

# **Social media, beauty standards and Chinese women**

Name, student number: Shuxiu Laarhoven, s1373412

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## Table of contents

1. Introduction .....	3
1.1 Research questions and research purpose.....	4
1.2 Structure of the thesis .....	5
2. Literature review .....	6
2.1. Sociocultural theory of the body .....	6
2.1.1 Social comparison .....	8
2.2 Feminist criticism of beauty .....	9
2.2.1 Objectification of women’s bodies.....	11
2.2.2 Self-objectification .....	12
2.3 Cultural beauty standards in China: The beauty economy and gender roles.....	13
2.3.1 Beauty standards of Chinese women.....	14
2.3.2 Mass media and beauty in China.....	16
2.4 Expectations .....	17
3. Methodology .....	19
3.1 Methods: Questionnaires .....	19
3.2 Explanation of the questionnaire .....	19
3.3 Participants and gathering of data .....	21
3.4 Ethics .....	21
4. Results .....	23
4.1 Sub question 1: ‘How does social comparison on social media affect beauty standards of Chinese women?’ .....	24
4.2 Sub question 2: ‘How does self-objectification affect beauty standards of Chinese adolescent women?’ .....	25
4.3 Sub question 3: ‘Do Chinese adolescent women feel objectified in Chinese society, and how important is beauty in relation to their family, love life, and career?’ .....	26
4.4 Pearson’s r correlations .....	26
5. Discussion & Limitations .....	29
5.1. Chinese social media vs traditional media .....	32
5.2. Limitations and suggestions for further research .....	34
6. Conclusion.....	35
Bibliography.....	37
Appendix 1. Questionnaire.....	41
Appendix 2. Results of the questionnaire.....	45

# 1. Introduction

Women are confronted with beauty every day, through reading beauty ads, going to fashion and beauty stores and watching television shows. In fashion magazines, on television, internet and in newspapers, western standards of beauty are portrayed. It is argued that the mass media over the years have played an important role in the changing body ideals of women in the western world and beyond. The mass media often portray unrealistic beauty standards.

Women are constantly subjected to fashion models and celebrities in the media who are perceived as attractive and can serve, especially for young women and girls, as inspirational figures.<sup>1</sup> In addition, along with the rise of the internet, it is possible to easily spread pictures of beautiful women and celebrities all over the world. Furthermore, the use of social media has increased. Social media today have become an integral part in many people's daily lives, especially of young adults. Perloff (2014) states that Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are all interactive social media platforms where internet users are allowed to create and share messengers to communicate with other users. In other words, users of social media are editors as well as audiences at the same time. Thus, internet users are able to create and edit their own online content every moment of the day while at the same time view content from other users. In addition, social media are very accessible, which makes them more of a personal outlet to use than the traditional media.<sup>2</sup>

The topic of beauty has been subjected to debate by a lot of feminist scholars and writers. Take Wolf (1991), for example; she writes in *The Beauty Myth* how images in the media are used against women, stating that the media set 'beauty standards' influenced by the beauty and fashion industry. Thus women are increasingly exposed to ideal images by the media and feel pressurized to adhere to those beauty standards. Yan & Bissel (2014) point out that not only in the west emphasis is laid on beauty by mass media, but that this may be an issue that occurs in countries all over the world.

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<sup>1</sup> Yan, Y., & Bissell, K. (2014). The Globalization of Beauty: How is Ideal Beauty Influenced by Globally Published Fashion and Beauty Magazines? p195

<sup>2</sup> Perloff, R. (2014). Social Media Effects on Young Women's Body Image Concerns: Theoretical Perspectives and an Agenda for Research. P365,366

## 1.1 Research questions and research purpose

Research conducted for this thesis is focused on social media and its impact on beauty standards for Chinese women. The main research question for this thesis is:

‘To what extent do social media affect Chinese adolescent women’s beauty standards today, and what social value give Chinese women to beauty?’.

Considering that the main research question is still rather broad, it is divided into the following sub questions:

1. ‘How does social comparison on social media affect beauty standards of Chinese women?’
2. ‘How does self-objectification on social media affect beauty standards of Chinese adolescent women?’
3. ‘Do Chinese adolescent women feel objectified in Chinese society, and how important is beauty in relation to their family, love life, and career?’

The main research questions consist of two parts. Firstly, I want to examine to what extent social media affects women’s beauty standards. Secondly, in order to understand how social media affects women’s beauty standards, I will investigate how beauty is conceived in the Chinese society.

Social media can affect women in different kinds of ways. The two theories, social comparison and (self) objectification, are frequently used in explaining the impact of social media on women and /or men. Each sub-question goes into a particular aspect of the main question, digging deeper into the meaning of beauty for women in contemporary China, yet they also stand in relation to each other. Social comparison is part of sociocultural theory which investigates how processes like social comparison and internalization play a role in how women compare themselves with the standard of beauty on social media. Objectification explains how social media portray women’s bodies and beauty and is a term used by many feminist scholars. Self-objectification is often the result of objectification and together with social comparison it contributes to the changing beauty ideals of Chinese women.

Most of the literature about social comparison and self-objectification has examined the causal relationship between social comparison/self-objectification, (social) media and body dissatisfaction for women in the West, furthermore it is obviously aimed at the use of western social media (Feltman et al. 2018; Ferguson et al. 2014; Perloff, 2014; Stronge et al. 2015).

Literature on Chinese women is either just about beauty practices and beauty in relation to plastic surgery (Hua, 2013) or the relationship between beauty and mass media (Zhang, 2012). As social media is a relatively new phenomenon, no research has been done to the effects of social media and beauty standards of Chinese women. This study will serve as contribution to the existing literature about social media and beauty standards of Chinese women. And the topic of how Chinese social media affects Chinese adolescent women through social comparison, self-objectification, and objectification has not, according to my knowledge, been studied before. The aim of the research is to explore the attitudes and behaviour of Chinese adolescent women in relation to beauty and beauty rituals and investigate the role of social media. Thus, contributing to the Chinese narrative on the story of beauty, gender and social media.

The sub-questions will be answered by conducting a quantitative descriptive analysis, using questionnaires as research method. The results will be analysed in a SPSS by (1) calculating the answers of the questionnaires in percentages and (2) using Pearson's R correlation to examine the relation between social media usage and social comparison, and social media and self-objectification.

## 1.2 Structure of the thesis

The theories, social comparison, objectification and self-objectification together have laid the foundation for this thesis. Literature about these theories together with the topic of beauty in China will be examined in the literature review, which is the second chapter.

In chapter three the methods and materials used for the thesis will be discussed and the design of the questionnaire will be explained.

Next, the results will be calculated in chapter four. This chapter will summarize the results gathered from the answers of the questionnaire.

Chapter five will give a more detailed account of the discussions and limitations. The results will be discussed and will be interpreted according to the literature. Next, I will examine if the results have rejected or supported the sub-questions. Furthermore, limitations that have occurred during the research and suggestions for further research will be given.

Finally, in the conclusion, the results will be summarized followed by the conclusion of the proposed research question.

## 2. Literature review

In order to understand what role social media have in the creation of beauty standards for Chinese women, we need understand the two previously mentioned theories: social comparison and (self) objectification. These two are important since they both emphasize the importance of social and cultural influences of women's beauty standards. Social comparison, objectification and self-objectification are all different facets that explain the research questions, yet they can also influence each other, which will be explained in this chapter. Both social comparison and (self) objectification are phenomena which women engage in when using social media. Since social comparison is part of sociocultural theory, a short general overview of sociocultural theory is provided followed by social comparison theory in 2.1. Section 2.2 will firstly provide literature about feminist critique on beauty in general. Secondly, it will zoom into the relevant part of the feminist critique necessary for the argumentation of the research questions: objectification and self-objectification. In section 2.3 literature about the beauty economy, beauty standards and mass media in China are analysed, followed by expectations based on this literature in section 2.4.

### 2.1. Sociocultural theory of the body

Sociocultural models of body image are frequently used by scholars and researchers to explain the link between on the one hand media and social media and on the other hand body dissatisfaction. Sociocultural theory describes how the media will lead to the development of body dissatisfaction and other types of behaviours.<sup>3</sup> The most important factors contributing to body dissatisfaction include family, peers and the media. These factors are claimed to have direct influence on body dissatisfaction, through indirect processes such as social comparison and internalization.<sup>4</sup> Internalization of beauty standards is the degree to which a person internalizes the beauty standards imposed by society, family, peers and the media.<sup>5</sup>

Social media have not as frequently been studied as the traditional media in relation to sociocultural theory for the reason that social media are a recently new phenomenon. However, social media have been a substitute for the traditional media for many people,

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<sup>3</sup> Forbes, G., & Jung, J. (2008). Measures based on sociocultural theory and feminist theory as predictors of multidimensional measures of body dissatisfaction among Korean and U.S. college women. p72

<sup>4</sup> Stronge, S., Greaves, L., Milojev, M., West-Newman, P., Barlow, T., & Sibley, F. (2015). Facebook is Linked to Body Dissatisfaction: Comparing Users and Non-Users. p202

<sup>5</sup> Fardouly, J., Willburger, B. K., & Vartanian, L. R. (2017). Instagram use and young women's body image concerns and self-objectification: Testing mediational pathways. p2

especially for young people. Fashion magazines and/or campaigns for beauty products are now mostly viewed on the internet.<sup>6</sup> Some studies show the relation between Facebook and body dissatisfaction for women in New Zealand (Stronge et al. 2015), whereas others have shown the link between Instagram, self-objectification and internalization of beauty ideals of women in Australia and the US (Fardouly et al. 2017; Feltman and Szymanski, 2018). Perloff (2014) similarly states that social media alone do not have a direct effect on body standards and will not directly lead to body dissatisfaction. Body dissatisfaction is firstly based on individual factors such as low self-esteem, depression, often combined with internalization of beauty standards in the media. In combination with these individual factors, a young woman can be negatively influenced by social media. Mediating processes such as social comparisons further contribute to body concerns of young women.<sup>7</sup>

Social media such as Facebook and Instagram allow users to carefully choose selfies and pictures of themselves alone or with friends. It is a platform for self-representation, where people tend to upload only the prettiest or happiest pictures. Besides, with the function of Photoshop or other similar apps it is possible to make oneself 'prettier' on pictures, thereby creating an image of the self which is not representative.<sup>8</sup> Ferguson et al. (2014) argues that mass media do not influence body dissatisfaction but rather processes like peer comparison will lead to body dissatisfaction. They found peer comparison to have a direct impact on body dissatisfaction, while traditional media and social media may not directly lead to body dissatisfaction. However, they did find a small correlation between social media and peer comparison, meaning that peer comparison may occur in the use of social media.<sup>9</sup> Chua and Chang (2016) also emphasize how important the roles of self-presentation and peer influences are in the construction of beauty standards.<sup>10</sup>

Let's take the slender body type for women as an example. Thinness is often presented as the ideal body type for women in western media leading to greater chances of body dissatisfaction (Groesz et al. 2002). According to a Puhl & Boland (2001) thinness is positively associated with physical attractiveness of women by both male and female,

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<sup>6</sup> Yan, Y., & Bissell, K. (2014). P197

<sup>7</sup> Perloff, R. (2014), p368-369

<sup>8</sup> Perloff, R. (2014), p366

<sup>9</sup> Ferguson, C., Muñoz, J., Garza, M., & Galindo, E. (2014). Concurrent and Prospective Analyses of Peer, Television and Social Media Influences on Body Dissatisfaction, Eating Disorder Symptoms and Life Satisfaction in Adolescent Girls. p12

<sup>10</sup> Chua, & Chang. (2016). Follow me and like my beautiful selfies: Singapore teenage girls' engagement in self-presentation and peer comparison on social media, p190

consequently contributing to a thin body type ideal in the media. As a result, women start dieting and go to the gym in order to fit into the ‘thin body type’ ideal.<sup>11</sup>

### 2.1.1 Social comparison

But what is social comparison exactly? Social comparison as part of sociocultural theory of the body, states that people compare themselves to others for diagnostic or functional reasons.<sup>12</sup> Social media, on which one can post pictures of oneself, serve as an ideal platform for young women to compare themselves to others. Especially in combination with the internalization of the thin body ideal, social comparison is very likely to occur. A lot of research has been done to the link between social comparison, internalization and objectification on social media and body dissatisfaction among young girls and women. Making upward social comparison and internalizing beauty standards with the result of body dissatisfaction can be found among users of Facebook (Stronge et al. 2015) as well as Instagram (Fardouly et al. 2017; Feltman and Szymanski, 2018). Reassurance, validation and a low self-esteem are important individual factors that lead to social comparison (Perloff, 2014; Chua & Chang, 2016). Especially when young women use programs/apps like Photoshop to adapt their pictures in order to look thinner or prettier, other women can get unrealistic ideals of body standards and therefore encounter upward social comparisons.<sup>13</sup> Upward social comparisons are processes that occur when people compare themselves with others who they believe are superior to them, resulting in a lower self-esteem. Downward social comparison are comparisons people make with others who they believe to be worse off, leading to a more positive attitude. Upward social comparison, however, will result in a lower self-esteem, which brings us back to the beginning, resulting in a vicious circle. People even tend to make upward social comparisons unconsciously.<sup>14</sup>

Research by Chua & Chang (2016) also shows how the use of Instagram and other photo sharing social media platforms can lead to peer comparison by teenage girls in Singapore. Their research has shown that teenage girls have four different roles in creating a beauty standard online on social media: imaginary audiences, judges, comparison targets and learners of how to create the ‘most beautiful’ picture by editing techniques and photography. When teenage girls post pictures online they first have to take into account imaginary

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<sup>11</sup> Puhl, R., & Boland, F. (2001). Predicting female physical attractiveness: Waist-to-hip ratio versus thinness. p40

<sup>12</sup> Perloff, R. (2014), p369

<sup>13</sup> Perloff, R. (2014), p369

<sup>14</sup> Stronge, S. et al. (2015), p202

audiences, who don't like or comment but do see your picture. Secondly, their picture can get positive or negative judgement depending on the number of likes and (good) comments.

Thirdly girls can post pictures on which they look their absolute best, with the help of the right lighting, the right angle and their photo edit skills, to create the perfect picture. Fourthly, they criticize their own beauty by comparing their own photo's to other pictures online.<sup>15</sup>

## 2.2 Feminist criticism of beauty

The second theory, objectification and self-objectification, is based on feminism, and in particular feminist criticism of beauty. It elaborates on the relationship between beauty, sexism and gender. Furthermore, it addresses what it means to be a woman in relation to beauty. Beauty standards and women's bodies have always been a hotly debated topic among feminist scholars and writers. The question why beauty is of greater social importance for women than for men remains a question which many feminist scholars like to write about.<sup>16</sup> It is argued by many that beauty standards derive rather from cultural and social factors than from biological adaptation (Davis, 1997; Wolf, 1991; Forbes et al., 2007; Lorber & Moore, 2011). Although feminist writers have different opinions on the topic of beauty, many of them do argue that beauty serves as a vehicle for the oppression of women in the sense that beauty standards and practices contribute to women's inferior status while at the same time undermining women's self-confidence.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, they think that gender roles and objectification (2.2.1) both play a big role in the oppression of women.

Naomi Wolf (1991) views beauty standards of women as a backlash in promoting equal rights for men and women. They function as a system determined by politics in which males can dominate over women. She points to the increasing number of women with eating disorders like anorexia, the surge in cosmetic surgery and the prevalence of pornography as manifestations of the outcome of the beauty myth: 'being in the midst of a violent backlash against feminism that uses images of female beauty as a political weapon against women's advancement'.<sup>18</sup> She claims that the beauty myth is based upon the institutional power of men and along with new technological advancements, images of ideal beauty are further imposed on women. Those beauty standards often create anxiety or insecurity about one's appearance

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<sup>15</sup> Chua, & Chang. (2016). p195-196

<sup>16</sup> Forbes, G. et al. (2007). Sexism, Hostility toward Women, and Endorsement of Beauty Ideals and Practices: Are Beauty Ideals Associated with Oppressive Beliefs? p265

<sup>17</sup> Forbes, G. et al. (2007). P266

<sup>18</sup> Wolf, Naomi (1991). *The beauty myth: How images of beauty are used against women*. p10

which leads to women trying to uphold those beauty standards by dieting or having cosmetic surgery for example.<sup>19</sup>

Like Wolf (1991), Lorber & Moore (2011) view the current society as a gendered society in which patriarchy still dominates. They view patriarchy as a system in which males dominate society as shown by their great political and social power.<sup>20</sup> The reason why men are considered to be superior to women follows from socio-cultural beliefs imposed by society.<sup>21</sup> Davis (1997), on the other hand, refers to male domination when talking about power and the feminist body. She explains that men use female bodies to dominate and feel superior over women. They sexualize and objectify women's bodies therefore contributing to the oppression of women.<sup>22</sup>

Naomi Wolf (1991) states that beauty is often a political tool in our society and that advertisements in magazines for beauty products are solely there for the purpose of selling products, not for sexual reasons.<sup>23</sup> However, it is reasonable to argue western society reinforces the objectification of women and thus treats women's bodies as a commodity in a capitalist society (Xu & Feiner, 2007; Zhang, 2012). In other words, sex sells products, whether these products are beauty related or not. Women's bodies are often sexually objectified in the sense that they are seen as a commodity for the purpose of selling products.

Both Lorber & More (2011) as well as Davis (1997) argue that the gendered society as we know it is a cultural and socially constructed phenomenon. The division between male and female is deeply rooted in our society and shows in daily life practices and, especially in behaviour of women aimed at conforming to beauty standards. This leads to two different sides to the argument of gender. While some think that gender differences are natural constructions, others have argued that gender is rather reinforced by culture, mass media, religions and knowledge systems which encourage boys and girls into different social roles and gives different social values to the body.<sup>24</sup>

Naomi Wolf (1991), in her argument on beauty, might be a bit radical when she says that beauty is used as a tool to oppress and dominate women completely. I agree, however, that it supports the wider argument that beauty is a socially constructed phenomenon. Furthermore, gender differences, whether they are naturally or socially reinforced, further emphasize the

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<sup>19</sup> Wolf, Naomi (1991). p13, 14,15, 232

<sup>20</sup> Lorber, J., & Moore, L. (2011). *Gendered bodies : Feminist perspectives*. p3

<sup>21</sup> Lorber, J., & Moore, L. (2011). p3, 4

<sup>22</sup> Davis, & Davis, Kathy. (1997). *Embodied practices : Feminist perspectives on the body*. P12

<sup>23</sup> Wolf, Naomi (1991). p84

<sup>24</sup> Lorber, J., & Moore, L. (2011). p3, 4

importance of beauty for women. The idea that women need to be 'beautiful' is constantly portrayed in the media. Furthermore, beauty standards are not only imposed by society but also by ourselves. By comparing ourselves to peers on social media we internalize the beauty standards that we see all around us. This proves that we all contribute to the creation of our own beauty standards, either consciously or unconsciously.

### 2.2.1 Objectification of women's bodies

Objectification and the 'male gaze' are terms first mentioned by Laura Mulvey (1989). These terms are important in line of this research. It is a theory that explains how women are looked upon on the screen by men. Although this theory is initially based on cinema and movies, it can be applied to pictures posted on social media as well, since movies as well as social media allow for the display of women looked and the gaze of men. It may explain why we always want to look our best in pictures on social media as well as in real life.

Laura Mulvey (1989) mentioned the term 'male gaze' for the first time in her essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*. She argues that women on screen are displayed as sexual objects for both the spectators as well as the characters on screen and a distinction is made between passive and active roles. Mostly men have active roles whereas women fulfil the passive role. In other words, a woman is actively looked at and gazed at as a sexual object by men.<sup>25</sup> And although her theory of the 'male gaze' is applied to movies, it can be applied to everyday life as well (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

The objectification theory of Fredrickson & Roberts (1997) states that sexual objectification is a way to oppress women. Sexual objectification means 'the experience of being treated as a body (or collection of body parts) valued predominantly for its use to others.'<sup>26</sup> Women are seen as objects for men's own personal pleasure instead human beings, causing mental health risks to women. Although, as Fredrickson & Roberts argue, objectification may vary among different races or races, it is an experience that women all over the world encounter.<sup>27</sup> Sexual objectification occurs in many different ways and forms. The gaze is a very subtle form of objectifying, in which men are able to visualize a woman's body as a 'sexual object'. This gazing can occur in two different occasions: through interpersonal or social encounters as well as in the media. In the media images of the female

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<sup>25</sup> Mulvey, L. (1989). Visual pleasure and narrative cinema. p61-63

<sup>26</sup> Fredrickson, B. L., & Roberts, T. A. (1997). Objectification theory: Toward understanding women's lived experiences and mental health risks. P174

<sup>27</sup> Fredrickson, B. L., & Roberts, T. A. (1997). p175

body are sexualized, and these media are often hard to avoid; it is very likely that many girls and women are influenced some way or another by the gaze.<sup>28</sup>

It seems that beauty standards nowadays have become more compelling due to the objectification of women in the media and social media. Lorber & Moore (2011) support this idea by arguing that beauty standards for women are set to make them sexually appealing to men. By internalizing these beauty standards set by the media, women start dieting, buy creams or other cosmetics or undergo plastic surgery. Even though feminists claim these beauty practices to be something that women do in order to meet the beauty ideals set by society, lots of women feel they are simply making independent and autonomous choices.<sup>29</sup>

### 2.2.2 Self-objectification

Objectification can occur when a woman is displayed on a screen, whether it is television, a computer screen or a mobile phone. Self-objectification results from objectification; it relates to the beauty standards set by society and adopted by the self. Objectification consequently has a great impact on a woman's identity. McKay (2013) describes self-objectification as 'regular exposure to objectifying experiences that socialize girls and women to engage in self-objectification, whereby they come to internalize this view of themselves as an object or collection of body parts'.<sup>30</sup> Feltman & Szymanski (2018) say that a woman self-objectifies herself when she regards her appearance 'independently from that of the individual'<sup>31</sup>. Simply put, a woman sees herself as an object first and as a woman second. Self-objectification can turn into self-surveillance, causing mental health problems such as depression, body dissatisfaction and even eating disorders. McKay (2013) further points out several factors that contribute to the self-objectification process: media, relationships and societal influences.<sup>32</sup> Women's bodies are objectified in the traditional media and in social media. Women are seen as 'objects' by men and society and are often portrayed in this way in the media. For example; the media associate being thin or skinny with being attractive, beautiful and having success in life. As a consequence, women start to consider this to be the new standard and trying to uphold to those standard by dieting or other forms of expressions.

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<sup>28</sup> Fredrickson, B. L., & Roberts, T. A. (1997). p176,177

<sup>29</sup> Lorber, J., & Moore, L. (2011). p64,65

<sup>30</sup> McKay, T. (2013). Female self-objectification: Causes, consequences and prevention objectification. p53

<sup>31</sup> Feltman, C., & Szymanski, E. (2018). Instagram Use and Self-Objectification: The Roles of Internalization, Comparison, Appearance Commentary, and Feminism. P311

<sup>32</sup> McKay, T. (2013). p53,54

Both Feltman & Szymanski (2018) as well as Fardouly et al. (2017) mention the role of self-objectification in the use of Instagram and in body dissatisfaction. Feltman and Szymanski (2018) argue that the use of Instagram leads to self-objectification through mediating factors of internalization of cultural beauty standards and engaging in upward social comparison.<sup>33</sup>

### 2.3 Cultural beauty standards in China: The beauty economy and gender roles

A Chinese beauty consumer culture did not exist until China's access to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 (Xu & Feiner, 2007). China's entry into the global economy not only meant liberalization of the economy, it also meant that China opened up to cultural influences from the West. Consequently, the term *meinu jingji*, which means beauty economy, was introduced. The words *meinu* and *jingji* literally mean 'beautiful girl' and 'economy'. The beauty economy refers to everything that links a woman's beauty to the economy, from beauty pageants, to fashion and beauty magazines, to plastic surgery, to beauty products and cosmetics, to advertisements etc.<sup>34</sup> In 2004, the beauty economy was next to real estate, the automobile industry, tourism, and telecommunication, ranked as the fifth largest industry in the Chinese economy.<sup>35</sup> While the beauty economy has positively contributed to the developing economy, it is also a topic that has led to many scholars voicing feminist criticism. The rapidly developing market economy has created a consumer culture in China in which the body plays an important part.<sup>36</sup>

Yang (2011) and Xu & Feiner (2007) logically argue that China has become a consumer society and tends to lean towards a capitalist economy. Yang (2011) describes the beauty economy as 'a possession used for social and professional advancement: appearance, display and impression management are the capital goods of the consumer economy'. The beauty economy further advocates a gendered society in which sexuality and femininity are of great importance.<sup>37</sup>

The argument of Xu and Feiner (2007) goes along the same line. In their view that the beauty economy reinforces and ensures the acceptance of the male gaze with the particular focus on the relation between objectification of women and male approval and gratification.

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<sup>33</sup> Feltman, C., & Szymanski, E. (2018). P321, 322

<sup>34</sup> Xu, G., & Feiner, S. (2007). *Meinü Jingji /China's beauty economy: Buying looks, shifting value, and changing place*, P308

<sup>35</sup> Yang, J. (2011). *Nennu and Shunu: Gender, Body Politics, and the Beauty Economy in China*. P334

<sup>36</sup> Hua, Wen. (2013). *Buying beauty cosmetic surgery in China*. P37

<sup>37</sup> Yang, J. (2011). p336, 352

China has transformed into a market oriented economy, allowing the bodies of Chinese women to be viewed as commodities by encouraging the beauty economy. Furthermore, gender inequality is actively displayed in the Chinese society through the beauty economy. The accompanying activities and practices that arise from the beauty economy such as beauty pageants, make up products, make up advertisements, beauty salons contribute to the ‘sale’ of women’s beauty, reinforcing the view on women as ‘objects’ rather than individuals. Women will be judged more on the basis of their appearance rather than on their skills.

Hua (2013) points out the difference between men and women in China. She sees a clear distinction between the type of jobs for men and women. In job advertisements for women certain physical features (height or weight) are required whereas for men this was not often the case. She observes that men are usually wanted for technical or management position, whereas the service sector has positions for women.<sup>38</sup> Stereotypical gender roles are deeply rooted in the Chinese traditional culture. Accordingly, a woman’s talent is being beautiful and stay inside to do housekeeping, while men are supposed to work. Although a lot has changed in these stereotypical gender roles, the obsession with female beauty still exists within the Chinese culture. A survey indicated that 72.4 percent of the men find a woman’s appearance to be the most important quality. Next to the workforce, beauty is an important factor on the marriage market as well.<sup>39</sup> An old Chinese saying underscores this fact: ‘a woman dolls herself up for the man who loves her (nǚ wei yuejizhe rong)’. The saying also reinforces the argument of the male gaze still existing in Chinese culture, especially on the marriage market where women doll themselves up or even undergo cosmetic surgery in order to find suitable husbands.<sup>40</sup>

### 2.3.1 Beauty standards of Chinese women

When reading literature about beauty standards of Chinese women two different opinions are particularly outstanding. On the one hand, scholars like Xu & Feiner (2007) state that Chinese women are influenced by beauty standards in Hollywood and strive for western beauty features such as whiteness and big eyes. Furthermore, women would internalize the western beauty standards which results in beauty practices like cosmetic surgery to ‘beautify’ one’s appearance.<sup>41</sup> On the other hand, Hua (2013) disagrees and views that western features such

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<sup>38</sup> Hua, Wen. (2013). P87

<sup>39</sup> Hua, Wen. (2013). P93, 94.

<sup>40</sup> Hua, Wen. (2013). P97

<sup>41</sup> Xu, G., & Feiner, S. (2007), P310

as double eyelid or light skin pursued through cosmetics or cosmetic surgery are not necessarily the outcome of western influences. Small, single folded eyelids and almond shaped eyes were beautiful in ancient China whereas today big, round eyes and double eyelids have become increasingly popular among Chinese women. And while many western media and scholars blame this phenomenon on the increasing influence of images in western mass media, she suggests that other factors have also contributed to the changing ideal of Chinese eyes. Most of the women she interviewed told her that they underwent eyelid surgery not in order to look more western, but to look prettier. Furthermore, Hua (2013) describes that big eyes were already considered beautiful in the Mao era, before the liberalization of the Chinese economy. Often strong and chubby women were portrayed on posters with heavy eyebrows and big eyes. A similar argument applies to the white skin adoration in China and the slender body type ideal. White skin is considered beautiful not as a consequence of westernization, but simply because having light skin distinguishes the middle class and aristocracy from the peasants.<sup>42</sup> Leung et al. (2010) examined where the slender body type ideal among Chinese people in Hong Kong comes from. A preference for slender bodies for Chinese women goes way back in time. Translations of ancient, traditional texts (772-481 B.C.) as well as famous beauty icons throughout Chinese history show that a slim and slender figure has always been considered as beautiful. Slimness and small feet were beautiful in ancient China. In general thinness was idealized; however, it is possible that body ideals are different among different social classes in China. A plump and heavy body type was considered beautiful among labouring women, since such a body type was preferred in order to fully maximize labour productivity. A thinner, more fragile body type was idealized among women of the ruling class.<sup>43</sup>

Zhang (2012) and Luo (2012) are providing the most logical argumentation behind the influence of the west on Chinese beauty standards. They argue, as Chinese women's exposure to the western world through social media has been increasing, they have begun to accept western standards of beauty. Thus, it is more reasonable to argue that the standards of beauty of contemporary Chinese women seem to contain traditional Asian aesthetics as well as more modernized or westernized ideals. According to a research by Zhang (2012), features such as big eyes, double eyelids, a fair/light skin, a small face in the shape of a watermelon seed, a small mouth and being skinny and tall are considered pretty among Chinese college women. Whereas being tall is a more modern or westernized beauty ideal, features such as small face,

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<sup>42</sup> Hua, Wen. (2013). P196-197, 201

<sup>43</sup> Leung, F., Lam, S., & Sze, S. (2001). Cultural Expectations of Thinness in Chinese Women. P345

slender figure and light skin are traditional Chinese beauty ideals.<sup>44</sup> Luo (2012) studied beauty standards of Chinese women on Chinese cosmetic surgery hospital websites. On those websites, breasts enlargement is pictured as an ideal borrowed from the west, large breasts being a symbol of femininity and youthfulness. What is shown as oriental beauty on those websites are again the watermelon seed shaped face, the double eyelid and the fair skin.<sup>45</sup>

Apart from the west, especially Korea has an enormous impact on Chinese beauty standards. The Korean pop culture with its dramas, music (k-pop), fashion and movies is very popular among Chinese teenagers. The establishment of the SK Aikang Hospital, shows the popularity of Korean popular culture and how women want to look like Korean superstars. This hospital, as well as other hospital, which employ Korean surgeons to do plastic surgery on Chinese women, is an indication of the impact globalization has on beauty standards in China.<sup>46</sup>

### 2.3.2 Mass media and beauty in China

Since the expansion of the beauty industry, the mass and social media have been playing an active role in the booming beauty consumer culture. Since the government strives for economic development, the media have become increasingly market-driven. All over the internet and the fashion magazines we see beautiful models, advertisements for plastic surgery and cosmetics to make oneself prettier. Those glossy magazines and social media set certain beauty standards for Chinese women (Hua 2013). Young women are more than ever conscious of their bodies through the exposure to social media and mass media.<sup>47</sup>

Research has been done to the effect of mass media on beauty standards of Chinese women (Zhang, 2012). According to the research, the mass media have both a direct and an indirect influence on Chinese women, in the sense that Chinese women feel inspired by celebrities or even copy them. Celebrities portrayed in the media have an enormous influence on Chinese women. These celebrities all meet a certain beauty standard, and most of them had have plastics surgery. Furthermore, the thin body type shown by models and celebrities on TV or in magazines, is adored or admired.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Zhang, M. (2012). A Chinese beauty story: How college women in China negotiate beauty, body image, and mass media p450

<sup>45</sup> Luo, W. (2012). Selling Cosmetic Surgery and Beauty Ideals: The Female Body in the Web Sites of Chinese Hospitals. p84-87

<sup>46</sup> Hua, Wen. (2013). P180, 182

<sup>47</sup> Zhang, M. (2012). P438

<sup>48</sup> Zhang, M. (2012). P443

Women constantly compare themselves to women on social media or in glossy magazines. Insecurity about one's own beauty can be countered by the practice of plastic surgery. As Hua (2013) points out, the normalization of cosmetic surgery is an increasingly upcoming phenomenon in the Chinese mass media. Cosmetic surgery is sometimes displayed not only as a path to a women's beauty but as a way to a more successful and happier life. However not only advertisements for cosmetic surgery have spread, also makeover programs through cosmetic surgery have won popularity on the Chinese television.<sup>49</sup> There are even plastic surgery apps on the market, with which you are able to adjust your face or make your skin look whiter.<sup>50</sup>

Chinese women change their appearance and undergo cosmetic surgery in order to conform to the ideal beauty imposed by society. Hua (2013) has asked women for the reasons why women undergo cosmetic surgery. First of all, job competition is very fierce in China. Women believe they have a chance to get a better job if they are prettier. She found out that some parents in China gave their daughters plastic surgery as a reward for getting a degree. Being pretty or beautiful is a form of social capital that can have advantages in the job market. This may help in the short term; however, she argues it will disempower women in the long run since it will enhance the existing beauty economy with all its inequality and discrimination of women.<sup>51</sup>

## 2.4 Expectations

Most of the literature about these two theories (sociocultural theory on the body and feminist theory) applies to the West and to the thin body ideal. I believe beauty is a transnational phenomenon, therefore I expect that social comparison as well as (self) objectification are applicable to Chinese women as well. In addition, literature on social comparison, internalization and feminist theories on beauty focuses on the thin body ideal. However, I agree with Forbes et al. (2007) that research should not be limited to the thin ideal but to all beauty standards and practices. Therefore, in this research Chinese women are expected to engage in social comparison when using social media; to be objectified in Chinese traditional and social media; and to self-objectify themselves. Furthermore, I expect that, the more women use social media, the more women engage in processes like social comparison and

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<sup>49</sup> Hua, W. (2013). P130, 133

<sup>50</sup>The Telegraph (2018). Why Chinese women are using 'plastic surgery' apps to whiten their skin. Via <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/life/why-chinese-women-are-using-plastic-surgery-apps-to-whiten-their/>

<sup>51</sup> Hua, W. (2013). P77,78, 80-82

self-objectification. Lastly, I expect that Chinese people give great social value to beauty standards of women.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Methods: Questionnaires

Methods used for the research is quantitative and online questionnaires are used in order to get to know the story of Chinese women, beauty and social media. According to Neuman (2014), questionnaires or surveys are ‘appropriate when we want to learn about self-reported beliefs or behaviours.’<sup>52</sup> Thus, the research focus is mainly to define the opinion, attitude and behaviour of Chinese women towards beauty and social media. The purpose of the research is to find out the opinions of a demographic group rather than the individual, and therefore questionnaires serve as an appropriate research method. The questionnaire was conducted using an online software at [www.Qualtrics.com](http://www.Qualtrics.com). The research is descriptive of nature and the data will be analysed with SPSS. However, conducting online questionnaires also brings some disadvantages. Firstly, the information provided by the respondents may not be as accurate as they claim it would be. Secondly, self-selection bias is likely to occur when conducting online questionnaires. People with interest of the topic of the questionnaire are more likely to fill in the questionnaire than people with no interest at all, creating a systematic bias (Wright, 2005). Lastly, since the questionnaire mostly consists of close-ended questions, there is no space for personal expression and/or follow up questions about a particular subject.

#### 3.2 Explanation of the questionnaire

The questionnaire designed and used for this research can be found in appendix 1. Most of the questions are closed- ended questions for the purpose of descriptive analysis, however the first part of the questions consists of two open question. These questions ask about the age of the participants, and about how many hours a day the participants spend on social media. Since the main target are Chinese women, the questions are firstly designed in English, and later translated into Chinese. The questions are based on the literature review and is used for the purpose of finding out if Chinese women engage in processes such as social comparison and self-objectification when using social media. Furthermore, Chinese women are asked how important beauty is to them, and if they feel like they are objectified in the Chinese society. The questionnaire consists of four parts.

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<sup>52</sup> Neuman, W. (2014). Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches p317

The first part is to obtain some general information about the participants and their use of social media. Questions about their use of social media, how many accounts they check out, what activities they carry out on social media and what kind of social media they check are asked. The last question is about the type of social media Chinese women use. The answers of this question contains three Chinese social media and one Western social media. Instagram is included in the answers, since it is nowadays one of the most popular social media in the west. (Q1-5).

The second part are questions about social comparison and self-esteem(Q6-17). A score from 1-4 is shown. 1 indicates that women can't relate to the question, while 4 indicates that women can relate. 2 and 3 are in between these scores; 2 indicates that women can relate just a tiny bit, while 3 indicates that women can relate to the statement most of the time. The higher the score, the more a woman tend to compare herself to others. Question 17 is a reversible question. It is asked in exactly the opposite way so that the lower they score, the more they tend to compare.

The third part consists of questions about self-objectification, which measures the extent that women internalize and adjust their own appearance to the beauty ideals in the media and society. (Q18-29). Firstly, participants have to indicate whether they agree or disagree. The more they agree, the more they tend to engage in self-objectification. Question 20 is again a reversible question. These questions were followed by seven other questions where participants had to indicate if a situation has never, sometimes, often or always occurred. The more a situation has occurred, the more a woman tends to engage in processes like self-objectification.

The fourth part starts off with questions about the position of women in China, and how beauty relates to this. Questions are asked about how women in China are objectified in society (Q30-36). Participants are supposed to fill in whether they agree or disagree with the statement. The first set of questions, 30-33 indicate the importance of beauty for women in China. Question 34 till 36 are posed in order to ask the opinion of Chinese women about objectification. The more they agree, the more beauty is considered to be important by herself and her surroundings, and the more they feel objectified in Chinese society.

### 3.3 Participants and gathering of data

Table 1. Age

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
How old are you? / 你多大?	48	15	34	23,69	3,422
Valid N (listwise)	48				

Initially, the main focus group of the research are Chinese women between the age of 18 and 29. The focus on young Chinese adolescent women is chosen because several surveys among populations of different countries have indicated that young adults use social media the most. One survey suggest that young American adults, age 18-29, are most likely to use social media compared to other age groups.<sup>53</sup> A similar outcome applies to Chinese young adults.<sup>54</sup> The data was collected during the period of 31-05-2018 and 21-06-2018. In total, 48 respondents have participated in the questionnaire (N = 48). Of those 48 respondents, a total of 45 individuals have fully completed the questionnaire, of which 1 respondent has only completed the first seven questions and two respondents have completed all of the questions except for the question about time spend on social media. Women participating in the questionnaire had a minimum age of 15 and a maximum age of 34 (M= 23,67; SD= 3,42). (see table 1)

During the distribution of the questionnaire, it was not easy to find enough Chinese women willing to fill in the questionnaire, therefore, snowball sampling sometimes naturally occurred. Unfortunately, some disadvantages adhere to snowball sampling. Firstly, the respondents recruited by snowball sampling might be biased or have the same opinion as their friends who passed on the questionnaire. Secondly, the representativeness of the respondent is not guaranteed.

### 3.4 Ethics

The respondents in the online questionnaire are all anonymous. Furthermore, the design of the questionnaires allowed for an information page at the very beginning of the questionnaire. At

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<sup>53</sup> Pew Research Center. (2015). Social Media Usage: 2005-2015. Via <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/10/08/social-networking-usage-2005-2015/>

<sup>54</sup> Statista. (2018). Daily internet usage rate in China in 2017, by age group. Via <https://www.statista.com/statistics/347934/daily-internet-usage-age-group-china/>

this front page, information about the purpose of the questionnaire and the main focus of the research is provided, as well as the contact information of the researcher, when wanting to ask further questions.

## 4. Results

In this part the results of the questionnaire will be discussed (appendix 2, table 4 till 6).

Descriptive analysis is conducted and the results are presented in two different ways. Firstly, answers to the questions are calculated in percentages. Secondly, Pearson's R correlations are calculated in order to learn about the relation social media, social comparison, and self-objectification. Also, the opinion of Chinese women about beauty and social media is asked, and calculated in percentages.

Table 2. Time spend on social media

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
How many hours a day do you usually spend on social media? / 你每天花费多少时间在社交媒体上?	46	1	10	3,26	1,971
Valid N (listwise)	46				

Firstly, questions 2 till 5 obtained general information about the social media usage of the participants. Chinese women (N=46) spend on average 3.26 hours a day on social media, with a minimum of 1 hour and a maximum of 10 hours, and a standard deviation of 1,97 (see table 2). Since two participants have not answered this question in numbers, they are not included in the calculation. These two participants did answer this question with 'always online' or 'hen jiu', meaning 'very long'. When using social media, 60.4% (N=29) of the participants check out 3-4 different social media accounts, 29.9% (N=14) check out 1-2 accounts, 6.3% (N=3) of the respondents check out 5-6 accounts, and only 4.2% (N=2) checks out more than 6 accounts. As question 3 and 5 is concerned, multiple answers can be checked. Therefore, answers to those questions can contain percentages with a total of more than 100%. Question 3 was asked to find out which social media the participants use. Instagram is by far the most popular type of social media, with 70.83% (N=34) of the participants using this. The follow up was Weixin with 52.08% (N=25). 39.58% (N=19) of the participants are also using Weibo and 58.33% (N=28) also use other types of social media, and none of the participants use RenRen. Question 5 asks about which activities participants carry out on social media. 66.67% (N=32) checks out social media profiles of friends, 64.58% (N=31) posts pictures and comments, 45.83% (N=22) views pictures of celebrities and models, 29.17% (N=14) views

fashion magazines, 89.58% (N=43) chats with friends via social media, and 31.3% (N=15) does other things on social media besides the above activities.

4.1 Sub question 1: 'How does social comparison on social media affect beauty standards of Chinese women?'

Questions 6 till 17 are designed to answer the first sub question. Firstly, question 6, 8 and 15 ask whether women compare themselves when using social media. Since these questions are most important when answering the first sub question, these will be discussed firstly.

Question 6 asked whether participants compare when using social media. The majority of the participant (41.7%) choose option 3, and 4 was chosen as second best (27.1%), meaning most of the women compare themselves to others on social media. Question 8, asks about upward social comparison; after looking at beautiful women on social media most of the women (35.4%) doesn't feel more insecure about their own appearance and 31.3% might just feel a little insecure, 16.7% can relate to the statement of the time, and 14.6% can always relate to it. Question 15 is about downward social comparison. The result is that both 1 and 2 is equally scored with 38.3%. 21.3% even often encounters downward social comparison, and only 2.1% always encounters it.

The remaining questions ask about the consequences of social comparison. Question 7, 9, 13 ask about how women feel about their selves after carrying out activities on social media. When was asked if participants consider their friend prettier than themselves, 2 (43.8%) was the most answered score, followed by 1 (27.1%). About the same score applies to whether participants feel pressurized to change their appearance after looking at beautiful women on social media. 2 was scored the most (40.4%) and 1 followed after (31.9%). When it comes to body standards, most of them are not insecure about their body after looking at slender models (40.4%), 25.5% feels sometimes insecure and 23.4% feels often insecure about their body.

Participants do care about their looks when posting a picture online. When that question was asked, 27.1% cares about their looks all of the time, and 44,7% cares about their looks most of the time. Question 17 is a reversible question and asks whether participants are concerned about the opinion of others when posting a picture online. The lower they score the more they agree with the statement. 51.1% has chosen score 2, so they are concerned most of the time what others think when they post a picture online. 17.0% is always concerned, 21.3% is sometimes concerned, and only 10.6% is never concerned. When was asked about

appearance in general and the opinion of others, more than half (51 %) filled in score 3. Question 11 asked about if likes and comments on their picture influences their self-esteem, with most of the participants (36.7%) filling in score 3. Second-best was score 2 with 27.7%, and score 1 and 2 were about equally chosen with 19.1% and 17%.

The last questions are about plastic surgery and whether social media creates social pressure for their users. Concerning plastic surgery, more than half (51.1%) doesn't think it looks pretty on models or celebrities at all. Furthermore, most of the participants thinks social media creates social pressure for their users. 3 was filled in the most (44.7%), followed by score 4 (27.7%).

4.2 Sub question 2: 'How does self-objectification affect beauty standards of Chinese adolescent women?'

Questions 18 till 29 ask about self-objectification of women. Firstly, questions about the extent to which women objectify themselves will be discussed (Q18, 19, 21). Question 18 asks whether women agree with the statement that appearance is of greater importance for women than for men. More than half, 53.2% agrees with the statement, 12.7% strongly agrees, 27.3% disagrees and 6.4% strongly disagrees. Question 19 indicates that more than half of the women (57.4%) like to spend time on their looks because they get more confident this way. Furthermore, 76.6 % agrees that women in the traditional and social media set the standard for other women 12.8% even totally agrees, 8.5% disagrees and only 2.1% totally disagrees with the statement.

Question 20 is a reversible question, and states that social media portrays realistic ideas women. 34% strongly disagrees and 36.2% disagrees with the statement, 23.4% agrees, and 6.4% strongly agrees. Next questions asked to indicate how often situations have occurred. Question 23 asks whether women ever feel pressurized to adhere to a certain beauty standard seen on social media. 51.1% has sometimes felt the pressure to adhere to beauty standards seen online, 21.3% has never felt the pressure, 23.4% has often felt the pressure, and 4.3% always felt the pressure.

As a result of the self-objectification, women like to put on make-up or follow a diet. 23.4% of the women always wear make-up, 29.8% often wear make-up, 36.2% sometimes wear make-up and only 10.6% never wear make-up. The answer to the question if women have ever dieted is most divided among never (40.4%) and sometimes (46.8). However self-objectification has not resulted in posting provocative pictures on social media (76.6%),

19.1% has sometimes posted such pictures, 4.3% has often posts those pictures and none of the women always posts provocative pictures. It has also not changed the strong opinion about plastic surgery; 51.1% wouldn't do plastic surgery in order to change their appearance. 17.0% agrees that they would do plastic surgery, and only 4.3% totally agrees. Furthermore, the majority (51.1%) has never changed their appearance because friends or family likes them better this way. Also most of the women (55.3%) don't use Photoshop to adjust their pictures, 23.4% sometimes use it, 17% often use it and only 4.3% always use Photoshop. The question if women doll their selves up for men was more divided. 40.4% never does it, 38.3% sometimes dolls herself up, and the option between often and always was equally chosen, with both 10.6%.

4.3 Sub question 3: 'Do Chinese adolescent women feel objectified in Chinese society, and how important is beauty in relation to their family, love life, and career?'

Questions 30 till 36, tries to find out the importance of beauty in a Chinese women's daily life. Women consider being beautiful or looking pretty as important in finding a job or a husband. 55.3% indicates that 'looking pretty brings advantages in finding a job' and 59.6% agrees with the statement that finding a husband will be easier when you look beautiful. Although they think beauty is important in their love life or career, they don't agree that being beautiful necessarily equals to being successful. 55.3% disagrees with this statement. Also, 57.4% disagrees with the statement 'my family thinks it is important that I look beautiful'.

Questions 34 till 36 are about whether participants think they, and other women in the Chinese society, are objectified or not. 61.7% agrees that women in Chinese magazines and films are sexually portrayed, 29.9% even strongly agrees with the statement, and none of the participants strongly disagrees. Question 35 is about the effectiveness of women's bodies in advertisements compared to men's bodies. The majority (44.7%) agrees that women's bodies are more effective than men's bodies on advertisements, 17% totally agrees, however a large part also disagrees (42.6). The last question asks about whether women think they are objectified by men. The majority of the women agrees with the statement (44,7%) followed by disagree (36,2%), strongly agree (12,8%), and strongly disagree (6,4%).

#### 4.4 Pearson's r correlations

The second type of analysis looks at the relationship between time spend on social media ( $M=3,26$ ,  $SD=1,97$ ), social comparison and self-objectification. These calculations are based on

questions 6, 8, 15, 18, 19, and 21. A Pearson's r analysis is conducted to calculate the correlation coefficient, to indicate whether a relation exist between two variables. The number of participants is 45. Three out of the 48 participants are not included in the calculation, since only two women have not answered the question about how much time they spend on social media the right way. They answered this questions with 'very long' or 'always online'. Another participant has only answered the first seven questions.

Table 3. Correlation between usage of social media per day and social comparison (Q6, 8, 15) and self-objectification (Q18, 19, 21)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
S.M.							
1 usage							
2 Q6	,32*						
3 Q8	-,04	,26					
4 Q15	-,18	,05	,41**				
5 Q18	,1	,2	,30*	,18			
6 Q19	,00	,05	,36*	,22	,06		
7 Q21	,04	,01	,31*	,1	,04	,39**	

N=45; \*P< 0,05; \*\*P < 0,01

All of the analysis below are based on the results represented in table 3. The analysis on question 6 (whether Chinese women compare themselves to other women on social media) and time spend on social media reveals a moderate positive correlation ( $r = ,32$ ;  $P < 0,05$ ). This tells us that the more Chinese women participating use social media, the more they tend to compare themselves to others. Furthermore, a p-value of less than 5% indicates the result is statistically significant. That the p-value for this correlation statistically significant is means that the positive relation between social media and social is an accurate representation. Next, participants were asked about whether they engage in upward social comparison (Q8). The results show a very weak negative correlation between social media usage and upward social comparison ( $r = -,04$ ). The closer the R-value is to 0.00, the weaker the correlation. An R-value of 0 indicates that there is no relation between two variables at all. Negative correlation shows that the more they use social media the lesser they tend to engage in upward social comparison. This correlation is not statistically significant; the results are likely due to random chance, and does not give an accurate representation of Chinese women. Lastly, the correlation between downward social comparison (Q15) and time spend on social media is examined. Results show again a weak negative correlation between the two variables. The

more Chinese women use social media, the lesser they engage in downward social comparison. However, this correlation is again not statistically significant.

Questions 18, 19, and 21 examine the relation between time spend on social media and self-objectification. The analysis conducted on question 18 and time spend on social media shows a very weak correlation ( $r = ,1$ ), and is not statistically significant. Although this indicates that the more women use social media the more they agree that appearance is more important for women than for men, the weak relation shows that it is almost non-existent. Same applies to question 21 ( $r = 0,04$ ). For question 19 there is no correlation found ( $r = ,0$ ). Also the results are not statistically significant.

A noteworthy result is the correlation between upward social comparison and the questions about downward social comparison and self-objectification. The correlation between upward social comparison and (1) downward social comparison ( $r = ,41$ ;  $p < 0,01$ ), (2) importance of appearance for women ( $r = ,30$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ), (3) attention given to appearance ( $r = ,36$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ), and (4) agreement that women in the media set the standard for other women ( $r = ,31$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ) all show a moderate correlation. The more women engage in upward social comparison, the more women tend to objectify themselves, and also engage in downward social comparison. Since all of the p-values are less than 5%, all of these results are statistically significant.

## 5. Discussion & Limitations

The aim of this study is to find out the opinion of Chinese adolescent women about beauty and social media, according to three sub-questions. This research has resulted in multiple findings.

Firstly, a positive relation is found between time spend on social media and social comparison. The more women use social media, the more women tend to compare their themselves, which is also confirmed by the percentages. Consequently, women worry very much about their appearance and the judgement of others. In addition, when posting a picture online, women tend to upload only the most beautiful picture. And when they post pictures on social media, the number of comments or likes on a picture affects most of the participant's self-esteem positively. These findings support the argument of Chua & Chang (2016), in which they argue that users of social media play different roles at the same time. Social media is a unique platform for self-representation where people can present the best version of their selves. It is therefore important to highlight that participants are fairly selective in uploading the right picture knowing they will be judged by others since they themselves also judge other people's pictures. Also the number of likes and comments on a picture is also another aspect where women can get recognition of their beauty and appearances.<sup>55</sup>

Secondly, the results show a negative correlation between the use of social media, upward social comparison, and downward social comparison. The more women use social media, the less women tend to engage in upward social comparison or downward social comparison. Although, the correlation shows a very weak correlation coefficient and is not significant, it does confirm the calculation of the percentages suggesting that using social media does not necessarily lead to body dissatisfaction or a low self-esteem. Next to social comparison, the relation between social media use and self-objectification is also examined. The results show a positive, but an almost none existing relation with self-objectification. Meaning that just a few people who use social media often, tend to engage in self-objectification. Also the correlation is not statistically significant, meaning that these results most likely have happened by chance. These results are in contrast with most of the literature about social media, social comparison, and self-objectification. The literature argues that using social media such as Facebook or Instagram is linked to body dissatisfaction. Social comparison or self-objectification should herby serve as mediators in the link between social

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<sup>55</sup> Chua, & Chang. (2016). P191

media and body dissatisfaction (Stronge et al. 2015; Fardouly et al. 2017; Feltman & Szymanski, 2018). However, Perloff (2014) provides a possible explanation for these results suggesting a more nuanced theory for the link between social media, comparison with peers and body dissatisfaction/lower self-esteem. He disagrees with other scholars saying that social media use will predicate negative outcomes such as body dissatisfaction or even cause eating disorders. He states that individual differences play a role in the outcome of social media on body dissatisfaction. It is important to be aware of already existing individual vulnerability factors a woman can struggle with. These factors can include ‘low self-esteem, depression, thin-ideal internalization, centrality of appearance to self-worth and/or perfectionism’, and can lead to seeking validation or reassurance on social media. Together with mediating processes such as social comparison, can lead to increase in body dissatisfaction or other negative outcomes.<sup>56</sup> Besides, there are many more factors that ensure body dissatisfaction or low self-esteem. For example, family situation, the kind of friends you hang out with, or if you have ever been bullied in the past. These factors can all pressure you into wanting to be the most beautiful version of yourself and therefore lead to a low self-esteem. Andsager (2014) agrees with him and also argues that social pressures and importance of physical appearance is different in every culture around the globe.<sup>57</sup> With regards to the research conducted for this thesis, many women in the questionnaire have studied abroad, therefore might be influenced by other foreign cultures, which also might affects their ideas and beliefs about beauty.

The relatively confident women participating in the questionnaire, also might be an explanation for lesser use of Photoshop and more negative opinions about plastic surgery. These findings don’t support my expectations based on the literature about cosmetic surgery in China. Zhang (2012) argues cosmetic surgery have become very popular. Due to Chinese traditional and social media, cosmetic surgery have increasingly become normalized through advertisement, TV shows, and magazines, and celebrities with cosmetic surgery.<sup>58</sup> Hua (2013) as well states that she notices an increasing trend in cosmetic surgery, and this trend has become especially popular among younger women than in the west.<sup>59</sup> However, since plastic surgery is only a recent trend, it might have affected only a particular group of Chinese women.

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<sup>56</sup> Perloff, R. (2014). P367,368

<sup>57</sup> Andsager, J. (2014). Research Directions in Social Media and Body Image. P407

<sup>58</sup> Zhang, M. (2012). P440

<sup>59</sup> Hua, Wen. (2013). P78

Results show that the negative relation between use of social media and upward social comparison doesn't mean that women don't engage in upward social comparison at all. Percentages show that the minority of the women who participated in the questionnaire did encounter upward or downward social comparison. Furthermore, when women do engage in upward social comparison, results of Pearson's  $r$  reveal a moderate positive relation between upward social comparison, self-objectification and downward social comparison. For those women apply; the more they engage in upward social comparison on social media, the more they self-objectify themselves, and engage in downward social comparison, thus resulting in dieting, putting on make-up or spending extra time and care on their appearances, and a lower self-esteem. These results are in accordance with the expectations. Several researchers have argued that social comparison often occurs next to self-objectification when using social media. Feltman & Szymanski (2018) have argued that the more people use Instagram, the more they tend to self-objectify themselves which results in body surveillance. Internalization of cultural standards of beauty and upward social comparison are hereby explanatory factors. A similar result was found by Fardouly et al. (2017); Instagram use was linked to self-objectification, mediated by again appearance comparison and internalization of beauty standards.

The last results explain the third sub-question, where objectification of women in the Chinese society and the importance of beauty is examined. Results of the questionnaire shows that the majority of the Chinese women who have participated feel objectified. Participants feel that women in China are mostly sexually objectified by men, and by the media. Furthermore, they feel like when using women's bodies in advertisements that these will be more effective than if men's bodies are used. When asking in which aspects they think beauty is important, the majority of the women agree that being beautiful definitely helps in finding a husband or a job. These results are in line with the expected results and represent similar findings as Hua (2013); Xu and Feiner (2007); and Yang (2011). These show that just like in the west, women in China are objectified as well. They argue that the beauty economy increases the objectification of women and these objectifications are intensified by the media. Particularly with the extensive use of social media, these sexual objectifications are even more present. Xu and Feiner (2007) emphasize that women in China today are 'increasingly viewed in terms of what they look like rather than what they can do'. The beauty market in China has been a factor in the changing social position of women. Women's bodies are considered as a commodity in capitalist production since it increasingly benefits the Chinese

economy.<sup>60</sup> Family of the Chinese women don't consider beauty to be important according to the questionnaire. Also, participants don't agree with the statement that beauty equals success. These results differ from the literature; Hua (2013) noticed a trend in which parents give plastic surgery to their daughters as a gift. These kinds of gifts would serve as an 'investment' for their future career and marriage. In this way, her argument does imply that Chinese women consider that beauty equals success. However, it is important to realise that Hua (2013), who examines the recent plastic surgery trend and only interviews women who are interested in or have undergone plastic surgery, might be biased in her conclusions and assumptions.

### 5.1. Chinese social media vs traditional media

While many researchers have investigated the role of traditional media (newspapers, magazines, TV etc.), this research attempts to focus on social media. The traditional media differs from social media, therefore, social media is able to affect young adolescent women in different ways. First of all, social media is more interactive than traditional media. Users can communicate with each other which makes the influence of peers more present. Peers are able to assert their influence through likes or comments on pictures. Secondly, social media is much more personal than traditional media. People upload messages or pictures about their life, or beliefs. Furthermore, there are many ways to edit or Photoshop your picture, thus letting your followers believe you have a 'perfect' life. Thirdly, the online aspect of it all is important. Users are able to create online content everywhere and every hour they want. All of these functions enable users even more to engage in social comparison, or self-objectification (Perloff, 2014).

Researchers that have examined the role of social media in social comparison, self-objectification and body dissatisfaction is mostly based on western media such as Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest. However, research done for this thesis is mostly based on Chinese social media, and to my knowledge, no research has examined the effects of Chinese social media. In the questionnaire I have asked participants if they use Weibo, Weixin, RenRen, and Instagram. Instagram is the only western social media, but it is included into the questionnaire since this type of social media is also used a lot by Chinese people.

Weibo, short for Sina Weibo, is one of China's most popular social media platforms. Weibo can be compared to a combination between Facebook or Twitter, and functions as a

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<sup>60</sup>Xu, G., & Feiner, S. (2007), P309

micro blog. Weibo enables users to upload pictures, video's, gifs and small blogposts (up to 140 characters). Just like twitter and Instagram, one can follow another individual without them following back. This kind of social media allows Chinese people to follow Chinese celebrities, and to feel part of their life. These Chinese celebrities show little pieces of their life and have thousands of followers. Furthermore, just like in the west, platforms like Weibo and Instagram has enabled for the arrival of social media celebrities. These are influencers known from their Weibo account, and they have built their life and work around social media.<sup>61</sup>

Weixin or WeChat, is another Chinese social media which is very popular. It functions as a messaging app, similar to WhatsApp, but has many more functions to it. The basics of messaging are included such as sending pictures, video's, voice memo's, video calling, and group messaging. Use of messaging with WeChat differs from western countries; Chinese people rather use voice memos to communicate than simple text messages. Next to the messaging function, WeChat also has a 'moments' page. The moments page is similar to timelines on Facebook. People can share pictures or messages of their day or thoughts. Only persons who they have connected with can see those messages, and friends can like or comment under your post. Next to moments, there is also a function that allows you to connect to strange persons close to you.<sup>62</sup> Recently, WeChat has come up with another new function: WePay. This allows users to pay with their mobile phone through the WeChat app, in which your bank account is linked to your Wechat account.<sup>63</sup>

The third social media mentioned in the questionnaire is RenRen. This social media network holds the same functions as Facebook, therefore it has also been called the Chinese equivalent of Facebook. However, according to the results, none of the participant use RenRen. An article at Technode points out that RenRen has lost its popularity since the coming of WeChat and Weibo.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Koetse, Manya. (2017). An Introduction to Sina Weibo: Background and Status Quo. Via <https://www.whatsonweibo.com/sinaweibo/#one>

<sup>62</sup> Koetse, Manya. (2014). Introduction to WeChat – Short Guide to China's Super App. Via <https://www.whatsonweibo.com/whatswechat/>

<sup>63</sup> Mozur, Paul. (2017). In Urban China, Cash Is Rapidly Becoming Obsolete. Via <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/16/business/china-cash-smartphone-payments.html>

<sup>64</sup> Liao, Rita. (2018). Shares of Renren—China's forgotten social network—just jumped after ICO announcement. Via <https://technode.com/2018/01/04/renren-shares-ico/>

## 5.2. Limitations and suggestions for further research

When conducting the questionnaire and analysing the results, I have stumbled upon some limitations. The first problem I have come across is finding enough Chinese women willing to participate in the research. The number of participants in the questionnaire might be too few to give an accurate representation of Chinese women. My goal was to find at least 60 to 70 women for the questionnaire, however it turned out to be more difficult than I thought to find that number of participants since the research was not conducted in China and Chinese women were hard to find. In the end I have only been able to find 48 Chinese women.

Secondly, my analysis of the results is statistically not very strong. I have used simple descriptive statistics in SPSS in order to analyse the results, due to a lack of statistical knowledge and experience.

Furthermore, I have distributed the questions among Chinese women, however, I know that some of those Chinese women have lived abroad for a year or more. Their time abroad in the western world might have influenced their view on beauty, which could have influenced my questionnaire results. However, my research focus did not contain the influence of globalization, thus I have not included questions about globalization, if they have ever lived abroad, or how their time abroad could have influenced their perceptions about beauty.

Since I have focussed especially on the aspect of how social media affects standards of Chinese women, I have less focused on the social impact of beauty. I have included a small part about the importance of beauty. However, after I have conducted the research and analysed the results, some questions popped into my head. What beauty does beauty mean for Chinese women, how it impacts their lives, and what is their definition of beauty for example.

Lastly, it would also be interesting to examine the difference between traditional media and social media. Since either the influence of traditional media or social media on beauty standards is researched, comparing the traditional media against social media can serve as another topic for further research.

## 6. Conclusion

In this thesis, the topic of beauty and social media is researched in order to answer the main research question. The main research question asks to what extent social media affects beauty standards of Chinese adolescent women. In order to answer this main question, I have formed three sub-questions in relation to beauty and Chinese women. Beauty has many interpretations and can affect women in different kinds of ways. But most importantly, social media is a very important factor which can influence a women's view on beauty. When reading literature about this topic, three theories are particularly often used in consequences of social media: social comparison, self-objectification and objectification. Social comparison is part of sociocultural theory of the body, which explains how (social) media can lead to body dissatisfaction. Objectification, or also called the 'male gaze', is a term often used among feminists. It explains how women are looked upon by men, and how appearance or beauty standards can lead to the oppression of women. The third theory, self-objectification is often a result from objectification, and is often mentioned next to social comparison in theories about how social media leads to body dissatisfaction or a low self-esteem.

To get to know the of the opinion of Chinese women about this topic, a questionnaire is set up. A total of 48 women have participated in the questionnaire. The sub-questions are analysed on the basis of data gathered from the questionnaire, and a descriptive analysis is conducted with SPSS and results are calculated in percentages, and Pearson's  $r$  correlation is used in order to examine the relationship between time spend on social media, social comparison, self-objectification and objectification. Also the relation between upward social comparison, downward social comparison and self-objectification is researched.

The main findings of the questionnaire suggest that (1) Chinese adolescent women do engage in social comparison and sometimes in self-objectification processes, (2) social comparison and self-objectification leads to practices such as wearing make-up or dieting, but it does not necessarily lead to lower self-esteem or body dissatisfaction, (3) when engaging in upward social comparison, it does however lead to self-objectification, and downward social comparison, (4) women feel objectified in the Chinese society. Lastly (5) women attach great social value to beauty in terms of career or love life, however they don't necessarily think that being beautiful equals success, also their family doesn't give great value to the importance of beauty.

So looking at the main research question; the majority of the women in this survey are pretty self-confident, and social media does only affect their view on beauty and beauty

practices only to a certain extent. And although social media does affect women in the sense that they start to compare themselves, when spending more time on social media, it doesn't immediately result in upward or downward social comparison. But when they engage in upward social comparison, they also tend to objectify themselves more, and engage in downward social comparison. This results in insecurity, wearing make-up or go on a diet. It does not lead however to more extreme consequences such as posting provocative pictures of longing to have plastic surgery.

However, beauty will always be a sensitive topic among many women all over the world, and women should not let their happiness and self-worth depend on how beautiful they are. They should remember that beauty is not only shown from the outside, but also from the inside.

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# Appendix 1. Questionnaire

## General information and usage of social media

1. How old are you? / 你多大?  
.... Years old / .....岁
2. How many social media accounts do you check out every week?  
你每个星期会用多少个社交媒体账号?  
[...]0 [...]1-2 [...]3-4 [...]5-6 [...]more .... /更多
3. What kind of social media do you use? (check all that apply)  
你用什么样的社交媒体? (都可以选择)  
[...]Weibo / 微博      [...] Weixin / 微信 [...] 人人    [...] Instagram [...] other / 别的
4. How many hours a day do you usually spend on social media?  
你每天花费多少时间在社交媒体上?  
  
..... hours a day / 每天....个小时
5. What activities do you carry out on social media? (check all that apply)  
你在社交媒体做什么? (都可以选择)  
  
[...] looking at friends' profiles / 看朋友社交媒体账户的资料  
[...] posting pictures and comments / 发照片和评论  
[...] looking at pictures of celebrities and models / 浏览名人或/和麻豆的照片  
[...] view fashion magazines / 看时装杂志  
[...] chatting with friends / 跟朋友聊天  
[...] other / 别的

## Social comparison

The next questions will be about beauty and social media. Rate on a scale from 1 till 4 how much you relate to the following statements. Rate 1 if you don't relate to it and rate 4 if you can relate to it.

1 = I can't relate at all , 2 = I can relate just a little bit, 3 = I can relate most of the time, 4 = I can totally relate.

下面的声明关于社交媒体和外貌。请一到四的比率表明你对这个声明的赞同程度。如果你没赞同的话选 1. 如果你完全赞同选 4.

	1	2	3	4
6. When looking at social media I often compare the way I look with other people's appearance.				

使用社交媒体的时候，我常常跟别人的样子相比。				
7. When looking at social media, I often think that my friends are prettier than I am. 在使用社交媒体的时候，我常常觉得我的朋友比我美。				
8. After looking at pictures on social media of women, who I consider beautiful, I feel more insecure about my appearances 在看到社交媒体上的美女以后，我常常会觉得不自信。				
9. I feel pressurized to change my appearance after looking at beautiful women on social media. 看美女在社会媒体以后，我会感觉到外貌上的压力。				
10. The way I look is very important to me when posting a picture on social media. 发表照片在社交媒体的时候，外貌很重要。				
11. The number of likes and (good) comments does influence my self-esteem positively 赞和评论的数量对我的自尊有积极的影响。				
12. After looking at famous models and celebrities who had plastic surgery, I think they look more attractive 看做过整形手术的网红，我认为她们很漂亮。				
13. When looking at slender models and celebrities on social media, I feel insecure about my own body. 在社交媒体看到名人人都很瘦后，我对自己的身材不满意。				
14. I care what other people think of my appearance. 我对别人的意见很重视。				
15. After watching people's profiles who I believe to be less pretty than I am, I feel more satisfied with my own appearance 在社交媒体看到比自己丑的，你会对自己的呀规则更满意。				
16. I believe social media networks create social pressure for their users 我觉得社交媒体对用户造成压力。				
17. When posting a picture on social media, I am not concerned about what others think of it. 发表照片在社交媒体的时候，别人的意见不那么重要。				

### Self- Objectification

How much do you agree with the following statements?

你对于这个声明同意还是不同意？

	Strongly disagree 强烈反对	Disagree 反对	Agree 同意	strongly agree 强烈同意
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18. Appearance is of more importance for women than for men. 女人的外貌比男人的外貌重要。				
19. The more attention I give to the way I look, the more confident I get. 如果我多注意我的样子，我就会更有自信。				
20. Social media portrays realistic ideas of beautiful women 社交媒体揭露了美女们的现实想法。				
21. Women in the media and on the internet set the standard for other women's beauty 女人在网络媒体上对别的女人有自己的标准。				
22. I would do plastic surgery in order to change my appearance 我原意去整形。				

### Self-objectification

How often have these situations occurred?

这个情况发生的频率？

	Never 没事	sometimes 有时候	Often 常常	always 总是
23. Have you ever felt pressurized to adhere to a beauty standards you see on social media? 你有感受到社交媒体美丽标准带来的压力？				
24. Have you ever posted provocative pictures on social media in order to get more likes? 你有没有为了获得更多赞贴更火辣的照片在社交媒体？				
25. Have you ever changed your appearance because your environment liked you better that way? 你有没有改变过容貌，因为朋友家人的想法？				
26. Have you ever used Photoshop to make yourself look prettier? 你有没有用 Photoshop？				
27. Have you ever dieted because you feel insecure about your own body?				

因为你觉得不自信，你有没有节食？				
28. When I wear make-up, I feel more confident 我化妆的时候，比较自信。				
29. I often doll myself up because I think men like me better this way. 我常常化妆，因为我觉得男人喜欢化妆的女人。				

### Objectification

How much do you agree with the following statements?

你对于这个声明同意还是不同意？

	Strongly disagree 强烈反对	Disagree 反对	Agree 同意	strongly agree 强烈同意
30. Looking pretty brings advantages in finding a job 外貌美丽对找工作有帮助。				
31. When I look beautiful finding a husband will be easier 我如果很漂亮，找对象会更简单。				
32. Being beautiful equals success in life 长得漂亮等于人生的成功。				
33. My family thinks it is important that I look beautiful 我家人觉得我的样子很重要。				
34. I think that men often look like me like I am an object 在我看来，男人常常物化我。				
35. Advertisements showing women's bodies will be more effective than showing men's bodies. 广告透露出女人的身材比男人身材更有用。				
36. Women in magazines and films are often sexually portrayed 杂志和电影中的女人常常被性感、欲化地刻画。				

## Appendix 2. Results of the questionnaire

Table 4. Results of questions 6 till 17 – Social comparison

	1	2	3	4
6. When looking at social media I often compare the way I look with other people's appearance. 使用社交媒体的时候，我常常跟别人的样子相比。	N=9 18,8%	N=6 12,5%	N=20 41,7%	N=13 27,1%
7. When looking at social media, I often think that my friends are prettier than I am. 在使用社交媒体的时候，我常常觉得我的朋友比我美。	N=13 27,1%	N=21 43,8%	N=10 20,8%	N=4 8,3%
8. After looking at pictures on social media of women, who I consider beautiful, I feel more insecure about my appearances 在看到社交媒体上的美女以后，我常常会觉得不自信。	N=17 35,4%	N=15 31,3%	N=8 16,7%	N=7 14,6%
9. I feel pressurized to change my appearance after looking at beautiful women on social media. 看美女在社会媒体以后，我会感觉到外貌上的压力。	N=15 31,9%	N=19 40,4%	N=11 23,4%	N=2 4,3%
10. The way I look is very important to me when posting a picture on social media. 发表照片在社交媒体的时候，外貌很重要。	N=2 4,3%	N=11 23,4%	N=21 4,7%	N=13 27,1%
11. The number of likes and (good) comments does influence my self-esteem positively 赞和评论的数量对我的自尊有积极的影响。	N=9 19,1%	N=13 27,7%	N=17 36,7%	N=8 17,0%
12. After looking at famous models and celebrities who had plastic surgery, I think they look more attractive 看做过整形手术的网红，我认为她们很漂亮。	N=24 51,1%	N=11 23,4%	N=10 21,3%	N=2 4,3%
13. When looking at slender models and celebrities on social media, I feel insecure about my own body. 在社交媒体看到名人人都很瘦后，我对自己的身材不满意。	N=19 40,4%	N=12 25,5%	N=11 23,4%	N=5 10,6%
14. I care what other people think of my appearance 我对别人的意见很重视。	N=4 8,5%	N=10 21,3%	N=24 51,1%	N=9 19,1%
15. After watching people's profiles who I believe to be less pretty than I am, I feel more satisfied with my own appearance 在社交媒体看到比自己丑的，你会对自己的呀规则更满意。	N=18 38,3%	N=18 38,3%	N=10 20,8%	N=1 2,1%
16. I believe social media networks create social pressure for their users 我觉得社交媒体对用户造成压力。	N=8 17,0%	N=5 10,6%	N=21 44,7%	N=13 27,7%
17. When posting a picture on social media, I am not concerned about what others think of it.	N=8	N=24	N=10	N=5

发表照片在社交媒体的时候，别人的意见不那么重要。	17,0%	51,1%	21,3%	10,6%
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Table 5. Results of questions 18 till 29 – Self-objectification

	Strongly disagree 强烈反对	Disagree 反对	Agree 同意	strongly agree 强烈同意
18. Appearance is of more importance for women than for men. 女人的外貌比男人的外貌重要。	N=3 6,4%	N=13 27,7%	N=25 53,2%	N=6 12,8%
19. The more attention I give to the way I look, the more confident I get. 如果我多注意我的样子，我就会更有自信。	N=1 2,1%	N=15 31,9%	N=27 57,4%	N=4 8,5%
20. Social media portrays realistic ideas of beautiful women 社交媒体揭露了美女们的现实想法。	N=16 34,0%	N=17 36,2%	N=11 23,4%	N=3 6,4%
21. Women in the media and on the internet set the standard for other women's beauty 女人在网络媒体上对别的女人有自己的标准。	N=1 2,1%	N=4 8,5%	N=36 76,6%	N=6 12,8%
22. I would do plastic surgery in order to change my appearance 我原意去整形。	N=24 51,1%	N=13 27,7%	N=8 17,0%	N=2 4,3%

How often have these situations occurred?

这个情况发生的频率？

	Never 没事	sometimes 有时候	often 常常	always 总是
23. Have you ever felt pressurized to adhere to a beauty standards you see on social media? 你有感受到社交媒体美丽标准带来的压力？	N=10 21,3%	N=24 51,1%	N=11 23,4%	N=2 4,3%
24. Have you ever posted provocative pictures on social media in order to get more likes? 你有没有为了获得更多赞贴更火辣的照片在社交媒体？	N=36 76,6%	N=9 19,1%	N=2 4,3%	N=0

25. Have you ever changed your appearance because your environment liked you better that way? 你有没有改变过容貌，因为朋友家人的想法？	N=24 51,1%	N=18 38,3%	N=5 10,6%	N=0
26. Have you ever used Photoshop to make yourself look prettier? 你有没有用 Photoshop ？	N=26 55,3%	N=11 23,4%	N=8 17,0%	N=2 4,3%
27. Have you ever dieted because you feel insecure about your own body? 因为你觉得不自信，你有没有节食？	N=19 40,4%	N=22 26,8%	N=5 10,6%	N=1 2,1%
28. When I wear make-up, I feel more confident 我化妆的时候，比较自信。	N=5 10,6%	N=17 36,2%	N=14 29,8%	N=11 23,4%
29. I often doll myself up because I think men like me better this way. 我常常化妆，因为我觉得男人喜欢化妆的女人。	N= 19 40,4%	N=18 38,3%	N=5 10,6%	N=5 10,6%

Table 6. Results of question 30 till 36 - Objectification

	Strongly disagree 反对 强烈反对	Disagree 反对	Agree 同意	strongly agree 强烈同意
30. Looking pretty brings advantages in finding a job 外貌美丽对找工作有帮助。	N=0	N=8 16,7%	N=26 55,3%	N=13 27,7%
31. When I look beautiful finding a husband will be easier 我如果很漂亮，找对象会更简单。	N=4 8,5%	N=8 17,0%	N=28 59,6%	N=7 14,9%
32. Being beautiful equals success in life 长得漂亮等于人生的成功。	N=8 17,0%	N=26 55,3%	N=13 27,7%	N=0
33. My family thinks it is important that I look beautiful 我家人觉得我的样子很重要。	N=6 12,8%	N=27 57,4%	N=9 19,1%	N=5 10,6%
34. I think that men often look like me like I am an object 在我看来，男人常常物化我。	N=3 6,4%	N=17 36,2%	N=21 44,7%	N=6 12,8%
35. Advertisements showing women's bodies will be more effective than showing men's bodies. 广告透露出女人的身材比男人身材更 有用。	N=3 6,4%	N=16 42,6%	N=20 44,7%	N=8 17,0%

<p>36. Women in magazines and films are often sexually portrayed  杂志和电影中的女人常常被性感、欲化地刻画。</p>	N=0	N=4 8,5%	N=29 61,7%	N=14 29,8%
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