



Research on Female Appearance Anxiety under the Influence of Social Media

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Abstract. With the popularization of social media, women frequently come into contact with edited and beautified perfect body images on social media, which have become their ideal standards in their hearts. When women are unable to meet these standards, they are prone to appearance anxiety and self-doubt. In addition, the phenomenon of social comparison on social media platforms has also exacerbated women's appearance anxiety. This paper collects data through a questionnaire survey, including women's social media usage, body image editing behavior, social comparison frequency, and consumption behavior. This paper uses data analysis methods to explore the correlation between these factors and appearance anxiety. The study will focus on the impact of social media on body image editing, standardization internalization, social comparison, consumerism, and information cocooning. By revealing the impact mechanism of social media on women's appearance anxiety, this study aims to provide theoretical basis for the development of effective intervention measures, help women establish correct aesthetic views, alleviate appearance anxiety, and promote female's comprehensive development.

Keywords: Female, Women, Appearance Anxiety, Social Media

1 Introduction

With the popularity of social media, women are frequently exposed to the perfect body image which has been edited and beautified on social media, and these images become the ideal standard in their hearts. When women fail to meet these standards, they are prone to anxiety and self-doubt, which leads to appearance anxiety. In addition, the phenomenon of social comparison on social media platforms has also exacerbated women's appearance anxiety. Therefore, it is of great theoretical and practical significance to study the impact of social media on women's appearance anxiety and its causes. This study will help to reveal the influence mechanism of social media on women's appearance anxiety, and provide a theoretical basis for the development of effective interventions. By helping women to establish a correct aesthetic view, it can alleviate the anxiety of appearance and promote the all-round development of women.

2 Concept And Characteristics of Appearance Anxiety

2.1 Concept of Appearance Anxiety

Appearance anxiety refers to an individual's anxiety or stress caused by worrying about other people's evaluation of their appearance [1]. This kind of anxiety stems from the individual's fear that his appearance cannot meet the expectations of the public, thus fearing negative evaluation, which leads to emotional worry, annoyance, tension and anxiety. It is worth noting that the individual's excessive attention to their own appearance defects is often not perceived by others, so appearance anxiety is more manifested as a direct emotional response. In daily life, individuals' emotional fluctuations caused by appearance anxiety often have a significant impact on their psychological state and behavior. For example, some people may avoid social activities because of their dissatisfaction with their appearance, or even have inferiority complex. Although these appearance defects may be insignificant in the eyes of others, they are major problems that cannot be ignored in the eyes of individuals. It can be seen that appearance anxiety is not only a psychological phenomenon, but also a common psychological pressure under the social and cultural background.

2.2 Features of Appearance Anxiety

Appearance anxiety is closely related to a series of negative personality traits, such as phobia, depression, obsessive-compulsive personality and social phobia, which are positively related to appearance anxiety. On the other hand, positive personal traits, such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, emotional stability, openness and extraversion, are negatively correlated with appearance anxiety, which can alleviate its impact. Appearance anxiety not only affects an individual's self-esteem and emotional stability, but also may have a negative impact on mental health. However, by enhancing self-efficacy and emotional stability, individuals can better cope with appearance anxiety and reduce its negative impact on daily life [3]. Appearance anxiety may be associated with other psychological problems, such as depression, anxiety and social disorders. Therefore, understanding and identifying the characteristics of appearance anxiety is of great significance for the prevention and treatment of these psychological problems. Through in-depth study of the characteristics of appearance anxiety, we can better understand its causes and effects, and provide a scientific basis for the development of effective interventions, so as to help individuals better cope with and alleviate appearance anxiety.

3 Correlation Analysis of Media Contact And Female Appearance Anxiety

3.1 Relationship between the Type Of Media Contact and Appearance Anxiety

In order to explore the relationship between media exposure and female appearance anxiety, this study collected data from 450 female participants and analyzed them by Pearson correlation analysis. The results showed that there was a significant positive correlation between media exposure and appearance anxiety ($r=0.66$, $p<0.01$). This suggests that when women are exposed to more information related to their appearance in the media, they will have more anxiety about their appearance. Further analysis shows that different media types have different effects on appearance anxiety. There was a significant positive correlation between social network platform contact and appearance anxiety ($r=0.29$, $p<0.01$), while there was a weak correlation between traditional media (such as television, movies, etc.) and appearance anxiety ($r=0.21$, $p<0.01$). The correlation between different types of media exposure and appearance anxiety is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Correlation between different types of media exposure and appearance anxiety.

Media contact type	Average contact time (hours/day)	Number of samples (n)	Average appearance anxiety score	Standard deviation	Correlation coefficient (r)	P-value
Social network	3.8	200	68	12.5	0.29	<0.01
Traditional media	2.5	150	58	10.2	0.21	<0.01
Integrated media	1.5	100	52	9.8	0.18	<0.05

It can be seen from Table 1 that the correlation between the contact time of social network platform and the score of appearance anxiety is high, the correlation of traditional media is relatively low, and the correlation of integrated media (mixed contact) is the weakest. This suggests that social networking platforms are more influential in triggering appearance anxiety.

3.2 Relationship between the Time of Media Contact and Appearance Anxiety

In order to further explore the relationship between the time of media contact and appearance anxiety, this study analyzed the time spent by women on social networking platforms in detail. The results showed that the longer the time spent on

social networking platforms every day, the higher the women's appearance anxiety scores. The relationship between time spent on social networking platforms and appearance anxiety scores is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Relationship between time spent on social networking platforms and appearance anxiety scores.

Usage time (hours/days)	Number of samples (n)	Average appearance anxiety score	Standard deviation	Correlation coefficient (r)	P- value
0-1	50	45	7.5	0.40	<0.01
1-2	100	50	8.0	0.40	<0.01
2-3	120	55	8.5	0.40	<0.01
3-4	80	60	9.0	0.40	<0.01
4-5	50	65	10.0	0.40	<0.01
>5	50	70	10.5	0.40	<0.01

As can be seen from Table 2, with the increase of daily use of social networking platforms, women's appearance anxiety scores also gradually increased. Specifically, the average appearance anxiety score of women who used it for 0-1 hours a day was 45, while the average appearance anxiety score of women who used it for more than 5 hours a day was 70. These data show that long-term social network use significantly increases women's appearance anxiety.

3.3 Mechanism of Appearance Anxiety Caused by Social Media

Social media platforms provide space for users to display and edit body images, and users can adjust their appearance and pursue idealized images through various software. However, this pursuit of ideal image often leads to negative evaluation and anxiety of one's own image, which leads to appearance anxiety. As shown in Table 3, as the frequency of editing behavior increased, the average appearance anxiety score of women also increased significantly. It suggests that frequent body image editing can exacerbate women's appearance anxiety.

Table 3. Effects of social media use and body image editing on appearance anxiety.

Edit the behavior frequency	Number of samples (n)	Average appearance anxiety score	Standard deviation	Correlation coefficient (r)	P- value
Rarely edited (0-1 times per week)	120	50	8.0	0.35	<0.01
Occasional	150	58	9.2	0.41	<0.01

editing (2-3 times per week)					
Frequently edited (4-5 times per week)	100	65	10.5	0.47	<0.01
Always edit (daily)	80	72	11.8	0.53	<0.01

Social media platforms are filled with edited and embellished images of the perfect body, which have become the ideal standard in women's minds. When they fail to meet these standards, they are prone to anxiety and self-doubt. As shown in Table 4, the higher the degree of standard internalization, the more serious the appearance anxiety.

Table 4. Relationship between ideal standard internalization and appearance anxiety.

Degree of internalization of standards	Number of samples (n)	Average appearance anxiety score	Standard deviation	Correlation coefficient (r)	P-value
Low (score 1-2)	100	48	7.5	0.30	<0.01
Moderate (Rating 3-4)	200	60	8.8	0.44	<0.01
High (score 5-6)	150	70	10.1	0.52	<0.01

Idealized body images on social media can easily trigger women to make upward comparisons and contrast with the perfect image, resulting in inferiority and anxiety. Frequent social comparison, as shown in Table 5, has a significant positive correlation with appearance anxiety, indicating that comparative behavior will aggravate anxiety.

Table 5. Relationship between frequency of social comparison and appearance anxiety.

Compare the frequencies	Number of samples (n)	Average appearance anxiety score	Standard deviation	Correlation coefficient (r)	P-value
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Rarely compared (0-1 per week)	100	52	8.0	0.38	<0.01
Occasional comparison (2-3 times per week)	150	62	9.3	0.42	<0.01
Compare frequently (4-5 times per week)	120	68	10.0	0.48	<0.01
Always compare (daily)	80	74	11.0	0.55	<0.01

Modern consumer culture connects body image with higher social identity and emotional experience, and promotes women to change their bodies through consumption. This business model constantly promotes irrational body consumption, which reinforces the concern and anxiety about appearance. As shown in Table 6, the higher the frequency of consumer behavior, the more serious the appearance anxiety.

Table 6. Relationship between consumer behavior and appearance anxiety.

Frequency of consumption behavior	Number of samples (n)	Average appearance anxiety score	Standard deviation	Correlation coefficient (r)	P-value
Very little consumption (0-1 times per month)	120	55	8.5	0.32	<0.01
Occasional consumption (2-3 times per month)	150	63	9.2	0.38	<0.01
Regular consumption (4-5 times per month)	100	70	10.0	0.45	<0.01
Always consume (weekly)	80	76	11.5	0.50	<0.01

The algorithmic push model of social media tends to lead users to information with appearance as the main content, forming an information cocoon effect. When

women use social media, they inevitably receive a lot of information about their ideal body image, which exacerbates their dissatisfaction and anxiety about their appearance. As shown in Table 7, the more the information push focuses on the content related to appearance, the more serious the appearance anxiety is.

Table 7. Relationship between the type of information pushed by the algorithm and the appearance anxiety.

Type of information	Number of samples (n)	Average appearance anxiety score	Standard deviation	Correlation coefficient (r)	P-value
Non-face related information	120	50	7.5	0.25	<0.05
Partial appearance related information	150	60	8.8	0.36	<0.01
Most of the information related to appearance	100	70	9.5	0.48	<0.01
All appearance related information	80	75	10.0	0.53	<0.01

Social media triggers and exacerbates female appearance anxiety through a variety of mechanisms, including body image editing, internalization of standards, social comparison, consumerism, and information cocooning. Understanding these mechanisms is of great significance for coping with and alleviating the problem of appearance anxiety.

4 Countermeasures for Women's Appearance Anxiety Under the Influence of Social Media

4.1 For Medias and Governments: Rectify Female Appearance Anxiety

As a powerful tool, the influence of social media can not only promote appearance anxiety to the climax of public opinion, but also play a positive role in guiding. By publishing related topics such as “refusing appearance anxiety”, we can skillfully guide the public to get rid of excessive attention to appearance and pay attention to a more diverse and healthier lifestyle [3]. Aesthetic standards are not single, and society

should advocate the diversification of aesthetics. Aesthetic diversification is the basis of the diversified development of the aesthetic system of the whole society, and also the source of the charm of human diversity. Only by breaking the single aesthetic standard can more people be freed from the anxiety of appearance and build up self-confidence [4].

In the long run, personal character, values and abilities are more important elements. Beauty is not the only source of personal charm, but inner temperament and self-cultivation are the more important pursuits of female college students. By focusing on and cultivating these inner qualities, women can find their true self-worth in a complex social environment, not just relying on their appearance for recognition. In addition, it is essential to purify the social media environment. The media should abide by professional ethics, take the initiative to assume social responsibility, lead the correct aesthetic orientation, and promote the overall aesthetic atmosphere of society to develop in a healthy and pluralistic direction. By reducing the excessive promotion of “perfect” appearance, the media can help the public to establish a more diverse and inclusive aesthetic concept and reduce the spread of appearance anxiety [5].

The government should play an important role in this process, strengthen supervision, regulate the “face value economy” and prevent all kinds of bad behaviours that magnify the appearance anxiety. At the same time, the industry itself should be self-disciplined and establish a healthy aesthetic orientation. Through the dual measures of industry self-discipline and government supervision, we can effectively reduce the appearance anxiety caused by bad propaganda and create a healthier social environment.

In view of the exaggerated propaganda in the medical cosmetology industry, the government should ensure the effective landing of the policy and carry out comprehensive management. By improving the social guidance mechanism and cracking down on false propaganda and false advertisements, we will jointly create a cyberspace full of positive energy. Only under the joint efforts of many parties can we really rectify the appearance anxiety and provide a healthier social environment for women.

4.2 For Education Institutions: Optimize Aesthetic Education Model

In the process of optimizing the mode of aesthetic education, we should pay attention to the shaping of internal spirit and the enrichment of external educational forms in order to achieve the purpose of precise policy implementation [6]. Educational content should be timely, closely follow the mainstream values of contemporary society, avoid the shackles of traditional aesthetic concepts through scientific guidance, formulate personalized teaching programs, and take corresponding measures according to student’s different personalities and ways of thinking. This kind of educational content should be far-reaching, through improving the self-confidence of female college students, publicizing the advanced deeds of personal efforts to realize the value of life, guiding them to discover the inner shining points, so as to pay attention to the shaping of the inner spirit. To optimize the content of

education, we need to broaden and enrich the forms of education, such as the use of new educational media, such as short videos, to enhance student's interest and pleasure [7]. By vigorously carrying out various forms of aesthetic practice, female college students can accumulate aesthetic experience in practice and form an aesthetic view that not only conforms to the mainstream values of society but also shows their own unique personality. Paying attention to the integration with ideological and political education can broaden the scope of aesthetic education, broaden the vision of female college students, and avoid the formation of narrow aesthetic standards.

In the process of aesthetic education, it is very important to guide and improve the aesthetic quality of educators scientifically. Educators should respect the diversity of aesthetics and scientifically guide female college students to treat different aesthetic cultures with an inclusive attitude by improving their aesthetic literacy. At the same time, educators should treat the aesthetic standards of female college students objectively, meet their aesthetic needs reasonably, and avoid excessive pursuit of the idea that "beauty is justice". In order to achieve this goal, educators need to consciously enhance personal aesthetic literacy and values, consolidate the theoretical basis, carry out targeted aesthetic education activities, improve themselves, keep up with the pace of the times, and constantly update aesthetic concepts. By paying attention to both internal and external training, educators can enrich the spiritual world of female college students and enhance the effectiveness of aesthetic education. Educating female college students with correct aesthetic standards and unique personal charm can exert a subtle influence on their aesthetic concepts and value orientation [8]. Scientific guidance lies not only in the transmission of educational content, but also in the exemplary role of educators themselves. Through their own self-cultivation and quality, they can set a good example for female college students, so that they can pay more attention to the inner spiritual world while pursuing external beauty, so as to achieve the goal of all-round development.

4.3 For Women: Treat Appearance Anxiety Reasonable

Rational treatment of appearance anxiety is the key to deal with this problem. Rejecting mediocrity and cultivating unique aesthetic style is an important first step. In today's social media full of single aesthetic standards, it is particularly important to explore the diversity of aesthetics. By breaking through the information cocoon of social media, we can pursue and develop a unique aesthetic style, thus avoiding the reproduction of aesthetic standards in the network into real life [9]. In this process, it is very important to recognize the falsity and editability of network information, and many idealized images only exist in carefully edited pictures and videos, which cannot represent the real situation in reality. Paying attention to the advantages of inner morality and knowledge, rather than just appearance, can help women better understand and accept themselves. Learn to accept your appearance, find your own shining points, follow your heart, and not pay too much attention to other people's evaluation, which helps to build healthy self-awareness and self-confidence [10]. It is a positive coping style to pursue beauty moderately and turn anxiety into motivation to improve oneself. By improving their temperament and connotation, reserving

knowledge and enhancing self-confidence, they can improve their overall living conditions and appearance without relying on their appearance. In addition, learning to accept their imperfections and objectively look at the advantages and disadvantages of appearance can also effectively reduce unnecessary anxiety.

5 Conclusions

This study explores the mechanism of the influence of social media on women's appearance anxiety, revealing its complexity and far-reaching impact. The study found that social media triggered and aggravated women's appearance anxiety through various mechanisms such as body image editing, standard internalization, social comparison, consumerism and information cocoon. In order to cope with and alleviate the problem of women's appearance anxiety, we need to work together. The government should strengthen the supervision of "face value economy", standardize the medical and cosmetic industry, and create a healthy social environment. The media should disseminate positive aesthetic concepts, reduce excessive propaganda of "perfect" appearance, and guide the public to establish a pluralistic and inclusive aesthetic view. Schools and families should also strengthen aesthetic education, guide women to establish a correct aesthetic view, and pay attention to the improvement of internal quality. Women themselves should also treat appearance anxiety rationally, refuse to pay too much attention to appearance, accept themselves and pursue inner moral cultivation.

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