

Research on the Influence of Youth's Use of Digital Beautification Technology on Their Cognition of Real Self Image

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Abstract

With the widespread use of social media and the continuous progress of digital beautification technology, more and more young people will use beautification technology to publish photos after drawing on social platforms. After browsing a large number of beautified photos, users will experience self-objectification and upward social comparison behavior. This paper uses the method of literature review to study whether the use of digital beautification technology will have a negative impact on self-image and appearance anxiety. The study found that the long-term use of digital beautification technology will cause individuals' dissatisfaction or even resistance to the real self-image. There was a U-shaped linear relationship between the use of digital beautification technology and appearance anxiety. That is to say, the moderate use of beautification technology is conducive to relieving appearance anxiety; the high frequency use of beautification technology will greatly increase appearance anxiety and social anxiety. Therefore, young people should appropriately use beautification technology and establish correct aesthetic standards in the future.

Keywords

digital beautification technology, self-image, appearance anxiety

1. Introduction

In this era of rapid development of science and technology, people have more and more ways to beautify their face and bodies. With the continuous progress and development of beautification technology, individuals are not limited to the transformation of their own appearance image in reality. More and more people choose to transform the photos taken with mobile phones, cameras, and other electronic devices. Digital beautification technology was first developed in Asia [1]. At first, it only modified the face, and then gradually developed to beautify all the details of the whole body. Modifying the self-image in the picture is far more efficient, convenient, and low-cost than transforming the real appearance image. Transforming self-image is no longer a matter that requires a lot of time and money to achieve [2]. However, frequent use of beautification tools will lead to social aesthetic deformity and social anxiety [3].

Due to the rapid rise of social media in recent years, more and more users are using these platforms every day. Users share beautified photos through social platforms, prompting more and more people to use digital beautification tools to pursue an ideal self-image. The beautified photos continue to strengthen the youth's

attention to self-image in the dissemination, and promote their tendency of self objectification, that is, Individuals begin to examine and evaluate their appearance from an external perspective, viewing the body as an object judged by others, rather than experiencing it as an embodied subject. This trend is further reinforced by a large number of self-portraits that individuals constantly upload to social platforms [4]. Driven by the upward social comparison, the degree of photo editing continues to strengthen, resulting in the growing difference between personal online images and actual appearance. [5]. Young people began to examine and judge the body as a detached object, and individuals began to be unable to face up to their actual body image. Strengthen the youth's lack of confidence in the realistic appearance image [3].

The photos released by individuals are usually photos that can cover up personal shortcomings (such as rough skin) after being beautified. Therefore, individuals gradually increase the management and control of their online self-image to ensure that their online image is consistent with their ideal appearance. This process further weakens young people's confidence in their actual appearance. which will strengthen the individual's anxiety about the real appearance [5]. Therefore, this study is of great significance to summarize the literature and propose how young people should use digital beautification technology and maintain a clear understanding of their real self-image.

The purpose of this study is to explore the influence mechanism of youth's use of digital beautification technology on their self-cognitive image, and to investigate whether this use behavior can induce appearance anxiety and social anxiety. This paper adopts the research method of literature review. This paper attempts to collect and summarize the different analysis angles and restrictions of various literatures, so as to find out whether the different frequency, motivation, and intensity of the use of beautification technology will affect the degree of deviation of young people's self-image.

2. Concept Definition

2.1 Definition of Self Cognitive Image

Self image cognition: Body image refers to an individual's subjective perception, thinking, and emotional experience of physical appearance. [6]. It covers three dimensions: cognitive evaluation, emotional response, and behavioral tendencies [7]. This is the basic concept of self-cognitive image. Research shows that multiple factors, including self-objectification, upward social comparison, and selfie culture, have contributed to individuals' increasingly distorted perception of their own self-image, and they are eager to shape their personal image into an ideal image that meets the aesthetic standards through digital beautification technology [2].

2.2 Appearance Anxiety

Appearance anxiety is subordinate to social anxiety. Acceptance or positive evaluation, “for example, appearance anxiety refers to the tension and distress caused by the fear that one's appearance will not be accepted or positively evaluated by others. [8]. The behavior of using beautification technology to modify their own images for a long time will significantly increase the appearance anxiety and social anxiety.

3. The Relationship Between Beautification Technology and Self-cognitive Image

Existing studies have shown that the overuse of digital beautification tools will enhance teenagers' dissatisfaction with their real body image, and the core lies in the strengthening of self-objectification. First of all, self-objectification is to examine one's own image from the perspective of a bystander, so as to criticize and judge one's own image [9]. With the increase in the number of users of social platforms such as instagram, the appeal and impact of the communication content on the platform on users have increased. When users see a large number of beautified photos, users' desire to improve their image becomes more and more intense. Digital beautification technology allows users to envision the possibility of achieving an idealized appearance. Users begin to regard their bodies as objects that can be examined and evaluated, thereby setting increasingly demanding standards for their own appearance. Individuals impose strict standards on their appearance in photos, and focus too much on their appearance in front of camera. This will lead to a decline in individual satisfaction with their own body. This negative emotion towards their own

image makes individuals eager to transform their realistic image into an ideal image through medical beauty [10].

Secondly, the photos after digital beautification have been widely spread, and the opportunity for individuals to make upward comparison has greatly increased, thus aggravating the dissatisfaction of individuals with their own image. Frequent browsing of social media will greatly increase young people's dissatisfaction with their bodies. Social comparison is to evaluate one's ability and value by comparing with others [11]. Social media platforms continue to convey photos transformed by digital beautification technology to users' mobile phones, strengthening users' upward comparison. Users will compare the self shot or refined life photos carefully modified by others with their own realistic image, thus questioning and denying their true appearance. Many studies have shown that social comparison behavior will have an impact on self-image cognition, and Individuals compare their appearance with a large number of edited photos released by beautiful women and celebrities on social platforms [10]. This behavior of frequently comparing the self realistic image with the beautified image will strengthen the individual's inferiority complex [7]. Individuals belittle the real appearance too much in their hearts, which leads to the negative cognitive bias of their appearance.

In addition, the study showed that the incidence of upward comparison behavior in young women was higher than that in men. Women are more likely to be influenced by media and physical appearance [12]. Nine out of ten British women choose to use beautification technology to modify photos before sending them to social platforms [13]. Introducing to women to the underlying logic of beautifying image communication in social media helps women reduce appearance anxiety and social anxiety [14]. The use of beautification technology also has a positive impact on the transformation of self-image. For example, Tufail et al. Conducted a survey of high school students in Italy. The study found that young women are willing to set higher standards for their true appearance and reduce their dependence on beautification tools. This is conducive to the female group to take the initiative to transform their real self-image. This suggests that psychological factors specific to women play a moderating role in the relationship between beautification tool use and self-image cognition.

To sum up, the existing research shows that frequent use of beautification technology will damage the real self's cognitive image. To a certain extent, the reasonable use of beautification technology to modify the photos is conducive to individuals' initiative to transform their realistic self-image in a more healthy and beautiful direction. However, due to the differences between different cultural backgrounds and individual self-esteem levels, the impact mechanism is still controversial, and future research needs to further explore related issues. In order to have a more comprehensive and objective understanding of the impact of digital beautification technology on self-image.

4. Whether The Use of Digital Beautification Technology Will Definitely Cause Appearance Anxiety and Social Anxiety

The research of Lian and Chen shows that the relationship between digital beautification technology and social anxiety is not a simple linear relationship, but a complex U-shaped curve relationship.

This conclusion comes from the study of 68 people with experience in using digital beautification technology in a university in China. The subjects were divided into an experimental group and a control group. The control group was given 10 minutes to write a brief self-introduction to present to the other participants. The experimental group had 10 minutes to take their own photos, revise their pictures, and publish them to the social platform. Four subjects in the experimental group who failed to complete the task within the allotted time were excluded from the analysis. Therefore, the effective subjects were 15 males and 49 females with social platform accounts.

The results showed that people who used digital beautification technology only once had significantly higher state appearance anxiety. For those who often use digital beautification technology, there is a U-shaped relationship between their frequency of use and appearance anxiety. When the frequency of using digital cosmetic technology is relatively low, the anxiety will decrease with the increase of the use rate; When the frequency of use is at a high level, the degree of anxiety will increase rapidly. In this experiment, there are three mediating variables: physical monitoring, perceptual control, and positive social feedback.

Physical surveillance is a positive mediator, and the occupation effect is the most significant. Perceived control and positive social feedback are negative mediators. Among them, the level of body monitoring of the people who performed facial and body revision at the same time was higher than that of the people who performed local revision. The more people who monitor their bodies, the more they will pay attention to their appearance defects, and the more serious the appearance anxiety and social anxiety [2]. The use of digital beautification technology has dual effects: in the case of moderate revision and control of the frequency of use, it will alleviate the appearance anxiety caused by showing one's appearance; However, when photos are excessively edited, and the technology is used at a high frequency, it tends to undermine individuals' confidence in their actual appearance and aggravate both appearance anxiety and social anxiety.

The content released by young people on social media will be paid attention to and commented on, which will have a high probability of producing a sense of imaginary audience, which will make young people want to release exquisite photos that cater to the audience's aesthetics. From this, the Youth Association has gained the positive motivation to take selfies and revise pictures. Driven by the desire for positive evaluation, young people are increasingly concerned about whether their beautified photos are perfect. Experience the aesthetic standard of internalization and externalization. In the process of pursuing the ideal appearance image, young people will not recognize their own appearance. This leads to the appearance anxiety and social anxiety of young people [5]. Research shows that young people's discrimination of over-beautified pictures published on social platforms depends on improving their social media recognition ability [15].

Many studies have shown that there are gender differences in the behavior of using digital beautification technology and social anxiety. Women are more vulnerable to media and appearance evaluation. The phenomenon that young women share and beautify photos on social platforms is becoming increasingly common, which leads to the homogenization and distortion of aesthetic standards within society [3]. This has contributed to a growing trend of ... self-image. The willingness of young Chinese women to undergo cosmetic surgery has greatly increased. Changed most women's views on cosmetic surgery [3].

To sum up, existing studies can basically infer that excessive use of digital beautification technology will cause appearance anxiety and social anxiety. Women's behavior of using beautification technology to edit self portraits will aggravate their appearance anxiety. Men are less likely to use beautifying tools than women. Men use beautification technology to edit pictures for different purposes than women. Men are mainly used to show their social values and status. Therefore, men's appearance anxiety caused by the use of beautification tools is lower than women 's. And the use of beautification technology has a U-shaped relationship with appearance anxiety and social anxiety, which is not a direct linear correlation.

5. Discussion and Suggestion

Through the systematic collation of relevant studies, this review draws the following conclusions: first, under the influence of self objectification and social comparative behavior, the excessive use of digital beautification technology will lead to the over beautification of the ideal image and the devaluation of self-image cognition of young people [10]. Second, there is a complex U-shaped relationship between the use of digital beautification technology and social anxiety, and a relatively low level of use frequency will alleviate social anxiety; Higher than the relative value will aggravate social anxiety [2]. Third, the psychological problems caused by the use of digital beautification technology are affected by gender and social media communication. Women are more likely to be attracted and influenced by the widely spread beautified pictures on social platforms, resulting in dissatisfaction with their own image and appearance anxiety. Based on the above conclusions, this paper gives the following suggestions: for individuals, youth groups should improve their media literacy and identify the cognitive bias caused by social comparison. It is suggested that young people resist uncritical acceptance of the mainstream aesthetic trend, recognize that media content is usually edited and planned, and cultivate a more acceptable attitude towards its true appearance, while reducing their dependence on beautification tools, and have the courage to face the real themselves and reduce their dependence on beautification technology. At the social level, the whole society should reach a consensus to reduce the excessive spread of network image, and call on the whole society to establish a healthy concept of self-image. The society should strengthen the ability to judge network information. At the media platform level, all major platforms should consciously strengthen supervision and establish clear labeling of beautified content to improve the transparency of beautified content on the platform. So as to

prevent the spread of abnormal aesthetics as far as possible. The platform should guide users to publish the content of mild beauty or no beauty, so as to reduce the youth's belittling and evasive behavior towards the real self-image.

6. Conclusion

To sum up, the high frequency of youth's use of digital beautification technology will lead to a negative impact on their self-image. Youth's use of digital beautification technology is associated with appearance anxiety, and the relationship shows a U-shaped linear relationship. Therefore, under the situation that the trend of using digital beautification technology to beautify pictures cannot be changed, young people should reasonably treat the reality that there is a difference between their self-image and real appearance after online modification. Youth's should reduce the frequency of the use of beautification technology within their own acceptable range, so as to ensure that they can not produce or reduce appearance anxiety. This study enables young people to develop a more thorough and nuanced understanding of how digital beautification technology may affect their mental well-being. Understanding the concepts brought about by social media communication is not all beneficial and desirable. So as to help young people grow up healthily and reduce their psychological burden.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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