

EXPLORING #WELLNESS ON INSTAGRAM: how is gender represented?

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GIVING CONTEXT

**RESEARCHING WELLNESS
IN DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT**

The increasingly prominent “wellness” lexicon and associated expressions on daily communication.

Wellness related content have become even more evident in the digital context >> Covid-19

Wellness related content invade smartphone screens. Additionally, one size fit all solutions are provided through platforms >> mobile apps.

The increasingly
expressions on da

TOWARDS

and associated

wellness related content hav
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become even more evident in

Wellr

PLATFORMIZATION

Additional
platforms >

OF WELLNESS.

through

The logo for WellApp features the text "WellApp" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The word "App" is partially overlaid by a large, colorful, abstract shape that resembles a water droplet or a splash. This shape has a gradient from light blue on the right to yellow and green on the left, with a thin black outline. The background is a solid light beige color.

WellApp

WellApp. Wellness amplified or appified? Wellness management trending in everyday life digital platform.

Explores the socio-cultural trend of the meanings of wellness, in contemporary life that emerge in digital spaces mediated by apps.



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Today's study...

How is gender represented on #wellness related content on Instagram?



WELLNESS
CONCEPTUALIZATION

AN APPROACH

Wellness defined as “a way of life oriented toward **optimal health and well-being**, in which **body, mind, and spirit** are integrated by the individual to **live life more fully**” (Myers et al., 2000, p. 252).

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"An active process through which people become aware of, and make choices toward, a more successful existence" (Stoewen, 2015, p.983) >> **actively pursue activities, choices and lifestyles**

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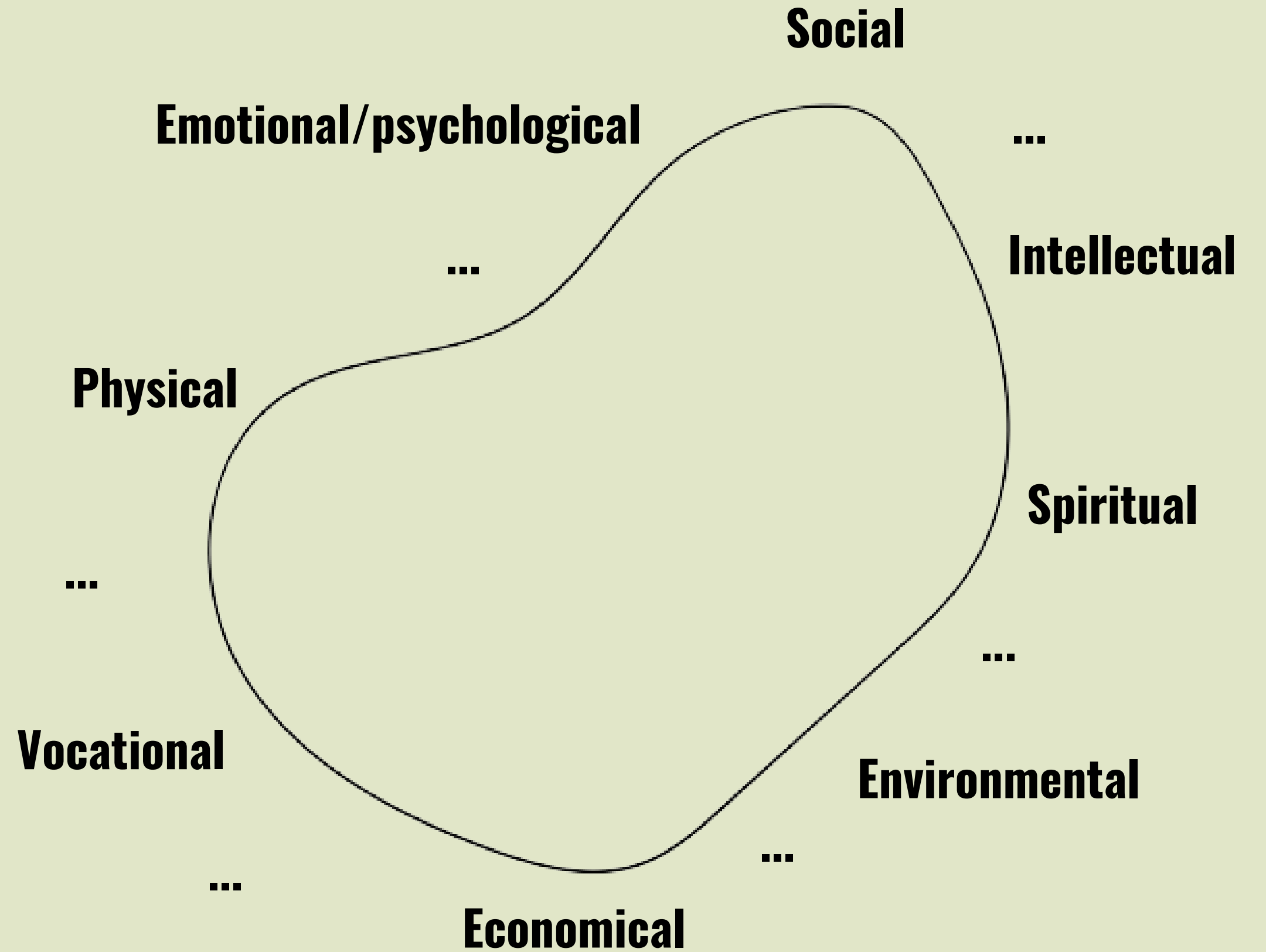
"An active process through which people become aware of, and make choices toward, a more successful existence" (Stoewen, 2015, p.983) >> **actively pursue activities, choices and lifestyles**

Dynamic process >> choices are made, people's intentions are reflected through their actions leading them to a state of self-improvement >> **using apps**

Multidimensional concept (Stoewen, 2015, 2017) including various sectors of an individuals' life in society.

Definition and reach

Interdependency



WELLNESS PART OF EVERYDAY PRACTICES

Multidimensional
concept (Stoewer
2015, 2017) includ
various sector
individuals' life
society.

Social

Intellectual

Spiritual

Environmental



**WELLNESS,
INSTAGRAM AND
GENDER**

CONNECTING THE DOTS

Instagram is a stage where **wellness-related content** is shared and discussed >> image-based offers a visual perspective (Åberg et al., 2020)

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Plays an increasingly important role in people's lives >> used as an **alternative public** space but also as an extra layer of self-presentation and representation.

Perceived as a space for **more diverse representations** that do not fit limitations >> mainstream media (Gill, 2007, p. 12).

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Instagram can for that be a stage where >> practices of gendered representation beyond their current norms or a space where existing social norms are reproduce/reinforce (Caldeira et al., 2018)

Wellness representation through gender is lacking attention >>
Why is important >> relevancy of wellness >> understood >> achieve
>> dynamic process

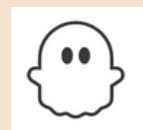
Can have an impact on how **wellness is lived**



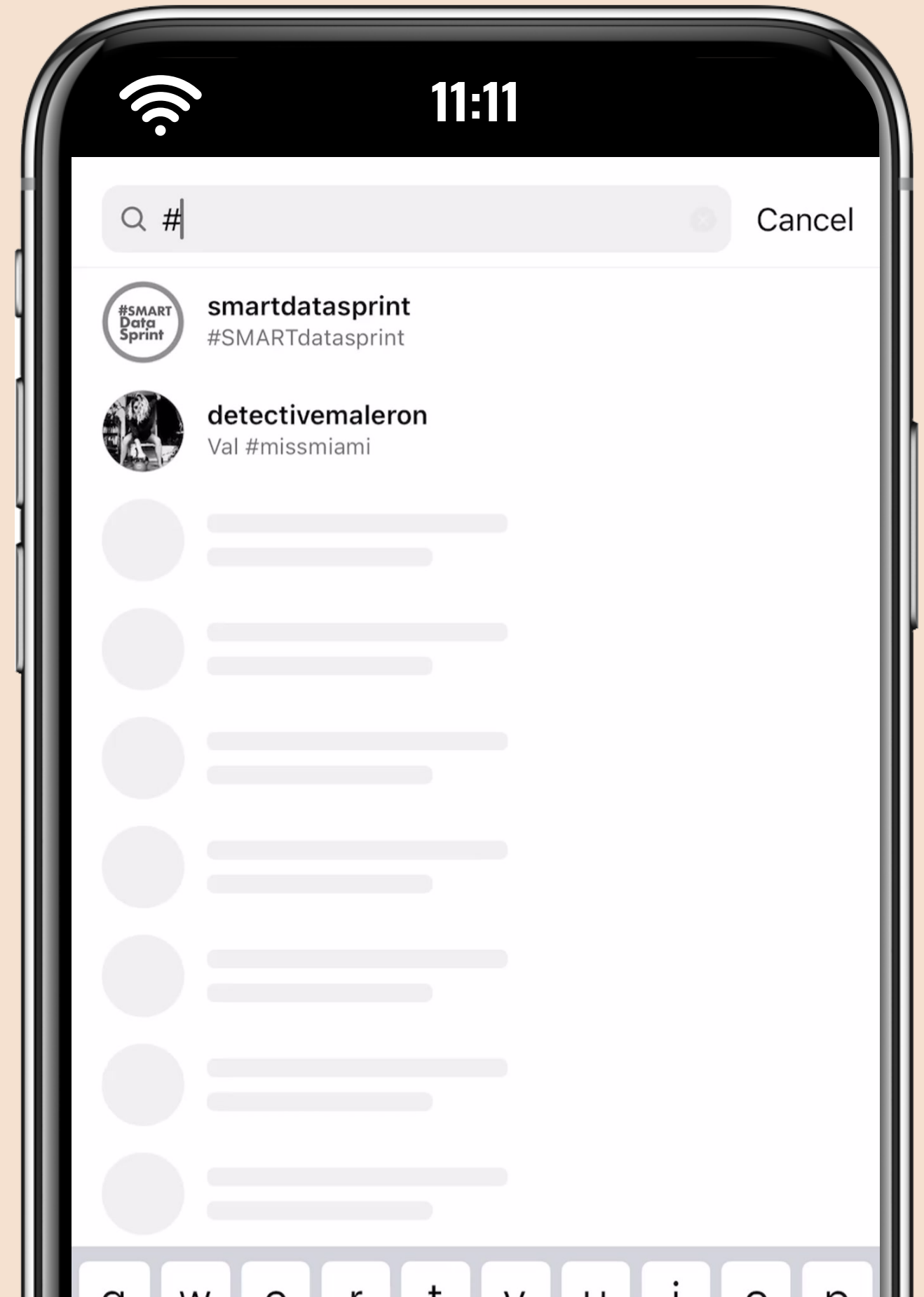
RESEARCH METHOD

HOW TO

#WELLNESS

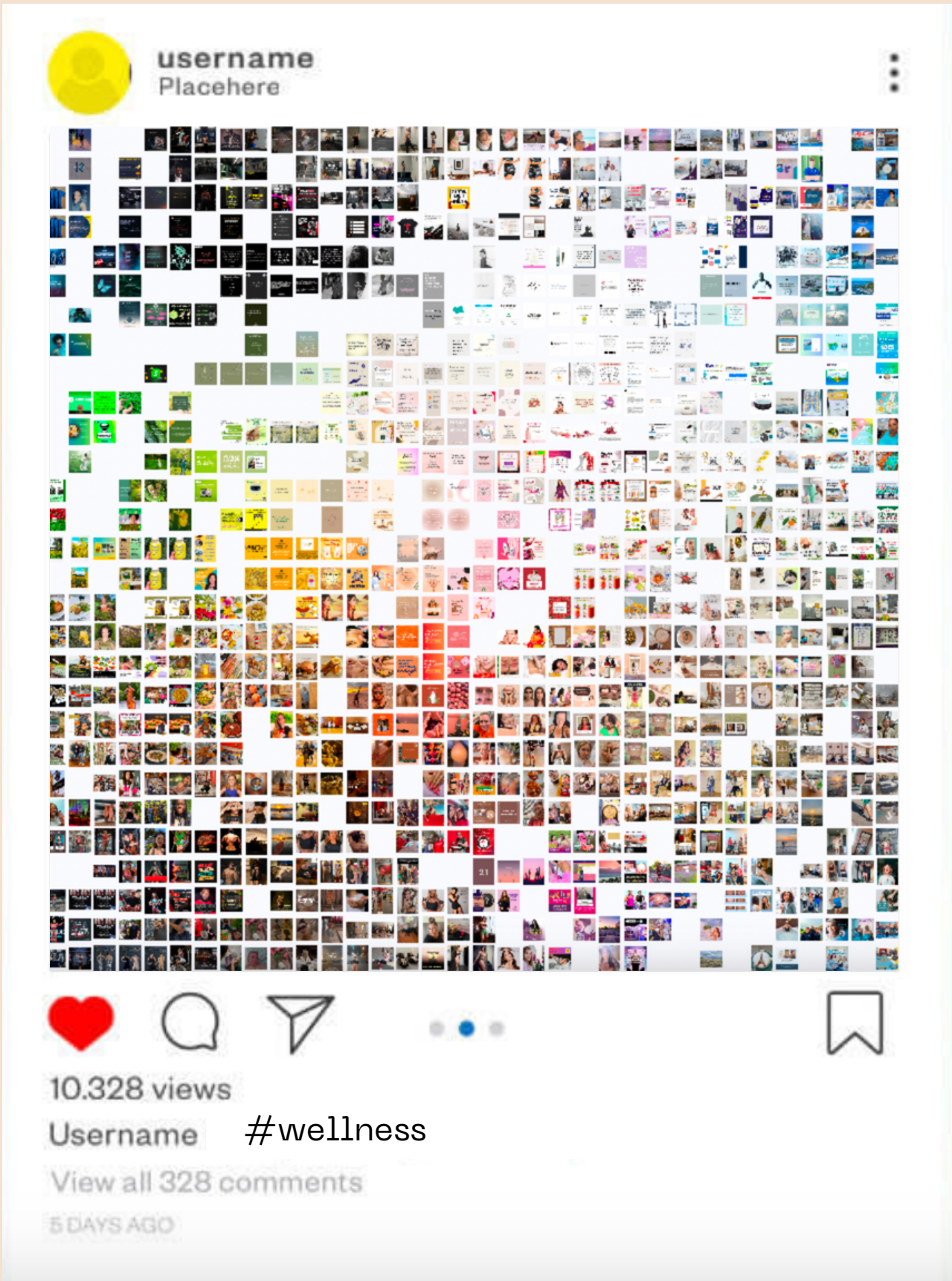


n=1500 most popular posts

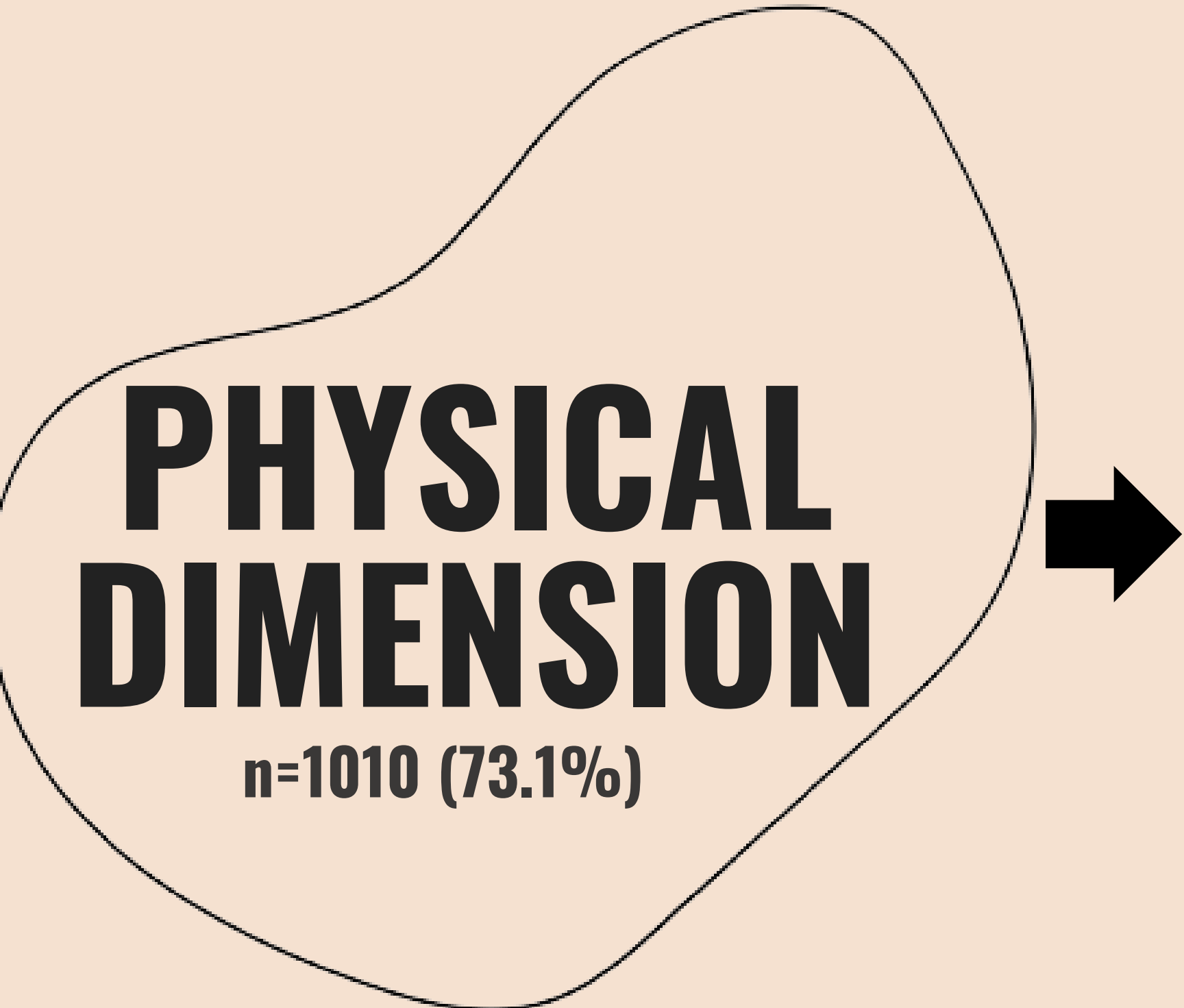


THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Wellness dimensions

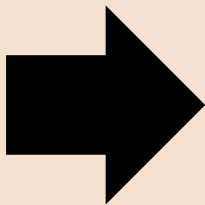


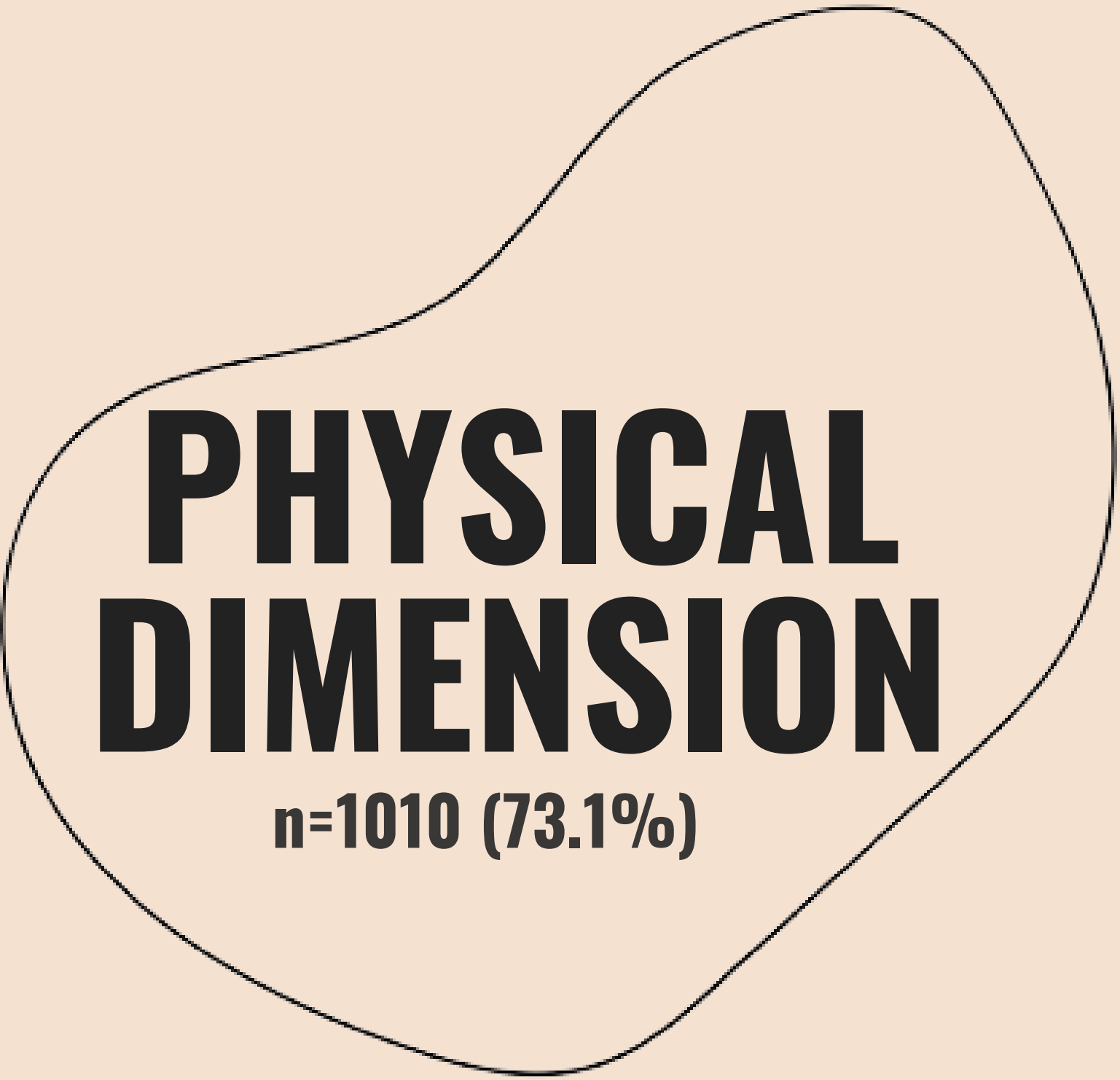
**STAGE 1
PROJECT SPECIFIC**



**PHYSICAL
DIMENSION**

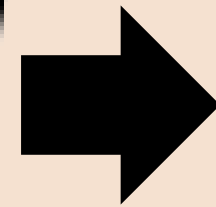
n=1010 (73.1%)





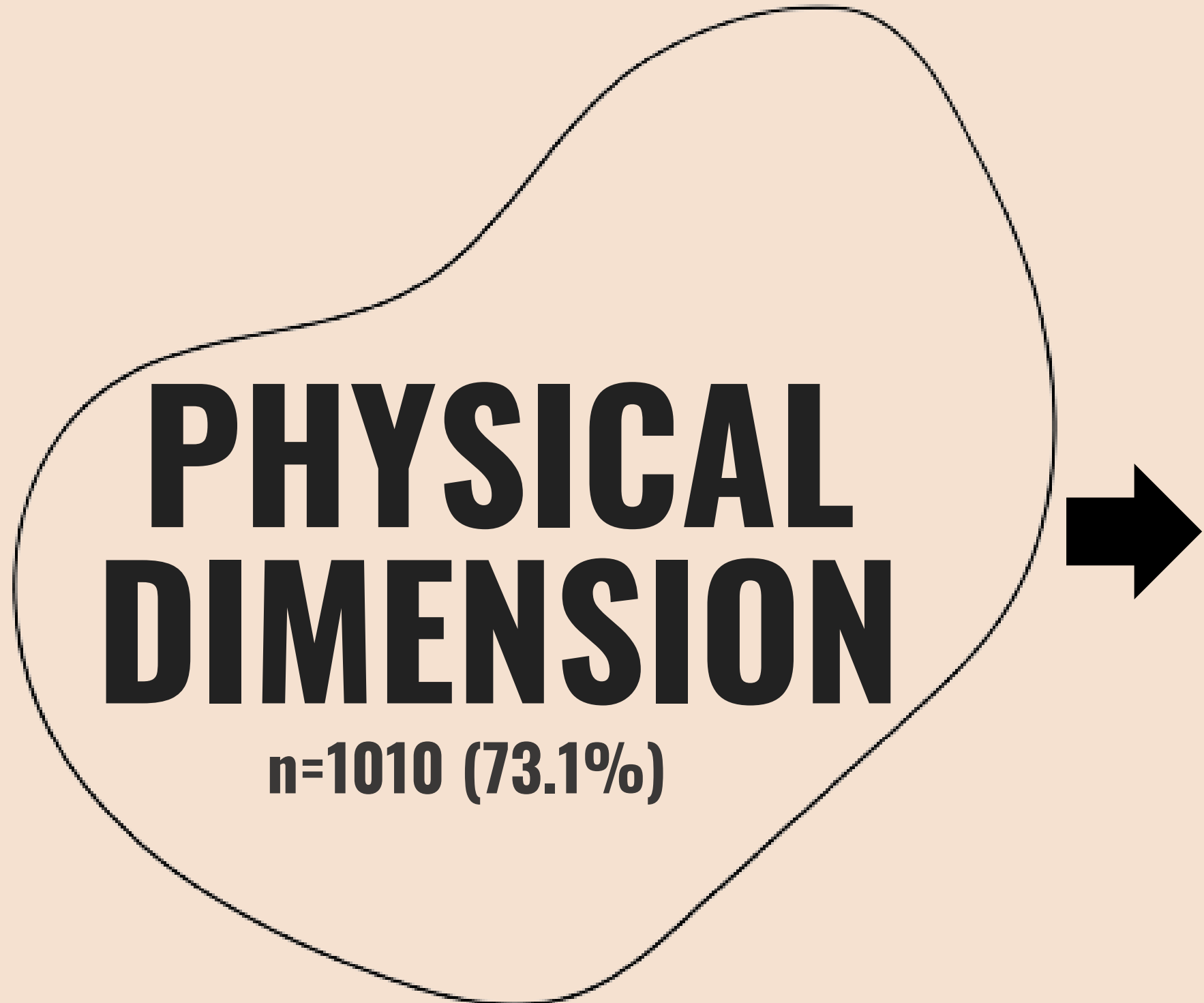
PHYSICAL DIMENSION

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1) exercise and fitness

Posts with users' everyday exercise activities (e.g. going to the gym, sharing their workout routines, and tips on how not to skip training or how to challenge oneself)



PHYSICAL DIMENSION

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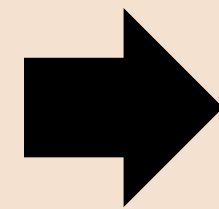
Posts with users' everyday exercise activities (e.g. going to the gym, sharing their workout routines, and tips on how not to skip training or how to challenge oneself).

2) nutrition and food

Practices related to nutrition (e.g. users shared photographs of their dishes, lunchboxes, shopping lists and even the cooking process).

**STAGE 2
STUDY SPECIFIC**

**PHYSICAL
DIMENSION**



**OPEN
CODING**

gender perspective

Post: bio, image, caption

FINDINGS

WHAT RESULTS LET US SAY



BODY

**POSTS WITH IMAGES
DISPLAYING THE
HUMAN BODY WERE
THE MOST FREQUENT.**

GYM SELFIES AND ACTION ORIENTED SHOTS

not always facing the camera

**“PROGRESS”
IMAGES
TEND TO MAXIMIZE
VISIBILITY OF THE BODY.**

**POSTS DISPLAYING THE
MALE BODY WERE
GENERALLY MORE
FOCUSED ON BUILDING
STRENGTH AND MUSCLE IN
THE UPPER BODY.**

POSTS DISPLAYING THE FEMALE BODY WERE MORE VARIED, FOCUSING ON DIFFERENT BODY PARTS AND MUSCLE GROUPS, AND WERE GEARED TOWARDS WEIGHT LOSS, MUSCLE BUILDING AND TONING.

**POSES ARE USED TO EMPHASIZE
BODY PARTS THAT ARE
CONSIDERED PARTICULARLY
IMPORTANT IN THE TRADITIONAL
HEGEMONIC NOTION OF
MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY.**



EXPRESSIONS

**MEN PREDOMINANTLY
PERFORMED AS STERNER, WITH
SERIOUS FACES AND BEHAVIOR
OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH
DOMINANCE.**

**WOMEN MAINLY PERFORMED AS
FRIENDLY, SMILING MORE, AND
DISPLAYING BEHAVIORS AND
FACIAL EXPRESSIONS THAT ARE
COMMONLY SEEN AS FUNNY AND
AMUSING.**



CLOTHING

**THE MEN WERE MOSTLY
PICTURED WITH TIGHT TANK
TOPS, SHIRTS AND SHIRTSLESS.**

**MID-LENGTH SHORTS THAT DID
NOT EMPHASIZE THEIR LOWER
BODY.**

**WOMEN USED TIGHT LEGGINGS
AND CYCLING SHORTS.
MORE VARIETY WHEN IT CAME
TO CLOTHING FOR THE UPPER
BODY, WITH SOME WOMEN
WEARING TIGHT TOPS, AND
OTHERS LOOSE SHIRTS.**

#1

**BOTH SEXES WEAR TIGHT
CLOTHING THAT EMPHASIZES
THEIR MUSCLES**

#2

**THE MUSCLES EMPHASIZED
DIFFER SIGNIFICANTLY BETWEEN
MEN AND WOMEN**



PRACTICES

**MEN >> ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY
DEPICTED LIFTING WEIGHTS,
PRIMARILY TO BUILD MUSCLE
AND STRENGTH IN THE UPPER
BODY >> GENERALLY CONVEYING
THE IDEA OF MEN AS STRONG
AND POWERFUL.**

**WOMEN >> MUCH MORE
VARIANCE: WORK ON THEIR
FLEXIBILITY AND MOBILITY,
LIFTED WEIGHTS AND
PERFORMED STRENGTH
TRAINING, BUT MAINLY FOR THE
LOWER BODY.**

**HOWEVER, EVEN WHEN WOMEN
WERE SHOWN LIFTING WEIGHTS,
THEY WERE ALSO USUALLY
DEPICTED SMILING, LAUGHING
>> ADOPTING A LIGHTER,
FRIENDLIER DEMEANOR.**

**THESE TENDENCIES TEND TO
PERPETUATE THE IMAGE OF
MEN AS STRONG AND
POWERFUL AND WOMEN AS
SOMEWHAT LIGHTER AND
LESS POWERFUL.**



COUNTER NARRATIVE

**POSTS FEATURING WOMEN
SHOWED MUCH MORE VARIANCE
AND WERE MORE LIKELY TO
CHALLENGE GENDER NORMS THAN
THOSE FEATURING MEN.**

#1

WOMEN ON POSES TRADITIONALLY ASSOCIATED WITH SERIOUSNESS AND DOMINANCE AND APPEAR STRONG, E.G., WITH ARMS CROSSED.

#2

WOMEN PERFORMING UPPER BODY STRENGTH TRAINING

#3

WOMEN WHO DEFY GENDER ROLES BY AIMING FOR A MORE MUSCULAR PHYSIQUE >> MORE FEMALE BODYBUILDERS THAN MALE IN OUR POSTS

**COUNTER-NARRATIVES OFTEN SEEM
TO BE DROWNED OUT BY THE
CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF POSTS
THAT UPHOLD TRADITIONAL
NOTIONS OF MASCULINITY AND
FEMININITY.**



INSIGHTS

TO THINK ABOUT, TO EXPLORE

**GENDER WAS LARGELY
REPRESENTED AS
BINARY.**

Bio's + images; consequence - not fitting

**REGARDLESS OF GENDER,
IMAGES OF PEOPLE
EXERCISING
PREDOMINANTLY SHOWED
AN “INSTA-BODY” BODY
TYPE.**

an expected body to be shown

**POSTS WERE USUALLY
NOT SPECIFICALLY
ADDRESSED TO ONE
GENDER.**

captions

**INSTAGRAM PLAY AN
IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE
PERCEPTION AND
UNDERSTANDING OF
WELLNESS >> FRAME**

users appropriation; self-presentation; perform; platform norms;

**“SELF-REPRESENTATION ON INSTAGRAM
DOES NOT EXIST IN A CULTURAL VOID”
(CALDEIRA ET AL., 2018)>>**

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**INSTAGRAM REPRESENTATIONS REGARDING
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**INSTAGRAM REPRESENTATIONS REGARDING
GENDERED WELLNESS >>**

**PRODUCE AND REPRODUCE SPECIFIC
GENDER CONCEPTIONS THAT ARE LINKED TO
BROADER SOCIOCULTURAL DISCOURSES (DE
LAURETIS, 1987, PP. 18-9).**

**PERFORMATIVE >> SNIP >> AESTHETICS >>
INSTAGRAM >> PARTICULAR NORMS >>
IMPOSED BY THE PLATFORM >> HOW USERS
APPROPRIATED**



THANK YOU

