

# Study on Appearance Anxiety of Chinese High School Students Caused by TikTok, a Chinese Short Video Software

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**Abstract.** TikTok is a socialize platform that people from all ages can use to kill time and socialize. The study on appearance anxiety of Chinese high school students caused by TikTok, a Chinese short video software can investigate the reason for appearance anxiety of high school student and find solution for it. Questionnaire was used for collecting data, via sharing on social media using computer. The questionnaire mainly ask question about influence of internet influencer on high school student, and basic information about high school student using TikTok. The willingness that causes high school students' appearance anxiety are high school students' blind support for Internet celebrities and unconditional acceptance of the information conveyed by Internet celebrities, the distortion of high school students' aesthetic values, and the one-sidedness and limitations of high school students' aesthetics. Possible solutions include limiting the time high school students can use TikTok, spreading correct aesthetic values at school and home, spreading more content about correct aesthetic values on TikTok, and suppressing influencers who spread negative aesthetic values.

**Keywords:** Chinese high school student; TikTok; Internet influencer; Internet celebrity; Appearance anxiety.

## 1. Introduction

ByteDance established in 2012. ByteDance is an enterprise that applies artificial intelligence to mobile Internet. It aimed to explore the long-term and open problems of artificial intelligence. The application Jinritoutiao is the first software they invented recommends personalized information for users through massive information collection, data mining and user behavior analysis. This is the rudiment of TikTok.

TikTok is the most famous product of ByteDance. TikTok was established on September 20, 2016, founded by Zhang Yiming, and is a Socialize, and entertain community platform for all ages. TikTok is committed to entertaining fragmented time, and unconsciously kills time. TikTok is a social media, including video sector, live broadcast, e-commerce, social networking, finance, games and other businesses, every user can share daily life in TikTok. User can meet more friends who share similar interest, get information about all kinds of anecdote, purchase commodity, surfing on TikTok watching videos and live broadcast to kill time, or play fun little game on TikTok. Most of the user of the TikTok platform are young age users, and TikTok intended to be design as a video sharing platform to help mass users to express themselves and record their life, through the development and innovation, TikTok become a social media that has variety of purpose and function. Sharing videos become one of the sector of TikTok. TikTok has an advertising revenue account for about 80% of total revenue, advertising revenue is 100 billion Yuan, and TikTok's annual profit is 367.8 billion. The number of TikTok users is 809 million, and about 12.2% of Douyin users are high school students. There is 99 million high school student users in TikTok. Since TikTok was developed, it has won many awards, including 2019 film and television media brand value ranked No. 1 in China. On June 30, 2020, TikTok ranked 79th in the "2020 BrandZ Top 100 Most Valuable Global Brands" list. In June 2022, TikTok was selected as one of the top 100 most valuable global brands in BrandZ in 2022, ranking 53rd. In August 2022, TikTok was selected into the list of "2022 Top 500 World Brands", ranking 140th.

With the continuous development of modern Internet technology, obtaining information is no longer a problem for people, people begin to use electronic equipment to record everything that

happens around them, compared with the traditional paper media era, the media era has a large amount of fragmented information, everyone in the society can talk about their own perspective, insight, and impressions on blogs, social media, forums and other internet network platforms, release text, pictures, or video information. Everyone can search for what interests them. In this case, some information that meets the public's aesthetic taste will inevitably get a high number of views and clicks, and under the commercial operation of the online platform and the publisher themselves, the "Internet celebrity" or "Influencer" was emerged. TikTok is such a social media platform that are continuously gathering and emerging many "Internet celebrities" or "Influencer", and these "Internet celebrities" or "Influencer" are also gradually influencing people and user of this software, from perspective of thinking, values, insight about different aspects and so on. For adolescents, mainly high school students, whose values and perspective toward the world and various aspect are not fully formed, are the most susceptible to influence.

## 2. Literature Review

With social media such as TikTok playing an increasingly important role in high school student's daily life and influencing their perspective and value they watching the world and various aspects, many scholars have carried out research on the influence of those social media on high school students.

According to Zhao YaYun and Wang SuYun's study, they emphasized that pursuing idols and internet celebrities are both positive and negative, and the negative side is much bigger for adolescent, they are easily misdirecting by their childish idolatry, which creates some deviation from the right values and perspective of viewing the world, the negative effect need to eliminate it and suppress through scientific induction to transform them into positive effects [1]. According to Hu WeiCheng's study, he emphasized that internet celebrities are having prominent negative impact, these are going against with the development of adolescent themselves, harmony of a family, and sustainable social development. The solutions for these are communicated and give information to the adolescent, setting up a correct value, setting up role models for adolescent, and improve the management of social media [2]. According to Wang Nan's study, she emphasized that the boom of social media has huge impact on adolescent since they are in the stage of values forming. The mixed of both internet celebrities that have positive values and negative values lead to misdirect of adolescent's values, she talks about the negative impact of internet celebrities can have on the aesthetic standard of high school student and analyze the reasons for the formation of those negative impact [3].

Although there are few studies about the appearance anxiety of Chinese high school student caused by TikTok, there are some studies on the body shape anxiety of female lead by other mainstream social media. According to Chen Lin's study and Man, Quan's study, they are using two different social media, one is TikTok, and another is Weibo, and they emphasized that social media are having a negative effect on the body shape aesthetic of female, and lead to increasingly large proportion of body shape anxiety. She studies about how to use sentences to persuade female to refuse body shape anxiety, and setting up health body shape aesthetic, cultivate individual resistance to body shape anxiety, and cultivate appropriate self-confidence to body shape [4, 5]. However, their study still remains several limitations, such as Chen Lin's study only talks about the solution and way to solve and refuse body shape anxiety, but not talk about why body shape anxieties are forming and how it is forming. This is significant, and according to Yin YanTing's study, and XiaoYing, Yang's study. they talk about the how and why of forming of body shape anxiety, and how social media influence female body image. they emphasized that in the new media environment, the spreading of information on the internet about body shape is having both negative and positive impact. Fashion of spreading own physical features on the internet is both positive and negative values toward adolescents. This may lead to body shape anxiety, the study analysis the mainstream of people who suffering from body shape anxiety, that is adolescents. The study also researches on the forming of body shape anxiety, and how the use of social media can spread and brings body shape anxiety about female [6, 7].

According to Deng ShuHua's study, she emphasized that internet celebrities nowadays are closely related to netizens, Internet celebrities have great exposure and popularity, which can have an important impact on the values of netizens, junior high school students do not have rigorous thinking logic and complete values, and the pursuit of Internet celebrities is very common among them. Internet celebrities have a significant impact on the thinking and values of junior high school students. Internet celebrities can be part of the ways to educate junior high school students. Positive values Internet celebrities have a positive impact on the thoughts and values of junior high school students, while negative energy Internet celebrities will cause students' values and thoughts to be distorted or misdirect the values and thoughts of junior high school students [8]. According to Wang Nan's study, and XueYing, Chen's study. they emphasized that in this new media environment. Internet celebrities are influencing the aesthetic values of high school students. High school students do not have stable aesthetic values, and they are easy to be influenced by Internet celebrities and lead to deviations from the correct values. She talks about four main negative effects that Internet celebrities may bring to high school students, such as the single sidedness of aesthetic value standards, the utilitarianizing of aesthetic value pursuit, the vulgarization of aesthetic value, and the distortion of the judgments of aesthetic value. At the same time, it also talked about strategies for cultivating the aesthetic values of high school students, such as improving the effectiveness of high school political courses, guiding the aesthetic values of high school students in families, creating a positive social media environment, and consciously improve high school student's aesthetic discrimination ability [9, 10].

These studies can help the author to have an understanding of the background information about social media's impact on adolescent and the effect internet celebrities toward high school students. However, there are still some research gaps existed. There is lack of research about the appearance anxiety that social media can have on high school students. The purpose of this paper is to find out how social media can affect the value of high school students; how social media can affect the aesthetic value of high school students and find a solution or to solve the appearance anxiety caused by social media that impact on high school students. For the purpose to achieve the expected purpose of the study and let the result of the study can put into applications. This research will study appearance anxiety of Chinese high school students caused by TikTok, a Chinese short video software.

### 3. Methodology

The methodology used in the research is Questionnaire which is a quantitative method. It can offer a legible analysis of appearance anxiety of Chinese high school students caused by TikTok, a Chinese short video software. Questionnaire is to collect information by asking the participants few questions about the topic and research. To ensure the facticity and reduce demand characteristic of the questionnaire, the questionnaire is anonymous, and protect the privacy of participants. Questionnaire is the most effective and convenient way to collect data. The questionnaire is distributed using computer and people who respond it are all over China. This means that there is extensive amount of user of TikTok received it, and valid questionnaire will be increase as the number of people answer this questionnaire, and this can help researcher to effectively conclude an objective conclusion.

The Questionnaires were performed with [www.wenjuan.com](http://www.wenjuan.com). As the study is about the appearance anxiety of Chinese high school students caused by TikTok, the subjects were chosen from the user of TikTok. The total number of questionnaires collected are 72 questionnaires. The questionnaire format is based on the Likert scale in order to facilitate statistics and comparisons.

The audience of the research topic is high school student who use TikTok, sending questionnaire on the social media is the most effective way to collecting data. In order to get valid results about high school students using TikTok, the questionnaire is post on social media that has the most familiarity among high school students. To receive enough respond for analysis, the questionnaire is open to participants for 5 days. 5 days later, the total number of questionnaires received are 72 questionnaires, and there are 65 valid questionnaires. All participant answering the questionnaires are high school students, and 90% of the participants use the software, TikTok.

## 4. Results

In 65 valid questionnaires, 65 of the participant notice and followed influencer on the internet. The way they notice about internet influencer is 80% from social media. 57% of people suggests that they are the die-hard fans of internet influencers, and 30% of the participant claims that they are not sure about these questions. 60% of the participants spending more than 1hour everyday looking at video of internet influencer. For high school student, social media, and internet influencer are truly part of their life.

There are 76% of the participants consider that the necessary conditions for becoming an Internet celebrity are good appearances, and stature. 52% of participants states that the appeal of internet influencers has both positive and negative impact, and 72% of participants think that internet influencer will causing socio-cultural deformities, and will cause distorted aesthetics. For the question that whether the participants are willing to be an internet influencer if there is a chance to become an internet influencer, 71% of the participant agree with it. Appearance and stature are valued by students, and students are willing and yearn to become internet celebrities.

According to all of the approaches of the first impression of internet celebrities, good appearances and statures are the prevailing one. The appearances and stature of internet influencer has become the most important and first insight way to determine an internet influencer. 51 participants claim that internet influencers have affect their appreciation of beauty, and 48 participants think that internet influencer have impact their dressing and primp. When checking the result of which type of internet influencer participants are more likely to follow, 32 participants out of 72 suggests that they are more likely to follow internet influencer that posting video about their appearance and stature. For high school students, the influence of internet influencer on TikTok would never be neglected.

48% of participants agree that it is acceptable for internet influencer to wear clothing that does not match their gender, and 40% of participants stay in the neutrality. 50 participants out of 72 claim that they will mimic the behavior of the internet influencer they followed, and 44participants suggests that they will mimic the appreciation of beauty of internet influencers. When asking the question of whether internet influencer's values correspond with participant's values, 53 participants out of 72 state that internet influencer's values are correspond with their values. 75% of participants will accept the values of internet influencer when their values are conflicting with internet influencer's values.

57% of participants claim that internet influencer's aesthetic is correspond with their own aesthetic. 30% of participants do not agree or oppose with this statement. 13% of participants' state that internet celebrities' aesthetic is not correspond with their aesthetic. 53% of participants agree that the information internet influencer deliver has influence on their aesthetic value, 36% of participants stay in neutrality, and only 11% of participants state that the information internet influencer deliver has no influence on their own aesthetic values.

40 out of 72 participants state that they want to have similar good-looking appearance and stature with internet influencers. 41 out of 72 participants claim that they like the appearance of internet celebrities and internet celebrities are shifting their aesthetic value. 55 out of 72 participants state that classmates and friends around them are pursuing and mimicking internet influencer.83% of participants suggest that internet influencer's view toward a certain thing will also influence their view toward certain thing.

## 5. Discussion

The first result is the blind worship and support of high school students for Internet celebrities, as well as unconditional trust and acceptance of the information transmitted by Internet celebrities, because Internet celebrities have a lot of fans and great influence on the Internet, which will cause high school students to judge that the things said by Internet celebrities and the values of Internet celebrities are correct and recognized by the public because of the above factors. If high school students' values are different from Internet celebrities, they consider that high school students may consider that there are problems with their own values and aesthetics, and the values and aesthetics

of high school students have not been fully cultivated. Because of the influence of Internet celebrities, high school students will be forced to cater to Internet celebrities' values and aesthetics, thereby changing their values and aesthetics, which leads to the distortion of high school students' aesthetics. The huge number of fans of Internet celebrities and the content disseminated will cause teenagers to blindly trust the information transmitted by Internet celebrities and lack their own judgment of thinking. Due to the blind worship and support and unconditional trust to the information transmitted by internet celebrities, high school student will have appearance anxiety that is unnecessary in right aesthetic values. The solution is to popularize information about establishing correct values in schools, cultivate children's self-confidence in their own values, families and schools work together to cultivate correct values and aesthetics for children, and TikTok's official should strictly control the influencers on this platform to spread content with correct values and aesthetics.

The second result is a distortion of the values and aesthetics of high school students. On the Internet platform, the competition between TikTok Internet celebrities is very fierce. In order to get more attention and gain more followers, so as to earn more profit. Internet celebrities will perform something new, and people usually have a curious attitude towards novel things, so that they can better get attention and gain more fans. And high school students, whose aesthetics and values are not yet fully mature, are likely to be misled by these novelties, causing their values to be distorted. Coupled with the large number of views of Internet celebrities, this will also increase the acceptance of these things by high school students, resulting in the distortion of high school students' aesthetics. TikTok is a diversified platform, there are various styles of Internet celebrities on TikTok, and the information conveyed by different Internet celebrities will lead to the distortion of high school students' values and aesthetics. Its advantage is that high school students can have different aesthetic values, not all of them having the same values, and its disadvantage is that the wrong aesthetics and values will have a bad impact on the development of high school students. With the distortion of aesthetic values, high school student will judge and value their appearance from the perspective of the aesthetic values that the internet celebrities transmitted to them, and this will lead to appearance anxiety. The measures that can be implemented are to spread the right values and aesthetics in schools and at home, promote influencers with the right values and related content, and deal with influencers with distorted and bad values and aesthetics.

The third result is the one-sidedness and limitations of aesthetics of high school students. On TikTok, in order to gain popularity, influencers will imitate videos and content with popularity and following, so as to gain more fans and popularity. This results in tremendous similar videos and information on the TikTok platform. High school students do not yet have the full itinerary of correct aesthetic values, which makes their aesthetic values easily influenced and changed. Browsing a large number of similar videos and content may lead to a one-sidedness aesthetic for high school students. besides, TikTok's intelligent engine recommends videos and content based on what users have recently watched and what content other users have watched the most. This results in users watching content that is similar to what they watched before. The content of the video, as well as the style of the author who made the video, are also similar. According to the result of the questionnaire, high school students had spent more than an hour a day using TikTok, and the aesthetics of high school students are easily influenced by the outside world, watching too many videos containing similarities may lead to affecting the aesthetics of high school students, resulting in single and one-sidedness aesthetic results. With a one sidedness aesthetic results, high school student will only judge their appearance with the aesthetic that delivered by the internet influencer they followed, and thus lead to appearance anxiety among high school students. Implementable solutions include limiting the amount of time high school students can use TikTok software, delivery video and contents of internet influencer with positive aesthetic values to high school students, and the dissemination of information to high school students about establishing correct aesthetic values.

## 6. Conclusion

The research aim of the study is to study the appearance anxiety of Chinese high school students caused by TikTok. The main three reasons for this are the blind support of high school students for Internet celebrities and the unconditional acceptance of the information transmitted by Internet celebrities, the distortion of high school students' aesthetic values, and the one-sidedness and limitations of high school students' aesthetics. Possible solutions include limiting the amount of time high school students can use TikTok, spreading correct aesthetic values at school and home, spreading more content about correct aesthetic values on TikTok, and suppressing influencers who spread negative aesthetic values. The aesthetic values of high school students are not fully mature, they are easily affected by external things, and Internet celebrities have a high degree of attention and popularity. The content they disseminate can easily affect the aesthetic values of high school students, who spend a lot of time on TikTok every day. Watching a lot of videos about different aesthetic values can lead to distortions in the aesthetic values of high school students. Criticizing one's appearance according to wrong aesthetic values can lead to appearance anxiety.

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