



# The Impact of the Use of Social Media on the Aesthetics of Young People

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**Abstract.** The definition of beauty in today's society is gradually strict. Once there is a deviation from the standard of universal beauty, the negative emotions of anxiety and inferiority will linger in the heart, affecting normal social and academics. So the author decided to discuss the factors that lead to the appearance and body anxiety of teenagers, and assume it as three aspects: the influence of online celebrities on the Internet, the popular single aesthetics, and the evaluation of the people around them. The researchers investigated the causes of anxiety among adolescents and their aesthetic concepts through the online questionnaire method. The research results show that the appearance anxiety of adolescents is common, and the parts that men and women value are different, which is in line with the definition standard of universal beauty for men and women's aesthetic concepts. The main factor in anxiety is the evaluation of people around you. The examples on the Internet are relatively extreme, and most teenagers will not pursue imitation. However, celebrities and Internet celebrities lead the aesthetic trend and constantly change the public's definition of beauty, and young people and the people around them are easily influenced by the value of universal beauty in this environment, which causes appearance and body anxiety.

**Keywords:** adolescents · appearance anxiety · body anxiety · universal beauty · aesthetic concept · aesthetic simplicity

## 1 Introduction

In 2021, the Norwegian Parliament passed an amendment. In the future, photos that change the shape, size, and skin of the human body through modification or other editing methods must be marked as “post-processing”. The Norwegian Department of Children and Family said that photo editing can easily cause social insecurity, poor sense of morality, low self-esteem, and physical and mental stress.

In recent years, with the popularization of technology and the Internet, the topics of “appearance anxiety” and “body anxiety” have caused heated discussions on the Internet platform. The number of related video playbacks has reached 2.31 billion times, and the number of Weibo topics has exceeded 528,000. This question is closely related to adolescents. According to a survey of 11–16-year-olds in the UK by Be Real Campaign, 79% said that their appearance is important to them, 52% are often worried about their

appearance, 30% are isolated from their physical anxiety, and 36% of them will make them look beautiful at all costs, including cosmetic surgery. It can be seen that the problem of appearance and anxiety among adolescents is widespread.

Moreover, appearance and anxiety have a serious impact on the lives of young people. As puberty begins, the perception and sensitivity of girls and boys to their appearance will become more prominent. Dissatisfied body image will make young people inferior, slowly lose self-confidence, and dare not participate in any social activities. Unconsciousness will make young people feel that they are slowly losing their beliefs. This can also be said to be a kind of mental torture. Under the situation of more serious appearance and anxiety, it will increase the risk of adolescents' eating disorders, depression, drug abuse and suicide [1, 2]. At the same time, physical troubles have a certain impact on career selection, have a greater impact on psychological development and personality improvement, and are one of the main risk factors that cause psychological disorders [2, 3]. In this context, this article is based on field surveys around young people, trying to show the impact of social media on the aesthetics of young people.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Related Research on Adolescent Aesthetics**

"Appearance and anxiety" is the upgrade of "social physical anxiety" in social media. The definition of "social physical anxiety" in the academic world refers to the psychological response of individuals because they are worried about others' self-body or physical negative evaluation. The phenomenon of "appearance and anxiety" is isolated with the following elements: (1) The improvement of beauty technology (2) The standard of "ideal beauty" is strengthened. (3) Women lose themselves and fall into the trap of "consumerism" [4]. With the development of the times, young people are easily affected by the public's aesthetic concepts, resulting in appearance and body anxiety.

Liu Shengzhi's research shows that the dissemination of the media is inseparable from aesthetics. The form, the concept, and the content and forms of the mass media include people's understanding and creation of aesthetics. At the same time, the mass media has also had a more negative impact on young people. Liu Shengzhi's research found that the negative impact of the mass media on young people is mainly manifested in three aspects:

#### **Passive Aesthetic Activities**

Teenagers are in the growth stage, and they have not yet formed a mature and stable aesthetic concept. They lack the ability to criticize and reflect on the aesthetics of the media. Therefore, in the face of the bombardment of the aesthetic information of the mass media, the lack of active choices and creations of young people's aesthetic activities, showing a passive phenomenon.

#### **Sensory of Aesthetic Experience**

In the aesthetic performance of the mass media, the image form has been widely used. People's aesthetic methods are a transition from reading to viewing, this makes the aesthetic experience of adolescents present sensory and flat characteristics. It makes the

aesthetic sensibility of adolescents replace reason, and sensory enjoyment replaces the sense of enjoyment.

### **Modelization of Aesthetic Taste**

The imitation of fashion fun by young people often only pursues beauty and chicness and pursuit of entertainment and leisure, but ignores the sweetness and bitterness of reality, ignores the tenacity and hard work of human nature, and thus, so as to avoid the social responsibility, so as towards consumerism and hedonism [5].

## **2.2 The Impact of the Use of Social Media on the Aesthetics of Young People**

Now the Internet celebrities in the online world are constructed into an idealized image. They let the audience see the life template of “good body” and “self-discipline activities”, which solidifies the audience’s aesthetic vision. The multi-channel network (MCN) makes the production of opinion leaders in the network platform more quickly and exacerbates the solidified aesthetics of the audience.

In addition, social media has led to “physical images” in adolescents. The physical image barrier in the medical field is a kind of psychological barrier. It is caused by the physical defects that do not objectively exist in personal imagination. It is a distorted experience of your body. The “physical image barrier” under the influence of social media is not the scope of mental illness as defined in the traditional medical field, but a psychological problem expressed through “appearance anxiety”. This is a common social anxiety phenomenon, which is manifested by too frequent physical examinations and excessive attention to physical details. The hot topics on women on social media are basically “how to lose weight in a short time” and “how to make their facial features look more refined.” Due to the anchoring effect, young people will follow the guidance of the influencer due to lack of judgment, and promote the face of the Internet to weaken the aesthetic ability, and the standard boundary of the aesthetic concept will gradually blur. When adolescents encounter failure, they will attribute the cause of failure to the imperfections of their looks and figure, which will exacerbate the “physical image barrier” [5].

## **3 Research and Analysis**

### **3.1 Detailed Questionnaires for the Topic Settings**

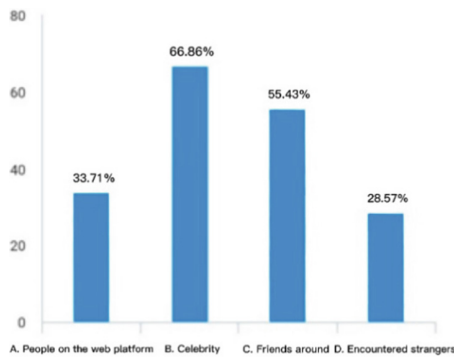
The questionnaires have been promoted and promoted on the Internet and received good feedback. The total number of valid questionnaires in this online questionnaire was 316, of which the ratio of male to female was 2: 3, and the ratio of girls was higher than that of boys.

- (1) Evaluation of your appearance and figure, a total of 5 points. Adolescent men generally have high evaluations of their appearance and figure, with 81.43% and 78.57% of men scoring 4,5 points for their appearance and figure, and 56% and 53.6% of women scored 3 points for their appearance and figure, indicating that young men are more confident in their appearance and figure than women.

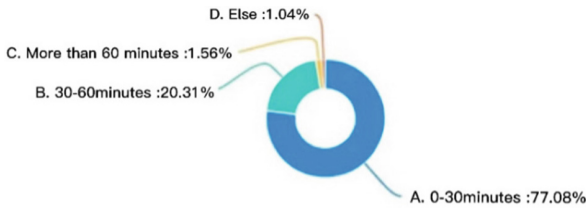
- (2) Regarding whether they have envied others for their face and figure, 59.2% of young women chose “sometimes”, and 57.14% of young men chose “very little”, which further shows that young men are more confident in their appearance and body than women.
- (3) For what kind of person’s appearance (body), the proportion of “celebrity” and “friends around” accounts for nearly two-thirds, explaining that the reasons that will cause anxiety in adolescents are divided into two kinds: the beauty without modification and the beauty of the extreme which is shown in Fig. 1
- (4) For how much time to dress yourself every day, the proportion of 0–30 min reaches 77.08%, which shows that even if there is anxiety in adolescents, they will not spend a long time paying attention to their appearance and figure which is shown in Fig. 2.
- (5) For the specific aspects of appearance and body anxiety, researchers have found that the tendency of adolescent men and women is different. The anxiety of young men is mainly focused on body, such as height and weight, while women’s anxiety is more extensive. In addition to general attention to weight and height, it also includes appearance anxiety, such as facial features, face shape, etc.
- (6) In the results about whether you care about others’ evaluation of your looks. 72.91% of teenagers chose “a little bit concerned” and “concerned about people close to”, accounting for nearly two-thirds, and only three people chose to “concerned about the evaluation on the Internet”, indicating that the impact of the Internet on the appearance anxiety of young people is not as serious as that of the conjecture, and more young people care about the evaluation and opinions of the people around them.
- (7) Which is shown in Fig. 3, for the reasons for improving your appearance, the proportion of “please yourself” is almost the same as “follow the fashion trend”, and the proportion of “attract others” is slightly less than the first two. It means that most young people are eager to change for themselves, and the mainstream aesthetic has a greater impact on young people.
- (8) Regarding adolescents’ judgment on women’s looks and figure, in terms of appearance, a total of 48.21% of young men and women chose Gao Yunzhen. In terms of body, 57.43% of young men and women chose B and D, which are more well-proportioned and have a female curve. It shows that young men and women have a simple aesthetic concept for women.
- (9) Regarding adolescents’ judgments on male looks and figure, in terms of appearance, young men and women have more choices. 48.8% of adolescent women choose A and F, which shows that young women are more inclined to the type of young boys and young people next door. It is worth noting that 40% of men chose G, which is themselves, which also shows that most young men are more confident in their looks. In terms of body, 68% of young women choose B and C with more shapely muscles, 34.29% of young men choose B, which is more muscular, indicating that women are more inclined to natural coordinated curvaceous beauty, while men are more muscular.
- (10) For the mainstream aesthetics that are popular on the Internet, most young people take a positive or unusual attitude, indicating that contemporary young people do not exclude or even agree with the aesthetic standards of singularity. Only 16.15%

of young people have independent opinions. This may be an important cause of adolescent appearance and body anxiety which is shown in Fig. 4.

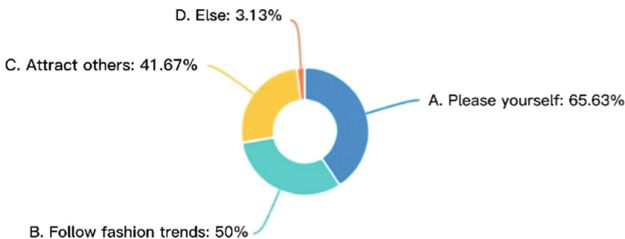
In general, this survey shows that the appearance anxiety of teenagers is real and will have an impact on real life, and the focus of anxiety between boys and girls is different. Boys are more concerned about height and figure, more tolerant of appearance, and aesthetic diversity. Girls are more concerned about the areas of facial anxiety such as facial features, skin color, and skin state. But what is certain is that they mainly want to change their body shape or appearance due to the influence of the people around them, and the impact of the network is smaller in comparison. Celebrities and Internet celebrities are extreme examples. They often play a guiding role, lead the mainstream of aesthetics, and form a universal beauty, thereby affecting the aesthetics of the people



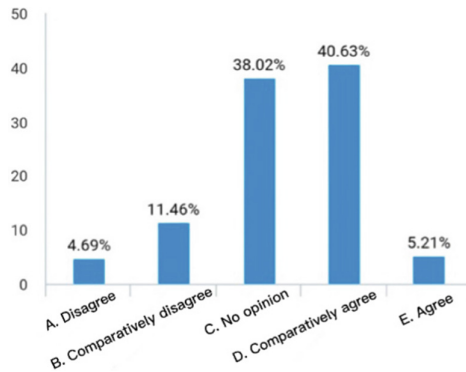
**Fig. 1.** The proportion of types of people admire of their figure and appearance



**Fig. 2.** Percentage of teenagers who spend different times dressing up every day



**Fig. 3.** The proportion of different reasons for improving teenager's appearance



**Fig. 4.** Teenagers' Views on Mainstream Aesthetics on the Internet

around them. The range of social and social contacts among teenagers is small, so the negative evaluation, views of the people close to them, and the most serious appearance anxiety and body anxiety caused by the comparison of the inner volume. Teenagers do not change themselves because of these extreme examples, pursuing the ultimate beauty. Individual teenagers have plans to change their appearance and body through extreme methods such as surgery, but they have low implementation due to factors such as pain and risk. Most teenagers are more willing to change themselves through exercise to lose weight or make up.

In addition, in terms of aesthetic concepts, teenagers have a strong unity. They prefer men with smooth and natural muscle lines, face and facial features, and there is no specific standard for specific facial features and other appearances. Female prefers slender and delicate facial features, with small nose bridge, melon seed face, and smiling lips.

## 4 Conclusion

In today's society, appearance and body anxiety are becoming more and more common, and young people are also deeply affected by it.

The research method adopted this time is the questionnaire survey method, and the research objects are mainly adolescents from the sixth grade to the third grade of junior high school. According to research, first of all, the appearance anxiety and body anxiety of adolescents do exist, and the main anxiety of boys and girls is different: the cause of anxiety of boys is mainly focused on these body factors such as height and weight, and the cause of anxiety of girls is mainly focused on facial features such as facial features, which is exactly in line with the general aesthetics of men and women. Secondly, the main influencing factor for this anxiety comes from people who are close to each other, may be classmates, friends, or relatives and family. In the end, it is the influence of the Internet on the appearance and body anxiety of young people. In fact, it is not as serious as expected. It may be because young people are not so sensitive to the beauty shown by Internet celebrities who are far away from their lives.

In general, although men and women have different definitions of beauty, no matter which side, the definition of their own beauty is limited by the universal aesthetics of

today's society. Therefore, I hope teenagers all have a variety of aesthetics, not limited to contemporary universal beauty.

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