

From Pampering to Empowerment: Comparing Self-Care and Radical Self- Care Content on TikTok

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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Review of the Literature	4
Ethics of Care	4
History of Self-Care	5
The Insurgence of Radical Self-Care	6
Self-care Amidst Social Media and Advertising Today	8
Methodology	9
Results	12
Discussion and Conclusion	16
Appendix	19
Appendix A	19
Appendix B	34
References	38

Introduction

Self-care generally has been understood as practices to advance one's own health and well-being. However, in the past several years the concept has gained massive popularity, growing across multiple media platforms. In the first 10 months of 2023, self-care content had 65.8 billion views on TikTok alone. Self-care content, which saw a sharp uptick in 2016, demands greater attention, as it has expanded beyond its roots in well-being practices to direct commercial appeals. Accordingly, this research considers whether self-care content emphasizes ways to preserve overall mental and physical well-being or has it shifted to promote neoliberal consumption of beauty products.

The conceptualization of self-care shifted after the election of Donald Trump in 2016. Countless articles from sources like [USA Today](#) (Mascarenhas, 2016), [Wired](#) (Dreyfuss, 2016), and [The Washington Post](#) (Attiah, 2016) were written on self-care tactics as a way to cope with the election results in growing political divisions. This brought self-care into the limelight and conversations grew on the variety of ways one could care for themselves. Self-care was soon mobilized by corporations and advertisers on social media to change the narrative of care towards the consumption of products: shaving butters, face masks, bubble baths, and more. Advertisers “opportunistic ability to read a society’s pulse and respond adroitly by selectively appropriating social discourses” is well documented, as is their efforts to “link the normative practice of beautification with an emancipated identity” (Lazar, 2011, p. 37). This shift in the understanding of self-care has created barriers, as most consider it to be a monetized activity. By commodifying care, it becomes inaccessible to those who may need it.

This shift of self-care has strayed far off the path of its origins in the medical field as a way to understand individuals as agent and objects of their own care (Denyes, Orem & Bekel, 2001) and Black activist movements as a way to sustain well-being and promote social justice (Davis, 2018). Black activists have worked to reclaim their original intent for self-care by coining the term *radical self-care* to preserve self-care as a social justice practice (Newman-Bremang, 2021). To this day, Black feminist scholars have continued to point to these origins and how commercialized self-care has become, yet there is little academic research comparing how ‘self-care’ and ‘radical self-care’ manifest on social media.

This study seeks to: (1) compare discussions of self-care and radical self-care content on TikTok to understand what kinds of care are presented, (2) interpret which content has remained true to the original intentions of self-care, (3) comprehend how commodified self-care content has become, and (4) understand how it can influence well-being and individuals caring for themselves.

Ethics of Care

Care ethics is an interdisciplinary field that has been developing since the 1970's. Early research on "ethics of care" sought to expand the perspective on developmental morality differences between sexes. Creator of the term, psychologist Carol Gilligan, intended to contest the research of her mentor, Lawrence Kohlberg on moral development, as he only included young white men in his analysis (Vinney, 2019, p. 2). Addressing this gap in his research, she argued that women related to morality differently than men. While previous studies described men's morality as intertwined with a sense of justice, especially when considering hypothetical dilemmas, Gilligan claimed that women's morality had an emphasis on care and compassion and related to real life situations (Gilligan, 1977, pp. 490-516). At the same time, she also concluded that embodying an ethic of care or justice wasn't simply exclusive to just one sex (Gilligan, 1977, p. 490). Rather, she wanted to "identify the ethics of care as a 'different voice'—a voice that joined self with relationship and reason with emotion" (EthicsOfCare.Org, 2011). While Gilligan's research was intended to provide a feminist perspective on morality, it was later critiqued by many feminist and queer theorists for being gender essentialist in conceptualizing principles like justice as "masculine" and qualities such as compassion as "feminine", sparking many debates in the field (Hamington 2010, p. 121).

Building from this research, feminist philosopher, Nel Noddings, began her studies on ethics of care in 1984. Noddings, throughout her career, provided important critiques of previous work on care ethics that solely focused on theorizing "justice" and "care" as distinct from each other (Engster & Hamington, 2015, pp. 72). Instead, her research proposed ways these concepts intersected in crucial ways (Noddings, 2015, p. 72). Specifically, she describes how rights in their most basic sense are "expressed needs (or wants) and become rights when claimants finally can exercise the power to satisfy their needs" (Noddings, 2015, p. 72). Extending rights to others is a form of care, especially when considering levels of attentiveness; care, in this sense, involving practices of listening and response to those in need of care (Noddings, 2015, p. 73). Finally, Noddings describes the great deal of care it takes to recognize that others' interpretations of what's right may not align with our own (Noddings, 2015, p. 73). All these points demonstrate that an essential function of justice is care; however, we must remember that care can also operate independently, without justice (Held, 2005, p.17). This is what makes care such an intensely integral concept to explore for feminist scholars interested in communication studies.

This early work on care ethics has been advanced over the past four decades, and innovative research and activist practices continue to develop in the areas of trans care (Malitino 2020), care, community, and politics (Chatzidakis et al. 2020), care, environmental studies and STEM (de la Bellacasa 2017), care and performance (McMaster 2020, Stuart and Thompson 2020, Garlough 2013), as well as radical self-care and disability studies (Kim and Schalk 2021). A core premise of ethics of care research is that humans are fundamentally relational because the human condition is characterized by interdependence. Every one of us engages with care across our lifetimes, whether that means providing or receiving care. Care is essential to our survival and thriving. Care is also political and can raise critical questions about conflicts of power, justice,

equality, or even trust (Fisher and Tronto 1991, p. 33). Ironically, even though care is so fundamental to our everyday lives, it's difficult to define. For the purposes of this thesis, I will be using Tronto and Fisher's well-known conceptualization, in which care is defined as an activity "we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web" (Fisher and Tronto 1991, p. 34).

As this definition suggests, care is innately social and based around community. Scholars like Joan Tronto, who have grappled with care throughout their career, consistently describe how care requires connections. In Tronto's book *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care*, she writes about caring and how it requires taking the concerns and needs of other people as a basis for action (Tronto, 1993) or the act of caring requires reaching out beyond yourself. If this is true, how do we explain the benefits and limitations of self-care?

History of Self-care

Self-care first appeared in an academic publication in 1946 (Riegel et al., 2019); the publication described how self-care could be used to address the needs of patients in mental hospitals (Groves, 2021). This practice put a significant emphasis on the patients' autonomy; completing acts like exercising and eating well was meant to aid patients' self-worth and aid overall health. These strands were picked up by theorists in nursing to advance the view of human beings as able to attend to and manage themselves (Denyes, Orem, & Bekel, 2001).

However, the roots of self-care scholarship, as we know it today, center on Black activist movements. From the 60's to 90's, self-care was used as a way to sustain social justice practices and provide care to marginalized communities that were often overlooked or outright excluded. The Black Panthers were the first to politicized the concept of self-care (Houseworth, 2021). They urged other members to engage in self-care practices like meditation, proper nutrition, and physical movement as a way to conserve energy to fight for equality and navigate an inequitable world. Angela Davis describes how, "One of the leaders of the Black Panther Party Ericka Huggins began to practice yoga and meditation in the 70s and she encouraged many people including Huey Newton and Bobby Seale to join that practice...we understood the importance of that kind of self-care" (Davis, 2018, 0:44-1:08).

Additionally, the Black Panthers were known to provide various types of programs, groups, and centers to offer care needed in Black communities provided by Black communities — a collective form of self-care. From 1969 to 1975 the Black Panthers created 13 Peoples' Free Medical Clinics across the United States to combat systemic discrimination against Black people and provide necessary healthcare (Pien, 2020, p.2). These clinics provided essential medical services like basic first aid and children's vaccinations, but they also offered screenings for serious conditions like high blood pressure, lead poisoning, and diabetes (Pien, 2020, p.2). What's important to note about all these practices and programs is that they provided individuals with the ability to care for themselves to support the collective. From here, we can see how self-care is not about individualism, but instead is based in community building efforts.

This conception of self-care was furthered by Audre Lorde in her book *A Burst of Light: and Other Essays* (1988). This book revealed her lived experience as a black queer woman undergoing cancer and navigating the medical industrial complex. Her writings displayed how self-care was necessary to survive a destructive and oppressive society, while continuing to fight for the liberation of marginalized communities (Kim & Schalk, 2021). A foundational quote from this book states that, “Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare” (Lorde & Sanchez, 1988, p.95). Here we see Lorde display how self-care is not about pampering or satisfying one's wants; instead, it's about perseverance and maintaining one's needs. Caring for oneself is political, urging individuals to prioritize well-being and push back against the capitalist standards of constant work. This preservation is essential to surviving and dismantling these oppressive systems of power. Best summarized by Davis, “If we don't start practicing collective self-care now, there's no way to imagine, much less, reach a time of freedom” (Davis, 2018, 4:06- 4:18).

The Insurgence of Radical Self-Care

Since Lorde's work, the concept of self-care surged in popularity, but for all the wrong reasons. As mentioned, self-care skyrocketed into the mainstream in November 2016, after Donald Trump's electoral win (Hobart & Kneese, 2020). During his polarizing term in office, and with rising anxiety over COVID-19 (Caldera, 2020), countless articles, [apps](#) (Perez, 2018), and social media accounts were produced that advocated for a range of beliefs, values and practices connected to mindfulness, stress reduction, and self-care. As self-care gained attention across media sources and social media, the more individualist and commodified it seemingly became (Newman-Bremang, 2021).

To reclaim the intentions, the term *radical self-care* was created to remind audiences of its political and radical origins (Newman-Bremang, 2021). Feminist scholars continue to write about radical self-care to reclaim its purpose for collective care, political uprising, and dismantling capitalistic systems. For example, in a recent article, Jina Kim and Sami Schalk write how radical self-care should be understood as “care work, because for Lorde caring for oneself was never about the individual self alone but, rather...about caring for the self in order to do one's political work of change, including involving others in the work of care through networks of support.” (Kim & Schalk, 2021, p.338-339). This definition recognizes the activist history of self-care, highlighting how practicing radical self-care is intentional and is meant for the purpose of participating in political work and building communities of care. This will be the understanding of radical self-care going forward in this thesis.

Other aspects to consider in understanding radical self-care include healing, correcting unjust power balances, (Caldera, 2020) and committing to the practice. This commitment is vital to the function of radical self-care. As Altheria Caldera describes, “When Black women commit to self-care, we reject implicit messages that we are unworthy, that we are expendable, and that we are superhuman beings who don't need nurturing. We refute the notion that our bodies and minds are valuable only when profitable to others” (Caldera, 2020, p.714). This commitment shows the

mental fortitude it takes to fully love and embrace oneself. It is that strength that directly criticizes systems of oppression and current notions of worth in capital.

Specifically, it critiques recent representations in media that have placed self-care under the guise of “profitable empowerment”; more specifically when self-care is used as a means to become the most productive version of oneself (Kim & Schalk, 2021, p.334). In 2017, Harvard Business Insiders wrote the article *6 Ways to Weave Self-Care into Your Workday*. This article states that “Self-care is no longer a luxury; it’s part of the job,” and goes on to describe how it is the key component of success and overall performance (Su, 2017, p.2). This conceptualization of self-care puts the onus of care on the individual instead of corporate spheres. It claims that it’s an individual’s responsibility to keep up with workflow by any means necessary, instead of creating a sustainable work environment.

This version of self-care was pushed to extremes in governmental spheres during the pandemic in 2020. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the onus of care was put on the individual. The U.S. federal government only advised that citizens follow their states’ guidelines as a means of protecting themselves. However, they didn’t perform an official national lockdown to slow the spread of COVID, but instead put the choice of sustaining health or sustaining finances on citizens.

Throughout the second wave of COVID-19 in August 2020, impeached and recently indicted president Donald Trump stated that shutting down the U.S. to decelerate the spread of the disease would do more harm than good. Later in his statement he insisted that during this time, “we must focus on protecting those at highest risk while allowing younger and healthier Americans to resume work and school” (Lovelace & Higgins-Dunn, 2020, p.2). The harm Trump describes in his statement is harm to the economy. Instead of putting a spotlight on the health crisis currently arising and making it a priority to care for U.S. citizens, Trump insisted on citizens going back to work to boost the struggling economy. This lack of federal support made individuals choose between supporting themselves financially or protecting their health. This is a large part of neoliberal objectives; when governments purposely dismantle public welfare resources, the responsibility of care shifts onto individual citizens. During Covid-19 pandemic, it was the governments’ responsibility to create programs and support funding for hospitals and citizens so they could sustain themselves. Instead of executing solutions, Trump and other politicians acted as if implementing effective systems of care was impossible. However, this isn’t true, because we’ve seen it done many times before by groups like the Black Panthers who provided free food and clinic visits to its communities when they were struggling throughout the late 60’s to 70’s.

This context of where neoliberal self-care can lead is important to the understanding of radical self-care and what it’s trying to combat. Feminist scholars focus on radical self-care and describe how conceptualizations like these go directly against the ideals and original intent of self-care, even though it can be disguised well under productivity, legislation, and capitalism. Caldera explains how products placed under the guise of self-care are, “largely products of capitalism designed to promote debt, overspending, and exclusivity. Instead of contributing to our victimization through capitalism, Black women must see self-care as a way to resist capitalistic

exploitation. Self-care must not be elitist. It is a right of all Black women, not just a privilege for the affluent” (Caldera, 2020, p.714). As this quote explains so well, radical self-care does not function within the confines of capitalism, rather it’s meant to dismantle and refute it. The continued use of capitalistic self-care will only create access and representation of care for the wealthy few. Unfortunately, this problematic view is currently how self-care is primarily understood within the public sphere.

Self-care Amidst Social Media and Advertising Today

To give a scope of the continuous rise of self-care, in 2021 Instagram had 24 million posts using the hashtag self-care (Mullis et al., 2021); as of October 2023, posts using the self-care hashtag increased to 78.7 million. On TikTok, self-care content has reached 65.8 billion views as of October 2023. With this rise in popularity, several articles and studies have evaluated the impacts of self-care on social media. Research has assessed specific aspects of self-care as a means of managing health conditions like COVID-19 and how mass media and social platforms raised awareness of self-administered health practices (Atarodi, et al, 2021; Kebede & Pischke, 2019). However, few studies have evaluated self-care content on social media and the themes that arise. One study out of University of North Florida suggests that 43% of #selfcare on Instagram consists of health-related content, but they describe how nearly 1/5 of coded content was beauty-related, which they consider “tangentially health-related” without specifying how this content promoted healthy practices (Mullis et al., 2021).

Several feminist scholars have described this same growth in mainstream understandings of self-care that highlight beauty and pampering activities (Kim & Schalk, 2021; Caldera, 2020). Moreover, feminist scholars have argued that the majority of self-care content on social media has become noticeably commodified (Kim & Schalk, 2021) and takes formats similar to other politically consumptive advertising. Like the rise of “femvertising,” or feminist advertising (Varghese and Kumar, 2020), advertisers center their messaging around what was gaining traction in the public, even if their product or company directly supports opposing values (Carreon, 2017). While many feminist scholars have noticed this commodification and beautification of self-care on social media, few studies have analyzed the scope of it, especially on platforms like TikTok.

Research on TikTok is just coming into fruition due to its rise in popularity in recent years. For clarity, TikTok is a social media platform that primarily shares short form videos (Anderson, 2020). It has become one of the top performing social media platforms globally and as of 2023; TikTok has over 1 million active users per month and is one of the highest revenue generating platforms. Specifically, TikTok has made \$350 million this year alone; this is more than Instagram, Facebook, X (formally known as Twitter), and Snapchat revenue combined (Wong, 2023).

This rise in popularity has been attributed to the COVID-19 shut down where downloads increased by 75% 9 months into 2020 (Koetsier, 2020). While isolation may have been a contributing factor to its rise in engagement, the way TikTok disseminates its content is unique

from any other social media platforms and has been attributed to its popularity among consumers (Harwell, 2022). Most popular social media platforms, before 2020, were modeled off following and engagement dissemination where content was distributed to users based on who they followed and what they liked (Anderson, 2020), whereas TikTok's algorithm was based on attention and engagement (Zuo, 2019). This algorithm personalizes content distribution among users to provide them with content they are more likely to enjoy and keep their attention. This enthralling and addictive entertainment platform is a space where advertising thrives (Zuo, 2019; Liu, 2022).

Because of the growing popularity of self-care content on TikTok, it's important to analyze how self-care is being portrayed. Additionally, there have been few comparisons of self-care and radical self-care social media content to see how this content differs or aligns online. Right now, we are left with too many questions about how self-care is represented on popular social media platforms. This study seeks to investigate the contrast between self-care and radical self-care content on TikTok.

Methodology

For this study, 200 TikTok videos were evaluated overall through content analysis. This analysis sought to interpret key concepts and examine how they relate to self-care vs. radical self-care content. The content evaluated was public videos on TikTok, exempting this study from IRB review.

Data was collected on a burner account to guarantee algorithm interference would not skew search results. To sample randomly, every third post was hand pulled after searching "self-care" or "radical self-care" in the TikTok search bar. Both sets of data were collected from September 10th to September 15th to avoid temporal differences in search results during this time period.

Throughout data collection, data was excluded if 2 videos were already in the sample from the same account, if the video did not have any content referencing self-care, if the caption did not contain self-care or radical self-care, or if the content was not in English. After this the 200 posts were split into two different Microsoft excel sheets labeled "Self-care Content" and "Radical self-care content" for evaluation. Throughout the coding process, posts were assessed by watching the entire TikTok video and captions provided. This combined evaluation was used to get a cohesive understanding of the content.

Content was coded for the variables like presence of self-care hashtag; presence of radical self-care hashtag; presences of beauty activities; beauty care; critiques of beauty in self-care; physical self-care; emotional self-care; mental self-care; spiritual self-care; trans care; collective care; individual care; activism; monetization; promotion; product placement; engagement; and who is representing care as it concerns race, gender identity, and gender pronouns of the main subject(s). All the definitions of these variables are provided in Appendix A, however, I wanted to explain some of the more nuanced codes here.

Presence of Beauty Activities, Beauty Care, and Critiques of Beauty

The purpose of these variables are meant to distill how beauty activities function within self-care based on intention. *Presence of beauty activities* is meant to describe content that only presents beauty activities. By beauty activities I mean endeavors that focus on increasing one's own perceived attractiveness; this includes activities like putting on facemasks, makeup, skincare, perfume, etc. This content inherently participates in the beauty industry and can create unattainable standards to maintain perceived attractiveness.

The difference with *beauty care* is the intention; beauty care entails participating in beauty activities, however, the use of said activities is meant to be used as a means of self-expression, empowerment, therapy, or connecting with oneself. Beauty care has been a term used in studies with cancer patients as a way to aid self-esteem, depression, and quality of life during chemo treatment (Richard et al., 2018). This variable is meant to grasp if beauty is used as a means of empowerment and self-expression, rather than a societal expectation.

Finally, the variable *critiques of beauty in self-care* is meant to capture how much criticism about beauty appears within self-care vs. radical self-care content. With the two previous variables encapsulating the positive aspects of beauty I wanted a variable to understand the conversations around the negative aspects of beauty.

Trans Care

This variable was created after reading "Trans Care" by Hil Malatino. This book critically talked about the systems that work directly against trans folks in the current transphobic political space. Additionally, it spoke about the networks of care needed for trans folks to uplift and truly care for themselves. This book asks how we can move beyond the domestic and reproductive centering theorizations of care to include mutual aid and emotional support developed by trans femme communities. I was curious how much this content was included in either hashtag to assess the state of trans care.

Collective Care and Individual Care

The purpose of these variables was to interpret when self-care is demonstrated as a group responsibility vs. completely individual. Self-care as a collective effort is different from someone providing care to an individual; instead, this effort is more about providing support, tips, or encouragement so that those can take care of themselves. It can also look like advocating the importance of self-care to individuals. On the other hand, individual care illustrates care as an individual's responsibility and that you are solely responsible for you and your well-being.

Monetization, Promotion, and Product Placement

In this study there were three aspects of advertising studied: monetization, promotion, and product placement, intended to differentiate the levels of obtrusiveness. Monetization was the most obvious form of advertising as it demonstrated with hashtags, links, or even the content within the video that they were being compensated for their advocacy of the product. Promotion was slightly more subtle as it wasn't clear to the viewer if the creator was being compensated for their post, but they clearly are promoting products and using @'s or hashtags to interact with the brands or products they are displaying. Product placement was the most pervasive and extremely subtle form of advertising. Product placement had no indications of payments towards the creator nor the aforementioned branded hashtags or @'s. However, this content only centered around the products themselves and clearly promoted the consumption of them. All these variables were later computed into a general variable called advertising; however, the pervasiveness of knowledge was an important aspect to ascertain the sneaky nature of advertising throughout this content.

These variables were conceptualized and chosen via two methods. The first being personal observations of content present under the hashtags #selfcare and #radicalselfcare. The second, was through the program Infegy Atlas. Unlike API-based collection systems for Twitter, which were recently restricted under Elon Musk's changes to the platform, Infegy Atlas uses "an army of specialized indexers adding millions of new sources every day" (Infegy Atlas, 2023). The indexers scour the internet collecting publicly available content from websites, blogs, forums, and social media platforms. As the content is stored, it is also continually updated." This approach allows analysis of a range of social platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and now TikTok. In Infegy Atlas I searched the terms self-care and radical self-care to gather a linguistic clusters of other words/hashtags that were commonly attached to #selfcare and #radicalselfcare. From these clusters and my observations, I began discerning which variables I wanted to cover in my analysis.

Once all my data was evaluated for all the variables, I proceeded to analyze it through the program IBM® SPSS Statistics v. 28. My main form of analysis was performing T-tests and Bivariate Correlations. Here I compared differences in variable means which provided context to the content differences between self-care and radical self-care content. Additionally, I examined the associations among variables in order to ascertain relationships. In this process I would first assess the p-value to see if there were any statistically significant differences (< 0.05) between variables. If a statistically significant difference is observed, I then evaluated the differences between means. For example, if the variable for emotional self-care had a mean of 0.94 in radical self-care content and 0.56 in self-care content, producing a statistically significant difference, I could conclude radical self-care content had more emotional self-care than self-care content. Additionally, frequencies were run to determine levels of diversity in care representation.

Research Questions

1. How does self-care and radical self-care content differ on Tik-Tok when looking at advertising?
2. How does self-care and radical self-care content differ in engagement (likes, views, comments, etc.)?
3. How does the use of the self-care and radical self-care hashtag affect engagement?
4. Which content contains more on activism work?
5. Which content focuses more on community care vs individual care?
6. Which content focuses more on internal well-being?
7. Which content focuses more on beauty and appearance?
8. What are the levels of diversity when it comes to racial, gender identity, and gender pronouns across self-care and radical self-care?

Results

Beauty Activities

Findings suggest that self-care and radical self-care content had significant differences ($p < 0.001$) concerning presents of beauty activities. Approximately 66% of self-care content contained solely beauty activities, this did not include beauty care or critiques of beauty in self-care; in contrast, only 6% of radical self-care content had beauty activities (Appendix B, Figure 1). This suggests that the majority of self-care content contains beauty activities and demonstrates one of the large aspects of difference between self-care and radical self-care content. Additionally, there is a positive correlation between the hashtag “self-care” and the presence of beauty activities; the correlation is approximately 0.27 (Appendix B, Table 1), a moderate correlation, meaning that there is a notable relationship between the two variables. Because we can’t test for directionality in this study, this correlation could mean one of two things. This could suggest that an increased presence of beauty activities in content leads to an increased use of the self-care hashtag. Or this correlation could indicate that the increased use of the self-care hashtag makes it more likely for content to contain beauty activities. On the other hand, the hashtag “radical self-care” had a moderate negative correlation with beauty activities at -0.29 (Appendix B, Table 1). This relationship between radical self-care content and presence of beauty activities suggests the exact opposite to the previous findings. Meaning, that the more beauty activities in content decreases the likelihood of radical self-care hashtag use.

Advertising

Among the sample, advertising encompasses 42% of self-care content compared with only 10% of radical self-care content (Appendix B, Figure 1). This difference was statistically significant as well, with a p-value of < 0.001 , showing that these kinds of content are vastly different when it comes to their frequency of advertising. While it's not the majority of content, we can infer that a significant portion of self-care content contains some form of advertisement. Among the levels of advertising, self-care content was mainly comprised of product placement at 29%, the hardest

advertising to detect. When we investigate further, product placements are positively correlated with beauty activities (0.370) (Appendix B, Table 1). This association is moderately strong and indicates that among product placement there is a high likelihood that it will contain beauty products. Among the hashtags, self-care had a significant positive association with advertising (0.153), while radical self-care had a negative association (-0.234) (Appendix B, Table 1). The relationship between both hashtags and advertising are modest correlations, meaning that they aren't extremely strong predictors of each other, but nonetheless there is still a relationship. From here we can signify that the self-care hashtag has a higher likelihood of containing advertising. In contrast the use of the hashtag radical self-care leads to negative likelihood of advertising in its content. All of this demonstrates the stark differences in the degree of commercialization across content domains.

Mental and Emotional Care

In this sample, mental health care was significantly different ($p < 0.001$) among self-care and radical self-care content. Mental health subjects only appeared in 14% of self-care content, whereas 48% of radical self-care content spoke about mental health (Appendix B, Figure 1). This finding illustrates that there are major differences in mental health care displays between content. More specifically it shows how almost half of radical self-care content spoke about caring for aspects of mental health, whereas self-care content barely spoke on it. To illustrate this point further, the hashtag self-care had negative correlation with mental health (-0.186), and radical self-care had a positive correlation (0.161) (Appendix B, Table 1). Both correlations are moderate, but still demonstrate an important relationship. In this instance the more mental health care appears in content, there is a higher likelihood of radical self-care hashtag usage and negative likelihood of self-care hashtag usage. However, these relationships can go either way and could instead indicate the reverse, meaning that the more one uses a hashtag the more or less likely mental health care will appear.

Emotional care had similar results to mental health care when comparing differences in self-care vs. radical self-care content. Content relating to emotional care encompasses 17% of self-care content, whereas emotional care was in 55% of radical self-care content (Appendix B, Figure 1). Again, we see significant statistical differences with a p-value of < 0.001 ; however, here we can see that themes of emotional care and stability appear in the majority of radical self-care content but isn't a prominent theme in self-care content. On an interesting note, though, the radical self-care hashtag doesn't have a correlation with emotional care, but the self-care hashtag does. This correlation is a modestly negative at -0.191 (Appendix B, Table 1) which means that the more emotional care in content the less likely #selfcare will be attached. What's fascinating here is that hashtags thus far in findings have been almost parallel to the T-test findings on content. What I suspect in this instance of no correlation is that emotional care themes didn't use the specific radical self-care hashtag as much as self-care. This is fascinating given radical self-care content is the main host for emotional care themes, but still doesn't incorporate the hashtag.

Activism and Critiques of Beauty

Themes of activism and critiques appeared in similar percentages across radical self-care

content. While activism only appeared in 15% of radical self-care content, there was still a stark difference in comparing self-care content that had no mentions of activism (Appendix B, Figure 1). While it wasn't surprising that radical self-care content had more themes related to activism, it was shocking to see that it didn't appear in self-care content at all. This suggests that the current conceptualizations of self-care on TikTok have pushed far beyond the original intentions of self-care. Additionally, this displays how radical self-care content is reclaiming these intentions and places a priority on activism more than self-care content. Notably, activism has a significant negative association with the hashtag self-care (-0.236), but a positive association with the hashtag radical self-care (0.147) and collective care (0.269) (Appendix B, Table 1). The negative correlation between the #self-care and activism in this case is modest and shows how the increased usage of this hashtag will lead to a decrease in activism. The #radicalselfcare is a modest correlation as well and had the inverse relationship to #selfcare and activism. What's fascinating in this case is that collective care had a moderate association with activism, this further demonstrates how collective care is an important aspect within activism.

For critiques of beauty there were similar results among t-tests. Here critiques of beauty within self-care appeared in 12% of radical self-care content, and 0% in self-care content (Appendix B, Figure 1). Again, this complete lack of critique in self-care content is compelling; it suggests that discussions about beauty within self-care content is solely positive and has little to no nuance. While critiques of beauty had no correlation with either of the hashtags, it did have a significant positive correlation with mental health care. The association is approximately 0.24 (Appendix B, Table 1), indicating a modest correlation. This suggests that content with increased levels of critiques increases the likelihood for that content to contain subjects about mental health care. This is consistent with previous findings on mental health care being negatively associated with beauty activities, but it's interesting that critique of beauty promoted more conversations around ways to care for mental health.

Collective Care vs. Individual Care

In this sample, self-care content majoritively focused on individual care (62%) rather than collective care (21%) (Appendix B, Figure 1). While nearly half of radical self-care content concerned collective care (49%) only 38% focused on individual care (Appendix B, Figure 1). The stark differences in how self-care is displayed and advocated is a fascinating finding. What this finding suggests is that self-care content mainly contains notions about focusing solely on the individual. Individual care was a variable that focused on neoliberal conceptualization of care. This suggests that self-care content mainly displays care as a personal responsibility vs. something you can seek help or assistance on. Findings here imply that radical self-care content focuses on the collective effort of self-care as it advocated for its viewers to take breaks, gave advice, and spoke about the importance of community. Along with these findings, individual care had a moderate positive association with advertising at 0.296 and product placement at 0.345 (Appendix B, Table 1). This last correlation is one of the strongest in this sample and displays how product placement had a high likelihood containing individualist focuses on care. Collective care on the other hand had a moderate negative correlation with advertising (-0.292) and product placement (-0.256) (Appendix B, Table 1). These findings were fascinating, given

that within my coding process I made advocating for self-care a part of the collective care variable; this meant that any advocacy to care for yourself, including promoting audiences to buy a product, would've been coded as collective care. Instead, findings here suggest that advertising and product placement took a more subversive route and mainly had individuals showing off the products instead of promoting them.

Engagement

Understanding the differences between and associations among care, activism, and advertising in self-care and radical self-care content is certainly informative, but it does not reveal which type of content has engaged the general public. To evaluate this, I decided to compute a new variable in SPSS called “EngagementContent” which was the sum of the variables likes, comments, saves and views. This new variable gave an overview of content engagement as a whole, but we will still be evaluating engagement on specific levels as well. Overall, self-care content had significantly higher engagement compared to radical self-care content (Appendix B, Table 2); specifically, self-care content on average had 4,542,757.09 points of engagement, while radical self-care had 58,536.5 on average. Moreover, every separate level of engagement was significantly higher for self-care; this means that on average self-care content received more likes, comments, saves, views, and followers. This suggests that self-care content overall has a broader reach to the general public. Additionally, there was a moderate positive correlation between the self-care hashtag and engagement (0.280) while the radical self-care hashtag had a negative one (-0.237) (Appendix B, Table 1). This correlation can suggest one or two things. First, that the use of #selfcare is enough to increase engagement significantly; or this correlation could mean that the general public has more access and generally prefers current self-care content.

Identity Representations within Content

Among this sample the majority of subjects in content didn't disclose their race. There were no significant differences here as 79% of subjects in self-care content and 68% of subjects in radical self-care content didn't mention race (Appendix B, Figure 3). Despite this, there were significant differences in self-identifying POC and black subjects between content. Ten percent of main subjects in self-care content were POC, whereas 29% were POC in radical self-care content (Appendix B, Figure 3). In self-care content 5% of main subjects were Black, while 25% of main subjects in radical self-care were Black (Appendix B, Figure 3). These were the most significant differences among identity representation variables, both at a p-value of <0.001. Other than this there were no significant differences among specific racial groups, but this may be due to how I collected data. Instead of taking an assumptive route from visual cues, I choose to evaluate identity based on self-identification factors seen in the content or profile. From this data we can see that the majority of those posting about self-care practices, in either self-care or radical self-care content, are not mentioning their race the majority of the time. However, for those that do, the main difference seen is those who self-identify as Black or POC; findings here suggest that radical self-care content is more diverse in main subjects as it concerns race. Because the subset

of self-identification was so small among the variables involving race, I couldn't run a confident correlation.

Similarly, across gender, the majority of self-care and radical self-care subjects didn't mention their identity or pronouns. Specifically, among self-care content 87% of subjects didn't mention their gender identity, and 96% of subjects in radical self-care content didn't mention their gender identity (Appendix B, Figure 4). Similar to the findings above, there were no significant differences here and because the self-identification was so small, I was unable to run correlations. For gender pronouns in self-care content 59% of subjects didn't mention their pronouns, and 50% of subjects in radical self-care content didn't mention their pronouns (Appendix B, Figure 5). These percentages weren't significantly different, however, there were significant differences among those who used she/her pronouns. Among the sample 29% of subjects in self-care content used she/her pronouns, while 43% of subjects in radical self-care used she/her (Appendix B, Table 5); this difference had a p-value of 0.04. Because of this finding I could run a correlation analysis and I found that the use of she/her pronouns or any indication that the subject was a woman had a negative association (-0.16) with engagement (Appendix B, Table 3). This correlation could be due to other correlations we viewed previously, like the negative correlation #radicalselfcare had with engagement, because we're not simply looking across all media content, we don't have a clear directional relationship on gender and engagement. Instead, the findings here suggest that among self-care and radical self-care content, engagement is more likely to decrease when subjects use she/her pronouns throughout their profile or content.

Discussion and Conclusions

To summarize, this research found that self-care content on TikTok mainly consists of pampering and beauty activities, and advertising, favoring neoliberal individualist mode of self-care. Advertising-inflected self-care content was mainly product placements. Product placements were the most subtle form of advertising in this study because they had no indications of payments towards the creator nor any branded hashtags or @'s. This indicates that audiences of self-care content may not notice that they are consuming advertising, and possibly believe that they are viewing are a reflection of authentic use instead of a paid endorsement. Radical self-care stood in contrast, as content mainly concerned emotional and mental well-being, activism, critiques of beauty, and advocating for collective communal care. This is consistent with what Black feminist scholars have stated about the current conceptualizations of self-care in popular media and how radical self-care has countered it.

This is concerning given the significantly higher engagement within self-care content. This study suggests that self-care content has and continues to reach more people compared to radical self-care content, suggesting that the general public's perception of self-care is more commodified and beauty-focused than they realize. This difference in engagement could be due to a variety of factors, but from my perspective current neoliberal discussions of self-care suggest the answer. In general, self-care content asks consumers to buy their problems away instead of accomplishing the hard internal and activist work that most radical self-care content calls for.

Diversity levels in this study were difficult to gather as my model was based on subjects self-identifying throughout their profile or content. This model was a partial limitation in my study because I can't confidently say which type of content was more diverse in its racial and gender representations overall. From those who did mention their race and pronouns, radical self-care content was the most diverse as it had significantly more POC and female identifying subjects. However, the majority of subjects in both self-care and radical self-care content didn't display any mentions of their identity throughout their profile or content. This may be due to the luxury many felt within their identity as no one had questioned them on it before, or they just simply choose not to. From my point of view a lot of the subjects that choose not to mention aspects about their identity appeared to be white and cisgender, but I cannot confirm this conclusively within my findings.

Additionally, this study did not find any significant differences or correlations with Beauty Care, Physical Care, Spiritual Care, or Trans Care variables. In particular, variables like Beauty Care and Spiritual Care didn't appear frequently in the sample which would explain the lack of correlation. However, Physical Care did appear at a high frequency in this sample, but there were no differences or correlations across content. This indicates that both self-care and radical self-care content convey recurrent messages about caring for one's physical health. Trans Care, on the other hand, didn't appear throughout the entire sample, which reiterates what Malatino spoke about and that the need for Trans Care goes unacknowledged within mainstream media and the public sphere.

Either way, it is clear that current self-care content on TikTok primarily displays a version of self-care that requires financial transactions and adherence to beauty standards. This is all under the guise of care and health, which is pervasive and discouraging to those trying to proactively care for themselves. How care is understood in popular media like TikTok is important as it reflects what human beings are perceiving and practicing. These results demonstrate how much self-care has been commodified by the beauty industry and the role radical self-care content has taken to dismantle these notions. Furthermore, radical self-care content had a more diverse and accessible display of care that truly focused on sustaining well-being, especially for the purpose of activism. While radical self-care content only has advertising in 10% of its content, we need to keep a pulse on this to ensure commodification doesn't occur in this important space. In order to maintain this space, content creators for radical self-care could use the self-care hashtag to increase engagement with self-care content consumers, and almost hash-jack #selfcare back. Reclaiming the hashtag self-care would be a resistive strategy that could expand the view of what self-care truly entails and provide accessible self-care strategies to the general public.

Future studies should expand off this work and evaluate these themes of care in-depth and how they manifest in self-care vs. radical self-care content. Specifically, I believe more evaluations should be done on mental and emotional care. From my personal experience coding, I noticed that radical self-care content took its time to explain concepts, techniques, and give advice, whereas self-care was usually more fast paced, only providing lists of things to do, and not explaining their reasoning further. I wonder how these types of content are displayed and how

they may impact mental health and emotional stability in individuals viewing them.

Additionally, terms like productivity and “rotting” were showing up frequently throughout the study in both self-care and radical self-care content. Themes of burnout, being overworked, and using self-care to stay productive showed up frequently within my sample but was beyond my scope of focus for this study. A future study on this topic should evaluate levels of discussions to see where there are critiques within a self-care context or see where self-care “contributes” to productivity. Themes of “rotting” showed up as a means of self-care throughout the study as well, but I had no variable to encapture this unique and possibly destructive form of care. In short, rotting in this context means spending time in complete comfort while simultaneously doing unhealthy activities as a means of self-care. An example of this can look like someone watching TV, purposely eating unhealthy foods, and excessively online shopping in order to rest. This concept of “rot night” or “rotting in bed” as a means of self-care is rising on the TikTok platform with approximately 3.4 million views as of November 2023. Doctors and news media sources like [CBS News](#), are already trying to combat this form of care as it can contribute to mental health struggles, increase chances of cardiovascular disease, and disrupt sleep patterns. A future study on this should analyze discussion of rotting and assess how it intersects with self-care content.

Appendix A

Self-Care vs. Radical Self-Care Codebook

1: Presence of hashtag self-care

Code 1	The words “self-care” are present in a hashtag in the caption
Example	1. Today Im taking my friends out for a spa day and some facials #selfcare #relaxation #goodday 2. Yes this works! Ive been doing it consistently for 2 weeks and over time it gets better. 😊 So braiders please take care of your hands too #braiderstiktok #braiderselfcare #foruyou
Code 0	No hashtag of self-care is present in the caption
	1. After a hard day and I need a break, I take a bubble bath. This is my self-care!

2: Presence of hashtag radical self-care

Code 1	The words “radical self-care” are present in a hashtag in the caption
Example	This is my favorite new evening ritual to ground myself and cultivate joy. It helps me reflect on my day, focus on what actually makes me feel good, and cultivate more ease for the day ahead #burnoutprevention #igniteyourpassion #circleofwomen #femininerising #womenrising #joyspotting #radicalselflove #radicalselfcare
Code 0	No hashtag of radical self-care is present in the caption.
Example	It saddens me every time I have to post this. But it’s also very necessary. Radical self-care is critical in times like this. Let this serve as an invitation to take care of yourselves and your community.

3: Presence of Beauty Activities

Code 1	Content where individuals participate in beauty activities. Beauty activities can be described as endeavors that focus on increasing one's own perceived attractiveness. This can include activities such as facemasks, putting on makeup, skincare, perfume, etc.
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Example	 1. 1,146	1. Looking for a solution to fight those fine lines and wrinkles? Say hello to Hi-Vitamin C, our 12% concentrated serum that works to diminish the appearance of sun-stressed skin and reverse free radical damage caused by the environment! ♡
Code 0	No mentions of beauty activities.	

4: Beauty Care

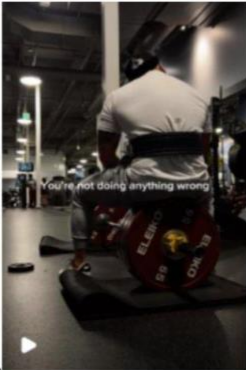
Code 1	Content or hashtags that display or speak to using beauty activities as a means of self-expression, empowerment, therapy, or connecting with oneself. This can include activities such as facemasks, putting on makeup, and creating outfits. This content is meant to boost self-worth and well-being. In most cases beauty care and presence of beauty activities should not be coded together. In beauty care it is implied that you are doing beauty activities, but it is for the particular purpose of care.	
Examples (If you click into these pictures you can see these videos)	 1.	1. unexpected blessings from being left out <u>#selfcare</u>
Code 0	No mentions of beauty care	

5: Critiques of Beauty

Code 1	Content that critiques beauty activities. This can include content and hashtags that speak against current beauty standards, how self-care is not about pampering activities, etc.	
Examples	 1.	1. radical self-care is more than a massage or a bubble bath. it's unglamorous - an often chaotic, transformative reset that digs into your hidden issues and unmet needs. going back to my hometown was the perfect way to do this. point number 3 is low key the cure to all 🗝️👤
Code 0	No mentions of critique towards beauty activities	

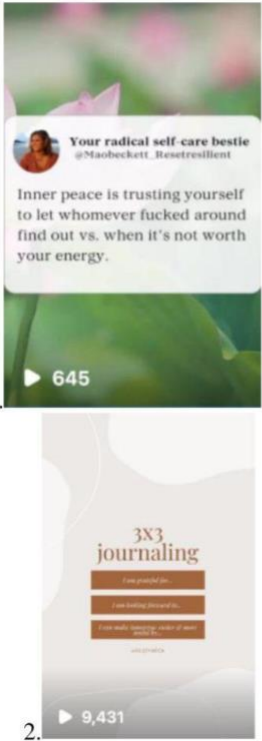
6: Physical Self-Care

Code 1	Content and hashtags that display or speak about caring for one's physical health. This can include subjects about exercise, walking, nutrition, hydration, sleep, aiding body aches or ailments, or aiding viral or bacterial illnesses.
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Examples	 1. 616  2. You're not doing anything wrong	1. You can't go through life without pausing, making time for fun, moving your body, connecting with other humans, practicing self-care, and turning inward ❤️ I am all for ambition, aspiration, and going after your dreams. But do it mindfully 🧘 This nonstop hustle will eventually break you down—physically, mentally, and emotionally 🧘 2. Self Reflection Sunday 🧘 The affirmation everyone needed
Code 0	No mentions of physical health to improve ones well-being	

7: Emotional Self-Care

Code 1	Content and hashtags that display or speak about caring for one's emotional well-being. This can include subjects on emotions, protecting one's peace, journaling or walking for reflective purposes, or meditation as a way to maintain emotional stability
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Examples		1. 🌸 Is it whom or who? IDK but I do know that inner peace is not about the void of feelings and reactions. Inner peace is • trusting your intuition that you have the inner resources to respond. • allowing yourself the space to feel what comes up. • knowing that you have a choice always. It may not what you initially want but you always have a choice. Look at you, inner peace having Bestie 😊 🌸 Share with your besties so they can learn about this too! 🌸 Save now to come back to it later. 🌸 Like this post if you find it helpful. The information contained in these posts are for educational purposes only and not intended as medical or therapeutic advice. For more radical self-care, somatic-related mental health content, follow @maobeckett_resetresilient, a liberation centered, psycho-spiritual-somatic therapist and coach 2. This is my favourite new evening ritual to ground myself and cultivate joy. It helps me reflect on my day, focus on what actually makes me feel good, and cultivate more ease for the day ahead.
Code 0	No mentions of emotional health	

8: Mental Self-Care

Code 1	Content and hashtags that display or speak about caring for one's mental and/or psychological well-being. This can include subjects on seeking professional help, self-compassion, speaking about struggles with mental illness or trauma, healing, or giving techniques that aid mental health struggles.	
Examples		1. So many of us are walking around with unresolved childhood trauma due to something someone who should have

	1. 29K 2. 205	protected us did or failed to do. Some of them, particularly our Nigerian ngelders, will never take accountability for their actions but for those that finally sincerely do and express commitment towards your healing, let's do our best to walk towards forgiveness; not necessarily even for their sake, but for your own 2. In this digital age, we can be easily influenced internally. Your mental well-being is your top priority. Garbage in, garbage out. If you feed your mind garbage, you will feel like garbage internally. Feed your mind positivity to enhance the quality and results in your life. #successtartswithin #radicalselfcare
Code 0	No mentions of mental health to improve ones well-being	

9: Spiritual Self-Care

Code 1	Content and hashtags that display or speak about spirituality and how it's aided their well-being. This can include subjects on seeking high powers, religious practices, or even life changing experiences that bring them closer to higher powers.
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Examples	 1. 944	1. A few scenes from our #MLKDay of Restoration! 🙏 We cleared our energy with Reiki, got grounded with Yoga, visualized our goals and intentions for the year, and affirmed our power and specialness through Contemplative Prayer. Thank you to our members @calmcoolco, @mamasreikilove, and @soulcarela for so lovingly guiding us through the day! If you couldn't make it, we hope you can invest time to explore some of the #selfcare options mentioned above. You deserve it!
Code 0	No mentions of spirituality that improve ones well-being	

10: Trans Care

Code 1	Content and hashtags that display or speak to transgender care. This can include topics of healthcare, gender dysphoria, creating space and resources for trans folks, and dismantling heteronormative systems of care.	
Examples	 1.	1. i hope yall are doing ok xx#selfcare #transmasc
Code 0	No mentions of trans care	

11: Collective care

Code 1	Content and hashtags that display or speak to the importance of community or relationships when it comes to caring for yourself. This content can emphasize how care isn't just an individual's responsibility but instead a collective effort.
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	This can include content about the importance of community, how the responsibility of care relies on community efforts, or content that advocates for others to practice self care.	
Examples	 1.	1. Take a break and recharge. You deserve nothing less. #CarriesTOUCH #selflove #selfcareroutine
Code 0	1. No mentions of community 2. Has a large group present but doesn't say in the video or caption the importance of self-care as a collective effort	

12: Individual care

Code 1	Content and hashtags that display or focuses on individual care and the ways people can practice self-care individually. This can include content where people advocate for solely taking care of themselves and not others, advocating that self-care is an individual's responsibility, or content of self-care activities that can only feature an individual.	
Examples	 1. 12K	1. One thing I learned when I started my healing journey was that I needed to pour into myself, not just others. ☐ Even before becoming a licensed therapist, I was constantly pouring into others while neglecting my cup at times. I wanted everyone to be happy and at peace, know their worth & chase their dreams. I wasn't taking the advice that I was giving others. I didn't feel worthy enough. Looking back, I now understand why I felt so empty, overwhelmed, and stressed. I wanted to be that uplifting person to everyone and forgot about myself. I learned I needed to

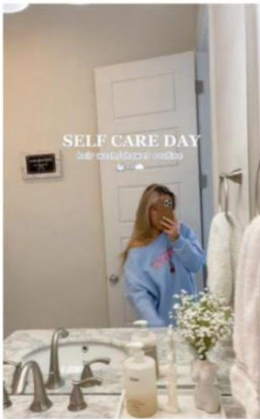
		be intentional with pouring into my emotional, mental, physical & spiritual needs. Are you the friend, co-worker, or family member who is constantly pouring into everyone else cups but neglecting yours? How does it make you feel? What are you willing to do to change it? I challenge you to be intentional this weekend to pour into YOUR cup! Comment below and let me know something you will do to pour into your cup!
Code 0	1. No mentions of individuality 2. Only one person in video, but they don't say anything about practicing self-care as an individual act	

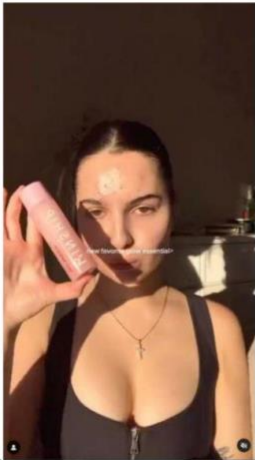
13: Activism

Code 1	1. Content and hashtags that speak about the way self-care is resilient or activist, or how self-care is an important function for activism and pushing against societal expectations. 2. Any subjects on activism or activist movements including hashtags. 3. Any mention or quoting of famous activists	
Examples	 1.	1. "Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation and that is an act of political warfare." – Audre Lorde 2. "Your very existence is an act of rebellion." #girltrek #blackjoy #blacklivesmatter #blessed @girltrek #blackexcellence #blackowned #blackonblack #blacklove #blackwealth #healing #justice #blm #sayhername #selfcare #radicalselfcare #womensrights #publichealth #diversityintheoutdoors #audrelorde #bellhooks #intersectional #harriettubman #blackwomen

		
Code 0	1. No mentions of activism or activists 2. If the use of activists name is thrown into a post randomly without context to the movement or care mentioned	

14: Monetization

Code 1	1. If #ad, #advertisement, #pr, #partner, #sponsor, or any other indicators that say the creator is getting paid is mentioned in the caption or video 2. Shows off product and tells audience the video is an ad, pr, or sponsored 3. Linking products in a storefront, TikTok Shop, etc. 4. Business account is selling items/services, or announcing a discount of items/services	
Examples		1. hair wash day routine👉 products used linked on my LTK & storefront #selfcare #skincare #aesthetic #hairecare #SelfCareRoutine #fyp
Code 0	1. No mention of #ad, #advertisement, #sponsor, etc.	

	- Unclear in anyway if its sponsored or monetized content - Content is shouting out or promoting an item or service on their own volition This content specifically indicates that they self-purchased the item or service.
Examples	 1. 1. Happy #pinkwednesday lovelies 💕 A lil texture moment with @lovekinship Self Smooth 10% glycolic resurfacing serum 🧴💕 A recent discovery and addition to my acids, it's quickly becoming a favorite! I love the faint sweet strawberry scent and tho it tingles slightly, it hasn't caused any irritation to my sensitive skin 💕 because it is an exfoliant, I use this twice a week when my barrier is healthy and as always, don't skip on spf~ 🌻 Contains: glycolic acid, strawberry extract, oat seed extract, pre-probiotics. Do you incorporate actives in your routine? Lmk! *self-purchased

15: Promotion

Code 1	- If content uses an @ or # for a brand for the purpose of promotion - If content specifically promotes the use of certain products or services - If content specifically promotes seminars or workshops they are conducting - Business Account demonstrating a product or services
Examples	 1. 1. Happy Selfcare Sunday #selfcaresunday #florencebymills #milliebobbybrown #florencefamily #iloveflorencebymills 🧴 #skincare #SelfCare #fyp #foryoupage #facemask @florencebymills

Code 0	1. No mention of promotion or its unclear if the content is promotion. 2. Accounts asking viewers to follow their account 3. Uses the term partner, ads, PR, sponsor or anything relating to the previous monetization code 4. Content is shouting out or promoting an item or service on their own volition. This content specifically indicates that they self-purchased the item or service.
Examples	 1. 1. The  in 2023 is gonna be INSANE! FOLLOW ME TO JOIN ALONG #selfcaretiktok #selflovetiktok #blacktiktok #radicalselfcare #blackselfcare #selfcaretips #selflovejourney #blackmentalhealth #personalgrowthjourney

16: Product placement

Code 1	1. If content's main focus is the product and not the person using them 2. If content purposely centers around certain product or products
Examples	 1. 1. No fomo around here ✨ #fyp #selfcare #selfcareroutine #selfcaretiktok #nightroutine #skincareroutine #pinkpilatesprincess #thatgirl

Code 0	1. No products in video or unclear view of products 3. If video happens to be in a store and a person happens multiple products - Doesn't count if the video is promoted by store or if video centers around creator recommending their "picks" from a certain store 4. Content is shouting out or promoting an item or service on their own volition. This content specifically indicates that they self-purchased the item or service.	
Examples		1. >>> #fyp #takecare #selflove #selfcare #skincare #care #viral #fae3ryn

17: Engagement

Likes	Input the number of likes
Comments	Input the number of comments
Saves	Input number of saves
Views	Input the number of views
Followers	Input the number of followers

18: Who is the subject of care? Racial identity of main subject(s)

Evaluate through mentions in profile or content. This should focus on the main subject of the content; this can be someone receiving care or giving care. If celebrity is used in the post and its not their profile you can search for their race.	
Code 0	Not mentioned
Code 1	Asian

Code 2	Black
Code 3	Hispanic/Latino
Code 4	Mixed race
Code 5	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
Code 6	Native American
Code 7	White
Code 8	Group of people- Can't gather/Multiple races
Code 9	No main subject(s) in content

19. Who is the subject of care? Gender identity of main subject(s)

Evaluate through mentions in profile or content. This should focus on the main subject of the content; this can be someone receiving care or giving care. If celebrity is used in the post and its not their profile you can search for their gender identity.	
Code 0	Not mentioned
Code 1	Cisgender
Code 2	Transgender
Code 3	Non-binary
Code 4	Genderqueer
Code 5	Genderfluid
Code 6	White
Code 7	Agender
Code 8	Group of people- Can't gather
Code 9	No main subject(s) in content

20. Who is the subject of care? Gender pronouns of main subject(s)

Evaluate through mentions in profile or content. This should focus on the main subject of the content; this can be someone receiving care or giving care. If celebrity is used in the post and its not their profile you can search for their gender pronouns.	
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Code 0	Not mentioned
Code 1	she/her/hers
Code 2	he/him/his
Code 3	they/them/theirs
Code 4	zie/zim/zis
Code 5	Other (specify in notes)
Code 6	Group of people- Can't gather
Code 7	No main subject(s) in content

Appendix B

Figure 1: Differences in Themes in Self-Care and Radical Self-Care Content

Themes in Self Care vs. Radical Self-Care TikTok Content

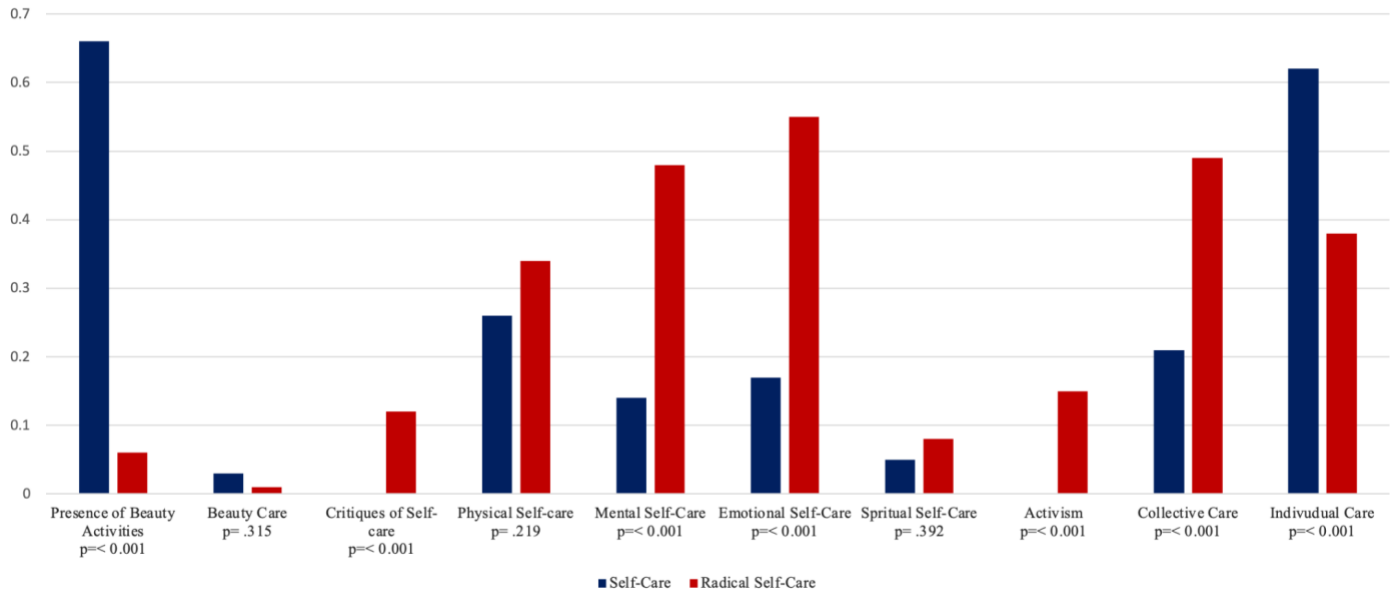


Table 1: Correlation Between Measured Variables

Correlations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	11	12	13	14	15	16	17 (A)	17 (B)	17 (C)	17 (D)	17 (E)	18	19
1: Presence of hashtag self-care	1.00																					
2: Presence of hashtag radical self-care	-.297**	1.00																				
3: Presence of Beauty Activities	.273**	-.290**	1.00																			
4: Beauty Care	0.01	0.02	-.011	1.00																		
5: Critiques of Self-care	0.02	-.002	-.189**	-.004	1.00																	
6: Physical Self-Care	-.001	0.04	-.150*	-.002	0.11	1.00																
7: Emotional Self-Care	-.186**	0.05	-.345**	-.011	0.07	0.03	1.00															
8: Mental Self-Care	-.191**	.161*	-.323**	-.010	.240**	.316**	0.13	1.00														
9: Spiritual Self-Care	-.006	0.02	-.003	-.004	0.10	.181*	0.06	.174*	1.00													
11: Collective care	0.03	.168*	-.266**	-.011	0.12	0.09	.301**	.165*	0.06	1.00												
12: Individual care	0.00	-.189**	.333**	0.07	-.013	-.002	-.208**	-.011	-.006	-.692**	1.00											
13: Activism	-.236**	-.147*	-.214**	-.004	0.09	0.06	0.10	0.14	0.08	.269**	-.013	1.00										
14: Monetization	-.002	-.001	0.11	-.003	-.004	-.012	0.05	0.01	-.005	-.007	0.06	-.005	1.00									
15: Promotion	0.02	-.009	0.06	-.004	0.09	-.002	-.010	-.011	-.008	-.009	-.002	-.001	-.005	1.00								
16: Product Placement	.182**	-.211**	.370**	0.14	-.011	0.02	-.264**	-.197**	-.011	-.256**	.345**	-.012	-.008	-.012	1.00							
17: (A) Likes	.256**	-.220**	.192**	0.05	-.011	-.006	-.185**	-.235**	-.007	-.005	-.001	-.013	-.004	-.004	0.09	1.00						
17: (B) Comments	.217**	-.178*	.168*	0.05	-.010	-.003	-.153*	-.013	-.006	-.006	-.005	-.011	-.003	0.05	0.04	.691**	1.00					
17: (C) Saves	.229**	-.188**	.154*	0.01	-.010	0.00	-.151*	-.178*	-.005	0.05	-.007	-.011	-.005	-.004	0.04	.795**	.514**	1.00				
17: (D) Views	.277**	-.234**	.244**	0.05	-.012	-.006	-.170*	-.209**	-.008	-.006	-.004	-.014	0.02	-.003	0.03	.822**	.730**	.678**	1.00			
17: (E) Followers	0.10	-.013	0.11	-.004	-.003	0.01	-.011	-.011	-.007	-.009	0.13	-.006	-.004	0.01	.230**	.147*	.161*	0.07	.159*	1.00		
18: Advertising	.153*	-.234**	.387**	0.08	-.005	-.004	-.255**	-.225**	-.156*	-.292**	.296**	-.013	.297**	.480**	.723**	0.04	0.05	-.001	0.02	.184**	1.00	
19: EngagmentContent	.280**	-.237**	.242**	0.05	-.012	-.006	-.175*	-.216**	-.008	-.006	-.004	-.140*	0.01	-.003	0.04	.859**	.738**	.712**	.998**	.160*	0.02	1.00
** Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).																						
* Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).																						

Figure 2: Advertising Differences in Self-Care and Radical Self-Care Content

**Amount of Advertising in Self-Care vs. Radical Self-Care
TikTok Content**

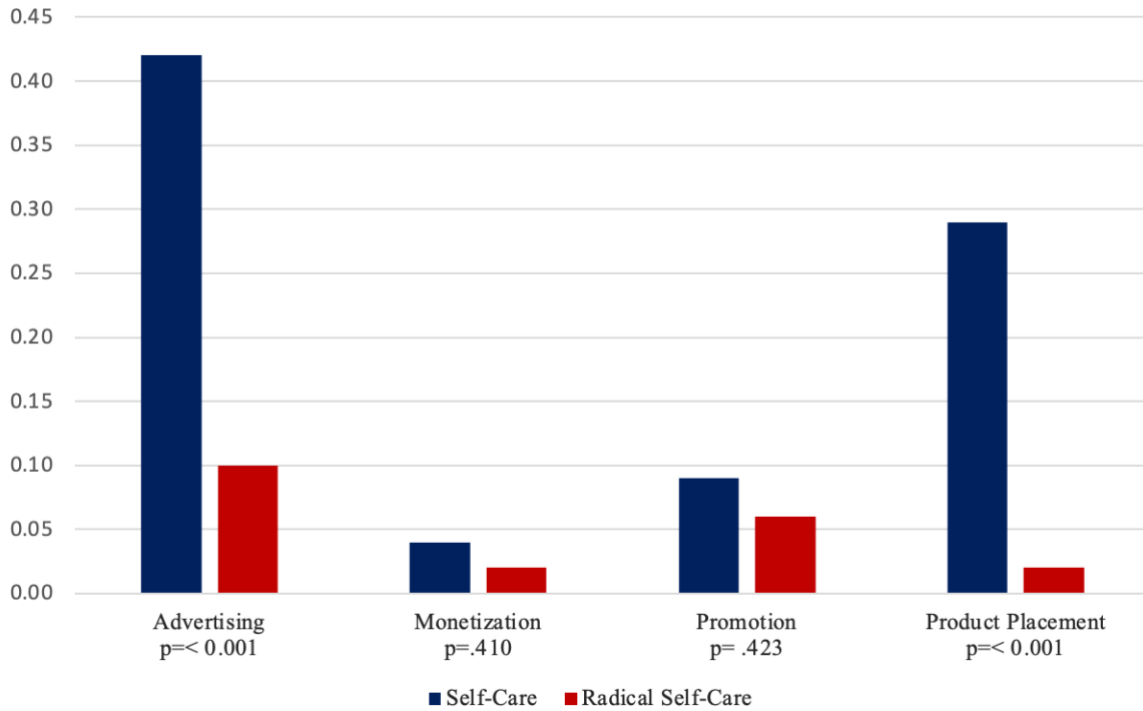


Table 2: Mean Engagement Differences in Self-Care and Radical Self-Care Content

	Self-Care	Radical Self-Care	p value
Average Engagement with Content Overall	4542757.09	58536.52	p < 0.001
Average Likes	461846.44	6976.57	p < 0.001
Average Comments	1856.98	64.05	p < 0.001
Average Saves	61998.81	737.2	p < 0.001
Average Views	4017054.86	50758.7	p < 0.001
Average Followers	694101.79	100020.45	p = 0.002

Figure 3: Differences in Race of Main Subject in Self-Care and Radical Self-Care Content

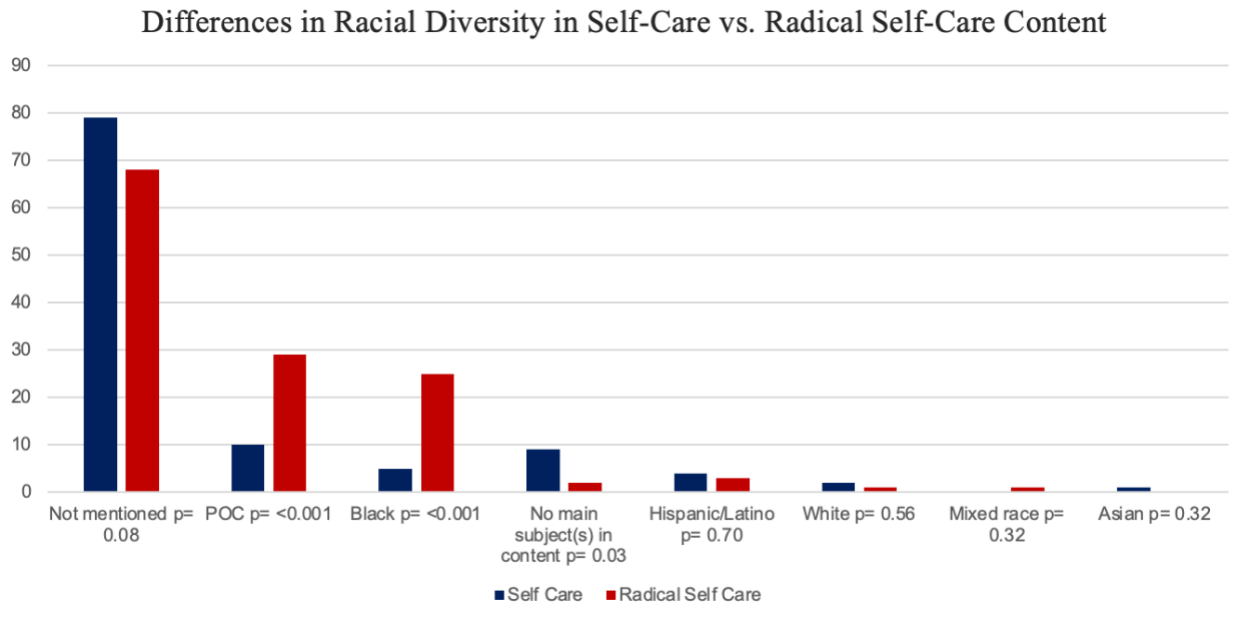
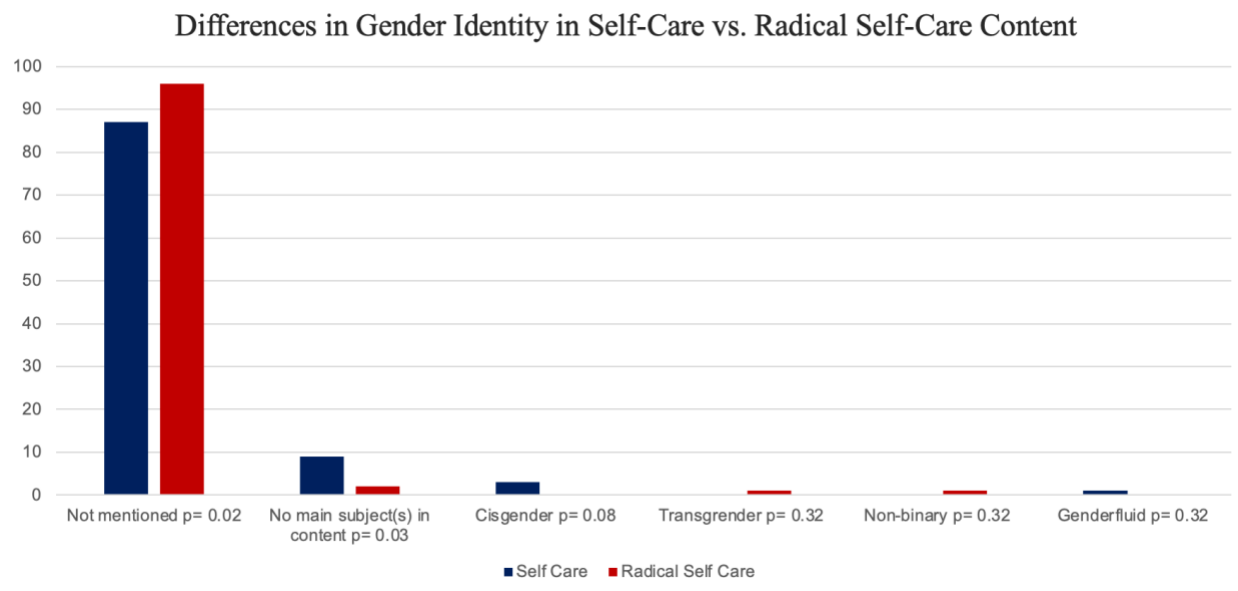


Figure 4: Differences in Gender Identity of Main Subject in Self-Care and Radical Self-Care Content



Differences in Gender Pronouns in Self-Care vs. Radical Self-Care Content



[†]. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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