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A STUDY ON HEALTHY LIFESTYLE INFLUENCERS...

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“IF WE ARE WHAT WE EAT, I AM FAST,
CHEAP, AND EASY!”

A STUDY ON HEALTHY LIFESTYLE
INFLUENCERS, THEIR AUDIO-VISUAL
CONTENT AND ITS PERCEPTION IN
TURKEY

A Master's Thesis

By

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Ankara
May 2023

To *Quadis*

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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

May 2023

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By Gülce Özdemir

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

“If We Are What We Eat, I Am Fast, Cheap, and Easy!”
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Özdemir, Gülce

M.A. in Media and Visual Studies

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Social networking sites are full of references to the ideal body and nutrition at a time when using digital media has become the norm. Being a constant observer of social media and, in particular, so-called “health” trends such as “What I Eat in a Day” videos is a gateway to body image and eating disorders despite their claims of promoting healthy eating. Through content analysis and survey, this research examines some key messages in the “What I Eat in a Day” videos and how individuals exposed to these visuals and appearance-based comparisons respond to the videos regarding their healthy lifestyle habits. Results of the content analysis of thirty videos and a survey conducted with eighty people reveal that thematic and visual patterns influence media consumers through videos that reflect shape, weight, and eating concerns, restraint behaviors, and additional concerns about eating and body appearance. These results imply that these “healthy eating” videos have inherent damaging capabilities for young women who already lean toward disrupted eating behaviors.

Keywords: body image, eating disorders, healthy lifestyle, influencer culture, what-I-eat-in-a-day videos

ÖZET

“If We Are What We Eat, I Am Fast, Cheap, and Easy!”
SAĞLIKLI YAŞAM FENOMENLERİ, ÜRETTİKLERİ GÖRSEL-İŞİTSEL
İÇERİKLER VE TÜRKİYE’DEKİ ETKİLERİNİN ALGILANMASI
ÜZERİNE BİR ARAŞTIRMA

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Sosyal paylaşım siteleri, dijital medya kullanımının norm haline geldiği bu çağda, ideal beden ve beslenmeye ilişkin referanslar ile kuşatılmıştır. Sosyal medyanın ve özellikle “Bir Günde Neler Yiyorum” videoları gibi sözde “sağlık” trendlerinin sürekli takipçisi olmak, beden imajı ve yeme bozukluklarına açılan bir kapı haline gelmiştir. Bu araştırma, içerik analizi ve anket yaklaşımlarını üstlenerek, “Bir Günde Neler Yiyorum” videolarındaki bazı temel mesajları ve idealize edilmiş görsellere ve görünüşe dayalı karşılaştırmalara maruz kalan bireylerin videolardan ne şekilde etkilendiklerini incelemektedir. Otuz videonun içerik analizi ve seksen kişi ile yapılan anketin sonuçları; form, ağırlık, yeme kaygıları ve kısıtlama davranışlarına ilaveten yeme ve vücut görünümü hakkında ek kaygıları yansıtan videolar aracılığıyla sunulan tematik ve görsel kalıpların medya tüketicilerini etkilediğini ortaya koyuyor. Bu sonuçlar, “sağlıklı beslenme” videolarının, halihazırda bozulmuş yeme davranışlarına eğilimli genç kadınlar için zarar verici bir iktidara sahip olduğu anlamına gelmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: beden imajı, bir-günde-neler-yiyorum, etkileyici kültür, sağlıklı yaşam tarzı, yeme bozuklukları

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Five years ago, when I first came across the term “eating disorder,” I had no inkling that I would later go on to experience multiple variations of eating disorders and remain in the recovery stage while writing my master’s thesis. “Gülce, you are aware that anorexia is real, right?” a close friend of mine once told me. When she initially asked me this question, I was someone who was monitoring all the models, fitness enthusiasts, and lifestyle bloggers on Instagram, misusing their pictures as motivation, and researching their eating habits on Google. In a matter of months, my entire world was dominated by disordered eating patterns and obsessions with food. Similar to me, 57% of Turkey’s population in 2021 and 51% in the years 2019 and 2020 were searching online, seeking health-related information (*Turkey: Users Seeking Medical Info Online 2009-2021*, 2022). Moreover, according to a study by Tuna Oran et al. (2017) with Turkish female participants, women’s goals for following media coverage of health and nutrition issues were “learning healthy eating” (42.7%), “protecting health” (12.2%), and “weight control and slimming” (6.9%). In the same study, 58.1% of participants showed interest in the topic and followed the media’s coverage of the “healthy nutrition” issue. 54.9% of participants reported changing their behaviors and habits due to the information they learned. In

comparison, 69.1% of participants thought that their knowledge level increased due to the information they learned from the media (Tuna Oran et al., 2017).

Parallel to the study mentioned above, Sipahi and Demirel (2021) discovered that 46.3% of participants altered their dietary habits due to posts about nutrition on social media. Reduced fat and red meat consumption; switching to oats, probiotic yogurt, kefir, and green tea; use of supplements; detoxing; and attention to food labels are just a few examples of altered dietary practices mentioned in the study (Sipahi & Demirel, 2021). These altered eating behaviors are also well-known and frequently observed in the “What I Eat in a Day” videos, which was analyzed in detail further in this thesis. Additionally, according to the previously mentioned study, 30.4% of participants disregarded references in posts on social media. Along with the aforementioned group, 8.1% think that posts about nutrition on social media are created correctly and with sufficient knowledge (Sipahi & Demirel, 2021).

The main reason I chose to conduct my study using Turkish-language videos was the need for comprehensive and informed literature resources looking at how social media affects eating habits and body image issues in Turkey. I wanted to focus on lifestyle bloggers who target the Turkish audience and whose advice I tried to apply during the period when I was battling various eating disorders. Another reason I chose to conduct my research on the most popular videos in Turkey and with the Turkish language is that I wanted to understand how these videos affected the beliefs and practices of other young women who live in Turkey and of my generation with regard to body image. Influencer culture is prevalent and well-liked in several countries, including Turkey. Therefore, it has become even easier to influence

people's eating habits when information about nutrition and body image is shared irresponsibly on social media combined with social media's relentless standards of beauty.

As a young adult woman with a history of eating disorders, I am aware that social networks, which I have been using since my early childhood years, have a direct or indirect relationship with my disordered eating behaviors. In addition, social networks are also related to body image dissatisfaction, low self-esteem, and psychological stress since early teenage years are thought to be fragile times for the youth to start engaging in poor diet and controversial physical activities (Nelson et al., 2008). In order to better portray the gravity of eating disorders, I would like to commence by presenting the several eating disorders that will be frequently referenced throughout the thesis.

1.1 Eating Disorder Types

According to The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5), which will be consulted throughout the thesis as another source other than the *American Psychological Association (APA)*, the sub-titles under the heading *Feeding and Eating Disorders* are pica, rumination disorder, avoidant/restrictive food intake disorder, anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, binge-eating disorder, other specified feeding or eating disorder, and unspecified feeding or eating disorder (Black & Grant, 2014). Briefly, rumination syndrome is a disorder in which patients continually and unwittingly regurgitate undigested or partially digested food from the stomach and remasticate it. Pica syndrome is

characterized by a continual need for abnormal, nonnutritive substances (*APA Dictionary of Psychology*, 2022a; 2022b; 2022c).

1.1.1 Anorexia Nervosa

According to the description by APA, anorexia nervosa is a subtype of eating disorder that majorly affects adolescent girls and manifests itself with the excessive fear of gaining weight, unwillingness to eat, effort to maintain minimum body weight, body perception disorder, and amenorrhea (absence of at least three menstrual periods) (*APA Dictionary of Psychology*, 2022d).

As the writer and having previously been through this experience and using instances from my personal experience, secondary amenorrhea was one of my initial symptoms. Amenorrhea is a condition with potentially fatal complications, hence the relevance must be fully grasped. Amenorrhea causes a considerable drop in the body's estrogen hormone levels, which can lead to infertility, cardiovascular diseases, and osteoporosis. I do not even feel the need to write about the psychological consequences and distress amenorrhea caused when I was expected to deal with hormone medicines, injections, and birth control pills for almost three years.

1.1.2 Bulimia Nervosa

Following repetitive binge eating episodes, bulimia nervosa is a kind of eating disorder that includes inappropriate compensatory actions. These compensatory actions may include self-induced vomiting, the consumption of laxatives, fasting or self-starvation, and extreme exercise (*APA Dictionary of Psychology*, 2022e).

1.1.3 Binge Eating Disorder

Consuming enormous portions of food after losing control is a classic sign of binge eating. These persistent binge eating episodes are linked to mental health issues and depression (*APA Dictionary of Psychology*, 2022f). Moreover, dieting has been highlighted as one of the major contributors to binge eating, despite the fact that it is currently seen as a customary and contemporary practice (Ambwani et al., 2019).

1.1.4 Orthorexia Nervosa

Orthorexia nervosa is characterized by an obsession with eating wholesome, unadulterated meals as distinct from trying to lose weight. Since individuals only eat the foods they deem safe and entirely cut out other foodstuffs from their diets, it can result in malnutrition and even demise. The classification of orthorexia nervosa as either an obsessive-compulsive disorder or a subtype of anorexia nervosa is still up for discussion, making it a contentious syndrome (*APA Dictionary of Psychology*, 2022g). It is hypothesized that orthorexia nervosa corresponds to obsessive-compulsive disorders by causing intrusive thoughts about food, anxieties about food contamination, and ritualized eating habits (Greville-Harris et al., 2019).

Orthorexia is the most prevalent ailment we encounter on social networking sites, despite the fact that it is a sort of eating disorder that is particularly challenging to identify since it lacks distinct and definite boundaries. Orthorexia nervosa sufferers advocate eating healthy and whole foods, are committed to meal preparation and planning, and frequently promote the clean eating movement in sociocultural settings. Social media, therefore, provides a suitable setting for promoting behaviors related to eating disorders or orthorexia nervosa (Valente et al., 2021).

1.1.5 Body Dysmorphic Disorder

Body dysmorphic disorder, also known as body dysmorphia, is marked by a severe preoccupation with an illusory or minor physical abnormality in one's body. People with body dysmorphic disorder are constantly busy checking the parts they perceive as defective, which causes this disorder to fall under the category of obsessive-compulsive and related disorders (APA Dictionary of Psychology, 2022h).

1.1.6 Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder

This condition is an eating disorder that restricts or forbids eating. The available research distinguishes between three main subtypes: those who do not eat adequately or display little allure to food, those who accept a restricted diet, and those whose refusal of food is related to the stimulus that serves as a negative reinforcer. Additionally, this disorder is linked to several operational outcomes, such as delays in physical maturation, difficulties in relationships and the social realm, and problems in family functioning (Black & Grant, 2014).

Weight management is stressed as being crucial to overall well-being in Western countries, where health and wellness have become cultural obsessions. Social networking platforms, which have a significant impact on our lives, have consequently evolved into an unofficial source of health education. With high levels of engagement, a considerable amount of content on social networking sites started to broadcast idealized body images, healthy foods, diets, and exercise regimens (Jean Marks et al., 2020). These images served as an entryway to the above-mentioned disturbed eating habits and eating disorders, in addition to laying the groundwork for social media's wellness culture and lifestyle blogging.

1.2. Lifestyle Blogging and Wellness Culture

Social networking sites are societal and interactive platforms where individuals may represent themselves publicly by promoting their dietary habits, workout routines, and body measurements (Riesmeyer et al., 2019). Users in adolescence and early adulthood, who use social networking sites more intensely and unconsciously compared to adults, are more prone to being impacted by social media messages in the youthful period when their personalities and body awareness are under development. Therefore, adolescents construct their sense of self by incorporating the information and images they encounter online. According to Beauvoir et al. (2021), a girl's body evolves "into a screen between the woman and the world" when she reaches puberty (p. 342). The young girl's body turns into a means of communication with the outside world (Weber, 2021).

In addition, it is understandable that individuals need to feel a sense of belonging to a community when they are in search of identity at such a period in their lives. It is simpler to participate in and have a feeling of belonging in online communities since they do not rely on a membership structure but rather rely merely on the practice of following the contents. As a result, mindsets, practices, and discourses in online communities might cause disordered eating patterns (Valente et al., 2021). It would be outstanding if social networking sites did not feature content that enforces a slender body, an athletic figure, and the particular body ideal enforced in an era where health and well-being are the priority of the dominant Western cultures. The "influencers," or social media celebrities, are the ones who develop and run these communities and have a significant voice on social media (Jean Marks et al., 2020). While social networks may have numerous positive effects, such as information sharing and

enhanced peer communication, social media content creators foster a toxic environment for self-comparison by establishing core values for body image and dietary habits, normalizing having influence over other people's bodies and nutrition, and making unfounded health-related claims. (Jean Marks et al., 2020).

As Sweeney-Romero (2022) stated in her research, wellness contents “foreground the habits that ‘high-achieving’ women in their 20s and 30s suggest are foundational to their personal and professional success” (p. 108). Influencers that create content on the topic of wellness share their morning rituals, daily activities, and lifestyles in an endeavor to inspire their audience to lead healthy and prosperous lives. These contents also imply and emphasize the idea that “becoming that girl” will be assured by adhering to the routine followed by the content creator (Sweeney-Romero, 2022). “Becoming that girl” here implies that the members of the community who engage with the content may also act as influencers with a voice in matters of lifestyle, health, and beauty. Sweeney-Romero (2022) further elaborates her words by stating that the influencers “wake up early as 5 a.m.; put on a ‘matching set’ of workout clothes to go to the gym or work out from home; prepare a colorful but modest, healthy breakfast, hydrate with lemon water while also drinking a matcha; apply name brand body-care products in the shower...” (p. 108). Although the wellness-themed material appears to motivate people to become the greatest version of themselves, producing content with an attitude as if delivering a universal formula for success is the equivalent of ignoring the presence of individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Sweeney-Romero (2022) mentions that content providers who present aspirational lifestyles are early age, white or white-passing, thin, able-bodied, and cisgender, and their behaviors meet heteronormative

expectations, which further establishes the fact that such content is non-applicable and non-representative for a large segment of the audience.

1.3. Social Media Terminology Regarding Eating Disorders

The effects of social media on the body cannot be solely examined from appearance comparisons or food-related content. Hence, we have to delve deeper into the social media culture, and this is only possible by understanding the language that has developed on different platforms and the diverse terminology that has been created as a result.

1.3.1 Thinspiration

By combining the keywords “thin” and “inspiration,” the word “thinspiration” is formed. In social media, this term is used to describe material that promotes weight loss and either becoming or remaining slender. This notion is not necessarily delivered through a visual medium, it could also be represented through text in the form of quotes and such. The notion of thinspiration promotes several unhealthy habits, and Ghaznavi and Taylor (2015) highlight this occurrence by mentioning how glorified risky traits of eating disorders coexist in thinspiration-related materials.

1.3.2 Bonespiration

The word “bonespiration” is created by fusing the words “bone” and “inspiration,” and it might be considered an extreme variation of the term “thinspiration.” Images depict a physique with reduced muscle mass and an extremely low body fat percentage. The focus on frailty and thinness alludes to shame and food restrictions (Talbot et al., 2017).

1.3.3 Fitspiration

The words “fit” and “inspiration” are merged to create the term “fitspiration”. Social media users are encouraged by this term to get into shape by exercising and following a healthy diet. Fitspiration content, according to researchers, is less damaging than thinspiration and bonespiration since fitspiration contents are less likely to contain cases of unwell or excessively slender bodies, although caution should still be maintained (Talbot et al., 2017).

The three aforementioned tags and their contents motivate members of the social media followers to strive for a certain and unrealistic physique through these motivational contents. Such content may result in a bad mood, bodily dissatisfaction, and low self-esteem.

1.3.4 Pro-ana

Pro-anorexic communities oppose the legitimacy of the diagnosis of eating disorders and contend that severe eating behaviors and thoughts are simply lifestyle choices. Pro-ana communities have migrated in recent years from the internet pages they founded to more visual and accessible social media platforms such as Instagram (Ging & Garvey, 2017).

1.3.5 Pro-mia

In parallel to pro-ana, pro-mia encourages its supporters not to seek recovery for bulimia and promotes eating disorders as a personal decision.

1.3.6 Pro-ED

Online pro-ed communities offer suggestions to assist their members having eating disorders, which can result in a rise in disordered eating patterns and body dissatisfaction. Thus, it is legitimate to forecast that social media has a stronger impact on appearance-focused individuals with disordered eating behaviors than conventional media since the social media ecosystem delivers a wide range of information that might promote disordered practices (Greene & Brownstone, 2021).

1.4 The Foundation of “What I Eat In A Day” Videos

In the late 2000s, YouTube influencers, namely, YouTubers, began to create video content regarding beauty, lifestyle, and wellness. Hence, the content creators were well-known figures who attained some notoriety in such themes before the social media influencer boom emerged. In the aforementioned time frame, the creators of the material engaged viewers by creating “how-to” tutorial videos for desired subjects including a specific food or makeup appearance, “a day in the life” themed video blogs, personal style, shopping, and home decoration videos (Sweeney-Romero, 2022). Over time, as content consumers sought the ideal white bodies the influencers possessed and believed them to be reliable sources, the aforementioned video concepts gave rise to “What I Eat in a Day” videos. These videos contributed to the mentality that people who did not have the “ideal” physique implied a lack of commitment and effort to a workout and nutrition plan. A particularly large target demographic for this mentality is young women. There is always social pressure on women and young girls to have slender bodies since they are portrayed in the media as emblems of health and wellness (Sweeney-Romero, 2022).

Given that food is a component of culture, it is legitimate for social media influencers to establish a food culture and a symbolic food language in order to foster an online community. YouTubers have discovered an environment in which they share not only their daily meals or recipes but also their way of life. The vlogger demonstrates the items they consume throughout the day in videos and frequently explains why they choose certain foods. Moreover, meal preparation is frequently demonstrated. The content occasionally takes the form of a video blog (vlog) that also includes coverage of other everyday activities. “What I Eat in a Day” video format is also present on Instagram and TikTok, but in my thesis, I focus on YouTube since it is one of the most comprehensive platforms to produce video content owing to lengthy filming and editing processes. As a consequence of this, content producers have had time to consider their message thoroughly. Thus, it may be regarded that since the end of the 2010s, this topic, which evolved and changed organically, has evolved into its own unique genre (Sandal, 2018).

1.5 Feminist Literature

Eating disorders are the most deadly disorders that anyone may easily suffer from; however, women are three times more likely to have one in their lifetime (Keski-Rahkonen et al., 2007). Furthermore, as Weber (2021) demonstrated, we cannot merely attribute the fact that 90% of people with anorexia nervosa are women with epidemiological or biological factors. In non-Western nations that have been exposed to Western influence through globalization and industrialization since the 1970s, the prevalence of anorexia nervosa, which has risen internationally among teenage girls and women, has also been progressively growing since the 1980s. Eating disorders were nonexistent and unknown outside of the Western world until

then (Weber, 2021). Thus, the links established with Western societies are responsible for the rise of anorexia nervosa and other eating disorders in non-Western nations. Additionally, social networking websites of today are the primary means through which young adults may develop direct interactions with distinct cultures. Young people may now easily observe and mimic the food preferences, dressing choices, and physical appearance of content producers of any nationality, whether Western or not.

The existence of patriarchal social oppression regarding gender has been going on for centuries in non-Western cultures as well. However, in Western societies, thinness, and beauty have historically been associated with privilege and power. Western society has always been able to restrict women's participation in public life by establishing unachievable standards of beauty. Little girls learn that they must earn their presence by having an appropriate body (Weber, 2021). Every young woman who is persuaded that she is not welcomed in society and grows up fearing exclusion has been under pressure to get in control of her big, lazy body (Weber, 2021). They are told that exercising and adhering to a diet will empower them and serve as a constant reminder of their authority over their bodies. Personally, I could still recall this feeling of authority. I must confess that anyone suffering from an eating disorder, however, is absolutely powerless over their body and their diet.

Even though Turkey is located in the near vicinity of the Middle East and has a long history of patriarchy and sexism, there is insufficient research on women's studies, body image issues, and eating disorders. Hence, I believe and anticipate that this investigation will add to the existing body of knowledge by revealing experiences from an underrepresented culture and geography. Finally, male content creators were

not excluded from the research since it was intended to present the ratio of male content creators who create videos of “What I Eat in a Day” to female creators.

The thesis seeks to address the research questions listed below in the following chapters after summarizing the literature that has been written to date on the relationship between media and disordered eating in the second chapter.

Research Questions

RQ1. What kinds of visual and thematic patterns are presented or promoted in *What I Eat in a Day* content on YouTube?

RQ2. How does “*What I Eat in a Day*” content on YouTube impact relevant audiences from the ED community?

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theories that have been discussed to date on eating disorders and their relation to social media consumption have been explained in detail in this chapter. Since there is a plethora of theories and models within mainstream psychology that try to explain problems with food and eating in terms of eating disorders, it is no longer accepted that a single omnipotent theory can adequately explain the connection between social media and the pathology of eating. As a result, the up-to-dateness of these theories is now being questioned. The literature review presents pertinent aspects of various communication and psychosocial approaches. The dramaturgical model proposed by Goffman (1959) serves as the first point of departure for the literature review, which then moves on to the impression management theory. These theories are presented in the first stage, during which the topic is discussed from the viewpoint of content creators, and the theme of personal curation in social media is stressed. In the following section of the literature review, the uses and gratifications theory, cultivation theory, sociocultural theory, social comparison theory, and objectification theory will each be used to address the issue from the perspective of social media users. At the point of the commodification of the female body, objectification theory is discussed in relation to Goffman's (1979/2020) *Gender Advertisements*.

The dramaturgical model Goffman propounded, in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* and in *Gender Advertisements*, form the theoretical foundation of the

thesis. The dramaturgical model provided an explanation for the actions of the influencers whose videos were examined, particularly those who were trying to establish a public persona. According to Bullingham and Vasconcelos (2013), “Goffman’s original framework is not only still applicable but also has great usefulness as an explanatory framework for understanding identity through interaction and presentation of self in the online world” (p. 110). Furthermore, Goffman’s arguments regarding gender are associated with the presentation of the female body in social media, as in advertising and mass media. According to the models Goffman (1979/2020) provided in *Gender Advertisements*, women were frequently represented as having submissive tendencies and infrequently as being confident and independent in traditional media. Women in positions of authority were rarely portrayed, and when they were, they were always depicted as being physically weaker than men and having a more delicate build. The upcoming *Gender Advertisements and Objectification Theory* section explains this model in an in-depth fashion.

Goffman conceptualizes self-identity construction in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, where he illustrates it utilizing dramaturgical analogies (Bullingham & Vasconcelos, 2013). Due to the piece’s composition date and its emphasis on in-person communication, it might appear that it cannot be applied for social media and the online environment. Goffman’s work focuses on face-to-face interaction because technology-mediated interaction was limited to phone conversations when the work was written. According to Bullingham and Vasconcelos (2013), telephone conversations were viewed as a marginal form of communication that deviated from accepted and customary conventions. Due to the absence of visible cues that are

present in face-to-face communication, technology-mediated interaction was not viewed as a “real” means of communication during that time. Consequently, this communication channel appeared less compelling (Bullingham & Vasconcelos, 2013). However, the communication established through social media is steadily approaching the communication established in the physical environment now that influencers and social media content creators can offer audio and video content simultaneously. Bullingham & Vasconcelos (2013) bolster this assertion by stating that as blogging technology has advanced, the ability to customize social networking profiles and share photos and videos has given bloggers a variety of identity indicators. Additionally, these indicators enrich communication with followers (Bullingham & Vasconcelos, 2013). Moreover, several studies contend that electronic interaction is the natural and logical progression of human interaction in the digital age (Miller, 1995); Goffman’s theories can be applied to computer- and technology-mediated communication (Laughey, 2007); and his theories are timeless and adaptable (Jacobsen, 2010). Finally, users experience the Western concept of beauty in virtual worlds as they equivalently do so in the real world, and they “especially create leaner, younger, more fashionable versions of themselves” (Ducheneaut et al., 2009 as cited in Bullingham & Vasconcelos, 2013, p. 103).

2.1 The Presentation of Self and Impression Management Theory

According to Goffman (1959), people try to shape how other people perceive them. In order to maintain the appearances and behaviors he established at the beginning of the performance; the person must stick to the identity he has claimed and put aside all other roles (Goffman, 1959). People who claim to have certain social characteristics ought to embody those traits. While forcing contentious behaviors such as disorderly

eating patterns, lifestyle bloggers and influencers can adopt these behaviors and eventually turn into the people they have presented themselves as in the first place. Goffman (1959) refers to this set of behaviors as a “performance”. The audience is another participant in the performance, and as a result, a social relationship develops between the actor and the audience. According to Goffman (1959), during his performance, the actor gives the audience the impression that their bond is more robust than it actually is. This also applies to the relationship between a blogger and their audience. The blogger frequently expresses how he thinks of his audience as close friends or members of his family. By doing so, they acquire the authority to control the bodies of their followers’ thanks to this emotional connection.

As was stated earlier, those who create the performance should exhibit the qualities they promote. To put it another way, influencers should be attractive and have ideal bodies, which, they claim, can be attained by following the healthy lifestyle they advocate. Although the performer works hard to shape the audience’s perception of him, he might not actually engage in the discourse he promotes outside the presence of his followers. The fact that many social media influencers that spread health propaganda have developed disturbed eating behaviors, as discussed in subsequent chapters, serves as an example of this situation.

Where the performance takes place is referred to by Goffman (1959) as the setting. Those who wish to use settings cannot begin their performance until they arrive at the proper location and are required to end it when they depart (Goffman, 1959). In our instance, the influencer is on camera, and the “What I Eat in a Day” videos are shot in

the influencer's home or gym. Since the location is familiar to the actors, it is possible to enhance the realism of the performance.

When a performer adopts a specific social role, he may occasionally discover that there are frequently stereotyped, established expectations for that role (Goffman, 1959). Social media has also established expectations for the characters interacting in the social media environment. As discussed in the following chapters, bloggers who promote a healthy living frequently share posts that are similar to each other. People present values and behaviors accepted by society when they perform, which gives rise to collective behaviors (Goffman, 1959). A collective representation of a healthy lifestyle is created by physical characteristics and similar dietary and exercise-wise preferences. These representations and collective presentations are more intense on social media because social media influencers must carry out their roles in front of their large audiences rather than a handful of people they might have to perform for in real life. As roles and performances become more extreme, they become more likely to lead to disordered eating patterns and body dissatisfaction, and the number of people they negatively affect grows accordingly.

Actors portray their current roles as if this is the only and most significant role they will ever play, claims Goffman (1959). Similar attitudes are presented in the "What I Eat in a Day" videos. Bloggers who promote healthy living portray their diets and lifestyles as a great success and a set of timeless principles.

The upper strata are frequently idealized in hierarchical societies. In addition to holding a prominent position, Goffman (1959) claimed that being a member of the

upper class also requires sharing the values of the community. In today's media-focused world, where everyone is geared toward the media, maintaining ideal health and beauty means adhering to these ideals.

According to Goffman (1959), people may occasionally declare themselves authorities on a subject and receive nothing worse than waves of laughter from viewers when the fallacy of their claim is revealed. As Goffman (1959) further states, a performer can take on any role and assert any status without putting themselves in an untenable situation. It is much simpler to embellish the truth on social media platforms without putting yourself in an absurd situation, even though the contents allegedly include elements from real-life experiences. The audience cannot witness all of the content creator's activities because they frequently share only a portion of their daily activities on social media. Goffman (1959) further emphasizes how the right camera angles and media montages could be used to distort the truth. Therefore, observers' perceptions of reality are always subject to manipulation. The creators of the content proceed without hesitation because they are aware that even if their audiences realize that they are being manipulated, there will not be any negative consequences.

Influencer-created universes frequently convey the underlying message that everything is perfect, including people's physical appearance, general well-being, living conditions, kitchen setups, exercise routines, and the delicious and nutritious meals they consume that are both aesthetically pleasing and high in nutrients. According to Goffman (1959), a flaw in the stage could endanger the interaction between the performer and the audience as well as the performer's standing and

reputation. However, due to the limited sharing of excerpts from the creator's daily life and the ability to montage the content, revealing a flaw is relatively uncommon in the social media setting. During the performance, a simple mistake can cast doubt on the overall performance. Therefore, the performer must design and present the perfect act by highlighting specific components of his life and eliminating others.

Furthermore, since a single impression has the power to influence the opinions of a sizable audience, the media industry is accustomed to having serious concerns about impressions. Since social media accounts are personal, the creator of the content is the only one in the spotlight, and the ideality of the impression is carefully considered. The success of the performance can be assessed by the audience's attachment to, belief in, and imitation of the performance as a result of being deceived by this reality (Goffman, 1959). In the interaction between the creators of the content and the viewers of "What I Eat in a Day" videos, there is a similar conviction and attachment.

In some cases, the performer believes that the reality he creates is the only reality and internalizes the standards he presents to society. He forms a team with other content owners who provide similar performances and becomes a spectator to similar scenes (Goffman, 1959). Albeit creators being different and having different ideologies and methodologies, they still serve the same purpose, the influencer purpose. In this case, they might be creators who eat more flexibly, do not obsess over calories, or do not exercise frequently, yet, Goffman (1959) considers them as parts of the same totality. At the point of creating the "What I Eat in a Day" videos, these individuals are part of the same team and serve the objectives of the team. Thus, there will be differences between team members in terms of the degree to which they manage the

performance; the structural similarity of the seemingly diverse lives and routines depends on the players' managing of the performance (Goffman, 1959).

Finally, Goffman (1959) points out that every stage has a backstage. The reality in this area, thus, might not match what is being presented on the front stage. Here, costumes and other components of the personal display are examined, and flaws can be fixed. The backstage of "What I Eat in a Day" content producers is full of binge-eating episodes and "cheat days" that are not displayed to the audience. People with disordered eating behaviors and dysmorphic disorder are aware of the backstage, even though it is a private space that is off-limits to the audience. I would like to note that I am speaking from a self-ethnographic perspective, and it should be recalled that the goal of this thesis is to analyze the videos in order to look at what goes on behind the scenes.

People who conform to the accepted beauty ideals and patterns are given the stage in real life, while those who exhibit undesirable physical characteristics are kept in the background (Goffman, 1959). Social drawbacks come with being overweight or not at an ideal weight. Being overweight is viewed as morally dubious, abnormal, discipline-deficient, and vulnerable. In other words, the value of projecting a proper and ideal image in social life compels one to take a leading role on the front stage (Goffman, 1959).

Similar to the self-presentation theory, there exists the impression management theory. These theories share the same fundamental principles. The impression management theory is related to issues with eating disorders and negative body image

brought on by increased and excessive Internet usage. Rodgers (2015) claims that obtaining social acceptance and approval is the driving force behind impression management practices. Thus, people believe that in order to gain social acceptance, they should present the most desirable and attractive versions of themselves and present selectively chosen images and information about themselves (Rodgers, 2015). Regarding eating disorders, the inability to express and suppress the true self can result in excessive reliance on other people's opinions and expectations regarding physical appearance. According to Striegel-Moore et al. (1993) and Zaitsoff et al. (2001), high body image concerns result from this commitment to the standards set by others. Given that videos with the theme of "What I Eat in a Day" are among the most frequently viewed materials about the external standards of appearance, it will not be difficult to grasp the connection between the eating disorder symptomology and video contents. According to Rodgers (2015) media users construct an online self closer to their idealized self than their actual self. Furthermore, people constantly attempt to close the gap between their online and offline selves, which raises the possibility that this online personal curation will result in disordered eating habits.

The creator's perspective is addressed by self-presentation and impression management theories. The uses and gratifications theory is one of the most prevalent theories regarding theories that address the audience's perspective. Mass communication theories held that the media directly impacted people and shaped their opinions before the uses and gratifications theory was put forward. The uses and gratifications theory, however, cannot be taken as proof that social media users are utterly conscious of their actions. Because even if we choose to subscribe to a channel or account, we do not have complete control over the content we are exposed to. The

options provided by the social media algorithms are not our personal decisions. Nevertheless, since people consume content to satisfy a particular need for themselves, their individual agency should not be disregarded. People may be motivated by a variety of factors regarding the content they consume, including information seeking, convenience, the urge to belong to a group, escaping from reality, and obtaining appearance standards.

2.2 Uses and Gratifications Theory

The uses and gratifications theory (Katz et al., 1973) attempts to explain the drive behind the selection and use of a particular media. Consuming material on appearance, diet, weight, and shape, as well as interacting socially with the content producers on these topics, may be goals for people who are drawn to the thinness ideal in traditional and social media, who are accustomed to comparing their bodies to those of others, and also who begin to feel dissatisfied with their bodies. At this point, the severity of an individual's experience with disordered eating behaviors and body dissatisfaction affects how motivated they are to engage in ED-related behavior on social media (Drtilová et al., 2021).

The research by Drtilová et al. (2021), which uses the uses and gratifications theory as its theoretical underpinning, aims to ascertain why women with a history of eating disorders participate in ED-associated online activities. The uses and gratifications theory underscores the user-oriented approach by presuming that users actively and purposefully select the media to meet their needs and demands (Katz et al., 1973). However, users from online ED communities have revealed that the gratification of internet usage is not always clear-cut (Drtilová et al., 2021). "The internet offers

constant eating disorder related information, which was unwanted and would ‘pop up’ unwelcomely” (Drtilová et al., 2021, p. 795). As authors further emphasize, the interviewees relied on the fact that this information bombarded and attacked them, and escape was almost impossible. Although the uses and gratifications theory is widely used in explaining the correlation between disordered eating behaviors and social media consumption, the previously mentioned study shows that the content we are exposed to on social media is not entirely within our control. The satisfactions we acquire from media “need not necessarily be driven by innate needs, but could be triggered by features we experience while using particular media,” according to Sundar and Limperos (2013, p. 510). Thus, eating disorder sufferers may lack the mental fortitude, digital literacy, or willpower to recognize potentially detrimental content (Drtilová et al., 2021).

According to the interview data collected by Drtilová et al. (2021), information that people are exposed to compels them to incline towards disordered eating patterns and to engage more actively with the topic. Other participants stress that the abundance of information about diet and exercise confuses users and makes it difficult to choose accurate information (Drtilová et al., 2021). The majority of respondents had negative ideas regarding the volume of information available on social media related to eating disorders and viewed this information as an obstruction to recuperation. Last but not least, for some further respondents, the abundance of information about diet and exercise led to the perception that these topics were natural to be discussed in an online setting, even though they thought these subjects were hazardous to discuss online (Drtilová et al., 2021).

Getting feedback from others is also a common reason for social media use; however, negative and positive comments are a double-edged sword. Positive remarks can boost the self-esteem of individuals with disordered eating behaviors through messages that have a supportive or motivating tone that they are in the correct behavioral pattern, while negative comments can increase someone's body image insecurity and dissatisfaction (Drtilová et al., 2021).

The uses and gratification theory and the planned behavior theories were combined by Pember et al. (2018) to further explore the motivations behind sharing food-related content. Researchers have shown that social media networks and platforms can generate and disseminate normative perceptions. People's intentions and routines for eating more healthily and exercising more frequently are impacted by the growing trend of sharing content with a food- or exercise-related theme (Pember et al., 2018). Research by Larson et al. (2014) found that exposure to images or messages of a certain type of food can stimulate cravings for that particular type of food. Moreover, research by Vaterlaus et al. (2015) found that college students have already admitted to being influenced by the social media posts they see about food and exercise. In short, because of the instantaneous and pertinent interactions with peers and consultants, social networking platforms have a significant impact and the potential to influence behavior and attitude change. According to the survey results on people who follow food images and food-related content in the study above, the primary objectives are "finding new recipes," "seeing what others are eating," "being inspired," and "comparing their own food with that of others." (Pember et al., 2018). Keeping track of other people's diets and comparing the portions and nutritional value

of other people's food with their own are two examples of problematic behaviors related to the healthy eating obsession discussed throughout the thesis.

The uses and gratifications theory was also employed in the study by Ngqangashe et al. (2021) to investigate the driving forces behind young people's consumption of food-related media. As I have already mentioned, these researchers have also noted that media use may not always be intended to satisfy needs. Sometimes the audience may consume a program or content purely out of availability. Additionally, as stated by Thorson and Wells (2015), viewers may not be in control of their viewing decisions in digital media because of the sheer volume of platforms and content options available to them.

The online media audience is considered to have more control than the traditional media audience, and the researchers viewed media consumption as a deliberate act and identified education, social utility, and entertainment as the driving forces. Furthermore, they proposed that food images share common patterns and express an aesthetic or a lifestyle (Holmberg et al., 2016). Accordingly, a different study discovered that posting pictures of food on social media, such as Instagram, is a way for teenagers and young adults to express themselves (Holmberg et al., 2016). According to research by Ngqangashe et al. (2021), these food-related posts impacted respondents' eating and cooking decisions. The research participants mentioned that the food content creates an urge to consume or cook similar foods.

Additionally, the researchers linked "fitspiration" content to the educational driving force. As was previously mentioned, "fitspiration" refers to online material that

entices the audience to practice vigorous exercise and adopt a healthy diet (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2016). All of this implies that users who rely on social media for advice on healthy eating may be exposed to harmful and extreme diet and lifestyle examples. These materials might contribute to disordered eating behaviors by making people feel inadequate and unaware of their dietary choices. The excessive reliance on online media for information and inspiration raises issues because it highlights the link between food media and health and because food media frequently features foods with dubious health benefits and restrictive eating habits.

Such conscious and active exposure to thinness-related social messages has the potential to develop into an obsession, an addiction, and eventually passive behavior. Speaking of over-exposure and excessive reliance, another topic that we should consider is the literature that examines the relationship between media and eating disorders through cultivation theory.

2.3 Cultivation Theory

Cultivation served as the leading theory in the research conducted by Saraceni & Russell-Mayhew (2007) in which they claimed that thin-depicting/thin-promoting messages cause eating disorders and body dissatisfaction because cultural standards focused on beauty and thinness are easily transmitted through media. Women have been exposed to images and messages of unattainable beauty and thinness through the cosmetic, diet, pornography, and plastic surgery industries (Wolf, 2015), and these days, exposure to these messages through social media is more common and more accessible. According to Irving (1990) women are most affected by the media's pressure to be thin and identify the media as their primary source of anxiety. While

women have a wide range of bodies in size and shape, the media and advertisements only present a single, distorted shape in an effort to establish a female body standard, which is why it is problematic to be exposed to body image constantly (Saraceni & Russell-Mayhew, 2007). According to the authors, working with the diet industry and emphasizing that the ideal body is attainable, regardless of biological or environmental factors, is another detrimental practice (Saraceni & Russell-Mayhew, 2007). The “What I Eat in a Day” videos can therefore be added to the list of sources suggesting the attainability of ideal bodies. The authors further stress how prevalent messages about the thin body ideal and diet- and exercise-related content make it highly acceptable and expected for women to be preoccupied with their weight and physical appearance evermore (Saraceni & Russell-Mayhew, 2007).

The cultivation theory contends that repeated exposure to these predetermined beauty standards distorts media consumers’ understanding of social reality and causes them to internalize the sociocultural ideal of thinness. Women are being told to alter their bodies to conform to ideal images through the constant media coverage of diet and exercise-related topics. As the authors state, the mainstream media “reinforces Western culture’s requirement that women ‘should be’ invested in self-improvement related to beauty” (Saraceni & Russell-Mayhew, 2007, p. 71). In societies where many women are dissatisfied with their bodies, it is crucial to recognize that eating disorders are a natural outgrowth of extreme weight obsession, constant dieting, and body shame. Lastly, each of these messages conveys to women that their value is based on their appearance, which is a strong message that can result in various mental disorders.

“American culture sends a powerful signal to women- that only the beautiful, and the thin are valued and loved, catalyzing an American ideal of female body image where thinness is a sign of success, health, and being in charge of your life. Thinness promises women the ‘goodies’ life has to offer” states Hesse-Biber et al. (2006, p. 208).

According to Hesse-Biber et al. (2006) male and female bodies are not just biological entities but also have culturally constructed meanings. Ideal bodies constructed according to these cultural standards emphasize economic success, feelings of power, bodily self-control, and control in the social world (Goodman, 2002). These social messages, primarily propagated through the media, aim to persuade people that women are responsible for having an ultra-slender body and that failures of this body type denote laziness, discourtesy, self-indulgence, lack of authority, and moral collapse. Therefore, slenderness is a reward for working hard and having strong morals and is, therefore, a substantial value sufficient to determine self-worth, according to common media messages (Hesse-Biber et al., 2006). Food’s moral classification as “good” and “bad,” “clean,” and “dirty” frequently appears in the media and rouses feelings of guilt and shame. These terms and their connotations could be risk factors for the emergence of eating disorders and/or disordered eating patterns.

According to the authors, media consumers are persuaded that achieving the ideal body requires “...individualized meal plans/pre-packed foods/daily meal delivery services, work-out sessions with celebrity trainers, or membership with a weight loss coach or guru” (Hesse-Biber et al., 2006, p. 213). This quotation clarifies why, within

the parameters of my thesis, users rely on social media influencers and their “What I Eat in a Day” videos. In light of this, the “healthy lifestyle” was developed purely for aesthetic purposes rather than health (Hesse-Biber et al., 2006).

Cultivation theory postulates that we are repeatedly exposed to media messages and images until they become a part of our reality (Levine & Smolak, 1996). These messages influence our current social reality and help to shape our ideas. Videos of “What I Eat in a Day” can persuade viewers that the ideal diet and exercise routines are possible, just as repeated exposure to images persuades women that this ultra-slim body is possible. Finally, cultivation theory declares that users are more likely to exhibit problematic eating behaviors the more social media exposure they receive (Hesse-Biber et al., 2006).

After discussing social influence and the cultivation theory, I can move on to other theories that have features in common and are centered on social interactions and relationships. Since I am conducting research on a group of people who watch specific types of videos, this audience has a common culture and language as well as a specific goal and motivation relating to body image and eating habits. Thus, I should start with sociocultural theory since it is built on language, culture, and social interactions.

2.4 Sociocultural Theory and Social Comparison Theory

Rodgers’ (2015) research also included sociocultural theory, which linked internet use to problems with body image and eating disorders. According to Rodgers (2015), after being exposed to messages about body image from social agents, people

internalize these messages. Additionally, social media facilitates communication between other social agents, such as friends and family, as well as influencers and outsiders. Family and peer groups can also propagate appearance-centered messages and exert pressure on people's bodies and diets (Rodgers, 2015). Social media also can endorse particular messages to foster ideals. Users can express their support and endorsement by liking, retweeting, following, and commenting on appearance-focused images and messages (Rodgers, 2015). The internalized messages lead to the practice of disordered eating behaviors to get closer to the "ideal" (Rodgers, 2015). Media is currently one of the most critical social agents and according to research by Levine and Murnen (2009), "a wealth of correlational, prospective, and experimental studies has provided support for the role of media exposure in the development of body image dissatisfaction and eating pathology and suggested that media exposure might be a causal risk factor for these concerns" (p. 122).

In addition to the images and messages that promote disordered eating behaviors, fat talk is also quite prevalent in the media. Shape and weight are the main topics of fat talk, which is frequently disparaging. Moreover, it might contain trigger messages and suggestions for weight loss that could cause issues with body image and nutrition (Nichter, 2001; Sharpe et al., 2013).

In his study investigating social media's effects on female body image, Perloff (2014) also demonstrates that thin-idealized beauty is culturally stereotyped. In order to address body image issues, he has utilized a variety of communication and psychological theories, including the sociocultural perspective. The study uncovers

that female internalization of the thin ideal originates in various social and cultural coercions, including peer pressure, media portrayals of thinness, same-sex interpersonal modeling, and symbolic, cultural, and even ideological articulations of beauty (Bandura, 2009; Maccoby, 1966; Thompson et al., 1999).

Although not everyone is equally affected by media exposure, utilizing images for self-comparison and self-evaluation derives from repeated exposure. Negative self-comparison and self-evaluation cause appearance concerns (Shotton et al., 2013). Sociocultural theory emphasizes appearance comparison as one of the instruments to explain the connection between sociocultural coercion to meet appearance standards, body image issues, and eating disorders (Schutz et al., 2002; Rodgers et al., 2014; van den Berg et al., 2002). Social comparison can take place in upward and downward comparison forms. In an upward comparison, individuals can cause a decrease in their self-esteem by comparing themselves with peers or celebrities. On the other hand, downward social comparisons draw distinctions with a target deemed inferior on the pertinent subject. Due to the abundance of body images available online, many of which can be digitally altered, social media is a convenient setting for examining social comparisons (Perloff, 2014).

In their study on how appealing peer and celebrity images affect women's mood and body image, Brown and Tiggemann (2016) noted that because celebrities' private lives are so widely covered in the media, they are an excellent source for social comparisons. As a result, the public may believe they have developed a stronger bond with celebrities (Maltby et al., 2005), and social media influencers. Moreover, people are more likely to develop self-comparison with those they perceive as familiar, as

this comparison provides the most information (Brown & Tiggemann, 2016). The lives of social media celebrities are much more in the public eye than traditional celebrities. For this reason, influencer culture and the social media celebrity system are hazardous and subject social media users to social comparison. In light of the findings of the study above, Brown and Tiggemann (2016) concluded that women's moods are negatively impacted by their exposure to images of peers and celebrities on Instagram and that this exposure drives them to compare their bodies, which leads to body dissatisfaction.

People are more likely to draw upward comparisons, as was previously mentioned. According to some researchers, people make upward comparisons to learn more and progress toward the standards of those they admire. Hence, they strive for self-improvement (Buunk & Gibbons, 2007; Taylor & Lobel, 1989). Women who make upward comparisons of their bodies also compare themselves with individuals they believe to be experts on a subject because they believe that these people can also provide a good deal of information and assist them in becoming better versions of themselves (Martinot & Redersdorff, 2002). Moreover, women who advocate the slender ideal, eat healthily, have flawless bodies, and are enthusiastic about exercise are good examples of the ones who seem to be "experts" in the media and good sources of inspiration (Collins, 1996; Mills et al., 2002; Myers & Biocca, 1992). As a result, social media influencers and content creators can easily be regarded as authorities if they are thin and attractive; thus, they can sway millions of users based on their appearance.

Studies have shown that women who are exposed to thin-idealized images of females in the media display more eating disorder symptoms than women who view average-size models, oversized models, or lifeless objects (Grabe et al., 2008; Groesz et al., 2002). In conclusion, women exposed to idealized thin images frequently feel inferior and inadequate due to their comparisons. These feelings of discontent and insufficiency are the main reasons for body dissatisfaction and disordered eating (Major et al., 1991).

In their qualitative research examining online blogs' association with orthorexia nervosa, Greville-Harris et al. (2019) declared that while the literature has focused on upward comparisons, their research has shown the role of downward comparisons with those considered "less healthy" in enhancing self-esteem. Additionally, because of the improvement in self-esteem, those with orthorexia nervosa consider the situation favorably. As Greville-Harris et al. (2019) further emphasized, "these contrasting narratives of downward comparison and social acceptability can be fundamental in understanding how orthorexia can remain unnoticed, hidden, or promoted as something to be desired" (p. 1699). The downward comparison is also presented in Wood's research (1989), which served as a self-improvement mechanism. According to the author, a person can feel better regarding their position by comparing themselves to someone lower in a trait of interest through downward comparison (Wood, 1989). Accordingly, both upward and downward comparisons can take triggering and damaging forms for the individual's mental and physical health.

In another study on the effects of body comparison, Lin and Kulik (2002) found that women feel unsatisfied with their bodies when they are exposed to idealized images. However, they do not react with increased body satisfaction when images of oversized bodies are shown. As a result, the aforementioned study's findings indicate that social comparisons are only negative and upward (Lin and Kulik, 2002).

Brown and Tiggemann (2021) also employ the commonly accepted social comparison theory to correlate body image issues and eating behaviors with media exposure. According to the authors, women compare themselves with models and celebrities, knowing they will be compared and evaluated based on cultural norms such as thinness and attractiveness (Brown & Tiggemann, 2021). The research also presents that women and young girls frequently compare themselves with celebrities and well-known individuals. Additionally, researchers concur that these comparisons harm body image (Brown & Tiggemann, 2021). Finally, according to investigators, celebrity culture is an inseparable part of today's societies (influencer culture can also be reckoned similarly). Brown and Tiggemann (2021) claim that exposure to, idolization of, and comparison to celebrities can result in maladaptive behaviors in women, girls, and increasingly, men and boys.

The social comparison theory is also the foundation for the research done by Panjra and Tiwari (2021) on the influence of fashion influencers on body image satisfaction. According to researchers, the actions taken by influencers who want to serve as a source of inspiration engender feelings of envy and lead social media users to compare their bodies to content creators (Panjra & Tiwari, 2021). Researchers further explain that fashion is crucial in maintaining the thin body ideal and

identifying standardized bodies (Panjraath & Tiwari, 2021). Since fashion is also a part of lifestyle blogging, it is imperative to address this issue. Researchers assert that social media users feel pressured to live and look “Insta-worthy” due to the contents they are exposed to on these platforms (Panjraath & Tiwari, 2021). Therefore, this study explains that social comparison is the root cause of feelings of inferiority and envy and can lead to lowered self-esteem and shape our conception of beauty in society.

In the research conducted by Panjraath and Tiwari (2021) some research participants claimed that when they compared their bodies to those of influencers, they became more conscious of their physical flaws and remembered their body fat and acne. They began to doubt their own worth when they became aware of their flaws because, in accordance with the social comparison theory, one’s social and personal worth are determined by comparison. Because even influencers compare themselves to others and try to judge their own worth, they also go through the persona-creation process we mentioned earlier. Insecurities about one’s physical attributes are thus a result of the influencer culture (Panjraath & Tiwari, 2021).

Riesmeyer et al.’s study (2019) is a further investigation into the practice of inventing a new online persona and presenting the self via social media. Researchers claim that social media, particularly Instagram, has changed how people express themselves online, including how they behave regarding nutrition and dietary behaviors. These researchers aim to address the subject through media literacy, and all study participants declared that they encountered typical food images on Instagram. The participants claimed that these images showcase healthy foods and highlight their

nutritional benefits. Celebrities and fitness and wellness bloggers are the primary sources of most of these idealized images (Riesmeyer et al., 2019).

The sharing of food images affects how social media users view “healthy eating.” According to the majority of participants, healthy eating means consuming plenty of vegetables and fruits and freshly cooked meals. Limiting fast food and sugar is often regarded as healthy behaviors (Riesmeyer et al., 2019). None of the participants mentioned paying attention to the desires and requirements of the body and taking nourishment in accordance with these requirements. The participants further stated that following a healthy diet has been associated with obtaining the ideal and desired body through social media (Riesmeyer et al., 2019). Thus, most study participants think Instagram bloggers do not reflect the truth regarding the ideal body and perfect diet. Nevertheless, many users acknowledge that they intentionally try to incorporate dietary trends, such as chia seeds, into their daily diets (Riesmeyer et al., 2019).

According to researchers, participants acknowledged and expressed their reliance on social media for nutrition-related information (Riesmeyer et al., 2019). Instagram provides participants with additional diet-related ideas, such as increasing their intake of fruits and vegetables or cutting back on late-night meals. As a result, there is a clear linkage between users’ dietary actions and social media images. Due to Instagram’s emphasis on the idea that everyone should eat healthily, people who adhere to different dietary practices feel inadequate and guilty about their diets. In addition, many social media users approach the issue from a cosmetic perspective rather than a health perspective, trying to eat healthily to appear attractive (Riesmeyer et al., 2019). Additionally, users place great importance on the topic and become

obsessed with it due to the widespread distribution of nutrition-related information and images on Instagram. The social comparison theory is thus presented in this study in relation to diets and eating patterns.

In addition to providing a variety of contexts for social comparisons, social media also fosters an atmosphere ideal for objectification. Social media images that we are frequently exposed to create body image issues by objectifying individuals and causing us to see people, especially women, only as physical bodies.

2.5 Goffman's Gender Advertisements and Objectification Theory

In his book *Gender Advertisements*, Goffman discusses the advertising industry and how marketers present their goods in a way that appeals to audiences. Goffman (1979/2020) contends that since the content should be simple to understand and meaningful, an image can function as a standalone narrative without needing additional text. Aside from advertisements, it is currently possible to assert that images are equally powerful in traditional media and contemporary social media. According to the author, advertisers utilize idealized characters to tell ideal stories and associate their presentations with a good world, so they overwhelmingly choose types that are favorable and socially accepted (Goffman, 1979/2020). The situation continues to exist on modern social media. Influencers and content creators promote idealized versions of themselves to enhance their positive self-images.

Goffman went into greater detail about how women are portrayed as weakened in the media. He mentioned that women are weakened by advertising portrayals in five categories: relative size, feminine touch, function ranking, the ritualization of

subordination, and licensed withdrawal (Goffman, 1979/2020). However, I believe that linking relative size and function ranking to my thesis is sufficient.

2.5.1 Relative Size

Size, especially height, can emphasize social importance and position. Powerful, authoritative, and prestigious terms all imply physical bigness. In social interactions with women, a man's larger body and taller stature convey his superior status over the woman (Goffman, 1979/2020), which has resulted in the development of some social norms that have endured for decades. Thus, the idea of women appearing in smaller sizes was internalized. This internalization is also evident in the social media posts made by contemporary women, which frequently have themes related to body fragility, weight loss, and projecting slimming messages. "Objectification of the female body (Bartky, 1990) and values such as passivity, dependence and weakness are imbued within constructions of hetero-normative femininity" (Brownmiller, 1984; Wolf, 2002; as cited in Woolhouse et al., 2011, p. 47). In conclusion, slim bodies represent belonging to the upper middle class, success in social, financial, and cultural spheres, authority and self-control, and moral chastity (Burns, 2004; Day & Keys, 2008; MacSween, 1993; Malson, 1998; Rich & Evans, 2008).

2.5.2 Function Ranking

According to Goffman (1979/2020), there is a hierarchy of male and female roles, and men's and women's roles in societies are also established according to traditional spheres of authority and competence. Men avoided participating in "women-specific" jobs in advertisements and images. The following chapter's analysis of the "What I Eat in a Day" videos shows that women predominate in the kitchen and that men rule

sports complexes. Female content creators are more likely to produce and share “What I Eat in a Day” videos than their male counterparts because they are already more involved in kitchen tasks. Women engage in “female-specific” and more “light” exercises like pilates and yoga, whereas men engage in sports such as bodybuilding and weightlifting which they believe will enlarge their physical structure and increase their social standing. Women become weak and depleted as a result, as well as physically vulnerable and dependent on their surroundings for their safety (Goffman, 1979/2020). The objectification of the body is now called into question. Women cease to be decision-makers about their bodies and social status and start to be viewed as objects. The foundation of objectification theory is the use of the female body in commerce and marketing. Girls learn early on that their appearance matters and affects how they are treated; as a result, their physical appearance also has social and economic repercussions for them in the future, according to Fredrickson and Roberts (1997).

Murphy (2012) provided a more recent analysis of the thin ideal in advertising. According to Murphy (2012), marketing professionals want to attract customers who aspire to look like the women in their advertisements by showcasing aspirational physical characteristics associated with their products. These characteristics are underscored in the advertisements by employing attractive, tall, and lean women. According to Wiseman et al. (1992), eating disorders are more prevalent in societies where the “thin ideal” is overly valued and where being thin is promoted as a means of achieving health, success, and joy. Advertising that portrays women of a particular body type as role models uses them to further connect communities where the thin ideal is appreciated with eating disorders and disordered eating habits. According to

some researchers, advertisers deliberately normalize unrealistic body images (Cusumano & Thompson, 1997). As a result, customers consume more, fueling their fantasy of an elusive body (Cusumano & Thompson, 1997). Thusly, eating disorders and body dissatisfaction result from the sociocultural representation of unduly slender women as more fashionable, alluring, and prosperous, as well as the objectification of the female body.

The study conducted by Butkowski et al. (2019) on body surveillance on Instagram used the objectification theory as a theoretical framework. According to Butkowski et al. (2019), “women adopt an externalized or outsider view of their bodies, often due to consistent exposure to the objectification of female bodies in the media and interpersonal interaction” (p. 386). As a result, obsessive monitoring of physical appearance or body surveillance can lead to sentiments of body shame, depression, stress, and disordered eating behaviors (Moradi & Huang, 2008). To further elaborate on their ideas, the researchers mentioned that the total number of likes and comments on social media posts are potent instruments for self-assessment and assurance. As a result, the number of likes and both favorable and unfavorable comments can affect one’s self-esteem (Butkowski et al., 2019). Likes and comments can also be regarded as an assessment of social success if they are taken into account in a more profound social context. Researchers in the aforementioned study assessed how users’ bodies—their online and offline identities—and the findings suggested an impact on both the internal and external level due to the feedback through channels of social media (Butkowski et al., 2019). Objectification theory is particularly applicable to users who self-objectify themselves and consider social media as a unique medium for creating and performing self-representations (Vries & Peter, 2013; Fox &

Vendemia, 2016; Mendelson & Papacharissi, 2011). Influencers and social media celebrities trying to create self-presentation through social media have also been discussed in previous sections in Goffman's *The Presentation of Self*.

Objectification theory was utilized in the study conducted by Fitzsimmons-Craft (2011), in which she explained disordered eating in university women within the framework of social psychological theories supported by social comparison and uses and gratifications. Women become aware of a mismatch between their actual bodies and the idealized ones by observing both their own and those of others (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). These excessive observations could have adverse effects, and individuals might become fixated on cultural ideals of beauty. According to Tylka (2004), the rise in body dissatisfaction, constant self-monitoring, and the expansion of time devoted to body-related issues may trigger the use of unwholesome eating habits or weight loss techniques.

Additionally, the bodily observance of others imposes an idea on women that they can control their bodies and comply with the cultural standards of thinness (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). Influencers on social media also frequently discuss the viability of having the ideal body while ignoring the socioeconomic situation, genetic makeup, availability of food and conditioning facilities, or health issues of the individual. Social media figures allude that people are held accountable if they do not have a "flawless" body or do not attempt to have a "flawless physique" hard enough. Furthermore, Woolhouse et al. (2011) assert that Western societies now associate body weight, size, and shape with emotional and psychological status and morality, in addition to physical health, in their study on the gendered discursive construction of

food and eating. Thus, to avoid the adverse social effects of fatness, women feel compelled to engage in dietary practices even though they do not want to (Woolhouse et al., 2011).

Ghaznavi and Taylor (2015) further suggest that social media can negatively affect teens and preteens regarding demeanors and beliefs and employ objectification theory when exploring insights into these influences. According to studies (Harper & Tiggemann, 2008; Morry & Staska, 2001; Murnen et al., 2003) exposure to objectified images underscoring the thin ideal can cause appearance concerns related to weight and shape, body dissatisfaction, and disordered eating behaviors. Furthermore, the authors claim that thinness-promoting posts stimulate urges for self-evaluation and self-objectification (Ghaznavi & Taylor, 2015). In their analysis of thinning promotion posts (#thinspiration images), researchers discovered that body parts such as bones, muscles, the chest, abdomen, thighs, ribs, hips, and collarbones are frequently shared. These body parts are touted as being able to convey the themes of thinness, fitness, and muscularity most effectively. Thus, the body is objectified by these contents (Ghaznavi & Taylor, 2015).

Additional explanation from Ghaznavi & Taylor (2015) indicates that social media content also heightens admiration for well-known and attractive social media celebrities. People seek perfection in these celebrities and are concerned about body fat and weight gain. Social media users experience self-esteem issues due to this situation, which lowers body acceptance. Social media posts promoting thinness as the social norm also significantly undermine people's sense of self-worth and their chances of leading healthier lifestyles. Exposure to thin-ideal images might imply that

thin-ideal bodies are more prevalent, which causes body dissatisfaction and disordered eating attitudes (Ghaznavi & Taylor, 2015). To summarize, the authors contend that thinspiration content glorifies unwholesome ideals of beauty and heightens the objectification and sexualization of individuals (Ghaznavi & Taylor, 2015).

I should reiterate at the conclusion of the chapter that manipulating, abusing, and ruling the female body is a topic with a rich and lengthy history that has been addressed by a variety of theories. As Brown (1989 as cited in Rodgers, 2015) further elaborated, “in feminist theories of the development of body image and eating concerns, the Western focus on female appearance that encompasses both the glorification of thinness and the vilification of fatness is viewed as a form of sexism and misogyny and therefore as a means of maintaining the patriarchal status quo” (p. 124). Furthermore, considering the already established societal norms, it is challenging for any woman to redefine femininity. Because women, just as they internalized bodily ideals, also internalized the social and financial rewards brought by following the message of thinness (Hesse-Biber et al., 2006).

2.6 Cleanliness of Food and Symbolic Purity

Starting this research with the symbolic meaning of clean food is fundamental because social media sites today use images and messages about food to express identity and engage with society. Although “clean eating” has no clear-cut definition, those who adopt this lifestyle are preoccupied with the idea that their food is natural, nutritious, and devoid of additives, preservatives, refined ingredients, and other artificial substances (Allen et al., 2018; McCartney, 2016). Then as well, “clean

eating” is a broad term with no precise explanation; sources define it as avoiding processed foods and consuming pure and natural foods (Allen et al., 2018; Ambwani et al., 2019).

There is also a misconception that vegan and vegetarian diets are the cornerstone of clean eating, even though “clean eating” can include a wide range of diets. Since these diets typically exclude animal products that are high in fat and cholesterol and favor a variety of fruits, vegetables, and legumes, many people mistakenly believe that they are entirely healthy. Vegetarian and vegan diets are frequently promoted as the healthiest in social media and “What I Eat in a Day” videos, reflect a growing interest in these lifestyles centered around “clean eating.” Furthermore, the idea of being morally upright and leading an ethical and politically correct lifestyle goes hand in hand with not utilizing ingredients derived from animals and not intentionally harming animals. People in food blogging communities are commencing to perceive fruits and vegetables as “safe” foods and view carbohydrates and discretionary foods as “dirty and scary” as a result of community norms and practices (Allen et al., 2018). As a result, categorizing food as “good” or “bad” attaches it with an excessive amount of unjustified and irrational emotion. Because of the above-mentioned idealization of food and the symbolic purity of food, disordered eating behaviors can result from the notion of “clean eating,” and severe dietary restrictions blooming from “clean eating” can also bring on symptoms of eating disorders.

To summarize, without considering any remaining factors, all “whole” foods—raw, organic, unprocessed, and home-cooked—as well as plant-based and vegan options, low-calorie substitutes, fat-free, sugar-free, gluten-free, dairy-free foodstuffs, and

versions of foods with less carbohydrate or added protein are all deemed to be healthy in the “clean eating” scene.

The present study sought to represent the typical characteristics of “What I Eat in a Day” videos and investigate the messages received while engaging with this particular type of social media content. Digitally generated content and “the production, circulation, and audiencing of digital materials (digital images, say) affect social and cultural life” (Rose, 2016, p. 312). Given how new technologies are reshaping social and cultural norms and altering interpersonal and other relationships, analysis of shared content is required. Hence, it has been a tactful decision to employ the content analysis method for my thesis in order to equitably and methodically read the messages in the digital environment and form opinions regarding the messages delivered by social media content producers.

The subsequent subheadings in this section justify why the content analysis approach was preferred for this study before turning to the methodology, i.e., the critical tools required to run the research.

2.7 Celebrity Worship and Parasocial Relationships

Celebrities are more willing to have their identities revealed to the audience because they are not anonymous figures and are frequently featured in the media. Today, this group also includes social media influencers and content creators because today’s influencers are opinion leaders who can shape their followers’ attitudes towards their shopping and consumption behavior, interests, hobbies, daily life, the world, and to many, influencers have become celebrity-like role models whom they look up to

(Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Jin et al., 2019). Therefore, viewers might consequently think that they develop strong bonds with these influential characters (Brown & Tiggemann, 2016). Social media, in particular, increases the possibility of users falling into the misconception that they are involved in the private lives of these well-known people. According to Maltby et al. (2005), an obsession that might be referred to as “celebrity worship” can occasionally result from this fictitious private bond.

Given that well-known individuals and celebrities have the authority to establish standards for cultural norms, celebrity worship can result in problematic attitudes and behaviors about health and body image since the cultural ideal of thinness is also a part of these norms (Brown & Tiggemann, 2016). Young girls and women, according to Jones (2001) and Strahan et al., (2006), compare themselves to their peers in terms of personality and social skills but compare their weight, shape, and appearance to celebrities and models. Given this information, it is reasonable to assume that people who hero-worship celebrities will try to alter their bodies in order to resemble them and may also engage in disordered eating habits or body dysmorphia. In other words, celebrity worship can become a risk factor for women’s body dissatisfaction (Brown & Tiggemann, 2016). Thus, conducting a content analysis of content produced by celebrities is essential to fully comprehend any potential risks associated with exposure to celebrity images. The information and advice provided by influencers and celebrities in the content they share are also potentially harmful since it is solely based on personal experience and not on any theoretical knowledge or education, and most content creators are self-described experts spreading false claims (de Regt et al., 2019; Pilgrim & Bohnet-Joschko, 2019; Ohlheiser, 2020).

Horton and Wohl (1956) introduced the term “parasocial relationship” to the literature to describe the intense and unilateral relationship that was previously discussed. The phrase refers to the affinity that people have for well-known celebrities who are frequently viewed on television or in movie theaters; it also describes the bond that exists between influencers and their followers in today’s world (Kirvesmäki, 2021). Additionally, a study conducted by Chung and Cho (2017) on parasocial relationships discovered that some followers are more likely to downplay the errors of the influencers they connect with and to undermine their disagreements depending on the depth and strength of the relationship.

Given this information, it can be concluded that followers who feel positively about an influencer find their claims plausible and do not consider their errors to be errors and thus, rather than being determined by the facts, truthfulness is now determined by the followers’ gut instinct (Berthon & Pitt, 2018). This explains, as was already mentioned, why this influencer—who is actually a self-described expert—is regarded as credible (Kirvesmäki, 2021). Therefore, if a follower is susceptible to the topic and receives health and nutritional guidance from an influencer who lacks relevant professional experience, they are more likely to develop compulsive disorders or eating disorders (Pilgrim & Bohnet-Joschko, 2019). Thus, the approach best suited for my thesis is the content analysis method because the daily lives of social media users are impacted by the actions and attitudes brought on by the aforementioned admiration and the one-way relationship. Therefore, the content that social media influencers create had to be examined to determine whether it promoted disordered eating habits.

2.8 Credibility Derived from the Influencer's Appeal

Another reason to investigate the subject using the content analysis method is the fact that the online personas of YouTubers are regarded as reliable sources by their viewers. For a source to be credible or reliable, more is required than just the appeal and attractiveness of the content producer. Outward appearances of influencers are taken as evidence that the self-tested advice they impart is sound. Influencers are also more likely to be accepted as plausible if the content they share appeals to the viewer, considered attractive and is associated with a healthy lifestyle (Kirvesmäki, 2021). Hereby, another reason I used content analysis in this study was that it helped me to understand why viewers found certain content credible and how it affected their perception of a healthy body and their eating habits.

Since the health, nutrition, and fitness industries should not be focused solely on appearance and good looks, and social media should not be the primary research platform for information on these topics, the association of having a socially acceptable appearance with credibility is inappropriate and merits investigation.

According to Djafarova & Rushworth (2017), social media content can make followers want to live the influencer's desired lives; thus, they comply with all the advice the influencers provide. As a result, followers can mimic influencers' lifestyles to share the same values and lifestyle to approach their favorite influencers in terms of social status (Chung & Cho, 2017; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). They can also adopt their eating and exercise habits and put aside any doubts about their credibility. As was already mentioned, there are strong connections between these phenomena, parasocial relationships and celebrity worship.

2.9 Habit-Tracking and Self-Tracking Culture

Habit-tracking and self-tracking have a great place in influencer culture alongside healthy eating and a self-care-based lifestyle because social media creators' systematic approach to perfection entails controlling their bodies and keeping track of their habits. In the current social media landscape, a fit lifestyle is portrayed using food images, calorie counts, body measurements, running trackers, heart rate monitors, and gym locations (Laan, 2016; Rajan, 2018). Moreover, social media posts frequently include before-and-after photos of thinning or muscle growth, indicating that the promoted lifestyle positively impacts physical changes. However, keeping track of the change in their body or documenting their exercise-wise practices on social media and putting them on display for the public to witness could put more pressure on other social media users to create or maintain an ideal image (Rajan, 2018).

Self-tracking is one of the most prominent indicators of eating disorder-focused social media use in the present media ecosystem, according to Greene & Brownstone (2021). The popularity of diet and fitness in today's modern, technology-based world is also contributing to the daily growth in the number of exercise tracking apps, calorie counters, and even countdown clocks displaying how long it has been since the user last ate. As a result of social media and mobile applications, people now evaluate their own capacity and value using numbers (Greene & Brownstone, 2021). Self-tracking, which involves imposing strict rules and numbers on the body, is consistent with the symptoms of eating disorders. Additionally, tracking calories and physical activity can exacerbate eating disorder symptoms, boost commitment to

disordered eating behaviors, and give people with eating disorders a false sense of control (Greene & Brownstone, 2021).

Given that influencers create content that encourages self-tracking and motivates psychologically vulnerable viewers to these attitudes and behaviors, the contents of “What I Eat in a Day” videos are analyzed using the content analysis method in this thesis, and insights about the social media ecosystem are presented. Social media, therefore, provides more opportunities within its media ecosystem to consume, which may push an individual to engage in eating-disordered behavior (Greene & Brownstone, 2021).

2.10 Food Culture

The 21st-century diet culture has been doused in fuel by social media through categorizing food as good or bad, popularizing phrases like “good food” and “clean eating,” and by coining new terms related to the subject. “Celebrity chefs and social media influencers (those who practice being a micro-celebrity on social media as a vocation) have also become part of a new media landscape that promote an ethics of ‘good’ eating and food consumption” (Lewis & Huber 2015, p. 290; Biltekoff, 2013; Contois, 2017). Images of clean eating, gaining popularity on social media, project a form of food ethics and deliberately and repeatedly underscore ideas of health as a lifestyle (Walsh & Baker, 2020). According to Walsh & Baker (2020; Hogan, 2010, p. 377), these mint food images are artifacts displayed as “still forms of the representation of self.” Food images are thus used for collective self-exhibition on social media, and this exhibition connects with shared identities centered around healthy eating. Simply put, social media augments symbolism of food, and clean

eating has invented its culture and community online. “Clean eating proponents encourage an implied morality concerning food that positions particular forms of food consumption as superior to others that are modeled on ‘culturally constructed needs and desires’” (de Solier, 2013, p. 16). Advocates of clean eating actively announce information about a pure, healthy diet on social networking sites. Through intimacy and interaction, followers develop a stronger bond with the bloggers they follow, legitimizing their roles as well-respected and knowledgeable cultural intermediaries and fostering faith in the moral values they uphold and communicate (Sandal, 2018).

Although unintended, the food culture that has emerged online may have a negative impact on the health of its adherents (Walsh & Baker, 2020). To clarify the reason, “while advocating restrictive eating patterns, many advocates offer advice without requisite qualifications or training, with most promoting suggestions based on their passion for food (Dickinson et al., 2018) or certain lifestyles (Baker and Rojek, 2020) rather than expertise” (Walsh & Baker, 2020, p. 576).

There is a growing correlation between consuming clean foods and morally upright behavior. As a result, moral principles become intertwined with food purity. As aforementioned in the chapter on *The Dramaturgical Model* put forth by Goffman (1959), all of these can be connected to the propensity to forge an identity, demonstrate one’s moral uprightness, and acquire social status. Being slender and following a moderate diet confers a high-value status that signifies moral virtue, control, self-discipline, and steadily improving health, whereas obesity has many negative cultural connotations. The idea of “dirty” and “unhealthy” food was developed by specific societies and cultural systems. Symbols of purity, cleanliness,

or dirt are thus merely social constructs that serve to uphold societal norms and boundaries; in line with this conception of “purity” and the food culture popularized online, those who practice healthy eating present an idealized version of themselves to others. Thus, in this cultural climate, the creation and maintenance of social identity are crucially influenced by all forms of material culture produced through social media (Walsh & Baker, 2020). Similarly, media plays a critical role in shaping people’s social and cultural realities (Featherstone, 2007). Such social and cultural messages foster a suitable setting for the emergence of eating disorders under the guise of healthy eating. People that are influenced by these messages start forming negative opinions about their eating routines and actively force themselves to imitate these unrealistic eating standards with the hopes to reach the societal ranks of those who showcase such behavior. Driven by these newly formed negative opinions, people restructure their eating habits and micromanage every action they take, thus, leading them to develop eating disorders.

Fears of transgression are allayed by low-calorie foods like bread without wheat, ice cream without cream, etc. If food does not contain any fat, sugar, or dairy, it must be free from vices and moral impurities, according to the predominant online food culture (Walsh & Baker, 2020). Therefore, “food’s imagery is imbued with a purity that assembles forms of food and their presentation as implicitly associated with ethics derived from an individual’s behavior, motivations, and choices” (Crawford, 1980. p. 378).

Featherstone (2007) asserts that today’s society places a high value on choosing the proper lifestyle. By virtue of their media fame and notoriety, lifestyle influencers

enjoy a high position and authority in society (Lewis, 2008). Today, people refer to lifestyle media as a resource for advice on making decisions that will enhance their lives and advance their social status. Given their high social standing, lifestyle influencers seem to have the right to offer advice regarding their lifestyle. When it comes to eating decisions, guidance on leading a healthy lifestyle often promotes values and preferences other than those of the lower-class (Lewis, 2008). Moral guidelines need not only deal with questions of justice or responsibility toward other people. Additionally, they can be related to individual notions of what makes one's own life desirable and proper (Jansson, 2001). Therefore, dietary decisions, eating routines, and food can be considered morally right or wrong (Sandal, 2018). Thus, in the "What I Eat in a Day" video content, "a vlogger's individual eating performance becomes one interpretation, one belief system with certain moral imperatives derived from the underlying regime" (Sandal, 2018, p. 58).

Since the ethics of clean eating have gained such rage on social media and various communities have emerged around clean eating, using the content analysis method to address this issue has allowed this thesis to investigate the symbolism of food and the imposed ethical values in the "What I Eat in a Day" videos.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Social media influencers exert significant influence over people's beliefs and perceptions due to their large follower base. They can influence individuals' thoughts on issues such as purchasing matters and decisions affecting one's life and health (Erkan & Evans, 2016; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). The phrase "What I Eat in a Day" has grown in popularity on YouTube over the past 12 months, according to Google Trends. In Google Trends, a score of 100 represents the term with the highest level of popularity. "What I Eat in a Day" scored a minimum of 66 out of 100 over the course of the previous 12 months (see Fig. 1). In the first week of February 2023, when the study was conducted, the term had a value of 97. Moreover, it was observed that the term's value was found to be 100 in January 2023 (*Google Trends*, n.d.).

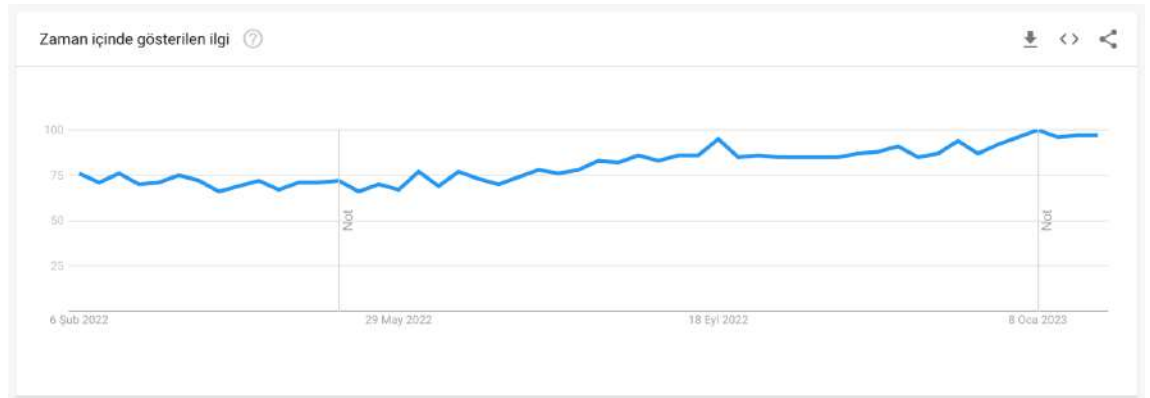
In "What I Eat in a Day" videos, every meal and snack consumed throughout the day is documented by the subject, often as a result of adhering to a strict diet. According to this conviction, my main goal when scrutinizing these videos, frequently created in the influencer culture, is not to address influencers individually but the concept itself as a common mechanism that shapes social practices. The rationale behind selecting "What I Eat in a Day" videos as pertinent data is to reveal the dietary habits of a

group that can shape public opinion. This, in turn, allows us to be further informed about the actions of a larger group, namely, their followers. In other words, the *everyday* aspect of the videos is what makes them significant, which is why this particular type of video was chosen for analysis. The 30 most popular videos in the Turkish language were included in the study corpus because of their potential to have an impact on societal attitudes and behaviors.

Briefly, the research methods used for my thesis are the content analysis for examining the videos and survey method to obtain descriptive findings about individuals who exhibit disordered eating behaviors or have been diagnosed with eating disorders.

Figure 1

Popularity of the Term “What I Eat in a Day”



Note. Search term “What I Eat in a Day”, Worldwide, February 2022 - January 2023.

3.1 Content Analysis

The idea of a “healthy lifestyle” and the associated content are relatively recent additions to online media. As a result, in the literature, the content analysis method

has been used frequently in recent years to assess content related to a healthy lifestyle. Boepple and Thompson (2014) analyzed blogs about healthy living, which guide people in enhancing their physical and mental health. According to their findings, five bloggers self-identified as having an eating disorder; seven mentioned menstrual or fertility issues; five claimed to have used some form of dietary restraint; and eleven expressed guilt over food. These conclusions point out that information on healthy living blogs may be alarming to viewers who struggle with eating disorders and body image (Boepple & Thompson, 2014).

Ghaznavi and Taylor (2015) focused on the images with the hashtags #Thinspiration and #Thinspo posted on Twitter and Pinterest. These pictures of women who are half-dressed and underweight are sexually objectified, according to the study's findings (Ghaznavi & Taylor, 2015). The articles on diet, exercise, and cosmetic surgery from eight renowned women's magazines between 1898 and 2007 were the subject of a content analysis by Saraceni and Russell-Mayhew (2007). The study's findings demonstrated that popular magazines support Western culture's expectation that women should devote time and money to enhancing their appearance (Saraceni & Russell-Mayhew, 2007).

Syed-Abdul et al. (2013) conducted another content analysis of eating disorder-related YouTube videos using the keywords "anorexia," "anorexia nervosa," "pro-ana," and "thinspo." The researchers categorized the videos as either educational, pro-anorexia, or other. The study found that viewers gave pro-anorexia content a higher favorability and rating. In the study by Talbot et al. (2017), images with the hashtags #Thinspiration, #Fitspiration, and #Bonespiration were sampled

from Instagram, Twitter, and WeHeartIt. The study's findings suggest that compared to thinspiration and bonespiration, the content of fitspiration offers a less toxic body standard. On the other hand, fitspo content also emphasizes muscular bodies more, and the images show the most extreme levels of muscle development. Fitspiration content is also detrimental and has the potential to alter how people perceive normal bodies (Talbot et al., 2017). The study conducted by Walsh and Baker (2020) used content analysis to investigate the "top posts" -nine for each hashtag- shared over eight days with the hashtags #cleaneating and #eateclean. The clean eating-themed posts examined in this study demonstrate how food imagery has evolved to become more appealing and alluring (Walsh & Baker, 2020).

The research conducted by Cavazos-Rehg et al. (2019) aims to comprehend body image and ED-related content on Twitter. The researchers used 23 terms connected to EDs and body image issues as keywords and examined tweets that contained these terms. 65% of these tweets express concern about body shape, per the study's findings (Cavazos-Rehg et al., 2019). Last but not least, the study by Wick and Harriger (2018) represents the first analysis of #thinspiration content on the social sharing website Tumblr in the literature. The majority of thinspiration pictures depict the sexuality and thinness of women who conform to the culturally prescribed standard of beauty, the study's findings reveal. Furthermore, themes that are present in the majority of the texts include dieting, restriction, weight loss, food guilt, and body guilt. These studies and their results demonstrate the viability of content analysis as a research strategy in this field, which is why this thesis also makes use of content analysis.

3.1.1 Measures for Content Analysis and Coding Scheme

I modified the key themes and categories Cavazos-Rehg et al. (2019) used in their content analysis-based research for my thesis. The Eating Disorder Examination (EDE) 16.0 is the cornerstone of Cavazos-Rehg et al.'s (2019) research's central themes. EDE is a verified tool for ED psychopathology that was created using the DSM-5 (The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition) diagnostic criteria (Cavazos-Rehg et al., 2019). The three main themes that were adapted from Cavazos-Rehg et al.'s (2019) content analysis and EDE 16.0 are: “a) shape concern (placing a high level of importance on or preoccupation with body image/shape), b) weight concern (placing a high level of importance on or preoccupation with body weight), and c) eating concern (having issues or preoccupation or guilt related to food/eating/calories, eating in secret, or fear of losing control over food)” (p. 3). Therefore, the question posed while watching the videos was: Does this “What I Eat in a Day” video explicitly show any of the eating disorder psychopathologies? (i.e., shape concern, weight concern, or eating concern)

Phillips et al. (2018) also based their content analysis on the Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire (EDE-Q). Researchers identified their primary measure as a) shape concern, followed by b) weight concerns, c) eating concerns, and d) restraint (Phillips et al., 2018). Indicators of shape concern are defined as a preoccupation with shape, fear of weight gain, the importance of shape, feelings of fatness, discomfort seeing the body, dissatisfaction with shape, avoidance of exposure, and a desire for a flat stomach (Phillips et al., 2018). Indicators of weight concern are a preoccupation with weight, the importance of weight, a reaction to prescribed weighing, dissatisfaction with weight, and a desire to lose weight (Phillips et al., 2018).

Indicators of eating concern are a preoccupation with food, eating, or calories; fear of losing control over eating; social eating; eating in secret; and guilt over eating (Phillips et al., 2018). Lastly, The EDE-Q's list of indicators of restraint concludes with the avoidance of eating, desire for an empty stomach, food avoidance, restraint over eating, and dietary rules (Phillips et al., 2018). The variables used in the two studies mentioned above were customized and utilized in this research to examine ED-related behaviors in "What I Eat in a Day" videos.

In my analysis of the "What I Eat in a Day" videos, I modified additional variables from the content analysis-based study conducted by Boepple and Thompson (2014) on healthy lifestyle blogs. I revised and coded the following variables: a) self-objectifying phrases or footage or body selfie b) exercise footage or over-excessive exercising, c) fat/overweight stigmatization or thin praise or more positive comments about being fit, d) before and after images, e) disordered eating behavior, f) guilt-inducing food messages, g) dietary restriction or food substitution or unusual portion size, h) health concern or personal health experiences, i) provision of health information or discussion of general health topics (Boepple & Thompson, 2014). These additional variables were used in this research to determine if the "What I Eat in a Day" videos contribute to eating or body image issues.

Table 1*ED Psychopathology Variables*

ED Psychopathology Variables	Type	Adapted From
Preoccupation with shape	Shape Concern	(Phillips et al., 2018) (Cavazos-Rehg et al., 2019)
Placing a high level of importance on shape		
Fear of weight gain	Shape Concern	(Phillips et al., 2018)
Feelings of fatness		
Dissatisfaction with shape		
Desire for a flat stomach		
Preoccupation with weight	Weight Concern	(Phillips et al., 2018) (Cavazos-Rehg et al., 2019)
Placing a high level of importance on weight		
Dissatisfaction with weight	Weight Concern	(Phillips et al., 2018)
Desire to lose weight		
Preoccupation with food, eating, or calories	Eating Concern	(Phillips et al., 2018) (Cavazos-Rehg et al., 2019)
Fear of losing control over eating		
Guilt-inducing food messages		
Food avoidance or food substitution	Restraint	(Phillips et al., 2018)
Restraint over eating		
Dietary rules		
Self-objectification or body selfie	Additional	Boepple and Thompson (2014)
Exercise footage or over-excessive exercising		
Fat/overweight stigmatization or thin praise		
Before and after images		
Health concern or provision of health information		
Portion distortion or unusual portions of food		
Placing a high level of importance over eating "healthy"		

I also edited and operated the research variables Wick and Harriger (2018) used to analyze the #thinspiration texts and images on Tumblr in the process of developing the coding system. I classified the body types of the content producers as a) thin, b) highly muscular or having visible muscle tone, and c) curvy or overweight, following Wick and Harriger (2018). This scale includes the item d) adhering to culturally based beauty ideals. The basics of scale for this item, as described by Wick and Harriger (2018), include d.1) blemish-free skin; blemish-free d.2) neat, shiny hair; d.3) symmetrical features; d.4) white, straight teeth; and d.5) a lithe, supple, and graceful

figure (p. 14). I employed these variables to examine whether social media content producers adhere to the idea of beauty that is imposed as a societal norm.

3.1.2 Research Context: YouTube

YouTube, which has more than 2 billion monthly users and serves roughly one-third of all internet users worldwide, is the most popular streaming video platform. As a result, YouTube is the second-most visited website globally, right behind Google, with its 2 billion users (Cook, 2022). On YouTube, daily video viewing totals 1 billion hours. That explains the approximately 5 billion YouTube videos that are viewed each day (Cook, 2022). With a 94 percent user share, YouTube took the top spot in the list of the most popular social networking sites among Turkish people in January 2021, while Instagram came in second (Dierks, 2022). In addition, according to Degenhard (2021), YouTube had 59.02 million users in Turkey in 2021. The aforementioned factors make it worthwhile to look at “What I Eat in a Day” videos on YouTube Turkey.

3.1.3 Data Selection

Data was collected on January 29, 2023. This day was designated as the start of the data collection process. The variables’ coding process was completed between January 29 and February 4, 2023. *What I Eat in a Day?* in Turkish, *Bir Günde Neler Yiyorum?* was written and searched in the YouTube search engine utilizing a computer where my email and YouTube accounts are not accessible so that my personal and private YouTube history and algorithm as the researcher do not alter the search outcomes and the data. The sorting criteria, which is the number of views, are then determined by using the filters option. No filters have been applied to the upload

date, type, duration, or feature options. Since the videos were not restricted to a specific time frame, it was possible to review all of the most popular videos from the point at which they first gained popularity up until the present. Videos that serve the gastro tourism purpose by showcasing what the content creator consumes mainly in a province or region are excluded from the research. The producers of these videos do not intend to advise their followers about what they eat on a “regular day,” but instead provide the opportunity to experience the culture and history of a region and create travel motivation by sharing a new food and beverage experience. The study also excluded videos with titles such as “What I Eat in Three Days,” “What I Eat in a Week,” or “What I Eat in Ten Days” to limit the data pool.

Because of the short video durations on TikTok and Instagram Reels, which prevent content creators from going into great detail about the topic, my research focuses on the videos created for the YouTube platform. Inference and interpretation are complex in TikTok and Instagram Reels due to time constraints, whereas YouTube videos offer more in-depth information. Additionally, the short videos on TikTok and Instagram do not provide any valuable information to study because they are produced in a more impromptu and spontaneous manner. As a result, the research was carried out using YouTube-posted videos while accounting for the trend’s original beginning.

Moreover, the research has included videos with titles such as “My daily nutrition routine,” “What I eat in a day while losing weight,” “What I eat on a school day,” “My healthy eating routine,” “What I eat in a day on a diet,” “What I ate today,” and “My entire day nutrition routine,” which have similar meanings with the title “What I Eat in a Day.” As a disclaimer, it is evident that videos with titles such as “What I eat

in a day while losing weight” and “What I eat in a day on a diet” indicate the purpose of content producers. Although weight loss behaviors may be anticipated in such content, since these videos rank among the top 30 most-watched videos, they were not disqualified from the study.

The Top 30 most-watched List contains a total of 498 minutes and 27 seconds of content. The videos have received 18,391,826 views in total. As a result, only 30 videos on this subject have amassed roughly 18 million views, which is a significant figure that deserves to be examined.

3.1.4 Identification of YouTubers & the Top 30 Videos

The five most popular content creators and most-watched videos are listed in the table below. In-depth analyses of these content producers were conducted due to their notable differences from other content creators in terms of views and followers.

Table 2

Top 5 YouTubers and Their Videos

Channel Name	Gender	Number of Subscribers	Title of the Video	Release Date	Number of Views	Number of Likes	Number of Comments	Hashtags
Duygu Özaslan	F	1.42M	Bir Günde Neler Yiyorum?	Jul 2, 2018	2.507.950	55K	3.9K	-
Çağla	F	1.27M	Beslenme Rutinim	Sep 26, 2017	2.294.001	32K	1.6K	-
Duygu Özaslan	F	1.42M	Bir Günde Neler Yiyorum?	Nov 2, 2018	1.642.899	29K	1.3K	-
Ebru Şallı	F	158K	Beslenme Rutinim! Bir Günde Neler Yiyorum?	Sep 5, 2021	1.234.895	17K	1.7K	#Sağlık, #Beslenme Rutinim
Elvin Levinler	F	1.01M	Bir Günde Neler Yiyorum? Fit & Pratik	Oct 17, 2018	1.171.871	22K	1.4K	#Sağlıklı Tarifler, #Yemek

The top 30 “What I Eat in a Day” YouTube videos and the YouTubers who created them are listed in Appendix A. The first video with the highest viewing belongs to influencer Duygu Özaslan. Duygu Özaslan has 1.42 million YouTube subscribers. She joined YouTube in 2013 and has since produced content there, making her one of the most well-known figures in Turkey’s social media industry. There are 383,889,440 total views on her YouTube channel (Özaslan, n.d.).

The creator of the video with the second-highest number of views is Çağla Şıkel, a renowned and outstanding television personality in Turkey known for her modeling, acting, and TV show hosting careers. She has 1.27 million YouTube subscribers. The YouTube channel of Çağla Şıkel has received 173,935,368 total views since it launched in 2017 (Şıkel, n.d.). She also made the video that has been viewed the 10th-most in the table above. Duygu Özaslan, who also holds the top spot, owns the “What I Eat in a Day” video that has received the third-highest number of views.

Ebru Şallı, another influencer who expanded her social media presence after rising to fame on television, is the creator of the 4th-most-watched video. She was formerly a model and a Pilates instructor. She currently has 158 thousand YouTube subscribers, thus, appealing to a broad audience. In a short period of time, Ebru Şallı, who joined YouTube in 2021, has accrued 11,664,529 views (Şallı, n.d.).

Last but not least, Elvin Levinler, a social media content producer who began her career as an actress, has one of her “What I Eat in a Day” videos as the fifth-most viewed. She has been growing her YouTube channel since 2014, and as of today, it has 114,134,919 total views. She also produced the video that received the

20th-highest number of views. With 1.01 million YouTube subscribers, Elvin Levinler has a sizable fanbase (Levinler, n.d.). Table 1 provides comprehensive information about the remaining 25 videos.

This study, in which the 30 most popular videos were analyzed, gave us data for the years between 2016 and 2022 since no time frame was specified. There are multiple videos from some content producers in the list. These individuals include Duygu Özaslan (3 videos), Çağla Şikel (2), Elvin Levinler (2), Melis Özten (3), Polina Chursanova (3), Duru Önver (2), and İlayda Oymak (2). Consequently, the total number of unique users creating content in this research is calculated to be 20, and only two of these users are men. Meaning that 90% of the content is created by female users, while male users create 10%. Emre Gökgöz, a male user who comes in at number 16 on the list, has 1.09 million subscribers and is one of the most famous figures in the YouTube fitness and diet community (Gökgöz, n.d.).

Several hashtags can be seen in the videos analyzed, including #Health, #HealthyRecipes, #Food, #MyNutritionRoutine, #nutrition, #fitness, #DietFoods, and #DailyVlog. Last but not least, the “Occupation” column of the table shows that none of the content creators who provided dietary and nutritional advice were professionals in those fields. However, outside their university education, their subsequent certificates and studies are not known for certain.

As was mentioned, the variables and definitions used in the study conducted by Wick and Harriger (2018) were revised to determine whether the influencers adhered to the culturally based ideals of beauty. Thus, among 20 different influencers, 17 (85%) had

flawless skin; 17 (85%) had neat and shiny hair; 18 (90%) had symmetrical features; 18 (90%) had pearly white teeth; and 16 (80%) had a lithe, supple, and graceful figure. Of these 20 different content creators, 13 were coded as slender (65%), 3 as curvy (15%), and 4 (20%) as highly muscular.

3.2 Survey

For the second research question, which asked how viewers reacted to the “What I Eat in a Day” videos, I chose the survey method as the secondary research approach. The survey was created using Google Forms. The first two survey questions—gender and age—were used to draw demographic conclusions. There are a total of 25 questions, excluding the gender and age questions. Four of these thirty questions are open-ended, and open-ended questions were not designed to be required in order to avoid discouraging survey participation. According to Merrigan and Huston (2004), open-ended questions are designed to allow survey participants to describe an experience or concept in their own words; as a result, they are a unique and essential way to shed light on the subject. They ought to be utilized in survey studies to delve into the conceptual realm.

In an effort to promote participation in the survey, 17 of the questions are yes-or-no questions with two options. A pilot study with 3 people was conducted before the questionnaire’s distribution, and the questionnaire’s design was adjusted in response to the feedback. The survey was distributed to 6 Turkish dietitians with expertise in eating disorders and nutritional therapy who take a non-diet approach and work on intuitive eating in order to reach the right audience of people who are interested in or struggling with eating disorders. The survey was distributed to a broad audience who

watch “What I Eat in a Day” videos and frequently use social media via these 6 dietitians sharing the Google Forms link on their social media accounts. 4 days were dedicated to this process between March 16 and March 20, 2023. The survey’s questions were written in both English and Turkish, and answers in either language were accepted.

3.2.1 Ethical Considerations

The institutional ethics committee’s ethical guidelines were strictly followed when working with human subjects in the study, and their moral and legal rights were respected. On March 1st, 2023, the study received approval from the Bilkent University Ethics Committee. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and individuals could withdraw at any point before, during, or after the survey.

Accordingly, participants who experienced discomfort during the study had the option to renounce their participation, eliminating the associated discomfort and risk.

Additionally, I ensured that the survey respondents’ responses were kept confidential by not collecting any personal information about them. Participants in the survey were not asked for any personal information, including their name, last name, or other contact details that might hint at their personality. More details about the objectives of the study and how the data will be used to support the scholarly investigation were provided to the participants prior to the start of the surveys. The minimum age requirement for participants in this research study was 18.

3.2.2 Question Selection

I drew inspiration from the semi-structured interview questions from the study conducted by Kirvesmäki (2021) on the reliability of health and fitness influencers on

social media while creating the survey questions. I added questions to see how respondents felt about the variables I listed in the content analysis section, including shape concern, weight concern, eating concern, and restraint. In this way, I caught and compared the reflections of the visual and thematic patterns I uncovered through content analysis on the audience via the survey. The survey questions and a copy of the informed consent form as well as the ethics committee approval forms, are located in Appendix B & C.

3.2.3 Participants

A total of 83 people responded to the survey; however, 3 were not included in the study because they either refused to provide consent, were under the age of 18, or provided answers that adhered to the *Mukbang* content. *Mukbang* is a style of video that is unrelated to the “What I Eat in a Day” videos and features the content creator interacting with the audience while eating in front of the camera.

Seventy-seven of the eighty participants are women; two participants do not identify themselves as either male or female, and one participant does not wish to reveal their gender. These participants’ ages span a wide range, from 18 to 47. The majority of participants were female (96.25%), which supports the notion that women’s bodies are the subject of body image discussions and that women are more deeply concerned and preoccupied with how their bodies appear compared to others.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study's findings are divided into two parts. The results of the ED Examination Questionnaire and other variables are covered in the first section. The results of the surveys are presented in the second section. My initial research question, "*What kinds of visual and thematic patterns are presented or promoted in What I Eat in a Day content on YouTube?*", was addressed by the content analysis findings. The responses to my second research question, "*How does What I Eat in a Day content on YouTube impact relevant audiences from the ED community?*" was also addressed using the survey results. The videos were open sources and available for public viewing; thus, screenshots from the videos were used during the content analysis. Due to the Turkish nature of the content, all quotations have been translated by the author.

4.1 Content Analysis Findings

The table below displays the frequency of occurrence of variables used to analyze ED-related behaviors in videos. The following paragraphs thoroughly describe specific instances and situations that pertain to these behaviors.

Table 3*Coding of Variables*

ED Examination Variables	Type	Total Number (out of 30 videos)	%	Total %
Preoccupation with shape	Shape Concern	12	40.0	29.4
Fear of weight gain		12	40.0	
Placing a high level of importance on shape		10	33.3	
Feelings of fatness		6	20.0	
Dissatisfaction with shape		4	13.3	
Desire for a flat stomach		9	30.0	
Preoccupation with weight	Weight Concern	21	70.0	50.8
Placing a high level of importance on weight		17	56.6	
Dissatisfaction with weight		11	36.6	
Desire to lose weight		12	40.0	
Preoccupation with food, eating, or calories	Eating Concern	30	100.0	77.7
Fear of losing control over eating		16	53.3	
Guilt-inducing food messages		24	80.0	
Food avoidance or food substitution	Restraint	22	73.3	68.8
Restraint over eating		20	66.6	
Dietary rules		20	66.6	
Self-objectification or body selfie	Additional	13	43.3	40.9
Exercise footage or over-excessive exercising		6	20.0	
Fat/overweight stigmatization or thin praise		3	10.0	
Before and after images		3	10.0	
Health concern or provision of health information		23	76.6	
Portion distortion or unusual portions of food		15	50.0	
Placing a high level of importance over eating "healthy"		23	76.6	

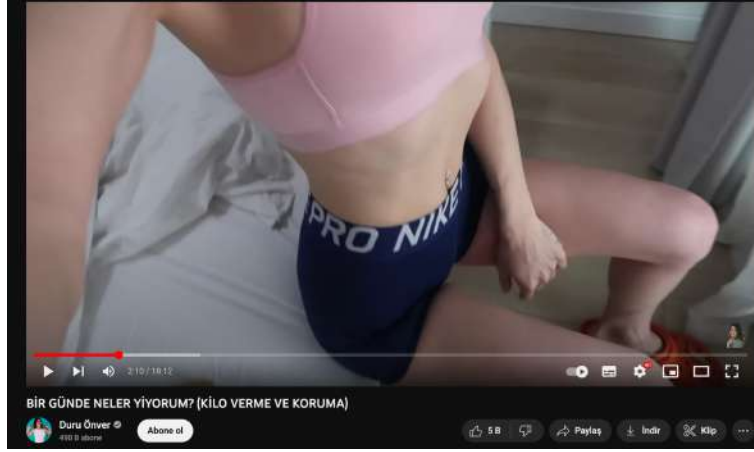
4.1.1 Shape Concern

If the content of the video includes preoccupation with shape, fear of weight gain, placing a high value on shape, feelings of fatness, dissatisfaction with shape, and a desire for a flat stomach, it has been determined that the video contains shape concerns. Out of the 30 videos, 12 demonstrated a preoccupation with appearance, 12 demonstrated a fear of gaining weight, 10 demonstrated a high priority placed on shape, 6 demonstrated feelings of fatness, 4 demonstrated dissatisfaction with shape,

and 9 demonstrated a desire for a flat stomach. Thus, a total of 29.4% of the videos contained shape-concerned behavior.

Figure 2

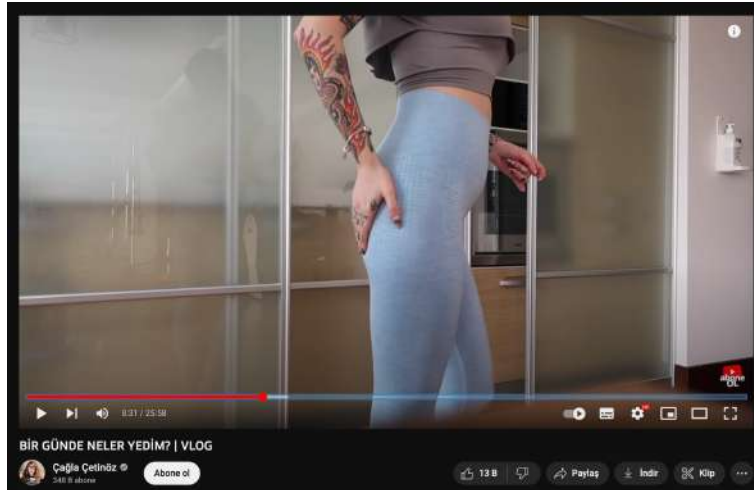
Duru Önver Showing Her Flat Stomach and Thin Figure



Note. Screenshot taken from Duru Önver's YouTube video (Önver, 2020).

Figure 3

Çağla Çetinöz Showing the Parts She Wants to Change



Note. Screenshot taken from Çağla Çetinöz's YouTube video (Çetinöz, 2021).

The videos showed people being shape-conscious, either by focusing on their body shape, criticizing it, or expressing satisfaction by displaying it. Figures 2 and 3 provide illustrations of the influencers' fixation on their bodies. While the second figure depicts an influencer sharing her image in a satisfied and pleased voice, the second figure shows the influencer criticizing her body and discussing the parts she wants to transform. In light of their physical similarities and differences, these images may influence viewers' perceptions of the ideal body. Moreover, fear of gaining weight is recognized due to similar behavioral patterns among many influencers. The majority of content creators mentioned that they avoid fried foods, only eat carbohydrates on the days they exercise, and stay away from sauces and high-calorie side dishes. By mentioning and advising edema-relieving teas, waters with lemon or vinegar added, bulletproof coffee (the ketogenic beverage "bulletproof coffee" is made with butter, ghee, coconut, or MCT oil which is thought to support digestive health, control blood sugar, and promote weight loss), detox beverages or hot pepper mixes that burn belly fat, many influencers also showcased their desire to have a flat stomach.

Content creators who experience feelings of fatness also appear to engage in obsessive behaviors concerning this issue. One content producer, Banu Berberoğlu expresses extreme resentment by declaring, "I was feeling uncomfortable because I gained weight; I have been on a diet for a week but I still haven't lost weight," (Berberoğlu, 2022, 01:18) while Melis Özten mentions that she entered a cycle because she tried to lose weight but was unsuccessful and that she involuntarily ate more, indicating binge attacks. In her other video, she discusses how she stays motivated by constantly picturing herself as thin and offers thought-provoking

sentences with thin praise. Another time, she mentions in one of her videos that she purchased two menus from *Popeyes* the day before. She chose not to share it with her Instagram followers, however, as a result of her embarrassment, which serves as a reminder that social media has a hidden agenda that promotes messages that make people feel guilty about eating fast food (Özten, 2018, 2019a, 2019b).

Other remarks made by Çağla Şikel highlight the value influencers place on physical appearance and shape. She says everyone wants to eat whatever they want and be “free,” but, according to her, there is a cost associated with the food we consume. Throughout her speech, she repeatedly stresses the value of exercising as much as we eat and deserve food. She talks about how she “deserves” carbohydrates once per week, purposefully eats small portions, and regrets not always going for the healthiest option when she has a snack (Şikel, 2017, 2020).

4.1.2 Weight Concern

Numerous actions listed above are also instances of actions that are simultaneously motivated by weight concerns. Out of the 30 videos, 21 demonstrated a preoccupation with weight, 17 demonstrated a high level of importance for weight, 11 demonstrated dissatisfaction with weight, and 12 demonstrated a desire to lose weight. Therefore, a total of 50.8% of the videos contained weight-concerned behavior. Additionally, there were details in the videos about the criticism from the social environment that was at the root of the fear of gaining weight. This situation is illustrated in one of the videos by Duygu Özaslan, whose boyfriend warned her not to gain weight because she ate rice for both lunch and dinner (Özaslan, 2018b, 12:00). The statement from Çağla Çetinöz’s video, “I imagine myself like a *dolly bird* in a summer bikini; I will burn

my belly fat completely and never have a belly,” (Çetinöz, 2021, 14:37) is an illustration of weight dissatisfaction. Such messages can also be interpreted as stigmatizing excess weight while praising thinness. “I relieve the guilt of the days I ate hamburgers with what I ate today,” said Chursanova (2018, 0:22), was another quote that perfectly captures the fear of gaining weight and guilt-inducing messages about food. Examples of being preoccupied with weight and having dissatisfaction with weight include Duru Önver’s words, “When I’m slightly full, I stop eating; I do not need to be entirely full because this will make me gain weight,” (Önver, 2019, 05:35) and İlayda Oymak’s declaration, “I am already remarkably thin, but I still want to lose weight” (Oymak, 2018, 01:50). The last example of being preoccupied and having developed an obsession with weight comes from Buğçe Kondakçı, who said, “I was obsessed with the scale; I weighed myself three times a day, but now I’m checking it once every day, and I’m losing weight very fast” (Kondakçı, 2021, 18:28).

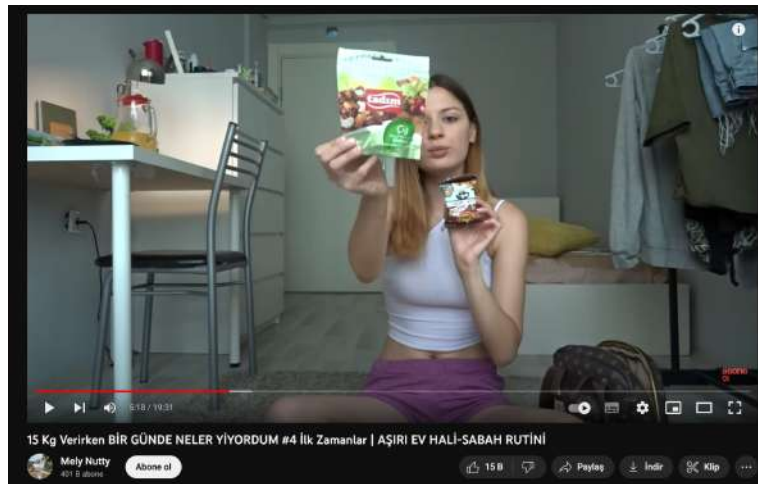
4.1.3 Eating Concern

The most common variable in videos was eating concern, which was present in 77.7% of the videos. All 30 demonstrated a preoccupation with food, eating, or calories, 16 demonstrated a fear of losing control over eating, and 24 demonstrated guilt-inducing food messages. The fear of losing control over food was a concern shared by many content creators. Figure 4 displays content creator Melis Özten listing the healthy snacks she always carries with her. “Of course, I cannot carry all of these alternates with me; otherwise, I could not control myself and eat them all,” she continued (Özten, 2019a, 05:17). Again mentioning alternatives for healthy snacks, Ebru Şallı (in Figure 5) emphasizes, “Of course, I do not eat the whole plate; these are all alternatives: 6-7 almonds, or 2 dates, and walnuts, or a seasonal fruit, or a spoonful

of peanut butter, but I never eat them all in one dish” (Şallı, 2021, 18:55). Gizem Özarslan, on the other hand, claims that she always prepares herself a plate for breakfast because she cannot help but overindulge when she makes a mixed breakfast, picking foods from larger serving plates on the table (Özarslan, 2020, 09:40). Hence, the earlier statements might be offensive to those who consume more extensive portions or have different needs. These sentences and sharing can lead to disrupted eating behaviors.

Figure 4

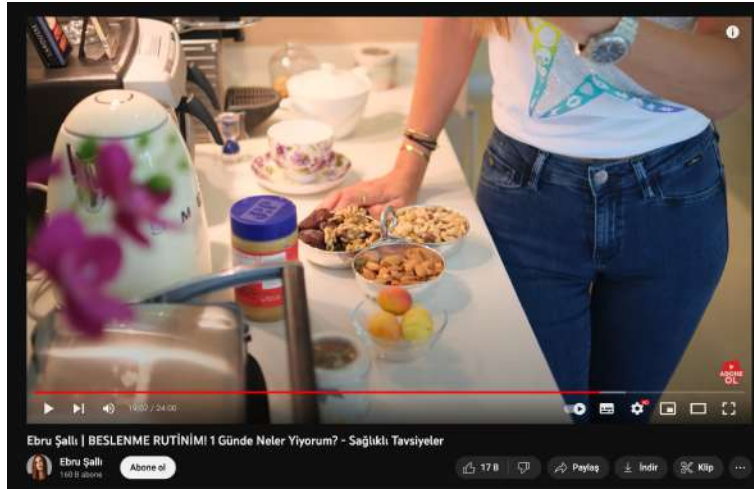
Mely Nutty Showing Her Snacks



Note. Screenshot taken from Mely Nutty’s YouTube video (Özten, 2019a).

Figure 5

Ebru Şallı Showing Some Snack Alternatives



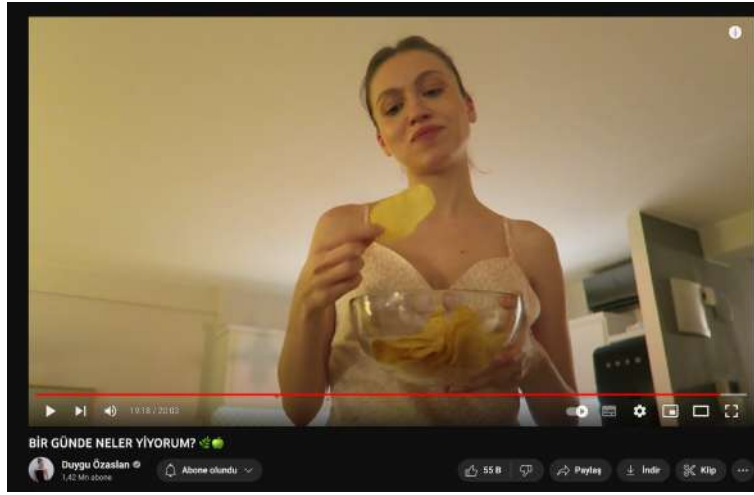
Note. Screenshot taken from Ebru Şallı’s YouTube video (Şallı, 2021) .

Another common practice frequently appearing in the videos was serving foods by associating them with guilt-generating messages. Figure 6 shows the content producer Duygu Özaslan eating chips at the end of the day while being caught on camera by her boyfriend, who then admits her guilt by saying, “I can eat *grass* from morning to night, I can eat anything healthy, but I cannot quit chips; I will get cellulite in return for these chips” (Özaslan, 2018a, 19:25). Moreover, influencer Melis Özten powerfully illustrates how “healthy and safe” foods can also be influenced by guilt-inducing messages in a scene where she considers how much milk she adds to her coffee. She warns, “Adjust the amount of milk so that the calorie count does not rise” (Özten, 2019a, 12:32). In another video, Melis mocks her friend by saying, “Well done, it’s clear whose friend you are,” after she refuses to eat the Turkish delight that is served with Turkish coffee (Özten, 2018, 07:30). However, the message that eating sweets should make you feel guilty and that not eating is something to be proud of is very upsetting for the audience members with eating disorders. Moreover,

influencer Duru Önver’s comment in her video, “When I realized I was getting thinner, I no longer want chocolate,” (Önver, 2019, 06:45) is reminiscent of Kate Moss’ famous mantra, “Nothing tastes as good as the skinny feels,” when asked for her motto (Costello, 2009), which is thought to have motivated people with eating disorders and subsequently used for purposes of spreading pro-anorexia messages.

Figure 6

Duygu Özaslan and her Infamous Chips



Note. Screenshot taken from Duygu Özaslan’s YouTube video (Özaslan, 2018a).

In one of her videos, Duygu Özaslan discusses her experiences overcoming binge eating and bulimia. She describes how she lost the weight she gained during this period and offers advice that may trigger ED symptoms in her followers, such as “You *should* decrease your portions; you *have to* find an exercise method you enjoy” (Özaslan, 2021, 08:05). She thus seeks to reverse the changes in her body shape, not the mental side effects of eating disorders.

4.1.4 Restraint

In the 30 videos, 22 demonstrated food avoidance or substitution, 20 demonstrated restraint over eating, and 20 demonstrated dietary rules. The percentage of restraint behavior was found to be 68.8% among all the videos that were examined. Preparing food without using any oil was the most deliberate restraint action, indicating an effort to reduce calories. Other behaviors included a fixation on portion control and eating “healthier,” low-calorie versions of food. The amount of oil used by YouTuber Ayşe Benli can be examined in Figure 7 in relation to restriction and avoidance of butter use, similar to the other content creators. Ebru Şallı gives another perfect example of her avoidance behavior when she brags about how little oil she uses to cook the rice (Şallı, 2021, 16:05). Another illustration is when Tuğçe Alpay shows how she persuades her followers to limit their rice intake to only oil-free, unsalted jasmine rice (Alpay, 2019, 13:03). Moreover, Duygu Özaslan adopts a dejected expression in one of her videos, saying, “I know it’s not healthy at all” while pointing at the rice she cooked with butter (Özaslan, 2018a, 13:35).

Figure 7

Ayşe Benli and Her Low Butter Consumption

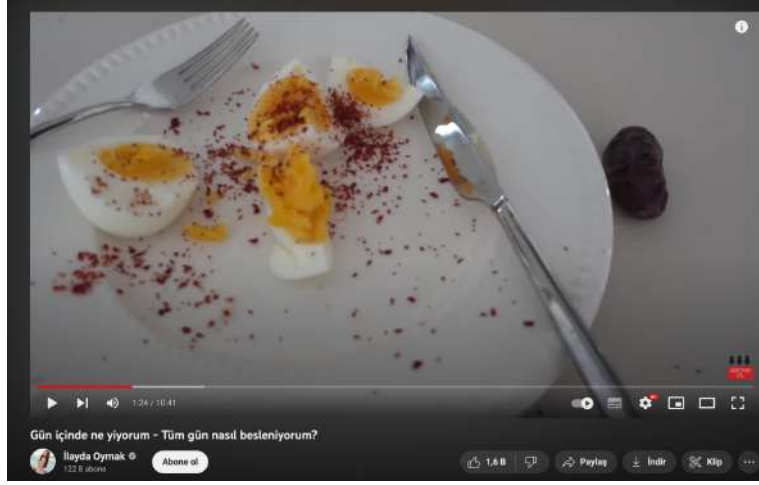


Note. Screenshot taken from Ayşe Benli’s YouTube video (Benli, 2020).

Damla Altun, on the other hand, promoted avoidance and guilt over food through phrases like “I wish I could eat a waffle right now, but I should not,” “I want to eat that dinner with bread, but I should not do such a thing today,” and “If I were not on a diet, I would definitely eat rice, but I will not do it” (Altun, 2018). In this case, the influencer’s criticism of certain food groups as being bad and causing weight gain—rather than her own dieting and weight loss efforts—is what is causing the guilt. In addition, weight gain cannot be caused by a particular food type or item. Losing weight depends on a variety of variables, including the individual’s needs and diet in general. Additional examples of abnormal portion sizes and restrictive behavior are illustrated in Figures 8, 9, and 10.

Figure 8

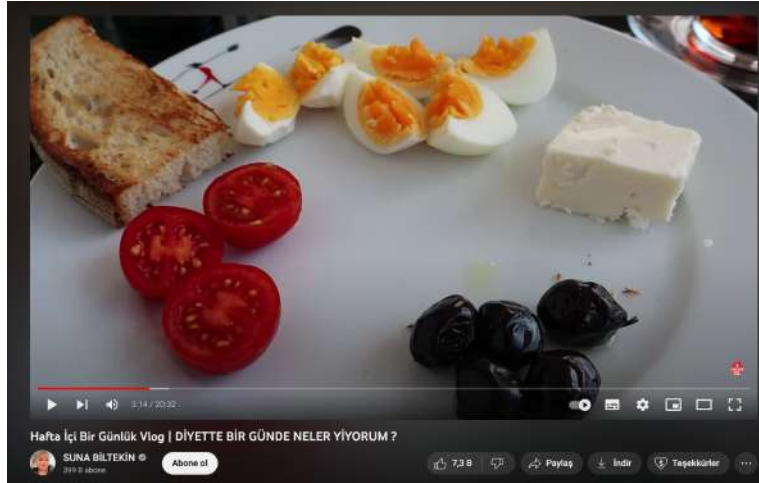
İlayda Oymak and Her Chili Flakes Consumption for Burning Fat



Note. Screenshot taken from İlayda Oymak's YouTube video (Oymak, 2017).

Figure 9

Suna Biltekin and Her Breakfast



Note. Screenshot taken from Suna Biltekin's YouTube video (Biltekin, 2020).

Figure 10

İlayda Oymak Sharing an Image of Her Post-Workout Meal



Note. Screenshot taken from İlayda Oymak’s YouTube video (Oymak, 2018).

Another common action depicted in the videos is a classic eating disorder behavior of dividing food into numerous small pieces and using small cutlery and plates to consume it. In their videos, Melis Özten and Damla Altun assert that they practice this behavior to deceive their brains into thinking they are eating more food and camouflage the true amount of food they are eating (Özten, 2018, 12:38; Altun, 2018, 16:03). However, micro-biting and ritualistic eating practices are behaviors that can be shown as examples of disrupted eating behaviors. Last but not least, the videos frequently featured dietary rules—another type of restrictive behavior. It was determined by a number of behavioral patterns, including the frequency of meals, how much water was consumed daily, when the meals were eaten, and the total intake of calories.

4.1.5 Other Variables

Self-objectification, exercise footage or excessive exercise, stigmatizing fatness or praising thinness, showing before and after photos of their bodies, unjustified health concerns or giving out health information as a non-professional, and portion distortion or unusual food portions were the additional factors considered in the analysis of the videos. A rate of 40.9% of the videos contains these additional variables. As I previously mentioned in the chapters regarding self-comparison and self-objectification theories, body selfies, before-and-after pictures, and exercise footage in the videos are quite risky because they cause viewers to form core beliefs about their bodies, eating habits, exercise routines, and health. Figures 11, 12, and 13 show examples of images where these physical comparisons can be made.

Figure 11

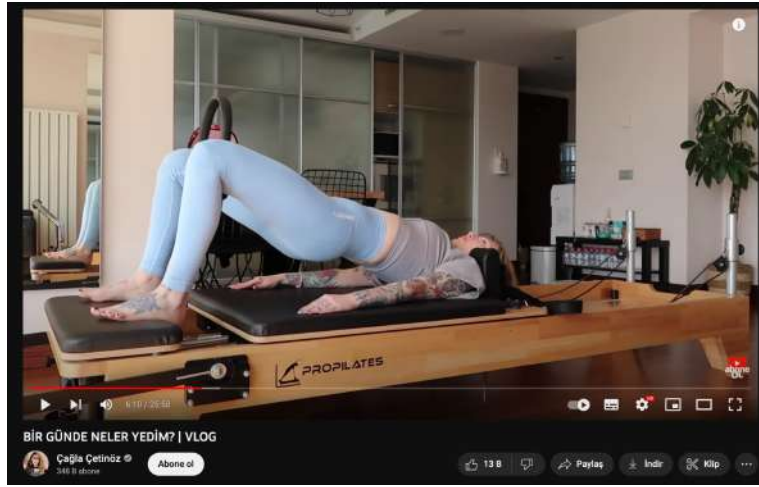
Youtuber FitYemek Lifting Weights



Note. Screenshot taken from FitYemek's YouTube video (Gökgöz, 2021).

Figure 12

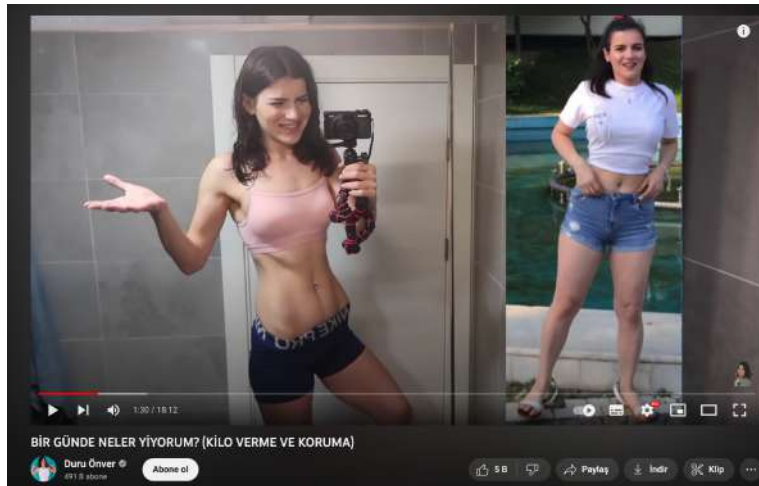
Çağla Çetinöz Doing Pilates



Note. Screenshot from Çağla Çetinöz’s YouTube video (Çetinöz, 2021).

Figure 13

Duru Önver Showing Off with a Before-After Transformation



Note. Screenshot taken from Duru Önver’s YouTube video (Önver, 2020).

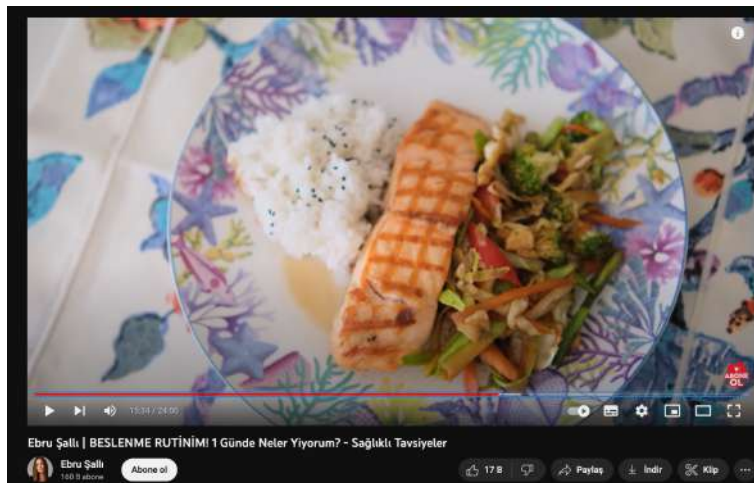
Influencers place great importance on “healthy” eating. Due to a lack of “healthy” outdoor options, the majority of content creators mention that they carry their own food. On various topics, including boosting their metabolism, using vitamins and

supplements, and how to burn fat, the content creators give out health-related information despite not being professionally trained in such areas. They also frequently do not cite the source of the aforementioned information.

Additionally, there are instances in the videos where the health advice given is untrue. Ebru Şallı's lunch menu, displayed in Figure 14, demonstrates this as an example. Şallı mentions at the beginning of her video that because she is a vegetarian, she eats a lot of eggs to compensate for her lack of protein intake and people like her should be careful about their protein intake as well (Şallı, 2021, 03:28). However, another scene in the video reveals her eating fish for her lunchtime meal (Şallı, 2021, 15:25). Thus, rendering the content producer a pescetarian, not a vegetarian. This demonstrates that the information this content creator shares is simply not true. It is, therefore, foreseeable that the excess protein she consumes could be harmful to both her own body and those who will heed her advice.

Figure 14

Ebru Şallı Eating Fish Despite Claiming Vegetarianism



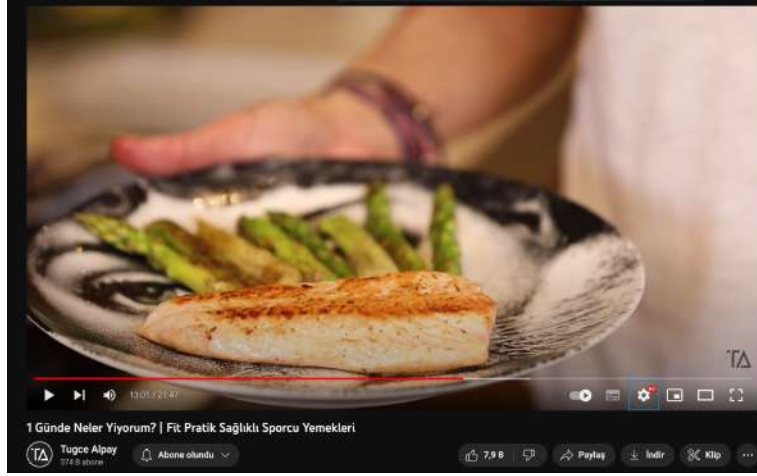
Note. Screenshot taken from Ebru Şallı's YouTube video (Şallı, 2021).

Although this content creator ate in a classic fashion of 3 meals - also a snack in between them - and did not consume any “unhealthy” food, she mentions at the conclusion of her video that she “*ate like a horse*” implying that she ate too much (Şallı, 2021, 21:08). Regarding the influencers, this declaration highlights the significance of their excessive portion control and the guilt they experienced once more regarding their food intake. The constant effort of portion control, as depicted in the videos, results from the fear of gaining weight. Influencers in the videos frequently advocate for small serving sizes and make their viewers feel guilty about their portion sizes without knowing their audience’s basal metabolic rates, hormone levels, age, gender, medical conditions (e.g. chronic diseases like diabetes), occupation, living circumstances or any other factors that might play a role in a person’s daily need of calorie intake. Giving people examples of portion sizes constantly may also cause them to disregard their bodies’ wishes and needs, fail to provide for their needs, and lose their body’s natural hunger and satiety signals.

Depicted in Figure 15 is Tuğçe Alpay’s post-workout meal. The lack of carbohydrates in this meal indicates that it is not a proper post-workout meal, despite the fact that she advises her followers to consume similar meals (Alpay, 2019). Similarly, in Figure 16, Çağla Şıkel’s dinner is shown. This image is an excellent illustration of portion distortion because the influencer remarks, after taking a look at the plate, which is of typical serving size, “The food here is too much; I can only eat half of it” (Şıkel, 2017, 08:52). Her attitude may cause people who might be used to larger portions to feel guilty about their regular diets and caloric intake.

Figure 15

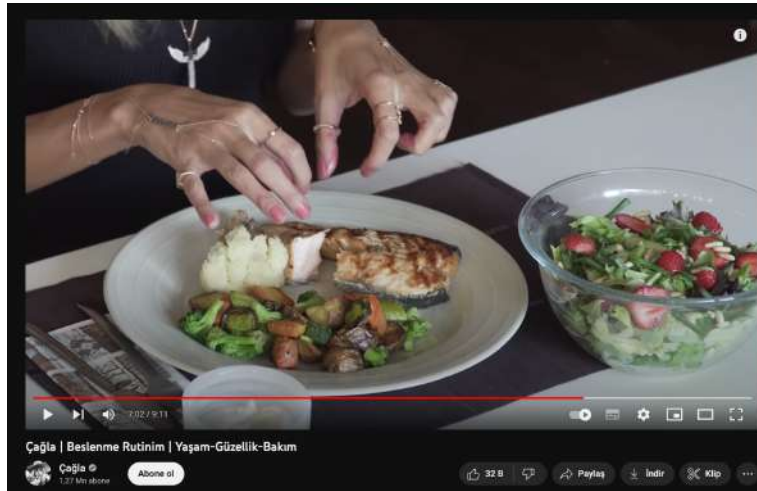
Tuğçe Alpay with Her Sans Carbohydrate Post-workout Meal



Note. Screenshot taken from Tuğçe Alpay's YouTube video (Alpay, 2019).

Figure 16

Çağla Şikel Saying She Will Only Eat Half of Her Dinner



Note. Screenshot taken from Çağla Şikel's YouTube video (Şikel, 2017).

The top 30-video analysis that I made to answer my first research question, “*What kinds of visual and thematic patterns are presented or promoted in What I Eat in a Day content on YouTube?*” revealed that several thematic patterns, primarily eating

concerns, restraint, and weight concerns, are presented in the videos. Additionally, the videos construct visual patterns that serve as references to the “ideal” diet and body through repeated exposure to idealized imagery which leads to some extremes becoming accepted as the standard, such as unrealistically thin figures and overly minimalistic plates. The videos encourage viewers to rely on the idealized body and healthy food standards set by social media influencers through their wide distribution and broad reach of the visuals. The messages conveyed by the influencers in their content were discussed in this chapter. The next chapter studies the results of the survey to uncover the effects of these messages on the audience and the following repercussions.

4.2 Survey Findings

Results of the survey reveal that 77 of the 80 participants in the study are women; two identify themselves as *other*; and one participant does not want their identity to be revealed. There is no male participant among the 80 participants. The percentage of female participants was therefore calculated to be 96.3%. Participants range in age from 18 to 47. The group with the most participants—57 individuals between the ages of 18 and 25—accounted for 71.25% of the total participants. The next group, which represents 19.75% of all participants, consists of 19 people between the ages of 26 and 34. Ages 45 to 54 comprise the group with the fewest participants, with just one participant making up 1.25% of the total. The demographics of the participants are shown in the table below.

Table 4*Survey Demographics*

Gender	Sample (80)	%
Female	77	96.30
Male	0	0.00
Other	2	2.50
Prefer not to say	1	1.20
Age (Years)		
18-25	57	71.25
26-34	19	23.75
35-44	3	3.75
45-54	1	1.25

The tables below (Tables 5 and 6) display the responses to yes-or-no questions and the number of participants who answered open-ended questions. The analysis of the responses, along with the analysis of the open-ended questions, is discussed further below.

Table 5*Answers of Yes-or-No Questions*

Yes-or-No Questions	Yes (Number of Participants)	Yes (%)	No (Number of Participants)	No (%)
1. Have you made any comparisons between the meal substance, quantity, and portion of the food in the videos and your diet?	72	90.0%	8	10.0%
2. Do you think the portion sizes shown in the "What I Eat in a Day" videos are realistic?	63	78.8%	17	21.3%
3. Do you have fears of not being able to stop eating?	48	60.0%	32	40.0%
4. Are there any details and/or messages in the videos that cause you to feel guilty regarding your diet?	67	83.8%	13	16.2%
5. Did the "What I Eat in a Day" videos persuade you to make "healthier" decisions? (e.g., choosing apples over chocolate or baking over frying)	38	47.5%	42	52.5%
6. Do you think the videos you watched play a role in your categorization of food as healthy or unhealthy?	65	81.3%	15	18.8%
7. Do you typically control and/or limit your food intake, skip meals, and/or count calories? Do you have at least one of these behaviors?	50	62.5%	30	37.5%
8. Are you satisfied with the shape and size of your body?	21	26.3%	59	73.8%
9. Do you think the before-and-after images or body selfies provided by these creators motivate you to lose weight?	32	40.0%	48	60.0%
10. Do you think the workout scenes in "What I Eat in a Day" videos motivate you to work-out or build muscle?	45	56.3%	35	43.8%
11. Are you following a healthy lifestyle and "clean" eating principles?	49	61.3%	31	38.7%
12. Does one or more of your "clean eating" principles and practices were influenced from the actions you saw in the "What I Eat in a Day" videos?	35	43.8%	45	56.3%
13. Do you consider yourself to have a social and/or emotional connection with the influencers you follow?	31	61.3%	49	38.8%
14. Do you think the advice and health information given by the influencers in the videos are accurate and/or beneficial?	16	20.0%	64	80.0%
15. Do you have any particular dietary rules? (e.g., having a rule about when you can eat or how much water you should drink each day)	53	66.3%	27	33.8%
16. Did the "What I Eat in a Day" videos influenced at least one of your dietary rules?	40	50.0%	40	50.0%
17. Did the videos you were exposed to caused you to determine your self-worth?	53	66.3%	27	33.8%

Table 6*Open-ended Questions*

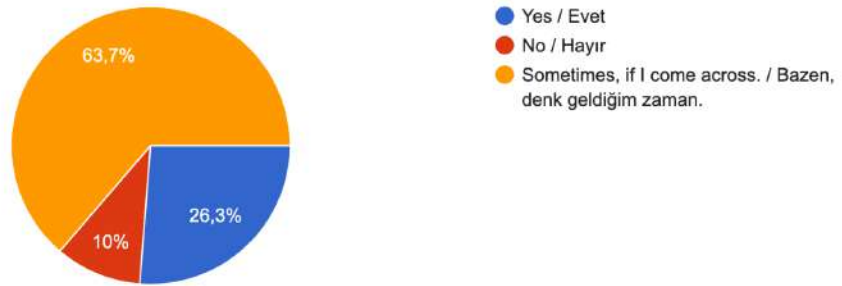
Open-ended Questions	Number of Answers
1. Which content producers' "What I Eat in a Day" videos do you keep up with?	48
2. What do you think of the dietary choices of the content creators you have seen in the "What I Eat in a Day" videos?	67
3. What is your idealized body standard? What influenced you to set your ideal standards?	64
4. What led you to think the advice and health information given by the influencers in the videos was accurate or beneficial?	16

Figure 19 shows that 51 people occasionally watch "What I Eat in a Day" videos, while 21 people follow these videos on a regular basis. A follow-up question of *"Which content producers' 'What I Eat in a Day' videos do you keep up with?"* were asked to cross-reference with the Top 30 list. Those on the Top 30 list, such as Damla Altun, Duygu Özaslan, Elvin Levinler, Banu Berberoğlu, Polina Chursanova, and Buğçe Kondakçı, are the influencers whose videos were frequently watched, according to the survey's findings. These names were included in the list of responses, along with generalized answers such as "people who have lost weight," "healthy-looking and thin people," "influencers who typically share their weight loss journey on social media," "YouTube creators with a pleasing physique," and "lean people or the ones who lose weight."

Figure 17

Survey Question About Watching the Videos Regularly

Do you watch "What I Eat In A Day" videos on a regular basis? "Bir Günde Neler Yiyorum" videolarını düzenli olarak takip ediyor musunuz?
80 yanıt



Note. Image taken from the Google Forms survey results.

Out of 80 participants, 60 were not diagnosed with an eating disorder or body dysmorphic disorder. A follow-up question of *"If the answer is no, do you think you have disordered eating patterns or an obsession with healthy eating?"* revealed that of these 60 people, 45 claimed to have impaired eating habits despite having given a negative response to the question in the figure above. Thus, 75% of viewers without a diagnosis even admit to engaging in disordered eating habits.

Figure 18

Survey Question About Having an ED Diagnosis

Please select if you have been diagnosed with an eating disorder (including orthorexia nervosa) or body dysmorphic disorder or not. Lütfen yeme bozuk...zukluğu teşhisiniz olup olmadığını işaretleyiniz.
80 yanıt



Note. Image taken from Google Forms survey results.

Of the total 80 study participants, 72 reported to have compared their diet with the substance, quantity, and food portions shown in the videos. In the following open-ended question I asked: “*What do you think of the dietary choices of the content creators you have seen in the ‘What I Eat in a Day’ videos?*”

The vast majority of respondents to the survey claimed that the content creators in the videos were lacking in nutrition. The participants noted that although the creators’ meals appeared to be regular and healthy, their portions were quite small, and they encouraged their followers to do the same. With expressions such as “most of them prefer foods that are completely free of refined sugar, away from pastries, and their portion sizes are small,” some participants claimed that the diets depicted were restrictive rather than healthy, and the tendency towards small portions was remarkable. Some participants continued by declaring that after becoming accustomed to the constrained and small portions depicted in the videos, their own

portions now appeared excessively large, and made them feel guilty. Therefore, rather than considering these videos as illustrations of healthy living, most participants described this content type as being a part of the toxic and restrictive diet culture. One participant described the videos as “restricted eating programs masquerading as healthy living.” According to some survey respondents, creators claiming they do not monitor their calorie intake are unconvincing. To further express their opinions on the subject, one participant added, “I think their diets are still low in calories, even if they say they do not count them.”

Some participants thought the diets promoted by the content creators in the videos could have been more sincere. They felt that the content creators were pushing themselves to eat remarkably few calories and select expensive foods unfamiliar to the general public. “Most of the time, I see that they consume expensive foods or ones we are unfamiliar with; because I lack access to such food, it seems impossible to have a healthy body,” said one participant in elucidating this situation. Respondents who did not have access to similar foodstuffs were led to believe that they would not lead healthy lives and maintain good physical health. The participants believed that by favoring these aforementioned foods, influencers were furthering their distance and segregating themselves from the general public. Additionally, some respondents believed that influencers were only concerned with the aesthetics of their plate and were solely focused on the visual appeal of the food rather than the nutritional value, thus further alienating themselves from their audience.

A few participants admitted to being envious of content creators and watching their videos in an effort to get motivated to achieve similar bodies. “Following such videos

has now become an obsession,” one participant said, illustrating the gravity of the situation. Several respondents added that they felt forced to keep up similar diets for the aforementioned reason. One participant remarked, “I eat like them and starve all day.”

Some participants acknowledged that the content creators lacked expertise and religiously applied second-hand knowledge to make up for their lack of information in the areas of health and nutrition. One participant claimed that “They typically try to make every meal as ‘healthy’ as possible so much so that it feels forced,” while another stated, “I think they are people who feel obligated to eat ‘healthy’ and want to prove it to others.” Such second-hand knowledge often leads influencers to have plant-based diets even though they do not practice veganism entirely. Several participants mentioned that content creators frequently eat vegetarian and vegan foods because they are *supposed to be* healthier. Another example of hearsay behavior is using unnecessary vitamins, supplements and/or protein-added versions of food. Another participant added, “I think they are getting enough calories, the problem is that they use too many processed foods and protein powders,” as an additional reason why she did not think influencers’ nutritional preferences were proper.

Finally, most participants believed that these types of videos create room for comparison and serve as a potent trigger for people with eating disorders, increasing the risk of impaired eating and furthering eating disorders. However, there are some who believe the opposite, 5 out of 67 responses indicated the content creators had a sufficient, regular, and nourishing diet.

In alignment with the open-ended responses from the previous question, 63 of the 80 participants did not consider the portions displayed in the videos to be realistic. 48 participants expressed apprehension about being unable to stop eating. In a similar vein, 67 out of the 80 participants agreed to have seen details and/or messages in the videos that caused them to feel guilty regarding their diet.

42 out of 80 participants claimed that the videos did not inspire them to make more “healthy” decisions regarding their food choices. This could be because viewers may feel demotivated rather than motivated. Inferred from the answers to the questions above, individuals might think they will never be able to make entirely “healthy” decisions and will not have similar physiques. Likewise, when asked whether seeing before and after photos of influencers’ bodies encourages viewers to lose weight, 60% (48 respondents) responded negatively. This might be the result of a lack of motivation brought on by an absence of confidence that a similar change will not occur. However, only 15 participants claimed that the videos did not impact labeling; the remaining 65 asserted that the videos impacted their classification of food as healthy or unhealthy.

Based on the information gleaned from the responses to the open-ended questions, it was argued that diets shown in the videos are frequently pricey and unsuitable for many people’s budgets. As stated in *The Presentation of the Self* chapter, bloggers who produce content on wholesome living promote their diets and lifestyles as a remarkable triumph and a set of timeless principles. By upholding superior health and beauty standards and creating impossible-to-reach societal values, content creators demonstrate that they are members of *the upper class*. Out of the 80 participants, 50

said they calculate calories, skip meals, and/or control or limit their food intake. 59 participants stated they were unsatisfied with their body proportions and measures.

Similar to the previous questions, an open-ended follow-up query was asked to gather in-depth information that is “What is your idealized body standard? What influenced you to set your ideal standards?” A significant portion of participants answered this question by saying their idealized body standards were a trimmed and toned body that is as lean as possible. The latter query was answered by stating that the social environment, the media, and social media played a key role in determining their ideal body standard. Some direct quotes such as, “Ever since I was a kid, I have always liked the idea of thinnes; my ideal standards are low-fat bodies, and what impressed me was the pressure of television and social media,” “I need to have a flat stomach to consider myself thin enough; influencers successfully molded my standards” were among the responses.

Answers such as “I want to be my skinniest self because I enjoy receiving compliments on my appearance; external validation helped me define my ideal body,” “Being thin, appearing strong, and having visible abdominal muscles are my idealized standards; I have never met someone with such a body in real life, I only see women with this type of body online, so that is how I created a sense of the ideal body,” highlighted the severity of the desire for thinness and set an example of the questionable nature of the existence of bodies presented as *ideal*.

The exercise scenes in the videos, according to 45 users, inspired them to work out. Therefore, the aforementioned videos significantly influence viewers’ decisions

concerning their bodies. 53 participants expressed that the messages they were exposed to through the videos had an impact on determining their self-worth. 49 of the participants claimed to adhere to the principles of a clean and healthy diet. The “What I Eat in a Day” videos, however, were only cited as having an influence on the guiding principles and practices of 35 participants’ diets. As a matter of fact, in the previous answers, the participants declared that the nutrients in the videos were relatively expensive and utopian. Therefore, it is reasonable that they were unable to be motivated by the guidelines set forth by these content producers when they developed their clean eating principles and behaviors.

Only 31 respondents believe they share an emotional and/or social connection with the content creators they follow. This demonstrates that content producers are capable of having a voice over their audiences’ bodies and eating practices without convincing them that there is a robust bond between them. 64 participants disagreed that the health recommendations and information the influencers provide in the videos are accurate or sound. Participants who believed the information was accurate gave the following responses: “they provide high-quality recipes using high-quality ingredients, and their body shape looks immaculate, making me believe their suggestions are valid,” “because they practice portion control, consume fewer calories, and maintain a healthy weight; harmoniously, when I do not cut out refined sugar and carbohydrates as they advise, I quickly gain weight,” “they have an extremely attractive, vibrant, and fit appearance,” “because they appear to be in good health.”

The majority of participants—53—agreed that they consistently adhere to certain dietary regulations. However, 40 out of 80 participants, or 50%, are swayed by influencers when making these dietary decisions. According to the information gathered, the participants compare their body size, portions, nutrients, and amounts to those of the content creators; feel pressure to be fit; are influenced by exercise images; label the meals as good or bad; and feel guilty about their diet. However, the characteristic patterns and behaviors in these videos are not always present in half of the participants' lives.

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To summarize, common visual and thematic patterns in the “What I Eat in a Day” videos, including concerns about shape, weight, eating, restriction, and other issues, were examined. Following that, the survey findings—which had been created to look at how these patterns and behaviors affect the audience—were discussed and interpreted in this chapter. The following chapter finalizes this research with concluding remarks and implications based on the literature reviewed.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The online environment has become an everyday source of information about nutrition, diet, and, consequently, a healthy lifestyle. Given that 75 percent of those with eating disorders also use the Internet as a source of information (Wilson et al., 2006), it is crucial to consider the Internet's function to comprehend the nature of EDs better (Drtilová et al., 2021). Since no single theory thoroughly explains the relationship between social media and eating pathology, I used an amalgam approach throughout the study by presenting the applicable points of diverse communication theories and psychosocial approaches.

I took the perspective of content producers as a personal curation performance; thus, I utilized the *Dramaturgical Model proposed* by Goffman (1959) as this study's main theoretical framework. I put forward the Goffman-based theory that individuals, especially influencers and those with high social media visibility, are motivated by a desire to gain public appreciation and establish their superior social position. Acquiring an appreciation for healthy eating, good looks, and beauty can help one advance in the societal ladder because these standards have become ingrained in our cultures and thought systems. It is difficult for individuals to re-consider these

expectations because some may be unwilling to give up the hard-earned social and financial benefits they have reaped by adhering to the societal message of ultra-thinness, youth, and beauty.

I used the content analysis method to examine the 30 most popular videos on YouTube, focusing on the theme “What I Eat in a Day,” to conduct a thorough analysis of the performances of content producers who exploit the power of social media to maintain and improve their social status. Moreover, I applied a 27-item questionnaire between March 16-20, 2023, to 80 people in order to examine the responses provided by users to the research content. Participants’ age distribution ranged between 18 and 47. A total of 96.3 percent of survey participants were female, similar to the 90 percent of content creators. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Irving (1990), mentioned in the literature review, and which lends credence to the idea that women are more likely to be affected by the media’s pressure to maintain a thin body image.

This study paves the way for future investigations into the subject’s connection to sexism and the cultural pressures on women to adhere to unrealistic beauty standards frequently propagated in the media. This study also notes that women are frequently evaluated and judged based on their physical appearance, which can be especially detrimental to those who have EDs or disordered eating. This emphasis on appearance rather than other facets of a woman’s identity is a form of gender inequality, as it perpetuates the idea that women are valued primarily based on their physical appearance.

Using the scale created with the variables I modified from the studies by Cavazos-Rehg et al. (2019), Phillips et al. (2018), and Boepple and Thompson (2014), I have examined shape concern, weight concern, eating concern, restraint, and other disrupted eating behaviors in videos. The majority of the above-mentioned videos featured scenes of extremely thin influencers. It was also common for the videos to include discourse regarding weight-loss tips and health advice.

Social media, where content producers can collectively share information, experiences, routines and communicate with other users, are essential venues for viewers to access information related to nutrition, health and a healthy lifestyle. I also examined how Turkish-speaking social media users comprehend, interpret, and assess food and nutritional content in the study. I used several theoretical frameworks to investigate how users behave both on and due to social media, including the uses and gratifications theory, cultivation theory, sociocultural theory, social comparison theory, and objectification theory.

Parallel with the propositions of the uses and gratifications theory, this research also confirmed that social media users use these videos to get information about an exemplary diet and exercise routine, compare their bodies and food, gather image-based messages about healthy eating, or find new recipes and food alternatives. The uses and gratifications theory offered a useful framework for comprehending why people follow social media influencers who promote healthy lifestyles. Cultivation theory is concerned with the lasting effects on audiences of long-term exposure to the recurring features of the media environment. In this regard, there is a misreading that the accuracy of online information is directly correlated to

the number of hits or views (Syed-Abdul et al., 2013). Viewers may think that the nutrition routines and dietary rules applied in these videos with the most views are accurate, and they may find it convenient to follow and imitate these rules and regulations. Since many influencers are promoting a particular diet and exercise routine, as shown in the videos, viewers began to perceive these behaviors as usual, healthy, and sustainable. This theory corresponds to the study findings that individuals heavily exposed to specific media content gradually accept its values, beliefs, and attitudes. Thus, an individual's perceptions of reality align with the portrayals of reality presented in media content.

Sociocultural theory explains how environmental, social, and cultural factors influence behavior. The findings from this study also suggests that users are to some degree impacted by the images and messages they are exposed to in line with sociocultural theory. For instance, some participants made it clear that, in addition to societal norms and expectations, the models they emulate and the messages they are subjected to on social media also manipulate their definitive body standards. Thus, even though individuals are not required to follow specific diets or have bodies similar to those of the influencers in the videos, the bottom notes emphasize that these characteristics are required for improving social standing. Findings reflect the arguments of the social comparison theory in the sense that study participants said that they compare their personal adequacy, diet, and body to those of influencers who imply that they are "one step ahead" of society. In line with the findings of the study, viewers become dissatisfied as a result of these comparisons since they perceive influencers as having a higher social status.

It should be noted that the class gap that the viewers are experiencing between them and the creators of the videos might be the result of the current socio-economic structure of Turkey. Numerous survey participants mentioned that their lack of access to certain foods due to high financial cost and lack of resources was the reason they could not achieve a fit body and a healthy lifestyle. The powerful effects of capitalism are at play here. The results of the study might have pointed in a different direction if this research had been conducted in a Western nation with less of a class and wealth divide compared to Turkey, resulting in an outcome where survey participants might not have mentioned economic disparities as the cause of their lack of healthy lifestyle choices. The lifestyles promoted in these videos seem to be unachievable for the lower and lower middle classes in Turkey.

The objectification theory has also been used to discuss how modern society forces women to desire beauty and sexiness. Women have firsthand experience with how society values physical attractiveness, how physical attraction makes them fit in, and how they self-objectify their bodies. According to Wolf (2015), eating disorders should be politicized because “it would need to make the point that you do not have much of a right over your body if you cannot eat” (p. 95). Participants in my research study also expressed frustration with the demands of maintaining their physical fitness, feeling under pressure as a result of the stigma attached to “fatness,” the glorification of thinness, and the connection between these values and self-worth.

In the survey I conducted, I questioned viewers about their consumption and internalization of the videos, whether they compare their bodies and diets to the content creators, their opinions on the idea of the ideal body -which objectifies

bodies- and the information and satisfaction they received about a healthy lifestyle through social media content. During the survey, it was discovered that the answers given by the participants were directly or indirectly related to weight loss, slimming, diet, and body image. Thus, the healthy lifestyle agenda has been observed to influence people's media consumption behaviors and their evaluation of the content they consume.

Both the results of the content analysis and the survey are intertwined with one another. Certain themes appear on either side, thus resulting in an overlap of findings. Feelings of guilt, desire, fear and dissatisfaction were some of the most significant keywords amongst the overlapping areas. Both the creators of the videos and the viewers exhibited behaviors centered around these themes, such as feelings of guilt toward consuming food, fear of losing control over eating, and an insatiable desire for an overabundance of "healthy" lifestyle choices.

Hereby, the answer to the first research question, "What kinds of visual and thematic patterns are presented or promoted in What I Eat in a Day content on YouTube?" --shape concern, weight concern, eating concern, restraint behaviors, and other patterns -including self-objectification, exercise footage, stigmatizing fat or praising thinness, before and after images, health concern or provision of health information, portion distortion, and placing a high level of importance on eating healthily- were discovered. The second research question, "How does What I Eat in a Day content on YouTube impact relevant audiences from the ED community?" on the other hand, announced that, following the analysis of the survey data, the relevant audiences are

primarily adversely impacted by the videos, causing them to tend toward distorted eating behaviors or feelings of inadequacy.

5.1 Limitations

This research has certain limitations. The study had a low degree of heterogeneity since 96.3% of the participants were female, even though their ages and histories of disorders varied. Also, one of the most critical research limitations is the double-barrelled nature of some survey questions and the use of a yes-or-no scale. With a more detailed survey instrument such as *The Likert Scale*, more precise information can be gathered in the future; this survey can only be considered a preliminary pilot.

Second, because I limited my attention to a single genre on a single platform, I am unaware of the content available on other platforms that are devoted to health and wellness. Furthermore, no other content on the same platform was considered; only the Top 30 list was employed to determine induction. The third drawback is that because the survey was entirely self-reported, I have no knowledge of the psychological well-being of the participants. Thus, there is a possibility of bias with respect to specific influencers and specific content. In addition, the first-hand stories and statements of respondents may not accurately reflect the general population. Moreover, although there was an aim to establish a comfortable experience and no personal information was requested during the survey, embarrassment or discomfort may have obscured some of the participants' online behavior. Fourth, the results might have been different if the survey had been conducted on a larger sample. Lastly, the content from the Top 30 list covers 2016 through 2022. Thus, the patterns

and behaviors mentioned throughout the study may no longer persist into the future, and the concept of “What I Eat in a Day” content may not exist or may evolve over time.

5.2 Recommendations

Individuals diagnosed with eating disorders or those who might have developed disordered eating behaviors may not have the digital literacy, nutritional knowledge, or critical thinking skills to recognize potentially harmful information. Studies should be carried out for internet users to establish these critical literacy skills, and certified health professionals should prepare content that provides information on the subject for dealing with unwanted information. It is paramount to clarify the distinction between healthy eating and destructively controlling calories through media literacy to help young people be more resilient in the face of impaired eating behaviors and physical disturbances. Thus, scientific information can spread on social media rather than inaccurate information that may encourage disordered eating behaviors.

Discussion of the benefits of social media and internet use should be incorporated into future research on how online social interactions can support recovery or reduce harm. Similar studies comparing men and women might be added to the literature, or studies looking into how media may affect young children’s perceptions of their bodies might be carried out. As a final recommendation, future studies could study the direct effect of these videos with a different methodology, such as an experimental survey or in-depth interviews.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A.

YouTubers & the Top 30 Videos

Channel Name	Occupation of the Channel Owner	Name of the Channel Owner	Gender
Duygu Özaslan	Influencer	Duygu Özaslan	F
Çağla	Fashion Model/ Gabmeister	Çağla Şikel	F
Duygu Özaslan	Influencer	Duygu Özaslan	F
Ebru Şallı	Model/ Pilates Instructor	Ebru Şallı	F
Elvin Levinler	Actress/ Influencer	Elvin Levinler	F
Mely Nutty	Pharmacist/ Influencer	Melis Özten	F
Mely Nutty	Pharmacist/ Influencer	Melis Özten	F
Damla Altun	Influencer	Damla Altun	F
Okan Serbes	YouTuber/ Independent Contractor	Okan Serbes	M
Çağla	Fashion Model/ Gabmeister	Çağla Şikel	F
Banu Berberoğlu	YouTuber	Banu Berberoğlu	F
Duygu Özaslan	Influencer	Duygu Özaslan	F
Mely Nutty	Pharmacist/ Influencer	Melis Özten	F
Polina Chursanova	Influencer	Polina Chursanova	F
Tuğçe Alpay	Fitness Coach	Tuğçe Alpay	F
Fit Yemek	YouTuber/ Self-Proclaimed Fitness Coach	Emre Gökgöz	M
Çağla Çetinöz	Influencer	Çağla Çetinöz	F
Esila Biltekin	Student/ Influencer	Esila Biltekin	F
Duru Önver	Influencer	Duru Önver	F
Elvin Levinler	Actress/ Influencer	Elvin Levinler	F
Polina Chursanova	Influencer	Polina Chursanova	F
Ayşe Benli	Fashion Designer	Ayşe Benli	F
Suna Biltekin	YouTuber	Suna Biltekin	F
İlayda Oymak	YouTuber	İlayda Oymak	F
İlayda Oymak	YouTuber	İlayda Oymak	F
Polina Chursanova	Influencer	Polina Chursanova	F
Duru Önver	Influencer	Duru Önver	F
Gizem Özarslan	Influencer	Gizem Özarslan	F
Buğçe Kondakçı	Influencer/ Self-Proclaimed Fitness Coach	Buğçe Kondakçı	F
Melisa Bebeli TR	Influencer	Melisa Bebeli	F

Total Number of Subscribers	Title of the Video	Release Date of the Video
1.42M	Bir Günde Neler Yiyorum?	Jul 2, 2018
1.27M	Beslenme Rutinim	Sep 26, 2017
1.42M	Bir Günde Neler Yiyorum?	Nov 2, 2018
158K	Beslenme Rutinim! Bir Günde Neler Yiyorum?	Sep 5, 2021
1.01M	Bir Günde Neler Yiyorum? Fit & Pratik	Oct 17, 2018
402K	15 KG Verirken Bir Günde Neler Yiyordum	Jul 12, 2019
402K	15 KG Verirken Bir Günde Neler Yiyordum	Oct 13, 2019
748K	1 Günde Neler Yiyorum Bakalım	Nov 17, 2018
563K	Gün İçinde Neler Yiyorum? Beslenme-Spor Rutinim	Nov 27, 2016
1.27M	Beslenme Rutinim	Jul 7, 2020
462K	Diyette Bir Günde Neler Yiyorum	Mar 21, 2022
1.42M	Bir Günde Neler Yiyorum? Beslenme ve Spor Motivasyonum	Jan 24, 2021
402K	15 KG Verirken Bir Günde Neler Yiyordum	Nov 27, 2018
613K	Beslenme Rutinim - Bugün Ne Yedim?	Nov 17, 2017
373K	1 Günde Neler Yiyorum - Fit Sağlıklı Sporcu Yemekleri	May 5, 2019
1.09M	Tüm Gün Beslenme ve Antrenman Rutinim	Mar 28, 2021
347K	Bir Günde Neler Yedim? VLOG	Mar 26, 2021
806K	1 Gün Boyunca Neler Yedim? Kaç Kalori Aldım?	Nov 24, 2020
491K	Bir Günde Neler Yiyorum? (Kilo Verme ve Koruma)	Mar 27, 2020
1.01M	Bir Günde Neler Yiyorum?	Mar 9, 2019
613K	Bir Günde Neler Yiyorum? Pizza ve Hamburger Detoksu	Dec 20, 2018
134K	Zayıflarken Bir Günde Neler Yedim	Mar 20, 2020
398K	Diyette Bir Günde Neler Yiyorum	Sep 22, 2020
122K	Gün İçinde Ne Yiyorum? Tüm Gün Nasıl Besleniyorum?	May 28, 2017
122K	Gün İçinde Neler Yiyorum? Nasıl Besleniyorum? Sağlıklı Beslenme	Nov 30, 2018
613K	Bir Günde Neler Yiyorum?	Mar 9, 2020
491K	Nasıl Zayıflıyorum? Bir Günde Neler Yiyorum? Vlog	Feb 27, 2019
32.5K	Bir Günde Neler Yiyorum?	Apr 10, 2020
262K	Bir Günde Neler Yiyorum? Vlog	May 16, 2021
279K	Bir Günde Neler Yiyorum? Sağlıklı ve Kolay Tarifler	Apr 26, 2017

Number of Views	Number of Likes	Number of Comments	Additional Hashtags
2.507.950	55K	3.9K	-
2.294.001	32K	1.6K	-
1.642.899	29K	1.3K	-
1.234.895	17K	1.7K	#Sağlık, #BeslenmeRutinin
1.171.871	22K	1.4K	#SağlıklıTarifler, #Yemek
967.188	15K	818	-
910.195	21K	937	-
753.317	16K	1.1K	-
679.852	12K	978	-
649.156	15K	1.1K	#BeslenmeRutinin
577.393	39K	4.9K	-
548.309	19K	1.4K	-
469.643	7.3K	270	#MelyZayıflama
434.395	10K	880	-
397.230	7.8K	635	-
376.420	15K	879	#beslenme, #fitness
306.904	13K	805	-
281.093	10K	Comments Off	-
253.807	5K	784	-
240.741	4.5K	303	#SağlıklıTarifler, #Yemek
208.757	5.8K	251	-
199.501	4.5K	271	-
191.245	7.3K	1.2K	#DiyetYemekleri, #GünlükVlog
167.417	1.6K	319	-
164.997	2.3K	434	-
161.481	5.2K	521	-
158.481	3.3K	388	-
155.152	2.3K	239	-
154.719	4.9K	523	-
132.817	2.6K	191	-

Appendix B. Survey Questions

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Do you watch “What I Eat In A Day” videos on a regular basis?
4. Which content producers’ “What I Eat in a Day” videos do you keep up with?
5. Please select if you have been diagnosed with an eating disorder (including orthorexia nervosa) or body dysmorphic disorder or not.
6. If the answer is no, do you think you have disordered eating patterns or an obsession with healthy eating?
7. If yes, are you actively battling with the disorder, in the treatment process, or fully recovered?
8. What do you think of the dietary choices of the content creators you have seen in the “What I Eat in a Day” videos?
9. Have you made any comparisons between the meal substance, quantity, and portion of the food in the videos and your diet?
10. Do you think the portion sizes shown in the “What I Eat in a Day” videos are realistic?
11. Do you have fears of not being able to stop eating?
12. Are there any details and/or messages in the videos that cause you to feel guilty regarding your diet?
13. Did the “What I Eat in a Day” videos persuade you to make “healthier” decisions? (e.g., choosing apples over chocolate or baking over frying)
14. Do you think the videos you watched play a role in your categorization of food as healthy or unhealthy?

15. Do you typically control or limit your food intake, skip meals, and/or count calories? Do you have at least one of these behaviors?
16. Are you satisfied with the shape and size of your body?
17. Do you think the before-and-after images or body selfies provided by these creators motivate you to lose weight?
18. Do you think the workout scenes in “What I Eat in a Day” videos motivate you to work-out or build muscle?
19. What is your idealized body standard? What influenced you to set your ideal standards?
20. Did the videos you were exposed to caused you to determine your self-worth?
21. Are you following a healthy lifestyle and “clean” eating principles?
22. Does one or more of your “clean eating” principles and practices were influenced from the actions you saw in the “What I Eat in a Day” videos?
23. Do you consider yourself to have a social and/or emotional connection with the influencers you follow?
24. Do you think the advice and health information given by the influencers in the videos are accurate and/or beneficial?
25. If yes, what led you to think the advice and health information given by the influencers in the videos was accurate and/or beneficial?
26. Do you have any particular dietary rules? (e.g., having a rule about when you can eat or how much water you should drink each day)
27. Did the “What I Eat in a Day” videos influenced at least one of your dietary rules?

Appendix C. Copy of the Informed Consent and the Ethics Committee Approval Forms



Bilkent Üniversitesi Akademik İşler Rektör Yardımcılığı

Tarih : 1 Mart 2023
Gönderilen : Gülce Özdemir
Danışman : Emel Özdora Akşak
Gönderen : H. Altay Güvenir
İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başkanı
Konu : "If We Are ..." çalışması etik kurul onayı

Üniversitemiz İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu, 1 Mart 2023 tarihli görüşme sonucu, "*If We Are What We Eat, I Am Fast, Cheap, and Easy!*" *A Study on Healthy Lifestyle Influencers, Their Audio-Visual Content and Its Perception in Turkey*" isimli çalışmanız kapsamında yapmayı önerdiğiniz etkinlik için etik onay vermiş bulunmaktadır. Onay, ekte verilmiş olan çalışma önerisi, çalışma yürütücüler ve bilgilendirme formu için geçerlidir.

Bu onay, yapmayı önerdiğiniz çalışmanın genel bilim etiği açısından bir değerlendirmedir. Çalışmanızda, kurulumuzun değerlendirmesi dışında kalabilen özel etik ve yasal sınırlamalara uymakla ayrıca yükümlüsünüz.

Kovid-19 salgını nedeniyle konulmuş olan kısıtlamaların yürürlükte olduğu süre içinde, tüm komite toplantıları elektronik ortamda yapılmaktadır; aşağıda isimleri bulunan Bilkent Üniversitesi Etik Kurulu Üyeleri adına bu yazıyı imzalama yetkisi kurul başkanındadır.

Etik Kurul Üyeleri:

Ünvan / İsim	Bölüm / Uzmanlık	
Prof.Dr. H. Altay Güvenir	Bilgisayar Mühendisliği	Başkan
Prof.Dr. Erdal Onar	Hukuk	Üye
Prof.Dr. Haldun Özaktay	Elektrik ve Elektronik Müh.	Üye
Doç.Dr. Işık Yuluğ	Moleküler Biyoloji ve Genetik	Üye
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Burcu Ayşen Ürgen	Psikoloji	Üye
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Didem Özkul McGeoch	İletişim ve Tasarımı	Yedek Üye
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi A.Barış Özbilen	Hukuk	Yedek Üye

Kurul karar/toplantı No: 2023_03_01_01

Confidentiality:

Confidentiality of study participants is important for the researcher. The identity of the survey participants will not be revealed or used at any time. You will not be asked to provide personal information such as your name, last name or any other contact information that may help identify your personality.

In order to participate in the study, please provide a signature next to the statement below.

_____ I agree to participate in the study.

Person carrying out the work

Assoc. Prof. Emel Özdora Akşak

Briefing and Informed Consent Form:

Dear participant,

You are invited to participate in a research study investigating "Healthy Lifestyle Influencers, Their Audio-Visual Content, and Its Perception in Turkey."

This research study is conducted by Gülce Özdemir, under the supervision of Assoc. Prof. Emel Özdora Akşak of Bilkent University Communication and Design Department. You can contact the study administrator at any time if you have any questions or concerns about your participation in the study.

Email: _____

Phone: 0(539) 875-2440

You must be over the age of 18 to participate in this research study. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you can withdraw from the study at any time you want.

The data you provide will only be used for a scientific purpose and your identity will NOT be revealed. The researcher respects the confidentiality of your data and will keep it anonymous throughout the data collection and analysis process. Demographic information such as age group and gender WILL be collected or published.

In order to participate in the study, please provide a signature next to the statement below.

_____ I agree to participate in the study.

Person carrying out the work

Assoc. Prof. Emel Özdora Akşak

Information on Debriefing:

At the beginning and end of the surveys, the participants will be informed further about the purpose of the study and how the data collected will be used to support academic research.

Appendix D. Full selection of “What I Eat in a Day” vlogs

Alpay, T. [Tuğçe Alpay]. (2019, May 5). 1 Günde Neler Yiyorum? | Fit Pratik Sağlıklı Sporcu Yemekleri [Video]. YouTube.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ze8_yiudT_Y&t=781s

Altun, D. [Damla Altun]. (2018, November 7). 1 GÜNDE NELER YİYORUM BAKALIM [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6TLzO4AeXs>

Beleli, M. [Melisa Beleli TR]. (2017, April 26). Bir Günde Ne Yiyorum - Sağlıklı & Kolay Tarifler | Melisa Beleli [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52jZJJVx3s8>

Benli, A. [Ayşe Benli]. (2020, March 20). ZAYIFLARKEN BİR GÜN BOYUNCA NELER YEDİM? EVDE KARANTİNADA BİR GÜN [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9dD3-VFqIM&t=439s>

Berberoğlu, B. [Banu Berberoğlu]. (2022, March 21). vlog sohbet, diyetle bir günde neler yiyorum [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3XKOZIWH7IA&t=55s>

Biltekin, E. [Esila Biltekin]. (2020, November 24). 1 GÜN BOYUNCA NELER YEDİM ? KAÇ KALORİ ALDIM? [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMxxZjO4S2k>

Biltekin, S. [Suna Biltekin]. (2020, September 22). Hafta İçi Bir Günlük Vlog | DİYETTE BİR GÜNDE NELER YİYORUM? [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MME6c0FSau0>

Chursanova, P. [Polina Chursanova]. (2017, November 12). BESLENME RUTİNİM | BUGÜN NE YEDİM? [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qxGUrSEzUE>

Chursanova, P. [Polina Chursanova]. (2018, December 20). BİR GÜNDE NELER YİYORUM? | PİZZA VE HAMBURGER DETOKSU. [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vxhUPa9zoPY&t=5s>

Chursanova, P. [Polina Chursanova]. (2020, March 9). BİR GÜNDE NELER YİYORUM? [Video]. YouTube.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BXRw_e570Y4

Çetinöz, Ç. [Çağla Çetinöz]. (2021, March 26). BİR GÜNDE NELER YEDİM? | VLOG. [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a8YM6jhZ00I&t=371s>

Gökgöz, E. [Fit Yemek]. (2021, March 28). Tüm Gün Beslenme ve Antrenman Rutinim (2650 kalori). [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZqp7ENSMXA&t=684s>

Kondakçı, B. [Buğçe Kondakçı]. (2021, May 16). Maksimum Yağ Yakmak İçin Antrenman / Haftalık Evde Antrenman Programı/ Bir Günde Neler Yiyorum? Vlog. [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahBpJXtL-o8&t=455s>

Levinler, E. [Elvin Levinler]. (2018, October 17). BİR GÜNDE NELER YİYORUM? FİT & PRATİK. [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7PIztDW3jo&t=295s>

Levinler, E. [Elvin Levinler]. (2019, March 9). BİR GÜNDE NELER YİYORUM? KOŞUŞTURMALI LONDRA MODA HAFTASI. [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QK8X-Ba-FWw>

Oymak, İ. [İlayda Oymak]. (2017, May 28). Gün içinde ne yiyorum - Tüm gün nasıl besleniyorum? [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ogtBfky3JkY>

- Oymak, İ. [İlayda Oymak]. (2018, November 30). Gün içinde ne yiyorum? - Nasıl besleniyorum? - Sağlıklı beslenme. [Video]. YouTube.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMfdQsY_OvU&t=181s
- Önver, D. [Duru Önver]. (2019, February 27). Nasıl Zayıflıyorum? Bir Günde Neler Yiyorum? | VLOG #Gün18. [Video]. YouTube.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pUd_sGj-Cak
- Önver, D. [Duru Önver]. (2020, March 27). BİR GÜNDE NELER YİYORUM? (KİLO VERME VE KORUMA). [Video]. YouTube.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KKPSRNYcI8o&t=130s>
- Özarslan, G. [Gizem Özarslan]. (2020, April 10). Bir Günde Neler Yiyorum | Aralıklı Oruç ile Beslenme Rutinim (Intermittent Fasting Uyarlama). [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2TRKV5_aXcA
- Özaslan, D. [Duygu Özaslan]. (2018a, July 2). BİR GÜNDE NELER YİYORUM? [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TeqyeNaikmg>
- Özaslan, D. [Duygu Özaslan]. (2018b, November 2). BİR GÜNDE NELER YİYORUM? YOUTUBE SANA İNANAMIYORUM. [Video]. YouTube.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-tOu3Fgw2Zg>
- Özaslan, D. [Duygu Özaslan]. (2021, January 24). Bir Günde Neler Yiyorum? - Beslenme ve Spor Motivasyonum. [Video]. YouTube.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Abx_d6R4rIo&t=154s
- Özten, M. [Mely Nutty]. (2018, November 27). “15 KG VERDİĞİM SÜREÇTE BİR GÜNDE NELER YİYORDUM? SABAH OKUL RUTİNİM” #MELYZAYIFLAMA. [Video]. YouTube.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AvovwJX0Two>

- Özten, M. [Mely Nutty]. (2019a, July 12). 15 Kg Verirken BİR GÜNDE NELER YİYORDUM #4 İlk Zamanlar | AŞIRI EV HALİ-SABAHA RUTİNİ. [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0IB-SnXoYUY&t=318s>
- Özten, M. [Mely Nutty]. (2019b, October 13). 15 KG VERİRKEN BİR OKUL GÜNÜMDE NELER YİYORDUM? #6 | Basit Öğünleri Yanında Taşımak. [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xf70GMUwK7k>
- Serbes, O. [Okan Serbes]. (2016, November 27). Gün İçinde Ne Yiyorum ? | Beslenme - Spor Rutinim. [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_7hSv5D5QAY&t=424s
- Şallı, E. (2021, September 5). [Ebru Şallı]. Ebru Şallı | BESLENME RUTİNİM! 1 Günde Neler Yiyorum? - Sağlıklı Tavsiyeler. [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gsvqshzg3iM&t=1147s>
- Şıkel, Ç. [Çağla]. (2017, September 26). Çağla | Beslenme Rutinim | Yaşam-Güzellik-Bakım. [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JR3lVZNWIHY&t=423s>
- Şıkel, Ç. [Çağla]. (2020, July 7). Çağla | Beslenme Rutinim | Yaşam Güzellik Bakım. [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G764hwnw9ts>