting from postfeminism, and how it is still used for critical media analysis. The rest of the chapter gives brief information about the new visible feminisms in media, especially popular and neoliberal feminism since they are all integrated into each other. The third part of the literature review is focused on Instagram marketing, defining wellness and lifestyle, and wellness entrepreneurship. Next is the methodology chapter of this study which

explains sample selection, data collection and data analysis. The fourth chapter focuses on the findings of this study by presenting the results of thematic analysis, branded content analysis, tagged accounts analysis, textual tone analysis and hashtags analysis. This chapter also evaluates the contents of shared themes under three titles; focusing on self, searching for alternative medicine and "healthy living" over extreme diets and fitness. The final chapter presents discussion and conclusion that combines the important points of the findings with research questions and revisits some essential topics from this research.

Research Questions

RQ1. What are the common characteristics, themes and communication strategies promoted on the selected Instagram lifestyle and wellness accounts?

RQ2. How does the wellness industry, specifically targeting women, promote feminism through female subjectivity and power?

RQ3. Specifically focusing on wellness to what extent these accounts promote wellness, mental health and women's health?

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 A Brief History of Feminism

Our current approach to feminism in modern societies is very different from earlier times, when different waves of feminism emerged as a reaction to patriarchal constitutions all over everyday life. Today, there are various scandals, campaigns, digital activism, and everyday products that remind and encourage us about female power, independence, and equality, and many celebrities are not reluctant about declaring that they are feminists. There are various campaigns and movements, mainly organized through social media that reveal the systematic discrimination and sexism embedded in our society. In the last decade, there have been various social media movements that changed the curriculum of feminism.

In 2017, actress Alyssa Milano's tweet sparked the #MeToo movement, which helped women from all over the world who had been silent to disclose their experiences of sexual assault. The movement has been supported worldwide with different hashtags: #BalanceTonPorc in France, #QuellaVoltaChe in Italy, #SendeAnlat in Turkey, and many more (UN Women, 2019). With the effects of the #MeToo movement and thousands of allegations against powerful men in the

industry, Time's Up was founded in 2018 as an organization to create a workplace that is free from gender discrimination (Time's Up, n.d.). Other movements include #HeforShe, #EverydaySexism, #YesAllWomen, #BringBackOurGirls, and #NiUnaMenos (UN Women, 2019).

Many celebrities, especially actors, reacted against gender discrimination in the workplace by being spokespersons for organizations, protesting on red carpets, and showing their support through social media. Most celebrities declared that they are feminists and discussed the real meaning of the word; Emma Watson launched the HeForShe campaign to discuss that feminism is not about "men-hating." Beyonce included Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's long quote about feminism in her song Flawless which ends with the declaration; "Feminist: a person who believes in the social, political, and economic equality of the sexes" (Hapsis, 2013). Many more celebrities have emphasized the importance of feminism in their interviews lately, which is very different from the past because, between the 20th and 21st centuries, there were only plenty of influential women recognized by the world for their fights against inequalities like Simone de Beauvoir, Emmeline Pankhurst, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Gloria Steinem.

For many years, feminism was regarded and portrayed as something ugly by media and society because

> […] feminism threatens conventional definitions and performances of masculinity; it threatens work culture, especially perilous in a global recession because when women have jobs this is somehow seen as taking away a man's natural right to have a job; and it threatens conventional

> performances of heteronormative feminin- ity, particularly in the ways that femininity functions to reassure men of their dominant position. (Banet-Weiser, 2018, p. 3)

These have become the reasons for feminism to be disregarded, diminished, and portrayed to the masses as something dangerous because the whole system was built against the empowerment of women. There are still hate comments, anti-feminist movements, and misogyny all over the world, and the internet has made them more achievable as well; however, social media provides a place for women to share their stories, support each other, and help voices be heard. It has emerged as a new arena for allies, activists, and all women to unite and fight for justice and equality due to its ability to create unity and gather everyday experiences. The impact of social media inspired fourth-wave feminism since people became aware of the continuity of structural inequalities. Before discussing the new visibilities of feminism in media that came into existence with our modern understanding of feminism, it can be helpful to discuss the history of feminism.

2.1.1 Second-Wave Feminism

First-wave feminism occurred in the 19th century as the first movement for women's social rights and the legal inequalities surrounding them. This first movement focused on women's right to vote, education, marriage rights, and employment (Wrye, 2009). Different from first-wave feminism, which primarily focused on the legal rights of women, second-wave feminism built on these issues and dealt with the issues of socially constructed gender inequality and the subordination of women in various aspects of life. These aspects include inequality regarding sexuality, family dynamics, domestic life, working conditions, and reproductive rights. One of the

significant victories of this movement was the Roe v. Wade case in 1973, which made abortion legal in the United States. This victory was about women having control over their own bodies; however, recently, the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade by claiming there is no constitutional right to abortion in the United States after almost 50 years (Donegan, 2022). Second-wave feminism as a movement aimed to criticize patriarchal or male-dominated institutions and ideas that surround society. Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) and Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949) became highly influential works for this movement. The common point in these works is to challenge the idea that women need to be taken care of by the male figures in their lives. Beauvoir points out the theological, sociological, philosophical, psychological, and biological texts as the primary sources for male supremacy. Friedan points out the roles of the articles, magazines, and experts for creating a domestic dream for women.

Both Beauvoir (1949) and Friedan (1963) see the solution in the transformation for the position of women to change, and both support that women should fight against these classifications and social roles. Beauvoir (1949) examines the definition of femininity, and whether being feminine is a prerequisite for being a woman, as femininity is something that is expected of them. In *The Feminine Mystique*, Friedan (1963) describes "a problem that has no name," women's unhappiness in the domestic spheres. Second-wave feminism questioned gender roles in terms of societal inequalities but also involved many discussions about women's sexual desires and pornography. Although second-wave feminism could not reach all its aims, it widens the scope regarding women's differences in sexuality, class, race, and ethnicity (Wrye, 2009).

2.1.2 Third-wave feminism

It is important to note that influential works of second-wave feminism focus mainly on the conditions of Western, white, middle-class women. Eventually, with this sort of focus point, these women usually have access to certain rights and education. In this sense, these works provide a limited description while questioning the struggles of womanhood in a male-dominated world because women worldwide have different cultural backgrounds, incomes, and histories, and these backgrounds bear different struggles. In this sense, 1950s feminism was not inclusive and could not become a voice for everybody and perpetuated other women who were in lower classes or from other backgrounds. In this sense, second-wave feminism was primarily effective in the Western part of the world and failed the idea of inclusiveness.

Understanding that everyone's representation is essential, third-wave feminism emerged in the 1990s and fought against the marginalized elements of the preceding waves. Third-wave feminism expands the scope of feminism by focusing on inclusivity, acknowledging universal experiences, respecting various cultural differences, and advocating for gender and sexual liberty through technological advances. Anna Julia Cooper discussed the concept of intersectionality in her book, *A Voice from the South* (1892), along with advocating for the education of women, criticizing the church, and discussing racial oppression. Although there are various topics, the central argument provides that for America to progress, they need to listen to black people, specifically black women, because they can find different aspects and solutions. Cooper (1892) points out that women's voices were needed to bring about social progress in the United States in the years following the abolition of

slavery for the reason of improving the status of African-American people, but primarily African-American women.

As Crenshaw introduced the word “intersectionality,” in 1989, she provided a similar concern with more details and discussions. In her essay, Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex (2013), Crenshaw explains that there are many layers of black women’s oppression, and these oppressions are different for each woman. Many layers provide discrimination and oppression to people, and these layers are usually about race, class, sexual orientation, gender, and ability. These layers usually melt into each other and create different types of oppression, in which they are experienced as a compound.

2.1.3 Fourth-wave feminism

Arguably, fourth-wave feminism began about 2012, especially through social media, with the discussions of sexual harassment, body shaming, rape culture, intersectionality, pay gap, LGBTQ+ rights, empowerment, and many others (Britannica, n.d.). Many issues regarding second-wave feminism re-emerged about gender-based violence, abortion, overall rights and freedom of women, especially with postfeminism (Peroni & Rodak, 2020). This movement can be regarded accepting the need for feminism since structural inequalities still surround many groups. US President Trump’s declarations about women’s reproductive rights and his degrading language towards women had been a way for women to reignite their fuel with the Women’s March as they demanded equal rights along with the #MeToo movement. These events proved that most of the issues can be overcome through communication, unity, and relationship with the effects of sisterhood and

self-determination (Peroni & Rodak, 2020. It seems that the issues of fourth-wave feminism primarily focus on our everyday lives and the embedded patriarchy and misogyny that is causing structural inequalities.

Solnit's (2014) book *Men Explain Things to Me* offers great examples from everyday life misogyny and patriarchy. Solnit (2014) describes how authoritative men underestimated her knowledge, questioning her credibility. This book made women realize it is a common experience, and "mansplaining" was coined. It is an example of how power dynamics try to oppress groups in different forms, and this presents the example of being silenced. It may seem that these waves of feminism keep repeating themselves. However, patriarchal privileges never end; there should be constant battles to achieve equality in every aspect. Ahmed (2017) describes systematic and institutional obstacles, patriarchy, and norms by using the metaphor of brick walls. The system outcast individuals through their ethnicity, race, gender, class, and sexuality. The wall is not easily demolished but scratched in every instance. This proves the need for continuity in terms of resistance.

Peroni and Rodak (2020) mention the characterization of this new wave as "the global connection of this movement and its capacity for analytical, practical and symbolic elaboration, made possible thanks to the use of the web and, in particular, of social media by the new generations of women of all continents" (p. 5). The power of social media and online groups enhances the interaction among women and creates global feminist movements for solidarity, which makes fourth-wave feminism powerful. This new wave can be confused with other sensibilities, such as popular and/or hip feminism (Gill, 2016), which are discussed later in this chapter. These

usually represent a feminism without substance, which is very different from fourth-wave feminism.

2.2 New Feminist Visibilities

With these new embracement of female power, there are new approaches and branches to feminism. The visible modern approaches seem to be postfeminism, popular feminism, and neoliberal feminism. In her work for contemporary postfeminism, Gill (2016) prefers to refer to these as visibilities because, in today's mainstream media agenda, there is an interest in feminist stories. Some acceptable approaches to feminism and its issues became visible and materialized in the media culture. Gill (2016) defines these three branches as visibilities since they are now acceptable and discussed in mainstream media. These new approaches to feminism are a part of the changes in media since our conception of media is very different from earlier times because "feminism is now part of the cultural field" (Gill, 2007, p. 161). Gill (2007) points out that "much of what counts as feminist debate in western countries today takes place in the media rather than outside it" (p. 161). For this study, it is crucial to define the struggles and boundaries of postfeminism and other current approaches to feminism to consider them while evaluating these accounts.

2.2.1 Postfeminism

As discussed above, feminism has only recently become a notion that is not only acceptable but also desirable, stylish, and cool. The media coverage of the use of the notion of feminism even changed. In the 2000s, being perceived as a feminist seemed to have bad connotations; however, recently, with many differences and generations, feminism and feminist issues have begun to receive the attention they deserve. In the

2000s, even most celebrities were afraid to claim they were feminists. There are various examples: Lady Gaga declared, “Not a feminist. I hail men, I love men. I celebrate American male culture” (BuzzFeed, 2012), Carrie Underwood said, “I would not go so far as to say I am a feminist, that can come off as a negative connotation. But I am a strong female,” or Geri Halliwell said, “It is about labeling. For me feminism is bra-burning lesbianism. It is very unglamorous. I would like to see it rebranded. We need to see a celebration of our femininity and softness” (Merryweather, 2016). Women thought they no longer needed feminism and that gender equality was achieved, but it is apparent that systemic discrimination, misogyny, and sexism were and are still active issues. These misconceptions and prejudices surrounding feminism are usually believed to be the result of postfeminism. The argument is that feminism is no longer required since women have attained equality promoted by increasing media products.

In the 1990s, there were many changes in the social climate and in the feminist movement itself. Postfeminism, as a set of ideas concerning the social climate, intersects with third-wave feminism through its time. According to Banet-Weiser et al. (2020), postfeminism came into existence during the 1990s “as a way of making sense of paradoxes and contradictions in the representation of women” (p. 4) as a political and cultural shift with the success of notable feminist historical moments. According to Gill discusses the meaning of the term as

> some people used the term to signal a temporal or historical shift – a time after second-wave feminism; others used it to delimit a new kind of feminism – sometimes a feminism influenced by post-structuralist or post-colonial thinking, or, alternatively, something akin to a new (third) ‘wave’ of

> feminism; while others still used the term to refer solely to a backlash against feminism. (Banet-Weiser et al., 2020 p. 5)

McRobbie (2004) defines postfeminism through a historical shift and as a backlash by declaring postfeminism "an active process by which feminist gains of the 1970s and 80s come to be undermined" (p. 255). In this sense, McRobbie (2004) prefers to explain postfeminism as a response to second-wave feminism, which focuses mostly on gender equality. The main issue of postfeminism is related to the seeming idea that equality was achieved and the discussions of feminism were no longer required, which makes postfeminism an appropriate media-friendly way of defending the rights of women which is now also the case for popular feminism and corporate/neoliberal feminism (McRobbie, 2008; Gill, 2016).

Generally, postfeminism has caused various debates for many years, especially in the agreement on the use of the term. Gill (Banet-Weiser et al., 2020) prefers to use the notion of "postfeminist sensibility" to contribute to conceptual clarity, to create an environment that emphasizes postfeminism as a critical object, and finally to be able to empirically analyze the term "as a circulating set of ideas, images and meanings" (p. 3). For this study, focusing on the definition of Gill (2007) becomes crucial for defining the term in order to achieve Instagram accounts analysis from a postfeminism perspective. Through using the term as postfeminist sensibility, it reveals "[…] the contradictory nature of postfeminist discourses and the entanglement of both feminist and anti-feminist themes within them" (Gill, 2007, p. 149). The contradictory nature of postfeminism is that it does not directly reject feminism, but instead of a collective force, it defends individuality, empowerment of

women, autonomy, and free choice since it considers that equality has already been achieved. These arguments may not seem problematic; however, according to academic feminists, it represents the "undoing of feminism, while simul- taneously appearing to be engaging in a well-informed and even well-intended response to feminism" (McRobbie, 2004).

2.2.1.1 Media and Postfeminism:

The first book pointing out that women have not yet achieved their assumed equality was Susan Faludi's book *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against Women* (1991). According to Faludi (1991), several issues were working against the issues of women's rights during the 1980s. These several issues were the media's effect on the misconception of feminism, the economic struggles of the era and how it affected women, ideas of anti-feminist groups, and the misinformation on women's choices and feminism. Eventually, the book revealed that the media presented false results about women on behalf of manipulating the achievements of second-wave feminism, mainly revolving around the idea that women prefer domestic lives. Faludi (1991) based her criticism of the representation of women in media on the issues of the 1980s, which are about the dilemma of women being perceived as belonging to domestic spheres and in which ways they can be a part of the work sphere. During third-wave feminism, women's place in the work field was accepted, and postfeminism played a force in these acceptances, approving that equality was achieved.

The most prominent examples of postfeminism exist within the media because of the suitable image it portrays. During the 90s and 00s, many women's magazines

became popular and focused on the image of working, independent women, which was very different from the earlier domestic images. There is a transformation in the portrayal of femininity in the media, but this change is still influenced by patriarchal values and approved by postfeminism. McRobbie (2008) agrees with Faludi's ideas on backlash but also explains postfeminism as "[…] a force which devalues, or negates and makes unthinkable the very basis of coming-together (even if to take part in disputatious encounters), on the assumption widely promoted that there is no longer any need for such actions" (p. 26). Postfeminism replaces the idea of collectivity with individualism, which is uncommon for the nature of feminism. This sort of idea of individualism presents a disconnection between disadvantaged groups worldwide. Also, McRobbie (2008) describes postfeminism as "double entanglement" (p. 7), meaning that while supporting homosexual relationships and the work life of women through empowerment and choice, it also expects traditional family values, male desires, and societal norms.

Through discussing her idea of postfeminism being the "undoing of feminism," McRobbie (2008) uses examples from advertisements, women's magazines, and TV series with female protagonists. Some TV shows and movies were declared as "postfeminist canon" (Gill, 2016) through their representation of female protagonists, such as *Sex and The City* (Star et al., 1998–2004), *Ally McBeal* (Kelley & D'Elia, 1997-2002), and *Bridget Jones's Diary* (Maguire, 2001) however, in her most recent work, Gill (2017) claims that we have moved away from these examples of 2000s. These female protagonists provided depictions of single, career women, flawed yet authentic professionals; however, in their feminist world, they were depicted as unhappy and mainly looking to settle down. In these depictions, women are

portrayed as "[…] confident enough to declare their anxieties about possible failure in regard to finding a husband, they avoid any aggressive or overtly traditional men, and they brazenly enjoy their sex- uality, without fear of the sexual double standard" (McRobbie, 2008, p. 21) .

At first, they all represent new, modern, career-driven, feminist women who predominantly have female audiences. However, through their postfeminist portrayal, they all want to gossip, have some romance in their lives, and want to reclaim their femininity, which seems that feminism robbed them of these needs and feelings (McRobbie, 2008). Initially, the media presented these characters in a postfeminist way by portraying that equality is achieved; regardless, this representation seems that all women want these traditional forms of happiness in their lives, although they have a modern understanding of the world. These career women are succeeding in their jobs; however, they always feel as if they lack something more important, and this is usually a traditional way of domesticity and love. As a consequence, the media is largely to blame for feminism's current state of misunderstanding and embellishment of postfeminism. Also, these screen examples highlight the assumption that postfeminism only focuses on Western, privileged, white women (Gill, 2016).

2.2.1.2 Postfeminism Themes

By conceiving postfeminism as a sensibility, Gill (2007) claims to present the contradictory nature of this term and shows how both feminist and antifeminist themes coexist within this discourse. Postfeminist sensibility is apparent in our modern lives and circulates through various media forms. According to Gill (2007),

some features and/or themes create postfeminist sensibility. These themes are not merely for discussing gender but also for discussing inequalities about race, ethnicity, class, age, sexuality, and disability. The themes that build postfeminist discussions are;

> […]femininity as a bodily property; the shift from objectification to subjectification; an emphasis upon self-surveillance, monitoring and self-discipline; a focus on individualism, choice and empowerment; the dominance of a makeover paradigm; and a resurgence of ideas about natural sexual difference; a marked sexualization of culture; and an emphasis upon consumerism and the commodification of difference. (Gill, 2007, p. 149)

Gill (2017) recently updated these features that characterize this sensibility since these were discussed a decade earlier. Eventually, Gill (2017) claims that these features still resonate and have become even more embedded in cultural life, especially issues of women's bodies, surveillance, and self-monitoring. The upgraded versions of these discussions are mentioned below as well.

Femininity as a bodily property is about media culture's hyper-fixation on the female body and the way it defines femininity according to the appearance of the body. Gill (2007) points out that in today's media, women's power and identity are reduced to having a sexy body changing according to the beauty standards of the time. As discussed above through Friedan (1963) and Beauvoir (1949), femininity has always been expected from women in various shapes. Gill (2007) points out that over the years, femininity has been determined through the body features of women by the media; "the body is presented simultaneously as women's source of power and as always unruly, requiring constant monitoring, surveillance, discipline and

re-modelling (and consumer spending) in order to conform to ever-narrower judgements of female attractiveness" (p. 149).

This constant monitoring of the body concerns not only weight but also many other details such as body hair, laughter lines, postures, and many others. For example, the media insulted Jessica Simpson and Britney Spears in various ways for their weight gains during the 2000s. Some of the headlines include "Britney 'fat'? Oops … weight-watchers did it again" (Hunt, 2007) and "Richard Simmons Prays for Fat Celebrities Like Jessica Simpson" (Pressler, 2009). Recently, on social media, many people revisited these humiliating comments on these celebrities and cannot believe the extent of fat shaming these celebrities had encountered and how media created "fat-phobia," mainly revolving around women's bodies (Gallagher, 2023; Kato, 2023; Laws, 2023). This scrutiny over women's bodies is just one aspect of femininity as a bodily property since there are many expectations of femininity.

McRobbie (2008) points out that this sort of hyper-fixation of the female body and beauty creates disorders concerning body image, which again points out the patriarchal structures. McRobbie (2008) points out that both women who are in and outside the fashion-beauty industry are affected and manipulated to "cutting themselves, endlessly on diets, fearful of their weight, prone to low self-esteem, frequently anorexic" (p. 96). In her recent article, Gill (2017) mentions these as "'postfeminist disorders', including bulimia, anxiety, depression and forms of addiction" (p. 616) and points out that these issues became even more heightened.

Beauty standards and body expectations continue to change with every period; however, women's bodies are somehow expected to adjust to these changes in order to fulfill this expectation of femininity. Fashion magazines usually are a way to control the choices of women since they create measures of femininity. They create an idea of "normative femininity," which changes from time to time through using fashion and body image that becomes the inevitable source of idealized female image. These magazines provide specific formulas and prescriptions to achieve these looks and feelings through make-up and skin-care products, fashion items, self-help literature, and beauty products that inevitably direct the audience to consumerism (McRobbie, 1996). Gill (2017) points out that pressures on women's bodies have intensified and extensified, even going beyond new areas and expectations regarding the popular body trends of the time.

There is a discrepancy between the representation of women and men when it comes to sexual context. This idea of women being the passive object of desiring active males has been around since the discussions regarding heteronormative, mainstream pornography. As Gill (2007) points out, women's bodies are constantly a victim of erotic representation; for example, "in the news media all women's bodies are available to be coded sexually, whether they are politicians, foreign correspondents or serious news anchors" (p. 150). This is highly related to the "lad magazine" culture; however, these magazines are not new and have a huge history. These magazines became a way to control the aesthetic standards, such as beauty norms and sexual expectations surrounding women. McRobbie (2008) points out a similar issue through acknowledging the normalization of pornography, which has been an ongoing battle for feminism. According to Gill (2007), lad magazines usually discuss

sex through pleasure-seeking, unselfconscious language, but in women's magazines, sex is presented as something requiring self-surveillance, constant attention, and usually about being desirable and pleasing sexual subjects. The portrayal of women in lad magazines is highly different from the portrayal of men in women's magazines. It should be noted that today these sorts of gender roles, which usually portray women as submissive and men as dominant, are challenged by feminist pornography with many other positive innovations to the porn industry.

The third theme is about a specific shift from women being perceived as passive and emotional about sex to being active and desiring, called "from sex object to desiring sexual subject." The sexualized representations of women in the media strengthened this idea as they were portrayed as "[…] passive, mute objects of an assumed male gaze […]" (Gill, 2007, p. 151). Mulvey (1989) pointed out this idea of the "male gaze" through her infamous work about cinema, which focuses on the scopophilic look of the viewer as "the actual image of woman as (passive) raw material for the (active) gaze of man" (p. 25). In this sense, "women displayed as a sexual object is the leitmotif of erotic spectacle" (1989, p. 19); this satisfies male desire. This idea was only strengthened with the golden age of porn, which happened around the 1970s as large-budget pornographic films were released in theaters. These films played an influential role in porn's shift towards the mainstream (Paasonen, 2007, p.23).

Recently, the portrayal of women in media shifted to "the sexually autonomous heterosexual young woman who plays with her sexual power and is forever 'up for it,'" which is very different from the passive sex object image (p. 151). Gill (2007)

suggests that this shift from sex object to subject is significant for understanding postfeminist sensibility. Sexual fulfillment and sexual identity are considered elements of postfeminism through their emphasis on individualism and empowerment (Gill, 2007; Saunders, 2024). The way that power operates is changed as "[…]from an external, male judging gaze to a self-policing narcissistic gaze" (Gill, 2007, p. 151), but this can be a sign of a more dangerous regime;

> […]power is not imposed from above or the outside, but constructs our very subjectivity. Girls and women are invited to become a particular kind of self, and are endowed with agency on condition that it is used to construct oneself as subject closely resembling the heterosexual male fantasy found in pornography. (Gill, 2007, p. 152)

This issue points out how women are governed by societal expectations when it comes to perceiving their own identities. Postfeminism may seem to celebrate and promote the sexual identities of women, but the question is whether this agency and choice belong to women or they are just feeling forced. The concern is that women's agency and choice are now very close to a self-image that is specifically found in heterosexual male desires and portrayed in mainstream pornography.

Most of the discussions above are already about the theme of individualism, choice, and empowerment. For postfeminism, since women have achieved equality and independence, one of the most prominent ideas is free choice: "[…] which present women as autonomous agents no longer constrained by any inequalities or power imbalances whatsoever" (Gill, 2007, p. 153). Every aspect of daily life is understood through personal choice, empowerment, and self-determination, which leads to individualism. This sort of personalization provides an essential point for

postfeminist sensibility in media culture, which is the release of notions of politics and cultural influence. Through individualism, everything becomes related to personal choice and the idea of self, which can be problematic because issues like racism, homophobia, and domestic violence are collective issues (Gill, 2007). This is another similarity between autonomous postfeminist subject and neoliberal subject on the questionable belief of free choice and autonomy (Gill, 2007).

This idea of free choice and empowerment seems to be the decision mechanism when it comes to certain beauty standards, such as having plastic surgeries, losing weight, and getting body hair removed only to please oneself. Again, the question is how these autonomously generated desires result in similar looks and align well with societal expectations. Questioning this shift of "pleasing oneself" and "following own desires" creates crucial questions about "how socially-constructed, mass-mediated ideals of beauty are internalized and made our own" (Gill, 2007, p. 154). As mentioned above, these empowering choices are usually socially constructed expectations portrayed in women's magazines, TV shows, and makeover programs, which are mostly believed to be free choices and mostly align with heterosexual male expectations.

As personal choices and empowerment become essential points for postfeminism, it creates an emphasis on self-surveillance, self-monitoring, and discipline themes for women. In order to achieve the status of successful femininity, one has to control oneself consciously but has to maintain it secretively. McRobbie (2008) relates these self-monitoring practices with female individualization. "Self-help guides, personal advisors, lifestyle coaches and gurus and all sorts of self-improvement TV

programmes provide the cultural means by which individualisation operates as a social process" (McRobbie, 2008, p. 19). McRobbie (2008) gives examples from *Bridget Jones's Diary* (Maguire, 2001); since Bridget is an independent career woman, however, she is fixated on finding a husband, and to gain male attention, she has to monitor her body, eating habits and fashion choices. She is always focused on her behavior, weight, and outside looks and consciously debates with herself in her diary. Gill (2007) points out that this surveillance is now in new spheres of life and intimate places since there is a focus on psychological betterment and wellness. Recently, Gill (2017) points out that surveillance has become even more central since women feel under constant surveillance. This scrutiny over female bodies and surveillance creates even more self-monitoring and self-optimization, especially with the new addition of beauty apps, filters from social media apps, self-modification apps, and many more (Gill, 2017).

Saunders (2024) analyzes sex tracking apps that can be an example of this self-policing, self-surveillance, and discipline theme. According to Saunders (2024), most self-care routines turn every activity into physical labor that requires overseeing, routinization, and enhancement. With these apps, sexual enjoyment becomes something that is not sufficient; instead, it is something that requires labor and enhancement. Also, sexual subjectivity is getting measured through data which links sexual enjoyment and power with objectivity;

> […] sex tracking apps partly ask women to conceptualise their sexual identity, body and relationships as apart from them, as numerical and decon-textualised. An objective view of the sexual self becomes central to the post-feminist subject produced through these apps. (Saunders, 2024, p. 2017)

In these terms, according to Saunders (2024), sex tracking apps actually reveal "how the objectification of women has become an important new element of contemporary female subjectivity" especially considering Gill's terms of shift from objectification to subjectification as a part of postfeminism (p. 2015). This distances female sexual subjectivity through datafication and objectivity instead of enjoyment present ways of "[…] a controlled and numerical unemotionality become the contempo- rary proofs of female sexual fulfilment, self-knowledge and self-love" (Saunders, 2024, p. 2019). These sex-tracking apps are just another contemporary example of self-monitoring actions that are primarily projected on women. Gill (2017) points out that now there are a variety of apps created for self-monitoring and self-tracking, that creates a postfeminist subject "[…]incited to monitor, track, work on and optimize all areas of her life" (p. 617). These force women to change to an ideal disciplinary subject or neoliberalism subject through self-help discourse where the self has become something that should be disciplined (p. 156).

Also, there is the "reassertion of sexual difference" (Gill, 2007) through self-help literature by so-called experts that present the biological and psychological differences between men and women, which were very popular towards the beginning of the 2000s. The comparison between women's and men's brains has led to significant challenges, particularly impacting women's social and professional lives. These pieces of (mis)information regarding gender differences have been discussed since the earliest days of philosophy to biological determinism, and they created the fundamental structures of sexism by presenting women as emotional compared to men. Today's neuroscience books that focus on gender are drawing us back by claiming that they are empowering women; however, they present disguised

allegations about the inferiority of women (Bluhm, 2012). These pieces of evidence on gender stereotypes heavily influence social perception, behavior, and attitude, resulting in women feeling incompetent in various aspects of their lives, especially in work spheres (Fine, 2012). The popularity of these sorts of self-help books presents that equality is still not achieved despite the claims of postfeminism. McRobbie (2008) explains this issue with her term "the post-feminist masquerade" (p. 59), in which there is an appearance of women images in media that portrays them as successful and empowered; however, there is still an underlying existence of patriarchal norms. The term presents that there are surface level examples of empowerment however, they do not actually challenge gender norms and inequalities. Women are presented as belonging to the work field; however, in times of stress, they are encouraged to seek therapy and counseling, which points to a gender-aware discrepancy (McRobbie, 2008, p. 60). In a way, as women's roles are being discussed in society, they are encouraged for independence and self-reliance by the government through specific roles in productivity, education, and the labor market; however, these roles are given in gender-aware ways, which creates the subtle way of gender inequality.

2.2.1.3 Exploring Contemporary Self-Help Culture

In her recent discussion, Gill (2017) points out that there is a focus on the psychological life of the subject, and this has been intensified, especially towards self-help culture. This kind of content is very apparent in wellness and lifestyle accounts, with discussions and pieces of advice regarding mental health, well-being, and loving yourself. There are "media messages targeted at women increasingly foreground not simply the individual but also the psychological: self-esteem, body

positivity, confidence" (Gill, 2017, p. 618). This growing confidence works in relation to an interest in feminism, but social injustice and patriarchal obstacles cannot be resolved with individual endeavors like confidence and resilience since these issues are related to capitalism, neoliberalism, and patriarchy (Gill, 2017). Similar to Gill & Orgad (2015), Banet-Weiser (2018) points out the idea of empowerment, especially self-empowerment, in the context of popular feminism which works in the favor of feminism however, becomes inadequate because of its politics.

> When girls and women are told to "be" confident and empowered, it is framed as an in- dividual choice: they just need to believe it, and then they will become it. This confidence will help them become better economic subjects, without interrogating the broad economic context that encourages women and girls to not be confident in the first place. (Banet-Weiser, 2018, p. 30)

Women and girls are now being advised to be confident however their confidence was taken away from them from the same authorities and structural inequalities. The main issue is that with these new self-help, empowering feminist visibilities women and girls are still being told to transform themselves while the inequalities are not being blamed and shifted.

Gill and Orgad (2015) discuss this pressure of confidence and how it invites girls to work on themselves with popular discussions on two issues: gender and work, and consumer body culture. The confidence culture is not only highly gendered, but it also portrays individualism and subjectivity, creates a distraction from structural inequalities, and still blames women for not having confidence. Apart from the

neoliberal discourses on corporate feminism confidence culture, there is the idea of "body love" used in advertising, magazines, and social media, which promotes messages of self-belief, "love your body," and feeling confident (Gill & Orgad, 2015). This sort of confidence and love your body messages may seem empowering; however, they are able to repudiate the injuries inflicted by structural inequalities due to the emphasis on individual self-regulation (Gill & Orgad, 2015). Eventually, they might contribute to a depoliticized, individualized form of feminism that aligns with corporate and neoliberal values.

There is a focus on positive psychology and positive mental attitudes that are new central to postfeminist culture, which shapes how women are allowed to feel (Gill, 2017). The issue is that the real feelings of women do not matter since they are expected to deal with struggles by keeping their positive attitudes, and these allowed feelings are shaped by recent neoliberal or postfeminist "feeling rules" expectations (Kanai, 2017; Gill, 2017). Feeling rules is a concept created by Arlie Hochschild (1983) that points out how societies construct standards for how individuals should feel and communicate their emotions in different social contexts. Similarly, Gill (2017) and Kanai (2017) point out that women are expected to present certain positive feelings with pressures of neoliberalism and postfeminism and are positioned not to show their insecurity, anger, and neediness to remain empowered. Tiusanen (2023) analyzes women's wellness posts, using Hochschild's feeling rules to show how wellness accounts advice women to feel. Eventually, Tiusanen (2023) discovers that women are encouraged to be honest, grateful, kind, and empowered.

There seems to be societal pressure and expectation that women maintain an upbeat demeanor despite ongoing gender inequalities. For women to feel or show emotions like anger or hurt is questioned politically, and expressions of dissatisfaction or complaint are considered unappealing from both a mental and visual perspective, although they have every right to feel these negative feelings (Gill, 2017). The positive feelings are generated through various forms of inspirational aphorisms. These could be short, uplifting statements or quotes that convey optimistic and empowering messages. These positive messages are presented through physical and digital spaces, which Gill (2017) gives the example of Facebook walls; however, Instagram posts on wellness and lifestyle accounts can be great examples as well. The problem with these messages is that they carry "a vaguely defiant sense of self-belief" (Gill, 2017, p. 620). These messages present a postfeminist sentiment of entitlement, specifically to happiness, concerning ideas of empowerment, self-confidence, and individuality, but there is no aim for a needed radical social transformation (Gill, 2017).

2.2.1.4 Post Postfeminism

In her recent work, Gill (2016) responds to arguments supporting that postfeminism has lost its credibility as a critical force, especially in the current years when feminism is increasingly promoted and accepted by the masses. It is related to the fact that postfeminism as a notion influenced popular culture during the 2000s (McRobbie, 2008), and today, circumstances are different since most people accept the need for feminism. The value of the term has been questioned for several reasons; the heightened visibility of feminist activism, the attention given to feminist issues and questions in media, and terms like sexism, gender inequality, and pay gap being

discussed are just some of these reasons and the way that mainstream media provides space for these problems (Gill, 2016). It used to be very hard for feminist arguments to be mentioned in media; “today it seems as if everything is a feminist issue” (Gill, 2016, p. 614). Since postfeminism can be defined as the “undoing of feminism” (McRobbie, 2004, p. 255), these new approaches to new feminist visibilities questioned the contemporary position of the term, and many have been called out as; out of date, falls short, redundant (Gill, 2016).

Gill (2016) points out the new transnational understanding of postfeminism, how postfeminism can be applied to various topics, and how the term is theorized in intersectional terms by presenting other scholars’ work. The relevancy of the terms shows itself through its improvement over the last decade, especially with the discussions of other scholars in the context of intersectionality (see Butler, 2013), transnationality (see Dosekun, 2015), and inclusivity (Gill, 2017). These are huge improvements since postfeminism used to be mostly discussed for its subjects, that is, presumably white, western, middle-class, and heterosexual women. Gill (2016) defends the accuracy of postfeminism by pointing out the new, trendy celebration of feminism and how it is structured through postfeminist sensibility. This new popular celebration of feminism provides a feminism without politics and cause.

Gill (2016) claims that there is a continuity of postfeminism in an era that can be defined as post postfeminism, especially as a critically analytical term for our critical vocabulary. The first issue Gill (2016) points out is how the media coverage differs regarding different feminist issues and visibilities. There have been many feminist issues covered in the mainstream media recently; however, most of these news are

usually about trivialized topics. There is a heightened visibility in terms of quantity, but the real question should be about what kinds of visibility are portrayed by the media (Gill, 2016, p. 616). Gill (2016) analyzes different kinds of current feminist visibilities in mainstream media: feminist activism, corporate or neoliberal feminism, and celebrity and style feminism. In each of these visibilities, there are contradictions between them. The media coverage of feminist activism usually circulates the campaigns that are more acceptable and less self-criticizing instead of showing the whole reaction (Gill, 2016). Neoliberal feminism becomes an acceptable face of feminism for the mainstream media, similar to postfeminism while covering the new emergences of feminism. Celebrity and style feminism usually represent a trendy feminist identity but are usually devoid of politics. Through pointing out these tensions and contradictions, Gill (2016) mentions "the need to think together feminism with anti-feminism, postfeminism, and revitalized misogyny" since the new acceptance of feminism also carries its backlashes with itself (p. 625).

To present postfeminism as a critical force in feminist media, especially with the popularity of feminism and intensifying misogyny, Gill (2016) points out how the term is a part of continuity and change. As discussed in this part, the use of the term before and even now is never to accept that media suddenly became feminist, but Gill (2016) also points out that feminist ideas are entangled with the ideas that pre-feminist, anti-feminist, and backlash ones" (p. 622). The relevancy of the term postfeminism shows itself through the fact that there are different kinds of mediated feminism; the visibilities of feminism are uneven (Gill, 2016). The celebrations of feminism in mainstream media have been on the side that's closer to postfeminism and neoliberal feminism, and eventually, postfeminism can be considered as "a

distinctive kind of gendered neoliberalism" (Gill, 2017, p. 611). Postfeminism still presents itself in an post postfeminist era through the focus on women's bodies, creating a sexualized self, questionable indications on empowerment, confidence, and choice, focus on individualization, the need for reinvention of self, constant self-monitoring and self-policing and false implications regarding women's feelings.

2.2.2 Neoliberal Feminism

Gill (2007) points out that postfeminism results from feminist and anti-feminist opinions, which are constructed through the grammar of individualism, the main idea of neoliberalism. Postfeminist sensibility is a study of contradictions that deals with the notions of the self, free choice, and surveillance, and these notions are also the constructions of neoliberalism. According to Gill (2007), there is a robust similarity between postfeminist sensibility and neoliberalism that works on three different layers. The primary layer is the current focus on individualism, which mainly does not accept any other anticipation from outside. Gill (2007) points out that there is an expectation from women to transform themselves and to work on themselves with the aim of constructing the ideal subjects, which makes her question the gendered tendencies of neoliberalism. Rottenberg (2014) coins the notion of neoliberal feminism by pointing out the ways in which prior feminist liberalism turned into neoliberal feminism and created a new feminist subject.

This notion of neoliberal feminism is constructed through ideals presented in popular publications by strong, career women, especially Sheryl Sandberg's *Lean In* (2013) and Anne-Marie Slaughter's "Why Woman Still Can't Have It All" (2012). Both books became feminist manifestos of their times, especially since Sandberg was

the ex-COO of Meta Platforms and Slaughter was the director of policy planning for the U.S. State Department and the dean of the School of Public and International Affairs. These women have been pitted against each other by the media, mainly because both vocalize similar issues for career women through focusing on different dimensions, and they have been compared to Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem because of their popular feminist personas (Rottenberg, 2014).

Slaughter's (2012) article mainly describes the personal experiences of having difficulty balancing family life especially in high-positioned careers while questioning the achievability of "having it all". Slaughter (2012) examines the expectations and demands of jobs and workplaces and points out that many are usually designed for males, especially since women are expected to fulfill work and family life requirements. There is a conflict for women to juggle between pursuing careers and fulfilling family responsibilities, primarily because of the time commitment expected from professional jobs. In this sense, Slaughter (2012) criticizes the work conditions encountered by women by presenting gender inequalities and advising women that it is acceptable to pursue family over careers or vice versa.

Sandberg's (2013) book *Lean In* offers advice for women who want to succeed in their professional lives, especially leadership positions, by paving the way for women to realize their professional ambitions. The name of the book (2013) directly advises women to "lean in" to their careers by pointing out the inequality of workplace dynamics, inviting men to criticize gender inequality in powerful positions, and presenting advice for work-family balance. According to Sandberg

(2013), women should work through their internal obstacles and self-confidence since women are less ambitious. For Sandberg (2013), the ambition gap between men and women and the lack of self-confidence are the main obstacles for career women, resulting in fewer women in power positions. The book (2013) promotes working harder to climb the corporate ladder while setting unrealistic expectations for women for family and work life and disavowing structural inequalities.

Both of these works accept gender inequalities but still mainly hold women as responsible and expect women to transform themselves while only catering to middle-class women. A similar comment came from Kim Kardashian, which becomes a great example of this sort of neoliberal feminism. While giving business advice, Kardashian commented, “I have the best advice for women in business, get your f------ ass up and work. It seems like nobody wants to work these days” (Sung, 2022). This comment not only neglects the structural and systematic inequalities but also totally disregards women who do not have the same privileges. These feminist manifestos advise women to beat impostor syndrome and “lean in” to their professional careers; however, the issue does not end with only criticizing gender inequalities and counseling women for changing when the inequalities are embedded in the system itself and have been preferred to stay this way. There is inequality and misogyny in institutional structures, and even just focusing on workplace issues such as unequal pay, sexual harassment, and glass ceilings reveal some of the issues (Banet-Weiser, 2018). Glass ceiling is a metaphor coined merely to explain the corporate hierarchy and how some individuals cannot be in powerful positions because of certain norms and biases. Many inequalities are also embedded in state

politics and reveal how feminism has been disregarded by authorities for so many years (Banet-Weiser, 2018).

Rottenberg (2014) argues that with these two popular feminist manifestos, previous mainstream liberal feminism is being transformed into neoliberalism with the creation of a new feminist subject. The criticism is that since feminism is a movement dedicated to women's liberation with collective justice, it is now being turned into something individualistic. Classic liberal feminism exists in order to present a critique of liberalism, whereas neoliberal feminism offers no critique of neoliberalism (Rottenberg, 2014) and merely incorporates elements of neoliberal economic principles. Rottenberg (2014) is suggesting that neoliberal feminism is helping to produce a new feminist subject;

> […] who is not only individualized but entrepreneurial in the sense that she is oriented towards optimizing her resources through incessant calculation, personal initiative and innovation. Indeed, creative individual solutions are presented as feminist and progressive, while calibrating a felicitous work–family balance becomes her main task. Inequality between men and women is thus paradoxically acknowledged only to be disavowed, and the question of social justice is recast in personal, individualized terms (pp. 421-422).

In this sense, this kind of feminism addresses gender inequality only through professional areas without any declarations regarding social and collective justice. The solutions are merely provided through individualism with only emphasis on work-family balance, which is against the collaborative nature of feminism. This

feminist subject focuses only on self-transformation and self-confidence in a way that does not expect anything from the outside world, such as governments, where real systematic discrimination should be solved. This strand of feminism is criticized for reinforcing existing power dynamics and neglecting systematic issues, which is why it has been highly visible in the mainstream media because of its acceptability. It promotes women's participation in the workforce and entrepreneurship without systematic barriers but directs the feminist subject to solve the problems inwards and create a perfect family and work balance when it is almost impossible. Eventually, neoliberal feminism defends that "the solution to injustice is to work on the self rather than to work with others for social and political transformation" (Gill, 2016, p. 617).

Recently there has been a high emphasis on the use of words including self such as "[…]'self-assurance', 'self-belief', 'self-worth', 'self-efficacy', 'self-compassion' and 'self-fulfilment'" (Gill and Orgad, 2015, p. 331). These words are used for pointing out women's lack of several issues; however there is barely any mention of broader factors such as structural, institutional, cultural, and societal influences that may contribute to understanding the origins and solutions of these challenges (Gill and Orgad, 2015). In Banet-Weiser et al. (2020), Rottenberg questions this new feminist subject, "one who accepts full responsibility for her own well-being and self-care" (p. 7) but also with this new creation of family and work balance that's been presented as the new feminist ideal.

Finally, on a positive note, Rottenberg believes that through neoliberal feminism, feminism became something that is more acceptable in the mainstream popular

culture landscape and media, which works with the notion of popular feminism and made most of current agenda-setting feminist movements more attainable and approachable for many (Banet-Weiser et al., 2020). Neoliberalism promotes economic success, new market growth, personal choice, self-entrepreneurship, and individualism, but all of these correlate with popular feminism and postfeminism (Banet-Weiser et al., 2020, p. 10).

2.2.3 Popular Feminism

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, feminism was regarded as an intimidating word and understood as a threat. For the last few years, the visibility of feminism in mainstream media has increased exponentially. Many celebrities, including Beyoncé, Oprah Winfrey, Emma Watson, Megan Markle, and Miley Cyrus, with corporate women like Sheryl Sandberg, declared that they are feminists (Banet-Weiser, 2018; De Benedictis et al., 2019). Major companies, such as Verizon, Dove, and CoverGirl, include feminism in their advertising and marketing, and many brands sell various items that carry feminist slogans (Banet-Weiser, 2018). These are all of the elements that built popular feminism, which makes the feminism phenomenon achievable and visible on mainstream media, in television, advertising, music, and especially on social media, but the issue is that seeing or purchasing feminism is not the same thing as changing patriarchal structures (Banet-Weiser, 2018).

Popular feminism has certain issues, although there is more attention to the inequalities and more Internet campaigns that unite people worldwide. Some issues include pinkwashing, selective inclusivity, tokenism, and superficiality. According to

Banet-Weiser (2018) “Popular feminism exists along a continuum, where spectacular, media-friendly expressions such as celebrity feminism and corporate feminism achieve more visibility, and expressions that critique patriarchal structures and systems of racism and violence are more obscured” (p. 4). Gill (2016) mentions neoliberal feminism and celebrity feminism (whether it is the same or slightly different from popular feminism) as the new feminist visibilities. Through the popularity and celebrity declarations of feminism, there are many great social media campaigns, activists, and marches; however, these became only possible through the visibility of mainstream media. In this sense, popular feminism follows the similar politics of capitalism and neoliberal feminism, prioritizing individualism and entrepreneurship. As feminism is portrayed as something that supports individualistic endeavors, it finds a more attainable place on the market and is easily popularised (Banet-Weiser et al., 2020).

According to Banet-Weiser (2018) “[…] postfeminism and popular feminism are entangled together in contemporary media vis- ibility. Postfeminism remains a dominant, visible iteration of feminism in culture, and is not displaced by popular feminism but rather bolstered by it” (p. 20). Popular feminism still embraces feminist values, announces the benefits of feminism, and accepts gender inequality, whereas postfeminism denounces feminism as no longer needed. However, the solutions that popular feminism finds for gender inequality are questionable as well. Popular feminism defends that women should be included more significantly in the fields that are known for gender inequality; however, in this case, there is the possibility of tokenism. Gheaus (2015) describes “token women” as a woman that is asked to occupy a powerful position, but not selected on merit rather selected usually because

she is a woman to prevent accusations of sexism. According to Banet-Weiser (2018), popular feminism advocates for the inclusion of women; however, this inclusion happens only because they are women. This kind of inclusion happens only to solve the problems on the surface and their mere inclusion does not challenge the bigger picture.

Another highly problematic issue of popular feminism is that it "[…] frequently refuses intersectionality, and often erases and devalues women of color, working-class women, trans women, and non- heteronormative women, even when it claims to include all women" (Banet-Weiser, 2018, p. 14). The dominant culture of popular feminism, similar to postfeminism and neoliberal feminism, is white, middle-class, cis-gendered, and heteronormative, which is the reason why it is visible (Banet-Weiser, 2018). This is related to the issue of preferring to portray the attainable kind of feminism that follows the politics of the dominant culture, which also makes it highly visible. #MeToo movement is an excellent example of this problem because its success is related to popular feminism and hashtag activism. As mentioned before, Alyssa Milano's tweet in 2017 sparked the #MeToo movement; however, the movement was originally founded by African-American activist Tarana Burke in 2006. Popular feminism created resistance against patriarchy towards the power of social media and hashtag activism, but still, white and privileged women are the preferred faces of these movements (Kokerov, 2022). Also, De Benedictis et al. (2019) analyzed the coverage of the #MeToo movement in UK newspapers, and the results revealed that most of the coverage only focused on the experiences of celebrities, cultural industries, and the fashion sector. According to Kokerov (2022), popular feminism only agrees to represent marginalized groups in a way that would

benefit them as potential customers and does not acknowledge structural violence and discrimination.

This kind of feminism is happy feminism where there are products that we can wear and use that have various slogans such as “Empowered,” “We Should All Be Feminists,” “Future is Female,” “Girl Power,” “Smash Patriarchy” (Banet-Weiser et al., 2020). All of these companies use feminism as a marketing strategy to sell more products and continue to add these to their products because they know they will sell. Another issue is that feminism almost seems like a trend rather than a phenomenon fighting inequalities for years. Nowadays feminism seems like a label that can be thrown on to anything and not something that aims for structural and cultural changes.

The framework of feminism becomes a vital part of this study because wellness and lifestyle industries and accounts are predominantly created by women and for women (O’Neill, 2024), so their position in female entrepreneurship and consumption is remarkable. There are various kinds of research focus on the relationship between wellness and social media (Kaur & Kumar, 2022), wellness and racial issues (O’Neill, 2020), wellness and female entrepreneurship (O’Neill, 2024), healthy living and gender identities (Baker & Walsh, 2018), wellness and neoliberal feminism (Mickey, 2019). In recent studies about neoliberal feminism, popular feminism, and other feminism variations, the wellness industry, PR campaigns, and social media, amongst other sectors, have become prime examples for reflecting new issues and expectations (McRobbie, 2004; Gill, 2007; Gill & Orgad, 2015; Gill, 2016; Banet-Weiser et al., 2020). There are various studies regarding new feminist

visibilities and female presence on social media, such as neoliberal feminism and female athletes on social media (Toffoletti & Thorpe, 2018), postfeminism and fitness posts on social media (Prins & Wellman, 2023), women's wellness and feeling rules (Tiusanen, 2023), and eating disorders with embodied neoliberalism and postfeminism (Cairns & Johnston, 2015). Analyzing the contents and aims of wellness and lifestyle Instagram accounts is essential for placing these industries according to their approaches to feminism since they usually claim to be feminists and evaluate what they offer to their consumers. So for the impact of this study these feminist approaches should be evaluated through understanding the wellness industry and rules of social media. The next section of this chapter examines the relationship between Instagram, the wellness and lifestyle industries, and their historical evolution, entrepreneurship as well as the influence of social media on these industries.

2.3 Defining Wellness and Lifestyle

The history of wellness is based on ancient times; however, our current understanding of wellness is slightly different. According to Baker (2022), our modern understanding of some aspects of wellness is rooted in traditional Greek, Chinese, and Indian medicine. Wellness culture's holistic approach to health reveals itself by taking eating habits, lifestyle, mental and physical activity" to the forefront. Contemporary thoughts of wellness have links with the seventeenth-century philosophy of mind and body dualism (Cartesian dualism), which relates health to balance and harmony; however, this link is not a direct continuation (Baker, 2022).

Our modern understanding of wellness was constructed and gained visibility between the 1950s and 1970s, mainly through movements as the network of physicians and thinkers in the United States conceptualized our understanding of wellness, an active pursuit of vitality (Global Wellness Institute, n.d.a). These are the hippie movement, the antipsychiatry movement, the human potential movement, and the civil rights movement (Baker, 2022). These movements also reflect a distrust of institutional services, especially regarding personal health and healthcare. Baker (2022) points out that this distrust is not a legacy of the past; the popularization of wellness culture and lifestyle media results from low trust, making individuals seek alternatives for personal health and healthcare delivery. According to Grénman et al. (2019), the popularity of wellness is related to the "consumption phenomenon" (p. 464), and our current understanding of wellness can be defined as;

> […] integrating a holistic health paradigm into one's life by making lifestyle choices and self-care decisions that will improve one's quality of life, such as getting adequate amounts of exercise and sleep, maintaining a healthy diet and weight, taking care of one's physical appearance, maintaining vitality, dealing with stress, and responding to the first signs of illness. (p. 463)

Grénman et al. (2019) most notable finding is that " […] wellness has moved beyond the merely physical dimension, emphasizing mainly exercise and nutrition, to significantly involve emotional/ mental, spiritual, social, even intellectual aspects" (p. 471). Most of the accounts on Instagram not only present workout routines and nourishing healthy food as content, but they also include spiritual aspects in their content through affirmations, mental health information, meditation routines, and advice about personal relationships. Baker and Rojek (2020) point out that these

accounts are not directly related to health and are not controlled through health guidelines.

Before becoming a notion on social media and magazines, lifestyle advice was mostly given through books. Some books by Smiles (1859), Beecher (1843), and Beeton (1861) were hugely influential for their time. However, the contexts of these books were tremendously different from each other. Smiles's book *Self-help with illustrations of character and conduct* (1859) is about improving various human qualities in personal life, especially in Victorian morals; Beecher's book *A treatise on domestic economy* (1843) is about a class-based perfectionism about the household management system; and Beeton's work *Book of household management* (1861) similarly gives bits of advice on household management and family conditions especially for women (Baker & Rojek, 2020). These books were not particularly about lifestyle; however, they provided some influence about "how to" knowledge, which introduced the readers to this genre. Most of these were about household management systems, family conditions, morals, and human qualities. During the 1900s, household management books, cookery books, and advice-seeking columns in magazines and newspapers became hugely popular (Baker & Rojek, 2020). These columns were about individuals seeking advice from journalists on intimate topics, and they got more personal and intimate with the abandonment of Victorian morals and the sexual revolution.

According to Baker & Rojek (2020), the term lifestyle guru came through with the birth of the media. With Oprah focusing on "live your best life" advice and introducing various lifestyle products and Martha Stewart relying more on house

management information such as cooking, gardening, and sewing, wellness and lifestyle industries became a huge market to not only to motivate people to live a certain life but also to promote some products to achieve a "better life" (Baker & Rojek, 2020; Lofton, 2006; Leavitt, 2002). As Baker and Rojek (2020) point out, apart from being instructive, lifestyle media is highly related to marketing, commercialization, advertising, and consumerism. According to Baker (2022), today's wellness and lifestyle industry hugely depends on "low trust" (p. 112). Baker and Rojek (2020) point out that lifestyle gurus have exploited people's fear of failure and the need to navigate their life choices with little or no formal training; "When we are disillusioned, we simply seek a new celebrity influencer or lifestyle guru to follow" (p. 31). Our trust in these influencers, celebrities, and gurus comes from their self-presentation techniques, position as experts, and social impact.

2.3.1 Instagram Influencers:

Leaver et al. (2020) describe Instagram as a social media platform for communication through the visual image and mention its success and relevance through the visual focus. However, it is also a place where "communication and commerce have overlapped, from the appearance of advertising to the rise of Influencers and a new class of content creators who strive for authenticity on a platform best known for selfies and self-representation" (Leaver et al., 2020, p. 1). There are many ways for influencers or entrepreneurs to use Instagram as a marketplace for commerce, even before the platform added the feature of paid sponsorships. With the power of the commercial side of the platform, Instagram shifted its network intimacy to the networked public, which made sharing content as a persona and influencer much easier (Leaver et al., 2020). According to Casalo et al.

(2020), Instagram is the most used platform by influencers because of its immediacy and creation of communities. Sokolova and Kefi (2020) point out that brands and businesses are no longer interested in famous figures on social media as brand ambassadors.

Everybody has the potential to become Internet famous since most of the influencers and/or microcelebrities begin as ordinary people posting content on the Internet. With the popularity of the notion, most celebrities use their social media accounts similarly to influencers since paid sponsorships and posts make a lot of money. Most influencers build their brands and become female entrepreneurs; similarly, many female entrepreneurs use social media, mostly Instagram, to promote their products. Sokolova and Kefi (2020) mention that the relationship between online influencers and social media users can be parasocial. Social media sites present more possibilities to engage with the influencer. The influencer's persuasive behavior and credibility also play a significant role in this relationship (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). Baker and Rojek (2020) discuss the self-presentation techniques of microcelebrities and influencers, such as authenticity, accessibility, and autonomy, in order to seem more relatable to their followers.

Leaver et al. (2020) point out many other ways to promote the product, such as posing with the product, announcing discount codes at the end of the captions, promoting contests and giveaways, and discreetly adding 'how to' tutorials with the advertised product. Many wellness and lifestyle accounts give healthy food inspirations by using appetizing photos and captions to give recipes; however, they also include their brand of protein powder in the recipe.

2.3.2 Wellness Entrepreneurship

Wellness entrepreneurs started a wellness business with or without training in topics like health coaching, yoga teaching, therapy, and nutritional diet. According to O'Neill (2024), this happened in the mid-2010s as some young women influencers-come-entrepreneurs started to promote their work under the name of wellness, creating cultural and commercial effects. This career path usually starts with having a blog or a social media account to share healthy recipes with bizarre and expensive ingredients, nutritional foods, lifestyle advice, and mental health information. It becomes a business by having your own product line, brand partnerships, writing cookbooks, and starting podcasts. They can be micro-celebrities or influencers on social media, or they can use their celebrity persona to achieve this status and become examples of feminine success in women's business and business journals (O'Neill, 2024).

McRobbie (2016) defines this endeavor as an emergency of "creativity dispositif," meaning the way young women are encouraged to follow their passions in their work life (as cited in O'Neill, 2024, p. 5). Entrepreneurship is presented as an opportunity to "follow your creativity" through different initiatives. This concept seems very similar to the postfeminism ideal of women empowerment, however, McRobbie (2016) points out that this creativity dispositif is gendered in order to promise pleasure in work to women while lacking the protection of conventional employment (as cited in O'Neill, 2024, p.5).

2.3.2.1 Gender Discrimination

Different from McRobbie (2016 cited in O'Neill, 2024, p. 5), Taylor (2015) discusses that this new popularity of entrepreneurship, which can be understood as working for oneself and self-employment is related to Friedan's (1963) idea of feminine mystique in a modernized way. According to Taylor (2015), with this popularity of entrepreneurship, there is the creation of a feminized figure that works alone at home with the aim of self-fulfillment and freedom, which lacks steady income and secure employment. She calls this issue "new mystique" (p. 175), which is related to Friedan's (1963) criticism of feminine mystique, that supports the feminine ideal as the involvement of domestic spheres rather than the workforce. New mystique "[…] potentially excludes women, and others, by encouraging them to return home, in the guise of a different set of priorities" (p. 184) and therefore encourages them to work in a marginalized position in the neoliberal economy. Negra (2009) points out that retreatism is a part of postfeminism discussion in terms of creating ways of "perfected domesticity" (p. 5). At its core, wellness presents traditional cooking expertise and taking care of self and surroundings, similar to Martha Stewart's popularity.

O'Neill (2024) wants to question the reason for the shift toward female entrepreneurship by doing ethnographic fieldwork and interviewing various wellness influencers and content creators. O'Neill (2024) considers how wellness entrepreneurship works in individual and collective aims as these women leave their conventional jobs. As a result, even though being a wellness entrepreneur is a work

pursued individually, the participants argue that underneath it is followed “by an impulse to collectively build something new together with and for other women” (O’Neill, 2024, p. 16). It is about creating new ways of living from the conventional work life since another aim is to live and work differently under capitalism. Many participants complain about everyday sexism they encountered in their previous work life and approach the women-run wellness industry as “‘global rising of women supporting women, and women supporting women-led businesses’” (O’Neill, 2024, p. 10).

Gender discrimination at work is a prevalent problem encountered by participants. This is a universal issue encountered by women. Gheaus (2015) describes her focus on the under-representation of female academic philosophers in the academic field and the stereotyping in the field, that philosophy is best done by men, by also concerning the efforts that are trying to change these. Hawley (2019) focuses on the imposter syndrome and points out that it can be related to being a minority in your field due to class, gender, social class, and ethnicity. Hawley (2019) presents examples of how feedback on performance is affected by gender and other discriminations. These systematic discriminations, which are based on the patriarchal ideology but also involve other minority groups, can lead to impostor attitudes. So, for these female entrepreneurs, having their own business means there is no discrimination or gender stereotypes. When questioning the promise of wellness, the participants share their desire to be involved in work with purpose and meaning. Another aim of the entrepreneurs seems to be helping women who do not have access to specific health care, such as mental health.

2.3.2.2 Racial Issues

In another article, O'Neill (2020) discusses the wellness industry by questioning why it is unavailable to a broader range of women. This question arises from her observations of wellness entrepreneurs in the United Kingdom who appear to have similar physical features; "young, slim, class-privileged, able-bodied, and almost uniformly white" (O'Neill, 2020, p. 629). The class components and privileges of the industry are highly discussed topics. O'Neill (2020) uses her encounter with a black entrepreneur, Asmaa, who wants to start a career in this area, as an example to question the inclusivity of this industry. Asmaa points out that the whiteness of the wellness culture is a result of exclusions directed towards women of color, such as the lack of interest in women of color by people from the industry, less promotion, and less privilege. Asmaa mentions, "'White influencers get more opportunities to work with brands, have more exposure, and therefore have more followers, and target more people that are the same as them'" (O'Neill, 2020, p. 630). This is related to the fact that structural injustice of the industry is oriented towards white people and the opportunities surrounding white women, which makes the restrictions for women of color unseen. This is problematic because it means that this health awareness-related industry only targets white people, which presents "racialized health inequalities" (O'Neill, 2020, p. 631).

2.3.2.3 Female Consumer

Saunders (2024) criticizes the wellness industry in terms of how it conditions the female consumer. She points out, "A woman's relationship with friends, children and

partners; her enjoyment of any art form; walking; eating; travelling; any therapeutic or spiritual practice and so on, become freighted with requirements of overseeing, routinization and enhancement" (p. 2008). This emphasis on self-care practices as a way for showing respect for themselves "[…] powerfully institutes labour and commodification into female subjectivity. Through self-care, a diffuse sense of (temporal) regulation, psychological discipline and improvement pervades women's subjec- tivity and their experience of all aspects of life" (p. 2009). Saunders (2024) mentions that our understanding of self-care and good mental health is constructed most prominently from psychological attitudes, such as going to therapy to physiological perspectives, such as having a daily routine, focusing on beautifying activities such as skin care and she places these in the context of whiteness and wealth.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study aims to explore the current contents of wellness and lifestyle accounts through their similarities and differences and how they engage with current feminist visibilities through their messages. Applying a feminist critical aspect in the wellness and lifestyle industries helps how self-regulatory actions such as selling diets, positive feelings, exercises, and other products are being reframed to women as empowering, positive, and individual choices become stand-alone examples of embodied neoliberalism (Cairns & Johnston 2015; Prins & Wellman, 2023). To focus on these issues, this research was conducted on ten posts from twenty different wellness and lifestyle accounts, through a content analysis method. Ten posts were considered in each account since 200 posts seemed adequate for analyzing and categorizing them into different themes.

This research selected twenty different accounts to understand the contents of the wellness and lifestyle accounts. These accounts were selected based on their familiarity with the chosen topics. The accounts are defined as both wellness and lifestyle because of their advice-giving quality to their mainly presumed female target audience. The main aim of this research is to question the impacts, reasons,

and means of these suggestions. There are various accounts; some are owned by celebrities and controlled by various editors, some are curated accounts with various owners and editors, and some are owned by micro-influencers. All of these accounts have different ownership protocols; however, they focus on the same aim of advice-giving about relationships, mindfulness, diets and exercises, recipes, and inevitably, they advertise products. These accounts can appeal to anybody; however, most of their advertised products cater to women, and they usually embody messages of "female power" and "female empowerment," which can be interpreted to mean that their target audience seems to be women.

The data set compromises 200 publicly available Instagram posts obtained by selection through Instagram suggestions. 200 was decided as the desired data set size to produce a manageable sample with decent account contents to create a qualitative approach for the meaning-making of these contents. Posts were collected in four weeks from October 1st to October 31st, 2023 until the gathered post numbers reached ten for each account. At least two extra posts were gathered from each account as a backup for the instance of deletion. The up-to-dateness of these contents becomes essential in terms of analyzing them through their content and current feminist visibilities.

3.1. Content Analysis:

The content analysis method was used by analyzing the content created by influencers, account owners, or celebrities (ranging from wellness to lifestyle) for adult women as the target audience on Instagram. Content analysis is a method of analyzing media texts, and it is about deciding what to count, how to classify our

material, and how to create categories for our material (Stokes, 2021). Also, this method can deal with large quantities of data and is useful for studying social media (Rose, 2016). The content analysis method is preferred for this study to explore the messages conveyed in wellness and lifestyle Instagram accounts. The main idea is to realize how and which similar models of desirable items and lifestyles these accounts offer to their target audience conforming to postfeminist media culture. These accounts are usually an example of female entrepreneurship and are typically focused on promoting specific brands and items to present the idea of a better lifestyle. Since this research is based on deciding on the under or over-representation of feminism and other current visibilities on Instagram accounts, the content analysis method is very suitable. Also, the posts are compared, evaluated, and discussed between themselves apart from categorization, so a comparative method is involved in this process. This method categorizes and compares qualitative data through different rounds of coding (Charmaz, 2014). While analyzing these contents, the images, accompanying text, and the message of the text were taken into consideration. The relationship between the image, text, tone, style, and marketing strategy of each post was considered in terms of interpretation for the analysis. Consistency was expected from the overall posts of selected accounts and between the images and accompanying text.

3.1.1 Research Context: Instagram

The nature of Instagram allows for content analysis, and these sorts of accounts are usually more active on this social media platform. Instagram, as one of the most popular platforms, allows for self-presentation, display, and social exchange (Baker & Walsh, 2018; Tiusanen, 2023), and by 2025, there are assumed to be 1.44 billion

monthly active users of the platform (Dixon, 2023). Also, Instagram became a place for daily blogging, and sharing information, replacing blogs and magazines since it has the potential to reach more people. Many wellness accounts used to have blogs; some continue to have their website but mainly promote their products by posting daily on Instagram. This is related to the fact that Instagram has become a place for advertisement (Leaver et al., 2020). These accounts usually prefer Instagram because it focuses on intimacy and marketing as a social media platform (Tiusanen, 2023). Most of these accounts use authenticity, empathy, and intimacy as ways to reach and connect with their audiences. They aim to market specific products or brands such as feminine products, vitamin supplements, and workout sets, and more importantly they are trying to market a lifestyle under the name of self-betterment. In this sense, they are using Instagram's features "[…] through advertising and selling commodities and services while heavily utilizing realness and emotional connectivity" (Tiusanen, 2023, p. 3691).

To encourage the marketing on Instagram, the platform itself introduced Instagram for business. More than 200 million business accounts on Instagram use the platform for promotional purposes, which is nearly 15% of the Instagram user base (Tan, 2023). Also, Instagram's certain features and characteristics, such as suggestions and business information, have been beneficial for this research. This research focused on the overall content of the posts through visual and textual analysis and used the relation between the image and text to gather the overall content of the post. In some instances, the relation between the chosen image and the textual explanation brought new perspectives and critical points.

3.1.2 Study Sample

The analysis began by selecting several accounts that can be examples for giving advice and suggestions to women, especially health and lifestyle, as ground zero for data gathering. Poosh and Goop seemed like suitable exemplary accounts because most of their content is related to health and nutrition, which are mainly addressed to women. Both accounts were selected as the main accounts regarding their relevance to the topic, popularity, content, and media impact. Other common points of Poosh and Goop were that they are both celebrity brands as entrepreneurial endeavors, have websites that are directly linked to Instagram, and are open to creating their own products. These qualities and features are not directly expected from the rest of the accounts, but the desired features are a combination of nutritional information, advice on well-being and health, healthy food recipes, workout routines, outfit and travel suggestions, and pieces of advice about sexual health and relationships. This is why this research defines these accounts as wellness and lifestyle. It is about the combination of all of these suggestions with having women as target audiences. Most of these accounts present themselves as lifestyle since they are not just a brand but they present a lifestyle.

Using the Instagram suggestions feature with these two examples, this research gathered other accounts that can be defined as wellness and lifestyle. Instagram's suggested feature is used frequently to enrich the number of accounts in terms of variety. This feature helped the selection process and proved that Instagram is the most suitable social media network. This sample selection is logical because similar pages are offered to the same target audience once one of these accounts is followed. So, the sample selection process follows the structure of an ordinary consumer. Also,

most of these accounts have public business information on their Instagram pages, which includes health and wellness information, and one can search for other similar businesses. Some similar studies prefer to use the hashtag search feature on Instagram to gather the accounts or posts that use the key terms of the study (Prins & Wellman, 2023; Tiusanen, 2023). However, hashtags similar to #womenswellness usually led to small accounts that were trying to gather audiences, and the investigation on used hashtags by Poosh and Goop showed that these accounts usually use hashtags that are formed just for them. Also, hashtags were not used throughout the selection of these accounts because they were repeatedly used for the same accounts. The usage of hashtags usually led to various other accounts that use wellness and lifestyle for other reasons, such as mere fat-loss coaches.

3.1.3 Data Collection

The first sample selection consisted of thirty-six accounts. The sample selection of this study is aimed not only at investigating the works of independent creators but also at all of the accounts that give similar suggestions to their audiences. After gathering the first thirty-six samples, some of the accounts are eliminated according to their content to reach the ideal number twenty. Through the process of selecting these accounts, the last ten posts were examined through their activeness and the date of their last post. The main number of accounts was decided to be twenty, and there should be ten posts from each of these accounts.

The final sample election was reduced to twenty accounts, and the rest of the accounts were elected for their non-activeness and content since some were primarily focused on sexual health education, female communities, or magazine accounts.

Overall, twenty is a sufficient number to give a successful variety in terms of research, and the increase in the number would involve irrelevant accounts. The selected sample was aimed to be actively focused mostly on lifestyle and wellness advice, to target women, and to promote products that mainly target women. These selected accounts consist of curated accounts, some celebrity-owned brand accounts, and micro-influencer accounts. This feature was not considered in terms of differentiating these accounts between themselves but rather as a commentary on the popularity of celebrities' preference for creating wellness brands, the spread of misinformation, and the way they use their celebrity persona to influence people. Eventually the final sample consisted of the first ten half controlled by a singular person/influencer and the other half managed by various editors and partially owned by celebrities. This equally divided sample can also be helpful to compare the ways influencers and editors control their platforms in terms of the themes of the posts, the content they prefer to share, and the ways they address their followers.

Once twenty accounts were selected, each of the accounts' last ten posts was coded using the pre-prepared coding sheet according to the time frame. All of these posts were categorized according to their themes, and other relevant patterns were discussed regarding whether to be included between these posts and accounts. Each account had two spare posts for the instance of deletion. Overall, 200 posts were analyzed through the images, captions, and similarities, which seemed to be adequate for finding patterns.

This study sample consists of the content collected via Instagram from twenty various wellness and lifestyle accounts, the first ten posts from each account posted

during October. In total, 200 posts were collected and saved in PNG format from the social media environment using the extension “Full Page Screen Capture.” Different files were created for each account to store the photos, links, and captions, and separate spreadsheets were created for detailed data analysis for each of the accounts. Each of these data files included the posts of accounts, hyperlinks, posts, and spreadsheets. There were separate spreadsheets for each of the twenty accounts’ captions and hyperlinks, with tables created for each of the ten posts. The individual tables presented hashtags used in the posts, the textual tones of the captions, the thematic analysis of each post, tagged accounts, and branded content. The results of separate spreadsheets were later combined for each analysis and transferred into a mutual spreadsheet that gathered the results for each analysis. Six tables were created to collect various information from individual tables, including thematic coding, branded content, hashtags, most used words, tagged accounts, and textual tone. Data visualization methods were employed to aid in the analysis and understanding of data, facilitating the mapping and clustering of information to summarize and examine the findings of the study efficiently.

3.1.4 Data Analysis:

The first category of the coding was a thematic analysis focused on revealing the theme of every post to figure out what kinds of wellness and lifestyle content get shared the most. The initial idea was to follow Creswell (2012) as “similar codes aggregated together to form an idea in the database” (as cited in Cavusoglu & Demirbag-Kaplan, 2017), which supports gathering the themes of every post and reaching repetitive themes for coding themes. Eventually, in a similar thesis by Rastrick (2022) that focuses on wellness accounts, Poosh and Goop’s content and

visual marketing used Global Wellness Institute's (n.d.b) sectors for defining the themes of the content. Global Wellness Institute's (n.d.b) wellness economy sectors can be defined as industries that enable consumers to incorporate wellness activities and lifestyles into their daily lives. Following Rastrick (2022), this study used Global Wellness Institute's (n.d.b) wellness economy sectors as predefined themes since almost all of the content shared correlated with defined sectors. According to the Global Wellness Institute (n.d.b.), the "wellness economy" encompasses 11 sectors: Mental wellness, Physical activity, Wellness real estate, Workplace wellness, Wellness tourism, Spa economy, Thermal/mineral springs, Healthy eating, nutrition and weight loss, Personal care and beauty, Preventive and personalized medicine and public health and Traditional and complementary medicine.

Considering the expansive nature of the wellness industry, it is crucial to identify the most shared themes through these segments and gather what sorts of information is passed on to female followers. Similar to Rastrick's (2022) study, some specialized areas are not explicitly covered in the Global Wellness Institute's analysis. However, Rastrick's (2022) study added two extra sectors: Mental wellness and spirituality and Healthy relationships and sexual wellness. With the update of Global Wellness Institute (n.d.b), the Mental wellness sector was already added to the coding of the themes, so only Healthy relationships and sexual wellness were incorporated into this study. Also, most of the accounts contained friendly language in their posts, so some of the posts are categorized as irrelevant since they did not present advice-giving information. Consequently, thematic coding for this study is Mental wellness, Physical activity, Wellness real estate, Workplace wellness, Wellness tourism, Spa economy, Thermal/mineral springs, Healthy eating, nutrition and weight loss,

Personal care and beauty, Preventive and personalized medicine and public health and Traditional and complementary medicine with two extra coding categories Healthy relationships and sexual wellness and Irrelevant posts. Individualized analyses were conducted for each account, determining the themes according to the coding categories for every ten posts. The accounts' results for each theme were gathered for a quantitative analysis to understand the most shared wellness themes. The contents of each theme were also analyzed in each coding sheet in order to understand what sort of information is given under that theme and whether this information correlates with discussed feminist visibilities.

Following the thematic coding, this study incorporated textual analysis to identify similar words or phrases used across the influencers, marketing strategies, hashtags, and tones. Gerstenecker (2021) conducted a similar doctoral dissertation by analyzing Instagram Influencer's content in order to define wellness for young adults through both photographic and textual analysis. This study followed Gerstenecker's (2021) textual analysis structure; the captions and posts examined word choices in the captions, hashtags, branded content, tagged accounts, and message tones for each influencer. Individualized analyses were conducted for each account, including most used words, branded content instances, hashtags, tagged accounts, and textual tone. Following this, the assessments of all influencers were compared to identify similarities in each category. Commonalities were then ranked based on their frequency and grouped through their own categories.

Most used words were analyzed by copying every caption in every ten posts and using a word counting website to reach the most used words for each account. Only

nouns, noun phrases, verbs, and adjectives are taken into account since they inherently convey meaning. The hashtags used by these accounts were analyzed, not quantitatively but thematically, in order to gather more information about what sort of hashtags were used for certain wellness and lifestyle themes. Any branded content was also documented and organized into themes in order to understand the marketing strategies of these accounts and analyze which sorts of products they promote to their followers. The criteria for branded content was checking whether the item was tagged in the caption. Tagged accounts were also analyzed and grouped into categories to understand which sort of people and accounts they were showing to their followers. Also, tagged accounts sometimes provide the resource of the presented content in terms of knowledge or photo credits, so it is helpful for analyzing whether the information came from an expert. The textual tone of the posts was observed by uploading every caption to online AI textual tone definers.

The comments and likes of these accounts were not examined because they differed in each account and post. Also, the reaction of the consumer is essential; however, the main focus of this research is about the messages conveyed by wellness and lifestyle accounts. The number of followers and the date of the first posts were examined and included in a separate table of about twenty accounts to analyze the impact of these accounts and the overall understanding of wellness and lifestyle entrepreneurship. However, the number of followers of these accounts did not affect the selection process of these accounts. These accounts do not openly claim to be feminist, but they target women and usually market products that are made for women. So, analyzing their messages becomes essential for understanding their

approaches and how they relate to the feminist visibilities of our time. The activeness of the accounts is taken into consideration because of the expectation of currentness.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted on the latest ten posts from a total of twenty different wellness and lifestyle accounts through a content analysis method, focusing on the themes of these posts and including analysis about tagged accounts, textual tones, branded content, and most used words. Overall, 200 posts were examined mutually-exclusive in each analysis to gather the following results

4.1 Content Analysis Findings

4.1.1 Thematic Analysis

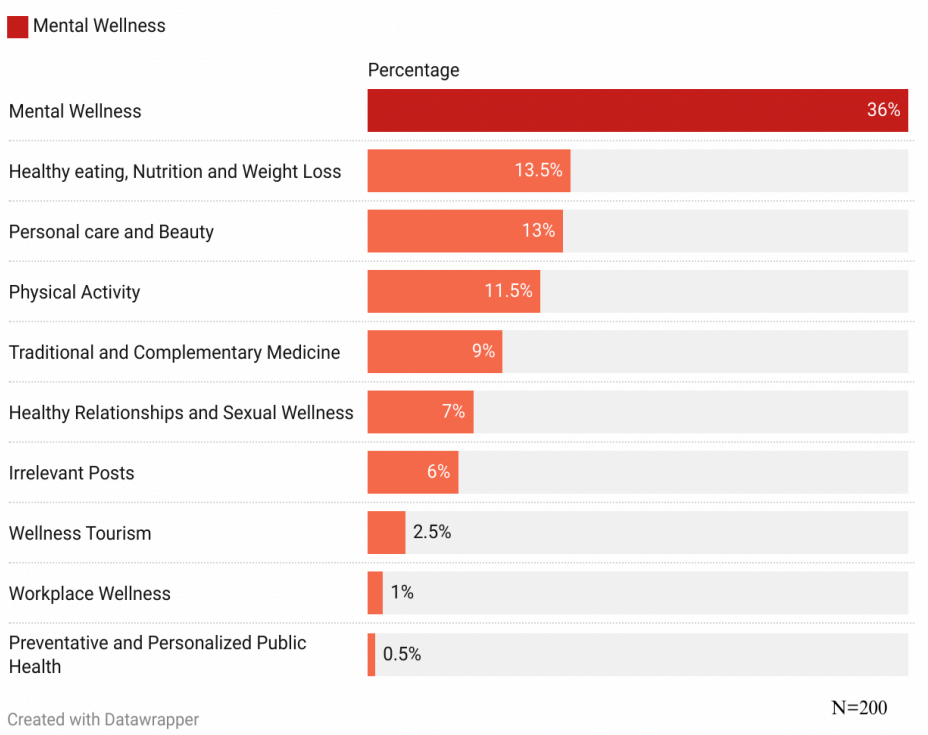
The first set of results is the thematic analysis focusing on the overall wellness and lifestyle accounts' posts. The coding category is taken from Global Wellness Institute's (n.d.b) predefined "wellness sector" section. According to the Global Wellness Institute (n.d.b), the "wellness economy" encompasses 11 sectors: Mental wellness, Physical activity, Wellness real estate, Workplace wellness, Wellness tourism, Spa economy, Thermal/mineral springs, Healthy eating, nutrition and weight loss, Personal care and beauty, Preventive and personalized medicine and public health and Traditional and complementary medicine. Due to the expansive nature of the wellness industry, this study added an extra theme, Healthy Relationships and

Sexual Wellness, following the structure of Rastrick's (2022) study. The rest of the themes that are unrelated to wellness and lifestyle are categorized under the irrelevant category since most of the accounts use these kinds of posts for interaction. The results of 200 posts are presented in this analysis.

In the chart below (see Figure 1), results of the dataset revealed that the most shared content among these twenty accounts is the mental wellness theme (36%, n=72), followed by healthy eating, nutrition, and weight loss (13, 5%, n=27) and personal care and beauty (13%, n=26). These were expected results; the overbearing of the mental wellness theme over the other themes is not surprising, considering the recent focus on this topic. However, wellness sectors are typically linked with physical appearances, such as weight loss, healthy eating, fashion, and fitness. Still, these results show that wellness and lifestyle accounts have recently posted content about followers' mental, emotional, and spiritual wellness. The results of healthy eating, nutrition, and weight loss with personal care and beauty are very close to each other since these themes have already been very popular among lifestyle and wellness accounts and overall in the micro-influencer world. Also, considering marketing strategies, it is observed that these two themes exhibit a higher level of receptivity toward advertising. These two themes can provide more marketable products and opportunities, explaining their higher position compared to other themes.

Figure 1

Thematic Analysis Findings



The rest of the themes are followed as physical activity (11,5%, n=23), traditional and complementary medicine (9%, n=18), healthy relationships and sexual wellness (7%, n=14), irrelevant posts (6%, n=12), wellness tourism (2,5%, n=5), workplace wellness (1%, n=2) and preventive and personalized public health (0,5%, n=1). Unexpectedly, the theme of physical activity does not rank among the top three most shared content, considering its historical prominence in discussions on wellness and lifestyle. Nevertheless, it continues to get significant sharing. Traditional and complementary medicine (9%, n=8) holding such a high ranking is interesting, considering that this sort of content is healthcare that revolves around holistic and mentally or spiritually-based systems (Global Wellness Institute, n.d.b).These kinds of methods require expertise and knowledge, so the coding of tagged accounts becomes highly important for considering the legitimacy of this theme. Similar

issues about the legitimacy of disseminated information happened to Goop, which is a curated account owned by Gweyneth Paltrow. Goop shared content regarding the use of egg-shaped stones for enhancing orgasm, the use of psychedelic mushrooms for mental illnesses, the use of blood facials to look younger, and the claim of energy healing as a treatment which claimed to be not expertly reviewed (Dickson, 2020).

This theme is followed by healthy relationships and sexual wellness (7%, n=14), which is an additional theme that is not included in the list of wellness sectors. Its relatively high ranking shows the actual requirement of this theme for this study since many of the accounts share content about relationships between friends, partners, family, and overall sexual health. Irrelevant posts (6%, n=12) are usually posts that are shared for fun purposes, and they include jokes about girlhood and friendships, film references, reposts of influencers' and celebrities' photos, and aesthetic images. Wellness tourism (2, 5%, n=5) is a theme usually shared to highlight retreat centers and vacation ideas, with a predominant presence of branded content in posts related to this theme. Ultimately, it's unexpected that workplace wellness (1%, n=2) and preventive and personalized public health (0, 5%, n=1) rank the lowest. This is particularly surprising since workplace wellness is linked to women's professional success, and preventive and personalized public health directly concerns health monitoring. These findings reveal a notable deficiency in the coverage of some health-related topics, such as routine physical exams and women's career success within wellness and lifestyle accounts.

There was no content about three coding themes from Global Wellness Institute's (n.d.b) "wellness economy" sectors. These three categories that have no results are

wellness real estate, thermal/mineral springs, and spa economy. These categories are highly conducive to advertising efforts, so it can be surprising for them not to be mentioned in any post. However, for these influencers and editors to discuss real estate and advertise such products on Instagram is probably not believable or profitable. The spa economy and thermal/mineral springs categories are very similar to wellness tourism. Most accounts preferred to share countries or retreat centers compared to spas and thermal springs.

4.1.2 Branded Content Analysis

The table (see Table 1) below concerns branded content analysis, which are the products advertised by these accounts. These products are usually tagged, used as hashtags, or are heavily mentioned in the captions of these posts. Products created by these wellness accounts are also included in this analysis if advertised in the captions. Initially, only the brands that were tagged in the captions were going to be on this list. However, many accounts used certain hashtags or heavily mentioned certain products in captions. So, all of these are considered in determining the branded content in these posts. First, the captions are analyzed in terms of what sorts of products are mentioned, and these are grouped into categories to examine what kinds of products are the most advertised. This sort of analysis points out what products are promoted to the followers of these wellness and lifestyle accounts to understand their promotional aims, content, and communication skills. These posts were coded and organized according to their categories. Each of these products was researched through its tagged Instagram page if there is any. Each product was subsequently grouped into similar themes according to its characteristics.

Table 1

Branded Content Analysis Findings

Categories	Number	Brand names and mentions
Clothing	24	@onequince 1 @alofitness 4 @kotomi_activewear 1 @kotomi_swim 1 @siloulondon 1 @alphalete 7 G label Collection by Goop 7 @cartier 1 Asics tennis shoes 1
Beauty	9	AloGlow 5 beingfrenshe body serum 1 @Dove 1 @Sniff.co 1 Color Glow Balm Goop 1
App	8	@soulnyscbody 3 @form 1 @underthebellyyoga 3 NikeWellCollective 1
Supplement	6	#AloGelShots 5 @rebbl 1
Retreat Center	4	@shoussugibanhouse 1 @artoflivingboona 2 @thelittlenell 1
Podcasts	3	@theblondefilespodcast 2 @ayawithin 1
Food	2	@sietefoods 1 @peteandgerrys 1

Table: by the author • Created with Datawrapper N=56

The most common categories were clothing (n=24), beauty (n=9), apps (n=8), and supplements (n=8). These are followed by retreat centers (n=4), podcasts (n=3), and finally, foods (n=2). There were 56 branded products in 200 posts, including the repetitive mentions of the same brands. The table (see Table 1) presents these categories, how much they were advertised, the brand names, and how many times these brands were mentioned near the brand names since some of them were promoted numerous times. This analysis presents not only what sorts of brands are being advertised but also how many times they were advertised, so the repetitive mentions are included in the outcome. For example, @goop promoted its own fashion brand, G Label, for seven posts and used no hashtags or tags. Similarly another fitness brand, alphalete, appears in a micro-influencers wellness account called @katecraigwellness for seven posts.

The clothing category is the most branded content, and these brands are mostly activewear brands; some are bikinis and work attire. These activewear brands are not categorized into fitness because the posts specifically showed the outfits. Clothes category (n=24) being high on this analysis is an expected result since most influencers are already known for their clothing partnerships. Apart from collaborations, Goop heavily advertised its own clothing label, G label. The second category is beauty (n=9), which mainly includes body lotions, soaps, and serums. There are also some makeup and perfume products. In some of these brand collaborations, hashtags are also used to achieve more audiences since in brand deal posts, likes, and comments are the primary concerns for increasing product visibility. The use of hashtags is usually important for improving the visibility of the products, so some of the accounts that typically do not use hashtags prefer to include them in their brand deals.

Figure 2

Kate Craig Using Hashtags for Brand Deals

Note. Image taken from @katecraigwellness Instagram account (Craig, 2023a).

In Figure 2, the wellness account @katecraigwellness included hashtags such as #morningroutine, #journal, #meditation, and #activewear in her @alphalete activewear brand deal post. Some brands even create unique hashtags for their products to gather all of their branded content and brand ambassadors together. In Figure 3, the wellness account @mynameisjessamyn uses #DovePartner, #DoveBeautyBar, and #HowDoYouDove hashtags in their captions. In Figure 4, wellness account @alowellness_, uses #AloGelShots for its own supplement brand. Also, these supplements were not tagged but only advertised through using a hashtag. There is a significant relationship between brand deals and the use of hashtags.

The category called apps (n=8) can be a part of the physical activity theme since most apps focus on showing workouts, so they promote fitness through these apps. Most of the mentioned apps are workout and yoga apps. NikeWellCollective is advertised as a mental health application; however, it mainly presents workout programs from various personal trainers.

Another outcome of this analysis is accounts usually prefer to post about wellness theme but they prefer to present collaborations about clothing and beauty. It is interesting that they do not prefer to collaborate with therapy apps. Surprisingly, there was little emphasis on the food category (n=2) of the wellness and lifestyle accounts. Overall, the supplements category (n=6) had higher brand deals compared to the food category. These supplements usually include protein drinks and supplemental shots with collagen, vitamin C, and immunity shots. Apart from the food category, they are generally consumed for health and nourishment; however,

they cannot be considered food. These products are taking over the wellness world, emphasizing health and nourishment, so they should have their own category, especially as branded content.

Figure 3

Jessamyn Uses Specific Hashtags for the Dove Brand Deal

Note. Image taken from @mynameisjessamyn Instagram account (Jessamyn, 2023c).

Figure 4

Alo Wellness Using #AloGelShots for its Own Brand

Note. Image taken from @alowellness_ Instagram account (Alo Wellness, 2023).

Also, retreat centers are dominant (n=4) in this analysis, which is unexpected because, in the thematic analysis, the frequency of wellness tourism is very low compared to the healthy eating, nutrition, and weight loss theme. This analysis shows that wellness tourism is mostly a brand deal content through retreat centers. Another interesting point of this analysis is that many of the accounts usually promote their own products, such as @Goop with G Label, @alowellness_ with supplements, and @mynamesisjessamyn with the underthebellyyoga app. These results show that, apart from their collaborative brand deals, most accounts are open to creating and advertising their own products. Also, some of these accounts have their own podcasts in which they discuss mental health topics. The podcast category (n=3) only presents two separate podcasts because these were the ones advertised, even though some other accounts also have their own podcasts.

Most accounts prefer to create their own products as an endeavor to create a separate brand for the business world and to make more profit. Later, they advertise these brands in their accounts, which already have a significant following. Since wellness and lifestyle industries are estimated to grow to almost seven trillion U. S. dollars, this analysis is a powerful insight into what sort of products get to be a part of this market, especially in terms of business and marketing (Gough, 2023). Overall, there were 56 branded content among 200 posts, which is a surprisingly low result since these wellness and lifestyle accounts usually thrive on brand collaborations. Usually, these accounts have many other brands and wellness accounts tagged in their photos, but this analysis mainly focused on the branded part of the content and gathered the

brands, especially tagged and/or mentioned in the captions. The following analysis focuses on the tagged accounts to gather further information.

4.1.3 Tagged Accounts Analysis

This analysis was done on the tagged accounts of these wellness and lifestyle accounts (see Table 2). In this analysis, every tagged account in the images and captions of the posts was analyzed and grouped according to their function. The first column shows the categories, the next column shows the total of these categories, and the final column reveals the functions of these tagged accounts and how many times they were tagged. Similar to the previous analysis, the repetitive mentions of the same accounts were still included.

This analysis's intriguing discovery is that the results do not correlate directly with branded content analysis. For example, the branded content analysis had an overall 56 posts, but there are 52 tagged accounts about brands in this analysis. In the branded content analysis, some posts only used hashtags and captions to promote the product. So, in this analysis, all of the tagged accounts in photographs and captions are included, regardless of their occupation. For example, it seems that in this analysis, only three supplements were tagged; however, in the former analysis, six supplements were mentioned. Unlike the previous analysis, in this analysis, most of the tagged products are just to show brands used in the photographs rather than promote the products. For this analysis, only the tagged accounts were included, which do not have to be a brand deal, and the posts that used hashtags or were heavily mentioned (not tagging accounts) were excluded, which creates a significant difference from the branded content analysis.

Table 2

Tagged Accounts Analysis Findings

Categories	Numbers	Tagged accounts and mentions
Brand	52	Clothing brand 25 Food 10 Supplement 4 Coffee 2 Journal 2 Skincare 2 Jewelry 2 Makeup 1 Beverage 1 Paper 1 Crystals 1 Parfume 1
Expert	36	Photographer 7 Personal trainer 4 Nuropath 2 Therapist 4 Acupuncturist &Herbalist 2 Aesthetician 2 Astrologist 1 Plant educator 1 Herbalist 1 Motivational speaker 2 Ritualistic mother 1 Dietitian 1 Wellness Expert 2 Doctor 2 Chef 1 Sex expert 1 Sleep expert 1 Holistic health expert 1
Influencer/Model/Celebrity	24	Celebrity 4 Model 1 Influencer 19
Person related to account	21	Owner 12 Podcasts 5 Editor 4
Other Accounts	16	Wellness Accounts 11 Random Accounts 5
App	7	Fitness apps 7
Retreat Center	5	Retreat centers 5
Friends	2	Friends 2
Sports Center	1	Sports center 1

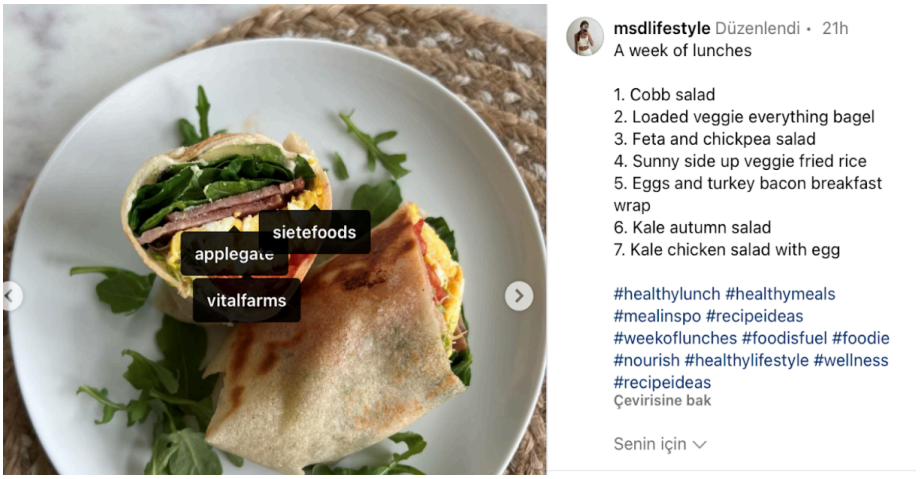
Created with Datawrapper

N=164

This analysis aims to examine the function of these tagged accounts and understand whether the shared information came from the experts since most of these accounts are tagged for credit purposes. Overall, there are 164 tagged accounts in a total of 200 posts. There are 133 accounts, and with repetitive mentions, the number goes up to 164 tagged accounts. The most tagged category is the brand accounts (n=52), with especially clothing (n=25), food (n=10), and supplements (n=4). Many accounts show the organic ingredients and recipe owners in the food category. In Figure 5, a wellness account, @msdlifestyle, posted content about the week of lunches and tagged many food brands.

Figure 5

Merryl Dougherty Tagging Multiple Accounts in Photo Slide 4

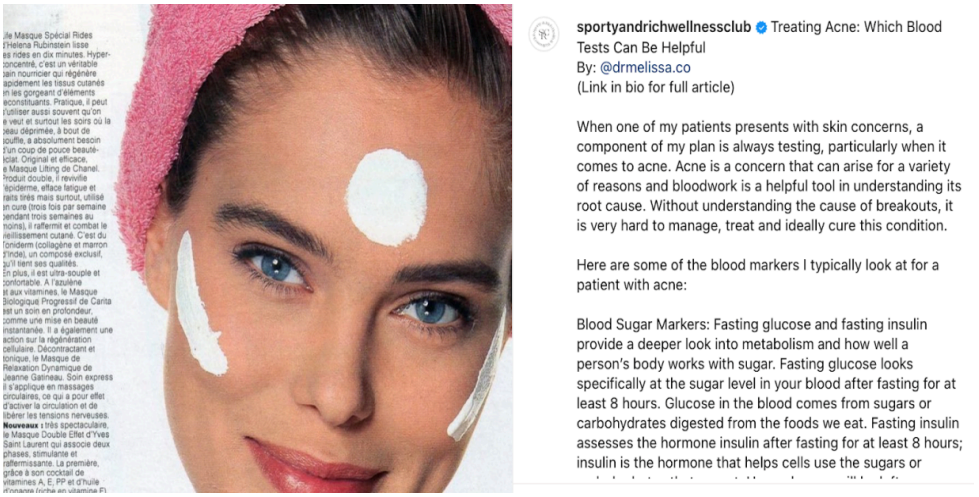


Note. Image taken from @msdlifestyle Instagram account (Dougherty, 2023a).

Usually, in some posts, there is more than one tagged account to give credits, so it can be gathered that these are not brand deals. There are some brands like journals (n=2), crystal (n=1), and paper (n=1) brands that are usually used for mindfulness. The following category is experts (n=36), which shows that some accounts and posts directly give the source of information via tagged accounts. This provides much-needed credibility to information shared by these accounts, especially if they are about health and mental health. This expert category (n=36) includes photographers (n=7), personal trainers (n=4), neuropathy (n=2), therapists (n=4), acupuncturist & herbalist (n=2), aesthetician (n=), astrologist (n=1), plant educator (n=1), herbalist (n=1), motivational speaker (n=2), ritualistic mother (n=1), dietitian (n=1), wellness
expert (n=2), doctor (n=2), chef (n=1), sex expert (n=1), sleep expert (n=1) and holistic health expert (n=1).

Figure 6

Sporty and Rich Wellness Club Tagging the Source of Information @drmelissa.co for Treating Acne

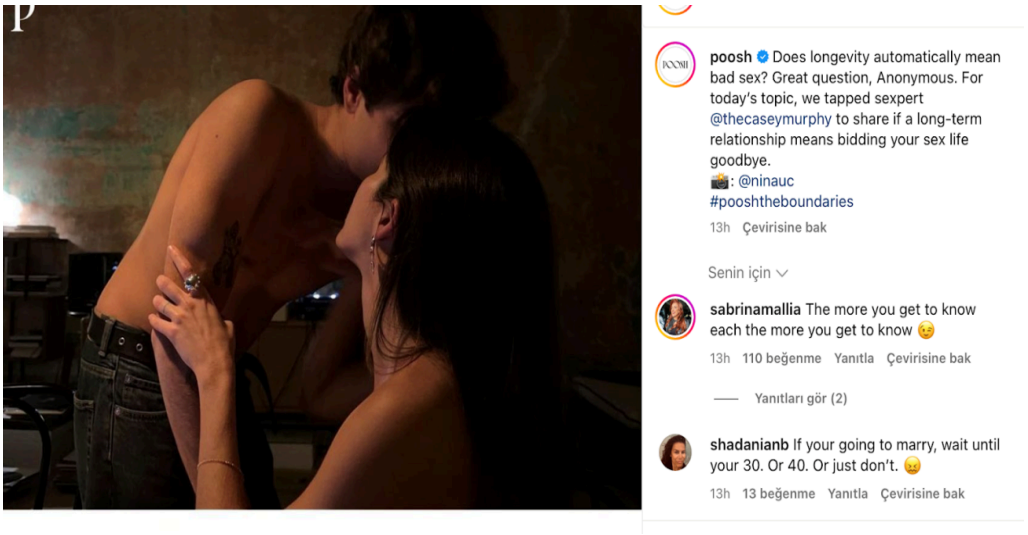


Note. Image taken from @sportyandrichwellnessclub Instagram account (Sporty and Rich Wellness Club, 2023c).

Usually, these accounts use photographers to provide the photography for a chosen topic and post. Apart from that, all job titles are related to the information disseminated in these wellness and lifestyle Instagram accounts. These job titles are directly taken from the Instagram bios of these tagged accounts since some of them can be unfamiliar. In Figure 6, the wellness account @sportyandrichwellnessclub posted content about treating acne. At the beginning of the caption, it is stated that this information was written by an expert in neuropathy (title taken from the account itself). In Figure 7, the wellness account @poosh provides information about long-term couple sex life by using tips by a sex expert as tagged in the caption.

Figure 7

Poosh Tagging the Source of Information @thecaseymurphy for Sexual Advice

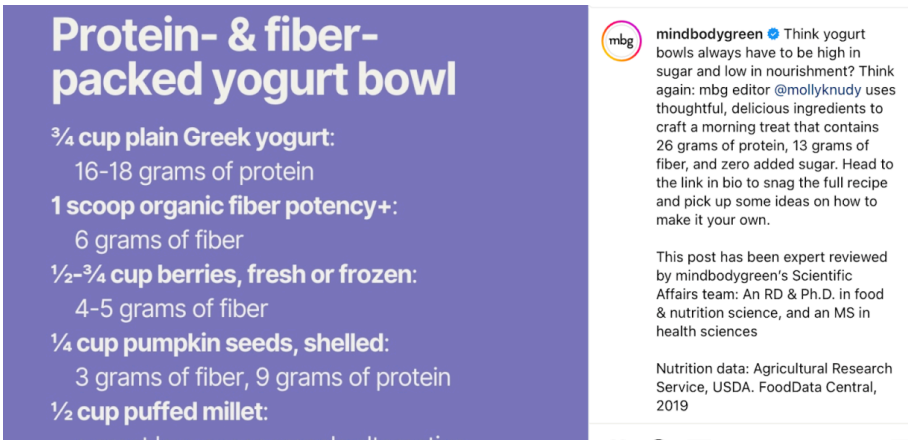


Note. Image taken from @poosh Instagram account (Poosh, 2023a).

Also, the @mindbodygreen account used another way to show the credibility of their information. In Figure 8, the account provided a recipe for a protein & fiber packed yogurt bowl and, at the end of the caption, stated that the post has been expertly reviewed by their scientific affairs team. Most of the tagged accounts are used to provide the source of the information, which shows some wellness and lifestyle accounts are trying to give truthful information to their followers.

Figure 8

Mindbodygreen Adding the Information about Experts at the End of the Caption



Note. Image taken from @mindbodygreen Instagram account (Mindbodygreen, 2023b).

The next category on tagged accounts is influencer/model/celebrity (n=24). In this category, mostly influencers (n=19) are tagged and followed by celebrities (n=4) and models (n=1). Usually, these people are tagged for photo credits since many accounts use their photographs for posts and give them credit. Some wellness accounts controlled by a single person usually share their own photographs and become micro-influencers. Other curated wellness and lifestyle accounts typically prefer to share pictures from influencers. Some wellness accounts especially prefer to use photos of known influencers and models usually known for their lean, sexy bodies, which is problematic since that kind of body type is unattainable for many ordinary women. Figure 9, a post by @poosh, shows celebrity Kylie Jenner and her influencer friend Anastasia Karanikolaou in golf outfits to encourage followers to play golf for fitness. In Figure 10, @poosh uses a photo of model Karlie Kloss to promote the

importance of mental health and ways of calming down with the tips of a therapist. These influencer and model bodies are achieved through living a healthy lifestyle, but this sort of lifestyle is a part of their business life, and some are achieved through plastic surgery. This kind of body type is hard for a woman who works nine to five with an office job. All of this content about influencing women to live a healthy life through these photos seems contradictory since, for most, it is unachievable. So this might bring an issue of unattainability and the feeling of failure to many women followers.

Figure 9

Poosh Using Photographs of Celebrities and Influencers

Note. Image taken from @poosh Instagram account (Poosh, 2023b).

Another issue is the dominance of white influencers in these photos, apart from certain accounts such as @frenshe and @respin. Also, many micro-influencers are maintaining this image of lean, privileged white women apart from @mynameisjessamyn, who is a queer, black influencer that shares content against

fatphobia. All these problems show that there is still an issue of inclusivity in the wellness industry. This industry has been discussed for its unavailability to a broader range of women since there is usually an image that comes to mind that is “young, slim, class-privileged, able-bodied, and almost uni- formly white” (O’Neill, 2020, p. 629). The use of these photos proves this point.

Figure 10

Poosh Using Photographs of Celebrities and Influencers

Note. Image taken from @poosh Instagram account (Poosh, 2023c).

Another category of tagged accounts is people related to account (n=21), these can be owners (n=12), editors (n=4) and mentioning the podcast (n=5) of the account or account owner. Apart from promoting their own podcasts, many accounts tag themselves as owners of the accounts or the editors who created the content. These can be for various reasons, but accountability is the main reason. Some of these accounts belong to famous people like Kourtney Kardashian, Halle Berry, Ashley Tisdale, and Gwyneth Paltrow, and tagging them shows their interest in their wellness brand. Other curated accounts sometimes share the personal Instagram

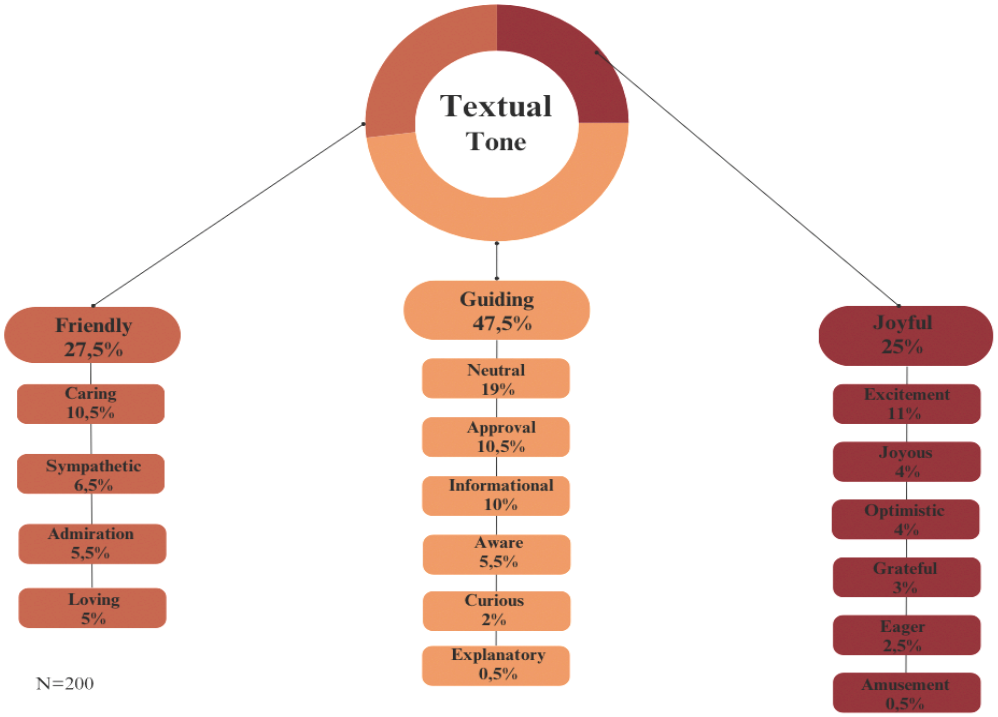
accounts of the owners and editors to establish the credibility of the source. Usually, micro-influencers use their wellness accounts as a way to promote their own podcasts, tag their podcast accounts, and share the topic and the guest of the week. Also, these wellness and lifestyle accounts sometimes share other accounts (n=16); most of these are other wellness accounts (n=11), and the rest are some random accounts (n=5) tagged for photo and quote credits. Some wellness accounts tag each other to promote and give credit for certain information. Apps (n=7) are another category; however, all of these apps are certain fitness apps, and some are created by account owners. There are retreat centers (n=5); one is not branded content but only tagged by a micro-influencer account to the reel video and not even mentioned in captions; the rest of the tagged ones are identical to branded content. Finally, one account tagged her friends (n=2), and one shared a sports center (n=1). This tagged accounts analysis presented certain differences to branded content analysis, showed that various accounts use expert knowledge in multiple areas, and questioned the photos used in these posts since most influencers, models, and celebrities are tagged for photo credits.

4.1.4 Textual Tone Analysis

The following analysis shows the textual tone used in the captions of these 200 posts in order to understand how these accounts prefer to communicate with their followers (see Figure 11). Two AI tone checker tools were used to understand the textual tones of the captions. All tones were gathered under three categories, using Rastrick's (2022) study to categorize them.

Figure 11

Textual Tone Chart

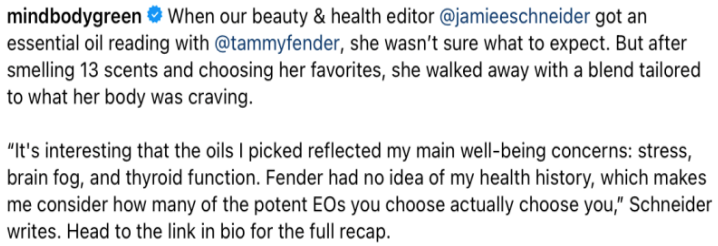


It was possible for a post to have more than one tone; however, only the dominant tone was categorized to avoid confusion. The most common themes that appeared throughout the text were guiding, friendly, and joyful. The tone of communication can be a way to show the power of the influencer to pursue credibility for the audiences, which leads to an increase in purchase intentions (Sokolova and Kefi, 2020). These tones emphasize the parasocial connection that influencers may establish with their audience. Such relationships usually depict the influencer as a mentor who presents themselves as a friendly figure to their viewers. All of these textual categories somehow offer a closeness intention while communicating with the audience. There were quotes in the photos of some posts; however, only the captions were used for this analysis. The first category is guiding (47,5%, n=95); in

this category, there are neutral (19%, n=38), approval (10, 5%, n=21), informational (10%, n=20), aware (5,5%, n=11), curious (2%, n=4) and explanatory (0,5%, n=1). Figure 12 shows that the tone of approval (10, 5%, n=21) is mainly used to promote a product and give certain advice on food, clothing, and skincare. The curious tone (2%, n=4) is usually used to encourage the post's interaction by asking specific questions to the followers (see Figure 13). The increase in the interaction is beneficial for account visibility, especially on the explore page. Figure 14 shows that informational tone (10%, n=20) is mainly used for product advice similar to approval tone; however, some accounts truly presented valuable information to their followers. Awareness (5,5%, n=11) is a tone specifically used by certain accounts for mental health and wellness journey.

Figure 12

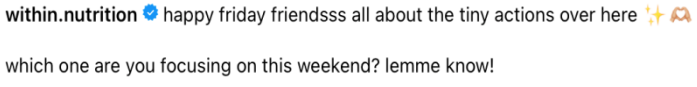
Mindbodygreen Using the Approval Tone in Captions



Note. Image taken from @mindbodygreen Instagram account (Mindbodygreen, 2023a)

Figure 13

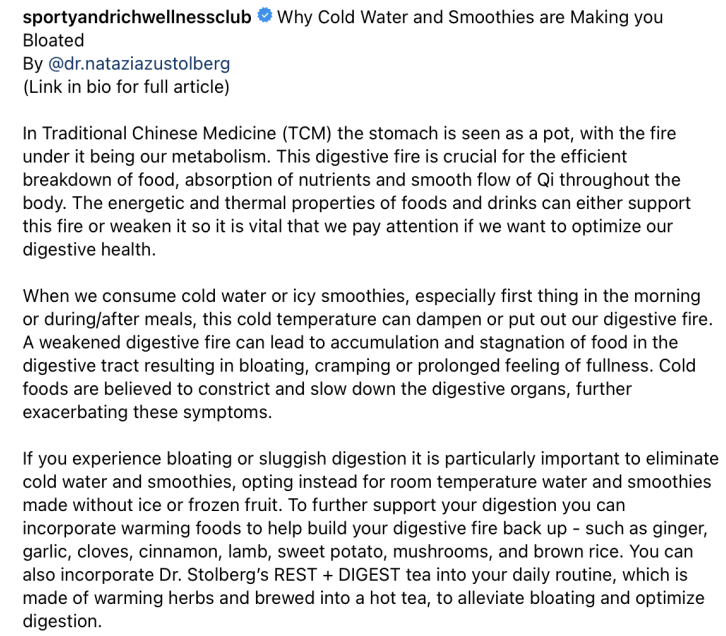
Kylie Ivanir Using Caring Tone in Captions



Note. Image taken from @within.nutrition Instagram account (Ivanir, 2023a).

Figure 14

Sporty and Rich Wellness Club Uses Informational Tone in Captions



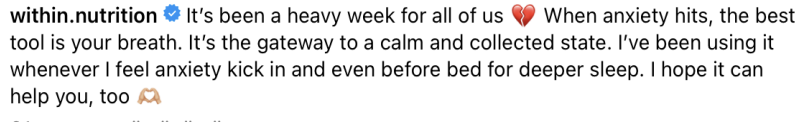
Note. Image taken from @sportyandrichwellnessclub Instagram account (Sporty and Rich Wellness Club, 2023a).

The second category is friendly (27%, n=55); in this category, there are caring (10, 5%, n=21), sympathetic (6, 5%, n=13), admiration (5, 5%, n=11), and loving (5%, n=10). These are all examples of the intention of creating a parasocial relationship with the followers. Figures 15 and 16 present the caring tone (10, 5%, n=21), which usually helps followers with certain issues and shows the interest of the accounts for their followers. Figure 16 specifically presents a caring tone through also sharing twenty-one positive affirmations on the picture such as "I am positive" and "I am resilient" (Mindbodygreen, 2023d). Also, a caring tone (10, 5%, n=21) is kind of similar to a loving tone (5%, n=10); however, AI tone checkers separated these two

categories. These friendly interactions create a sense of a fake relationship and show the accounts care for their followers. Developing such relationships with followers increases the credibility of the shared knowledge and creates a sense of loyalty.

Figure 15

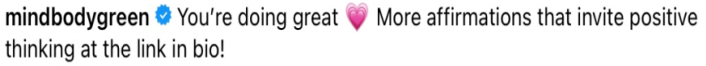
Kylie Ivanir Using Caring Tone in Captions



Note. Image taken from @within.nutrition Instagram account (Ivanir, 2023b).

Figure 16

Mindbodygreen Using Caring Tone in Captions and Giving Positive Affirmations



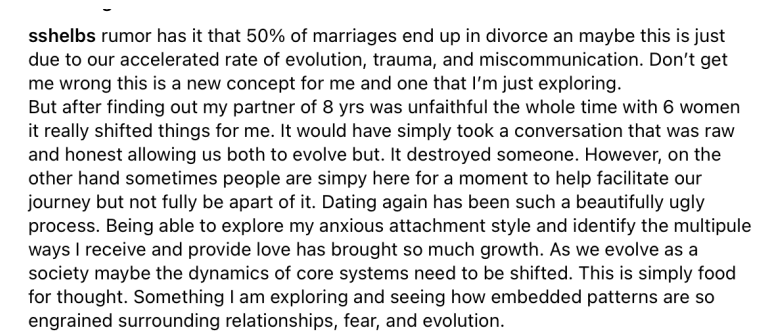
Note. Image taken from @mindbodygreen Instagram account (Mindbodygreen, 2023d).

Finally the last category is joyful (25%, n=50); in this category there is excitement (11%, n=22), joyous (4%, n=8), optimistic (4%, n=8), grateful (3%, n=6), eager (2, 5%, n=5) and amusement (0, 5%, n=1). The tones of these posts are usually funny, energetic, and motivational. Figure 17 presents an example of an optimistic (4%, n=8) tone; overall, the whole caption gives a sense of motivation. Certain accounts share amusing and relatable content intending to cultivate an engaging and diverse profile encompassing a wide array of subject matter. In this category, the majority of posts convey a motivational, positive, and lively tone, commonly used in content

intended to inspire and uplift. It often carries an energetic vibe, intending to infuse enthusiasm and optimism into the content, particularly in posts with motivational purposes. Also, another minor analysis was done with the textual content of these Instagram posts. All captions of 200 posts were uploaded to the word counter to gather the most used words to understand the language and key terms of the wellness community. Several words were repetitive; however, the outcome was not drastic. The most used words in the wellness community were “body,” “health,” “wellness,” “self,” “self-care,” “mental health,” “protein,” and “October.” It was surprising to note that the term “body” had a higher frequency of use compared to “wellness,” “self,” and “mental health” in a pool of 200 posts, where the wellness theme emerged as the most commonly shared content. This suggests that physical appearance remains a significant focus for wellness and lifestyle accounts. Additionally, while the term “October” may not be a key keyword for the wellness community, all the content was collected during that month, indicating that many accounts align their content with the themes associated with that specific time frame.

Figure 17

SoShelbs Using Optimistic Tone in Captions



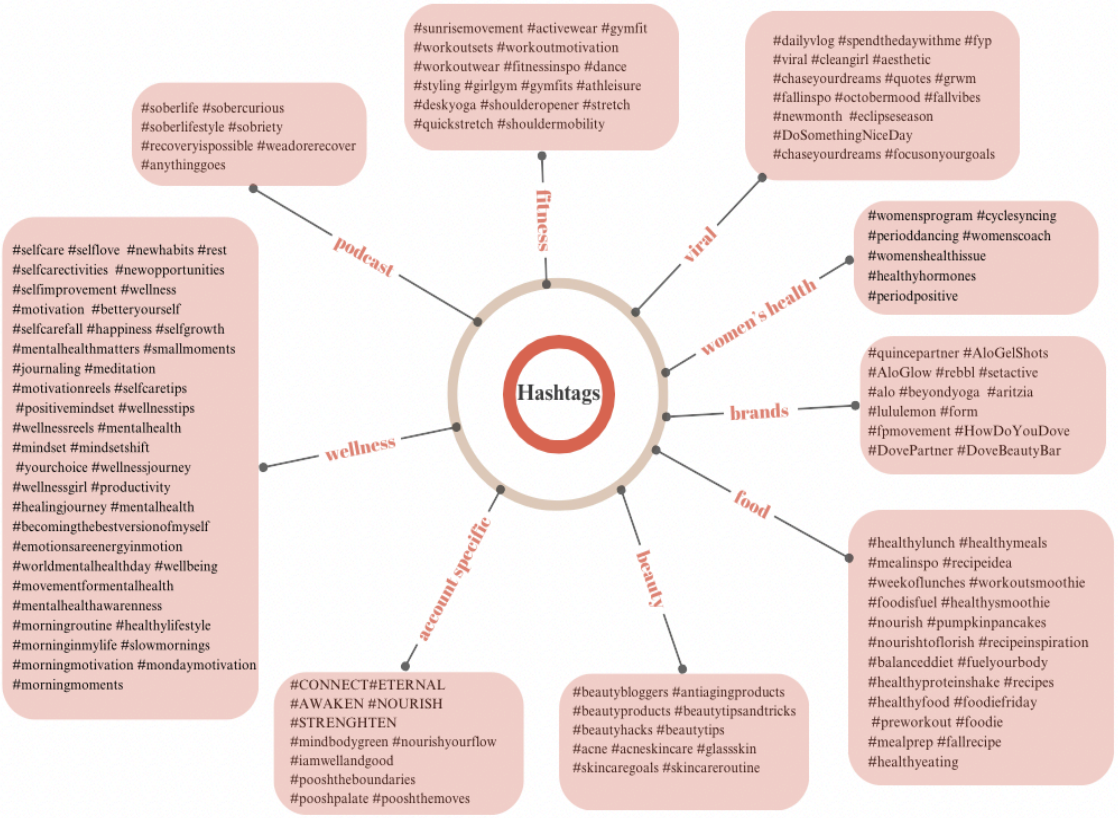
Note. Image taken from @sshelbs Instagram account (SoShelbs, 2023).

4.1.5 Hashtag Analysis

The following analysis of this study regarded hashtag analysis by examining the caption, copying every hashtag, and gathering them into categories (see Figure 18). This sort of analysis can gather more information about the content shared by wellness and lifestyle accounts and present how they collect and communicate with their followers.

Figure 18

Hashtag Analysis Chart



The initial concept was to quantify these hashtags precisely; however, accounts that prefer to use hashtags often employ a copy-and-paste method to gather more

followers, making it challenging to determine accurately each hashtag's frequency. In the compilation of 200 posts, a total of 311 hashtags were utilized, but only 169 unique hashtags emerged due to their repetitive use. The decision to exclude the number of hashtags was deliberate since hashtags are used numerously to attract a broader audience. The primary focus of this analysis is not on the sheer volume of hashtags but rather on understanding the thematic categories they represent. The emphasis lies in deciphering the hashtags employed to engage and communicate effectively with followers. Hashtags did not contribute significant information to the overall study; however, they were identified as an additional component to the findings for themes of the contents.

The results revealed that six out of twenty accounts refrained from using any hashtags and did not repeat any specific hashtag throughout their content. Interestingly, three of these six accounts belong to micro-influencers, and the other three belong to curated wellness accounts. Those three curated wellness teamed accounts all have a following number higher than 50.000 followers, and one of these accounts belongs to celebrity actress Gwyneth Paltrow. Also, the other three micro-influencer accounts all have a following number higher than 50.000 followers. The lack of hashtag usage in these accounts can signify that these accounts do not actively try to gain more followers. The information on hashtags was used to be grouped into nine categories. The most common categories with the most hashtags are wellness, food, fitness, brand names, and viral phrases. The previous thematic analysis revealed a predominant focus on wellness content; similarly, the majority of the hashtags used revolved around metal wellness. Hashtags about wellness usually revolve around focusing on self, mental health, routines, and motivation. Some

examples are #selflove, #selfgrowth, #betteryourself, #meditation, and #journaling, as seen in Figure 18. These hashtags show that wellness is presented as something "having it all" with maintaining good mental health, healthy food, and an active life with constantly doing everything to make it a lifestyle for the betterment of self. Another variety of hashtags focused on food through posting new recipes, meals, and smoothies. Still, usually, there is an emphasis on health and nourishment, even though hashtags such as #foodisfuel, #nourishtoflourish, and #fuelyourbody. The idea of food is usually related to fuel for fitness and health rather than taste. Hashtags also revolve around the fitness category, which was about workouts and stretches, but most of them revealed activewear outfits.

Also, there are many hashtags about brand collaborations or brands themselves. Some hashtags only revealed specific brand names that were used in the photos. Some hashtags, such as #AloGelShots and #AloGlow, were specifically created for brand collaborations. For a Dove collaboration post, three hashtags are used: #DovePartner, #DoveBeautyBar, and #HowDoYouDove. Certain hashtags are mainly used for gathering followers, and they are used by many other accounts as well. These are categorized as viral and utilized to increase the visibility of the account and posts. These are #fyp (meaning for you page), #viral, #aesthetic, #grwm (meaning get ready with me). Some of the hashtags that were used included the concept of fall and October to gather more attention according to the season of the posts, such as #fallinspo, #fallvibes, and #newmonth. Another hashtag category was podcasts, which present certain podcasts and their topics as hashtags. This technique is only used by two accounts, and the podcast topic by @ariellelorre is sobriety. This technique is used to gather more listeners for podcasts. Another topic was women's

health, and the variety of hashtags came from one account, @greenshaker, which focused on alternative healing methods for women's wellbeing and hormones. Hashtags about beauty usually were about anti-aging, products, hacks, and tips.

Certain accounts employ specific hashtags unique to their profiles, typically incorporating distinct phrases, such as the account name itself, or adjusting a phrase to align with the account's name. This category is called accounts specific. Five accounts use this technique, which is probably not used to gain followers since these hashtags are unknown. However, these can be useful for gathering account posts under specific hashtags. An account, @poosh, usually uses #pooshtheboundaries for most posts but uses #pooshtheboundaries for fitness content and #pooshpalate for food posts. Another account, respin, use specific words for every content; #CONNECT and #AWAKEN are usually used for wellness, #NOURISH is used for food, and #STRENGHTEN is for fitness posts.

4.2 Focusing on Self

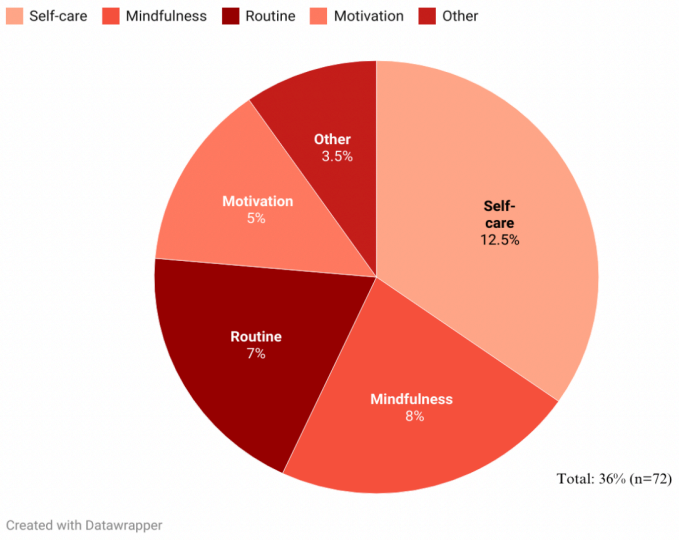
4.2.1 Mental Wellness Theme

The following results reveal a further analysis of the posts from wellness and lifestyle accounts. In these posts, there is a significant emphasis on the idea of focusing on yourself as prioritizing yourself more than anything, both through inside and outside. This title includes four themes that revolve around self: mental wellness theme, personal care and beauty theme, healthy relationships and sexual wellness theme, and workplace wellness theme. These themes reveal what sort of suggestions are presented to followers about how one should manage mental well-being, work life, relationship with oneself, and self-care. Another question is whether all these

themes present coherent messages about mental well-being and self. The predominant theme across the 200 posts is mental wellness, with 36% (n=72) of the posts centering on this topic. The mental wellness theme is extensive, including posts about self-care, mindfulness, routines, and motivation (see Figure 19). Within the mental wellness theme, self-care emerges as the most prevalent topic, comprising 12.5% (n=25) of the shared posts. Self-care can be achieved in various ways as a part of well-being, but in this context, it is used as being happy and healthy by putting your mental and body health first. There is a common belief that self-care can be attained through focusing on your mental and body health, creating a health journey for yourself, being positive, being self-focused, and achieving self-confidence, well-being, and personal growth as a result.

Figure 19

Mental Wellness Theme Chart:



Most posts advocate for self-care as showing yourself love, giving breaks when needed, creating time for yourself, strengthening yourself physically and mentally, transforming your mindset, creating health journeys, finding self-love and striving

for self-confidence. In Figure 20, @nourisheddgirl shared some hints on becoming the best version of yourself, which is about presenting ways to transform yourself. The given hints are health rules about mind and body health; however, some of these are basic cleaning and eating recommendations, and the rest are easier said than done, considering terms such as “reconnect with your inner child.” In Figure 21, @shaynateresetaylor shared a friendly and insightful post about self-growth, self-discovery, and self-love, claiming that it all starts with wanting the journey of transformation. The insights shared in these self-care posts are valuable, but many of them imply that achieving self-care is challenging and requires more than just eating well, daily journaling, and adopting new habits. Nonetheless, these uplifting messages can benefit followers by encouraging them to prioritize themselves.

Figure 20

Heidi Heidel Gives Hints to Achieve the Best Version of Yourself For Self-Care

Note. Image taken from @nourisheddgirl Instagram account (Heidel, 2023).

Figure 21

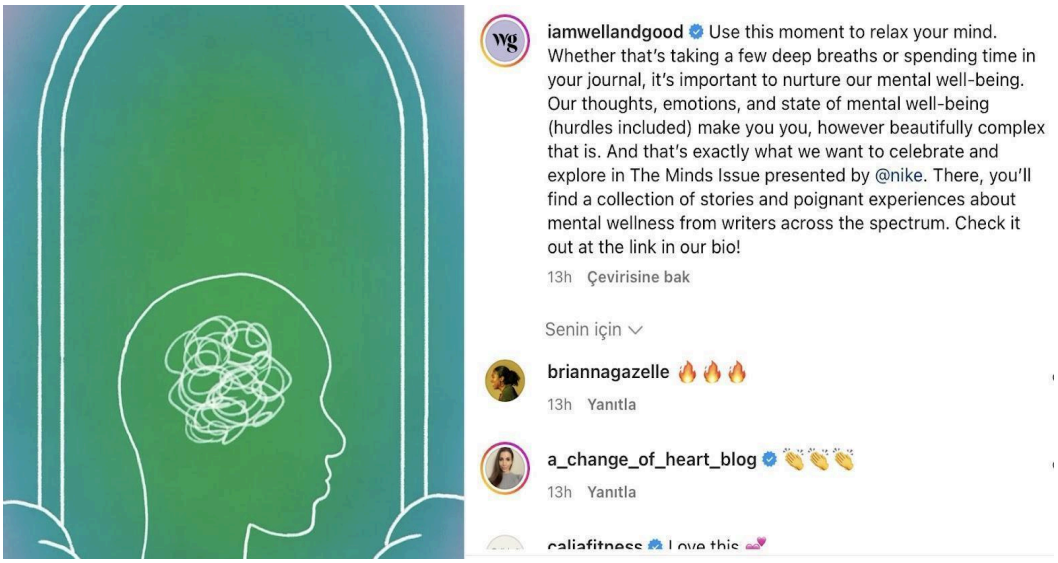
Shayna Terese Taylor Explains Self-Growth and Self-Transformation For Self-Care

Note. Image taken from @shaynateresetaylor Instagram account (Taylor, 2023).

As another topic within the mental wellness theme, mindfulness stands out as another frequently discussed subject, making up 8% (n=16) of the posts shared. This topic is directly about mental well-being through focusing on the current moment. Many accounts highlighted the importance of mindfulness when it comes to stressful issues like feeling overwhelmed, feeling inadequate, feeling anxiety, not finding inner peace and fulfillment, needing rest, and feeling imperfect. Usually meditation, mindfulness prompts, the power of manifestation, therapy, calming techniques, practicing breathing, and journaling are suggested to calm followers. These methods facilitate spiritual growth and tranquility, with some being more effective than others. Nevertheless, they collectively demonstrate the conscientiousness of wellness and lifestyle accounts towards mental health.

Figure 22

Well+Good Suggests Ways to Relax and Promotes Mental Health



Note. Image taken from @iamwellandgood Instagram account (Well+Good, 2023).

In Figure 22, the wellness account @iamwellandgood suggested that followers use this moment to relax, take deep breaths, or journal to remind themselves of the importance of mental well-being by introducing a new application by Nike. This content is sponsored to promote the application; however, it is evident that the suggestions offered in the post are beneficial for the mental well-being of the followers. In Figure 23, @respin shared the benefits of decluttering mental and physical spaces. The advantage of decluttering the mind is unquestionable; however, decluttering the physical space is cleaning.

Figure 23

Respin About the Importance of Decluttering for Well-Being

Note. Image taken from @respin Instagram account (Respin, 2023c).

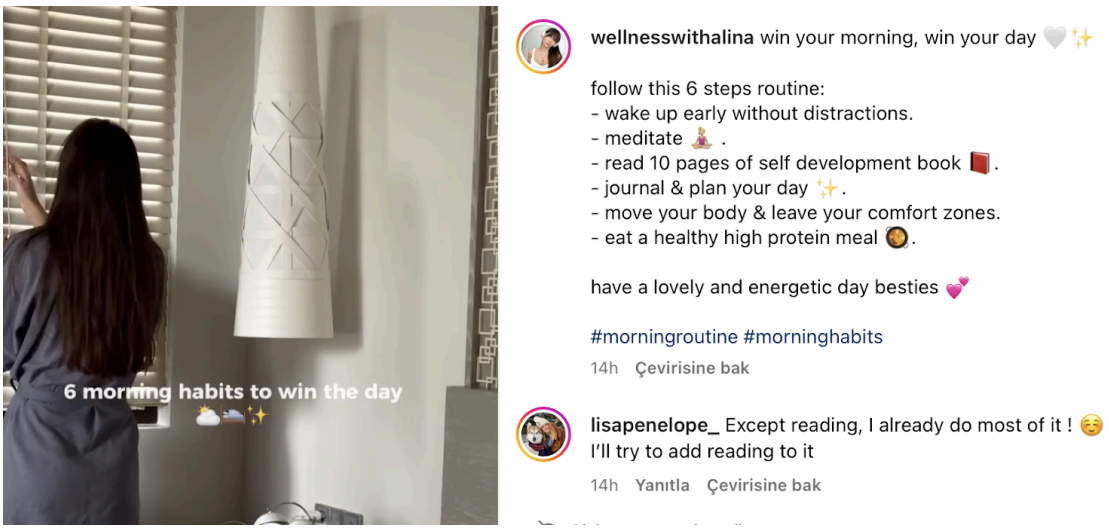
The mindful movement is beneficial; however, is it possible to turn every simple task into a mindful movement? These posts glamorize simple house tasks to women like cleaning and cooking as mindful moments which can defeat the purpose of mindfulness. Another critique of mindful posts is their purported aim to make followers feel good and present to eliminate stress. However, numerous accounts inadvertently induce pressure by promoting endless routines, accomplishments, and "to-do" lists, leading to feelings of inadequacy and overwhelm for those unable to meet such expectations. This pressure contradicts the intended goal of stress reduction, appearing inconsistent.

Another topic of mental wellness theme is routines, with 7% (n= 14) of the posts. These posts about routines usually gather healthy eating, physical activity, and mindfulness together in order to create morning and night routines. These posts have their own category because they do not directly fit in with the rest of the topics.

Usually, they claim that a routine will calm your mind, provide relaxation, and release positive hormones. In Figures 24 and 25, @wellnesswithalina shares her morning and daily routines.

Figure 24

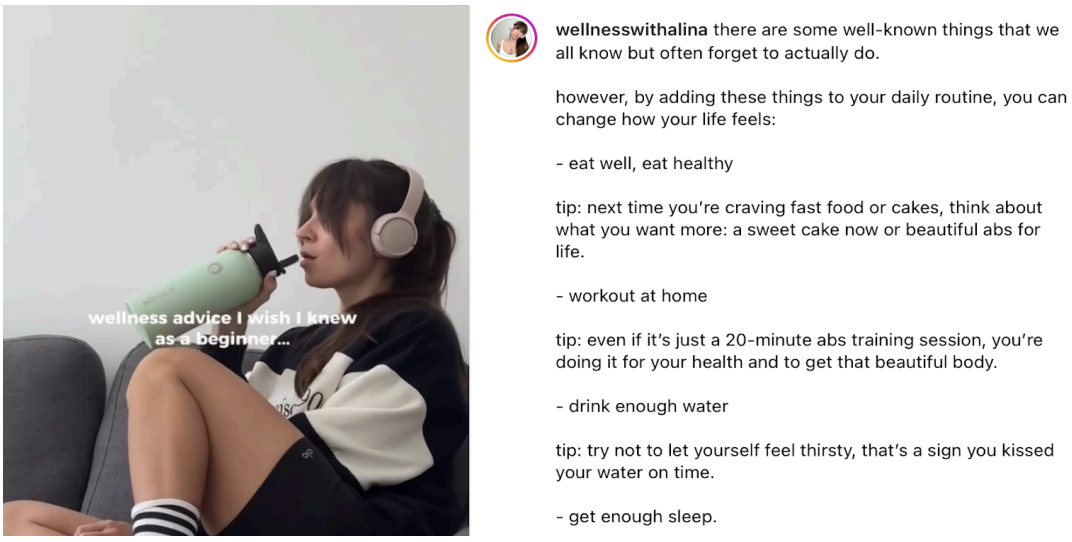
Alina Shares Six-Step Morning Routine



Note. Image taken from @wellnesswithalina Instagram account (Alina, 2023b).

Figure 25

Alina about Daily Routine



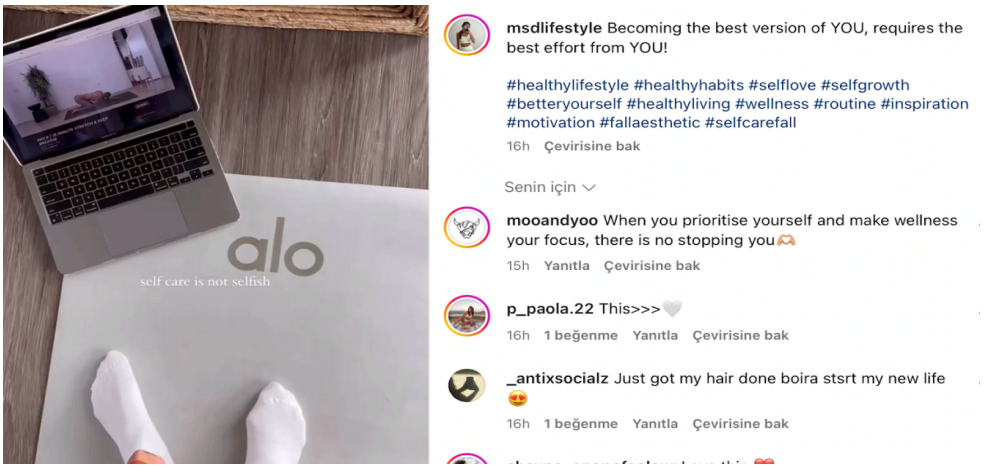
Note. Image taken from @wellnesswithalina Instagram account (Alina, 2023a).

In Figure 24, there are suggestions for having an energetic morning by incorporating movement, eating healthy food, and journaling for mental well-being. In Figure 25, @wellnesswithalina shared her daily routine tips by claiming that to eat healthily, you should consider whether you like a sweet cake or want beautiful abs. Nowadays, this mentality is criticized since health is about balance; however, some are still using these restricting techniques, which are a part of old problematic dietary suggestions. These routines can be beneficial for being more systematic, but not everybody has the luxury to achieve all of these, especially on work days.

The next topic is motivational posts with 5% (n=10) of the posts. These usually show some goal-directed behaviors about living a healthy and productive life by using quotes, manifestations, and affirmations. In Figure 26, @msdlifestyle shared a reels video with the phrasing that to achieve the best version of yourself, you should show some effort.

Figure 26

Merryl Dougherty Shares a Motivational Post



Note. Image taken from @msdlifestyle Instagram account (Dougherty, 2023b).

Usually, these motivational posts emphasize the importance of productivity and present motivational quotes and phrases to achieve a lifestyle surrounded by self-care and routines. In Figure 16, @mindbodygreen shared twenty-one positive affirmations to motivate the followers. The other topics, 3,5% (n=7), are about various topics such as World Mental Health Day, astrology with mindfulness, dreams, and mental health. However, one of the posts is about fatphobia; @mynameisjessamyn shared an episode from her podcast about being fat, how it affected their self-image, and how the world perceives this (see Figure 27).

Figure 27

Jessamyn Talks About Fathobia

Note. Image taken from @mynameisjessamyn Instagram account (Jessamyn, 2023b).

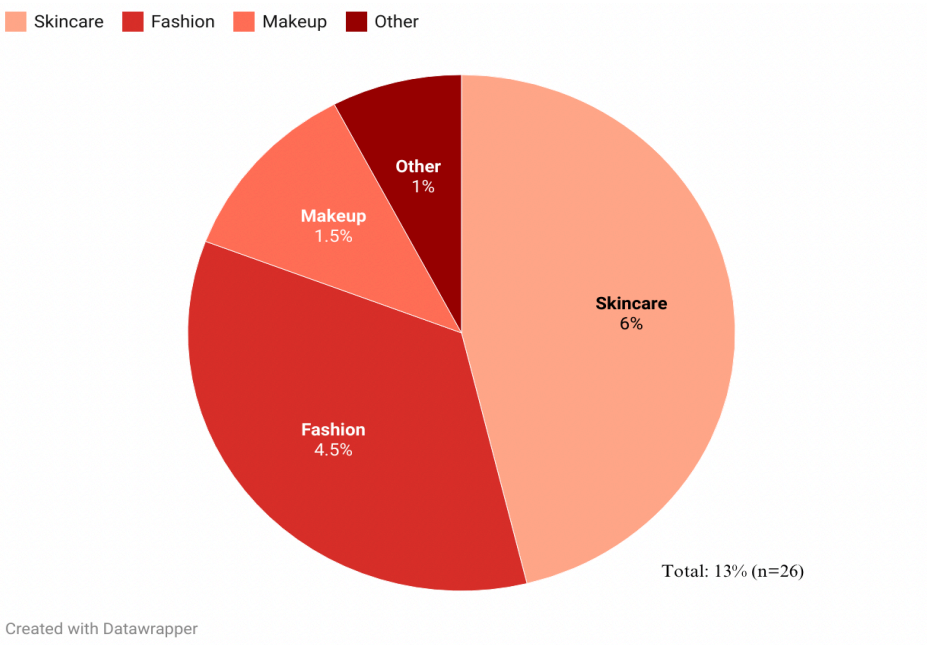
This is a rarely spoken issue; however, wellness and lifestyle accounts are usually known for their strict dietary and physical routines. This account shared the ways how they feel comfortable in their own body is a massive accomplishment for this industry and this mental wellness theme.

4.2.2 Personal Care and Beauty Theme

The subsequent theme delves into personal care and beauty, a subject closely associated with self-focus and self-care. This personal care and beauty theme constitutes 13% (n=26) of the shared posts. It predominantly emphasizes outward appearance, covering areas such as skincare, cosmetics, and fashion choices (see Figure 28). Within this theme, skincare is the most shared topic, comprising 6% (n=12) of the shared posts.

Figure 28

Personal Care and Beauty Chart

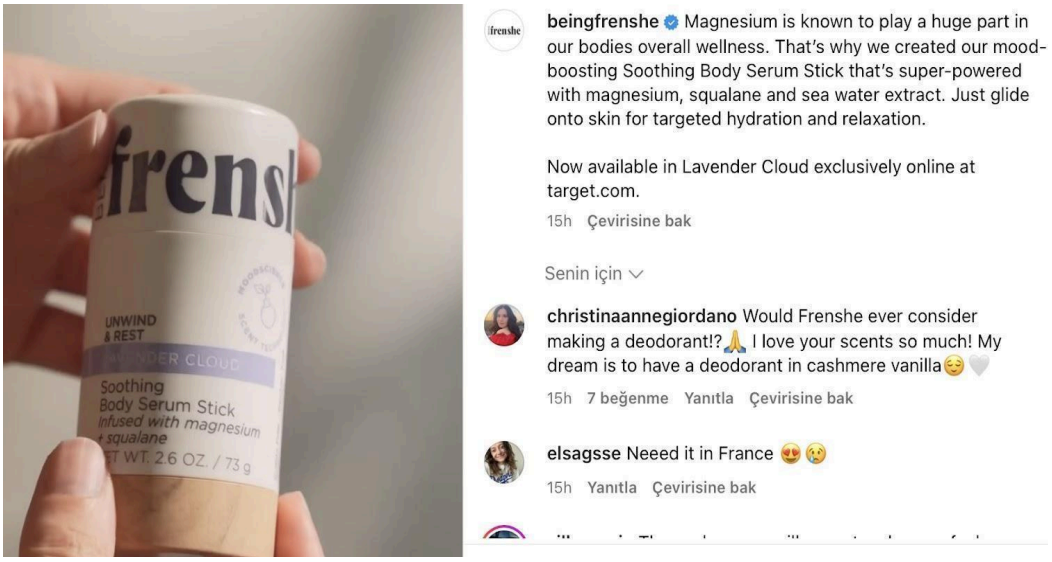


This topic concerns skincare products like creams and serums, skincare procedures like microneedling and using magnesium, anti-aging products, and some posts about being against botox and chemicals. This focus on outer beauty can be misleading, considering the aim of achieving unrealistic beauty ideals. Nevertheless, almost all of

these topics discuss beneficial products for the skin and body. In Figure 29, the @frenshe account shared a body serum of its own, which is good for hydration and relaxation. It is clearly stated that this product benefits the skin with its use of magnesium, squalane, and seawater extract. Despite the pervasive pressure on women to conform to youthful beauty standards, there is surprisingly limited discussion or promotion of anti-aging products and plastic surgeries within this theme.

Figure 29

Frenshe Promoting Their Serum Stick

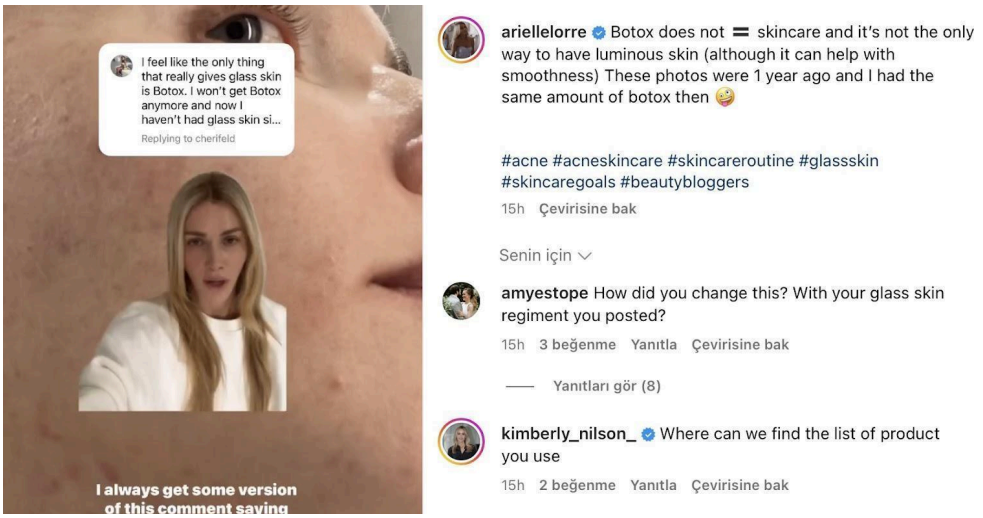


Note. Image taken from @frenshe Instagram account (Frenshe, 2023).

In Figure 30, @ariellelorre stated that botox is not a form of skincare or a way to have luminous skin. This content is not glamorizing cosmetic procedures but also not demonizing them for people who have them. Women are often inundated with messages emphasizing youthfulness as a marker of attractiveness and worth, yet the absence of extensive content on anti-aging solutions suggests a potential change in this situation.

Figure 30

Arielle Lorre Explains Botox and Skincare Are Different



Note. Image taken from @ariellelorre Instagram account (Lorre, 2023a).

Figure 31

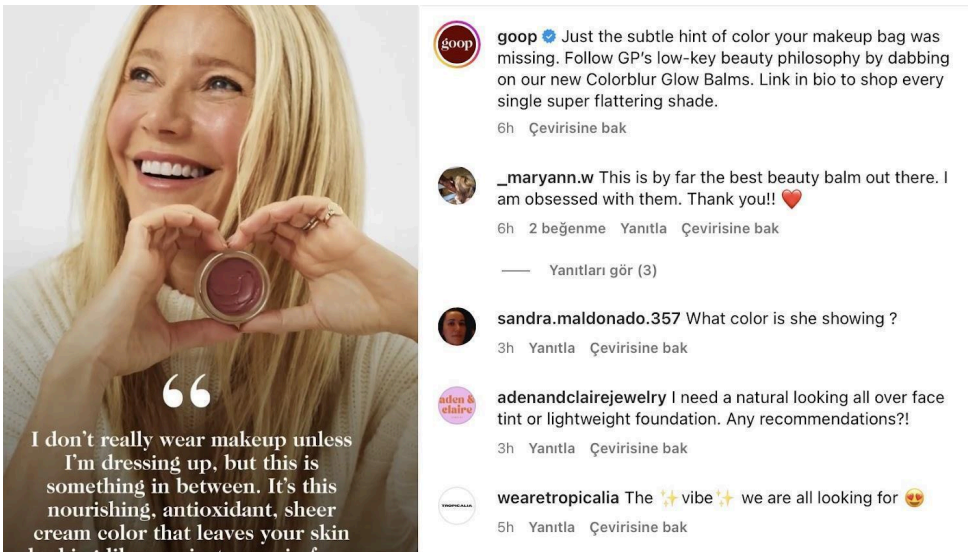
Goop Promotes New Clothing Label

Note. Image taken from @goop Instagram account (Goop, 2023a).

Another topic of the personal care and beauty theme is fashion, with %4, 5 (n= 9) of the posts. These posts are about presenting outfit ideas, promoting clothing brands and pieces, showing how to dress for certain occasions, and offering luxury items. The majority of these posts belong to @goop since the account recently released its luxury brand, G Label. In Figure 31, @goop shared a new piece from its collection using the founder of the account, Gwyneth Paltrow. The product is described as polished wool and paired with Cartier accessories to highlight the luxury side of the brand. These sorts of fashion items are unattainable for most followers, representing Gwyneth Paltrow's celebrity side. Fashion has been a tool to show and force society's expectations of women. Nowadays, there are more fashion trends for women to follow in office and work attire with the effect of neoliberal feminism. The next topic for this theme is makeup with %1,5 (n=3) of wellness and lifestyle Instagram posts. Makeup is a highly commercialized area, especially regarding the commodification of beauty; however, there is not much content about makeup products.

Figure 32

Goop Promotes Makeup Lip Balm



Note. Image taken from @goop Instagram account (Goop, 2023b).

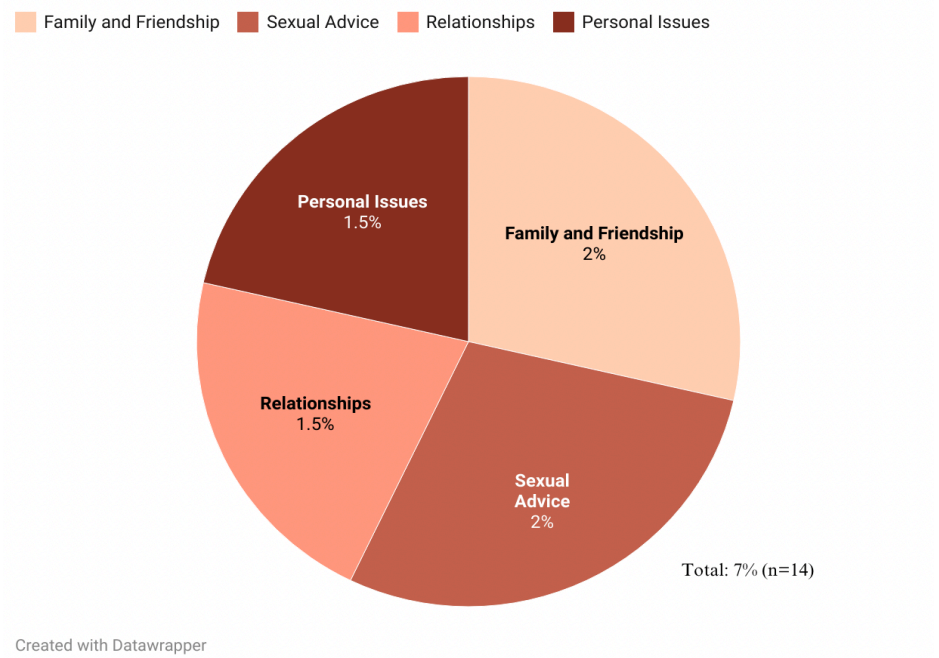
In Figure 32, @goop shared a lip balm product from its own makeup brand. Lip balm is introduced as one of Gwyneth's favorites since it is nourishing, subtle, and natural. The natural looks seem to be embraced with the idea of self-love and self-confidence. The rest of the topics of this theme are about hair shaping and perfumes, and each of these topics has one post regarding it.

4.2.3 Healthy Relationships and Sexual Wellness Theme

The following theme is healthy relationships and sexual wellness, which is an additional theme. This theme has 7% (n=14) of the shared content. Figure 33 shows the topics around this theme: family and friendship, sexual advice, relationships, and personal issues. This topic is included within this title to understand whether the relationships that are not related to the idea of self are considered in which ways by these accounts. Self-care and self-transformation are revealed to be the most significant focus for wellness and lifestyle accounts, so another question is understanding whether there is an aim of individuality. In the context of postfeminism and neoliberal feminism, there is a notable emphasis on individuality as a critical component of empowerment and agency for women. Within this theme, usually, there is an emphasis on family and partnership; however, societal expectations are not forced onto followers. Also, there is a lot of focus on the idea of self and the context of considering the needs of others. This does not mean there is a belief in unity; however, the mere focus is not on individuality but on the self while also considering others. Within healthy relationships and sexual wellness themes, the topic of family and friendships has 2% (n=4) of shared posts.

Figure 33

Healthy Relationships and Sexual Wellness Theme Chart



The posts about family and friendships focus on connecting with your friends, doing nice things for people you know, and the importance of friendships. These are about understanding the worth of people around you and how you should be able to communicate with them through tough times, which is a part of forming healthy connections. The next topic is sexual advice, compromising 2% (n=4) of the shared posts. These are about long-term relationships and sexual connection, some sex positions to enhance pleasure, and the importance of self-pleasure. This topic is essential in terms of accepting that women are also sexual beings. The sexual needs of women have been a social stigma for many years. For many years, women have been seen as the object of sexual desire, and only recently, they are being accepted as the subject of their own sexual drive. In Figure 7, @poosh discusses the sexual habits

of long-term couples by also counseling a sex expert. The next topic is relationships with %1,5 (n= 3) of the shared posts. This topic focuses on breakups, dating, and new relationships. In Figure 17, @sshelbs shared a heartfelt caption about leaving old relationships and feeling scared and excited about starting new ones. The final topic of this theme is personal issues, with 1,5% (n= 3) of the shared posts. In this topic, there are discussions of people pleasing, loneliness, and empathy for others. These sorts of self-reflections are helpful since they present the importance of empathy and how feeling loneliness can be a shift towards letting people inside of your life.

Figure 34

Sporty and Rich Wellness Club Discusses People Pleasing With a Therapist

Note. Image taken from @sportyandrichwellnessclub Instagram account (Sporty & Rich Wellness Club, 2023d).

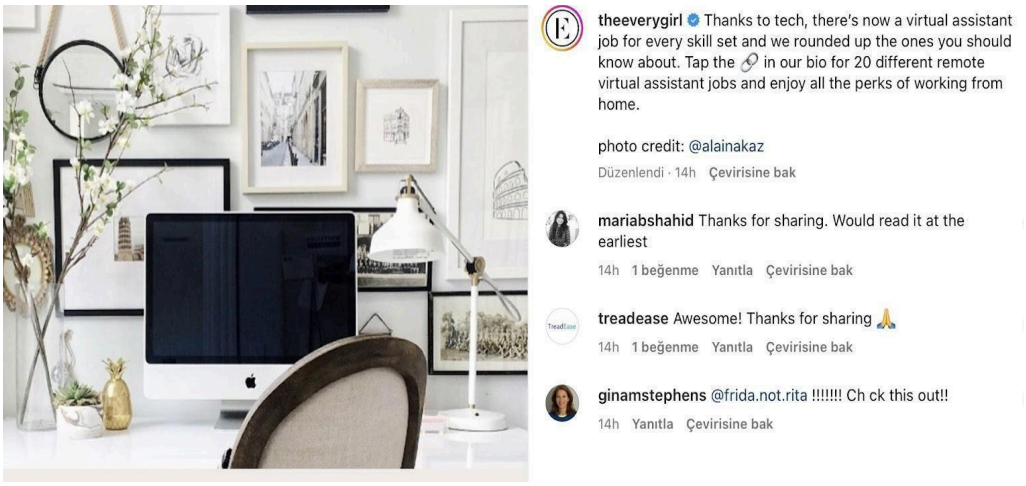
In Figure 34, @sportyandrichwellnessclub shared a post about people pleasing and its possible reasons through counseling a therapist. These posts help to enhance followers' relationships with themselves and the people surrounding them.

4.2.4 Workplace Wellness Theme

The final theme of this title is workplace wellness, which is a less-discussed theme in these wellness and lifestyle posts. The issues about workspace and Instagram accounts can seem unrelated; however, as discussed before, they usually target women for their followers. There are huge issues in the workplace, especially considering women and how they are overlooked because of systematic barriers, glass ceilings, and societal expectations. Especially with neoliberal feminism, individuality is accepted as women pursue their careers, working harder for promotions as if glass ceilings and systematic barriers do not exist. Even in the workplace, most women suffer from payment issues because of gender discrimination. As self-growth, self-confidence, and self-transformation are prevalent topics in these posts, the lack of focus on these fundamental issues indicates that the rest of the discussions are surface-level.

Figure 35

The Every Girl Shares Virtual Assistant Jobs



Note. Image taken from @theeverygirl Instagram account (The Every Girl, 2023b).

Most women have imposter syndrome about themselves because of these sorts of systematic problems and discrimination. Workplace wellness constitutes 1% (n=2) of the shared posts in these wellness and lifestyle accounts. The discussed topics are jobs comprising 0,5% (n= 1) of the shared posts and financial issues comprising 0,5% (n=1). In Figure 35, @theeverygirl shared a post about different virtual assistant jobs. The other post about workplace wellness is about bank adjustments as if women specifically need help with their financial problems.

4.3 Searching for Alternative Medicine

4.3.1 Preventive and Personalized Public Health Theme

Wellness encompasses the holistic care of both our physical and mental health, as they are intrinsically linked and collectively contribute to our overall well-being. This concept underscores the importance of nurturing all aspects of ourselves to achieve a balanced and fulfilling life. By prioritizing wellness, individuals want to build harmony between their mind and body to reach a state of optimal health and vitality. This title focuses on two wellness and lifestyle themes: traditional and complementary medicine and preventive and personalized public health.

Both are similar in terms of putting bodily health forward; however, they differ in terms of treatment. Wellness and lifestyle accounts prefer to indulge in traditional and complementary medicine content more frequently, showing an interest in searching for alternative medicines and methods. The preventive and personalized

public health theme is the least shared in wellness and lifestyle Instagram accounts, comprising 0,5% (n= 1) of the shared posts.

Figure 36

The Every Girl Reminds Regular Check-Ups

Note. Image taken from @theeverygirl Instagram account (The Every Girl, 2023a).

These accounts are not controlled by doctors and health personnel; however, they usually consult experts such as doctors and therapists. In this sense, giving direct suggestions on serious health issues can be problematic; however, they could be keener on reminding people about their health controls. Preventive and personalized public health emphasizes the importance of caring for individuals already in good health while providing information about diseases and potential health risks. This approach involves encouraging people to attend routine physical exams to prevent illnesses and detect any underlying health issues early on. By promoting regular check-ups and screenings, this theme aims to encourage individuals to maintain their well-being and avoid the possibility of developing serious health problems (Global Wellness Institute, n.d.b). Figure 36 is the only shared content about preventive and personalized public health posted by @theeverygirl. This post is about reminding the

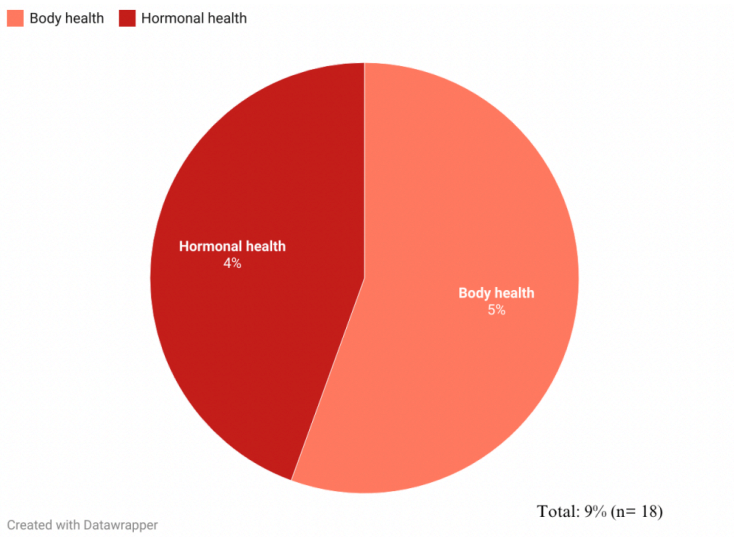
followers about self-checkups regarding breast cancer, written in a caring tone since it is breast cancer awareness month. The only shared content about this theme is about women's health.

4.3.2 Traditional and Complementary Medicine Theme

Another theme about health is traditional and complementary medicine, which is more shared content than the previous theme. Traditional and complementary medicine themes comprise 9% (n=18) of shared posts, which is a high ranking considering the sensitivity of the information. This theme discussed topics in terms of hormonal health and body health in the shared posts (see Figure 37). Traditional and complementary medicine covers many treatments and practices that aren't part of the conventional healthcare system.

Figure 37

Traditional and Complementary Medicine Theme Chart:



Traditional and complementary medicine is more about holistic approaches, mentally or spiritually-based systems, and various therapies not typically associated with

mainstream healthcare. There are various treatments like homeopathic remedies, naturopathy, chiropractic care, Traditional Chinese Medicine, Ayurveda, energy healing, and herbal remedies (Global Wellness Institute, n.d.b). These treatments became a solution for many people who do not believe in modern healthcare; however, they should be performed and gathered from experts. There have been a lot of issues regarding the truthfulness of the information being dispersed. Most shared posts regarding traditional and complementary medicine have been reviewed by experts or consulted with them. The topic of body health within this theme has 5% (n=10) of shared posts. These posts are about practical knowledge about our digestive systems, how essential oils can be helpful for specific issues, sleep improvement, healing through different ways, and certain diets. These diets are not about losing weight but are more focused on holistic, organic, and naturopathic eating.

Figure 38

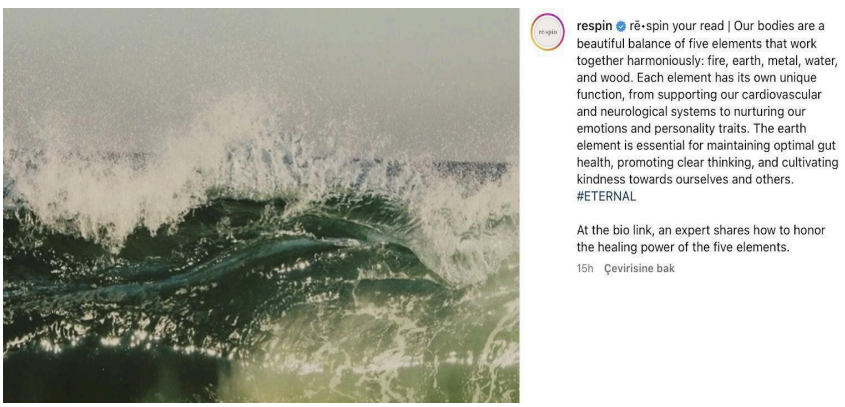
Sporty and Rich Wellness Club About Energetic Properties of Foods

Note. Image taken from @sportyandrichwellnessclub Instagram account (Sporty & Rich Wellness Club, 2023b).

In Figure 38, a post shared by @sportyandrichwellnessclub presents that each food has energetic qualities, and this idea of nutrition comes from Traditional Chinese Medicine. According to Dr. Stolberg, an imbalance between energies could cause hormonal and digestive issues. Other posts about food and diets present questions about the American health system and foods, supporting the use of bone broth and certain ingredients for the betterment of our gut system. Figure 39, shared by @respin, explains five elements of healing and how they support our cardiovascular and neurological systems to nurture our emotions and personality traits. The other body health topics are about the usefulness of essential oils for the needs of our bodies, the ways to improve our sleep, and ingredients for brain health. Overall, there is much information about alternative treatments and how they affect our bodies. These alternative treatments, which are primarily grounded in the past, can be a sign that people no longer trust these accepted healthcare systems and are intrigued to turn to organic solutions and ingredients.

Figure 39

Respin About Five Elements of Healing



Note. Image taken from @respin Instagram account (respin, 2023a).

The other traditional and complementary medicine topic is hormonal health, which comprises 4% (n=8) of shared posts. These posts concern women's health, menstrual cycle, and hormonal acne. These focus primarily on women's health because women's health issues have been disregarded in the past. These show that most women are looking for alternative treatments when it comes to hormones and menstrual cycles. These posts give information about hormonal resets, causes of PMS, phases of menstrual cycles, and the effects of lunar cycles and lunar dieting. Figure 40, shared by @greenshaker, offers a health journey for women's health, which aims to sync every woman to their body and menstrual cycle for health. These hormonal guides provide strategies for dietary and exercise adjustments about each individual's hormonal differences and menstrual cycles, promoting pain-free periods, hormonal balance, and overall energy and nourishment. Additionally, certain posts delve into hormonal health, especially for the time of menopause. These posts about hormones reveal that many women have been suffering from hormone-related issues, especially about that many women have been suffering from hormone-related issues, especially about their period cycles, since there is not enough scientific research about women's health issues. The interest shown by wellness and lifestyle accounts in traditional and complementary medicine may be associated with this lack of information about women's health, especially about hormonal issues.

Figure 40

Greenshaker Offers Health Journey for Women

Note. Image taken from @greenshaker Instagram account (Greenacre, 2023).

4.4 "Healthy Living" over Extreme Diets and Fitness

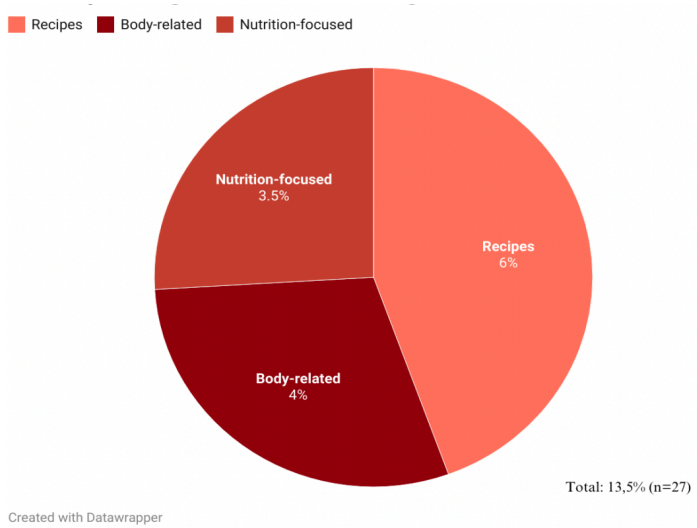
4.4.1 Healthy Eating, Nutrition and Weight Loss Theme

Instagram wellness and lifestyle accounts heavily use the phrase healthy living and its synonyms in their posts. Many posts are about starting a health journey, prioritizing your health, and choosing a healthy lifestyle. This healthy living seems to be achievable through eating nutritional, low-calorie foods and exercising continuously. This title is about themes of healthy eating, nutrition and weight loss, physical activity, and wellness tourism. When it comes to basics, these terms are highly related to careful toxic diets and fitness culture. These may refer to past trends and ideals about weight loss and exercise, which usually promote unhealthy practices, extreme measures, and unrealistic body standards. These are known to lead to various eating disorders through setting unrealistic beauty ideals that women especially feel the need to conform to. Today, both men and women are known to

suffer from body dysmorphia and various eating disorders because of these trends. However, in the past, women were used to be forced more by society to fit into beauty ideals and trends since there was a hyper-fixation, especially on women's bodies. Recently, these trends have been highly criticized, mainly because of the damage they caused to society. This part analyzes the shared posts about these themes regarding their content and understanding whether they perpetuate the change about unrealistic ideals.

Figure 41

Healthy Eating, Nutrition, and Weight Loss Theme Chart:



The first theme is healthy eating, nutrition and weight loss, highly popular among wellness and lifestyle accounts, comprising 13,5% (n=27) of the shared posts. Figure 41 shows that topics related to this theme are recipes, body-related foods, and nutrition-focused posts. Regarding healthy eating, nutrition, and weight loss, recipes emerge as the most prevalent topic with 6% (n=12) of the posts.

These posts are about healthy breakfast, lunch, and dinner recipes. The recipes usually present soups, salads, and oatmeal using vegetables and organic ingredients. There are usually recipes for various fall soups, overnight oats, healthy desserts and sweet treats, oatmeal cookies, green goddess salad, and rice recipes. Figure 42, shared by @ariellelorre, presents an example of these recipes. It is an oatmeal cookie as a fall sweet treat, and the used ingredients are oat flour, coconut oil, bananas, and maple syrup since they are healthier options. The account even offers to add supplements like collagen and protein powder.

Figure 42

Arielle Lorre About Oatmeal Cookies

Note. Image taken from @ariellelorre Instagram account (Lorre, 2023b).

All of the recipes similarly prefer healthier options; however, they do not glamorize these recipes by using terms like "weight-loss" and "low-calorie." Another topic of healthy eating is body-related foods, with 4% (n=8) of the posts. These posts share foods that are good for the body. These posts are about balancing hormones with

foods, staying hydrated with lemon water, blood-sugar-conscious smoothies, podcast episodes about healing with food, and the importance of hydration. In Figure 43, @goop shared certain foods that help balance the hormones, especially during menopause and perimenopause. These posts show the importance of food for our bodies without directly glamorizing supplements. These posts show that enough food is sufficient to take care of our bodies and present the benefits of food.

Figure 43

Goop About Hormone Balancing Foods

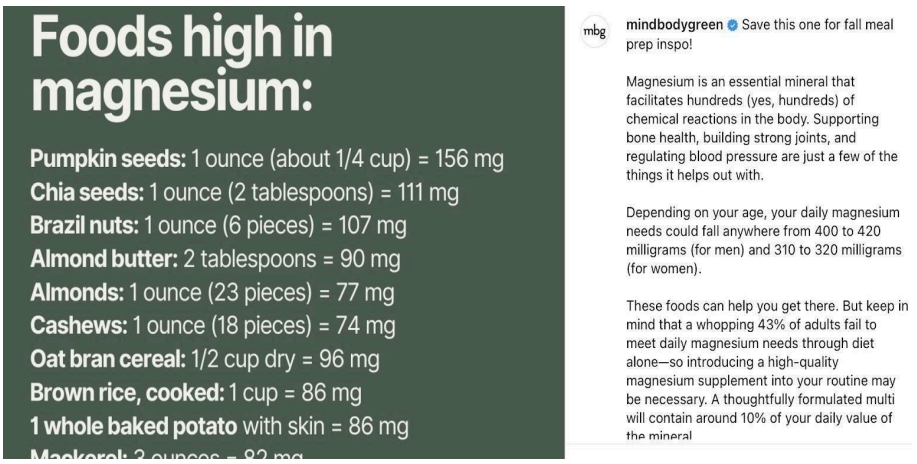
Note. Image taken from @goop Instagram account (Goop, 2023c).

The final topic of this theme is nutrition-focused content, with 3, 5% (n=7) of posts. These posts focus on the nutritional qualities of the foods. The posts are about protein packet oatmeal, egg recipes with protein, various supplements, and ways to boost protein intake. Some of these posts share supplement brands to incorporate with daily diets. Figure 44, shared by @mindbodygreen, shows which foods are high in magnesium while also sharing their portions. Recipes feature soups, salads, smoothies, and oatmeal, typically associated with strict diets. However, they're not

being promoted solely for weight loss purposes. Instead, they're shared with their nutritional advantages, highlighting their contributions to body health, including protein, magnesium, and fiber intake. While some of these posts may evoke a toxic dieting and fitness culture, there is a valuable effort to show the benefits of food.

Figure 44

Mindbodygreen About Magnesium



Note. Image taken from @mindbodygreen Instagram account (Mindbodygreen, 2023c).

4.4.2 Physical Activity Theme

The following theme is physical activity comprising 11,5% (n=23) of shared posts. The topics of this theme are workouts and sports, activewear, and exercises (see Figure 45). The first topic within this theme is workouts and sports, with 5.5% (n=11) of posts. This topic is about incorporating certain activities into your daily routine. These activities are full-body workouts, workout challenges, muscle-building workouts, and other sports like yoga, fitness, pilates, golf, and walking. These posts usually focus on specific body parts and present fast-paced workouts.

Figure 45

Physical Activity Theme Chart:

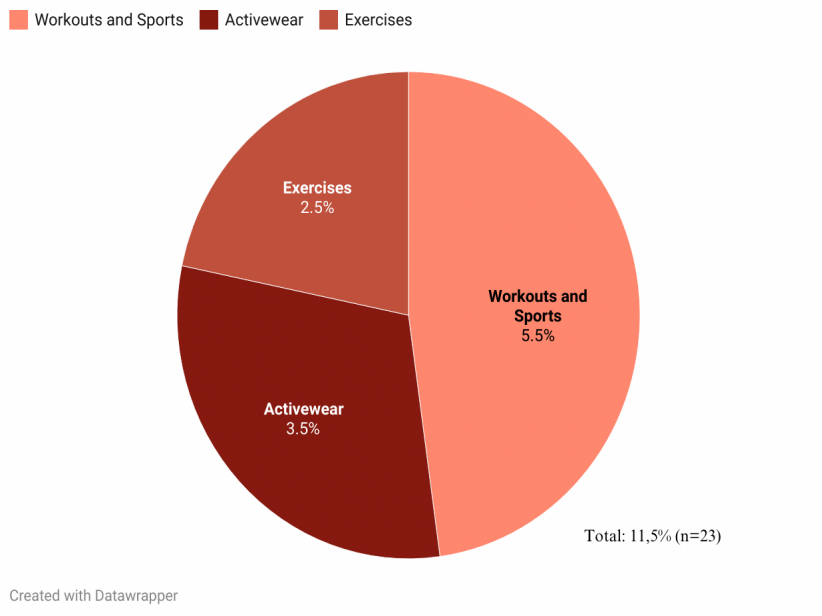
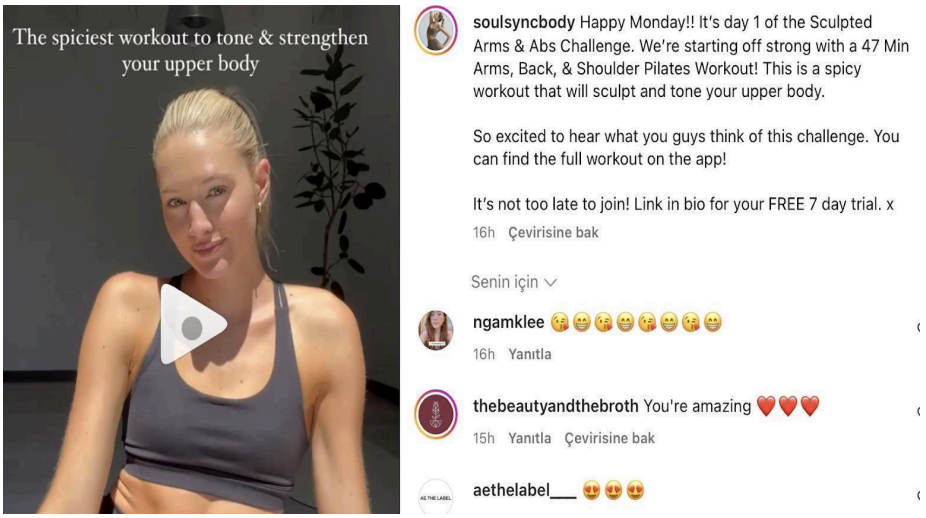


Figure 46

Soulsyncbody Arms and Abs Workout Challenge



Note. Image taken from @soulsyncbody Instagram account (Soulsyncbody, 2023).

In Figure 46, a post shared by @soulsyncbody presents a workout challenge concentrated on arms and abs. These fast-paced workout routines can promise unrealistic results in a short amount of time. Overall, these workouts may not be achievable in everyday life for a working person; however, they show the importance of incorporating physical activity.

Another topic of this theme is activewear, which comprises 3,5% (n=7) shared posts. These posts are about showing certain activewear brands, and these are usually branded content. However these are included within this theme since they are used for the reasons of physical activity. Usually, these posts show lean, sporty girls trying and wearing these outfits before their workout sessions. Figure 47 shows @katecraigwellness wearing an activewear brand, showing her body and the brand's outfit. The posts within this theme especially usually portray thinness and slim body types. This is an issue for almost all the posts shared by wellness and lifestyle accounts. Unwillingly, these posts equate health and wellness with thinness. This can create an atmosphere of comparison and pressure to achieve similar results, fostering feelings of inadequacy and perpetuating harmful dieting behaviors.

Figure 47

Kate Craig Showing Pilates Outfit

Note. Image taken from @katecraigwellness Instagram account (Craig, 2023b).

The following topic of this theme is exercises with 2,5% (n=5) of shared posts. These exercises include functional movements for our nervous system, incorporating movement for our mental health, stretching, and warm-ups. These movements are usually slow-paced, manageable, and achievable for many people. In Figure 48, @mynameisjessamyn shows yoga moves for the workday, which you can fit into your daily routine and is attainable for many people. Also, @mynameisjessamyn is one of the few accounts that do not promote thinness in order to be healthy. Their account is devoted to showing meals and movements that are achievable to everybody, and they talk about the effects of fatphobia.

Figure 48

Jessamyn Showing Yoga Moves

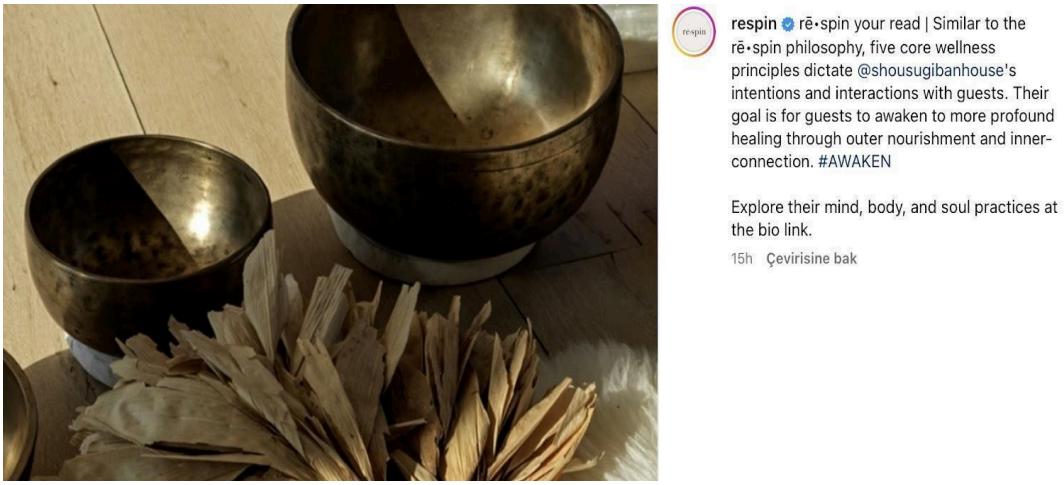
Note. Image taken from @mynameisjessamyn Instagram account (Jessamyn, 2023a).

4.4.3 Wellness Tourism Theme

The final theme of this title is wellness tourism. Wellness tourism comprises 2,5% (n=5) of shared posts, which are all about retreat centers. These posts are usually about branded retreat centers that combine healthy eating and physical activity in a peaceful place for all the attendees. Figure 49 shows one of the examples of retreat centers shared by @respin. This is the branded content of this retreat center, which offers the attendees healing, nourishment, and inner connection. These retreat centers are beneficial for attendees, but unquestionably, they are for the middle and upper classes. All of the themes under this title offer healthy living as a lifestyle with minor errors that might remind one to conform to unexpected beauty ideals.

Figure 49

Respin Promotes Wellness Center



Note. Image taken from @respin Instagram account (Respin, 2023b).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The wellness industry has seen remarkable growth in recent years, increasing awareness of health, fitness, and holistic well-being among consumers worldwide. As the wellness industry has expanded, it has gained a presence on social media platforms like Instagram since there is a growing interest in self-care and preventive health measures. Through Instagram accounts about wellness and lifestyle, people have found a place to share inspiration, motivation, and knowledge about healthy living. These wellness content on social media convey specific messages to their followers through various communication tactics. These messages often present advice on various health-concerned topics, but these also give away the condition of women in society and the recent issues they face. Through these contents about healthy living, there are underlying messages that present societal pressures, expectations of empowerment, and agency, collectively reflecting the values and ideals surrounding women. Therefore, it was essential for this study to understand the preferred messages offered to women and determine the feminist and antifeminist values of the presented content, especially considering that these contents are ideally curated for women. For this study, I used the content analysis method to examine a total of 200 posts from 20 different wellness and lifestyle Instagram accounts by

taking ten posts from each account, which were posted between October 1 and 31, 2023. These selected twenty accounts are a combination of both micro wellness influencers and curated wellness accounts, some of which are owned by celebrities.

The first question of this study is: what are the common characteristics, themes, and communication strategies promoted on the selected Instagram lifestyle and wellness accounts? This question directly focused on the thematic content of shared posts and their communication skills with the followers. To answer the first research question, I used a coding category taken from Global Wellness Institute's (n.d.b) predefined "wellness sector" section, adding one more category: healthy relationships and sexual wellness. There were nine themes encountered in 200 of these posts: Mental wellness theme, healthy eating, nutrition, and weight loss theme, personal care and beauty theme, physical activity theme, traditional and complementary medicine theme, healthy relationships and sexual wellness theme, wellness tourism theme, workplace wellness theme, and preventive and personalized public health theme. Apart from these, twelve out of 200 posts were deemed irrelevant, including funny memes, aesthetic photos, and movie references.

The findings revealed that the most shared content among these twenty accounts is the mental wellness theme, followed by healthy eating, nutrition, and weight loss and, personal care and beauty, and physical activity. These four themes are the most popular themes among shared posts, which is not a surprise considering that a combination of all of these fosters a holistic approach to well-being. Personal care and beauty is a highly popular theme on social media, especially considering the roles of micro-influencers and micro-celebrities since their role on social media is

mainly about sharing tips about products that they use. This is a highly commercialized theme since it is usually about sharing products, making it highly compatible with sponsorships. Themes of healthy eating and fitness are also prevalent since specific diets and workout routines have been popular around Instagram, especially with problematic body glamorizing posts. The most popular theme among these posts is mental wellness, which seems beneficial, especially for understanding the high and unrealistic expectations created by social media. It presents content focused on self-care, self-love, self-confidence, and self-discovery.

These wellness and lifestyle accounts use specific communication tactics to increase engagement rates and more followers. The effectiveness of influencer marketing campaigns often indicates the influence and reach of these accounts. In the wellness industry, "This idea of wellness as a lifestyle becomes the basis to market a series of products, apps and services to help the consumer look good, feel better and live well" (Baker, 2022, p. 82). The impact of social media is undeniable for beauty and wellness industries both for creating content to inform people. Alongside this informational content, there are also marketing tactics and efforts to establish a strong presence on social media platforms. As a result, Instagram's primary function has shifted away from merely storing memories to becoming optimized for sharing and boosting content to achieve widespread visibility and engagement (Leaver et al., 2020).

The branded content analysis revealed that there are 56 branded posts out of 200 posts overall. The majority of branded content is about clothing, beauty products, and apps. Most of the clothing category of branded content came from the theme of

physical activity since most of the products were active wear. Surprisingly, most of the branded content belongs to physical activity theme, which is an unusual outcome considering that this theme is focused mainly on workouts and sports. Then, it is followed by personal care and beauty, which is usually known for its sponsored content. The frequency of branded posts is unexpectedly low, given that wellness and lifestyle accounts typically thrive through collaborating with brands. These findings indicate that beyond collaborating with brands, many accounts are directed toward developing and promoting their own products. The majority of accounts prefer to develop their own products in the form of clothing, beauty, and podcasts with an attempt to establish a distinct brand presence in the business sector and increase their profitability.

Tagged accounts analysis included every account mentioned in both photos and captions. There were a total of 164 tagged accounts. The most tagged category is the brand accounts, followed by experts, influencer/model/celebrity. The high quantity of tagged brand accounts is not surprising, considering that these accounts aim to influence people, and not all these brands are sponsored content. A significant finding from this analysis revealed that experts were tagged in these posts. The inclusion of certain doctors, therapists, and dietitians means the information shared in the post is gathered from them. There are some shortcomings with the use of social media, especially for marketing reasons, and these are imitation of work, unfair competition, fake posts and reviews (Kaur & Kumar, 2022). One of the shortcomings is that the source of information can be misleading. According to Baker (2020), the spread of misinformation from wellness influencers is not usually detected since they are known to share experiences and opinions rather than facts. As a result, they

prefer to share the sources of information, which can act as a barrier to the dissemination of misinformation, although the legitimacy of the tagged experts can be questionable.

Another analysis was conducted to examine the tones of the captions to understand how these accounts prefer to communicate with their audiences. Three primary tones were detected: guiding, friendly, and joyful. The guiding tone was expected to be the most frequent, considering that most of the shared content was informative and approving since these accounts aim to influence people. The following tone, being friendly, is related to creating a one-sided para-social relationship with the followers. As mentioned by Baker (2020), social media platforms are easily accessible to everyone, so these accounts and influencers prefer to seem friendly and approachable to their followers and come across as caring in order to foster this sort of fake relationship. The ability to communicate in a caring manner, whether utilized or not, makes them seem accessible and strengthens the sense of connection their audience feels towards them. The use of friendly and joyful tones also fosters genuinity, leading followers to believe in the influence of the products and potentially gathering more purchases.

Finally, the use of hashtags in the captions were gathered and grouped into categories. Hashtags can be helpful in many ways to increase the post's visibility, expand the reach, and enhance engagement by using certain popular and generic hashtags. However, findings indicated that six out of the 20 accounts opted not to utilize hashtags and did not repeat any particular hashtag across their content. Similar to the results of the thematic analysis, the majority of the hashtags used revolved

around mental wellness, healthy eating, and fitness. Some accounts repetitively used trendy hashtags to enhance the engagement and visibility of their posts. In some of these brand collaborations, hashtags are also used to achieve more audiences since posts, likes, and comments are the primary concerns for increasing product visibility in brand deals. In some of these brand collaborations, specific hashtags are created for this particular campaign, and all influencers and accounts are advised to use the same hashtags. According to Leaver et al. (2020), these sorts of campaign hashtags help to maximize the exposure and impact of the hashtag stream since there is a variety of similar content under the same hashtag. Additionally, five accounts prefer to create their specific hashtags with wordplays, which creates a highly personalized, organized space for all of the posts.

The second question is about questioning the feminist credentials of these accounts: how does the wellness industry, specifically targeting women, promote feminism through female subjectivity and power? The wellness industry is highly integrated into the issues of feminism through its standpoints, promoting female entrepreneurs and their female followers. This industry should promote feminism by empowering women, challenging societal norms, advocating for women's health and rights, and providing platforms for female leadership and representation. The themes that have the highest sharing frequency are mental wellness theme, followed by healthy eating, nutrition, and weight loss and, personal care and beauty, and physical activity. The wellness industry, mainly when targeting women, seems to promote feminism by emphasizing female subjectivity, agency, and power ways of defending the importance of self and advising individual empowerment, especially as an industry known for creating platforms for female leadership and representation. The way the

wellness industry presents these ideals is questionable, especially through the content of these Instagram posts and the way they resonate with certain feminist ideals that are known to be media visible.

Women's empowerment, agency, and choice ideals are also highly important for postfeminism and neoliberal feminism. Both postfeminism and neoliberal feminism strongly emphasize individual agency and choice, understanding women as powerful supporters of their own choices and individual decisions, making them active agents (Gill, 2007; Rottenberg, 2014). Postfeminism is known to be an analytical perspective on products that offers a combination of feminist and antifeminist themes and already accepts the idea that there is no need for feminism since equality has already been achieved (Gill, 2007). Now, especially considering that this era discussed as post postfeminist; postfeminism can be seen as an outdated concept in analytical terms with the acceptance of feminism and shortcomings of the postfeminism discussion (Gill, 2016). However, some of its thematic offerings still shape the issues of gender inequality and power relations (Gill, 2016). According to postfeminism, women's everyday life is interpreted through the lens of personal choice, empowerment, and self-determination, ultimately fostering individualism (Gill, 2007). This created idea of free choice is a socially governed version of the new idealized beauty, and the idealized image of empowerment is directed towards certain beauty products and consumerism. This encouragement of empowerment is not about ending patriarchal relations; instead, it continues to present femininity as a commodity. It is suggested to women that they freely choose their idealized images when, in reality, these beauty ideals and standards are forced on them through various mediated ways, including wellness and lifestyle accounts on Instagram. They

inevitably promote certain looks and products to their followers, fostering certain beauty standards and increased consumerism.

In these wellness accounts, especially on the theme of mental wellness, there is a significant emphasis on the idea of the self; this idea that the self can only get better through self-care, self-love, self-growth, and self-transformation achieved through combining mental and bodily health. These sorts of ideals represent women who are always in search of the betterment of themselves through self-transformation and self-growth journeys compatible with the theme of self-monitoring of postfeminism. Gill (2007) points out that the extensiveness of self-surveillance is apparent in women's magazines; "bodily shape, size, muscle tone, attire sexual practice, career, home, finances, etc are rendered into 'problems' that necessitate ongoing and constant monitoring and labour" (p. 155), and now also projected on wellness and lifestyle Instagram accounts. These accounts motivate their followers constantly about how they need to self-care and self-transform for their mental health. This heavy focus on the self-concept is interpreted in many ways.

Gill and Orgad (2015) criticized contemporary neoliberal self-help books through their focus on women's self-confidence by mentioning that "[…] the confidence cult(ure) 'recuperates' feminism by recasting it in its own postfeminist and neo-liberal terms: as an individualistic, entrepreneurial project that can be inculcated by the self" (p. 334). By asserting these ideas of self-confidence and self-transformation, they expect women to take full accountability for their issues and not criticize the sources of the problems that created these issues, which are societal gender injustices, structural inequalities, and systemic barriers. Gill and Orgad (2015)

declare that this counterfeiter feminism is just a part of neoliberal feminism; “This new spirit, embodied by the confidence cult(ure), incites women to makeover their psychic lives, and in doing so makes over feminism itself—into a neoliberal feminism that is complicit with rather than critical of patriarchal capitalism” (p. 341). Neoliberal feminism is known to overlook structural inequalities and systemic barriers that limit women’s opportunities, focusing instead on individual achievement and empowerment within existing power structures.

Even from the perspective of industry, these encouragements towards self-care may be taken as an act of consumerism. The presence of posts with branded content is low compared to 200; however, self-care content is very much related to the ideology of consumerism. According to Baker (2022), this idea of self-actualisation has been exploited by wellness accounts in the form of self-transformation since they foster feelings of self-doubt, insecurity, and inadequacy in order to advertise certain wellness products and advice. Many accounts promote the idea of self-transformation and self-growth by focusing on mental health, creating routines, cooking healthy food, and incorporating physical movement. In order to achieve all of these, they offer retreat centers, cooking products, fitness apps, mental health apps, skin serums, and creams. The constant process of offering these types of content makes the followers feel inadequate. Also, creating time and money for all these presumed necessities is almost impossible for an average person who works nine to five.

Mostly these sorts of content, whether in social media, magazines, and self-help books, are usually directed towards women. Saunders (2024) points out that self-care is closely linked to striving to achieve one’s optimal self. The underlying implication

is that engaging in the right self-care practices will ultimately fulfill female roles, encompassing work, relationships, parenting, and overall existential well-being. In this regard, “self-care, therefore, renders women’s most profound meanings and purposes vulnerable to both commodification and an imperative of optimisation that embeds female subjectivity in ideals of discipline and self-improvement” (Saunders, 2024, p. 2008). The concept of self-care, particularly when applied to women, can be turned into commodification. Additionally, there is pressure for women to constantly strive for self-improvement and optimization, which can be restrictive and enforce societal ideals of discipline and perfection.

Overall, the wellness industry, through its emphasis on self-care and personal development, reflects and reinforces aspects of neoliberal feminism. Neoliberal feminism places a strong focus on individual empowerment and choice as pathways to gender equality, often downplaying the significance of systemic inequalities. However, Rottenberg (2014) explains the importance of work and family for neoliberal feminism; “neoliberal feminism attempts to ensure that the new feminist subject is oriented and orients herself towards the goal of finding her own personal and felicitous work–family balance” (p. 432). The surprising point is that workplace wellness is among the lowest themes posted in these accounts, with only two posts. These posts are not about giving workplace advice but instead focus on financial stability and finding remote jobs, which is surprising since neoliberal feminism supports economic participation and the personal success of women. From another perspective, Taylor (2015) discusses that there is a “new mystique” that supports the feminine ideal as the involvement of domestic spheres rather than the workforce, especially with this new popularity of entrepreneurship.

Another highly problematic issue of these accounts is that feminism is known for its collaborative support, which allows it to acknowledge and address differences among people and support equality with inclusivity and intersectionality. By promoting these ideals, feminists can strive for solidarity and collective action to challenge systemic injustices and advance equality for all. This ideal of collaboration allows for a more inclusive understanding of gender inequality, as it acknowledges that women's experiences are shaped by intersecting factors such as race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality. In all of these wellness and lifestyle accounts 200 posts, there is almost no content about women supporting each other, no content about feminism, and no content about human rights. There is not enough representation of racial, sexual, and bodily differences in the posts of wellness and lifestyle Instagram accounts, and feminism is not something that focuses only on the individual. This aligns with the frameworks of neoliberal and postfeminism ideals of individual empowerment. The wellness industry's promotion of self-care and personal development often aligns with the principles of neoliberal feminism, emphasizing individual empowerment over systemic change.

The final question of this study is focused on wellness. Specifically it asked to what extent these accounts promote wellness, mental health and women's health? This question is essential for understanding whether the industry genuinely cares for women and their betterment. As discussed before, the wellness industry is dominated by female entrepreneurs who claim to want to work on themselves and carry the desire to help other women (O'Neill, 2024). It is important to discuss in which ways the wellness industry is able to help women and whether it is achieving these by

paying attention to inclusivity. Wellness accounts should help women by being mental health advocates and educate users about women's health, especially about topics including reproductive health, menstrual health, pregnancy, and menopause. They also should create content by taking into account various social identities, including race, gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic status.

The first approach to answering this question is analyzing how these accounts deal with women's health through shared posts. Only one post focused on preventive and personalized public health theme about breast cancer awareness. There could be more content about preventive care, health screenings, and common health concerns affecting women, empowering their followers to take charge of their health. There was plenty of content about traditional and complementary medicine theme, and a significant number of them focused on periods, hormones, and menopause. More importantly, almost all the content shared about this theme had been expert reviewed. Also, on the theme of healthy relationships and sexual wellness, there was some content about women's sexual wellness, including taboo topics such as masturbation. Throughout history, there have been a lot of misunderstandings, especially about the hormonal systems of women. It seems that the usual healthcare systems have failed women in their search for health, so they seem to be intrigued by the search for alternative methods and medicines.

Another approach to this question is questioning the focus on mental health on these accounts. As mentioned in the second question, these accounts unquestionably advocate mental health by focusing on anxiety, depression, self-care, and seeking professional help. In many ways, they can be useful for reducing stigma and

promoting open conversations about mental health. Mental health, being the most discussed topic on these wellness and lifestyle accounts, is actually presented to be the betterment of self mainly from the inside but also through outside circumstances. These mental health discussions on self-love and self-confidence are also related to themes of personal care and beauty, healthy eating, nutrition, weight loss, and physical activity. Certain beauty ideals seem no longer glamorized by these accounts; however, examining pictures of the posts reveals that most of these accounts share pictures of similar-looking people, which can also be a topic for healthy eating, nutrition, weight loss, and physical activity.

These themes of healthy eating, nutrition and weight loss, and physical activity can be highly related to the old toxic ways of achieving beauty ideals through extreme dieting and exercise. Wellness and lifestyle accounts on social media platforms, while frequently advocating for positive concepts like self-care and healthy living, may unintentionally perpetuate harmful dieting and fitness standards. Overall, the posts on these themes show no praise or glamorization of extreme dieting and exercise. The prevalence of workouts promising quick results can perpetuate the misconception that fitness achievements should be immediate and dramatic, fostering unrealistic expectations. These posts may remind the toxic culture of dieting and fitness; however, there is an effort not to directly conform to the ideals of that culture, which seems to be working. Usually, there are recipes with high nutritional values, various exercises, and sports for different levels. Physical activity is praised for its benefits to mental well-being. There are continuous recipes for soups, salads, smoothies, and oatmeal recipes, which are usually known to be foods for extreme dieting. Nevertheless, these foods are not glamorized for weight-loss qualities.

Almost all of them are shared with their nutritional benefits, emphasizing the quality of foods with their benefits to the body, protein, magnesium, and fiber intake. There is only a specific representation of bodies and looks, which are usually tiny, skinny, perfect-looking women. Baker (2022) also mentions this issue "the emphasis on cultivating a certain type of body through the consumption of wellness products and programmes reflects this general concern to construct and control the body" (p. 86). They present and inevitably force a specific look on their followers, which is unhelpful for women's mental health. Wellness and lifestyle accounts usually prefer to share pictures of certain body types with slim figures, and this can be a more significant issue of conforming to beauty ideals and creating unrealistic ideals for their followers. Tagged accounts analysis showed that these accounts tag a lot of models, influencers, and celebrities because they use their photos for their content. These can eventually affect the mental health of followers and encourage extreme diets and physical activity. It is essential to note that in these 200 posts, there was only one content about fatphobia. Additionally, there's a significant issue regarding accessibility, particularly for individuals with demanding nine-to-five jobs. Balancing cooking nutritious meals and fitting into daily exercise routines can be considerable challenges for most followers. These results present some issues about inclusivity regarding race, body, and socioeconomic status, which brings us to the third approach.

The third approach is inclusivity and intersectionality, which is about recognizing the interconnectedness of various social identities, such as race, gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic status, with health outcomes. In many ways, wellness as an industry is known "as the exclusive and somewhat risible preserve of wealthy white women,"

which is one of the main concerns for this industry and study (O'Neill, 2020, p. 628). Baker (2020) mentions that "the wellness industry remains a hierarchical and exclusive phenomenon, and digital technologies can reinforce social stratification around race, class and gender rather than contesting social inequalities" (p. 113). The industry itself is known to be created and reinforced by privileged and white people. O'Neill (2020) discusses this issue with a black wellness entrepreneur woman, Asmaa, and she points out that "[…] the whiteness of wellness entrenches racialized health inequalities" (p. 631). The health industry is already problematic when it comes to racial issues, and it is problematic for women. The wellness industry itself contributes to this issue by not being inclusive enough. O'Neill (2024) connects this issue with neoliberal feminism and points out that it has many in common ideals with neoliberal feminism; "To this extent, it has much in common with the neoliberal feminist project it sets itself up against" (p. 16). Also, in this sense, the industry fails its aim to help women because "[…] while expressing a desire to help 'women' in some general undifferentiated sense, participants' efforts are actually directed towards particular kinds of women, namely those that resemble themselves" (O'Neill, 2024, p.16).

Overall, wellness and lifestyle accounts are known for their valuable information and influences, and aim to be sources of health. When it comes to women's health, they share valuable information, which is mainly about alternative medicine. Wellness and lifestyle accounts are not directly commercialized and are motivated to help women in various aspects. This can be understood from the low presence of branded content than the overall number of posts. However, they still fuel the culture of consumerism through ideas of self-transformation and self-care because they create the idea that

their followers need certain products and change. The most shared content among all themes is the mental health and wellness theme. The first issue is their focus on self-care and self-transformation, both of which are regarded as a part of mental wellness. These terms are questionable for their feminist approach since they fail to give accountability to systematic issues and create feelings of insecurity among women. It seems that the wellness industry is going in a direction that can be a mix of media visible feminisms, neoliberal and popular feminism, which already carry certain ideals of postfeminism. Gill (2016) regards these as media visible feminisms which use the terms as a motivational concept and promote a feminism that is out of substance; "What is new here is not the contestation but the mere fact of feminism being championed as a cheer word, a positive value—yet in a way that does not necessarily pose any kind of challenge to existing social relations" (p. 617). Within this framework, the wellness industry's messages promote the idea that individuals can overcome societal challenges through self-improvement, such as mindfulness practices or lifestyle changes. This approach overlooks the structural barriers that disproportionately affect marginalized groups and may serve to perpetuate existing power dynamics by placing the burden of change on individuals rather than addressing broader societal issues.

Also, their focus on mental wellness seems inconsistent because there are specific issues about their content preferences. All of these powerful messages and hints about self-transformation and self-care are very important and insightful; however, the real question is how much of these are attainable and rational when it comes to the real-life experiences of the followers. Apart from the attainability, it seems that they are directed towards the ideals of consumerism through their aim of constantly

offering insecurities to their followers. Their content seems contradictory because they seem to be supporting nutritious meals and physical activity for betterment of mental wellbeing however they prefer to only use pictures that convey certain beauty ideals especially subjects of pictures being models and influencers. They are not size and body-inclusive; they do not share enough information about these sorts of mental issues despite being one of the sources. These wellness accounts do not mention real issues surrounding women such as the topics of gender injustice, systematic barriers, unequal pay, and racial inequities but rather they focus on solving individual insecurities by also perpetuating the culture that created them.

5.1 Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered. First, the conclusions drawn from this research are constrained by the specific time period and the limited number of posts analyzed. The content analysis was restricted to only the latest ten posts shared by 20 wellness and lifestyle Instagram accounts between 1st and 30th October 2023, possibly overlooking some content outside of this timeframe. Also, by selecting only ten posts from each account, the depth of the data may not fully represent the entirety of each account's content. A longer time frame and more extensive data could be helpful for the depth of this study.

Furthermore, while this study aimed to identify and analyze problematic issues in the sampled posts, it is acknowledged that such problems may not be representative of all content shared by the accounts. These accounts are selected randomly, and the findings of this study provide information about general content, and the results may not be accurate for every account. There could be some accounts that are more

inclusive and aware of feminist ideals and principles. Analyzing only ten posts per account might have missed out on specific details that could be found in other posts, which could have offered more profound insights into the issues being discussed. As a result, the conclusions and discussions in this thesis are based on the specific sample and time period that was analyzed. Also, the selection of the twenty wellness and lifestyle accounts present that this culture is mainly seem to be controlled by American culture. The aspect of nationality could be considered in a more in-depth research especially for comparing its effects to wellness culture which is known for its Eastern roots.

Finally, the results gathered from textual tone analysis that worked on captions could have been more in-depth. However, the results are only obtained through AI tools. Using AI limited specific results of this analysis; however, deciding on the overall tones of the captions without any subjective opinions would be impossible without AI. This particular analysis could have been more detailed; however, this was not possible because of limited resources and the time frame of this study.

5.2 Areas for Future Research

Despite these limitations, the outcomes of this study provide valuable insights into the thematic content and potential problematic issues of wellness and lifestyle accounts within the selected sample. Future research endeavors of this study aim the issues that were addressed in the limitations. Expanding the sample size and incorporating posts from a more comprehensive time range could be the main next steps for this research to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of these

accounts. Besides, employing diverse methodological approaches, such as including a photo analysis and understanding its relevance to the theme of the content, could be interesting. Moreover, analyzing these accounts and their content on national and religious holidays could be an interesting study especially for discussing the nationality side of these accounts. Also, since these accounts are both curated and influencer accounts, analyzing the thematic and communication differences between these could be promising for future research.

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Sporty & Rich Wellness Club. [@sportyandrichwellnessclub]. (2023c, October 13). *Treating Acne: Which Blood Tests Can Be Helpful By: @drmelissa.co (Link in bio for full article) When one of …* [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CyWVsJsPuCs/

Sporty & Rich Wellness Club. [@sportyandrichwellnessclub]. (2023d, October 21). *People Pleasing: What Causes It And Strategies To Stop By: @ericabassotherapy (Link in bio for full article) Do you often confuse…* [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CyozfRzPd7v/

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APPENDICES

Appendix A.

Table of Instagram accounts

Name	Bio	Followers	Active since	Status
Goop	An indispensable resource for a beautiful, thoughtful life. Discover clean beauty, timeless fashion, wellness and more. Pursue pleasure @goopsex	1.8 MN	November/2013	Not Influencer owned by Gwyneth Paltrow
Poosh	by @kourtneykardash a guide to live your best life. read our feed: linkin.bio/poosh	4.8 MN	March/2019	Not Influencer owned by Kourtney Kardashian
Well+Good	Decoding and demystifying what it means to live a well life, inside and out. Follow @fineprint, @wellandgoodtravels & @wellandgoodeats linkin.bio/iamwellandgood New York, New York	1 MN	March/2011	Not Influencer
Mind Body Green	well-rounded well-being 💫read, listen, learn, watch, shop See what's on the site today: Bağlantı simgesi linkin.bio/mindbodygreen	1,3 MN	December/2012	Not Influencer
Theeverygirl	your favourite resource for a well-rounded life Tag @theeverygirl & #sharetheeverygirl to be featured on site & social Listen on @theeverygirlpodcast	1,2 MN	January/2020	Not Influencer

@mynameisjessamyn	the ms. frizzle of yogaaward-winning author #everybodyyoga #yokebook co-founder of @theunderbellyyogai love you.	589B	July/2012	Influencer
Frenshe	Helping you live a balanced non-toxic life. Founded by @ashleytisdale. → Mood-boosting self-care @beingfrenshe→ Male-identifying wellness @frens.he	143B	August/2020	Not Influencer Owned by Ashley Tisdale
Respin	A digital community focused on perimenopause and menopausal healthcreated by Halle Berry	120 B	April/2020	Not Influencer Owned by Halle Berry
Sshelbs	❁ just a bad b!tch trying to thrive, survive, & meditate * Podcast @ayawithin• Founder @divineselfretreat @brandingwithin ⋓ Clinical Social Worker	76 B	June/2014	Influencer
Ariellelorre	wellness, beauty & lifestyle stuff ♥ @theblondefilespodcast on Dear Media	402B	February/2016	Influencer
Katecraigwellness	girl gym ✨🧚@alphalete & @pescience -> code KATE	215B	May/ 2017	Influencer
Shaynateresetaylor	•Holistic chef•Sustainable living•Gut health•RetreatsFounder | CEO @shaynas.kitchen | @bottleandstone American raised with a European heart. 📍🇮🇹🇺🇸	791B	February/2019	Influencer
Greenshaker	🌼 I help women nourish their ***FLOW***, love their cycle, know their purpose + move through life with more joy. Cyclical Living Coach. 🌼 Work 1:1 with me👇🏼	51,3B	July/2012	Influencer
within.nutrition	▫dietitian▫gut health and hormones ▫fix your energy, weight, bloat, skin, fertility, mood 💫	251B	September/2018	Influencer
wellnesswithalina	fitness • healthy lifestyle • motivation☐ dubai | check my reelsmore fun on my story 🤍🫶🏻	2.271 B	October/2023	Influencer
msdlifestyle	for my love of healthy living🤍recipes | wellness | workouts@form community lead-code MERRY💌emelie@rowcollective.com	47,1 B	July/2018	Influencer
sportyandrichwelnessclub	33 Greene Street NYC	60,5 B	January/2020	Not influencer

alowellness_	What you put on your body matters. Amla-powered cutting-edge skincare & supplements. Move into wellness with @aloShop our feed👇	43,1 B	April/2021	Not influencer
soulsyncbody	By @sannevloet Access 175+ Pilates workouts, meal plans & a library of recipes! Purchase my 7 Day Gut Reset Ebook 🍋Start your FREE 7 day trial 👇	116 B	April/2019	Not influencer
nourisheddgirl	Hannah Heidel intentional living, nourishment, well-being holistic nutrition science / master's studentemelie@rowcollective.com	87,6 B	January 2022	Influencer

Appendix B.

Full selection of the images taken from wellness and lifestyle accounts

Alina. [@wellnesswithalina]. (2023a, October 14). *there are some well-known things that we all know but often forget to actually do. however, by adding these things…* [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CyYZRXLIGLU/

Alina. [@wellnesswithalina]. (2023b, October 18). *win your morning, win your day 🤍✨follow this 6 steps routine:- wake up early without distractions…* [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CyiWB1rg75W/

Alo Wellness. [@alowellness_]. (2023, October 3). *We're making the pursuit of better health even easier by putting wellness in the palm of your hand (or your…* [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/reel/Cx8hEiVL4eP/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Craig, K. [@katecraigwellness]. (2023a, October 20). *starting my day with meditation and journaling will forever give me superpowers wearing the new @alphalete flare leggings and sports…* [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CyochT0PoO0/

Craig, K. [@katecraigwellness]. (2023b, October 24). 🎀🧚☕💅🩰 **the sudden urge to go to Pilates** new @alphalete Oct 28th [code KATE] [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CyyZ0s-xUR9/?img_index=1

Dougherty, M. [@msdlifestyle]. (2023a, October 4). *A week of lunches 1. Cobb salad 2. Loaded veggie everything bagel 3. Feta and chickpea salad…* [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Cx-qIWYuZEc/?img_index=1

Dougherty, M. [@msdlifestyle]. (2023b, October 7). *Becoming the best version of YOU, requires the best effort from YOU!* [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CyGgPe3OV34/

Frenshe. [@frenshe]. (2023, October 3). *Magnesium is known to play a huge part in our bodies overall wellness. That's why we created our mood-boosting Soothing…* [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Cx6WIFUSFsz/

Goop. [@goop]. (2023a, October 1). *Our ideal fall outfit formula: polished wool separates + exquisite extras from the Tressage collection from @cartier Libre. Head to…* [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Cx3m-ckOdUg/?img_index=1

Goop. [@goop]. (2023b, October 4). *Just the subtle hint of color your makeup bag was missing. Follow GP's low-key beauty philosophy by dabbing on our…* [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Cx-oe3ssdEx/

Goop. [@goop]. (2023c, October 4). *The bad news: hormonal shifts during menopause and perimenopause can lead to symptoms like mood swings, weight gain, hot flashes, and…* [Photograph]. Instagram.

Greenacre, A. J. [@greenshaker]. (2023, October 4). 🪷 *NOURISH YOUR FLOW* 🪷 *I wrote this course for every woman who desires to be happy, in harmony with…* [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Cx-2Su9LkyC/

Heidel, H. [@nourisheddgirl]. (2023, October 5). *be the best verison of yourself -take the pressure off -remove expectations of who you think you should…* [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CyBd7JQrboK/

Ivanir, K. [@within.nutrition]. (2023a, October 6). *happy friday friendsss all about the tiny actions over here ✨🫶🏽 which one are you focusing on this weekend? lemme know!* [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CyD5K6NqJ8m/?img_index=7

Ivanir, K. [@within.nutrition]. (2023b, October 16). *It's been a heavy week for all of us 💔 When anxiety hits, the best tool is your breath. It's...* [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Cyd5cZWKkXk/?img_index=2

Jessamyn. [@mynameisjessamyn]. (2023a, October 2). *Here's a few quick shoulder stretches you can do seated or standing during your work day! #deskyoga #shoulderopener* [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Cx6DT4iPWs7/

Jessamyn. [@mynameisjessamyn]. (2023b, October 3). *Just a reminder- fat people do cool things all the time! Another reminder- The Devil class dropped today on @theunderbellyyoga app !* [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Cx8oVFvPQBW/

Jessamyn. [@mynameisjessamyn]. (2023c, October 5). *#DovePartner Here is my two-week update from using the @Dove sensitive skin beauty bar as a face wash every day while…* [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/reel/CyBr8E1RyO7/

Lorre, A. [@ariellelorre]. (2023a, October 9). *Botox does not 🟰 skincare and it's not the only way to have luminous skin (although it can help with smoothness)…* [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CyL2V7OO_XX/

Lorre, A. [@ariellelorre]. (2023b, October 17). *My go-to fall sweet treat 🍪 these oatmeal cookies are so easy and versatile, you can customize them with whatever…* [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CygPk_MrYmp/

Mindbodygreen. [@mindbodygreen]. (2023a, October 1). *When our beauty & health editor @jamieeschneider got an essential oil reading with @tammyfender, she wasn't sure what to expect. But…* [Photograph] Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Cx3VokVJEsA/

Mindbodygreen. [@mindbodygreen]. (2023b, October 3). *Think yogurt bowls always have to be high in sugar and low in nourishment? Think again: mbg editor @mollyknudyuses thoughtful…* [Photograph] Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Cx6c4HqMdNi/

Mindbodygreen. [@mindbodygreen]. (2023c, October 4). *Save this one for fall meal prep inspo! Magnesium is an essential mineral that facilitates hundreds (yes, hundreds) of chemical…* [Photograph] Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Cx9D9ZNshH3/

Mindbodygreen. [@mindbodygreen]. (2023d, October 6). *You're doing great 💗 More affirmations that invite positive thinking at the link in bio!*. [Photograph] Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CyDq7tEMThC/

Poosh. [@poosh]. (2023a, October 2). *Does longevity automatically mean bad sex? Great question, Anonymous. For today's topic, we tapped sexpert @thecaseymurphy to share if a…* [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Cx5woRvR1HM/

Poosh. [@poosh]. (2023b, October 2). *Should we be taking up golf? Y/N? We tapped trainer @tishaalyn to weigh in on this fitness trend at the link…* [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Cx6HSG3hd4X/?img_index=1

Poosh. [@poosh]. (2023c, October 3). *Take two deep breaths in with mental health therapist, Katie Pankonin (@enkindle_mentalhealth) as she walks you through her favorite hacks…* [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Cx8r18VgGFI/

Respin. [@respin]. (2023a, October 3). *rē•spin your read | Our bodies are a beautiful balance of five elements that work together harmoniously: fire, earth, metal, water…* [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Cx8N_rUsfl-/

Respin. [@respin]. (2023b, October 3). *rē•spin your read | Similar to the rē•spin philosophy, five core wellness principles dictate @shousugibanhouse's intentions and interactions with guests. Their goal…* [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Cx8pdF1vGJd/

Respin. [@respin]. (2023c, October 5). *Marketplace | Decluttering helps us value and take better care of the things we choose to keep while also saving time and…* [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Cx_wjJbonDb/

SoShelbs. [@sshelbs]. (2023,October 6). *rumor has it that 50% of marriages end up in divorce an maybe this is just due to our accelerated rate…* [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CyEIhanrvSD/

Soulsyncbody. [@soulsyncbody]. (2023, October 9). *Happy Monday!! It's day 1 of the Sculpted Arms & Abs Challenge. We're starting off strong with a 47…* [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CyL1AT4RhXE/

Sporty & Rich Wellness Club. [@sportyandrichwellnessclub]. (2023a, October 2). *Why Cold Water and Smoothies are Making you Bloated By @dr.nataziazustolberg (Link in bio for full article) In Traditional Chinese…* [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Cx57-Pjvo4p/

Sporty & Rich Wellness Club. [@sportyandrichwellnessclub]. (2023b, October 11). *The Energetic Properties of Foods By Dr. Natazia zu Stolberg, L.Ac, DACM (Link in bio*

for full article) Traditional Chinese… [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CyRcXkHSj7Y/

Sporty & Rich Wellness Club. [@sportyandrichwellnessclub]. (2023c, October 13). *Treating Acne: Which Blood Tests Can Be Helpful By: @drmelissa.co (Link in bio for full article) When one of* … [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CyWVsJsPuCs/

Taylor, T. S. [@shaynateresetaylor]. (2023, October 8). *Can you believe how much can change in just one year? It's a powerful testament to the magic of bravery…* [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CyI9uMgtcGV/

The Everygirl. [@theeverygirl]. (2023a, October 2). *October is #BreastCancerAwarenessMonth, and we want to remind you that early detection is the best solution. Swipe through for symptoms* … [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Cx6AKj1MRL_/

The Everygirl. [@theeverygirl]. (2023b, October 2). *Thanks to tech, there's now a virtual assistant job for every skill set and we rounded up the ones you…* [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Cx6OWLmMX_e/

Well+Good. [@iamwellandgood]. (2023, October 3). *Use this moment to relax your mind. Whether that's taking a few deep breaths or spending time in your journal…* [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Cx8y7tDveVF/