

Unpacking Thin Culture Among Chinese Young Women: The Intersection of Peer Interaction and Social Media

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ABSTRACT

The study examines how peer interaction amplifies the effects of social media regarding the formation of thin culture among Chinese young women. Drawing on 9 in-depth interviews and observational data, the paper takes a qualitative approach to analyze how social media and peer interaction operate collectively while promoting the development of the thin ideal in Chinese young women's perception. The findings are threefold. First, it delineates the discursive content of "thin culture" on social media, which extols boniness as the defining factor in beauty and celebrates the quantification of the body. Second, the article examines the specific mechanism of the penetration of the "thin culture" on social media. Through communication, admiration, imitation, and comparison, peer interaction confirms the message from social media, further strengthening the thin ideal among Chinese young women. In addition, the findings also reflect the reproduction of gender inequality and the deleterious algorithm of social media platforms.

Introduction

In the movie "To the Bones", a young woman's struggles to fight anorexia nervosa were portrayed fully. The conflict within herself whether to lose weight or get healthy was depicted vividly. The film reveals the trend in modern society that people tend to pay great attention to their bodily appearances, also known as body images, which exist in the form of human perceptions. The standards of a beautiful body are set by social media intangibly and are welcomed by many people, especially females. It is widely accepted that beauty is defined by both outward appearance and inner virtues. However, social media only focuses on outer appearance, which is usually quantified by weight or BMI, especially thinness. Many young women pursue a thin body image, and their eagerness often ends up causing girls to be outside the healthy boundary. According to Boutell (2002), approximately 34%-57% of adolescent girls reported weight control behaviors such as dieting, self-induced purging, and intaking diet pills. Why is obtaining a slim body so common among young girls that they are willing to sacrifice their health, money, or even relationships? The interaction with peers and the use of social media are two key factors that contribute to this body image crisis. Specifically, peer interactions amplify the dominating trends on social media.

The research starts with the phenomenon that many Chinese young women are trying to pursue thinness for they equate thinness to beauty. To measure the outcome of their efforts to be thin, the girls look at the numbers on the scale. The lower the weight, the thinner they are, and the more "beautiful" they are. This is the principle of thin culture, which is the set of values and abnormal aesthetic judgments that equates female beauty with thinness. In other words, the standard of beauty is assessed by how much a woman weighs and judged by how skinny a woman looks. With the "thin culture" in mind, girls constantly desire to control or lose weight until a deleterious point.

Given this background, this paper aims to find the reasons behind the prevalence of thin culture among young Chinese women and investigates the potential consequences of this phenomenon. Despite the extensive research that has been done linking thin ideals to eating disorders in women, little focus on the young women population (aged 13-20), especially Chinese young girls. This limitation should be addressed because young women account for the most population who has body anxiety and a desire for unhealthy thinness. Statistics show that “78% percent (of girls) are unhappy with their bodies at age seventeen”, and about 5% of adolescent girls suffer from eating disorders (Monroe, 2012). Yet this important population is being neglected. Furthermore, most research viewed social media and peer interaction as two separate factors that promote the formation of thin ideals, but little explained the cofunction of these two factors. This study focuses on how social media and peer interaction act together while promoting thin ideals in Chinese young women.

As an unintended consequence, many teen girls who try to pursue a thin body developed eating disorders. Eating disorders have received wide attention in academia. It is among all mental illnesses ranking second on mortality rates (Arcelus et al. 2011). According to U.S. News & World, deaths due to anorexia nervosa are 12 times higher than the ones caused by all causes for females 15-24 years old (Caceres, 2020). The prevalence and detriments of eating disorders are apparent, calling for actions to intervene. Thus, knowing the contributors to the formation of thin culture among young girls is significant. Furthermore, thin culture reflects not only girls’ attention on beauty but also their attempt to obtain self-discipline, recognition, and even a position in society. The paper discusses the thin culture among Chinese young women, including its formation and consequences. In addition, the paper examines the role peer interaction plays in amplifying the impacts brought by social media, which further strengthens the desire for thinness.

Literature Review

The Relationship Between Ultra-thinness Desire and the Development of Eating Disorders

The trend of a “beautiful” body image emphasizes abnormal thinness, which is often characterized by being underweight. This is considered one of the indicators of the eating disorder, anorexia nervosa. One research investigated women (Aged 16-24) who consider being underweight as a positive attribute and their tendency to develop eating disorder symptoms. Using the Implicit Association Test, Ahern and her research team discovered that young women who hold positive attitudes toward being underweight reported a significantly higher desire for a thinner body size, which also resulted in eating disorder symptoms (Ahern et al., 2008). Harrison’s research also confirmed the exposure to content of ultra-thinness in daily life through media such as magazines and television is related to eating disorders, which is developed through the mechanism of self-discrepancy—the deviation of one’s actual self from his/her ideal self (Harrison, 2001). Exposure to unhealthy skinny girls will cause women to raise their standards of thinness.

The limitation of this research is that only quantitative methods were applied (Clay et al., 2005). Despite the fact that quantitative research draws a clear and direct link between the two variables, it fails to explain the logical link and the complexity between them. This study takes the qualitative approach to investigate the logical link by interviewing the subjects to learn more details about young girls who actively seek thinness. The use of scales and surveys in quantitative research is insufficient to capture the complexity of cognitive processes, leading to the loss of the in-depth evaluation into individual diversity and multifaceted perspectives of young Chinese women. Furthermore, this research uses semi-structured in-depth interviews to invite open responses from interviewees, allowing interviewees to fully

elaborate their answers, providing enough details.

The Influence of Social Media and Peer Interaction on Body Image Perception

Losing weight to get thinner is becoming a dominant trend among young women with age 13-20. As the Tripartite Model suggests, there are three sources of disturbed body image perception: media, peers, and parents. These factors operate through two mechanisms: internalization of thin ideals and social comparison (Keery et al., 2004). The high use of social media has long been considered an important contributor to this unhealthy trend. Many actions on social media create an intangible cultural boundary between slim and normal.

In one research, 500 adolescent girls aged 9-16 were surveyed, and about 70% of them agreed that their perception of an ideal body image is affected by magazine pictures (Clay et al., 2005). Comparing themselves with ultra-thin models will make girls feel ashamed of their body image, triggering them to pursue thinness. In addition, girls are likely to internalize the standards of thinness, though unrealistic and unhealthy. Not meeting the standards will make them feel worse about themselves, leading to body dissatisfaction and more weight control behaviors (Thompson, 1999). On the other hand, interaction functions of social media such as “like” and “Follow” will influence body dissatisfaction, although not as significant (Vuong et al., 2021).

Research has also shown that peer interaction is likely to cause body dissatisfaction, leading to attempts to lose weight. The major socialization environment for adolescent girls is the school, the site of many peer groups, which gives rise to the formation of thin culture (Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2006). Based on qualitative methods, Dohnt and Tiggemann surveyed 128 girls in Australia and concluded three ways peer interactions affect their body image perception: Peer body dissatisfaction, peer discussions, and imitation. This research also predicted that social media and peer influence might operate together, but it did not describe how, which is a limitation (Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2006).

Rebuttal to the Negative Impact of Social Media

Although much data about the connection of social media with enhanced thin culture internalization support the negative influence of the former, Burnette and her colleagues found that some girls showed high media literacy, which is the sensitivity to filter the information they receive and be critical toward the mass media. They displayed self-confidence about their body instead of comparing themselves to media figures (Burnette et al., 2017). This research rebuttal the idea that social media contributes to the formation of toxic thin ideals among teenage girls. However, this argument lacks persuasion. However, this argument lacks persuasive force. Many girls remain unaware that they are being influenced by social media or their peers. They fail to recognize that their perceptions and standards regarding their own bodies have been reshaped by the media, with peers playing a facilitating role in this process Burnett (2017).

Research Methods: Data Collection and Analysis

A qualitative research approach is proposed for this study and the interpretative method is applied through in-depth interviews to represent the meaning system behind Chinese young women’s behavior to obtain a skinny body shape. Compared to quantitative research, qualitative research is less restrictive, for it would not quantify the subjects’ perceptions and reasoning. The qualitative approach allows the subjects to be storytellers and talk about their experiences

in detail. Second, as opposed to questionnaires and surveys which are confined by rigid questions, qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews might reveal some unexpected details about the subjects.

Sampling

The platforms for data collection in this research are WeChat and Tencent Meeting. There are several advantages of setting the research online. First, participants can be contacted through the internet regardless of geographic obstacles. In addition, the online setting helps the interviewees to be more relaxed and open. Since the interview is completely pseudonymous, participants will feel more secure about their personal information and give genuine responses.

This research used purposive sampling to recruit participants. The criteria for selecting subjects are:

1. Chinese girls with age 13-20
2. Has a history of at least one weight control behavior
3. Has access to social media

Key Concepts

Thin culture refers to the set of values and toxic aesthetic judgments that equates female beauty with thinness. In other words, the standard of beauty is assessed by how much a woman weighs and judged by how skinny a woman looks.

Body image is women's perception of their body size and body shape.

Eating disorder refers to a series of abnormal and persistent eating behaviors which bring negative impacts on one's physical and mental health (Mayo Clinic, 2018). The most common eating disorders are anorexia nervosa, characterized by abnormally low body weight and fear of gaining weight, usually accompanied by restrictive eating behaviors, and bulimia nervosa, characterized by the cycle of bingeing and purging (Mayo Clinic, 2018). Self-discrepancy is the deviation of one's actual self from his/her ideal self (Harrison, 2001).

Data Collection and Analysis

The strategies of data collection in this study are in-depth interviews and observation. A general interview outline was prepared first.¹ Then, follow-up questions were asked on top of questions in the outline, aiming to discover the full picture of the participant's story. The in-depth interviews were documented through audio recordings. After the interview, the recordings were turned into transcripts, and thematic coding was used to interpret the responses of participants.

The observation mainly revolved around the voice, tone, wording, and reaction speed of the interviewee in Tencent Meeting. Using WeChat, participants' characteristics are observed through conversations and their social media posts, from which their hobbies and aesthetic tastes are also revealed. The emojis, punctuation marks, and wording used by the interviewees were observed to find out about their state and attitude.

¹See Appendix 2: Interview Outline

Findings

How young Chinese women define thinness

There are mainly two categories of definitions of thinness given by the interviewees, which are western aesthetics and Asian aesthetics. Interestingly, seven out of nine interviewees reported a shift in perception about thinness after they experienced weight loss and eating disorders. Specifically, they first preferred Asian aesthetics but then turned to western aesthetics over time.

The western definition of thinness is characterized by defined muscles, such as firmed abs or tight hips, which are usually obtained by regular workouts. Many of the interviewees used Pamela Reif, the German fitness star, as an example to illustrate what their ideal thin body should look like. They all expressed that they adored Pamela's fit and muscular body and wished to be like her. The interviewees think this kind of thinness can show health and energy.

On the other hand, many Asian countries such as China, Korea, and Japan stress thinness as bony, which is usually accompanied by a body weight that is below standard BMI. The representative women are Mi Yang, as mentioned by three interviewees, and members of the Black Pink group, as mentioned by two interviewees. These women have common body features: extremely thin legs and small waists that can be wrapped by only two hands, etc. Two of the interviewees concluded their ideal body shape using the female characters from cartoons and anime, who have extremely long and thin legs, hourglass-like waists, and slender arms.

"They look good in all sorts of outfits." (Cassie, 15 years old)

"The thin girls in my class are very popular, and so are thin girls on Tik Tok. So many people give them likes and comment because they are beautiful. For example, her legs are so thin! She's so hot! Oh My God, I love her! I want to be like them." (Yona, 20 years old)

Girls who are very skinny can fit into many kinds of outfits, such as short skirts, fairy dresses, and jeans. More importantly, such girls appear to be very attractive in these outfits: they look hot, elegant, cute, etc. Being attractive will gather more attention and compliments for girls, making them satisfied or even giving them confidence.

This phenomenon led the interviewees to relate popularity with thinness. The interviewees looked forward to obtaining high popularity by being thin and beautiful. Thus, it can be concluded that a significant driving force that pushes Chinese young women to pursue thinness is the contentment they experience when they receive praise, build relationships with people, or simply feel pretty and confident themselves.

Effect of social media on the construction of thin ideal

Social media mainly contribute to the formation of the thin ideal in two ways: 1) displaying pictures of "perfect" bodies and 2) highly quantifying beauty and thinness.

On Chinese social media platforms, perfect bodies are the ones without a flab. Although having a flab is normal among common people, girls on Chinese social media, particularly the Redbook, Tik Tok, and Weibo, seem flawless in their posts: they are extremely thin and beautiful, but more importantly, they don't have flab. Such posts receive many praising comments, which give young women the impression that thinness equals popularity and

recognition. On the contrary, when pictures or videos of “imperfect” bodies receive negative comments, young Chinese women tend to internalize the boundary for fat as well. For example, when interviewing Cassie, she mentioned her experience:

“Once I saw a video about a girl dancing. She was not a thin girl. When I opened the comment section, I saw a bunch of messages saying her legs are so thick, she is so fat... I compared myself to the girl in the video, and our legs are similarly sized. I suddenly felt the people in the comment section talking about me. That is when I gave myself the fat tag.” (Cassie, 15 years old)

Cassie is not the only case. Many other interviewees reported comparing themselves to the girls on social media. After the comparison, young women tend to internalize the standards on social media, and they will feel discontent toward their bodies and deny their beauty.²

On the other hand, Chinese social media have quantified beauty and thinness in various ways. Beauty has a broad definition, and it is widely accepted that beauty should be assessed through both outward appearance and inward virtue. Thinness is also a flexible term as discussed earlier in the paper. However, the trend in Chinese social media quantifies beauty and thinness simply through weight and calories. To be more specific, many popular girls on Chinese social media are so thin that their BMI³ fall into the underweight range. Their weight then became a reference for many young Chinese girls. There are many versions of charts listing heights and corresponding weights. Most of the charts provide standards that are unhealthy—below the bottom line of normal BMI (18.5kg/m²). In recent years, the tag “BM girls”⁴ is very trendy on Chinese social media. The following chart lists the corresponding weights a girl must have to fit into the BM clothes.

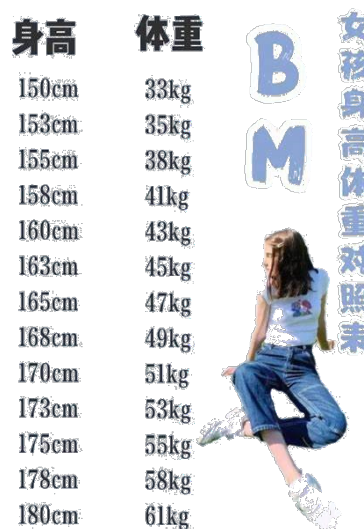


Figure 1 Brandy Melville Girl's height-weight chart (Tamen, 2021⁵)

² See Betty's response in Appendix 3.1

³ Body Mass Index= Weight/Height squared

⁴ Brandy Melville is a brand that sells S-size clothes only, and its target customers are young women. A woman with a normal body size can hardly fit into the clothes. Thus, becoming a BM girl is the dream of many Chinese young women.

⁵ The source of Figure 1 is https://www.cqcb.com/manxinwen/manxinwen/2021-03-17/3862939_pc.html

This weight chart can be considered one of the gold standards for thinness on Chinese social media. Many young Chinese women would try to lose weight until they meet the BM standards.

Social media also quantifies thinness through calories—calorie-burnt and calorie intake. There are many fitness bloggers on Chinese social media such as bilibili, the Red book, and Tik Tok who share information about weight loss. Some bloggers stress the importance of working out: the more you exercise, the more calorie you burn. Bloggers first introduce the general principle of losing weight—creating a calorie gap by eating fewer calories than burnt. Then, they talk about types of healthy and clean food, which usually have fewer calories or higher nutrition. Finally, they advocate for girls who try to lose weight to track the calories they take and burn.

Done right, this method will be helpful for healthy weight loss. However, many young girls tend to focus so closely on the food they eat that every single bite counts. What’s more, many of them restrict the total amount of calories they absorb, because they think the less they eat, the greater the calorie gap will be, and the thinner they will become. Besides the calorie tracking methods, there are even more extreme teachings online about losing weight. Many female celebrities also share their weight loss recipes online, which might be misleading plans for young women.

Above are the diet plans of two KPOP stars, Ailee and Seol Hyun, both are very restrictive on calories—about 1/4 of the standard calorie intake for an adult woman. The “What I eat in a day” videos or blogs are very popular on the Red book, Tik Tok, etc. This becomes another source of comparison for young girls trying to lose weight.⁶

“I often see posts such as what a 170m-44kg girl eat in a day. These girls are proud of their lightweight, and they just spread anxiety. There are constantly girls who are thinner than others. I would be very jealous and make comparisons.” (Miranda, 13 years old)

Social media sometimes convey misleading messages, or young women sometimes misinterpret the information from it. If they are not media-literate enough, it is likely for them to pick the wrong reference and go on the unhealthy track.⁷



Figure 2 Ailee’s diet⁸



Figure 3 Seol Hyun’s diet⁹

⁶ See Gina’s response in Appendix 3.2

⁷ See Amy’s response in Appendix 3.3

⁸ The source of Figure 2 is: <https://www.koreaboo.com/stories/female-idols-eat-maintain-figures/>

⁹ The source of Figure 3 is: <https://www.koreaboo.com/stories/female-idols-eat-maintain-figures/>

Amplification of thin ideal by peer interaction

Young women spend most of their time hanging around their friends or family, who may also alter their perceptions. This study analyzes how peer interaction—including peer communication, admiration, imitation, and comparison—amplifies the effects of social media, further strengthening thin ideals in girls' minds.

(a) Peer communication

Young Chinese women spend most of their time with friends and communicate with each other. A commonly seen topic among girls is losing weight. Young girls typically share strategies to lose weight, such as eating less, exercising more, skipping normal meals, etc. This trend reflects the fact that they are internalizing and welcoming the standards set by social media. Conversations based on losing weight will reinforce the thin ideal in young girls and stimulate their desire to be thin.

“After my friends found out that I lost so much weight, they wanted me to teach them how to do it.” (Cassie, 15 years old)

Cassie was among her peers who successfully lost a lot of weight. She then became the center of attention in her community. Her classmates even wanted to learn how she did it, which indicates that they also largely value thinness. Through conversations, they wish to learn the most effective losing weight strategy. This gave Cassie the impression that thinness is a positive attribute, and she went even further on her weight loss journey. Her lowest weight is 30kg, and she is still very reluctant to gain weight.

(b) Peer admiration

“My best friends are both pretty and skinny. What’s more, they are the most popular girls in our class. I wanted to be as thin as them so I can also be attractive. I guess people just like thin girls more.” (Yona, 20 years old)

The standards of thinness on social media mentioned earlier in the paper have successfully dominated young girls' minds after their continuous exposure to the internet. They view thinness as a positive attribute. In addition, as Yona has mentioned, she thinks thinness stands for popularity. Her popular friends seem to confirm and amplify the uniform aesthetics on social media, driving her to lose weight. This can be explained by confirmation bias: when people deeply believe in something, they tend to consider supporting evidence only and neglect inconsistent information. It is natural for people to desire attention and popularity. When young Chinese women find their peers attractive and popular when being thin, they generate a sense of admiration.

(c) Behavior imitation

Peers play an important role in conveying sociocultural messages, including both the dominant aesthetics and ways to approach it (Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2006). It is likely for the girls to imitate behaviors their peers have, such as dieting, overexercising, tracking calorie, etc. Since young girls lack guidance, they simply follow things that are happening

around them. Some strategies may be unhealthy or detrimental, but young girls are not critical enough to make judgments.¹⁰

“One of my friends I hung out with was very thin. She usually skips dinner. She told me that if she didn't eat, she would lose weight very quickly. I couldn't stand hunger at first because growing up, I never missed a single meal. In the beginning, I was very hungry. Later, I gradually became used to the hunger, and I skipped dinner with my friend together.” (Betty, 17 years old)

(d) Peer Comparison

“I have a twin sister who is a lot thinner than me. She attempted to lose weight at first. Then I followed. We somehow started to compete with each other, to see who is thinner.” (Fiona, 18 years old)

Fiona has a twin sister that is also trying to lose weight. Growing up, Fiona's sister has always been thinner than her, so she constantly felt envy. Fiona's sister affected her not only by having weight-loss behaviors but also by being a reference. Fiona's eagerness to be thin was largely stimulated by the desire to surpass her sister.

Similarly, many other interviewees shared how comparing themselves to their friends had made their behaviors more extreme¹¹. The girls usually start with a friend who also wants to lose weight, and they will supervise each other to be “self-disciplined”, which is mainly to eat less and exercise more. However, as time goes on, girls tend to develop a non-stopping and morbid mindset: they subconsciously start to compare themselves to their friends. They feel a sense of accomplishment when they win the weight loss competition by eating less and weighing lighter.

Negative consequences

Many young girls pursue unhealthy thinness under the pressure of media, friends, and themselves. Their extreme behaviors can lead to many unwanted side effects. Some consequences may be less severe, while others are irreversible.

(a) Development of extreme dieting and eating disorders

Every interviewee in this study used extreme diets to obtain their ideal body which is skinny and bony. The interviewees gave the same pattern: at first, they used relatively healthy methods to lose weight, such as exercising and eating clean. However, many of them experienced an incident in which they found out that eating less can help them drop more weight in a short amount of time.

Interestingly, many of the interviewees did not cease extreme dieting even though they already reached their dream weight. The interviewees were afraid that if they switch to regular meals, they will gain weight instantly. The girls might get “addicted” to this “weight loss” game.¹² As a result, young women are very likely to develop eating disorders during their weight loss journey. Due to the continuous content about fitness-friendly food and weight-loss

¹⁰ See Cassie's response in Appendix 3.

¹¹ For more examples, see Appendix 3.5 and 3.6

¹² See Appendix 3.7 and 3.8

recipes, young women start to give food labels: high calorie; greasy; green; low GI, etc; such behaviors are signs of Orthorexia Nervosa, which is an all-consuming obsession with healthy eating (Pulge, 2021).

(b) Body dysfunction

Young women's bodies are still in the developmental stage, and their organs are not completely mature. Not supplying the body with enough nutrients can result in irreversible body dysfunctions. For example, the reproductive system is relatively less vital than other body systems. When the body undergoes nutrient-deficiency, it will automatically shut off the reproductive functions since they are not obligatory. Thus, many girls will have inordinate menstrual cycles. What's worse, if a young woman continues to eat below the required amount, her pituitary gland might permanently stop her reproductive functions, which means she'll have premature ovary failure. Other body dysfunctions might be hair loss, anemia, malnutrition, etc.

(c) Loss of opportunities

As a further consequence of body dysfunction, many young women are unable to continue their normal daily life. They are forced to drop out of school for recovery. If they do not accept hospitalization, the worst result will be death. Amy, for example, missed Gaokao, the college entrance exam in China. Not attending it means Amy will have to either take another year of school or give up her high school diploma and directly enter the workplace. Amy chose the second option. However, society today values diplomas and degrees a lot. If Amy does not have one, she will probably face a lot of troubles in her later life, such as difficulties in looking for jobs or a spouse.

(d) Depressed mood

When young women are trying to be skinny and bony thin, they usually focus too much on their bodies, their weight, and on the food they eat. Due to their great shift in attention, the girls are likely to lose interest in other parts of their life. More seriously, some girls even developed depression. Many girls are reluctant to go to parties or social events after they started to lose weight or developed eating disorders. They are constantly in a low mood, and this is detrimental to their well-being.¹³

Conclusion and Discussion

This study discovered two types of definitions Chinese young women have for thinness: Western type and Asian type. This study also confirms the fact that social media promotes the formation of thin culture among Chinese young women by 1) displaying pictures of "perfect" bodies and 2) By highly quantifying beauty and thinness. In addition, peer interaction amplifies the effects of social media through peer communication, comparison, admiration, and behavioral imitation.

To expand the findings, the thin ideal among young Chinese women is in fact a reflection of gender inequality. The trends on social media intensify the deification of the perfect body. Girls would desire such bodies, and they will feel sad or ashamed if not in their ideal body shape. This is an indication that girls highly value observers' perspectives on their bodies (Calogero, 2004). Here, the observers' perspectives are mainly from men—many Chinese young women live under the male gaze. All the emphasis on thinness and beauty on social media, to a certain degree, is serving men's

¹³ See Appendix 3.9

preference for female characteristics. Given the pressure to be accepted or appreciated by men, many girls intangibly force themselves to welcome the popular standards. This phenomenon reflects the reproduction of gender inequality. Nowadays the importance of inner virtues is indeed stressed instead of purely outer appearance while assessing someone. However, it is inevitable for people to be affected by one's appearance. It is a natural behavior in humans to prefer beautiful things. Thus, young women try to be very careful in front of other people, especially men. If they are thin and pretty like popular girls online, young girls are more likely to give men good impressions, which possibly can lead to more opportunities. Calogero's research has confirmed the negative effect of the male gaze: female participants who felt being observed by men reported greater body shaming and social physique anxiety (Calogero, 2004).

In addition, Chinese social media platforms use an algorithm that works by making similar content continuously appear on the user's page. Although this strategy effectively increases the click rate since users are probably interested in similar content as well, it might also strengthen the user's impression. For instance, if a girl clicks on a post that talks about the 16+8 fasting diet on the Red Book, it is very likely for her to see related content—such as the KPOP idol diet and keto diet—when she later uses the app. If the girl continuously receives repeated content, it will be more likely for her to subconsciously absorb such information, which might lead her to the wrong way. Thus, it will be a wise idea for social media platforms to revise such an algorithm, for it might prevent more young women from taking a potential problematic approach to pursue thinness.

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