

ABSTRACT

The prevalence of beauty standards on social media, particularly Instagram, has been demonstrated to exert significant pressure on women, particularly those affected by acne. The objective of this research was to analyze and understand how Gen Z women with acne represent themselves on Instagram. This study employs Stuart Hall's theory of representation, which encompasses several focal points, including reflection, construction, and intention. It utilizes a qualitative method, adopting a phenomenological approach to explore the in-depth experiences of the informants. The data presented herein were collected through a combination of in-depth interviews, observational studies, and documentation of Gen Z women who actively use Instagram and have acne skin conditions. The present study demonstrates that informants employ a variety of strategies to construct self-representations, including the use of filters, the concealment of facial features, and the deliberate avoidance of uploading facial photographs. The analysis reveals a clear interconnection between the informants' self-representations on Instagram and their exposure to social beauty standards that prioritize smooth skin as a symbol of aesthetic perfection. This finding underscores the profound influence of the social environment and media on individuals' self-presentation. These representations are not solely a means of self-expression; they also serve as a means of adapting to social pressures. The result of this study is that Gen Z women with acne form self-representations based on social stigma and digital media pressure. This research is expected to inform efforts to create a more inclusive social media environment that reflects the diversity of physical appearance.

Keywords: Instagram, acne skin, social media, self-representation, beauty standards, Gen Z women.