

# Appearance Dissatisfaction and its Relationship with Social Media

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## ABSTRACT

This essay mainly focus on appearance and body concerns recently in China due to the exceedingly high number of appearance dissatisfaction triggered by the development in industry related with becoming thinner and more beautiful. The paper uses online case study of self-reports and online questionnaire survey to analyze the present days appearance dissatisfaction phenomenon in the society. The context of this essay includes the cause and effect of appearance dissatisfaction; correlation study and analyses of appearance concerns are relevant to online activities especially advertisements related that receive through social media. Through all those researches and surveys, it shows that surge of appearance concerns is relevant to online appearance related advertisements.

**Keywords:** *Advertisement, Appearance, Social media, Body dissatisfaction, Social network*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the self-appearance evaluation section of the survey sample, 62.8% of women and 56.7% of men were dissatisfied with their appearance, and 62.8% of women were in the 18-40 age group, as were the male sample. From the sample data can be seen: regardless of male women, in the sample selection of beauty services demand for skin beauty is the largest proportion of choice, and from the survey sample as a whole, the demand of the female group is much larger than the male group; Regardless of the male and female sample, the choice of medical services is concentrated in the 18- to 40-year-old population. [1]

Min's body anxiety has been there since childhood. In the third grade of elementary school, the school organized a physical examination, and the whole class of girls weighed herself, only she was more than a hundred pounds, and at that time she felt that she was a fat man. After losing 10 pounds in the second year of high school diet exercise, Xiaomin began to have binge eating behavior. Xiao Min, who is afraid of becoming fat again, learned about the method of inducing vomiting in the weight loss sticker bar. There are more than 7 million body anxiety people gathered in Tieba who share various weight loss methods, such as valley breaking, acupuncture, liposuction, etc., and micro-businesses take the opportunity to sell diet pills. Here, health and safety are left behind and thinness becomes the only goal. Xiao

Min still remembers that the first time she induced vomiting was in winter, and the kitchen was particularly cold. In order to spit out the food, she stood in front of the washstand, poured cold water into her stomach, poured it in and spit it out, as if she were torturing herself. She wanted to vomit clean, so she poured detergent into her stomach and repeated it until it was completely emptied. The next day she had a high fever, but she felt relieved to see food out of her body. Xiao Min said that she was the first to use tools to induce vomiting, from what was used around her at the beginning, to a friend she met in Tieba later taught her to use a gastric tube to induce vomiting, "This method was invented by herself, she said it was easier to spit out." Now, Xiao Min has replaced the tool with a more professional emetic tube. [10]

Even mostly happening on female, but if you eat any unhealthy food one day, you will fall into a bad emotional state.

This paper analyzes and studies the causes of appearance anxiety by means of questionnaire survey and literature summary. Combined with the dissemination of social media, the study analyzes the role of social media advertising in increasing appearance anxiety. This paper analyzes and studies the causes of appearance anxiety by means of questionnaire survey and literature summary. Combined with the dissemination of social media, the study analyzes the role of social media advertising in increasing appearance anxiety.

## 2. EXPERIMENT

Before preparing for the study, the authors launched an online survey on appearance issues among 42 people as the background for the study. The questionnaire is mainly aimed at whether they are satisfied with their appearance and whether they agree with the mainstream aesthetic standards in the current society. The results showed that 40% of women and 14.3% of men were dissatisfied with their appearance. 51% of the respondents disagree with the current social aesthetic standards, and 9.52% realize that there should be no fixed aesthetic standards. While body shaming about body appearances on social media led to 34% of respondents worrying about themselves further, 20% believed that positivity about their online appearance would help them maintain a good body condition.

In a more comprehensive survey on appearance anxiety in another literature, in the self-appearance evaluation section, 62.8% of women and 56.7% of men were dissatisfied with their appearance. 62.8% of the samples were in the 18-40 age group.

It can be seen from the sample data that in the sample selection of beauty services, whether male or female, the demand for skin beauty is the largest selection ratio. From the overall survey sample, the female group has more needs, which is greater than that of the male group. .

However, regardless of the male and female samples, the choice of medical services was concentrated in the 18-40 year old population.

## 3. COMMON METHOD TO RELIEVE APPEARANCE ANXIETY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media and the internet are pushing beauty standards to shape people's notions of beauty. And people who don't meet this standard will refer to social media to provide weight loss or medical beauty products to help themselves meet the standard. .

### 3.1. Diet food

To lose weight, many people, including those are not fat, use various slimming products, such as flours, seeds, teas, thermogenics, fat blockers, shakes, laxatives, diuretics and diabetic medicines [5]. Lübeck et al. [6] demonstrate that physical appearance concern increases body dissatisfaction in women, as well as reinforcing the relationship between those factors and the increased intention to use slimming products. Increasing demand from consumers especially among women has led to an increase in the diversity of slimming products in the market. Slimming products are often advertised in the media. Women's tendency to obtain slimming products is

driven by their desire to look slim and beautiful. (Lübeck et al., 2016)

#### 3.1.1. Diet pills with illegal or improper ingredients

In the current market, in order to meet the purpose of fast weight loss for consumers, manufacturers generate illegal drugs or drugs with improper ingredients, and sell them to consumers. There will indeed be weight loss in the early stage of drug use, but at the same time, due to overdose in the drug, there will be problems of emotional disturbance, palpitation, fainting, and sudden death. These weight loss drugs that are harmful to health mostly contain a series of pharmaceutical ingredients such as fluoxetine, rhubarb powder, sibutramine, phenolphthalein, dobutamine. An fOverdose can lead to death.

Chinese news media have reported on the incident, and manufacturers of fake diet pills have been punished. However, these substandard diet pills are still sold under the packaging of social media to people who desperately need to lose weight by changing their names and packaging

(According to china news media reports, on March 11, Shanghai police cracked a case of producing and selling illegally added sibutramine slimming products, and arrested a total of 32 criminal suspects)

#### 3.1.2. Roundworm eggs

On some shopping sites, some businesses advertise practical roundworm eggs as a very safe way to lose weight. Relying on the free reproduction of roundworms in the abdominal cavity, the body consumes excess nutrients to lose weight.

This kind of propaganda takes advantage of people's existing knowledge barriers to carry out false propaganda, which has great harm to human health. Cases of aphids invading heart valves and liver death can lead to diseases such as aphid intestinal obstruction. If the aphid infestation is severe, the patient will lose weight in a short period of time, leading to malnutrition and sometimes bloating, which can even be life-threatening.

### 3.2. Wearable ways to lose weight

One of the more popular and expensive weight loss products is sportswear. At first this was designed for people who need to lose weight quickly, such as boxers, martial artists, etc., mainly for the convenience of players to participate in competitions. However, in order to increase profits, businessmen promote it as a safe and fast way to lose weight, increase the amount of exercise, and make exercise to lose weight with less effort. But it actually produces short-term weight loss through rapid dehydration. But this needs to be done under the right

guidance, otherwise too much dehydration can be life-threatening.

The second is the tight belt, which is another product that has been very popular recently. There are a lot of advertisements on social media, such as Weibo and Instagram. Corsets reduce appetite by compressing the abdomen and squeezing the stomach. If you reduce your intake, you will achieve the effect of losing weight. And this way of squeezing the stomach is easy to cause damage to the organs, which seriously affects the normal operation of human organs. It can also damage your health in the long run. .

### **3.3. Surgery**

According to ISAPS, the report states that more than thirty percent of South Korean women between the age of 19 and 29 have undergone surgery. [9] In 2018, the global plastic surgery markets were valued at about 962.7 million USD, with the growth rate of CAGR of 8.8% from 2019 to 2026; in 2020, Market size value is about 1,114.6 million USD; in 2026, the Revenue forecast is about 1,870.1 million USD. [4] The huge medical beauty market also enables merchants to develop different surgeries to help consumers meet their requirements for face and body, such as leg nerve block surgery, fairy ear surgery, etc. When the business is promoting, it will also tell consumers that the operation has no negative impact on the body through various cases. However, leg nerve block surgery is to damage the important blood vessels and nerves in the legs, so as to achieve the effect of atrophy of a pair of stovepipe muscles. During the operation of Elf Ear Surgery, the nervous system of the ear is easily damaged and affected.

### **3.4. Vomit**

Baidu Tieba, one of the largest public communication platforms in China, once had a section for discussion and sharing about using vomiting to lose weight. In the case of uncontrolled diet, the normal intake of food is followed by an abnormal way to induce vomiting, thereby preventing the digestion of food. However, due to the reflux of stomach acid into the mouth during vomiting, it can burn the esophagus and erode the teeth. In severe cases, they will suffer from anorexia due to abuse of vomiting, thereby losing their ability to take care of themselves and work.

### **3.5. Other products**

According to the Forward-Looking Industry Research Institute, the overall market size of China's cosmetics industry in 2019 will be close to 500 billion yuan. During the 2020 "Double Eleven" shopping festival, the cosmetics category, facial treatment kits alone sales of more than 11 billion yuan, young people has become the main force of consumption. Skin care beauty and medical

beauty consumption from the past "low frequency" "high consumption" to now become a more fixed "daily expenditure", reflected behind the Chinese society's consumption upgrade.

## **4. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF SOCIAL AESTHETIC STANDARDS**

### **4.1. Browsing more appearance related topics**

Young women often compare their appearance negatively to other women on social media like facebook, ins, weibo. An article out of the journal Body Image surveyed 227 female college students, and found that young women who spend more time on Facebook may feel more concerned about their body because they compare their appearance to others (especially to peers). This means there are profound psychological consequences for women's body image when they compare their physical appearances to others. After having such social comparisons of oneself with media ideals or celebrities, stereotypes originally from the others then become stereotypes for the individual and forming the social perpetual confirmation and self-fulfilling prophecy, so that the individual with false social belief act in ways that objectively confirm that belief which means they might looking for more information about appearance. As a result, they spend more time on the appearance topics and might be more dissatisfied with themselves.

A bombshell study conducted by the Florida House Experience, a healthcare institution, uncovered that both women and men compare their bodies with those in the media. The survey included 1,000 men and women and focused on their body image, confidence, and the media. It found that 87% of women and 65% of men compare their bodies to images they consume on social and traditional media. In that comparison, a stunning 50% of women and 37% of men compare their bodies unfavorably.

some men's behavior in the gym is very honest about this body anxiety. In pursuit of larger pectoral muscles or more pronounced abs, they train wildly in the 24-hour gym and even take steroid medications to make the muscles more angular; Fitness is no longer for health purposes, but has become a morbid obsession.

Body dissatisfaction was significantly related to time spent engaged in social comparisons [2]. With technology and the use of social networking platforms advancing at an exponential rate, frequent engagement in social comparisons, less favorable self-evaluations, and a tendency toward internalization of appearance ideals are all important processes in explaining how adolescent girls 'online appearance-related activities are related to negative body image appraisals. [2]

#### **4.2. "Indiscipline" and "negative in attitude towards life"**

According to Liu, some college students over-enlarge the role of the value of the appearance, affected by variety show information and the Internet, people today think that as long as they look good, they can develop better in the future. Influencer work has become a high-paying job. And if you want to start an online celebrity career, you need to use the "net celebrity face" based on the Internet celebrity standard to attract popularity and attention, so as to continuously improve your business value.

The concept of "value economy" has been widely promoted by these companies and internet celebrities into the hearts of contemporary teenagers. [1]. Individuals with false stereotypes spread their false beliefs on social media,

At the same time, judging others has become the norm on the Internet. Blame other people's appearance under Twitter or blog, cover up your dissatisfaction with your appearance by evaluating the self-righteous superiority and pleasure generated by others, and at the same time fill in the emptiness and inauthenticity of your own heart. This departure from normality has led to an increasing emphasis on appearance.

#### **4.3. Body dysmorphic disorder.**

If an individual believes a desirable attribute in another is attainable, they may be inspired and assimilate with them, whereas contrasting effects may occur when an individual believes that such an attribute is outside their realm of ability [7]

When things go outside of their ability, people might have a mental illness, such as eating disorders, depression, anxious. Body anxiety seems to be a problem about an individual's appearance, but at a deeper level, it is also affected by the individual's self-perception, and it also affects the individual's mental health.

Many people attribute their increased body size to "overwork fat" and "stress fat", which stems from the fact that when an individual is in a state of high pressure for a long time, the pressure will activate the sympathetic nervous system, secreting adrenaline in the body, resulting in loss of appetite, but if the pressure is not lifted, the body will secrete another hormone - cortisol. Cortisol causes an increase in appetite and increases our motivation, including the motivation to eat. Excessive anxiety about body shape has the potential to lead to a more serious problem: Body Dysmorphic Disorder.

#### **4.4. Information from Social media**

##### **4.4.1. Daily news**

Of the 1,035 tweets over the same time period, 696 (67.2%) were related to body image, fitness, food, dieting, eating disorders, or focused on lean and eating disorder behaviors, and included images of extremely thin women. [8] The messages of these explosions directly affect people's marks on their appearance. This in turn affects all aspects of society. A Korean company specified in its 2015 recruitment announcement to look for "attractive beauties above the C cup" [7]. The emergence of this information has led to increased demand for appearance, while promoting appearance anxiety in society.

##### **4.4.2. advertising**

Advertisements that tend to create demand and sales contribute to the spread of appearance anxiety in society. Weight-loss idealized media images are often used to promote products, services, and brands, primarily focusing on ideal appearance, perfection, and weight loss. Fashion marketers believe that a skinny image in fashion advertising leads to a more favorable brand attitude. In 2014, for example, to promote a new season of lingerie, Victoria's Secret launched a poster featuring ten babes with the slogan "Perfect Body." [3]

At the same time, the false propaganda of unscrupulous medical institutions is spread on various types of social media, using strong picture comparison to make readers feel good, and relevant experience sharing to dispel psychological doubts of consumers, thereby increasing the acceptance of consumers.

The slogan that matching beauty is everything makes people's idea of trying medical beauty slimming more and more intense.

##### **4.4.3. Online sales**

Internet anchors showed off skin care and beauty products through social media, attracting thousands of netizens to watch. Make huge profits by nitpicking and exaggerating product features. In addition to make-up live broadcasts, major social platforms have also launched skin care columns. More and more people are sharing beauty-related topics in text or short videos. In the era when the public pursues beauty and advocates beauty, beauty and health care boost economic development.

#### **4.5. positive encouragement on the social media**

Emerging research highlights how young women exposed to body-positive positions experience improvements in mood, body satisfaction, and body appreciation compared to exposure to ideal and appearance-neutral positions (Cohen et al., 2019)

Lots of people are there to resist the standardization of beauty, to help the slightly anxious, and to spread the word about positive events and art exhibitions. From February 8th to 9th, 2021, four female high school students in Beijing, Liao Lingxi, Xu Weiyu, Ji Yuyu, and Jiang Yulan, initiated and held the art exhibition "I'm Beautiful", telling all the girls who are going through it to look anxious: You are very pretty. An article published on the National Eating Disorders Collaboration website recommends educating young people about the proper use of social media and raising awareness that social media may not always reflect reality. These messages also reflect new awareness and resistance to appearance anxiety.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Social media influences how people look at themselves both positively and negatively, therefore it's important that people understand the effects in order to limit their impact on mental health.

Still, more surveys are required to prove this topic, especially whether those actions with positive purpose help with people's concerns and what else positive acts are able to help with people through social media in great range.

A problem is that there is more paper done on females and experiments have shown that females have a higher rate of appearance dissatisfaction, whereas they do not figure out explanations for these differences in gender. Further research could focus more on males' appearance-related experiments figuring out what makes the difference in gender so that maybe the reason can help to reduce the widespread dissatisfaction in females.

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