Sociological Analysis of Male Appearance Anxiety

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Abstract. The so-called appearance anxiety refers to the fact that many people lack confidence in their appearance in an environment with great appearance. Generally speaking, appearance anxiety refers to the phenomenon that people feel unconfident about their appearance and think they are not good-looking, so as to produce anxiety. The author uses the literature research method to explore the phenomenon of male appearance anxiety, and finds that there are mainly problems such as appearance cognitive dissonance, family function imbalance, poor peer group relationship, and lack of social support. This paper combines the ecosystem theory to analyze the micro-system, meso-system, and macro-system in the environment in which men are located. From the aspects of family, school, culture, peer group, and mass media, the causes of appearance anxiety are discussed, and countermeasures are proposed at different levels. This study focuses on the sociological analysis of male appearance anxiety, which has important theoretical and practical significance for enriching the study of appearance anxiety.

Keywords: anxiety · appearance anxiety · ecosystem theory

1 Introduction

Due to various ascribed and consequential factors, there are differences in the appearance of individuals, and because of the advent of the information age, it is more convenient for the dissemination of information, coupled with the purposeful publicity of online media, many people are not confident enough in their appearance. Appearance anxiety affects people's normal life and learning. The research on appearance anxiety has always been an important field of humanities and social science research. The research on appearance anxiety is mostly based on the research from the female perspective. There are few studies on male appearance anxiety at home and abroad. The author believes that male appearance anxiety is a very valuable research problem. Based on the ecosystem theory, the author analyzes the mechanism of male appearance anxiety in the micro system, meso-system and macro system of the male environment, and puts forward opinions and suggestions. It is of great theoretical and practical significance to solve male appearance anxiety.

1.1 Research Significance

The author uses sociological research methods and ecosystem theory to comprehensively and systematically explore the causes of appearance anxiety. Through further discussion and analysis of these influencing factors, we can further understand the mechanism of male appearance anxiety and put forward suggestions, which is of great significance for alleviating male appearance anxiety.

1.2 Literature Review

Domestic scholar Shang Zaohua (2014) found that appearance self-esteem can alleviate the negative emotions of individuals due to appearance in the study of the mediating effect of appearance self-esteem on mental health of perfectionism [1]. Some scholars have pointed out that excessive anxiety about appearance and the gap between the actual ideal body shape are related to negative emotions. Zhong Youjie (2020) conducted a questionnaire survey of 920 college students and found the relationship between college students 'body mass index (BMI) and social appearance anxiety, and found that college students' appearance anxiety was positively correlated with BMI [2]. Li Sheng (2022) analyzed the mechanism of female appearance anxiety, and put forward the misleading of body consumption in media-based propaganda content, which made female youth fall into the cyclic social scene of "social aesthetics-appearance anxiety-body consumption" [3]. Guo Liping (2021) also found that the exposure of fashion media was positively correlated with self-objectification and appearance anxiety in the influence of fashion media exposure on eating disorders of middle school girls [4]. Some researchers have also studied the related factors of men 's appearance dissatisfaction, and found that social pressure (media, peer group, family) in the context of Chinese culture is also an important factor leading to men 's appearance anxiety. Domestic researchers found that the mass media in the perfect male image such as stars, models, etc., and the mass media for the appearance of the role of exaggerated propaganda, the single, one-sided male aesthetic standards, spread, into the aesthetic standards of the whole male group, causing the wrong guidance, that the media in the model 's body is perfect, and as a cognitive, internalized into self-standard, and when their own body cannot achieve satisfactory results, and then produce anxiety, depression negative emotions [5].

1.3 Research Methods

Literature Research Method
By consulting and collecting a large number of research materials on appearance anxiety at home and abroad, the author has synthesized a large number of relevant literature in the field of research, including body image, body self-esteem, social appearance anxiety, and social body anxiety. After that, the status quo of male appearance anxiety and the mechanism of male appearance anxiety were specifically and deeply understood, which broadened the research horizon and formed a more reasonable research framework.

1.4   Definition of Related Concepts

Exterior Anxiety
In social life, people's appearance is often scanned and commented by others, which will make people pay much attention to others' evaluation of their own appearance, resulting in a kind of concern, that is, whether their appearance conforms to the standard of beauty. If their appearance encounters the negative evaluation of others, the individual will be worried, nervous, uneasy and so on. This kind of doubt and unconfident for their own appearance because of the evaluation of their own appearance in society, and the psychology that they are not good-looking is called appearance anxiety.

2   Analysis of the Causes of Appearance Anxiety of Male College Students Under the Theory of Ecosystem

2.1   Microsystem: Male Cognitive Dissonance of Appearance

The individual's self-cognition imbalance is produced in two aspects. One is that the individual's self-cognition is too high, that is, the appearance perfectionism is produced. It is a special perfectionism, which refers to the individual's appearance. Set and strictly adhere to these high standards that do not conform to reality, and judge self-worth by whether they meet these standards, including desire for appearance perfection and worry about appearance imperfection. Men's fear of negative evaluation is closely related to appearance anxiety. Fear of negative evaluation refers to fear of others' evaluation, distress for negative evaluation, and expectation of negative evaluation that others may give themselves. Second, the self-cognition is too low, that is, the negative self of the body. Whether the male's self-cognition is too high or too low, it belongs to the bad self-cognition. The individual's self-cognition is affected by many factors. The formation of the individual's cognitive system is inseparable from the interaction between the various levels of the individual's system. Family, school, mass media, social culture and so on have an important influence on the formation of personal cognition.

2.2   Mesoscopic System: The Imbalance of Family, Peer Group, Mass Media, etc.

The Communication Between Peer Groups is Frustrated
Talking about the negative appearance characteristics of physical defects in the peer group will easily lead to a negative self-evaluation of the person being talked about. The person being talked about will use the reflection of others as his own mirror and adjust himself according to others. Therefore, the more obvious the physical characteristics of men in the peer group are, the less satisfied they will be with their appearance, which will lead to appearance anxiety.

Family Members Lack Communication
The soundness of family function can negatively predict the level of adolescent appearance anxiety. The more perfect the family function of adolescents is, the lower the level of appearance anxiety is, and vice versa.

2.3 Macro System: Facial Value Consumption is Prevalent, and Male Appearance Anxiety is Ignored

The macro system refers to the social environment under the interweaving of social culture and organizational system, which plays a direct or indirect role in the acquisition of personal cognition. As the carrier of culture, human body has been influenced by social culture. In the current social environment, whether it is the rise of 'face value economy' or the emergence of appearance anxiety, it implies the favor of social culture for high face value and high appearance. Face value has a significant positive impact on income, and the impact of face value on men is greater than that on women.

The neglect of male appearance anxiety by the general public and social organizations. In some news media, we see appearance anxiety, mostly for women, in which we rarely see an introduction to the status of male appearance anxiety.

3 Analysis of Male 'Appearance Anxiety' Countermeasures Under Ecosystem Theory

3.1 Microsystem: Focusing on the Correction of Male Appearance Cognition

The formation of correct cognitive style is a key link in family education. It is necessary to guide men to form correct cognition of self-appearance and make them have a clear understanding of unreasonable cognition. Second, strengthen the control of major media and play an active role. The society should also introduce policies to regulate relevant media, so as to reduce the impact of mass media on men's self-perception. Third, improve male self-esteem and self-confidence to create more opportunities for men to show themselves. In the family, to create a harmonious atmosphere, through the form of decentralization, give them more autonomy, exercise their ability to choose actively, in order to enhance their self-esteem.

3.2 Meso-System: Explore Social Resources, Focus on Environmental Change

Play the positive function of peer groups in peer groups, we should encourage and guide the formation of an atmosphere of mutual respect, not to laugh at and attack the physical defects of others, and to promote mutual tolerance and acceptance. One is to strengthen the educational function of schools. Schools should strengthen the ideological construction of students, lead students to a positive and healthy view of themselves, and spread the mainstream values of society. The second is to rectify the network media and strengthen the control of information. As a platform and tool for people to obtain information, mass media should consciously assume its responsibility to promote the healthy and stable development of human society. Network media should strengthen the screening and control mechanism of information and raise the threshold of accepting information.

3.3 Macro System: Promote Policy Improvement and Call for Social Attention

The lack of social support network for appearance anxiety is mainly reflected in the lack of relevant policy systems. The core factor of strengthening the construction of social support network is to strengthen the construction of policy system and create a good social atmosphere, so as to alleviate and change the phenomenon of appearance anxiety. One is to create a good social atmosphere. Implement 'net' measures, such as shielding vocabulary, banning accounts that personally attack others, raising the threshold for entering the network and publishing information, and second, strengthening the construction of policy systems. Relevant government departments should work together with social organizations to formulate scientific, efficient and targeted countermeasures against appearance anxiety. The third is to call for social attention and advocate diversified aesthetic standards. At the social level, we should strengthen the understanding and understanding of male appearance anxiety, call on the society to participate in social attention, call on experts and media to pay attention to male appearance anxiety, and advocate diversified beauty standards.

4 Conclusion

Male groups also have appearance anxiety, social and cultural expectations and requirements for male appearance. Based on the theory of social ecosystem, this paper finds that the reasons for men's appearance anxiety are as follows: First, the mass media, based on their own interests, mislead people's understanding and rationality of appearance. The second is the concept of 'neglect' of male appearance in family interpersonal relationships. The third is the 'group pressure' between male peer groups. Fourth, the lack of school education.

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