

Fashion media as a precipitant of anxiety disorders in women

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Abstract. In the contemporary period of swift advancements in media and entertainment consumption, women are not only the focus of media attention but also the subject of extensive consumer consumption. The article examines the detrimental effects that fashion media's regular exposure to the public eye has on the physical and mental well-being of its target demographic, which mostly consists of adolescents, young adults, and middle-aged women. This article examines the causes behind its emergence, including the impact of historical, economic, cultural, and other variables, in addition to beginning with the female subject. There is also the distinct aesthetic of Chinese entertainment culture, which is centered around youthful and slender shows that appear to be exclusively feminine but are actually loaded with masculine gaze and consumerism traps. In order to help modern women overcome body anxiety and eating disorders that are influenced by the media, this study offers further references and solutions based on identifying the source of the issue and summarizing prior experiences.

1 Introduction

This study aims to explore the relationship between fashion media exposure and women's physical and psychological anxiety. Numerous homogenized data calculuss are exposed to people's gaze as a result of the younger generation's quicker adoption of the Internet. Compared to traditional media such as newspapers, broadcasts, etc., the digital age makes it easier for people to receive visual information from images and videos [1]. Especially fashion media exposure refers to the widespread display of media content containing the figures and physical features of fashion figures such as celebrities and models in public view. Perfectly packaged body imagery and celebrity effects will cause viewers to self-reflect and unconsciously copy the actions of celebrities [2].

The mass media may operate as important influences on disordered eating through their impact on the values, norms, and aesthetic standards embraced by modern society. The values and aesthetic attitudes conveyed by fashion media in modern society have a significant impact on the physical and mental development of their main audience - young women. As major communicators, influencers, build up their "ideal persona" that combines wealth and good looks causing anxiety among young women, including their appearance and age [2].

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Anxiety is a psychological term that refers to the tension and frustration that individuals experience when they are unable to meet their psychological expectations. The external manifestation of appearance anxiety is the feeling of self-doubt and inferiority caused by an individual's inability to align with public aesthetics in terms of appearance.

Women aged 18 to 25 are eager to form intimate relationships and seek attention by enhancing their self-image. Compared to men, they are more focused on achieving a "perfect" physique. Although idealized protagonists in other forms of visual media, such as soap operas, can inspire teenage-aged women to emulate and improve their physical attributes, these portrayals can also lead to dissatisfaction with their bodies [3]. However, the impact of fashion media's idealized images is particularly significant. Prolonged exposure to these images, combined with repetitive exposure to a singular visual influence, can result in heightened external pressure and anxiety for women who perceive beauty benefits.

This process unfolds in three stages: psychological, physical, and psychological. Body dissatisfaction arising from cognitive dissonance, restrictive diets, and heightened appearance anxiety. This study is to investigate the additional disruptive elements that contribute to women's physical and mental anxiety, which in turn causes dietary anxiety, and how exposure to fashion media exacerbates these concerns [4].

2 Historical trend

The ideal female in American beauty pageants during the 1920s and 1980s was typically the slimmest. As a result, the proportion of slender models in popular magazine ads rose dramatically between 1950 and 1984, peaking at 46% in the 1980s [5].

A study conducted revealed a noteworthy decrease in the weight and physical measurements of Playboy magazine and the Miss America competition between 1959 and 1978. These findings demonstrate annual weight drops that are striking, and over time, pageant winners have generally weighed considerably less than the general population in most nations [5].

Still, there was a five- to six-pound gain in the average normal weight of American women under thirty in 1978. Women in the current era are accustomed to this kind of aesthetic trend. When slim appearance becomes popular, eating disorders will also negatively impact society as a result of the phenomenon of imitation and public follow-suit [6].

3 The impact on women

According to historical trends, women use fashion as a means of speaking up for themselves and as a kind of compensation. According to Simer's theory of fashion class distinction, the lower classes usually have no unique style; instead, they can only imitate and chase the upper class's style through psychological processes like the collective unconscious [7]. Seeking after trendy social fashion blindly in order to satisfy the demands of upper-class integration, along with a cohesive outlook on life, attire, admiration of hobbies, and other behaviors, obliterates not just individual traits but also the group identity of individualists.

On the other hand, it is more evident how fashion benefits women. Women who are denied the ability to speak have turned exaggerated and attractive modeling into a potent weapon in the fight for that ability in political and cultural spheres. For instance, the women's rights movement argues that women should wear pant-suits and do away with bras in order to legitimately assert their own rights. Furthermore, it is imperative that the fashion industry adopts a flexible approach to compensation, as women's needs and preferences will always evolve [8].

For example, the "#Me Too" movement is conducted on social media due to the growth of mass media in contemporary culture. Women aspire to be independent in the modernization process and free from the patriarchal norms and the stare of males. Women want to be in the spotlight and to rule the broader public [8].

Nonetheless, being different cannot essentially provide a sense of security and deference; rather, it can amplify interpersonal unease and weaken one's sense of self, resulting in feelings of guilt, fear, panic, and other negative psychological reactions.

4 Mass media development

Following the rise of consumerism, the media became a vital conduit for information while also serving as an instrument of state manipulation of popular opinion [9]. The public values thinness as attractiveness, which associates self-control with one's physical fitness. This is because fashion is a broad term that encompasses body practice, material design, style, and other aspects as well as communication channels.

Fashion media, on the other hand, is a multifaceted idea that resembles the logic of new media. The audience may be coerced into participating in the process of aesthetic metamorphosis by creating a community with others, positioning brands and advertisements as the authorities on themes, and more [10].

When it comes to leisure shoppers, women are more likely than men to view shopping as a calming kind of entertainment where they can get positive reinforcement and emotional value. Men are routine shoppers whilst women use fashion as a status signal. The tertiary sector is expanding quickly along with the media, and a never-ending supply of diverse and entertaining programming is being produced. Entertainment programs have gained a lot of traction as a result of the ideal female's quick rise to prominence in the media [11].

5 Consumerism

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Take the variety show "Sister Who Make the Waves" in Mainland China, which is focused on female groups. Only female stars over 30 are admitted to the cast. The French philosopher Baudrillard discussed the nonviolent subculture that currently exists right beneath the consumer society. "body" is the most beautiful and moving one among the psychological, controllable, and consumption of the characters.

According to further in-depth research, the creators of the manufacturing team are all men, and the stunt of the program is through the celebrity effect, for the majority of women for the ideal life expectations, pick rich and physical female stars for publicity packaging [13]. What needs to be thought about is that the female image with both success and body and face being exposed by the media is only an example of success. Moreover, when viewers are fixated on female celebrities, their physiques tend to attract greater attention rather than their accomplishments. Idols will therefore believe that diets are a crucial component of their happiness. Studies have indicated that advertisements connected to beauty and sex appeal are far less common than advertisements that are neutral, despite the lack of evidence supporting a link between eating disorders (ED) and media [12].

Despite the lack of concrete research findings between the emergence of ED and the media. Nonetheless, the rise of consumerism and social advancement have made women consumers a powerful force in the market; the phrase "pink tax" has even been coined [14]. (Also known as gender tax, because women have more potential consumption in the same field than men, for example, plastic surgery, cosmetics, and luxury clothing.)

6 Conclusion

In summary, the research's foundation is the promotion and display of beautiful female pictures in the fashion media, which prompts individuals to consider who they are and the psychological divide that results from comparing the two. Meanwhile, women are more likely to be negatively impacted by the media than males. The mental health and education of female groups in China have not received enough attention, particularly the social problem of minor women feeling dissatisfied with their bodies because they defy the public aesthetic and pursue a thin aesthetic. In addition to punishment and physical harm, patriarchal culture also aims to undermine women's performance. Fashion media and consumerism have emerged as major contributors to appearance concerns in an effort to increase sales of beauty goods. Additionally, the results have limitations. Women's appearance anxiety and ED are caused by a variety of factors and triggers, including childhood experiences, work pressure, a history of illnesses, etc. These potential causes require continual treatment and the right medication to reduce such problems because they cannot be resolved or resisted immediately.

Women's self-perception and personal awareness are greatly influenced by the mass media, and public recognition of excellent ideal female images, such as business owners, wealthy second generation, Internet celebrities, and so forth—is more likely for these women. Especially for adolescent women, who are more likely to ignore the factors behind the gap between people and people, the talent gap, family economy, growth experience, etc., and pay attention to the superficial image displayed by the media, women are more likely to find themselves in situations where they compare themselves with others due to patriarchal society, the era of visual culture and peer pressure, and the lack of female consciousness. Therefore, we may investigate the pertinent triggers, what causes women to get addicted to fashion media, why they doubt their own image, and how to effectively use the media to express positive opinions of women in the future.

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