

Body Anxiety of Contemporary Youth The Popularity of Brandy Melville Style

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ABSTRACT

Popular BM phenomenon refers to the dressing style generating from an Italian brand of ladies dress, Brandy Melville, which shows high requirements to the figures of the ladies wearing the dress of the brand. The popular BM phenomenon has been sought after by young ladies and caused a trend of pursuing and forming slim figures, which has caused concern in the society. By conducting deep interview with 18 young ladies, we find that, influenced by aesthetic orientation of “taking slim body as beauty”, young ladies generally show imbalance in body intention. The popular BM phenomenon was developed on the basis of young ladies’ psychology of losing weight, aggravating their anxiety on figures. The phenomenon results from both external elements, including consumerism, fashion doctrine, mass media, market, and internal elements, including young ladies’ desire for men’s attention, social identity, and so on. We should conduct active interference and guidance on the phenomenon because of its two-sided influence on young ladies.

Keywords: young lady, body anxiety, aesthetic culture

1. INTRODUCTION

On popular Chinese apps like Weibo and RED, you can see many posts of people’s “OOTD”(outfit of the day). We will find that the outfit all have one or two of the same items: crop tops, plaid skirts, petite dresses, and slim jeans. This type of look is otherwise known as the Brandy Melville Style. It has taken over the wardrobes of young girls all over China. Even celebrities can’t seem to resist the allure of the BM style. Though the brand caters to tall skinny girls, it also seems to perpetuate unrealistic body stereotypes. As BM style has become synonymous with “good body shape,” more and more young women are buying BM clothes and losing weight to follow this style.

The popularity of BM style has sparked a series of controversies, the focus of which is on the correctness of the orientation of BM style's “harsh” on women's bodies. The widespread spread of the “BM girls' height and weight chart” has further sparked heated social debate. The “BM Girl Height and Weight chart” indicates the upper weight limit for women of different heights wearing BM clothing.

The BM offers an unconventional weight standard of 33kg for 150cm, 35kg for 153cm, 38kg for 155cm, 41kg for 158cm, 43kg for 160cm, 45kg for 163cm, 47kg for 165cm, 49kg for 168cm, 51kg for 170cm, 53kg for 173cm, 55kg for 175cm, and 58kg for 178cm.

The hype over Brandy has put unnecessary pressure on girls to lose weight in order to look good in one of those little crop tees. When BM was not just a brand but a style, young women tried on children's clothes in various stores to show this style, resulting in problems such as children's clothes being stretched too big to be sold again. In today's internet-connected world, many teenagers, especially teenage girls, have a great deal of body anxiety. Anxiety was usually caused by feeling insecure and unsatisfied with one's body. Sometimes these anxiety will bring a lot of negative impact on the body and life, such as self-confidence, abnormal thinking, and even a lot of psychological damage.

We did this research that how these adolescents are affected and become anxious, and how anxious these adolescents are. We included the negative influence of BM fashion on teenagers and the impact of the Internet and other social media.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Firstly, it is about the control of celebrities and mass media over women's bodies. According to “Yangzi News”, it reported many articles about female stars wearing BM style clothes to convey the idea of "thin is beautiful"[1]. Chinese actresses Yang Mi, Angelababy and so on, for example, have taken to Weibo and other social media to take on weight loss challenges, which have inspired many netizens to follow them[2].

Secondly, it is the thin body phenomenon about young woman. According to *The Washington Post*, there are a few news reported about how women are anxious about their weight[3]. Some literature have investigated the methods and effects of weight loss of young women from the perspective of health science, or studied the body intention of young women from the perspective of psychology, or analyzed the influence of body aesthetic culture on female weight loss psychology from the perspective of culture[4].

3. METHOD

In order to explore the reasons for the popularity of BM style among young women and whether they are affected by BM style to lose weight. This study his study adopts qualitative research, combining survey and interview.

3.1. Questionnaire

We provided a questionnaire and selected 10 young women as specific interview objects. The questionnaire questions include four parts: Basic information of the respondents, questions that are related to BM, questions related to body anxiety and measuring anxiety levels (we used the Anxiety Scale and Beck Depression Inventory) and a open-ended question.

1. What is your gender? Female or male
2. What is your age?
3. What is your occupation? Student or have jobs.

4. How much do you live on or earn?
5. Have you ever heard about BM? Where did you hear it?
6. Do you ever feel body anxiety?
7. Do you feel unsatisfied with your weight?
8. Do you feel unsatisfied with your height?
9. Do you look at models or apparently "good body" as the norm for the average person?
10. Do you pay attention to your body in your daily life all the time?
11. Have you lost weight because of body anxiety or other media influences?
12. Has BM and the presence and spread of social media exacerbated your body anxiety?
13. From these survey questions, do you have any tips on how to solve or reduce body anxiety?

3.2. interview

As for the interview, the 6 interviewees came from Chinese high schools, American high schools and employed people. We set the age range from 15 to 25. The selection criteria of interviewees are mainly based on the following aspects: First, young women at different ages can help us clarify the views with different life experiences on this issue. Second, young women with different figures and weights can help us explore the differences in understanding of BM style among young women. The third is to explore women's different views on BM according to their own preferences for clothing. We use BMI (BIM, Body Mass Index is a person's weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in meters. A high BMI can indicate high body fatness. BMI screens for weight categories that may lead to health problems) to judge whether the interviewees meet the international body shape standard, and compare this with the BM body chart to explore the difference between the body shape standard of BM style and the normal body shape standard.

Table 1. Basic information of interviewees

No.	Age	Status	BMI	Type	Whether it meets BM standard	Whether lost weight for BM
1	17	High school student	15.9	Underweight	yes	yes
2	18	High school student	24.3	normal	no	yes
3	17	High school student	22.1	normal	no	yes
4	22	Employed	21.5	normal	no	yes
5	25	Employed	17.3	Underweight	no	yes

6	18	High school student	18.4	Underweight	no	yes
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4. RESULTS

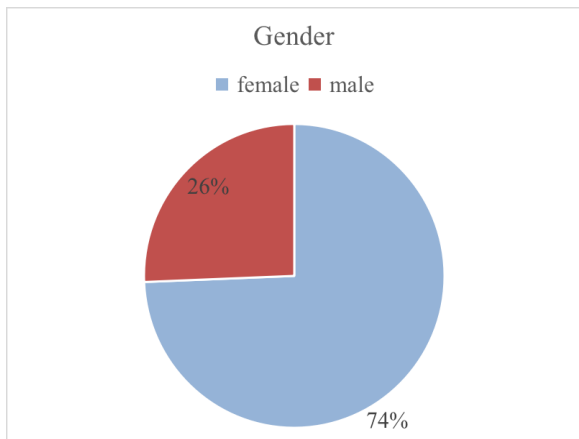


Figure 1 Result for gender

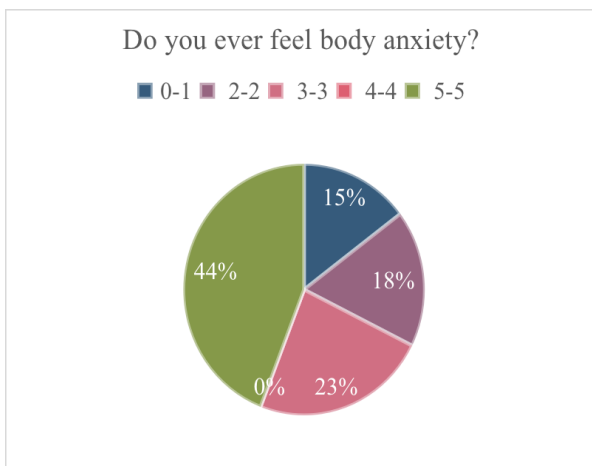


Figure 2 Result for "Do you ever feel body anxiety?"

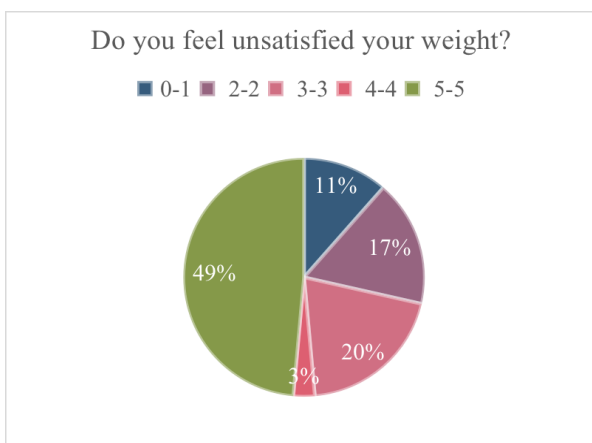


Figure 3 Result for "Do you feel unsatisfied your weight?"

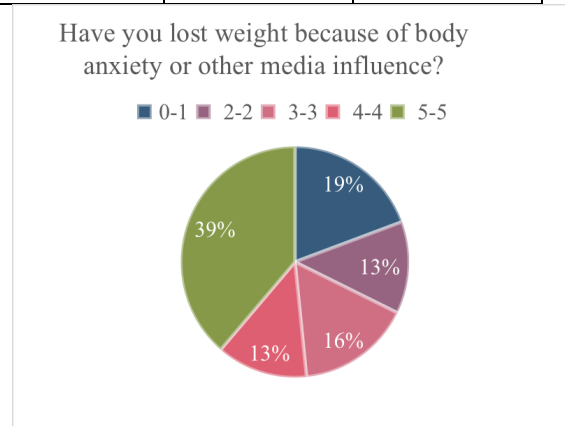


Figure 4 Result for " Have you lost weight because of body anxiety or other media influence?"

4.1. Analysis from survey results

Nowadays, the quality of the figure has become a factor in our love, friends, employment development, because of this reason, there are also students busy with fitness, muscle training, shape, fat reduction. It's okay to be body-conscious, but more than 60 percent of us have body anxiety that deserves our attention. As a psychological problem, body anxiety is becoming a psychological and behavioral problem that needs to be paid attention to and corrected.

A certain amount of beauty is acceptable, and a certain amount of body anxiety is understandable and normal. People adjust the cognition of beauty, correct understanding of beauty, "persist in exercise can alleviate the problem of body shape, but in the choice of exercise time and intensity, must act according to one's ability. We can choose more interesting sports from our sports selection and further relieve the psychological pressure caused by body anxiety through communication and communication." The most important part of a person's charm is not only the beauty of his body, but also the inner knowledge and beauty.

Women are more critical of their leg shape than men. Calf muscles, ankles not thin enough, thighs a little thick, legs not straight enough... Always able to pick out something less than perfect anyway.

First of all, we can see from these charts that when we conducted the questionnaire, our final result was quite obvious. The majority of people chose 3-4 and 4-5, and the data showed that they accounted for more than 60%. And in the statistics of these three questions, choice five, that is, people with great body anxiety accounted for the largest percentage. It's the lowest percentage and they add up to about 30 or 40, so you can see that body anxiety is still a very serious problem, especially among girls. 74% of the respondents were female and 92% of them were students. The proportion

of people who chose 3 to 5 to lose weight because of body anxiety or the influence of the media has reached 68%, which is a very high figure, so it can be seen that body anxiety, including some negative influences from the media, has a great impact on people, and many people have lost weight because of it. They consider excessive thinness "beautiful". This is a very deformed cognitive and aesthetic. And looking at the survey results, men generally have less anxiety about their bodies, and it doesn't affect them as much. But women's anxiety and reactions to their bodies are very strong. In the questionnaire, almost all the women had a certain degree of body anxiety, and were dissatisfied with their weight, and even carried out weight loss, diet control and other behaviors.

4.1. Analysis from interview

Youth pursue fashion, with personalized clothing to highlight personality, expression of self. The rapid development of information technology and the prosperity and popularization of social software enable young people to grasp the information of fashion trends at home and abroad at the first time and join the community with the same aesthetic interest. The enthusiasm of young people to pursue fashion clothing and create new fashion trends is rising. The interview results show that BM style is very popular among young women. 6 interviewees were presented with pictures of BM style, and all interviewees said they knew the style of BM style. Among them, 5 interviewees could clearly say terms such as "BM style" and "BM girl". Despite the popularity of BM, there are few women who meet the height and body weight criteria of "BM girls." Among the 6 interviewees, the BMI of 3 interviewees is in the range of "underweight" and 3 interviewees' BMI is in the range of "normal". However, compared with the "BM Girls' height and weight table", only 1 of the 6 interviewees met the standard of "BM girls' height and weight table". Although women with a BMI of "underweight" are generally allowed to wear BM clothing, the "threshold" of BM fashion still excludes most women of normal size.

"BM clothes can only be worn by thin people, like us who have too much meat on the belly dare not wear a short jacket, nor trousers.", said the interviewee No. 3.

"I bought this kind of clothes (BM style) following the trend online before, but it was too ugly on me and made me look fat...This kind of dress is designed to accentuate the line, so don't buy it if it's not too skinny.", said the interviewee No.4.

The global popularity and development of fashion style and aesthetic culture make slim figure and slender waist become the common pursuit of young women all over the world. BM style provides a new popular path for extremely thin women to show their appearance and

highlight their femininity. Although BM style has high requirements on the body of the wearer, "BM girl", as a synonym for thin girl, still attracts many young women to follow the BM style craze and constantly take measures such as dieting and exercise to reach the standard of "BM girl".

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. The fashion aesthetic of extreme thin

BM style highlights the curves of women's body, and the design of waist revealing and tight fitting caters to the aesthetic fashion that "thin is beautiful, thin people look good in whatever they wear", which is wildly sought after by extremely thin women. The popularity of BM style takes advantage of young women's desire to have an extremely thin figure and highlight their fashion taste.

Youth is the creator of fashion trend, but also the followers of fashion clothing, a certain kind of clothing once popular, will have a great attraction to youth, especially young women. Clothing is not only a fig leaf and ornaments of the body, the significance of clothing display individual value orientation, life style, aesthetic temperament and interest, popular clothing in the youth groups to a certain extent reflects the youth way of identity and expression way, become more young people into the group, the "thin" and personal quality, life attitude and aesthetic temperament and interest and other associated, Women with extremely thin figures are regarded as individuals with willpower, life interest and fashion taste, admired by the same sex and favored by the opposite sex, and have more advantages in the workplace competition. When "BM girl" becomes synonymous with "good body", being "BM girl" means being divided into the circle of "thin girls". While enjoying the envious eyes of others, they can also gain more superiority and social recognition.

5.2. The generalization of young women's body anxiety

Body anxiety refers to the anxiety caused by the negative cognition of body shape. Under the influence of the aesthetic pop culture of "thinness as beauty", the society links fat and thin women with good or bad. In this category of aesthetic culture, extremely thin women symbolize confidence, self-discipline and success, while obese women are labeled as lazy, lax and failure. When "thinness" gradually becomes the reference standard of young women's social value, more and more women begin to have negative experience of their own bodies. The contemporary tyranny of thinness is anything but a neutral phenomenon. Women are more obsessed with and dissatisfied with their body image than men.

Moderate weight loss is good for the physical and mental health of women with BMI is in the "overweight" and "obese" ranges, but there is no need to lose weight in the "underweight" and "normal" BMI ranges. However, many normal women have adopted weight-loss behaviors of different forms and intensity, such as dieting, taking weight-loss products and exercise. Even those whose BMI was in the "underweight" range took aggressive measures to slim down, such as fasting and excessive exercise.

The popularity of BM style undoubtedly aggravates the body anxiety of young women, and its influence has two sides: On the one hand, young women's "slimming vision" for "BM girls" can stimulate young women's positive emotions and encourage them to choose a healthy lifestyle, such as sticking to fitness exercise and green diet, so as to help them maintain good physical appearance and avoid a series of risks and diseases caused by obesity. On the other hand, the negative emotional experience caused by BM style easily leads to the generalization and alienation of young women's slimming behavior. Major businesses have launched BM style clothes one after another, and "BM girls" with small waists can be seen everywhere in the streets and on the Internet -- the popularity of BM style creates an illusion that "everyone is thin", which leads to some women with ordinary figures having body anxiety and self-denial, and then choosing incorrect ways to lose weight. Cause double damage to physiology and psychology.

5.3. Contributing factors of social media

Michel Foucault's social discipline theory holds that the body is the target and object of external power and technology. "The body is manipulated, shaped and disciplined. It obeys, it cooperates, it becomes nimble and strong." In the era of consumer economy, commercial capital and male aesthetics still dominate women's body transformation and aesthetic orientation implicitly, while mass media technology plays an important role in the discipline of external forces on the body. Contemporary youth have the characteristics of survival and networking. The use of mobile phones and computers, like eating and sleeping, has become a necessary part of young People's Daily life, and media such as Weibo, wechat, Douyin and Red have become important channels for young people to obtain information. Due to the huge influence of media on youth, brands have to change their traditional marketing model to a certain extent. According to Uché Okonkwo-Pézar, the Internet and social media have greatly shortened the time for brands to become famous. "It used to take 30 years to build a global brand, but now it can be achieved in 18 months." Goldman Sachs research found that brands that are popular with young people are adept at using social media for marketing. Young people

hate the way that traditional merchants directly promote products and explicitly persuade consumers to buy. They like to search for product keywords on media platforms and check user feedback before purchase, and they especially like to follow and imitate the consumption behavior of celebrities, fashion bloggers and other public figures. The popularity of BM is the result of marketers making full use of social media to implement marketing strategies.

Among many fashion styles, BM fashion stands out because it makes use of young women's slimming principles. Driven by interests, mass media often use "thin" and "fat" as gimmicks to sell young women's body anxiety without revealing it and stimulate consumers' buying behavior. On the one hand, the mass media has continuously promoted the concept of BM style clothing to young women. Phrases such as "One size fits most" and "Check whether you have clothes with good body shape" inspired young women's desire to buy. BM wind clothing models are uniformly waist slim, curvy women, color pure and fresh and tight, youth fashion highlights the models that show sexy female temperament, win the favor young women from the vision not only, also from psychological make young women into oneself also can have a perfect figure, wearing the uniform of small yards in the "vision" thin body. On the other hand, the discussion of "BM girls" remains high on many online platforms. The extremely thin women who share the BM style dress aroused the yearning and imitation of young women, and induced them to join the ranks of buying BM style clothes in succession.

6. CONCLUSION

To sum up, the reasons for the popularity of BM style can be interpreted from two aspects: external and internal. On the one hand, the popularity of BM style is under the aesthetic culture of "thinness as beauty", and consumerism and fashion treat women through mass media.

Results of discipline and successful marketing strategies; On the other side, the thin body psychology of young women and figure anxiety make numerous women become "the moth that fight the fire", scrambling to enter the trap that external force designs. Young women who pay for BM fashion are actually paying for their own thinness and body anxiety.

The popularity of BM style has aggravated some young women's dissatisfaction with their bodies, and they have taken radical slimming measures, causing both physical and psychological damage, requiring external intervention and guidance. The key of intervention lies in advocating diversified aesthetics of young women and helping young women establish the consciousness of "the most beautiful healthy body".

First of all, school and family should be in daily education.

To spread the concept that there is no beauty or ugliness in body shape and no right or wrong in aesthetics to students (children), arouse them to think about the definition of beauty independently, form the body aesthetic standard independently, and make them pay more attention to the inner spiritual world. Secondly, the mass media should assume the responsibility of guiding young people, spreading health knowledge and popularizing the adverse consequences of improper weight loss. If conditions permit, you can open relevant columns to interact with youth groups. Third, government agencies and enterprises should spread positive information to the society. For example, in the promotional videos of enterprises, women with different bodies and styles can be selected, instead of extremely thin women with a single color representing the corporate image. Although in a short period of time, it caused "thin for beauty" aesthetic orientation and on the female body.

It is still difficult to eliminate the prejudice of material, but through the joint efforts of family, school and society, women will be able to have more say in body shape.

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