

# The manifestation of female objectification in the marketing content of social media brand advertising: taking BM brand as an example

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**Abstract.** With the rapid development of Internet technology, social media has become a new channel for the dissemination of advertising and marketing content, which is more extensive and guiding. The values conveyed by brand advertising content will even have an impact on overall social values. The female objectification information in social media marketing content has a certain impact on women's psychological and physical health through brand advertising. Women who have long lived under the influence of social media with strong sexual characteristics and objectified information are prone to deepen their self-objectification and become anxious about their appearance. They will internalize a third perspective to view themselves. This paper adopts the interview method and analyzes BM brand marketing content as a case to draw research results. The implicit value orientation in advertising and marketing content has led to a deepening of women's self-objectification, and they always examine and monitor themselves. However, with the development and rise of feminist forces, the phenomenon of self-objectification in some female groups has gradually declined and dissipated in recent years.

## 1 Introduction

With the development of science and technology, social media and Internet technology have gradually evolved into a mature system. Fashion is a popular trend in a period of time, with cultural concept attributes and time periodicity [1]. The richness of social media platforms has made the dissemination and marketing of brand advertising more possible, and has gradually changed the single form of advertising. More and more advertising forms are displayed on social platforms, and advertising channels and fashion communication are diverse. This realizes the vision of being able to cause advertising and fashion trends without leaving home, and makes up for the defects of the small dissemination range of offline advertising and poster advertising in the past. But on the contrary, a series of problems and phenomena have also emerged. When the marketing content of brand advertising becomes a fashion trend that people are flocking to, do the values and concepts generated in it have an impact and reshaping effect on consumers? At the same time, the guidance of opinion leaders

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in social media can increase consumers' purchasing intentions and play a positive role [2]. When brands choose opinion leaders for product marketing and advertising placement, they will focus on leaders whose appearance, style, and ideas are more in line with their own brands. The content displayed by opinion leaders is also a kickback to the brand concept, which in turn affects the values and fashions of advertising consumers and fans and even the entire society. Social media content has fragmented the female body into one eye-catching or highly sexualized part after another, and over time, women will use this template to see themselves, focusing too much on appearance [3].

Female self-objectification means that women will pay more attention to the appearance and looks of their bodies rather than the functions and dynamism of their bodies. If they live in a cultural atmosphere that objectifies women for a long time, they will also take an objectified perspective to view themselves [4]. Women who objectify themselves will prioritize their appearance and looks in social interactions with others, using appearance and looks as the primary consideration in constructing and presenting themselves. Foucault mentioned Panopticonism in his 1995 book. The Panopticon sets up a permanent state of visibility and surveillance for prisoners [5]. Prisoners do not know when they are being monitored, so they are in a state of being always under surveillance and pay attention to their own performance. Women have long lived under the objectification ideology subconsciously constructed by marketing content, and gradually internalized a third perspective to examine their own bodies and words and deeds. It is also a "circular prison" in the cultural ideology of the new era. It is also the Panopticonism in explaining women. New ideas on the issue of socialism.

This study uses the BM brand as a research case to explore the impact of the value concepts spread by the brand in content marketing on the degree of self-objectification of women. This study adopts the interview method in the qualitative method, aiming to understand the deeper thoughts and existing troubles of the interviewees through the form of interviews. This study points out that brands will have objectified value concepts when conducting social media content marketing, and reflects on the moral and ethical issues of advertising content. Advertising content marketing has the function of spreading and influencing social values, and its moral and ethical review before release is important. At the same time, helping more women realize the consequences of self-objectification is meaningful for the healthy growth and development of women.

## 2 Methodology

The methodology used in this research is the interview method in the qualitative research method. The reason why the interview method is used in this study is to better understand the degree of women's perception of brand marketing anxiety and the measures and attitudes they take, rather than the existence of social proof phenomenon through data. The researcher conducted offline interviews with 4 female friends aged 18-25 who had purchased BM brands and had a certain understanding of fashion advertising content. The interview duration is 30 minutes per person. The whole interview has been recorded with the informed consent of the interviewees, and the data is for research use only. The classification and statistics of the interviewees' age and major are in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Age and major of interviewees.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Major</b>
Miss G	21	Marketing
Miss C	20	Journalism
Miss W	20	Journalism
Miss S	21	Journalism

*\*The letter G, C, W, S comes from the first letter of their last name.*

The interview content is roughly divided into 10 questions. The following is the interview outline:

1. What is your age? A career?
2. What fashion information do you like to watch on social media platforms (Little red book, TikTok, Weibo, ins)? Can I have a quick chat?
3. How did you know BM brand for the first time?
4. In 2018, when BM was in great fire, what was your opinion of BM brand?
5. What factors make you want to buy and consume BM brand? (Advertising? Dress style? A star? Brand concept? Brand symbol?)
6. We see that BM actually has a lot of wild spokespersons, such as Yang Mi, Ouyang Nana and other stars or Internet celebrities are in the upper body, will you be attracted to buy or follow the trend because of their wearing effects?
7. Do you have any personal opinion about the one size phenomenon of BM that you would like to share with me?
8. Do you think overseas brand BM is successful in a series of localization development and marketing after entering China?
9. In May 2024, some negative rumors about BM brand swept through social media platforms. Do you have any personal thoughts on these negative rumors?
10. Will you choose to buy BM clothes in the future?

### 3 Result & Discussion

The researcher found that most of the reasons that caused the four interviewees to purchase the brand were fashion and hunger marketing. The interviewee Miss S mentioned in the interview that there are too few physical XX brand stores in China and the purchase channels are limited. Therefore, this means of hunger marketing leads to people's desire to consume. Three other interviewees mentioned that they chose to follow the trend and imitate consumption because of the popular style. At the same time, regarding the "One Size" mechanism and the brand's marketing methods, the four interviewees had the same views:

**Table 2.** Interviewees' part opinions

Name	Opinions
Miss G	The marketing method is successful. Although it is controversial, it is more well-known. You can understand the market and consumers more quickly through social media interaction. From the perspective of brand, if you want to form a sales transformation, you must first be subconscious in the hearts of the audience and consumers.
Miss C	The quality of the brand is not very good, and it does rely on marketing methods. The marketing method directly makes the brand symbolical with young and beautiful girls.
Miss W	The marketing method is very successful, and the brand is very arrogant. Many shop assistants are fashion and beauty bloggers who play we-media. They use the recognition of the XX brand to endorse their appearance, which further deepens the authority of the XX brand in terms of beauty and appearance.
Miss S	Marketing is so successful that it has changed the minds of all East Asian women, especially the idea implantation. Because the clerks of the XX brand only choose young and beautiful girls, people regard this selection standard as a kind of appearance. If I can be asked by the shopping guide whether willing to come to the store as a clerk, everyone will think that it must be because I am beautiful or because I am thin.

Four interviewees all believed that the marketing of the XX brand was successful. Little G mentioned that marketing only through social media can be closer to the market and quickly understand fashion trends and consumer preferences. (see Table 2) David Ogilvy said in his book "Confessions of an Advertiser" that advertising can make people buy what they doesn't need [6]. Advertising can construct virtual social needs and also build a social aesthetic standard. After "XX style" has become a traffic symbol, many Chinese, Japanese and Korean brands have rushed to launch replica "XX style" clothing in their own brand clothing. As a fashion trend, "short, tight and small" clothes are stimulating the attention of female audiences.

People look at the "inner group" to which they belong with satisfaction, resulting in group pride and superiority, and actively distinguish the "external group" that they do not belong to. The marketing methods of "XX brand" are very ingenious. It has no advertising, promotional videos and public relations activities. Instead, by looking for online bloggers and opinion leaders, it has a sense of daily life, so that the audience subconsciously thinks that they can be as beautiful and fashionable as bloggers, so as to follow the trend. And because the XX brand represents an aesthetic trend and standard, the "inner group" of fans who love the BM brand have a higher sense of superiority and satisfaction. In this group follow-up and carnival phenomenon, any woman who rejects this aesthetic standard and figure will be attacked by XX brand fans. Because they believe that this is a psychology of jealousy and imbalance [7]. This phenomenon reflects the high cohesion and group identity of XX brand fans, as well as the degree of self-examination and review.

Miss S mentioned in the interview that at the beginning, she would also be affected by this atmosphere and be forced to lose weight. At first, she also had body anxiety and lost weight until she put on their clothes. Miss W also had this kind of trouble in the early stage. (See Table 2) At first, she couldn't wear their clothes. Even if she liked them, she didn't fit well so she was really unhappy. Usually, in the cover of magazines and advertising posters, women's bodies are always used as containers to display clothes and jewelry. When the mass media repeatedly spreads the image of women as containers, so that the audience's ideas will be subtly affected. The use of women are the object [8]. Men are the main body and the use of women is to display men to watch. The promotional pictures of the XX brand usually only display the exposed slender body parts, so the audience can only see their body parts. "XX style" pursues fair complexion and slender figure, which can make male have a desire to protect and possess. In the eyes of male, this clothing style can best reflect the characteristics of strong male and weak female. This style full of "strong female body labels" reflects the expectations of women's figure in a patriarchal society. It is the result of social products and discipline under the gaze of male. But so far, the development has become a social phenomenon of women's self-gaze and self-objectification, which is manifested by frequently checking their own bodies, monitoring their bodies, and generating shame and anxiety. Female will look at themselves from the perspective of observers [9]. Panoramicism occurs in the whole world, not only in the physical system, but also into different forms according to different scenes. It may be hidden behind the surveillance of power [10]. The panoramicism in the era of social media has developed into a hidden gaze, including the trial of strangers on the Internet, the connotation of real-life acquaintances' jokes, and self-subconscious restraint. Men, as the rulers in the prison, stand in the center of the watchtower. They give gaze on the women around them through the marketing content of social media. It is difficult for women's bodies not to be affected and controlled by the patriarchal system. Under the social system of patriarchy, women's bodies are more like being set to please men. The trend and atmosphere of the XX brand has promoted the review and right to speak about women's bodies in a patriarchal society. At the same time, women have internalized a third perspective. Check and examine your body from time to time, which shows that you always pay attention to your figure management, whether it meets the standard of "white, young and

thin" for men to stare, and worry about their appearance. The business model of One size is more like a unique qualified framework customized for aesthetics, with arrogant exclusivity. At the same time, through the dissemination and rendering of the mass media, the cultural values of "thinness as beauty" have been widely publicized, and social platforms point the camera at women's bodies and list them as objects to be watched and watched [11].

On the other hand, the rise of modern feminism has made some rational and sober women gradually break away from the body and appearance anxiety brought by brand marketing and media communication until today. Under the prevalence of XX brand, some rational voices have emerged to re-examine the relationship between women's self and body, and women have slowly awakened in terms of body concept and subject consciousness [7]. This is also reflected in the researcher's interview. Xiao S mentioned in the interview that she believes that one size will no longer be consumed in the future, and the diversification of aesthetics will make this concept gradually disappear. In recent years, China has seen a variety of niche "subculture styles" and "dopamine color dressing styles", which express the concept of rebellion and resistance to single cultural aesthetics through complex accessories and colorful clothing patterns. Social media content marketing can guide social aesthetics and even values, but at the same time, the audience's voice and value concepts can also affect the marketing direction of content. Modern women are actively exploring and thinking about the value of life and the sovereignty of the body, accepting more diverse aesthetics, and paying more attention to the connotation, personality traits and social attributes of people, rather than animalized people. The development of technology has deepened the degree of self-objectification of women, but with the gradual development and maturity of technology, it is also accompanied by the awakening of women's self-awareness and the awakening of self-identity recognition and construction, and women's right to speak is gradually being respected.

## 4 Conclusion

This study indirectly reflects the degree of self-objectification of brand marketing content on women aged 20-25 by investigating the marketing impact of social media fashion content on women aged 20-25. Using specific brands as research cases can better explain the research topic to the interviewees, and to a certain extent, it is also convenient to see the big picture from the small. However, there are still defects and shortcomings in the collection of interview content in this study. First, the screening of interviewees is too single in identity attributes. All interviewees are from the student group around the researcher. The imbalance of group identity and occupation may lead to subjectivity and singleness of perspective. In future research, there should be multiple groups in different fields and occupations. For example, whether housewives and working women have different views, because of the different nature of their occupations, the degree of influence on social media marketing content is also different. At the same time, the age range can be further expanded to 30-40 years old to observe whether young and middle-aged women still have self-objectification phenomenon and the degree of objectification. At different ages in life, there will be different experiences and different feelings towards marketing content. For example, after work and after childbirth, whether the mentality has changed differently. Age factor is also an important consideration in studying women's self-objectification. Is self-objectification a phenomenon exclusive to young women, or is it a problem for most women?

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