

Vanity Sizing and Gen Z Chinese Female Consumers

Xinyao Liu

18027147

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Abstract

Over an extended period, females across different nations have faced significant aesthetic pressures regarding weight reduction. In recent years, discussions surrounding petite-sized attire have gained popularity among Chinese young women, consequently prompting increased concern amongst females regarding alignment between their body image and garment size for showcasing an ideal physique. Vanity sizing refers to by increasing clothing sizes but keeping label sizes the same. Clothing retailers and manufacturers in China intentionally exploit the non-standardization of clothing sizes prevalent in the industry to create vanity sizes that cater to consumers' psychological needs.

This research sought answers to four research questions. Are young Chinese females buying smaller clothes sizes instead of clothes they like because of their self-image? How much have social media and advertising contributed to young Chinese women's consumption of small-size clothing and shaped fashion trends? Do males dictate fashion trends targeted at young Chinese women? And does the emphasis on smaller clothing size have adverse effects on the well-being of young Chinese women?

An online survey of 120 Chinese women aged 18-29 years, was undertaken with the sample gathered by the Dynata research company. Rating scale questions were employed to cover issues of vanity sizing, body image and social expectations.

One quarter of respondents deliberately choose a smaller clothing size than their preferred garment. More than one-quarter associated smaller size garments with feminine attractiveness. 40% believe the thinness aesthetic in society influences their choice of clothing size. 30% believe they are influenced by social media and advertising to buy small sizes of clothing, and 37% compared their body image with celebrities and influencers.

A notable proportion of respondents (22.5%) reported often experiencing instances of receiving comments on their attire from male leaders, colleagues, or classmates in their daily lives. One-quarter of respondents have experienced judgements or criticism of the body image and one-quarter have felt significant pressure regarding body image. 40% felt the pressure to wear small size clothes impacted their happiness and self-esteem significantly or

extremely. Hence, this dissertation explored the implications of these findings for the well-being of Chinese female consumers and explained the academic implications in depth.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor used artificial intelligence tools or generative artificial intelligence tools (unless it is clearly stated, and referenced, along with the purpose of use), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed: _____

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Acknowledgements

The motivation for this dissertation arises from the growing number of young Chinese women who express concerns on social media regarding the sizing discrepancies among various clothing brands, which consequently contribute to body dissatisfaction. They resort to dieting, exercising, and attempting various changes in order to become thinner. I used to be one of them. In my pursuit of fitting into a size S, I restricted my food intake and increased physical activity. However, it is undeniable that these practices had a detrimental impact on my health. Nevertheless, I am undergoing a transformation where instead of seeking comfort with my body image, I have learned to accept my body as it is, even if it does not conform to society's modern standard of thin beauty. Fortunately, I have observed an increasing number of individuals embracing their own body image, which is an information I aim to convey through this dissertation.

From the moment I typed the first English letter until now when the dissertation has evolved from a preliminary idea into a complete. This journey has undoubtedly presented me with numerous challenges, often overwhelmed by countless files in Microsoft Word, confusion tends to set in. However, amidst the obstacles encountered during the writing process of this dissertation, there lies an invaluable opportunity with Professor Ken Hyde as my kind supervisor. His patience and unwavering support have greatly assisted me throughout my studies, and his use of humorous jokes never fails to alleviate nervousness within me. Reflecting upon my experience pursuing a Master's degree in the future, I will still think it as a challenging yet rewarding period.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The primary focus of this dissertation centres around the phenomenon of vanity sizing among young (Generation Z) Chinese females. Subsequently, it delves into the underlying factors contributing to the excessive preoccupation of Chinese young women with their body image and explores the societal gender disparities stemming from issues related to body size. This chapter will explain the research background, aim and research questions and contribution of the research.

1.2 Research Background

This dissertation investigates the issue of size inconsistency in the women's clothing industry in China, which accompanies a global concern for size shrinking. Research indicates the common phenomenon of shrinking size is widely shared across countries (Dockterman, 2016; Paridon, 2023; Kennedy et al., 2009), especially in the female clothing industry (Bishop et al., 2018; Bordo, 2004; Wolf, 1991). Meanwhile, the focus on thinness is no longer confined to Western societies, as it has extended to various Asian countries due to the influences of Westernization and modernization. Consequently, body image anxiety has become prevalent in these regions (Swami, 2015). Hence, to achieve profits maximize, manufacturers in the women's clothing industry have adopted vanity sizing, which promotes sales by labelling clothing as smaller than its actual size. Meanwhile, the media unconsciously guides these women to pay attention to small size to meet the commonly held standards of thinness and beauty in society (Lewis, 2012). Bishop et al.'s (2018) take the example of advertisements to show how the idea of thinness is spread widely by models who can only get jobs if they meet society's standards. However, although there is still evidence that some professional clothing sizes are smaller, this makes it difficult for some non-skinny people to advance in the workplace. Women who conform to mainstream beauty standards begin to compare themselves to those who do not and subjectively use their looks to gain privilege (Bishop et al., 2018). Therefore, the vanity caused by the inability to unify sizes and its impact on young Chinese women is worth exploring in depth.

1.3 Aim and Research Questions

Little scholarly attention has been given to the factors influencing the clothing size in the Chinese women's clothing market. Nevertheless, several researches have examined vanity sizing (Hoegg et al., 2014), the impact of social media (Hu et al., 2022), and Chinese cultural values and society (Hughes et al., 2015; Ping, 2002). The media has played a pivotal role in shaping societal norms and cultural standards of physical appearance, particularly regarding the idealized slender female body, commonly known as the 'thin ideal' (Ketrone and Williams, 2018). This is consistent with the research results of Wang (2022), which she observed that an increase in posts and views on social media correlates with an increase in the likelihood that young Chinese women will buy a particular clothing brand. This could lead some young women to blindly follow slim Internet bloggers and change their appearance to buy the same clothes. Thus, as discussed by Zhang (2023), social media use is strongly associated with body image issues, especially when users engage in certain types of activities on social media, such as comparing their appearance with others. For example, on Douyin (TikTok in Chinese), a short video platform that has recently become popular in China, there is a trend that encourages users to show that they are slim by participating in "body challenges" (Wang, 2022).

However, in the context of today's global aesthetic diversity, the younger generation of Chinese women is dedicated to establishing a non-standardized beauty paradigm in order to alleviate body anxiety. In China, an increasing number of bloggers are sharing photos of themselves wearing plus-size clothing on social platforms like The Red Book, aiming to inspire other women who experience body anxiety (Gao et al., 2022; Hu, et al., 2023).

Overall, the objective of this dissertation is to investigate the factors contributing to the efficacy of vanity sizing and its societal implications, with a specific focus on addressing body image concerns and anxieties among young women in China regarding smaller sizes, ultimately aiming to enhance their self-confidence and self-identity for their body image.

To accomplish these objectives, the following four research questions will be considered:

- Research Question 1: Are young Chinese women (18-29 years old) **buying smaller sizes instead of the clothes they like** because of their self-image?

- Research Question 2: How much have social media and advertising contributed to young Chinese women's consumption of small-size clothing and shaped fashion trends?
- Research Question 3: To what degree do males dictate fashion trends targeted at young Chinese women?
- Research Question 4: In contemporary society, does the emphasis on smaller clothing sizes have adverse effects on the well-being of young Chinese women?

1.4 Contribution

This dissertation unveils deeper social gender inequality by examining vanity sizing, making significant contributions to future scholars in the field of consumer behaviour and society. Moreover, despite the extensive literature on vanity sizing worldwide, there is limited research on sizing in Asian countries, particularly China. Therefore, this dissertation will provide supplementary survey data on sizing issues within China's womenswear industry. Simultaneously, the research holds two practical implications: (1) countering contemporary society's utilization of mass media to promote the standard of "thin is beautiful," and (2) assisting young Chinese women in enhancing their self-awareness and body image identity. Consequently, amidst the rapid development of the Internet, China's online shopping platforms have also experienced substantial growth. However, when selling women's clothing in any retail space, manufacturers should consider offering a broader range of clothing sizes to meet the shopping needs of a larger female consumer base.

Therefore, in the context of the rapid development of the Internet, China's online shopping platform has also witnessed significant advancements. However, irrespective of the retail space for women's clothing, manufacturers should consider a broader range of clothing sizes to cater to the diverse shopping needs of female consumers.

1.5 Structure

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. The Chapter one serves as an introduction to the research topic. The Chapter two presents a comprehensive literature review encompassing body image, gender issues in body image, and vanity sizing. In Chapter three, the research

design is discussed, including the research philosophy, methodology, ethical considerations and data analysis plan. For Chapter four, data analysis will be conducted with a focus on identifying key findings for further explanation. Lastly, the Chapter five integrates the existing literature on previous studies and the survey's findings to provide a more comprehensive explanation of how vanity sizing affects Chinese young women. Meanwhile, delving into the main results and their practical significance while also addressing the limitations of the dissertation and providing suggestions for future research.

1.6 Summary

In summary, the present chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the research, with particular emphasis on the research background and issues at hand. Simultaneously, while elucidating the overall framework, this dissertation aims to present the specific dissertation content in a more visually intuitive manner.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The societal standardization of women's beauty based on thinness has led to an increasing preoccupation with body image among individuals (Selimbegovic et al., 2021), which subsequently gives rise to body anxiety (Balcetis et al., 2013; Becker et al., 2017; Poulter and Treharne, 2020). Although this beauty standard is predominantly prevalent in Western countries, the process of globalization and modernization in recent years has also exerted pressure on individuals from other countries to also conform to a slimmer physique (Swami, 2015). In the pre-1990s era, Asian countries witnessed few reported cases of body anxiety, notably in Malaysia, Singapore, India, and among the Chinese population in then-British Hong Kong. Such instances were generally uncommon across Asia, except for a notable rise in Japan during the mid-1970s. As the 20th century drew to a close, there was a marked surge in eating disorder attitudes and behaviours among Asian young women, with these disorders spreading from Japan to Singapore, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan (Forbes and Frederick, 2007; Pike and Dunne, 2015). Notably, in China, the pursuit of thinness has emerged as the prevailing aesthetic ideal (Paridon, 2023). Meanwhile, an increasing number of young women are preoccupied with aligning their body image with their clothing size to attain their desired physical presentation. Consequently, clothing retailers in different countries exploit the lack of standardization in the clothing industry to intentionally create vanity sizes, that is, increasing smaller sizes of female clothing to create consumers' psychological desires (Aydinolu and Krishna, 2012; Ketron and Spears, 2016).

At the same time, in order to adhere to socially prescribed standards of beauty, some women engage in a range of detrimental behaviours, such as extreme weight reduction (Grogan, 2022) or surgical interventions (Wolf, 1991). However, numerous research has also indicated that within the subset of women who pursue thinness as an idealized form of beauty, certain individuals intentionally or unintentionally accentuate their "desirable" body curves, potentially perpetuating patriarchal objectification within society (Bishop et al., 2018; Kandiyoti, 1988), thereby highlighting issues related to gender inequality (Bishop et al., 2018). Specifically, Hamermesh (2010) examines the influence of physical appearance on individuals' employment choices, focusing on both women and men. The study utilizes US data sets from the 1970s and Canadian data sets from 1977 to 1981 as illustrative examples. The findings indicate that physical appearance does not significantly impact an individual's

likelihood of being employed, regardless of whether they are above or below average in attractiveness. However, it is observed that highly attractive women have a slightly higher probability of being employed compared to those with average looks (approximately a 5% increase) (Hamermesh, 2010). Consequently, within labor markets characterized by gender imbalances, perceiving "qualified" appearances as advantageous can be interpreted as a manifestation of patriarchal bargaining.

However, this behaviour cannot be solely attributed to women. The fashion industry shapes women's body image by establishing clothing sizing standards, which simultaneously stigmatize certain body types by relegating them to specific sections or stores. The industry creates spatial, temporal, and economic barriers for women who deviate from cultural ideals. Conversely, women who do not conform to the societal standard of slender beauty face significant stigmatization for wearing larger sizes (Bishop et al., 2018). The phenomenon of vanity sizing may be attributed to media propaganda in society (Frost, 2001), where smaller-sized models are often selected by the media as conforming to standards, exacerbating the objectification of women in the workplace (Rajagopal and Gales, 2002). Therefore, it is imperative to address this issue given the current reality of gender inequality caused by the stigmatization of plus-size clothing and sizing. This dissertation aims to explore the causes of vanity sizing and encourage a non-standardized concept for young women's identification and acceptance of their own body image and encourage young women to develop a sense of non-standardized sizing, identification and acceptance of their body image. Thus, vanity sizing warrants further investigation.

In addition, the literature review primarily encompasses three key areas: body image, gender-related aspects of body image, and vanity sizing. Due to the consideration of gender diversity, this dissertation is confined to biologically female consumers and does not encompass men or other populations identifying as female. Finally, the conclusion will address the limitations present in this dissertation.

2.2 Body image

2.2.1 The gap between the ideal body image and real body image

The discrepancy between the ideal and actual body image in young women has been a significant subject of academic investigation (Grogan, 2022), particularly within feminist research domains (Bishop et al., 2018; Bordo, 2004; Wolf, 1991). Concurrently, scholars

have increasingly focused on the younger age group, where young women are more inclined to scrutinize their body image and subsequently evaluate themselves (Lewis, 2012; Poulter and Treharne, 2020; Rice, 2014; Solomon, 2009; Wood-Barcalow et al., 2010). This inclination may be influenced by cultural and societal standards (Grogan, 2022). As discussed by Bishop et al. (2018) and Frost (2001), Western white cultural backgrounds emphasize the thin ideal as essential. Although there are notable differences among various ethnic minority groups, body dissatisfaction also exists within Asian cultural contexts (Kennedy et al., 2009). It is reasonable to assert that different cultural groups share a common perception of female beauty defined by society's emphasis on thinness for women (Ketron and Williams, 2018). Consequently, young women perceive thin bodies as the epitome of an ideal physique while simultaneously being aware of the disparity between this idealized standard and their own real body image (Brechan and Kvaalem et al., 2015).

2.2.2 The ideal body image and social media

Frost (2001) illustrated that the growing interest among women in beauty can be attributed to the escalating societal pressure on them to attain flawlessness and influencing younger age groups (Lewis, 2012). This phenomenon may be influenced by social media impact (Grogan, 2022; Rice, 2014) as well as advertising exposure (Rajagopal and Gales, 2002). Lewis (2012) provided direct evidence for this claim; Sarina, a seven-year-old, is one of the young girls affected by societal pressures to conform to a thin body ideal, as she engages in comparisons with her peers and utilizes social media platforms for weight loss-related information seeking. This perspective aligns with Grogan (2013) that social media often portrays women as excessively thin. It is likely women's choices of consuming television programs and magazines are likely to reinforce the pursuit of beauty. Moreover, role models tend to embody hegemonic ideals while images of an ideal female body and face pervade society (Frost, 2001). Additionally, Solomon (2009) and Rice (2014) employ Barbie dolls as an example illustrating society's standards of beauty. They argue that Barbie perpetuates an unattainable standard that alienates women whose bodies do not fit into the mould of whiteness (Smolak, 2004). This phenomenon is particularly pronounced in the field of advertising, in electronic media, women are often depicted as the epitome of femininity, characterized by a slender physique, tall stature, and fair complexion (Battoo et al., 2022). Meanwhile, advertisers often select visually appealing women who conform to societal beauty standards to capture the attention of their target audience and portray what they perceive as the ideal appearance. Exposure to advertisements featuring attractive female

models tends to diminish women's satisfaction with their attractiveness (Matlin, 1987). However, exposure to images featuring digitally enhanced slender models may lead to decreased body satisfaction among women, as it fosters social comparisons (Lewis et al., 2020). Specifically, the dissemination of filtered portrayals showcasing idealized appearances on social media perpetuates the marginalization of individuals whose physical attributes such as appearance, height, and weight do not align with prevailing sociocultural beauty standards (Battoo et al., 2022). This pervasive propaganda prevalent across social media platforms puts undue pressure on women (Battoo et al., 2022; Lewis et al., 2020). Evidently, the media catalyses body image concerns among these women. As highlighted by Furlong and Cartmel (1997), the media disseminate a limited and carefully controlled set of meanings associated with consumer capitalism while exerting significant social pressures that encourage individuals to adopt certain subjective identities. Consequently, consumers not only aspire towards attaining similar body shapes but also seek out individuals who adhere to society's beauty standards (Frost, 2001).

2.2.3 Body satisfaction and self-esteem

In order to conform to socially prescribed beauty standards, many women resort to extreme measures such as undergoing surgical procedures (Bishop et al., 2018; Brechan and Kvalem et al., 2015; Ketron and Naletelich, 2017 ; Solomon 2009) and developing eating disorders (Lewis, 2012; Rice, 2014; Wolf, 1991), which have detrimental effects on their body image (Poulter and Treharne, 2020). Previous literature has predominantly employed quantitative methods in examining the negative aspects of body image (Becker et al., 2017; Brechan and Kvalem et al., 2015). Bishop et al.'s (2018) that body image plays a crucial role in shaping the self-esteem of numerous adolescent girls. Becker et al. (2017) observe that negative body image is associated with various adverse outcomes among adolescent girls and young adult women, including eating disorders, anxiety, and unhealthy weight control behaviours. These findings align with the perspective of Brechan and Kvalem et al. (2015), who propose that dissatisfaction with body image and eating disorders play a mediating role between self-esteem and depression in women.

Selimbegovic et al. (2021) propose that social body type anxiety refers to an emotional state, while sexual body type anxiety pertains to apprehension and concern regarding one's appearance and body image. Additionally, Selimbegovic et al. (2021) associate thinness with beauty and emphasize the significant role played by the belief that being thin is essential for

attaining beauty in fostering women's social anxiety about their appearance. However, unrealistic clothing size measurements (Alexander et al., 2005; Dockterman, 2016) and media promotion of the "ideal" fashionable female image, known as the "frame standard of beauty," also contribute to negative body image (Tebbel, 2000). In terms of size confusion, if women utilize clothing size as an indicator of their weight, shape, and stature, their assessment may be based on inaccurate information (Grogan, 2013). Moreover, this situation provides more opportunities for vanity sizing which acts as a "white lie" comforting consumers with smaller body shapes or weights (Dockterman, 2016; Ketron, 2016; Ketron and Naletelich, 2017; Ketron and Williams, 2018). On the other hand, the media plays a crucial role in shaping society's current aesthetic trend towards slim bodies primarily driven by celebrities' influence and fashion aspirations (Apeagyei, 2007). Consequently, the idealized body types tend to be thinner, and individuals face increasing pressure to lose weight and maintain a slender figure (Neagu, 2015). Meanwhile, Poulter and Treharne (2020) further advances this perspective by highlighting that young individuals, particularly young women, frequently engage with mass media portraying idealized body shapes. Consequently, the media's promotion of an unrealistic thin beauty standard contributes to a heightened prevalence of body anxiety among individuals. Concurrently, within the prevailing societal emphasis on thinness, an increasing number of young women struggle to identify their true size amidst sizing discrepancies and are more inclined towards selecting vanity sizes in order to conform to mainstream aesthetics and alleviate anxiety.

However, several scholars have examined positive body image characteristics, including Lewis (2012), Poulter and Treharne (2020), Wood-Barcalow et al., and 's (2010). Evidence suggests that a gradual reduction in food intake can effectively mitigate the risk of obesity while regulating blood sugar levels and mood stability, thereby reducing anxiety (Lewis, 2012). Simultaneously, increasing physical activity is often employed as a means to alleviate physical anxiety (Selimbegovic et al., 2021). Furthermore, Lewis (2012) discovered that cultivating a positive body image can enhance self-esteem. When individuals possess a positive perception of their bodies, they are more inclined to engage in behaviours that promote health and happiness.

2.3 Gender issue in body image

2.3.1 Female attraction and power

Frost (2001) argues that youth culture places a strong emphasis on social pressure and holds hegemonic beliefs. This culture perceives girls' and women's power as being closely tied to their sexual attractiveness. As discussed by Rice (2014), women find that their bodies become significant markers of identity in social interactions, leading them to associate themselves with the body image of socially popular girls within this culture. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as "body cathexis," which represents an individual's expression of how they feel about their own body (Solomon 2009). Numerous researches have demonstrated that while a majority of women hold a negative opinion about their body image (Wood-Barcalow et al., 2010; Jackson et al., 1988; Matlin, 1987), they consider female attractiveness to be more important than male attractiveness (Jackson et al., 1988). This subjective effect indicates that a woman's perception of her attractiveness influences her behaviour (Solomon, 2009). In this context, meeting one or more criteria for social beauty may result in gaining certain privileges and subsequently lead to the development of assertive and patriarchal transactional relationships (Kandiyoti, 1988). Simultaneously, it reinforces the notion that men enjoy social power and receive special treatment (Emerson, 2002; Kaufman, 1999). However, Solomon (2009) reveals that some employers prefer hiring employees who are considered "good-looking." This suggests that women's physical appearance has an impact on their passive roles (Solomon, 2009), ultimately contributing to greater inequality (Evans and Shankar; Bishop et al., 2018).

2.3.2 Male gaze under the influence of media

Over the years, feminist literature has extensively criticized the fashion industry for its role in perpetuating unrealistic body ideals through media imagery (Bordo, 2004; Wolf, 1991). For instance, TV shows like America's Next Top Model teach girls and young women to bridge the gap between their physical differences and the ideal image by reimagining their unique attributes as conforming to societal standards. These shows often emphasize that sexual attraction from men is a means for young women to make a significant impact while treating a body image that aligns with society's expectations as a prerequisite for success (Rice, 2014). Simultaneously, Rajagopal and Gales (2002) illustrated how advertising and media have shaped men's expectations of women who are over 5'6" tall but weigh less than 100 pounds. They should appear attractive in appropriate or revealing clothing and be able to

quickly capture men's attention. Rajagopal and Gales (2002) further explain that advertising uses women not as human beings but as objects. This is similar to the idea put forward by Batoo et al.'s (2022) that advertising also objectifies women by using their bodies to enhance sexual attraction. Advertisers highlight women's bodies and curves to make ads attractive, aiming to attract more viewers. Additionally, the aesthetic standards created by the media for female body image are not only unrealistic but also excessively gendered (Johnson et al., 2015). Bordo (2004) introduces the concept of the "male gaze" in her research by using Madonna's portrayal of an idealized body image in film and television as an example. This perspective suggests that men's examination of women within the realm of cinema is merely objectifying scrutiny. Advertising frequently employs gender stereotypes, such as depicting women as frail, reliant, and submissive, in order to cater to men's preferences and aspirations (Kostrova, 2021). It might mean advertising and media continue to objectify women by solely focusing on their appearance while devaluing their intrinsic worth (Rajagopal and Gales, 2002). These viewpoints align with those expressed by Bishop et al., (2018) and Kandiyoti (1988), who advocate narrow aesthetic concepts under the guise of representing diversity while encouraging consumption-driven modifications aimed at achieving an ideal appearance, the traditional media practices exert pressure on women to conform to standards of thinness, intelligence, attractiveness, and beauty (Batoo et al., 2022).

2.3.3 Women's self-awareness awakening

Qualitative research has also initiated the exploration of characteristics and experiences of young individuals with a positive body image in a limited number of small-scale studies. Wood-Barcalow et al. (2010) conducted individual interviews with adult female college students, revealing that most students acknowledged experiencing negative body image during adolescence. This suggests an increasing realization among women that accepting their imperfections contributes to cultivating a positive body image (Lewis, 2012; Wood-Barcalow et al., 2010; Poulter and Treharne, 2020). However, Wood-Barcalow et al.' (2010) emphasize that transitioning from a negative to a positive body image is a dynamic process requiring patience, which is closely linked to cognitive thinking (Lewis, 2012; Wood-Barcalow et al., 2010).

When examining women's self-consciousness concerning advertising portrayals, it becomes evident that since the early 20th century, the depiction of women in advertisements has been perceived as derogatory and demeaning (Rajagopal and Gales, 2002). It is possible for

women who grew up during this period and became mothers to pass on these societal norms to their daughters. Subsequent generations are influenced by these advertising stereotypes and inherit ideals from them. Rice (2014) further supports this argument in his research by emphasizing how shaping female self-consciousness involves attributing physical gender meaning through appearance even during childhood years. Simultaneously, in order to counter the phenomenon of women being subjected to stereotypes in advertisements, Vadakkepatt et al. (2022) propose a novel concept known as femvertising, which aims to empower women by presenting their experiences and achievements without perpetuating stereotypes. This approach plays a constructive role in shaping social reality through non-stereotyped portrayals of women.

2.4 Vanity sizing

2.4.1 Non-standardization of sizes

Industrial processes shifted clothing production from tailor-made to ready-to-wear on a massive scale, leading each clothing company to develop its own set of sizes (Hakkett and Rall, 2018). However, customers became confused by the numerous size options offered and requested a more standardized system (Aydinoolu and Krishna 2012., Ketron, 2016., Ketron and Williams, 2018). In response, several countries developed sizing systems including the United Kingdom (BS3666:1982), the United States (CS215-58), France (AFNOR EXP G 03-002[1997]), and Australia published its own L9-1959 Australian Standard Body Measurement Standard in 1959. Sizing for women's ready-to-wear later evolved into AS1344 Women's Clothing Sizing Coding Scheme (Standards Australia) (Hakkett, 2021). Thus, the source of standard sizing in Australia dates back to 1959 based on data from previous anthropometric studies which included a survey conducted in the United States in 1941 and another one carried out in Australia in 1926. These survey data were found to be very similar to previously collected data; hence they were considered appropriate for developing standard sizing in Australia.

	8	10	12	14	16	18	20
Height	5'3"	5'3½"	5'4"	5'4½"	5'5"	5'5½"	5'6"
Weight	100lb	108lb	118lb	130lb	144lb	160lb	176lb
Bust	31"	32½"	34"	35½"	37"	39"	41"
Waist	23½"	24½"	25½"	27"	28½"	30"	32"
Hip	34"	35"	36"	38"	40"	42"	44"

Table 1: Measurements produced for use by the Australian Clothing Industry. Adapted from the Australian Standard, L9-1959 Misses' Size chart (Hakkett and Rall, 2018).

However, the quality of the data underlying these standard sizes has been criticized because Australia's data collection process for standard sizes excludes non-white individuals, older women, and non-athletes. This exclusion can result in sizing systems that do not accurately reflect a woman's true body size and shape (Kennedy et al., 2009). Consequently, enforcing a single set of metrics may make shopping easier for certain demographics such as thinner females (Dockterman, 2016). Therefore, Hakkett and Rall (2018) further deepened the discussion on size change. In the 1970 Australian Standard, the sizing system adopted the provisional American sizing system with numbers like 8, 10, 12 etc., which had no correlation to actual measurements. In 1972, Australia converted from British units (inches and yards) to metric units (centimetres and metres), making slight adjustments to round off numbers in scale tables. For example, instead of directly converting bust measurement for size 12 from 34 inches to 86.36 cm it was changed to appear as a whole number at 85 cm. However, the changing shape of consumers is beyond our control. Since 1980 obesity has become a major public health problem affecting over 500 million people worldwide (Bhurosy and Jeewon, 2014). Moreover, this issue is not limited only to developed countries but also extends into developing ones. In terms of GDP percentage, total healthcare costs associated with obesity in China are twice those in United States and India. However, despite this trend towards changes in body shapes retailers are still trying to attract customers, and thus vanity sizing phenomenon emerged (Kennedy et al., 2009).

Vanity sizing can be perceived as the practice of labelling smaller numbers on clothing tags to cater to consumers' psychological need for self-enhancement and desire for a slimmer appearance (Hoegg et al., 2013). Aydinoolu and Krishna (2012), Bishop et al. (2018), and

Franz (2017) argued that deliberate size mislabelling by clothing manufacturers exacerbates confusion regarding sizing standards in the market. Consequently, due to the ambiguity surrounding sizing systems and challenges associated with identifying the true "correct" size label, manufacturers find it more convenient to incorporate vanity sizing into women's apparel products (Ketron and Williams, 2018).

Table 2 uses the Australian clothing market as an illustrative example to highlight disparities between retailers' clothing sizing and standard sizing. The findings indicate that measurements for bust, waist, and hip (in cm) in retail clothing sizes are larger than those of standard sizes, despite using the same size designation. Specifically, considering size 8 as a case in point, the bust, waist, and hip measurements for standard size are recorded as (75,55,80), whereas the retailer size reflects (85,65,90) (Hakkett and Rall, 2018). Consequently, this practice by clothing manufacturers is also perceived as a form of consumer deception (Ketron et al., 2016; Ketron and Williams., 2018). This perspective aligns with Hakkett and Rall's study (2018), which concurs that vanity sizing is misleading while emphasizing the undesirability of encouraging such trends due to their potential to create uncertainty regarding fit among consumers thereby diminishing the practicality of sizing systems.

Size	4	6	8	10	12	14	16
Bust (cm)	75	80	85	90	95	100	105
Waist (cm)	55	60	65	70	75	80	85
Hip (cm)	80	85	90	95	100	105	100

Common measurements given by Australian Clothing Retailers.

Size	8	10	12	14	16	18	20
Bust (cm)	75	80	85	90	95	100	105
Waist (cm)	55	60	65	70	75	80	85
Hip (cm)	80	85	90	95	100	105	100

Adapted from Australian Standards AS 1344-1997 (1997).

Table 2: *Vanity sizing (Hakkett and Rall, 2018).*

In addition, there has been a trend towards smaller sizes in the women's clothing industry in recent years (Hoegg et al., 2013). Clearly, vanity sizing helps sell clothing, and women prefer smaller clothing to larger clothing labels (Gruys, 2012; Dockterman, 2016). This means that

small-sized labels may be more likely to evoke more positive self-related mental imagery (Aydinoolu and Krishna, 2009). Thus, consumers of size 6 pants will more actively imagine themselves thinner than size 8 pants (Aydinoolu and Krishna, 2012). To prove this point, Dockterman (2016) discussed in A fashion magazine how measurements of size 8 in the United States have changed over the past few years (Appendix A). As can be seen from the figure, measurement dimensions such as bust, waist and hip are positively proportional to the growth of the year, but inversely proportional to the smallest size.

Year	Bust	Waist	Hip	Smallest Size Available
1958	31"	23.5"	32.5"	8
1970	32.5"	23.5"	34.5"	6
1995	35"	27"	34.5"	2
2012	36.25"	28"	39.5"	0

Table 3: *Women's clothing size change (Saha, 2016).*

Due to the confusion in sizing, different brands employ varying measurement standards for labelling sizes. Consequently, it is quite common for the actual size to differ from the one indicated on the label. Kennedy et al. (2009) conducted a similar study on this phenomenon, and mass media regularly reports changes in body shapes of average Australian women, indicating an increasing trend across all dimensions. The figure below illustrates the comparison and differences among size 8 clothing from several brands (Saha, 2022).

It is noteworthy that different brands employ distinct measurement standards for labelling sizes. The comparative analysis and variations in size 8 clothing across multiple brands are depicted in the figure below (Saha, 2022).

The discrepancy between the actual size and the labelled size is also prevalent in Australia. Kennedy (2009) has conducted similar research on this matter.

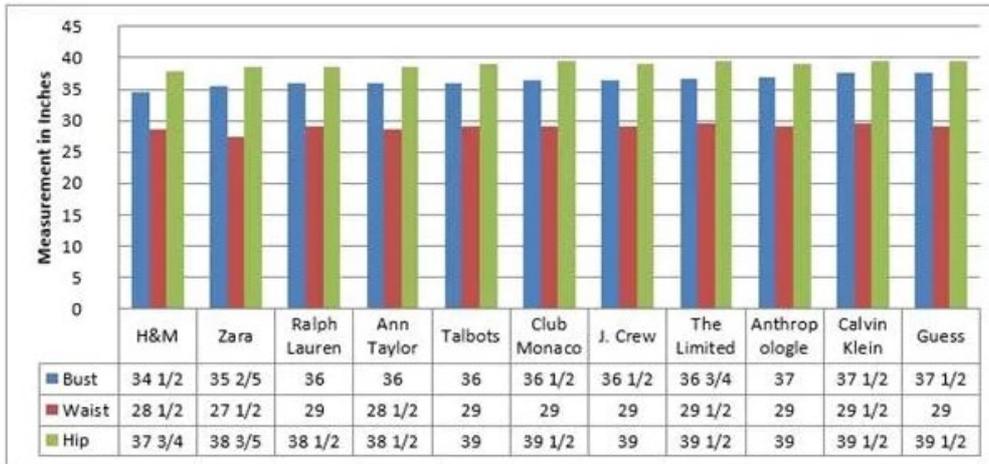


Table 4: Comparison of different brands of size 8 clothing (Saha, 2022).

The research indicated that currently a SIZE 10 measures 95 centimetres (bust), 75 (waist), and 100 (hips). In 1970 it was 80-60-85.

As depicted in the table, the measurement of chest circumference exhibits the widest range, varying from a minimum of 34 inches to a maximum of 37 inches. In contrast, waist and hip measurements only differ by 2 inches. Consequently, this phenomenon leads to many consumers wearing sizes ranging from x-small to x-large depending on the brand and region (Dockterman, 2016). This implies that variations among different brands for the same size may cause frustration among consumers (Street, 2022).

Due to the existence of vanity sizes, consumers can easily confuse the label size with their actual size choice, which can have a negative impact on them and lead to compensatory consumption behaviour such as purchasing jewellery or cosmetics to enhance their self-identification with appearance. Ketron and Spears (2016) propose that consumers with low self-esteem tend to view buying vanity-sized products as a form of compensatory consumption. Therefore, vanity sizing can be seen as a deceptive practice employed by retailers for profit purposes. Furthermore, consumers with low self-evaluation are more likely to prefer smaller clothing or other products in order to enhance their self-identity (Ketron and Spears, 2016). Ketron and Williams (2018) conducted research based on compensatory self-enhancement theory. They argue that when larger than expected clothing sizes threaten one's cosmetic self-esteem, there is an increased demand for products with positive cosmetic attributes aimed at enhancing physical appearance (e.g., cosmetics, jewellery), thereby

providing positive value and mitigating further threats. This implies that when consumers encounter larger than expected sizes, they may experience damaged self-esteem; however, through compensatory consumption behaviours they can purchase products that boost their self-esteem levels while improving mental health and happiness (Hoegg et al., 2013).

2.4.2 Redefine vanity size

Ketron and Naletelich (2017) have proposed a new concept that larger sizes may also be considered vanity sizing in certain body parts, where social norms favour bigger sizes. This is different from the traditional definition of vanity sizing which only refers to smaller products. However, it should be noted that the underlying motivation for both small and large vanity sizing remains rooted in personal vanity. For instance, Victoria's Secret has expanded the range of its underwear styles to meet consumers' demand for breast enhancement surgery. Although there are cultural variations in beauty standards, there is still pressure on individuals to conform to certain idealized body shapes. Therefore, Aydinoolu and Krishna (2012), Ketron and Williams (2018), and Bishop et al., (2018) maintain a consistent definition of vanity sizing, which is consumers are more inclined to purchase items that accentuate their strengths, such as clothing in a smaller size or underwear in a larger size; however, these sizes may differ from their actual measurements. Consequently, consumers demonstrate a greater willingness to embrace the "deception" presented by merchants (Ketron, 2016; Ketron and Naletelich, 2017; Ketron and Williams, 2018) rather than accepting an accurate representation of their own body image (Rice, 2014).

2.4.3 Size issue and social inequality

The vanity sizing phenomenon is associated with women's pursuit of an ideal body shape (Owen and Spencer, 2013). Aydinoolu and Krishna (2012) argue that slim bodies are generally coveted by women, while smaller clothing sizes can evoke a positive self-image and enhance consumers' sense of self-worth. This aligns with the perspective of Ketron and Spears (2016), who suggest that societal pressures on women to maintain a slender physique lead consumers with strong female identities to showcase themselves by wearing smaller garments than usual. Field observations conducted by Ketron and Spears (2016) reveal that female gender identity interacts with size differences in influencing purchase intention, product attitude, and word-of-mouth communication. Ketron and Williams (2018) find that for female consumers with high self-evaluation, donning smaller-than-usual sizes can convey

a positive self-image and increase their inclination to make purchases. However, men do not exhibit any discernible response towards vanity sizing in terms of purchase intentions or product attitudes (Ketron, 2016). Furthermore, caution must be exercised when employing vanity sizing strategies among female consumers due to its potential deceptive effects (Ketron, 2016).

However, research on vanity sizing is not limited to quantitative studies. Bishop et al. (2018) conducted field observations, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participative observation to show that the retail environment organizes women into different body types, thus reinforcing narrow cultural body ideals. Specifically, Bishop et al. (2018) surveyed a plus-size clothing store called "Real Style". Real Style advocates tailoring clothes according to the customer's real figure, aiming to make the clothes adapt to the customer rather than vice versa. This vision aims to reduce stigmatization of plus-size clothing and female consumers who do not conform to society's mainstream aesthetic of thinness.

Additionally, Gruys (2012) explored the stigmatization of plus-size women in his study and mentioned emotional labour and aesthetic labour. Emotional labour refers to employees needing specific emotional expression and management capabilities alongside their skills at work in order to meet employer and customer expectations. It is considered part of aesthetic labour because employees' appearance and image are also involved in emotional labour (Mears, 2014). This means that aesthetic standards need to be met through appearance, dress style, and other aspects of performance at work (Gruys, 2012). Furthermore, the phenomenon of assigning different jobs and tasks based on gender and body type still exists in the workplace, resulting in a majority of salespeople being assigned such roles as well as assistant managers.

Therefore, acknowledging that women who do not conform to mainstream beauty standards are often labelled with stigmatizing terms, the disagreement between Bishop et al. (2018) and Gruys (2012) lies in their divergent focuses. Primarily exploring the issue of plus-size stigma faced by female consumers, Bishop et al. (2018) aims to challenge size classifications through consumer customized clothing, thereby alleviating size-related anxieties within the prevailing thin beauty aesthetic. On the other hand, Gruys (2012) places more emphasis on workplace challenges encountered by these stigmatized women. For instance, despite being well-suited for interactive service roles, plus-size employees face limited opportunities for

career advancement into senior management positions due to high job mobility, potentially exacerbating social inequality (Bordo, 2004).

The absence of regulations and inconsistent sizing in women's clothing contributes to broader societal issues. Clothing size standards have a profound impact on women's sense of self, social standing, and physical habits. Moreover, these standards can perpetuate inequalities based on gender, race, class, and body type (Bishop et al., 2018). Regular sizes for women are typically categorized as extra small (XS), small (S), medium (M), large (L), and extra-large (XL). However, many retailers classify double extra size (XXL) as an additional size rather than an unconventional one. Conversely, men's regular sizes include small (S), medium (M), large (L), oversized (XL), and double oversized (XXL), only a few retailers offer oversized options for men. Given that women generally exhibit greater concern about their body shape compared to men, the use of larger size labels by men may help them avoid feeling "extra small" or inadequate in terms of physique (Hoegg et al., 2013). Consequently, it is evident that men's clothing sizes tend to be more generous than those for women, vanity sizing predominantly exists within the realm of women's clothing while variations in men's clothing sizes remain relatively limited (Franz, 2017). Nevertheless, this discrepancy could stem from society placing higher expectations on female physical appearance and susceptibility to external influences regarding beauty standards and body image (Palan et al., 1999).

Bishop et al. (2018) and Crane (2000) have also substantiated this perspective, suggesting that access to appropriate clothing implies the existence of social inequality. For instance, women with curvier figures in low-income situations encounter difficulties in finding business suits that cater to their needs (Gruys, as cited in Bishop et al., 2018). Gruys (2018) uses time-interval measurements to test whether inequality persists in the workplace when "plus-size women" wear appropriate clothing. A nonprofit organization called Successful Women's Outfitters (SWO) helps underprivileged women gain more job opportunities by providing used professional clothing and offering interview style advice. The participants who wore professional clothing in sizes suitable for their body types provided by SWO were involved in the first fitting appointment experiment. Once these individuals are offered a job, they can schedule a second appointment with SWO to obtain more specialized clothing and accessories, which is known as using the time interval measurement method described by

Gruys (2018). By examining changes in clothing sizes and accessories, the authors found that there is an inequality in how customers of different body types receive clothes that fit their image. According to the results, smaller customers almost always receive a full suit while larger customers rarely do (Gruys, 2018).

Furthermore, from a pricing standpoint, it has been observed that smaller and larger-sized garments are more expensive compared to standard-sized clothing items (Bishop et al., 2018). These distinct retail practices create spatial, temporal, and economic barriers for women who deviate from cultural body ideals while symbolically emphasizing the inequality associated with their stigmatized status based on size and body image (Bishop et al., 2018).

Consequently, consumers must try on multiple sizes before finding an appropriate fit (Fellingham, 1991). To address these irregularities in sizing, Pray's research on perceptions and attitudes of retail buyers/managers and consumers within the petite market revealed that 88% of consumer participants and 53% of retail buyer or manager participants agreed upon the necessity for "all women's clothing manufacturers to adopt a standardized system for sizing" (Pray, 1987 as cited in Bishop et al., 2018).

Additionally, Bishop et al. (2018) observed in their research that women who fall near the boundaries of a particular size category strategically claim adherence to an ideal body shape in order to attain psychological, social, and material advantages. This aligns with the perspective put forth by Ketron and Williams (2018), who contend that over time, the fashion industry has instilled suspicion among women regarding inaccurate size labels. The findings of Franz (2017) reveal a significant shift in women's ready to wear clothing sizing standards towards vanity sizing, wherein nominal clothing sizes have increased over time, prompting women to adapt to "smaller" sizes. Societal pressures emphasizing thinness as beauty are attributed to the existence of artificial size labels (Ketron and Williams, 2018). However, not all women utilize clothing size standards as a means to impose specific body images on themselves or others. Bishop et al.'s (2018) employ actress Amy Schumer's case concerning her controversial clothing size as an example, she refuted media-defined categorization as plus-size and employed fluctuating sizing standards to describe herself as medium-sized instead. While this incident reflects public scrutiny of celebrity bodies, it also exemplifies how average women evaluate their body image based on divergent clothing size criteria (Bishop et al., 2018).

This underscores the imperative for sociological inquiries aimed at examining the impact of these standards on women's everyday lives (Bishop et al., 2018). Consequently, when expectations are not met, women are more inclined to focus on their body image and resort to methods such as dieting to enhance their self-worth (Hoegg et al., 2013). Ketron and Williams (2017) have proposed that compared with men, women exhibit a higher level of deception when perceiving vanity-sized clothing.

Therefore, feminists should expand their critique of the fashion industry beyond solely focusing on societal promotion of an ideal body shape, and instead examine the repercussions of dress size standards, which is an integral component intertwined with everyday life (Bishop et al., 2018).

2.5 Summary

In this Chapter, Ketron conducted extensive research in the field of women's clothing sizing, redefining vanity sizing to encompass not only smaller sizes but also larger sizes such as bust size. Furthermore, he and other have explored the potential deception of consumers by vanity sizing. Among the highly cited articles, Bishop et al.'s (2018) contributions on "sizing stigmatization" and "gender issues" have emerged as crucial aspects within this review, representing significant topics in the realm of vanity sizing research. Consequently, through synthesizing research findings from across various countries in the domain of clothing sizes, it can be concluded that societal pressures on women lead them to prioritize body image concerns and consequently gravitate towards purchasing vanity sizes. However, while these studies have made some progress in mitigating excessive body image concerns among women, several challenges and issues persist. It is worth noting that a majority of the literature cited in this article originates from Western societies where slimness has been widely accepted as a beauty standard. Conversely, there is limited research on Asian female consumers' anxieties regarding clothing size despite the increasing adoption of slimness as a beauty ideal due to Western influence. Nevertheless, Chinese and other unofficial web forums actively debate Chinese clothing size-related matters. Therefore, the aims of this dissertation is investigate body anxiety and associated social problems faced by Chinese female consumers due to clothing size issues while encouraging young female consumers to embrace their body image positively and establish a healthy self-perception.

Chapter 3: Research Design

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the research philosophy adopted in this dissertation and provide a comprehensive account of the research methods employed, including sample collection. Furthermore, a detailed exposition of the questionnaire design will be presented. Lastly, a description of the data analysis method is provided.

3.2 Research Philosophy

Positivism asserts that an individual's perception of the objective environment and external entities must be grounded in empirical observation or sensory experience. While individuals may possess varying levels of education, the principles employed to validate sensory experiences exhibit minimal divergence. The primary aim of positivism is to establish knowledge objectivity (Bryman et al., 2008; Saunders, 2016). Furthermore, positivism predominantly applies to elucidate social phenomena and causality, emphasizing the credibility solely attributed to facts derived from observation or senses (Ayeni and Kasimu, 2019). Based on the literature review, it can be observed that vanity sizing is caused by the lack of standardized sizing. Many scholars have also explored the social background behind young women's increased emphasis on thinness as a beauty standard. Post-positivism is chosen as the research philosophy in this study because the confusion of sizes in the women's clothing market has long perplexed many female consumers. Additionally, considering that thinness has become a societal norm for beauty, synthesizing previous scholarly research on vanity sizing and incorporating this into a survey will aid in comprehending the principles governing vanity sizing.

3.3 Method

In quantitative research, numerical data is collected and analyzed to address research inquiries or test hypotheses. This approach emphasizes the systematic collection, precise measurement, and rigorous statistical analysis of quantitative data for objective and replicable investigations (Saunders, 2016). Surveys serve as a valuable research method for gathering extensive data to comprehend the perspectives, attitudes, and behaviours of respondents (Kwadwo et al., 2015). In this study, focusing on Chinese young women's perceptions of vanity sizing in women's clothing, a survey questionnaire was employed to facilitate efficient sample selection. The survey questionnaire encompasses six dimensions: demographics,

clothing size preferences, frequency of purchasing smaller sizes, body image perception, bodily changes experienced over time, and societal expectations.

3.3.1 Sample and data collection

Firstly, population and sample are fundamental concepts in statistics (Fuller, 2011). A population refers to the complete set of observation units whose characteristics or regularities the researcher aims to comprehend. It encompasses all individuals who possess specific properties or attributes relevant to the research purpose (Ahmad, 2023). On the other hand, a sample represents a subset of individuals selected from the population. The selection process should adhere to scientific and rational sampling methods ensuring that it adequately captures the characteristics of the population (Ahmad, 2023). In this dissertation, the sample consisted of Chinese-born female clothing buyers aged between 18 and 29.

Furthermore, sampling methods can be categorized into probability and non-probability sampling methods (Buelens et al., 2018). In this dissertation, the quote sampling method was employed as a non-probability sampling technique. A questionnaire survey was conducted on the Qualtrics website and distributed through Dynata company to recruit eligible participants while ensuring both participant and researcher anonymity. Prior to releasing the survey to the target group, a pre-test of the questionnaire was conducted. The estimated completion time for the survey was predicted to be approximately 10-15 minutes. A total of 120 samples were collected by the delivery date, with research funding provided by Auckland University of Technology being used for corporate payments.

In addition, the dissertation examined a sample of Chinese-born female clothing buyers aged 18-29. To this end, the researchers employed the Qualtrics platform to design a series of questions for screening eligible respondents. For instance, participants were asked about their gender and age group. However, if a participant selects "Male" as their gender and chooses the age group "Over 30," the survey is automatically terminated.

3.3.2 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire in this dissertation is primarily divided into six dimensions: Firstly, it encompasses the fundamental personal information of survey participants, including gender, age, occupation, and residence. Secondly, it investigates the sizing challenges encountered by participants when purchasing women's clothing, encompassing both actual sizing and vanity

sizing. The third section focuses on consumers' buying behavior regarding small-size clothing. The fourth section evaluates participants' satisfaction with body image and self-identification. Part five examines additional modifications made to body image such as surgery and dieting. Lastly, the final section aims to assess the social phenomena associated with women's sizing issues. Additionally, Figure 3 visually presents these six sections of the questionnaire in order to address the research questions.

The questionnaire in this dissertation is divided into six sections (Figure 3.1).

First, the respondents' personal information, including gender, age, occupation, city of residence and shopping style. Second, the size challenges participants encountered when buying women's clothing, both actual size and vanity size. Third, consumers' purchasing behavior of small-size clothing. Fourth, participants' satisfaction with body image and self-identity. Fifth, additional changes to body image, such as reusing surgery, exercise, and dieting. Finally, there are the social phenomena related to the problem of women's sizing.

In addition to the general questions in the initial section of this Questionnaire, the subsequent questionnaires from Q6 to Q37 are evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale as outlined below.

Table 5: *Structure of the questionnaire*

Question	To answer the Research Questions (RQs)	Category
1. What is your gender?		Demographics
2. Which age group are you in?		
3. What is your current job?		
4. Which city are you living in now?		

5. Where do you usually buy women's clothing?		
6. Do you think there are various body images and sizes that have not been adequately represented by the women's clothing industry?		Clothing size
7. Do you think there are enough sizes to choose from within your preferred clothing range?		
8. Have you ever gone shopping and been unable to find clothes in your size?		
9. Have you felt disappointed in the clothing on sale because of a difference between the label size and the real size when you try on clothes?		
10. When both Size Large and Size Small fit you, do you prefer to choose a smaller size?	RQ1	
11. Have you deliberately chosen clothes that are smaller than your actual size when you shopping?	RQ1	How often they buy smaller sizes?

12. How often do you forego buying your favored clothes for a smaller size?	RQ1	
13. Do you think wearing smaller sizes is a measure of attractiveness?	RQ1	
14. Have you personally experienced the challenges or negative impacts caused by people's widespread attention to small-sized clothing?	RQ4	
15. By and large, I am satisfied with my body image.	RQ4 Body image	Body image
16. By and large, I am satisfied with my looks.	RQ4 Body image	
17. I would like to change a good deal about my body.	RQ4 Body image	
18. I would like to change a good deal about my looks.	RQ4 Body image	
19. To what extent is self-image relevant in the choice of clothing size?	RQ4 Body image	
20. Are you on diet, or doing exercise to make yourself look more skinny?	RQ4	
21. I think a lot about what I could be doing (e.g., exercising, dieting) to achieve a thin body.	RQ4	
22. Have you ever considered cosmetic surgery to change your body image?	RQ4	

23. Have you ever rejected social activities because you feel yourself not thin enough?	RQ4	Societal expectations
24. Have you ever avoided certain clothing trends because you were afraid they would accentuate your body shape?	RQ2	
25. Do you think that society's expectations for small-sized clothing have influenced the views of young Chinese women on their body image?	RQ2	
26. How much does praise or criticism of your body image affect your self-esteem?	RQ4	
27. Do you think females are more likely to pay attention to their body image than others?	RQ4	
28. Do you think society's prevailing aesthetic of thinness influences your choice of clothing size?	RQ2	
29. Have you ever experienced judgement or criticism related to your body shape?	RQ4	
30. Have you experienced body image-related pressures from society, the media, or your peers?	RQ4	
31. To what extent does social media and advertising lead you to buy smaller clothing size?	RQ2	

32. Do you think the media portray an unrealistic standard of beauty?	RQ2
33. How often do you compare your body to that of celebrities or influencers on social media?	RQ2
34. In your opinion, how does the pressure of wearing small-sized clothes affect the overall happiness and self-esteem of young Chinese women?	RQ4
35. Have you ever felt uncomfortable or dissatisfied with your body because the common body standard is skinny?	
36. Do you feel that your body image affects how others perceive you in a social or workplace?	
37. In your daily life, have you felt evaluations of your attire from male managers, male co-workers or male classmates?	RQ3

3.4 Ethical Considerations

The Ethics Committee of AUT approved the application for ethical approval (No. 24/138) on May 29, 2024 (Appendix A) to ensure the institutional nature of the research. Additionally, this survey was conducted anonymously, and participation was voluntary. The questionnaire has been designed to maintain anonymity, with no collection of participants' personal information, and participants had the right to withdraw from the survey at any time without facing any negative consequences. A copy of the questionnaire (both English and Chinese

languages) is provided in Appendix B1. The English language version of the questionnaire was translated into Chinese by the researcher. All respondents answered the Chinese language version.

3.5 Data Analysis on SPSS

In this dissertation, valid data collected from Dynata were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics software. Firstly, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS, as it serves as a prerequisite for accurate statistical inference (Stehlik-Barry and Babinec, 2017). Descriptive statistics summarize a complex dataset by providing key numerical measures that depict the overall characteristics of the data (George and Mallery, 2018). In this dissertation, researchers integrated responses to each questionnaire item and employed SPSS Descriptive statistics to analyze demographic information through frequency distribution analysis while recording percentages. Secondly, frequency distribution analysis is highly valuable in examining fractional distributions (Hinton et al., 2014). Therefore, bar charts were utilized in this dissertation to visually represent the results of frequency distribution.

3.6 Summary

In conclusion, this chapter provides a detailed account of the methodology and methods employed in the research, adhering to the positivist paradigm and adopting a quantitative research approach. To gather data, we designed a 37 question questionnaire using the Qualtrics platform and administered the survey with assistance from Dynata company. The results indicated successful completion of the survey by 120 participants. However, some participants had missing data due to systemic reasons that did not impact the overall findings of this dissertation.

Chapter 4 Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive analysis of the data on Chinese female (Gen Z) vanity sizes collected from Dynata company. A total of 120 responses were obtained in this survey. The analysis is structured into seven sections, which are (1) Demographic statistics of participant, (2) Clothing size, (3) Research Question one, (4) Research Question two, (5) Research Question three, (6) Research Question four, (7) Chapter summary. In addition, bar charts are employed to visually depict the key findings pertaining to the research questions.

4.2 Demographic statistics of participant

4.2.1 Gender

Prior to conducting this survey, the sample group for this dissertation was exclusively comprised of female consumers within the Chinese women's clothing market. Consequently, an analysis of 120 completed questionnaires yielded descriptive data indicating that all participants were female.

4.2.2 Age group

Four age cohorts have been delineated for the Generation Z customer segment, encompassing individuals aged 18-29 (Figure 4.1). Analysis of the data reveals that the largest cohort comprises respondents aged 22-24, totalling 62 individuals and representing 51.7% of the sample. In contrast, the smallest cohort consists of participants aged 18-21, with only 12 individuals accounting for a mere 10%. The cohorts spanning ages 25-26 and 27-29 each comprise 23 participants, constituting an equal proportion of 19.2%.

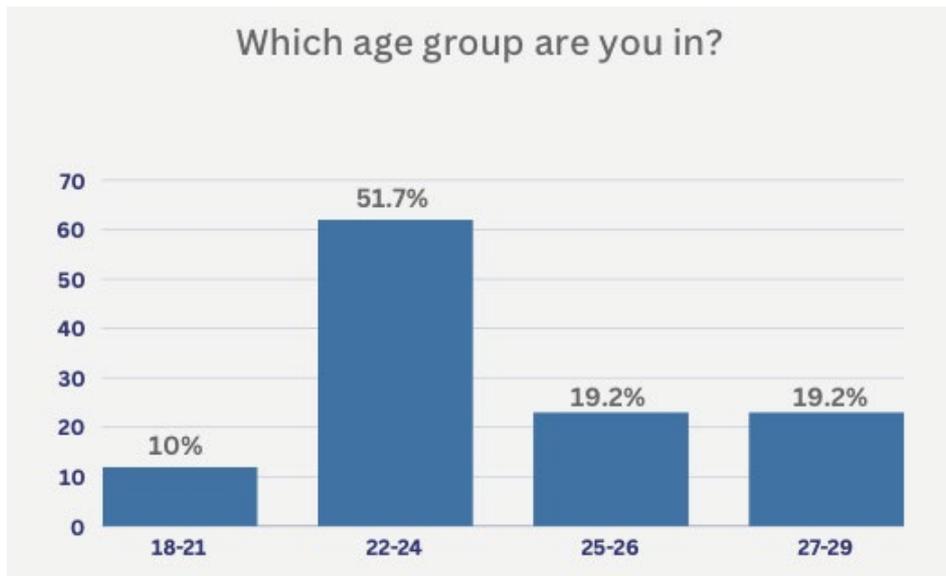


Figure 4.1 Participants' Age Groups

4.2.3 Current occupation

In this data, the most significant participant group is comprised of company staff, totaling 82 individuals and accounting for 68.3% of the sample (Figure 4.2). Following this are individual business representatives, totaling 22 participants and accounting for 18.3%. In contrast, government employees and individuals from other occupations constituted a smaller proportion of the sample, with five (4.2%) and one (0.8%) participants respectively.

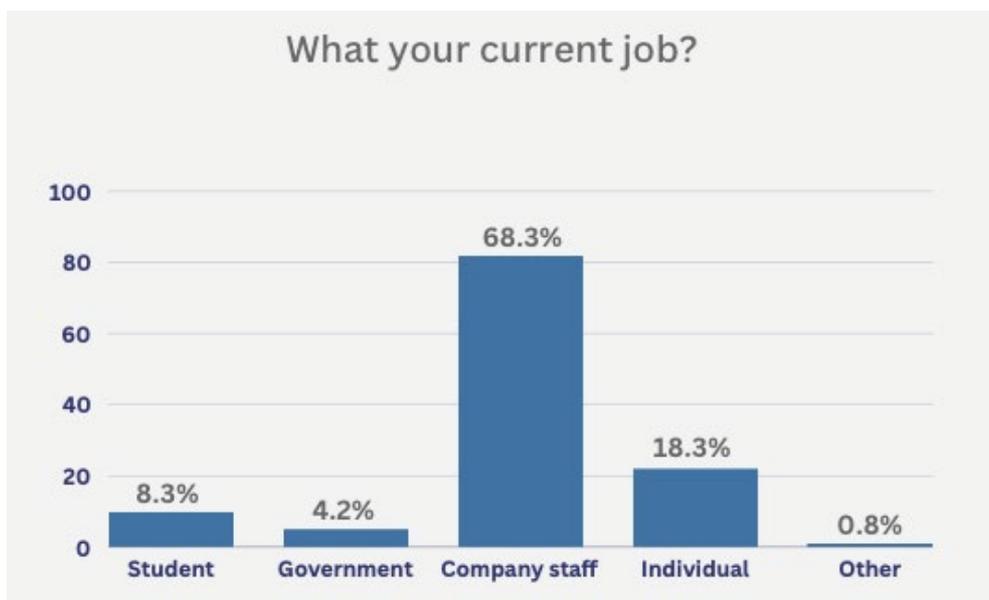


Figure 4.2 Participants' Occupations

4.2.4 Living areas

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the urban environments in which the participants reside, four distinct living areas were delineated: the southern region of China, the northern region of China, the Special Administrative Region of China, and overseas (Figure 4.3). However, only individuals residing in southern and northern China took part in the survey, constituting 63.3% (76 individuals) and 36.7% (44 individuals) respectively. This suggests that the primary cohort is located in southern China.

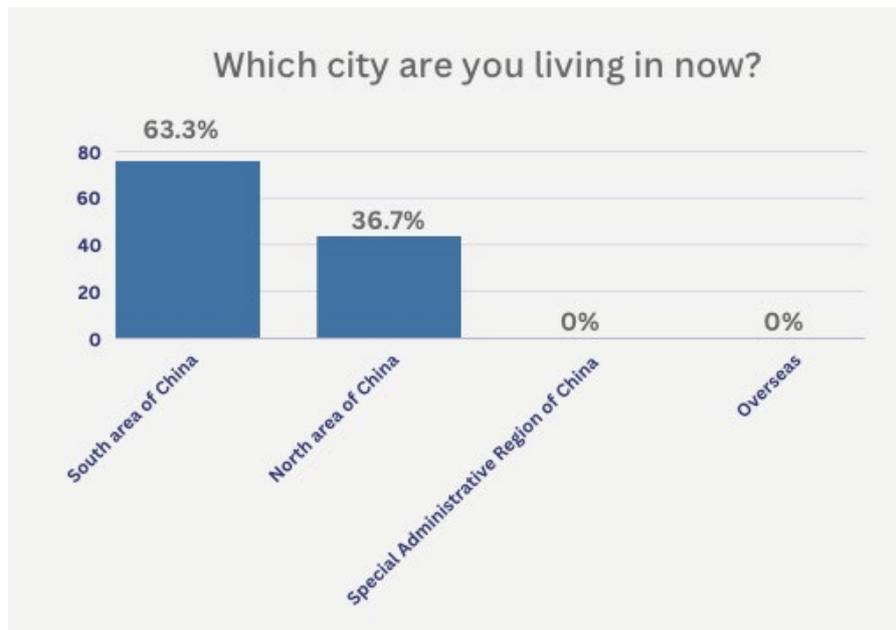


Figure 4.3 Participants' Living areas

4.2.5 Shopping method

In terms of the shopping style of the participants, only a very small number of participants chose to buy women's clothing in retail stores, accounting for only 5%, a total of 6 people (Figure 4.4). In contrast, the number of participants who prefer to buy women's clothing online is more than three times that of retail stores, accounting for 16.7%, a total of 20 people. Meanwhile, the number of participants who purchased women's clothing on both online shopping platforms and retail stores was the largest, reaching 78.3 %, with a total of 94 people.



Figure 4.4 Participants' Shopping Method

4.2.6 Summary

This section counts the demographic information of the participants. In terms of age, the majority of participants were young women aged 22-24, predominantly comprising employed company personnel. Notably, there was an absence of participants from Chinese special administrative regions or individuals born in China but residing overseas. The prevailing modes of clothing purchase encompassed both physical retail stores and online platforms.

4.3 Clothing size

4.3.1 Women's clothing size and body image

Based on respondents' perspectives on women's sizing and body fit, a significant proportion of participants (9.2%) strongly agreed that "women's sizing takes into account consumers of all body types." (Figure 4.5). Additionally, the majority of consumers (55.8%) expressed agreement with this statement. Conversely, only a small percentage (3.3%) strongly disagreed with the notion that "women's sizing is targeted at consumers of all sizes," while a larger proportion (7.5%) held strong disagreement.

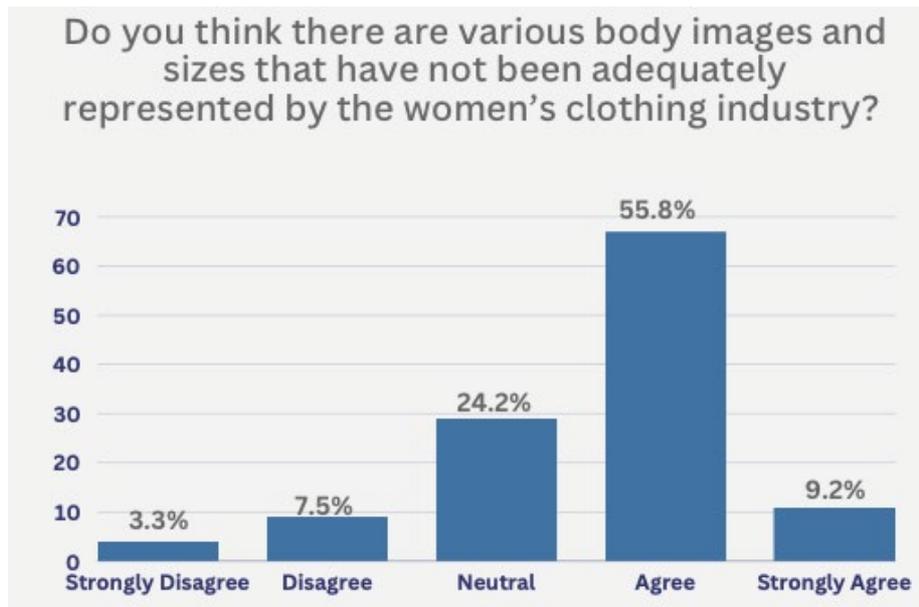


Figure 4.5 Participants' Size and Body Image Attitude

4.3.2 Women's wear and size range in the market

From the survey findings, a majority of participants (65.8%) expressed confidence in their ability to often find women's clothing that suits their body type. However, only a small proportion (2.5%) reported experiencing this very often. Additionally, when shopping for specific dresses they desire, 22.5% of participants indicated occasional success in finding garments that fit them well. Conversely, 6.7% felt that women's sizing seldom meets their needs and almost never 0.8% believed it inadequately considers diverse body types resulting in difficulties finding appropriate sizes.

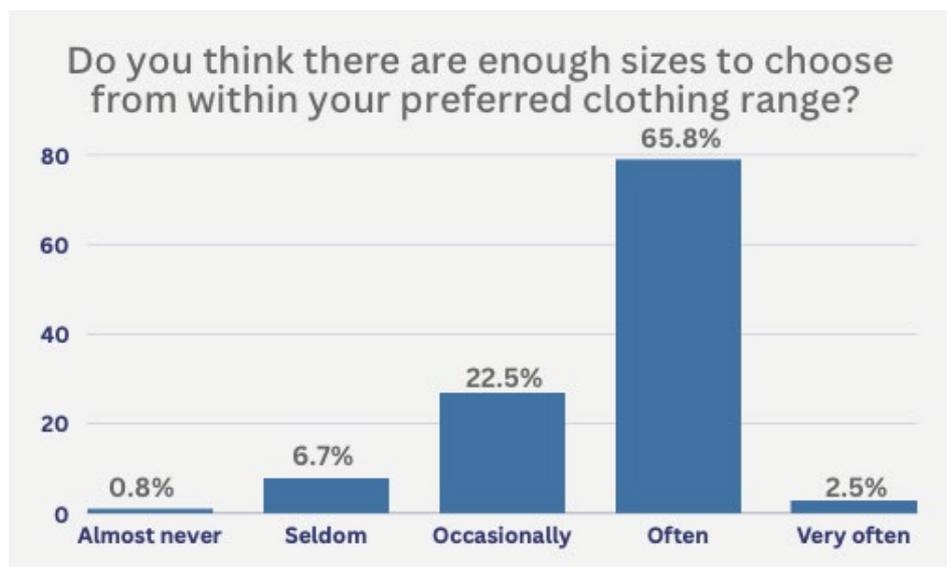


Figure 4.6 Participants' Attitudes to the Size Range of Clothing

4.3.3 Shopping experience and size selection

From the survey results, it is difficult to find the right size when shopping, the data shows that 19.2% of participants believe this happens often (Figure 4.7). However, none of the participants in the shopping experience thought this was something that happened very often. Meanwhile, for occasionally situation, 25.8% of participants reported difficulty finding the right size when shopping. On the other hand, nearly half of the participants (44.2%) said that they seldom encountered the wrong size in their shopping experience, which was the answer of the largest number of participants. In contrast, 9.2% of participants almost never experienced difficulty finding the right size during their shopping experience.



Figure 4.7 Participants' Attitudes to Shopping Experience

4.3.4 Disappointed due to actual body image and label size

According to the feedback by participants, a strongly agree with the notion that "customers often experience disappointment when trying on clothes due to size discrepancies between labels and body image" was expressed by 8 participants, constituting 46.7% of those who expressed their opinion (Figure 4.8). Meanwhile, a total of 28 individuals (23.3% of the sample) maintained a neutral stance. Conversely, an equal number of participants strongly disagree or strongly agree with this idea, accounting for 6.7% each. Additionally, 15.8% of respondents indicated that they would not be disappointed if the label size did not correspond to their body shape.

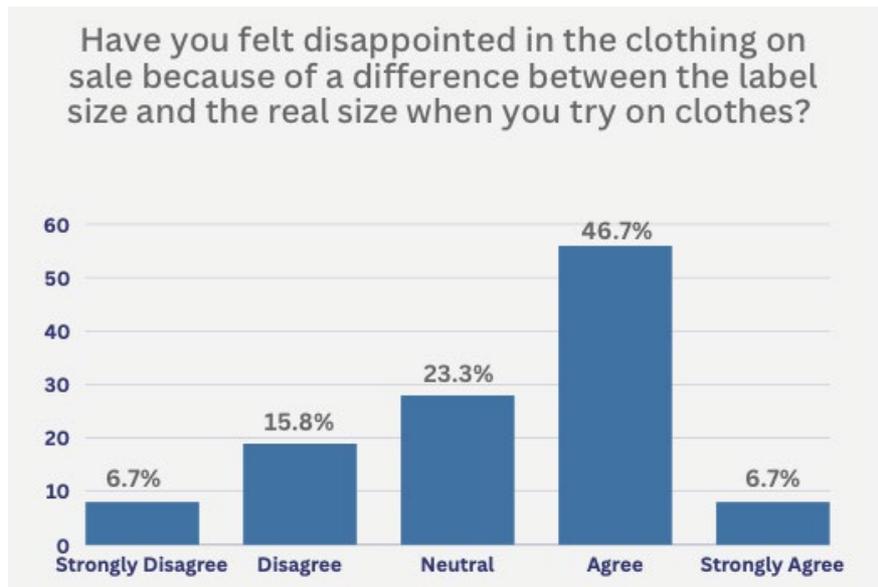


Figure 4.8 Participants' Attitude to actual Body Image and Label Size

4.3.5 Summary

Overall, based on the data, the majority of participants expressed satisfaction with the availability of women's clothing sizes. In their shopping experience, the market offers sizes that meet the needs of their favourite clothing. However, there were a majority of where consumers who voiced disappointment when discrepancies arose between labelled and actual sizes in women's clothing.

4.4 Research Question 1:

Are young Chinese women (18-29 years old) buying smaller sizes instead of the clothes they like because of their self-image?

4.4.1 Size S and size L

Participants exhibited divergent attitudes towards the assertion that they tend to opt for a smaller size when both Size S and Size L are available. Merely 4 individuals (3.3%) expressed strongly agree, while the majority of participants, comprising 55 individuals (45.8%), agree with this perspective (Figure 4.9). Furthermore, approximately half of those who agreed adopted a neutral stance, accounting for 27 participants (22.5%). Conversely, only two individuals strongly disagreed with this viewpoint, whereas thirty-two participants voiced their disagreement.

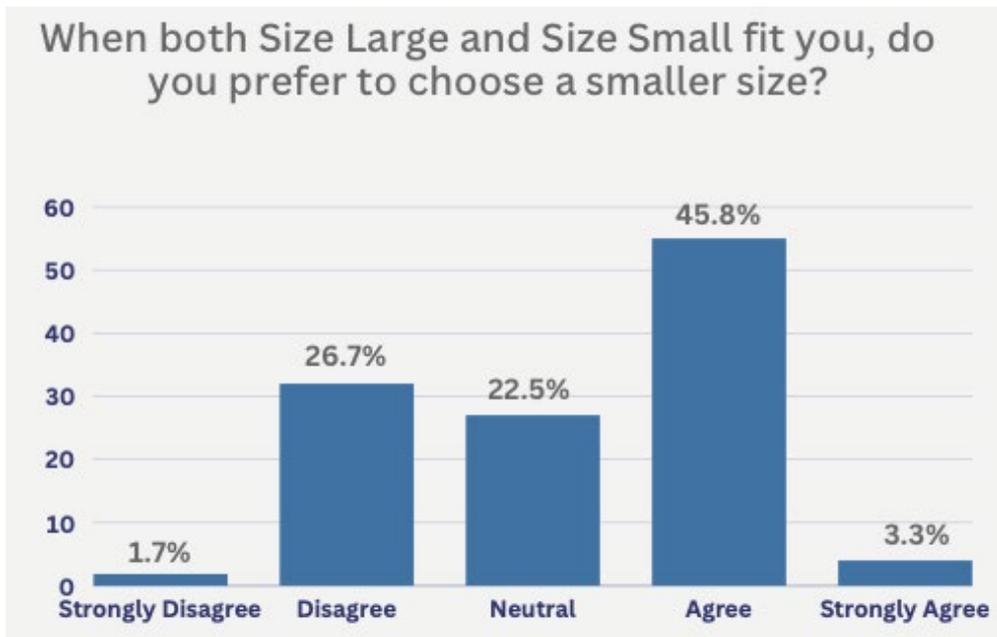


Figure 4.9 Participants' Attitudes to smaller size

4.4.2 Size selection

A total of 30 participants (25%) reported often deliberating selecting smaller-sized clothing than their actual sized. However, only 2 individuals (1.7%) indicated a very often preference for smaller sizes during shopping, which represented the lowest proportion among respondents (Figure 4.10). In contrast, 34 participants (28.3%) occasionally opted for smaller-sized garments. Notably, those who seldom chose clothes smaller than their actual size when shopping was more than twice as likely to deliberately do so compared to those who claimed "almost never" doing so, with a prevalence of 30.8%. Additionally, 12.5% of the participants stated that they almost never engaged in shopping activities and deliberately selected outfits that were smaller than their actual size.

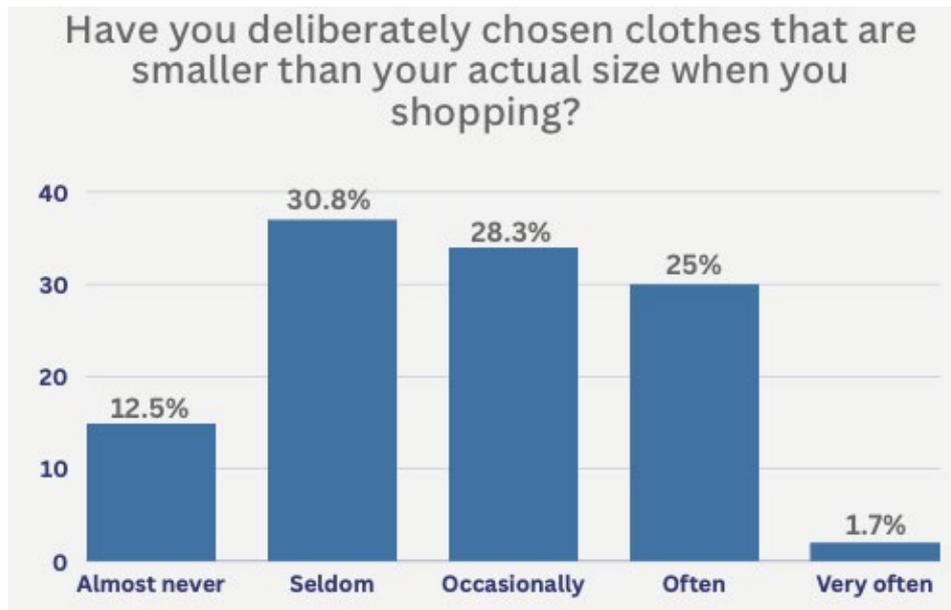


Figure Participants' 4.10 Attitude to Size Selection

4.4.3 Smaller size

According to the findings (Figure 4.11), a total of 26 participants (21.7%) often sacrificed their preferred garments for a smaller size, while 2 participants reporting this occurrence as very often (1.7%). Additionally, 21.7% of respondents indicated an occasional desire to exchange their favourite outfit for a smaller one. However, the majority of individuals (42.5%) expressed seldom inclinations in this regard. Furthermore, 15.8% of participants firmly asserted that size considerations do not influence their selection of favoured clothing and they would almost never relinquish it due to a smaller size.

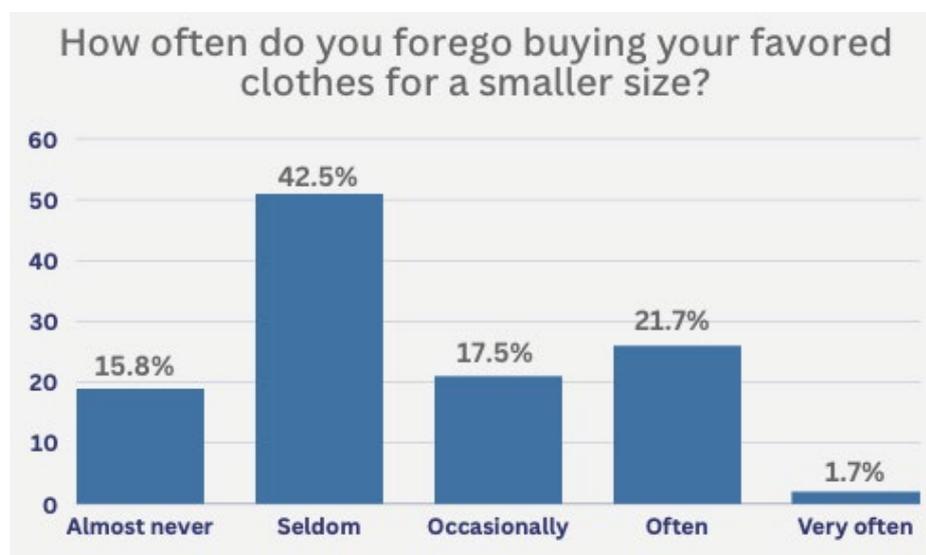


Figure 4.11 Participants' Attitudes to Abandonment Times

4.4.4 Small size clothing and attractiveness

When queried about whether the size of clothing is indicative of a woman's personal attractiveness, only five participants strongly agree, constituting 4.2% of the sample (Figure 4.12). Additionally, 34 participants (28.3%) agreed that small-sized garments are associated with women's personal attractiveness. The majority of respondents maintained a neutral stance, specifically, 35 individuals (29.2%). Conversely, a total of 17 participants (14.2%) strongly disagreed with this notion. Furthermore, nearly 30 participants (22.5%) disagree views.

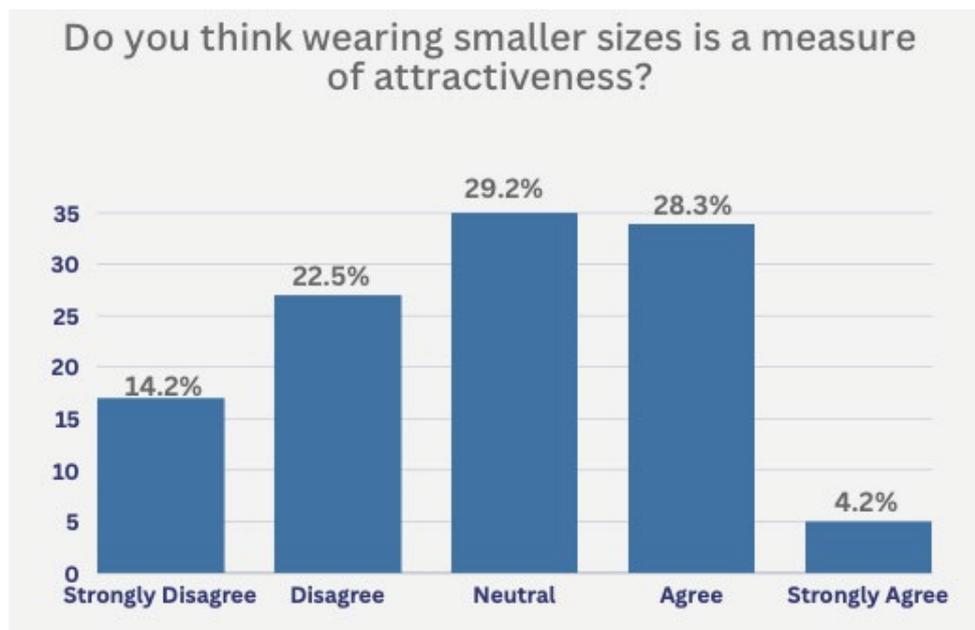


Figure 4.12 Participants' Attitudes to Small Size and Female Attractiveness

4.4.5 Summary

Research question 1 asked, are young Chinese female buying smaller clothes sizes instead of clothes they like because of their self-image? Based on the collected data, almost half the respondents would choose a small size given a choice between S and L. One quarter of respondents deliberating choose a small size; a similar percentage would deliberately choose a smaller size than their preferred garment. More than one-quarter of respondents associated smaller size garments with feminine attractiveness.

4.5 Research Question 2:

How much have social media and advertising contributed to young Chinese women's consumption of small-size clothing and shaped fashion trends?

4.5.1 Fashion trend clothing and body image

When it comes to body image (Figure 4.13), only three participants strongly agree their unwavering commitment to purchasing popular clothing styles despite concerns about their body shape, indicating a heightened focus on personal body image (2.5%). Secondly, it is noteworthy that 35 individuals agreed abstaining from buying women's clothing due to apprehensions regarding the potential accentuation of their body shape through certain fashionable styles, constituting a cumulative percentage of 29.2%. Additionally, 30 participants maintained a neutral stance. In contrast, 14 respondents strongly disagreed (11.7%), while another 38 participants expressed disagree determination in not relinquishing the purchase of select trendy garments despite anxieties surrounding their physique, accounting for 31.7% overall.

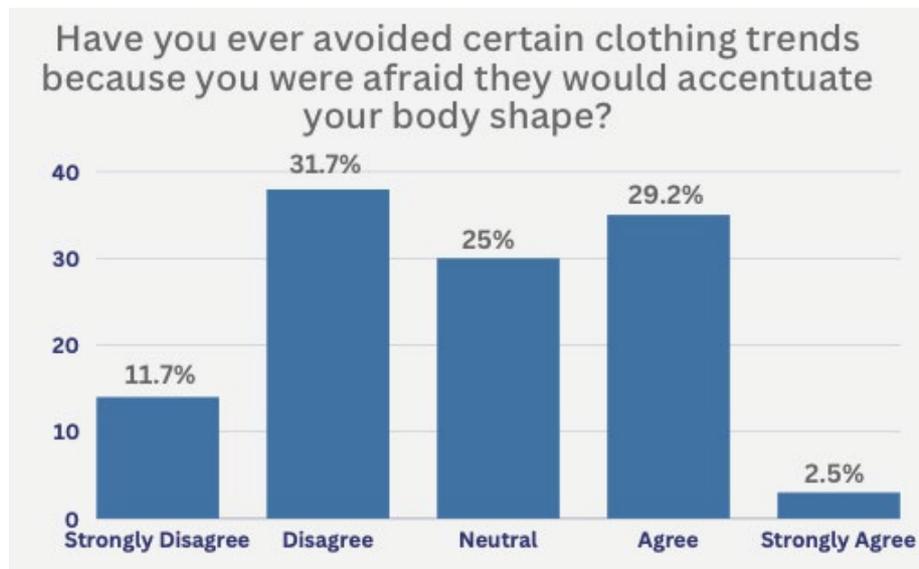


Figure 4.13 Participants' Attitudes to Popular Clothing and Body Image

4.5.2 Social expectations and women's self-evaluation

When questioned about the influence of societal expectations regarding small-sized clothing on young Chinese women's body image, six participants (5%) expressed an extreme opinion (Figure 4.14). In contrast, 29.2% of participants believed that such expectations had a significant impact on these perceptions. However, the majority opinion (42%) was that it would moderately affect them. Additionally, approximately 30 participants (22.5% in total) were slightly influenced by this perspective. Furthermore, 8.3% of participants held the belief that societal expectations of small-sized clothing did not at all to young Chinese women's body image perceptions.

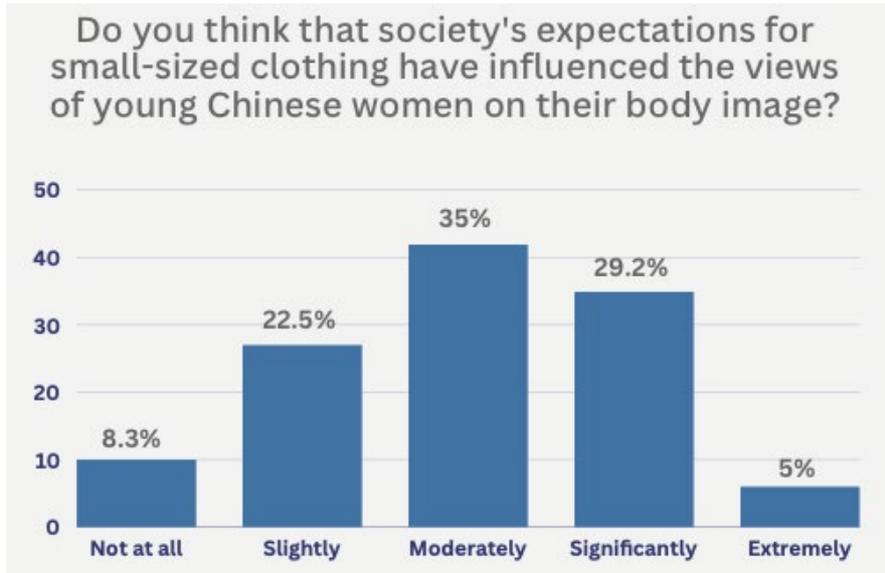


Figure 4.14 Participants' Attitudes to Social Expectations and Women's Self-Evaluation

4.5.3 Social mainstream aesthetic and clothing size

In contemporary society with an emphasis on slimness as its prevailing aesthetic standard, 5.8% of participants (7 individuals) believe this emphasis on slimness has an extremely influential impact on their choice of clothing size (Figure 4.15). A substantial 35% of participants acknowledge a significant influence. Simultaneously, 36 respondents consider the impact to be moderately moderate for them, accounting for 30% in total. Furthermore, approximately 23.3% of participants believe that the mainstream perception of thinness slightly influences their clothing size preferences. Conversely, only 5.8% remain not at all affect by this perception and assert that clothing size is unrelated to it. These individuals also amount to seven participants, which the same number as those who perceive an extremely high impact.

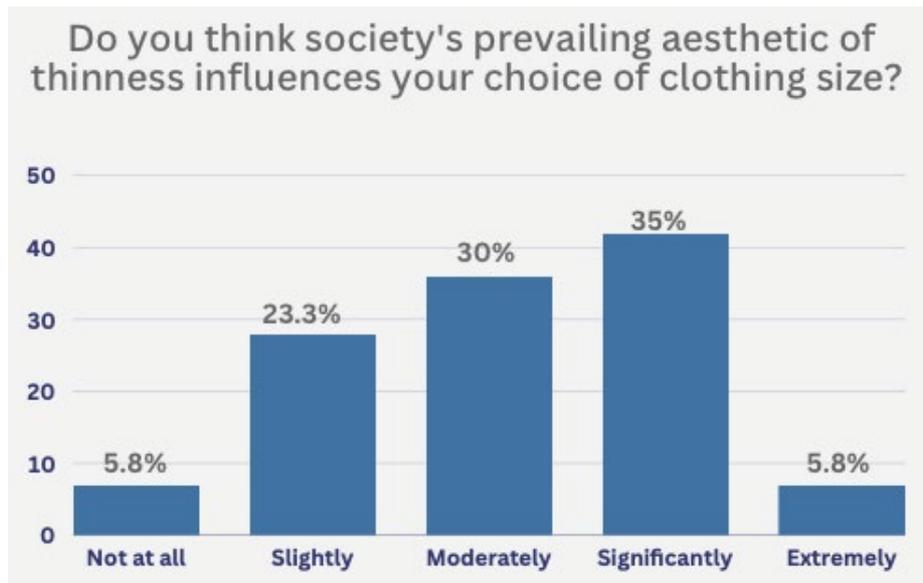


Figure 4.15 Participants' Attitudes to Social Mainstream Aesthetics and Clothing Size

4.5.4 Social media and small-size clothing

Among the participants, 0.8% found the appeal of social media and advertising in relation to purchasing smaller clothes to be extremely compelling (Figure 4.16). However, a significant impact was reported by 35 participants, accounting for 29.2%. Additionally, 35% of the participants believed that social media and advertising moderately influenced their decision to buy small-sized clothing. Furthermore, a slight influence on consumers' purchase of small clothes was perceived by 22 participants (18.3%). This finding aligns with those who felt no effect at all, totaling 18 individuals or representing 15%.

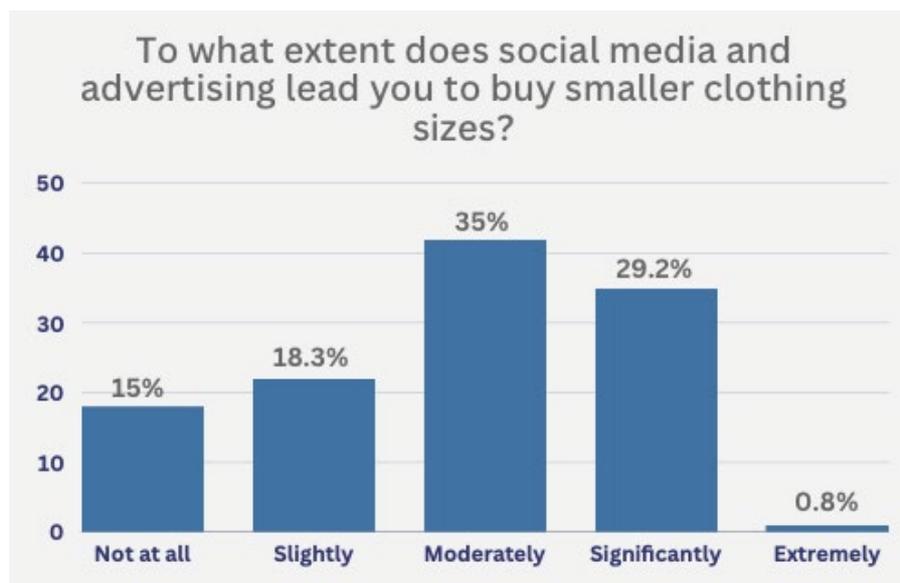


Figure 4.16 Participants' Attitudes to Social Media and Small Size Clothing

4.5.5 Social media and beauty standards

When questioned about the influence of social media on beauty standards, a small but significant proportion of participants (8.3%) strongly agree with the notion that media presents an unrealistic portrayal of beauty (Figure 4.17). Additionally, 28.3% of respondents agreed with this statement, comprising a total of 34 individuals. Meanwhile, a substantial majority (41.7%) maintained neutral attitudes towards this issue. However, it is noteworthy that within those who disagreed, approximately one-fourth expressed strongly disagree (4.2%), while the remaining three-fourths held moderate disapproval (17.5%). This equated to 10 participants.

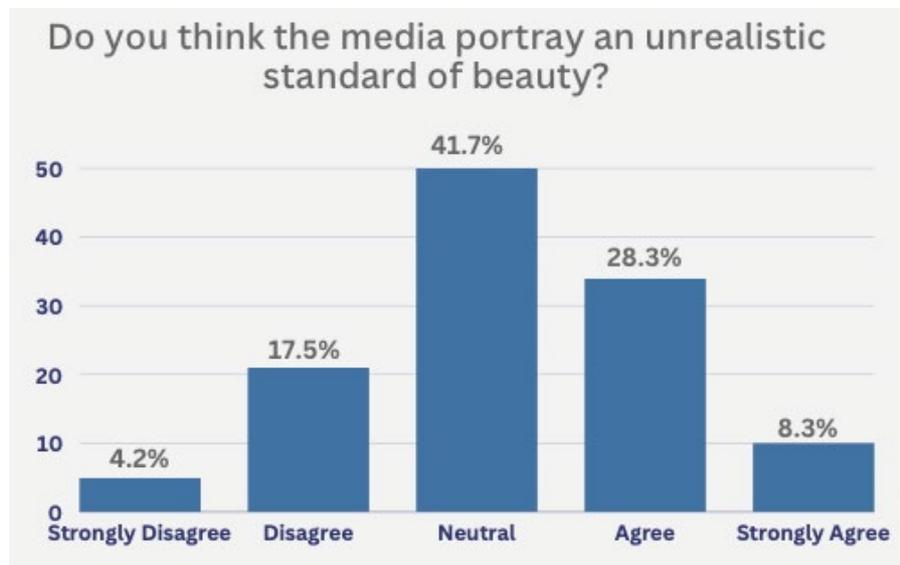


Figure 4.17 Participants' Attitudes to Social Media and Standards of Beauty

4.5.6 Body image and Internet celebrity bloggers

Regarding the comparison of body image with influencer bloggers in media, participants were surveyed on their tendency to make such comparisons (Figure 4.18). The findings indicate more than one-third of participants (34.2%) reported often comparing themselves to influencers, while only 4 (3.3%) indicated doing so very often. Additionally, 31.7% of respondents stated they occasionally made such comparisons. However, nearly seven times as many individuals reported seldom making these comparisons compared to those who did so very often (28 or 31.7%, respectively). Furthermore, nine participants expressed indifference towards this issue and not at all compared themselves to influencers.

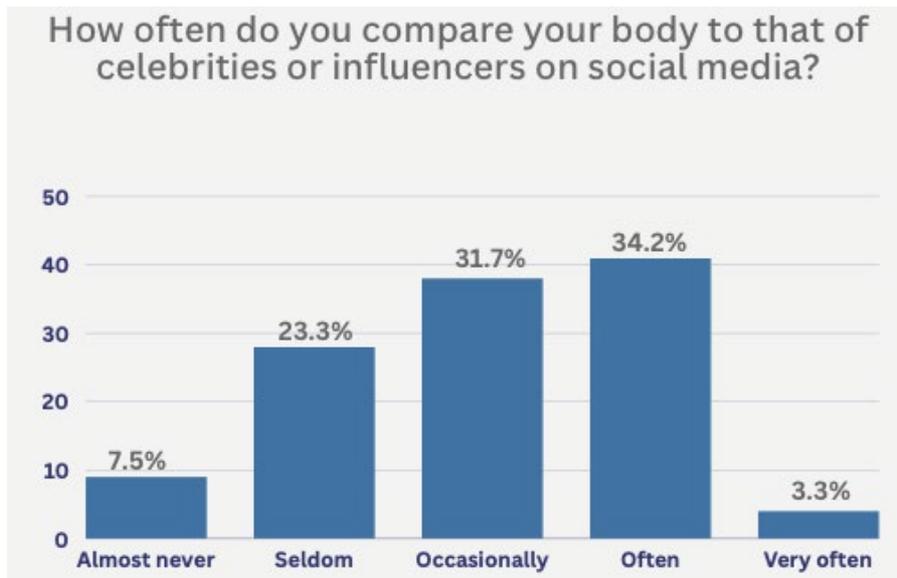


Figure 4.18 Participants' Attitudes to Body Image Compared with Internet Influencers

4.5.7 summary

Research question two asked, how much have social media and advertising contributed to young Chinese women's consumption of small-size clothing and shaped fashion trends. 30% avoid clothing trends that emphasize their body shape. 30% also believe society expectations regarding small sizes influence their body image. 40% believe the thinness aesthetic is society influences their choice of clothing size. 30% believe they are influenced by social media and advertising to buy small sizes. 36% believe the media has an unrealistic standard of beauty, and 37% compared their body image with celebrities and influencers.

4.6 Research Question 3:

To what degree do males dictate fashion trends targeted at young Chinese women?

Research question 3 asked, to what degree do males dictate fashion trends targeted at young Chinese women (Figure 4.19). Hence, from the result, regarding the discourse on the male gaze, a notable proportion of participants (27 individuals, accounting for 22.5%) reported often experiencing instances of receiving comments on their attire from male leaders, colleagues, or classmates in their daily lives. However, only a small fraction (2.5% of participants) indicated that such occurrences were very often. Additionally, approximately 45% of respondents expressed encountering occasional incidents.

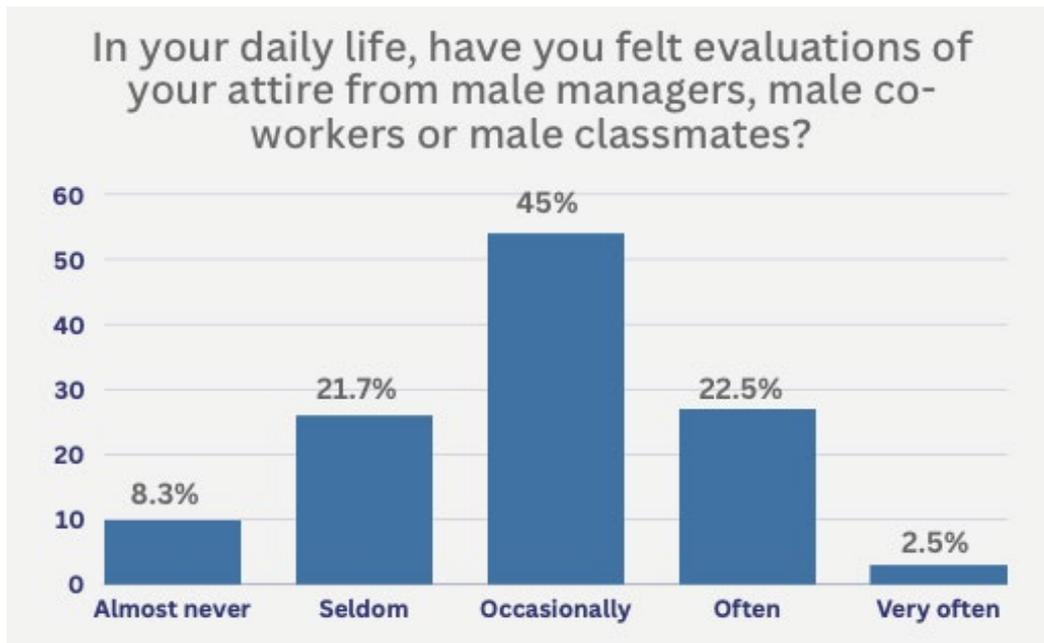


Figure 4.19 Participants' Attitudes to Male Gaze

4.7 Research Question 4:

In contemporary society, does the emphasis on smaller clothing sizes have adverse effects on the well-being of young Chinese women?

4.7.1 Self-image and size choice

As for the idea that "self-image will affect the choice of clothing size", 45.8% of respondents rated this statement as relevant (Figure 4.20). At the same time, 25% of participants felt that self-image was neither relevant nor irrelevant to clothing size choice. In addition, 21 participants (17.5%) considered the attitude to be not very relevant.

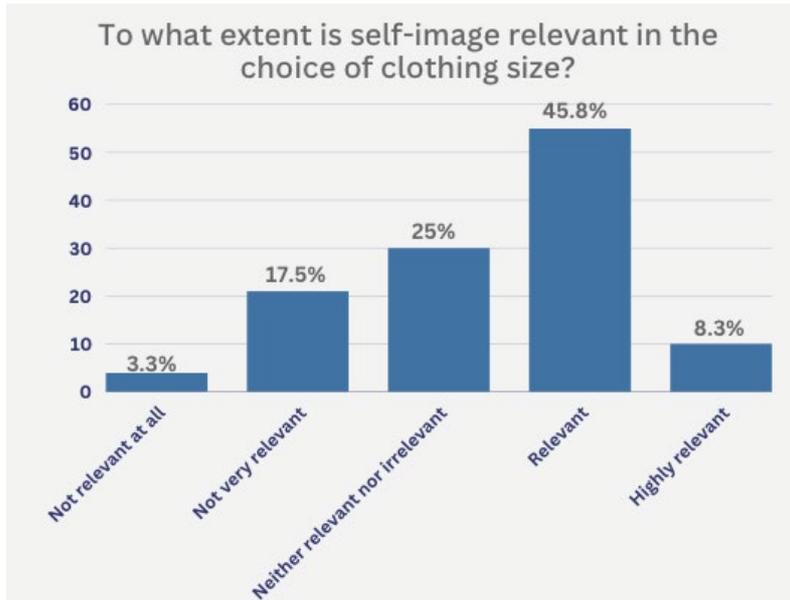


Figure 4.20 Participants’ Attitudes to Self-Image and Size Choice

4.7.2 Diet or exercise

When it comes to diet or exercise, 35% of respondents often engage in dietary restrictions or physical activities with the aim of achieving a slimmer physique (Figure 4.21). However, only two participants (1.7%) expressed a very often of such behaviors. Simultaneously, 31.7% of participants occasionally adopt dieting or exercising practices for the purpose of attaining a thinner appearance. In contrast, 20% of participants exhibited seldom attitudes towards these practices, accounting for 10.8%, as opposed to almost never engaging in them.

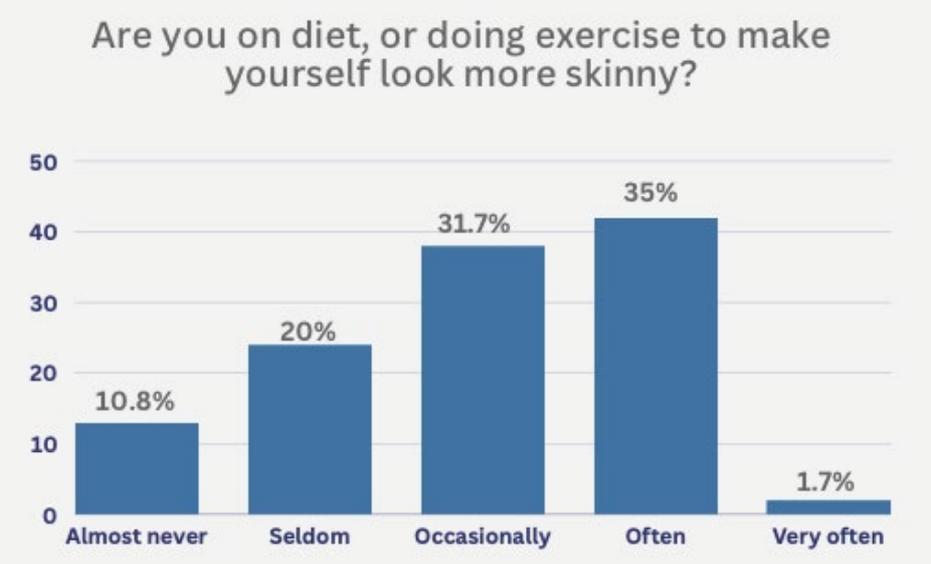


Figure 4.21 Participants’ Attitudes to Diet or Exercise

4.7.3 Surgery and Appearance

The feedback results indicated that, only 1 participant strongly agree the notion of "considering surgical intervention for aesthetic alteration" representing a mere 0.8% (Figure 4.22). Furthermore, an equal number of participants expressed agreement and maintained a neutral stance, with 27 individuals accounting for 22.5% in both categories. Conversely, a significant proportion of participants (17.5%) strongly disagree with pursuing surgery to alter their appearance. Simultaneously, the largest disagree towards surgical interventions was observed among 44 participants, constituting 36.7%.

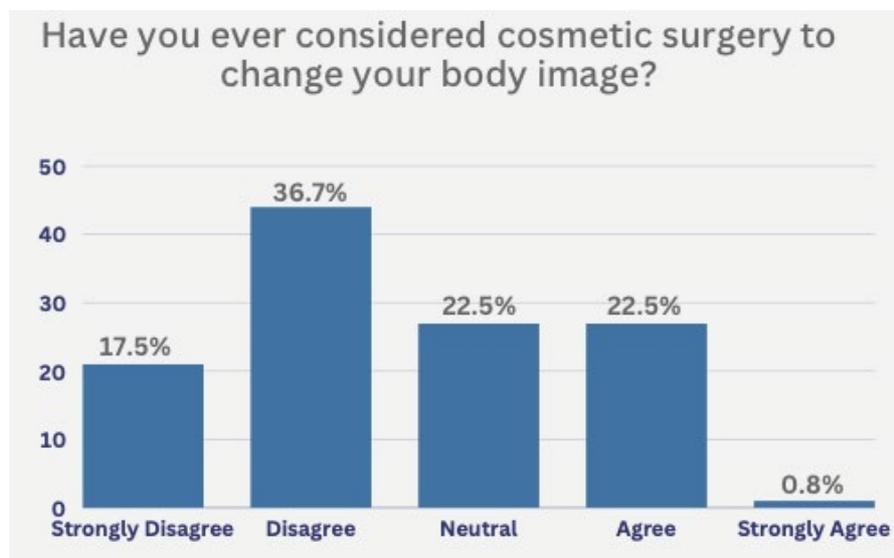


Figure 4.22 Participants' Attitudes to Surgery and Appearance

4.7.4 Body image and social activities

In response to the question of whether body image concerns lead to avoidance of social activities, 8.3% of participants reported often avoiding social engagements due to dissatisfaction with their body image (Figure 4.23). However, only 1 participant (0.8%) expressed a very often tendency to avoid social activities because of body image dissatisfaction. Additionally, 27.5% of participants said occasionally, more than half as many as those with a seldom attitude, which is 43.3%. Conversely, 20% or 24 participants stated that they had almost never experienced any avoidance of social activities related to body image concerns.

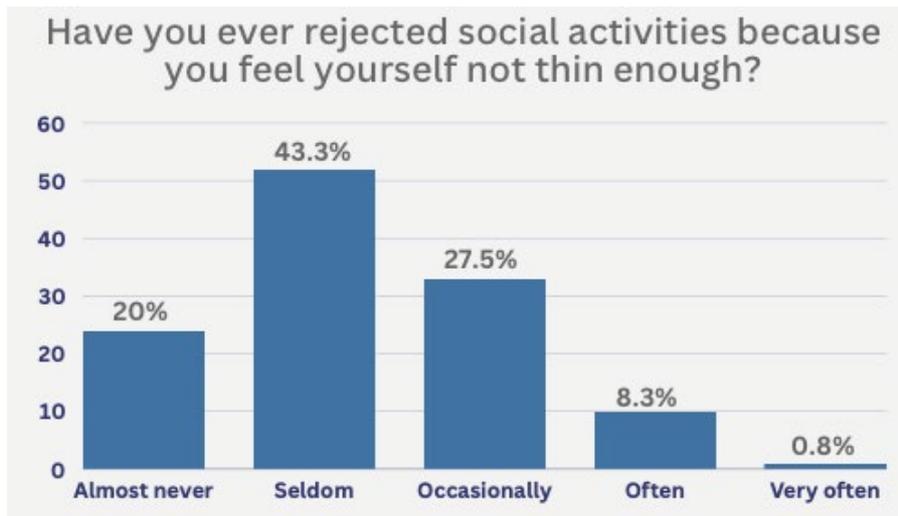


Figure 4.23 Participants' Attitudes to Body Image and Social Interaction

4.7.5 Body image evaluation and self-esteem

Only 4 participants (3.3%) strongly agree with the notion that 'external evaluations of body image significantly impact self-esteem' (Figure 4.24). However, the majority of participants, totaling 41 individuals and accounting for 34.2%, expressed agreement. Simultaneously, a neutral stance was adopted by 27.5% of participants. Furthermore, a notable proportion of respondents (10%) strongly disagree this viewpoint. Conversely, 29 participants (24.2%) believed that external evaluations of body image had no bearing on self-esteem.

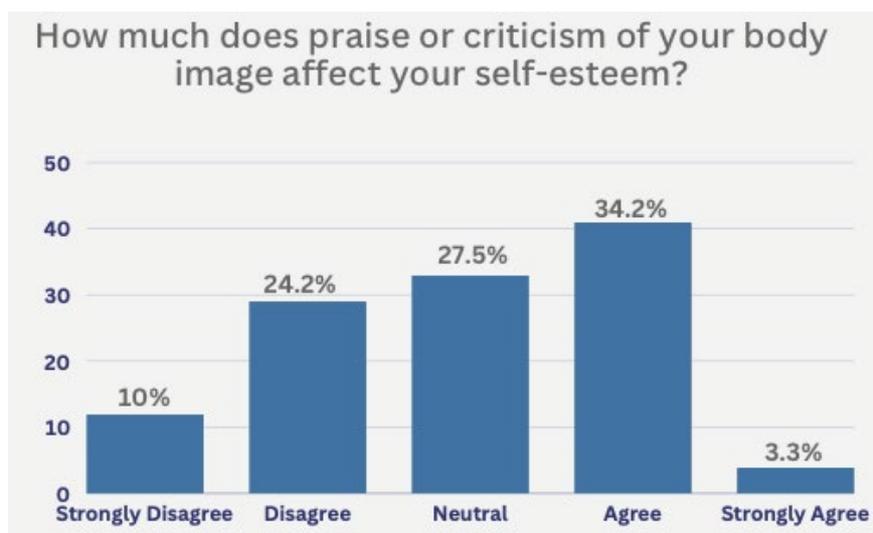


Figure 4.24 Participants' Attitudes to Body Image Evaluation and Self-Esteem

4.7.6 Women and body image awareness

Asked if females are more likely to pay attention to body image, a mere 10.8% of participants strongly agree with the statement, signifying their profound concern regarding women's body image (Figure 4.25). However, a substantial majority of 78 participants (65%) expressed agreement. Simultaneously, 19.2% of participants remained neutral in their stance. Conversely, 2 participants (1.7%) strongly disagreed, constituting half the number of those who simply disagreed (3.3%).

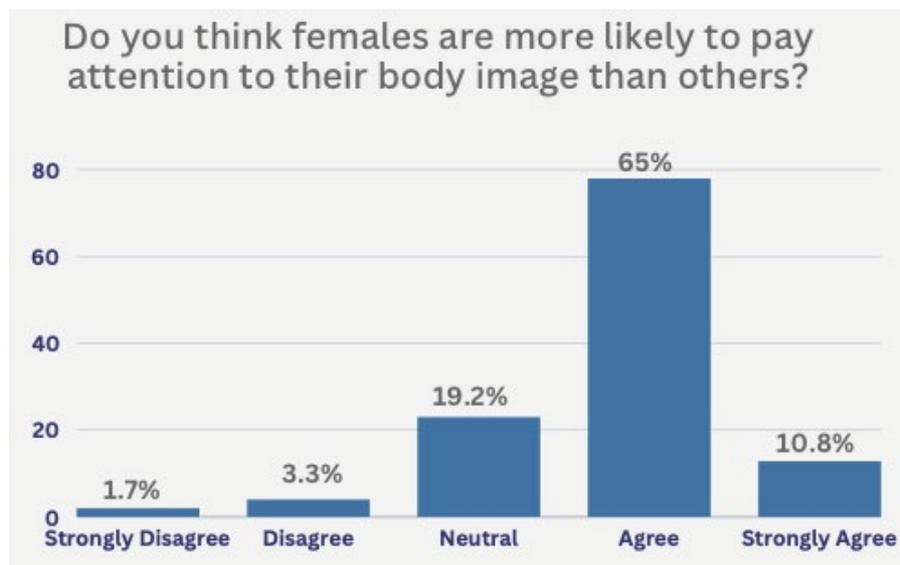


Figure 4.25 Participants' Attitudes to Body Image Awareness

4.7.7 Body image and negative evaluation

The proportion of participants who strongly agreed with experiencing body-related teasing or shaming was 3.3% (Figure 4.26). However, the number of participants who agreed with this view was seven times higher than those who strongly agreed, totalling 28 participants and accounting for 23.3%. In contrast, a total of 24 participants remained neutral on this issue. On the other hand, strong disapproval was expressed by 15% of the participants. However, only 37.5% disagreed.

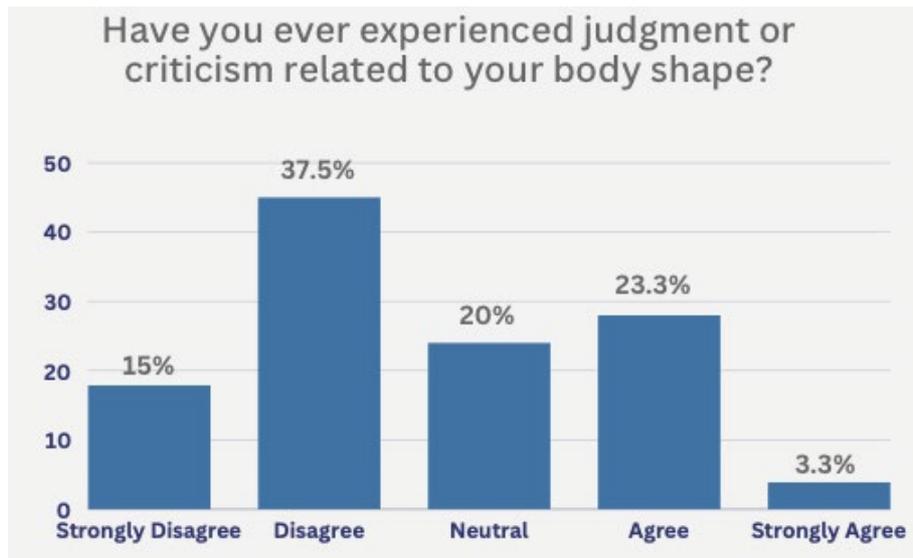


Figure 4.26 Participants' Attitudes to Body Image and Negative Evaluation

4.7.8 Body image and stress

The statement that "society, the media, or peer pressure on body image", the smallest number of participants thought the impact was extremely, which two participants (1.7%) (Figure 4.27). In contrast, 24.2% of participants had experienced significant from society, the media or peers regarding their body image. Moderately affected participants accounted for 31.7% (n=38), while slightly affected participants constituted 28.3% (n=34). Additionally, 14.2% of participants expressed the belief that society, the media, or peers did not at all impose any pressure on body image.

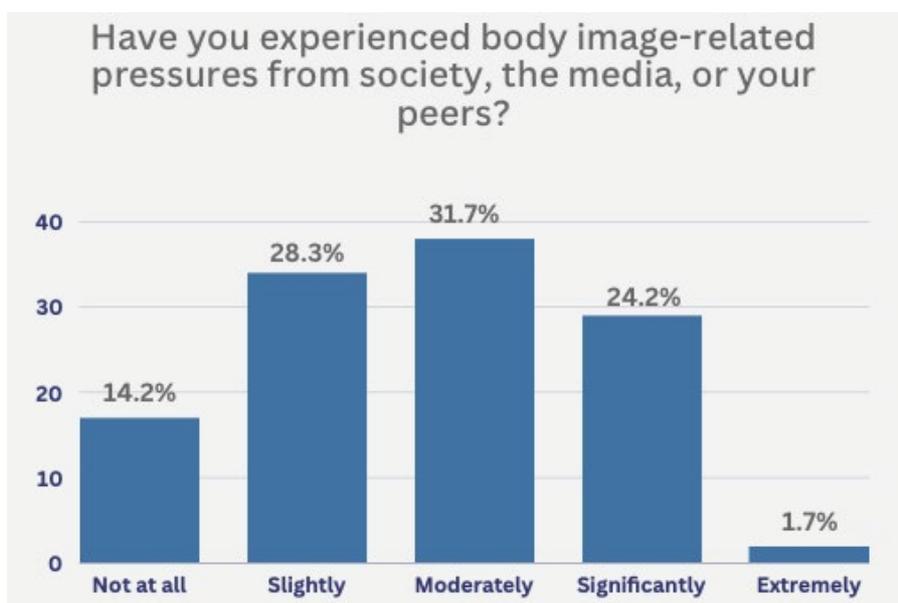


Figure 4.27 Participants' Attitudes to Body Image and Stress

4.7.9 Small size clothing and happiness

7.5% of young Chinese women felt that the pressure to wear women's small-size clothes impacted their happiness and self-esteem extremely (Figure 4.28). More than one-third of participants (35.8%) felt the pressure to wear small-size clothes impacted their happiness and self-esteem significantly. On the other hand, 26 participants remained neutral and believed that this pressure has a moderate effect on the overall happiness of young Chinese women. In contrast, 25% indicated a slightly different impact from the pressure for small sizes in women's clothing. However, 10% of participants stated that it had no effect at all.

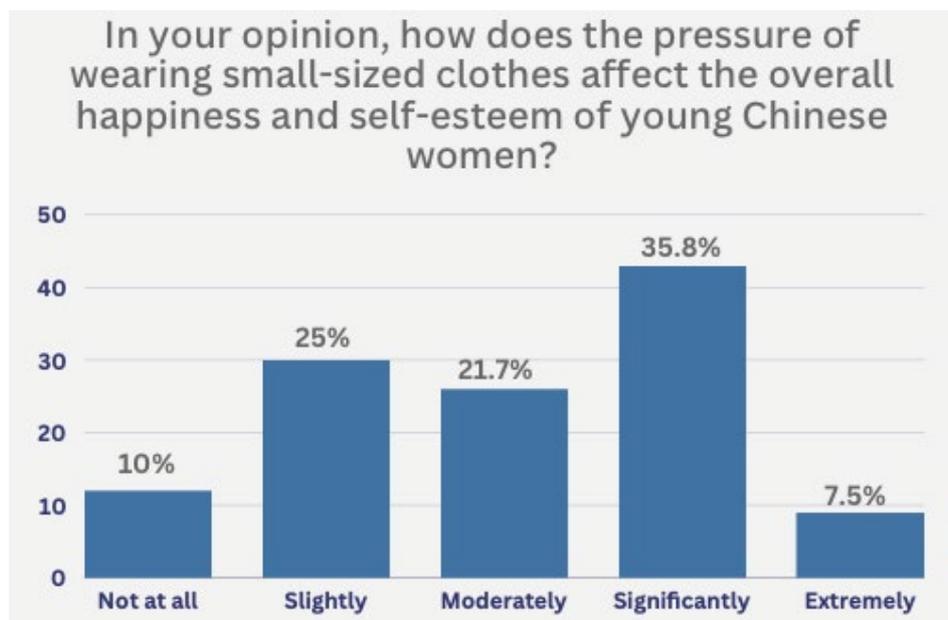


Figure 4.28 Participants' Attitudes to Small Size Clothing and Happiness

4.7.10 Small size clothing and negative effects

When asked about the negative effects and personal experiences of small size clothing, none of the 120 participants showed they were extremely negatively affected by the attention paid to small size clothing (Figure 4.29). However, 22.5% of participants rated the negative effects significantly. At the same time, 39 participants, or 32.5%, said they would be moderately affected by people's attention to smaller sizes. In addition, 44 participants (36.7%) felt that the attention paid to smaller sizes had a slightly negative impact on them. In contrast, only 8.3% of participants saw no impact at all.

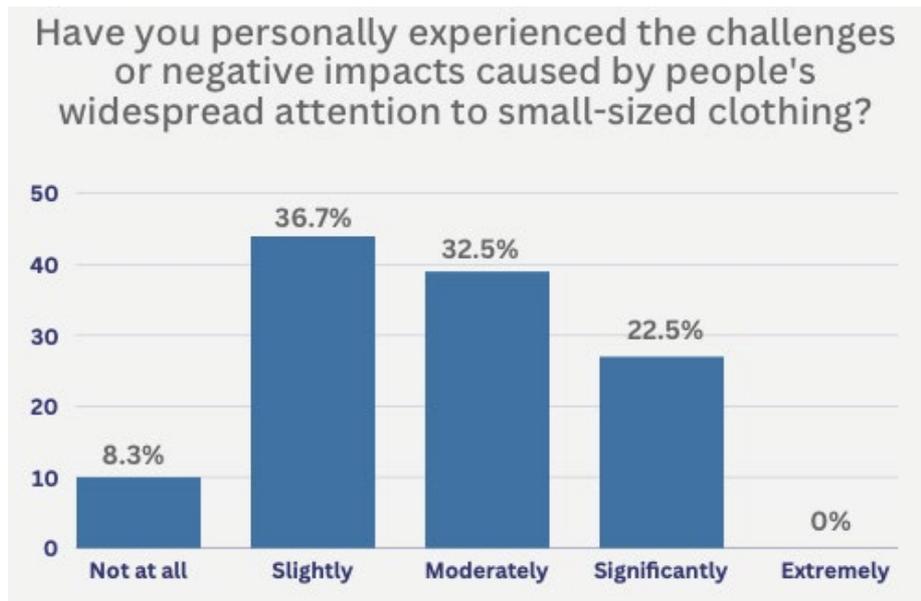


Figure 4.29 Participants' Attitudes to Small Size Clothing and Negative Effects

4.7.11 Summary

Research question 4 asked does the emphasis on smaller clothing size have adverse effects on the well-being of young Chinese women? In summary, 35% of respondents had engaged in dieting to achieve a slimmer physique. Almost one-quarter had considered surgery to change their body image. One-third occasionally or often avoided social contact because they did not feel thin enough. One-third agreed praise or criticism of their body image affected their self-esteem. One-quarter had experienced judgements or criticism of the body image and one-quarter felt significant pressure regarding body image. 40% felt the pressure to wear small size clothes impacted their happiness and self-esteem significantly or extremely.

4.8 Chapter Summary

Regarding clothing sizes available on the Chinese market, the majority of expressed satisfaction with the availability of women's clothing sizes. However, a majority also voiced disappointment when discrepancies arose between labelled and actual sizes in women's clothing.

Research Question 1 asked, are young Chinese female buying smaller clothes sizes instead of clothes they like because of their self-image? Almost half the respondents would choose a small size given a choice between S and L. One quarter of respondents would deliberately

choose a smaller size than their preferred garment. More than one-quarter of respondents associated smaller size garments with feminine attractiveness.

Research Question 2 asked, how much have social media and advertising contributed to young Chinese women's consumption of small-size clothing and shaped fashion trends? 30% of respondents avoid clothing trends that emphasize their body shape. 30% also believe society expectations regarding small sizes influence their body image. 40% believe the thinness aesthetic is society influences their choice of clothing size. 30% believe they are influenced by social media and advertising to buy small sizes. 37% compared their body image with celebrities and influencers.

Research Question 3 asked do males dictate fashion trends targeted at young Chinese women? A notable proportion of participants (22.5%) reported often experiencing instances of receiving comments on their attire from male leaders, colleagues, or classmates in their daily lives.

Research Question 4 asked does the emphasis on smaller clothing size have adverse effects on the well-being of young Chinese women? One-third occasionally or often avoided social contact because they did not feel thin enough. One-quarter had experienced judgements or criticism of the body image and one-quarter felt significant pressure regarding body image. 40% felt the pressure to wear small size clothes impacted their happiness and self-esteem significantly or extremely.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to integrate the data collected in Chapter 4 with existing academic literature, focusing on examining the impact of societal ideals of thinness on body image perception and changes among young Chinese women. Additionally, it explores how vanity sizing can be utilized to meet social expectations. To accomplish the research objectives, this chapter provides further elaboration on the four research questions addressed in the previous chapter."

Research Question 1: Are young Chinese women (18-29 years old) buying smaller sizes instead of the clothes they like because of their self-image?

Research Question 2: How much have social media and advertising contributed to young Chinese women's consumption of small-size clothing and shaped fashion trends?

Research Question 3: To what degree do males dictate fashion trends targeted at young Chinese women?

Research Question 4: In contemporary society, does the emphasis on smaller clothing sizes have adverse effects on the well-being of young Chinese women?

This chapter will discuss the main findings in five areas: (1) Demographic information of participants, (2) women's clothing size, (3) leading by social media and advertisement, (4) fashion trend lead by male, and (5) smaller size and women's wellbeing.

5.2 Women's clothing size

Previous studies have demonstrated significant variations in sizing standards among garment manufacturers, who intentionally label clothing as smaller than the actual size to promote a more positive and relatively slim self-image for consumers (Bishop, 2018., Franz, 2017). This discrepancy in sizing has long been a challenge for the women's clothing industry, hindering sales (Ketrion, 2018). Consequently, this survey reveals the existence of vanity sizing phenomenon within China's women's clothing industry and its association with women's body satisfaction and sexual attractiveness.

5.2.1 Women's satisfaction with clothing size

The findings revealed that the majority of participants expressed satisfaction with the size range offered by women's clothing brands and reported successful purchases of desirable and suitable clothing during their shopping experiences. However, there are certain disparities compared to previous literature on women's sizing in China. Prior research conducted by Paridon (2023) on the China Fashion website indicated that young Chinese women often opt for ultra-petite attire, occasionally even smaller than children's clothing, in order to conform to prevailing fashion trends. This phenomenon may be attributed to a discrepancy between actual sizes and label sizes (Ketron and Williams, 2018). Moreover, when consumers perceive inaccuracies in sizing information or doubt the existence of vanity sizing as a response to such practices, they tend to feel deceived (Ketron, 2016., Ketron and Spears 2017). Consistent with this perspective, more than half of the respondents expressed disappointment when encountering discrepancies between labelled sizes and actual sizes (Figure 4.8). Therefore, despite ongoing downsizing efforts in Chinese women's clothing sizes, a significant portion of individuals still believe that these sizes meet their shopping needs. Nevertheless, many women continue to experience disappointment upon perceiving the presence of vanity sizing.

5.2.2 Female attractiveness

To answer research question one: Are young Chinese women (18-29 years old) buying smaller sizes instead of the clothes they like because of their self-image? The survey results indicate that 32.5% of the participants agree or strongly agree that small-sized clothing serves as a standard for measuring attractiveness (Figure 4.12). This suggests an association between women's small-sized clothing and sexual attractiveness (Selimbegovic et al., 2021). However, most participants are unwilling to sacrifice their favourite clothes in order to deliberately choose smaller sizes to showcase their attractiveness, which differs from previous literature findings. Prior studies have mentioned that some slender women are more inclined to flaunt wearing smaller-sized clothes than usual (Ketron and Spears, 2016) in order to leverage their body shape for personal advantages (Bishop et al., 2018), possibly related to women's subjective agency (Ketron and Spears, Ketron and Spears, 2016). Solomon (2009) provided an example where certain women actively conform to social expectations by purchasing smaller sizes with the intention of appearing more attractive. This aligns with the current survey results where 55% occasionally or often intentionally opt for clothing smaller than their actual size (Figure 4.10). Conversely, there is a growing acceptance among young

individuals towards negative body image as part of themselves (Wood-Barcalow et al., 2010., Poulter and Treharne, 2010). Notably, only 40.9% of participants occasionally, often or very often give up their favorite clothes for smaller sizes (Figure 4.11). Therefore, it can be inferred that some participants who meet societal aesthetic standards tend to subjectively select smaller sizes in order to display their attractiveness while those with strong self-identity remain unaffected by thinness.

5.3 The influence of social media and advertising

To answer research question two: How much have social media and advertising contributed to young Chinese women's consumption of small-size clothing and shaped fashion trends? This survey posits that the underlying rationale behind the aesthetic culture propagated by social media and advertising is intricately linked to societal expectations for women. While most participants did not subjectively acknowledge feeling pressured to wear smaller sizes due to the influence of social media and advertising on body image, a majority also admitted that socially dominant notions of beauty influenced their clothing size choices.

Simultaneously, based on the dissertation's findings, most participants held a neutral stance and agreed with the pressure exerted by media and advertising regarding small-size ideals for young individuals. This result may appear contradictory in terms of guidance provided by social media and advertising. However, previous literature can further elucidate this phenomenon.

From the 1960s to the 1980s, media representations of women's bodies increasingly emphasized slenderness (Frost, 2001). However, despite ongoing efforts by social commentators to challenge the idealization of extremely thin bodies in the media since the 1970s, there remains significant sociocultural pressure on women to conform to thinness (Grogan, 2013). This indicates that the media perpetuates an unrealistic standard of beauty (Apeagyei, 2007) and attempts to democratize it by convincing viewers that they can attain the 'perfect body' (Rice, 2014). Therefore, this survey aims to examine how the media portrays an unattainable perception of beauty. 36.6% of respondents agreed with this statement (Figure 4.17). This discrepancy may be attributed to participants' self-evaluation, even within a society that values thinness highly, individuals with positive body image evaluations are less susceptible to societal pressures (Ketron and Naletelich, 2017; Ketron and Spears, 2016).

On the other hand, the influence of socially dominant aesthetic ideas on clothing size choices could not be denied by most participants, who also acknowledged the significant role played by the media. Particularly among young individuals, especially young women, regular exposure to mass media portraying ideal bodies as exceptionally thin (Grogan 2022) has led to a desire to emulate celebrities and stay fashionable (Apeageyi 2007; Rajagopal and Gales, 2002). These survey findings align with this perspective, as indicated by 31.7% and 37.5% of participants occasionally and often comparing their body shape with that of influencer media bloggers (Figure 4.18). Consequently, it is evident that a majority of participants still prioritize conforming to social beauty standards promoted by the media in terms of their body image, those influenced by societal expectations regarding women's bodies tend to opt for smaller sizes while others unconcerned about these standards perceive them as irrelevant.

5.4 Fashion trends dictated by males

To answer research question three: To what degree do males dictate fashion trends targeted at young Chinese women? The survey results indicate that over 90% of female participants have encountered varying degrees of male gaze in the workplace, particularly regarding their attire (Figure 4.19). These findings align with previous research, as McKie and Jyrkinen (2017) highlight the constant scrutiny women face concerning their appearance, clothing choices, and behavior both within and outside work settings, often originating from men. However, within a sexualized culture, alongside objectification through the male gaze, women also engage in self-directed surveillance and adopt a neoliberal perspective by scrutinizing themselves and other women (Evan, 2010). This phenomenon is frequently observed when consumers blame their bodies for ill-fitting clothes purchases (Grogan, 2013., LaBat and DeLong, 1990). Consequently, combining the outcomes of this dissertation with existing literature suggests that men exert some influence on women's dress both inside and outside the workplace to an extent that may impact women's body confidence. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that more than 30% of participants did not perceive this influence as significantly affecting their daily lives or professional endeavours.

5.5 Smaller clothing sizes and women's wellbeing

Previous research has demonstrated that the congruity between body image and small-sized clothing prompts women to make various adjustments (Smolak, 2004). Simultaneously, alterations in body image are likely to exert a detrimental impact on the physical and mental

well-being of women (Brechan and Kvaalem 2015; Wood-Barcalow et al., 2010). Therefore, in order to address research question four: Does the emphasis on smaller clothing sizes in contemporary society have adverse effects on the well-being of young Chinese women? This dissertation will further elucidate two aspects: body satisfaction and personal experiences.

5.5.1 Body satisfaction

The survey results indicate that a significant number of participants are willing to adopt measures, such as dietary changes and exercise, in order to enhance their body image and strive for a slimmer physique. This finding aligns with previous literature, where Smolak (2004) demonstrated that many women attempt weight and body shape modifications through reduced food intake at some point in their lives. It has been reported that approximately 95% of women have engaged in dieting during their lifetime, while more than 50% of American women are actively trying to lose weight at any given time (Martin et al., 2018). Moreover, existing studies suggest a correlation between self-image and clothing size preference, indicating that women's satisfaction with their bodies influences the selection of apparel sizes (Hoegg, 2013). Notably, certain young women resort to extreme behaviors like excessive exercise and drastic dietary alterations in pursuit of a thinner body image (Neagu, 2015), which can lead to severe physical consequences including depression and eating disorders (Becker et al., 2017; Brechan and Kvaalem 2015; Poulter and Treharne 2020). Additionally, some individuals opt for surgical interventions as an often perceived radical means to transform their body image (Bishop et al., 2018). Furthermore, the current findings exhibit similarities with prior research, most participant's express willingness towards employing explanations or engaging in exercise routines for achieving a slimmer physique but demonstrate opposition towards extreme forms of alteration such as surgery (Figure 4.22).

5.5.2 Personal experiences

This questionnaire examined the personal and shopping experiences of participants in relation to societal concerns about body size. The survey findings revealed that 26.6% of the respondents reported instances of ridicule or body shaming based on their size, indicating that society's emphasis on small sizes had minimal impact on consumers themselves (Figure 4.26). This finding contrasts somewhat with previous literature, as Neagu (2015) demonstrated that respondents experienced genuine pressure from family, friends, and potential partners to lose weight or maintain a slim figure due to specific cultural values shaping Asian populations' body image, particularly in highly industrialized regions where

the pursuit of thinness is more pronounced than in Western countries (Neagu, 2015). Nevertheless, over 70% of participants believed that women placed greater importance on body image compared to other genders (Figure 4.25). This perception may stem from traditional Asian cultures characterized by collectivism wherein an individual's appearance often represents not only themselves but also their family or the wider Asian community as a whole. Consequently, any alteration in physical appearance is driven by a desire to conform to group norms and avoid disappointing relatives or arousing resentment within the community, frequent social comparisons further contribute to heightened concern about body image among Asian women (Neagu, 2015). Therefore, although many participants claimed limited influence from societal focus on small sizes personally, numerous women still felt compelled to prioritize their body image.

5.6 Implications

The findings of the dissertation underscore the emergence of Chinese women's self-interest, enabling them to disregard the societal pressure and adverse effects imposed on women by the prevailing aesthetic standard of thinness. Simultaneously, it mitigates the stigmatization surrounding plus-size women's clothing and contributes to fostering gender equality within society.

5.7 Theoretical Implications

This dissertation contributes to the existing literature in the garment industry by providing theoretical insights. Firstly, while previous research on vanity sizing has predominantly focused on Western countries (Aydinolu and Krishna, 2012; Frost, 2001; Poulter and Treharne, 2020), this dissertation specifically examines China's context. Considering diverse national conditions and cultural backgrounds, this dissertation emphasizes the behavior of Chinese young women within a traditional patriarchal society that idealizes thinness as a beauty standard. Contrary to societal pressures favoring thinness, we uncover a new finding indicating an increasing number of young women challenging and rejecting unhealthy beauty standards while prioritizing their personal preferences for clothing. This aligns with the objective of this dissertation.

Secondly, our sample primarily consists of young Chinese women, with a significant proportion employed in companies. Consequently, this research provides valuable insights

for young women entering the workforce regarding how they navigate China's prevailing small-size culture within professional settings. Our findings reveal that many female employees experience varying degrees of objectification based on their attire due to male gaze dynamics at work. Additionally, workwear sizes tend to cater more towards thinner individuals while marginalizing plus-size women in terms of aesthetic labor hierarchy. Notably, compared to slim counterparts, plus-size women were found to be less likely 'interview ready' after meetings (Gruys, 2017).

5.8 Limitations and future research

The dissertation has evident limitations. Firstly, this dissertation primarily focuses on the phenomenon of vanity sizing in China, thus limiting the generalizability of the findings to other cultural contexts.

Secondly, this dissertation predominantly includes female participants and lacks representation from other genders.

Thirdly, the dissertation solely encompasses individuals aged 18-29 years old, thereby imposing limitations in terms of age range.

For future research and development in this field, we can address the following limitations of this dissertation. Firstly, a more comprehensive investigation could be conducted on the cultural backgrounds of other countries or regions, including considering the unique cultural background of China's special administrative region. Secondly, to enhance gender diversity in our research, it is important to consider the diverse perspectives of LGBTQ+ groups regarding Chinese small-size culture. Lastly, incorporating viewpoints from a wider range of age groups would further enrich our analysis.

5.9 Conclusion

In light of the impact of modernization and Westernization in China, the prevailing aesthetic trend in recent years has shifted towards a preference for 'thin beauty'. In order to cater to consumers who, perceive themselves as having lost weight, women's clothing retailers have resorted to using vanity sizes that appear smaller. Consequently, it is worth examining how female consumers respond to this practice of vanity sizing. Specifically, this dissertation aimed to investigate the influence of vanity sizing on women's purchasing behaviour within

China's small-size culture. To facilitate further research, this dissertation gathered opinions from young Chinese women regarding small-size clothing and their personal experiences as consumers, with the aim of understanding the underlying causes and societal impacts associated with vanity size purchasing behaviour in the Chinese market. The findings from a questionnaire survey provide evidence suggesting that the thinness-oriented small-size culture has an influence on younger generations of Chinese consumers.

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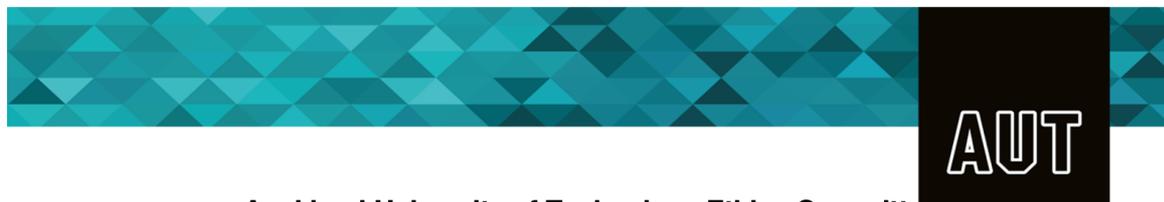
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Appendix

Appendix A: *Ethical approval from the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).*



Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

29 May 2024

Ken Hyde
Faculty of Business Economics and Law

Dear Ken

Re Ethics Application: **24/138 Vanity sizing and Gen Z Chinese female consumers**

Thank you for your responses to AUTEC's conditions.

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 29 May 2027.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. The research is to be undertaken in accordance with the [Auckland University of Technology Code of Conduct for Research](#) and as approved by AUTEC.
2. All public facing documents must have the AUTEC approval number and be of a high standard of spelling and grammar. Dates on the Information Sheet(s) and Consent Form(s) must be consistent.
3. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented.
4. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date.
5. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project.
6. Any serious or adverse events must be reported to AUTEC, this includes unforeseen issues that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.
7. AUTEC grants ethical approval only. You are responsible for obtaining management permission for access from any institution or organisation at which your research is being conducted and you need to meet all ethical, legal, public health, and locality obligations or requirements for the jurisdictions in which the research is being undertaken.

The application number and title need to be referenced on all correspondence related to this project.

All forms are available online <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics>

For any enquiries, please contact ethics@aut.ac.nz
(This is a computer-generated letter for which no signature is required)

The AUTEC Secretariat
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Khd6246@autuni.ac.nz



Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced:

11/04/2024

Project Title

Vanity sizing and Gen Z Chinese female consumers

An Invitation

Hello, my full name is Xinyao Liu. I am a post-graduate student at Auckland University of Technology. My major is management. My master's research is on clothing sizing and consumer purchasing behavior.

Please complete all question items in the following questionnaire. The questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the impacts of the vanity sizing phenomenon.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You are a member of a Dynata research panel. You were female born in China, and you are 18-29 years old.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

Your participation is entirely voluntary and will not advantage or disadvantage you by any means. You can consent to the research by completing the online survey, after carefully reading and understanding this information sheet.

What will happen in this research?

You will complete an online questionnaire. You will provide a numerical rating or written answer for each question.

What are the discomforts and risks?

I do not anticipate there will be any discomforts or any risks for participants. If at any time you wish to withdraw from the survey you can do so without being disadvantaged in any way.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

N/A

What are the benefits?

Your participation will give you some insight into the sizing market for women's clothing in China and help researchers understand the decision-making process of female customers' purchasing behavior regarding vanity sizing. Your participation will also help to contribute to consumer behavior, and help me to complete my master's degree.

How will my privacy be protected?

No individual names or contact details will be recorded or reported. All this information will be analysed and reported at an aggregate level that does not identify the individual responses of participants. All information you provide will be strictly confidential. Results will not be released to any third-party. The demographic information that I ask you to provide, at the end of the questionnaire, will be used for comparative purposes only.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

About 10-15 minutes of participation will be required.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You have one week to consider this invitation.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

This URL will be provided to all participants checking the results of this survey.

URL:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/ixq8vjq1wvvnv68ciy62h2/Xinyao.docx?rlkey=5184eqc63h75udkjq2edanpmm&st=8bagekt&dl=0>

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Ken Hyde, ken.hyde@aut.ac.nz, (09) 921 9999 ext 5605

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEAC, ethics@aut.ac.nz , (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

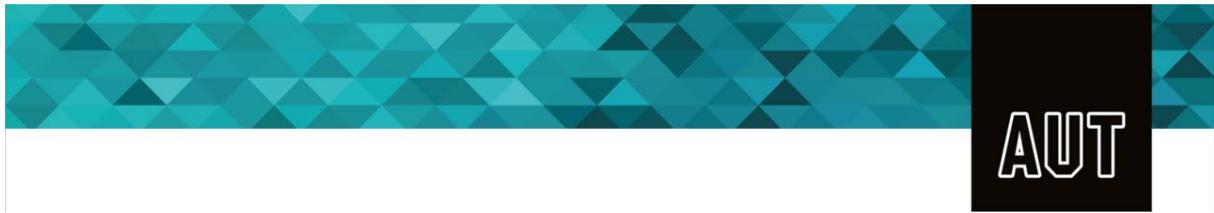
Researcher Contact Details: Xinyao Liu (khd6246@autuni.ac.nz)

Project Supervisor Contact Details: Assoc.Prof. Ken Hyde, ken.hyde@aut.ac.nz, (09) 921 9999 ext 5605

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Project Supervisor Contact Details: Assoc.Prof. Ken Hyde, ken.hyde@aut.ac.nz, (09) 921 9999 ext 5605

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *type the date final ethics approval was granted*, AUTEAC Reference number *type the reference number*.



Part1: demographic information

Q1. What is your gender? 您的性别是什么?

- A. Female 女性
- B. Male 男性
- C. Others 其他

Q2. Which age group are you in? 您正处于哪个年龄段?

- A. 18-21
- B. 22-24
- C. 25-26
- D. 27-29
- E. Over 30

Q3. What is your current job? 您的职业是什么?

- A. Student 学生
- B. Government employee 政府部门
- C. Company staff 企业员工
- D. Individual business 个体工作者
- E. Other 其他

Q4. Which city are you living in now? 您现在居住的城市是哪里?

- A. South area of China (such as Shanghai) 中国南方
- B. North area of China (such as Beijing) 中国北方

- C. Special Administrative Region of China (Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau) 特别行政区
- D. Overseas (living in another country but was born in China) 海外

Q5. Where do you usually buy women's clothing? 您经常在哪里购买女装?

- A. Physical retail stores 线下零售店
- B. Online stores 网络购物平台
- C. Both 两者皆有

Part2: Clothing size

Q6. Do you think there are various body images and sizes that have not been adequately represented by the women's clothing industry? 你是否认为女装的尺码针对了各种身材的消费者?

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree 强烈反对	Disagree 反对	Neutral 中立	Agree 同意	Strongly Agree 强烈同意

Q7. Do you think there are enough sizes to choose from within your preferred clothing range? 你是否认为在你喜欢的服装范围内有足够的尺码可供选择?

1	2	3	4	5
Almost never 从未	Seldom 很少	Occasionally 一般	Often 经常	Very often 频繁

Q8. Have you ever gone shopping and been unable to find clothes in your size? 你是否曾经去购物却找不到适合你尺码的衣服?

1	2	3	4	5
Almost never 从未	Seldom 很少	Occasionally 一般	Often 经常	Very often 频繁

Q9. Have you felt disappointed in the clothing on sale because of a difference between the label size and the real size when you try on clothes? 当你试穿衣服时，是否因为标签上的尺寸与身材不一致而感到失望？

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree 强烈反对	Disagree 反对	Neutral 中立	Agree 同意	Strongly Agree 强烈同意

Q10. When both Size Large and Size Small fit you, do you prefer to choose a smaller size? 当你一件衣服的 Size S and Size L 都适用你时，你是否愿意选择更小尺寸的？

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree 强烈反对	Disagree 反对	Neutral 中立	Agree 同意	Strongly Agree 强烈同意

Q11. Have you deliberately chosen clothes that are smaller than your actual size when you shopping? 你是否在购物时刻意选择比你实际尺寸小的衣服？

1	2	3	4	5
Almost never 从未	Seldom 很少	Occasionally 一般	Often 经常	Very often 频繁

Q12. How often do you forego buying your favored clothes for a smaller size? 你有多少次为了买小号的衣服而放弃你喜欢的衣服？

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

强烈反对	反对	中立	同意	强烈同意
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Q13. Do you think wearing smaller sizes is a measure of attractiveness? 你认为穿小码衣服是衡量魅力的标准吗?

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree 强烈反对	Disagree 反对	Neutral 中立	Agree 同意	Strongly Agree 强烈同意

Q14. Have you personally experienced the challenges or negative impacts caused by people's widespread attention to small-sized clothing? 你亲身经历过人们对小码服装的关注所带来的负面影响吗?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all 没有影响	Slightly 影响不大	Moderately 影响适度	Significantly 有大影响	Extremely 影响极大

Part3: body image

Q15. By and large, I am satisfied with my body image. 总的来说, 我对自己的身材很满意。

1	2	3	4	5
Does not apply at all 非常不适用	Does not apply well 不适用	Applies somewhat 有点适用	Applies well 适用	Applies exactly 非常适用

Q16. By and large, I am satisfied with my looks. 总的来说, 我对自己的长相很满意。

1	2	3	4	5
Does not apply at all 非常不适用	Does not apply well 不适用	Applies somewhat 有点适用	Applies well 适用	Applies exactly 非常适用

Q17. I would like to change a good deal about my body. 我想为我的身材做出很大的改变。

1	2	3	4	5
Does not apply at all 非常不适用	Does not apply well 不适用	Applies somewhat 有点适用	Applies well 适用	Applies exactly 非常适用

Q18. I would like to change a good deal about my looks. 我很想改变我的外表。

1	2	3	4	5
Does not apply at all 非常不适用	Does not apply well 不适用	Applies somewhat 有点适用	Applies well 适用	Applies exactly 非常适用

Q19. To what extent is self-image relevant in the choice of clothing size? 你认为自我形象会影响人们对服装尺寸的选择吗?

1	2	3	4	5
Not relevant at all 毫不相关	Not very relevant 不是很相关	Neither relevant nor irrelevant 既不相关也不无关紧要	Relevant 相关	Highly relevant 高度相关

Q20. Are you on diet, or doing exercise to make yourself look more skinny? 你是否有过节食或者锻炼让自己看起来更瘦?

1	2	3	4	5
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Almost never 从未	Seldom 很少	Occasionally 一般	Often 经常	Very often 频繁
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Q21. I think a lot about what I could be doing (e.g., exercising, dieting) to achieve a thin body. 我想了很多我可以做什么(例如 锻炼, 节食) 来获得一个苗条的身体。

1	2	3	4	5
Almost never 从未	Seldom 很少	Occasionally 一般	Often 经常	Very often 频繁

Q22. Have you ever considered cosmetic surgery to change your body image? 你是否考虑过整容手术来改变你的身体形象?

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree 强烈反对	Disagree 反对	Neutral 中立	Agree 同意	Strongly Agree 强烈同意

Part4: social expectation

Q23. Have you ever rejected social activities because you feel yourself not thin enough? 你是否曾经因为担心自己的身体形象而逃避社交活动?

1	2	3	4	5
Almost never 从未	Seldom 很少	Occasionally 一般	Often 经常	Very often 频繁

Q24. Have you ever avoided certain clothing trends because you were afraid they would accentuate your body shape? 你是否曾经因为害怕某些流行服装款式会突出你的体型而避开它们?

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree 强烈反对	Disagree 反对	Neutral 中立	Agree 同意	Strongly Agree 强烈同意

Q25. Do you think that society's expectations for small-sized clothing have influenced the views of young Chinese women on their body image? 你认为社会对小码服装的期望是否影响了中国年轻女性对自己身体形象的看法?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all 没有影响	Slightly 影响不大	Moderately 影响适度	Significantly 有大影响	Extremely 影响极大

Q26. How much does praise or criticism of your body image affect your self-esteem? 他人对你身体形象的赞扬或批评是否会影响你的自尊?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all 没有影响	Slightly 影响不大	Moderately 影响适度	Significantly 有大影响	Extremely 影响极大

Q27. Do you think females are more likely to pay attention to their body image than others?
你认为女性比其他人更注重自己的身体形象吗?

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree 强烈反对	Disagree 反对	Neutral 中立	Agree 同意	Strongly Agree 强烈同意

Q28. Do you think society's prevailing aesthetic of thinness influences your choice of clothing size? 你认为社会对瘦的主流审美是否会影响你对衣服尺寸的选择吗?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all 没有影响	Slightly 影响不大	Moderately 影响适度	Significantly 有大影响	Extremely 影响极大

Q29. Have you ever experienced judgment or criticism related to your body shape? 你是否经历过与你的身材有关的嘲笑或羞辱?

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree 强烈反对	Disagree 反对	Neutral 中立	Agree 同意	Strongly Agree 强烈同意

Q30. Have you experienced body image-related pressures from society, the media, or your peers? 社会、媒体或同龄人是否对你的身体形象造成压力?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all 没有影响	Slightly 影响不大	Moderately 影响适度	Significantly 有大影响	Extremely 影响极大

Q31. To what extent does social media and advertising lead you to buy smaller clothing sizes? 社交媒体和广告在多大程度上引导你购买小号的衣服?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all 没有影响	Slightly 影响不大	Moderately 影响适度	Significantly 有大影响	Extremely 影响极大

Q32. Do you think the media portray an unrealistic standard of beauty? 你认为媒体描绘的是一种不切实际的审美标准吗?

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree 强烈反对	Disagree 反对	Neutral 中立	Agree 同意	Strongly Agree 强烈同意

Q33. How often do you compare your body to that of celebrities or influencers on social media? 你通常会将自己的身材与社交媒体上的网红博主做比较吗?

1	2	3	4	5
Almost never 从未	Seldom 很少	Occasionally 一般	Often 经常	Very often 频繁

Q34. In your opinion, how does the pressure of wearing small-sized clothes affect the overall happiness and self-esteem of young Chinese women? 在你看来, 穿小码衣服的压力是否影响中国年轻女性的整体幸福感和自尊心?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all 没有影响	Slightly 影响不大	Moderately 影响适度	Significantly 有大影响	Extremely 影响极大

Q35. Have you ever felt uncomfortable or dissatisfied with your body because the common body standard is skinny? 你是否因为普遍的身材标准是瘦而对自己的身材感到不舒服或不满意?

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree 强烈反对	Disagree 反对	Neutral 中立	Agree 同意	Strongly Agree 强烈同意

Q36. Do you feel that your body image affects how others perceive you in a social or workplace? 你觉得你的身体形象会影响别人在社交或职业环境中对你的看法吗?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all 没有影响	Slightly 影响不大	Moderately 影响适度	Significantly 有大影响	Extremely 影响极大

Q37. In your daily life, have you felt evaluations of your attire from male managers, male co-workers or male classmates? 在日常生活中，你是否感受过男性领导、同事或同学对你着装的评价?

1	2	3	4	5
Almost never 从未	Seldom 很少	Occasionally 一般	Often 经常	Very often 频繁