



The Research on the Sense of Body Shaming Brought by Little Red Book Upon Chinese High School and Undergraduate Students

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Abstract. Viewers easily comment on women's appearances on Chinese social platforms, especially the Little Red Book. In particular, the comparison between people themselves and the perfect images is made. However, this comparison will lead to further issues: eating disorders, unhealthy diets, anxiety, etc. Thus, by sampling Chinese high school students and university students living in China or other countries, this study surveys with quantitative and qualitative questions. The responses of participants collect the results. The collective results reflect that body-shaming is significantly correlated to the time spent on social media, including Little Red Book, mainly the percent of time spent on viewing clothing, make-up, and such loggers. Accordingly, this body-shaming is correlated to people's further reaction that they will consciously buy some beauty products; they will have difficulties eating, and they will feel anxious when viewing the images on social platforms.

Keywords: Chinese Students · Sense of Body Shaming · Little Red Book

1 Introduction

In nowadays society, social media is an inseparable part of people's life. With the popularization of smartphones, people spend more time on social media, so social media easily influences people. Social media can have both positive and negative influences on people. The pew research Centre survey in 2018 found that among social media users of 13–17, 43% reported only dare in the content of the social media and arrival is suitable for their image. Media survey found that another 37% feel they can only send a lot of praise and comment on the content of the harvest.

Meanwhile, 45% of people think that social media drama makes them feel exhausted. The number of teens using Instagram has exploded, with 78% of teens surveyed using it, up 20% from an earlier report. Social media has put enormous pressure on mental health, and adolescents are more likely to struggle with body image. An increase has matched this in eating disorders, particularly anorexia nervosa, particularly among adolescent

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girls over the past 50 years. In social media, there are a lot of ways that influencers show how perfect their body is, like BM style, A4 waist collarbone coins, and backhand touch navel. This may cause the comparison between the young people who will chase the perfect body on social media. Social media may force users to keep up with the competition by posting only the best moments and the most beautiful images, which may cause underage users to feel tremendous pressure, low self-esteem, and depression. Social media has a severe impact on the mentality of teenagers, who generally believe that it aggravates their anxiety and depression.

Among them, 32% of teenage girls said that Instagram only makes them feel worse when they feel out of shape. Other data showed that more than 40% of Instagram users began to doubt their appearance after browsing Instagram. About 25% of minors feel worse after using the platform. More worryingly, many suicidal children in Europe and the US are negatively affected by social media. China, these years, with the economic growth, more and more people have a phone, so did China face the same dilemma as the USA and European? That is a question worth be considered. The target of body anxiety spread by social media is mainly women because women, as objects of the world, have more stringent requirements on women's appearance in social culture. However, body anxiety targets females because the whole social structure will have a higher need for women's appearance. What a beautiful woman should be is defined by the man, so from the feminist perspective, those will cause evil influences on the female, whatever their health or self-estimate.

2 Literature Review

This study focuses on analysing the influence of the female reaction to social media. The target group is 15 to 20 years old, and most of them are female undergraduate students. Social media is not a new concept, which first appeared in an e-book called *What is social media*. Antony Mayfield believes that social media is a new type of online media that provides users with great space for participation [1]. Daniel Scocco believes that social media is a collection of various forms of user-generated content (UGC) and websites or applications that enable people to communicate and share online [2]. In the same year, Ron Jones proposed that social media is an analogy to online media in which people talk, participate, share, communicate and mark [3]. Later, Susan Ward gave her definition: Social media is an online media that promotes communication, contrary to the traditional media, which provides content but does not allow readers, audiences, and listeners to participate in the creation and development of content [4]. In the same year, Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein defined social media as "a group of Internet-based applications" based on the concepts and technologies of Web 2.0 with content creation and communication from user-generated content [5].

In addition, some domestic scholars have summarized the definition of social media from the perspective of information science, information science, and communication science. In information science, researchers use this concept to collectively express the new network information exchange space brought by social network services. From the perspective of information science, it is the product of interaction between personal information space and public information space. Communication begins with the "self-media? Observation and thinking of W" phenomenon [6].

This research notices that the rise of social media has changed the traditional way of communication among college students. On social networking sites, college students create a “pseudo-self” in the network through the management of personal home pages, “selective exposure,” and “self-impression shaping.” College students can recognize and interact with each other through “mimicry me” and “mimicry he” to satisfy their psychological needs. However, the “fake self” is not the same as the authentic self, and the phenomenon of “social media addiction” is caused by narcissism, self-pity, loneliness, vanity, and anxiety. Finally, social media has become concerned about the healthy growth of college students who have to face the problem. Although these social media have brought a lot of convenience to our life, they have gradually affected our mental health, especially Facebook, which hurts people’s happiness.

In many researches, the definition of body shaming is classified. Integrating the similarities and differences of such related concepts, Schlüter, Kraag, and Schmidt concluded that body shaming is a person consciously comment others’ build and appearances, including kind advise and malevolent remark. In general, it is a type of aggression leading to negative impact on another person [7].

Social media does influence body shaming in China. Fredrickson and Roberts point out the objectification theory that interpersonal encounters with sexual objectification undergoing will lead to self-objectification [8]. Collaborating with high body surveillance, individuals potentially compare others’ images to their own [9]. According to Gaffney, after viewing the relatively perfect images of builds on social media, audiences would be more anxious, depressed, angry, and dissatisfied about their body. Lack of others’ supports and positive implication from themselves, social media have impact on body shaming, influencing their mental health [10]. Further, Chinese certain environment of social media plays a role for this phenomenon. In China, people tend to use several adjectives to describe people who are physically attractive, which is obsession with the beauty of others’ appearances or their own. As a result, people tend to pay more attention on others’ build instead of other conditions, leading to the situation that they will consciously or unconsciously make comments based on others’ body, while social media is necessary for interpersonal communication [11]. Correspondingly, Chinese social media influences the situation of body shaming.

In recent studies, most researchers focus on how social media influences body shaming and the impact of body shaming. However, this paper will reveal the body shaming from the perspective of feminism, including why feminism is influencing body shaming and anti-body shaming, the causes of body shaming based on feminism, and the impacts. In current society, gender equality, especially feminism, influence each perspective of people’s life. Moreover, people need to deal with the adverse effects of body shaming; thus, a different view that feminism is necessary for researchers to explore the causes and influences of body shaming. As a result of social media, many females come to the gym and perform exercises accordingly. The study will reveal how Little Red Book, a famous social platform in China, influences body shaming from a feminist perspective.

3 Methodology

This study utilizes a survey to prove the hypothesis. Thus, the survey was created by the application in China called Wen Juan Xing, sending it through this public platform Wen

Juan Xing in China. After two weeks, the survey results are received, with all qualified answers.

3.1 Participants

Chinese aged from 14 to 25 attending high school study or university study were considered eligible to participate in the survey in this study. Thus, 65 participants are enrolled, with 45 female and seven males. In this sample, 47 participants are 14–18 years old; 23 are 18–25 years old; 2 are more than 25 years old. The sample is asked to determine such levels and undergoing to clarify the difference between education, disposable income, and living abroad influencing body shaming. According to educational level, 47 of the participants currently have high school studies; 21 have undergraduate studies; 2 have graduate studies; the rest 2 have middle school studies. For disposable income, 17 participants have less than 1000 RMB pay; 23 have 1000–3000 RMB income; 23 have 3000–5000 RMB income; 9 have more than 5000 RMB income. For living abroad experience, 39 participants have never lived in foreign countries (other nations besides China); 19 participants have lived for 1–3 years; 5 have lived for 3–5 years; 8 have lived for more than 5 years.

3.2 Survey Design

To ensure the accuracy and effectiveness of the survey, based on the hypothesis that Little Red Book influences body shaming from a feminist perspective, the survey uses several statements with the level of agreement scoring from 1 (least agree) to 5 (most agree). Moreover, the form of questions is applied in this survey to check the time, application, and money spent related to body shaming and beauty.

First, the survey includes the number of time participants spend on social media platforms, applications they use, and percent of time spent on vloggers shooting clothing and make-up. Thus, the first question with multiple choices is which social platform the participants most frequently viewed, including the option Little Red Book, Zhi Hu, Tik-Tok, Bilibili, WeChat, QQ, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and others. These are famous Chinese and American social platforms and applications. Based on this question, the survey further asks how many hours participants spend on social media, ranging from 1 h to 8 h, dividing into three equal sections and two options less than 1 h and more than 8 h. Further, the survey includes the question of the percentage of time they spend on videos of make-up and clothing. Those options range from 5% to 80% with four equal sections and contain the options that are less than 5% and more than 80%. The survey includes these questions to ensure participants' responses will not be highly varied because of their different time spent on social media.

Second, the survey aims to clarify participants' satisfaction with their bodies and self-estimation. Scoring from 1 to 10, the participants are asked to achieve their satisfaction with their appearances and build, while one represents being very dissatisfied and ten means being very satisfied. Then, participants are asked whether they are experiencing body shaming or not. Based on these results, they are asked to score the influence of social media on body shaming, ranging from 1 to 5. 1 represents no influence, and 5 illustrates power a lot.

Finally, the survey includes a section on how body shaming influences participants' daily life with corresponding daily actions. Based on previous questions, the participants are asked how body shaming influences their everyday life, including anxiety, consciously purchasing beauty products, eating disorders, others, and no influences. Then, the survey contains the question of how much money participants spend on beauty products per month, ranging from 500 RMB to 4000 RMB, with four equal sections, including the options that are less than 500 RMB and more than 4000 RMB. Next, their frequency of having meals per day is also recorded, with the possibilities that one meal, one to two meals, three to four meals, more than four meals, and sometimes eating nothing for one day.

Based on these questions, body shaming is defined as "money spent on beauty products per month" and "frequency of having meals per day." Besides, their scores of satisfactions with their appearance will determine whether they experience body shaming or not.

4 Results

Little Red Book and such social media occupy lots of people's time. In this survey, as shown in table 2.1, half of the participants frequently view Little Red Book as their social platform; on the contrary, less than 30% of the participants will view Zhihu, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. Since WeChat, Bilibili, and QQ also function as communications and videos, 96.15% of the participants use WeChat; 73.08% of participants use Bilibili, and 30.77% of participants the participants use QQ. Thus, Little Red Book is still one of the most frequently used social media applications among Chinese young people, chosen by 50.00% of the participants. Moreover, 44.23% of participants will spend 3 to 4 h on the social platform; 25.00% of those will spend 5 to 8 h; 7.69% of those will spend more than eight while 23.08% of those will spend less than 2 h. When asking the percentage of time spent on viewing vlogger shooting appearances, clothing, and make-up, 25% of the participants chose that these actions occupy less than 5% of their overall time using social platforms; 38.46% of participants chose that those occupy 5% to 15%; 19.23% of participants choose that those occupy 16% to 50%, and 17.31% choose that those occupy more than 50%.

Little Red Book and such social media platforms influence body shaming. In this survey, the participants are asked to score their satisfaction with their appearance and build, ranging from 1 to 10. From this table, most participants will achieve their satisfaction over or equal to 5, which means they partially believe they are satisfied with their build. However, 16.92% of those will score their satisfaction below 5, which means they are unhappy with their bodies. Besides, 48.08% of participants say they do not think they are suffering from body shaming, while 51.92% say they believe they are suffering from it. They are asked to determine how much social media influences body-shaming based on their self-estimation. 63.47% of the participants believe that social media affects body shaming (choosing the scores higher or equal to 3), while 19.23% of those choose 2, meaning that social media have little impact on the body shaming. 17.31% of the participants choose 1, which means social media has no impact on body shaming.

Body shaming leads to a negative impact on people. 57.69% of the participants responded that they would consciously adjust their lifestyles and paces, which means

body shaming will lead to a change in people's life: 11.54% of those will purchase beauty products; 59.62% of those will suffer from anxiety; 13.47% of those will have eating disorder and unhealthy diet. Thus, body shaming leads to people's harmful living style, especially young Chinese.

However, 57.69% of participants will not spend any money on beauty products; 25.00% of those will spend less than 500 RMB. Thus, Chinese young people will not spend so much on beauty products. Besides, 68.63% of participants will have 3 to 4 meals per day, which could be considered a healthy diet for one day. 33.33% of participants will have 1 to 2 meals, while 11.76% of participants sometimes will not eat anything for one day. Thus, based on the impact of social media, most participants still have a healthy diet each day.

5 Discussion

Based on the survey, Little Red Book occupies a large section of people's time in daily life, positively correlated to body shaming by receiving perfect images of appearances. This situation further connects to anxiety and eating disorders.

Little Red Book and such a social platform occupy people's daily lives. During the era of information, social media is one of the most efficient ways for people to obtain the information they want. In particular, Little Red Book can help people to find these such pieces of information: work, studies, suggestions, and so on. Many brands utilize this famous social media to advertise their products; accordingly, many vloggers choose to shoot videos about clothing, beauty products, styles of make-up, and so on. Correspondingly, people can easily access comments on fashion styles and appearances.

Therefore, these perfect images and comments are positively correlated to the automatic comparison of viewers, leading to body shaming. When viewing the photos and others' comments on appearances, people would evaluate themselves based on these comments. In particular, they will unconsciously compare these appearances with theirs: eyes, nose, mouth, and the whole face. This comparison will lead to shame in their appearances if they believe that these images are much better than they are. The idea of body shaming is formed during this process.

Consequently, this body-shaming is positively correlated to anxiety and eating disorders. First, when people are shamed, they feel shocked and anxious. With the enormous amount of information, rigorous comments on the build, and images, their sense of shame are reinforced. Thus, this sense will further lead to anxiety. Second, to have such a perfect build shown by the images, people tend to control their meals: eat less or low-calorie foods. However, some tend to have difficulties eating food--eating disorders eventually. As they form the idea that they shall not eat so much, it would be difficult for them to have a healthy diet or regular meal, taking it to an extreme situation. Thus, it will further lead to health problems, even death.

Accordingly, during the era of information, people can be simply accessible to comments on builds and appearances on Little Red Book, which positively corresponds to body shaming, leading to eating disorders and anxiety.

6 Conclusion

As the famous Chinese social platform, Little Red Book positively correlates to body shaming, leading to anxiety and eating disorders. Because of the popularity of information and images, people are accessible to others' pictures and comments based on appearances and builds. Thus, they can compare this information with themselves, forming a mood of anxiety and shock. Therefore, this comparison corresponds to the psychological situation of body shaming: shame and critique for own appearance or body. As a result, this shame will lead to further actions of people: general anxiety, an unhealthy diet, and an eating disorder. With the guilt of their appearance, people would take steps to make themselves as better as possible, or they would feel ashamed because they realize that they are not good enough (Ward). Consequently, this will further cause their sense of anxiety. Besides that, they would tend to limit their meals to ensure their builds are close to the perfect images, through having an unhealthy diet and even difficulty eating with an eating disorder.

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