

Abstract

The 'that girl' trend on TikTok has emerged as a compelling representation of an idealized woman, embodying self-improvement, wellness, and perfection. However, beneath the surface of this aspirational portrayal lies a darker reality, as young women reported its detrimental impact on mental health and self-esteem. This research investigates the commodification of 'that girl' as an ideal woman on TikTok, exploring her adherence to or defiance of mainstream beauty standards and how wellness, beauty, fashion, and diet products are presented as tools for achieving this image. Adopting a case study approach, mixed methods data analysis examines publicly available TikTok videos tagged with #thatgirl between March and August 2021. Utilizing a multimodal content analysis informed by social semiotics, thematic categories were developed to understand patterns in the portrayal of womanhood. The findings reveal that the 'that girl' trend encourages consumerism by promoting products and lifestyle choices as pathways to attain the ideal womanhood depicted on TikTok. This study highlights the complex interplay between social media, consumer culture, and gender norms, offering valuable insights into the implications of beauty standards veiled as empowerment and wellness in digital spaces.