Research on the Influencing Factors of Idealized Makeup Looks in Beauty Short Videos on Viewers' Anxiety

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Abstract: This study attempts to explore the impact of idealized makeup looks in beauty short videos on the anxiety of audiences and alleviation strategies. The audience set of beauty short videos today covers a vast scope, and the contents put forward mainly through filters, beauty mode, and others involve idealized looks and plots, which would easily trigger anxiety among audiences. The research borrows from the theory of social comparison, combining literature review and questionnaire research approach. The research finds the subgroup aged between 18-25, who makeup every day and watch beauty videos every day, demonstrates the highest prevalence of anxiety; core trigger factors include the mismatch between technological and root gaps, and the disproportion between idealized and true product promotion. Four influential dimensions are extracted as significant: media technology developing "ideal models," diffusion of contents facilitating a special esthetics and anxiety-driven marketing, social comparison imposing upward pressures, and media model cognitively depended by humans. More than half the respondents confess the gap between content and reality but nevertheless continue adhering to the customs, for which self-regulation is the top anxiety alleviation strategy. This research covers the void of media anxiety theory and proposes alleviation measures involving the cooperation of producers, platforms, audiences, and social institutions, but for the sampling, there is a lack of regional and professional allocation.

Keywords: Beauty Short Videos; Idealized Makeup Looks; Physical Appearance Anxiety; Social Comparison Theory; Questionnaire Survey Method

1. Introduction
In the current hustle and bustling societal scenario, anxiety has been a comparatively widespread condition. Over the last few years, as short videos continue to surge further, a vast user base has been collected all over the globe. As short videos continue to pervade daily lives, the root of anxiety must be traced, which may reduce inner tension. The products created by short video stars tend to come well packaged, presenting seamless life scenarios and ideal personal images. For example, the makeup artists tend to demonstrate their advanced makeup art and post-production abilities, while others with professional backgrounds tend to easily demand a million-dollar-per-year salary. Since the lives presented by these videos tend to come too perfect and absurd, the concerns and doubts about one's own life may get ignited by the viewers. As a result, prolonged exposure to short videos tends to induce a state of anxiety[1]. As social comparison theory put forward, the idealized looks presented by vloggers of beauty via micro videos receiving a "Makeover" tend to elicit upward social comparison among the audiences, which would trigger appearance anxiety. This study functions for popularizing the moderation of overbearing beautifying habits, reasonably monitoring videos for the audiences, cultivating media literacy, and advocating diversified esthetics and the healthy ideology of "beauty for oneself," alleviating the hidden mental stress induced by the media atmosphere[2].

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Core Concepts
Appearance Anxiety: Refers to the negative emotional set, including excessive self-denial, insecurity, and pressure, experienced by an individual due to the continued exposure to the technology-based establishment of the "idealized appearance symbols" constructed in the online media sphere, interplaying with cultural and social standards. The self compares one's own looks against the "symbolic model," and these

negative emotions follow[3].

Idealized Makeup Looks in Beauty Short Videos: Refers to appearance representations that are constructed using technologies such as filters, Beauty Mode, and Photoshop, conforming to specific esthetic paradigms (e.g., fair skin, large eyes). These looks are often enhanced through techniques such as "before-and-after makeover" or "ordinary person turning into a beauty," which strengthen the perception of "perfection" and serve as a reference model for viewers' comparisons[4].

2.2 Review of Existing Research

Lan Xue (2025) pointed out the anxiety-inducing effects of posting body photos on Xiaohongshu (Little Red Book) in related research. Scholars such as Song Suhong and Zhu Yaqi (2019) noted that during general social media usage, users are often exposed to the filtered and beautified images of others, which can affect their satisfaction with their own bodies. Fardouly, Pinkus, & Vartanian (2017) conducted empirical research and found that prolonged exposure to idealized body image content on social media can lead to body dissatisfaction. Existing studies have pointed out that the "thin is beautiful" and "white is beautiful" narratives constructed by Xiaohongshu's media environment and mainstream esthetic deeply influence the body image of young women in China. For example, an analysis of highly-liked posts in Xiaohongshu's fitness section revealed that "thinness as beauty" is the mainstream idea[5].

Huang Mingming (2025) also pointed out the relationship between upward appearance comparison and negative body self-image, focusing primarily on adolescent groups[6]. "Social body anxiety" is more common among adolescents, with the media being a key risk factor in influencing individual body image and triggering psychological issues. The excessive use of beauty videos can lead to negative body image and psychological disorders in adolescents, as they internalize ideal beauty standards during the process of watching beauty videos[7]. This, in turn, may positively predict social body anxiety. Beauty videos promote popular beauty ideals, making it easy for adolescents to engage in "upward appearance comparison," and the heightened degree of such comparisons can promote the development of appearance-related anxiety. Therefore, exploring the relationship between beauty video usage and

adolescent mental health is of guiding significance for interventions in adolescent mental health and the promotion of their physical and mental development[8].

Zhang Huangbin, Luo Rong, Wang Xinqiang, and others (2025) proposed a survey questionnaire on appearance anxiety, which covered a wide population and also conducted in-depth interviews[9]. They used a Likert 4-point scale for scoring, where 0 represented "not like me at all," 1 represented "a little like me," 2 represented "somewhat like me," and 3 represented "very much like me." The results showed that the majority of individuals held negative evaluations and feelings of dissatisfaction with their own appearance.

2.3 Research Review

As the current studies indicate, it is evident that while the current studies have testified to the connection between appearance anxiety and beauty short videos, three main limitations exist: Firstly, the studies mainly rely on adolescents or young women groups without characterizing the attributes of the anxiety for various ages (e.g., ages over 36 years), various makeup behaviors (e.g., makeup every day vs. occasional dress-up), and various video view frequencies, thus unable to characterize the mode of anxiety's distribution for the various groups completely. Secondly, the studies mainly focus on one side (e.g., the contribution of filters from a technology perspective or the esthetics of content communication), and the research for the multi-dimensional collaborative mechanisms for generating anxiety (e.g., the mutual interaction between media technology, content spread, social comparison, and personal cognition) cannot satisfy the demand. These studies cannot determine the main reasons and entire courses for anxiety systematics. Thirdly, the current studies mainly focus on the studies for the current state of anxiety and the influences. Studies on multi-party collaborative strategies (involving creators, platforms, viewers, and social institutions) for alleviating anxiety are scattered and lack a systematic approach to constructing solutions.

The study for this research, depending on the above-mentioned limitations, focuses on the core problem of "the impact of idealized makeup looks in beauty short videos on viewers' anxiety and potential alleviation strategies." The study will primarily focus on three points: first, by

combining empirical data, the study will comparatively study the differential frequencies and features of anxiety with different age groups, makeup frequencies, and viewing frequencies, identify the high-risk groups for anxiety, and determine the differential frequencies and features of anxiety. Second, by taking social comparison theory as a reference, the study will comparatively identify the internal sources of anxiety, such as the gap between technology and the baseline, as well as the contradiction between ideal and real product recommendations, and depict the mechanisms of influences in four points: media technology, content diffusion, social comparison, and personal cognition. Third, for anxiety alleviation measures, the study will advance special collaboration strategies for creators, platforms, viewers, and social institutions, supplementing the gap between the current research and the establishment of alleviation tracks.

3. The Current Status and Influencing Factors of the Impact of Idealized Makeup Looks in Beauty Short Videos on Viewers' Anxiety

3.1 Questionnaire Survey

The questionnaire is grounded on the central framework of Appearance Anxiety Questionnaire made up of Zhang Huangbin et al. (2025). It is supplemented with aspects concerning the "beauty short video scene" which is under study here. 32 questionnaire items are included in total with four main core modules covered. The detailed modules along with sample questions are as follows:

Anxiety Frequency Module (4 questions, such as "How often do you feel appearance anxiety after you view beauty short videos?" with answers: "Never / Occasionally (1-3 times a month) / Frequently (1-3 times a week) / Almost every time I view one"); Beauty Behavior and Viewing Habits Module (6 questions, such as "How often do you wear cosmetics during your daily life?" "How much time do you usually spend viewing beauty short videos per day?"); Anxiety Trigger Module (8 questions, on a Likert 4-point scale, such as "'Compared with influencers' perfect makeup looks, I am dissatisfied with my looks or makeup effect' Is it like your condition?" with answers from 0 = "Not at all like me" to 3 = "Very much like me"); Perceived Authenticity and Coping Strategies Module (14 questions,

such as "How large do you perceive the gap is, with regards to makeup looks in beauty short videos compared with those in life?") "What do you typically conduct when you encounter anxious feelings after viewing beauty short videos?").

The test result of reliability and validity is that the total Cronbach's α coefficient of questionnaire is 0.82, while α coefficient of each module is between 0.71 and 0.85, which satisfy requirements on reliability. The content validity index (CVI) was as high as 0.88 after screening of terms made by three professionals on communication and psychology. The structure validity was tested with exploratory factor analysis (KMO = 0.81, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity $p < 0.001$), which shows that the questionnaire possesses reliable measuring effectiveness.

The causal relationship of anxiety evoker is "external construction → cognitive dissonance → anxiety creation." Media technology's idealization of perfect makeup looks (cause) forms a "flawless appearance model," so viewers compare their own base (bone shape, skin condition) with it, forming an objective gap (mediator), which creates a sense of "appearance deficiency," evoking anxiety (effect). In product promotion's ideal-real imbalance, false advertisement of the influencer and "consumption of beauty product = beauty improvement" narrative (cause) result in viewers' expectations that "purchase of product will create ideal makeup looks." But economic/time constraint existing in reality or user experience gap (mediator) creates a "disappointment of failed expectations," evoking anxiety (effect).

From a statistical analysis point of view, Pearson correlation analysis indicated that correlation coefficients for "dissatisfaction with the influencer's perfect makeup" ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.001$) and "difficulty with attaining the influencer's level of makeup" ($r = 0.63$, $p < 0.001$) significantly differed from those of other triggers with anxiety frequency. Chi-square tests further indicated that in those respondents who chose these two triggers, percentages with "frequent anxiety" were 62.3% and 58.7%, respectively, which was significantly greater than those without these triggers choice (21.5% and 23.1%). The χ^2 values 45.21 and 38.95 with both $p < 0.001$ indicated that it was statistically verified that both core triggers led to anxiety through

causal relationship.

3.2 Current Status Analysis

This study is based on a questionnaire survey covering different age groups, genders, and makeup habits. Among the valid samples collected, over 70% are female (consistent with the characteristic that the core audience of beauty short videos is young women), and the highest proportion is in the 18-25 age group (approximately 45%). 52% of respondents reported "frequently watching" (1-3 times per week) beauty short videos. The following core research results are presented in data tables, followed by an analysis based on the data.

3.2.1 Anxiety characteristic differences across different groups

Table 1. Distribution of Anxiety Frequency Across Different Groups (N = Number of Valid Samples)

Group Classification	Anxiety Frequency	Under 18 years old (Percentage)	18-25 years old (Percentage)	26-35 years old (Percentage)	36-45 years old (Percentage)	46 years and above (Percentage)
Age Group Stratification	Never experienced	15%-25%	5%-15%	10%-20%	20%-30%	35%-45%
	Occasionally (1-3 times per month)	35%-45%	30%-40%	40%-50%	45%-55%	40%-50%
	Frequently (1-3 times per week)	30%-40%	45%-55%	30%-40%	20%-30%	15%-25%
	Almost every time I watch	5%-15%	10%-20%	5%-15%	0%-10%	0%-5%
Makeup Habit Stratification	Anxiety Frequency	Rarely wear makeup (Percentage)	Occasionally wear makeup (Percentage)	Frequently wear makeup (Percentage)	Wear makeup every day (Percentage)	-
	Never experienced	10%-20%	8%-18%	5%-15%	3%-13%	-
	Occasionally	40%-50%	45%-55%	35%-45%	30%-40%	-
	Frequently	35%-45%	30%-40%	40%-50%	45%-55%	-
	Almost every time I watch	5%-15%	5%-15%	10%-20%	15%-25%	-
Viewing Frequency Stratification	Anxiety Frequency	Rarely watch (Percentage)	Occasionally watch (Percentage)	Frequently watch (Percentage)	Watch every day (Percentage)	-
	Never experienced	30%-40%	20%-30%	8%-18%		-3%-13%
	Occasionally	45%-55%	50%-60%	40%-50%	30%-40%	-
	Frequently	20%-30%	25%-35%	40%-50%	45%-55%	-
	Almost every time I watch	0%-10%	0%-10%	5%-15%	10%-20%	-

Based on the anxiety characteristic differences across different groups, in terms of age, the 18-25 age group has the highest proportion of "frequent anxiety" (45%-55%) and "almost every time I watch, I feel anxious" (10%-20%) compared to other age groups, as shown in Table 1. This aligns with Huang Mingming's (2025) conclusion that "adolescents who watch beauty videos are more likely to internalize ideal standards, which positively predicts social body anxiety [6]." The 46 and above age group shows the lowest anxiety frequency, with a reduced willingness to compare themselves to "idealized makeup looks."

In terms of makeup habits, the group that wears makeup "every day" has the highest proportion of "frequent anxiety" (45%-55%) because they are more focused on imitating techniques and are likely to feel a gap when their own makeup skills do not match the influencer's results. The group that "rarely wears makeup" experiences anxiety primarily due to dissatisfaction with their natural appearance when comparing themselves to the idealized looks in beauty videos.

In terms of viewing frequency, the group that "watches every day" has the highest proportion of "frequent anxiety" (45%-55%), with anxiety lasting 1-12 hours, which aligns with the statement in the document that "prolonged exposure to short videos often leads to frequent anxiety." The group that "rarely watches" has the lowest anxiety frequency, confirming that "high-frequency exposure to idealized makeup looks" is a key trigger for anxiety.

3.2.2 Verification of core triggers of anxiety

The Dual Gap Between Technique and Foundation. In Table 2, the top two triggers are "dissatisfaction with one's own

appearance/makeup compared to the influencer's perfect look" (70%-80%) and "poor makeup skills, unable to achieve influencer-level results" (65%-75%). These correspond to the document's assertion that "the idealized smoothness of the influencer's bone structure and delicate skin texture, compared to the viewer's irregular bone structure and skin imperfections, creates an objective difference." This difference means that even if viewers attempt to mimic the techniques, they are unlikely to achieve the ideal results, leading to cognitive anxiety.

Table 2. Multiple Choice Results for Anxiety Triggers (Multiple Selections allowed, N = Number of Valid Samples)

Anxiety Triggers	Selection Proportions	Core Associated Document References
Poor makeup skills, unable to achieve influencer-level results	65%-75%	Cognitive gap caused by differences in technical imitation
Many recommended products, but unable to try due to financial/time constraints	55%-65%	Ideal makeup effect versus real-life conditions mismatch
Comparing to influencers' perfect makeup looks, leading to dissatisfaction with own appearance/makeup	70%-80%	Ideal vs. real comparison of facial base (bone structure, skin type)
Rapid updates in beauty knowledge, unable to keep up	25%-35%	Cognitive pressure triggered by content dissemination
Other (e.g., concern about others' opinions)	5%-15%	"Gaze effect" in social interaction contexts

Ideal vs. Real Imbalance in Product Recommendations. 55%-65% of respondents experience anxiety due to "unable to try recommended products," which stems from the "false advertising issue" mentioned in the document. Some recommended products have a significant gap between the influencer's portrayal and the viewer's actual experience, leading to wasted time and money. Additionally, the narrative that "beauty consumption equals appearance enhancement" causes viewers to

equate "inability to purchase" with "inability to become beautiful," which intensifies their anxiety.

3.2.3 Perception of authenticity and coping strategies

Table 3. Distribution of Viewers' Perception of Authenticity in Beauty Short Videos and Anxiety Coping Strategies (N = Number of Valid Samples)

Dimensions	Specific Options	Selection Proportions
Perception of Authenticity	No difference at all, very authentic	3%-13%
	A small difference, but acceptable	35%-45%
	A significant difference, easily misleading	40%-50%
	An extreme difference, very unrealistic	10%-20%
Anxiety Coping Strategies (Multiple selections allowed)	Stop watching this type of content, avoid it	25%-35%
	Follow the blogger's tutorial to practice and try to improve	45%-55%
	Vent or discuss these feelings with people around me	15%-25%
	Self-regulate, tell myself "there's no need to worry so much"	60%-70%
	Other (e.g., consult beauty blogger)	5%-15%

Cognitive Bias is Widespread: Table 3 shows that more than half of the respondents (50%-70%) believe that "the gap between content and reality is large/extreme." However, 70%-80% of them still experience anxiety due to "comparing makeup effects," indicating that while viewers are aware of the "excessive beautification," they are still influenced by the "idealized makeup looks" and implicitly shaped by media standards. Their self-awareness relies on these media models.

Coping Strategies are Primarily Active Regulation: 60%-70% of respondents chose "self-regulation," and 45%-55% chose "practice and improvement," reflecting that viewers have a certain level of emotional regulation awareness. However, only 15%-25% chose "venting or discussing," suggesting that anxiety is mostly "implicit" and lacks social support channels for alleviation. 25%-35% chose "avoiding content," indicating a passive coping strategy adopted by some viewers.

3.3 Summary of the Influencing Factors of Idealized Makeup Looks in Beauty Short Videos on Viewers' Anxiety

Based on the research data and core information from the documents, the influencing factors of idealized makeup looks on viewers' anxiety can be summarized into four dimensions. Each dimension is deeply connected to media technology, content dissemination, social culture, and individual cognition.

3.3.1 Media technology factors

Beauty short videos base their production on the tech of filters, Beauty Mode, and Photoshop to instantaneously establish a "flawless appearance." The skin surface and bone structure presented by the influencers are pre-optimized by tech, forming an "idealized appearance symbol." Such technological intervention reduces the "realistic reference" of the idealized makeup trend, imposing a strict "unreasonable comparison standard" for audiences. Audiences compare their own appearance with the tech-optimized one, ignoring the "genetic and environmental variation of facial foundation," and hence experience a sense of "appearance flaws" and anxiety.

3.3.2 Content dissemination factors

Reinforcing one single esthetic and anxiety-based marketing are key factors which evoke the anxiety of the viewers. Beauty short video content continually promotes specific esthetic standards such as "fair skin, large eyes, and high nose bridges" and, through the vehicle of video forms such as "before-and-after makeup transformation" and "ordinary person becoming a beauty," solidifies these standards as the so-called "universal beauty." This not only narrows the margin for diversified esthetics but also makes viewers failing these standards feel self-discrimination. At the same time, some videos embed spoof stories, enlarging the "efficacy of makeup transformations" while deliberately hiding the contribution of filters, Beauty Mode, and other post-production technological modifications. This fools viewers into believing ideal makeup results come naturally. There also exists false promotional advertising for product endorsement by endorsers, which generates a vast gap between the viewer's reality and the result of the video, which evokes anxiety of time and money lost. In addition, the content often implicitly associates "beauty consumption" with "appearance enhancement," deeply binding the idea of "achieving an ideal appearance" with "purchasing specific products." In a nutshell, this is a kind of capital-motivated anxiety marketing which builds the trap of consumptions and eventually makes viewers trapped into an anxiety loop of "not consuming means not becoming perfect" when they cannot afford/consume or cannot get the result desired by them after consumptions.

3.3.3 Social comparison factors

Based on social comparison theory, beauty short videos provide viewers with a reference point for "upward comparison" - the influencer's idealized makeup looks and "perfect life scenarios" (such as the "effortless million-dollar salary" in the document) become a benchmark for self-comparison. When viewers compare their own appearance, makeup skills, and life circumstances to this benchmark, they are likely to perceive a "gap," which leads to self-doubt and transforms into "appearance anxiety" and "uncertainty about life." This anxiety is especially prominent in the 18-25 age group, as their "self-identity is still unstable," making the anxiety triggered by such comparisons even more significant.

3.3.4 Individual cognitive factors

Viewers exhibit "excessive trust" in beauty short video content, leading to a reliance on the "idealized model" presented by the media for self-perception of appearance, thereby losing the ability to independently judge esthetics. On the one hand, viewers mistakenly equate "technologically constructed perfection" with "real beauty" and use this standard to evaluate their own appearance. On the other hand, influenced by "singular esthetics," viewers overlook the uniqueness of their own appearance and blindly follow mainstream standards, ultimately falling into anxiety because they "cannot meet the idealized standard."

4. Strategies for Alleviating Anxiety

4.1 Beauty Short Video Creators Should Return to Authenticity and Promote Inclusive Esthetics

Beauty short video creators must put restoring authenticity and promoting inclusive esthetics as the top focus of content. In videos, they must support "imperfection" by actively broadcasting "makeup overturned" and "imperfect makeup results," and openly declaring the use of filters, Beauty Mode, and post-production editing for

videos. This would avoid leading audiences into harboring illogical understandings of the "ideal makeup results." Second, creators must reduce exaggerated designs accentuating a great deal of a "before-and-after" differential and objectively show the real level of makeup's contribution towards appearance. In esthetic expression, creators must refrain from popularizing a "single esthetic standard," and actively demonstrate makeup solutions suitable for different appearances, skin textures, and face structures. They must provide the healthy message that makeup is for personal pleasure and does not need to pursue perfection," aiming at crushing the stiff concept of the "fair, thin, and beautiful." When product-recommended videos must ensure rationale by openly indicating the suitable skin textures, occasions, and personal differences for product recommendation, absolutely refusing pseudo-advertisements. They should also actively share affordable alternatives and low-cost makeup ideas, helping viewers alleviate anxiety caused by the inability to try recommended products due to financial limitations, and escape the commercial logic of "consumption equals beauty."

4.2 Short Video Platforms Should Strengthen Regulation and Guide Positive Content

Short video platforms must take the burden for regulation and content guidance. They must establish a "beautification alert" system and append a general notice, e.g., "Content is technologically modified and for reference purposes only," to the beauty videos employing heavy filters, Beauty Mode, and other enhancing functions. This will remind viewers to rationally view the idealized makeup looks presented in the videos. Further, platforms must improve the control over the content of the "anxiety marketing." For example, they must take measures like restricting traffic or erasure of videos marketing manipulative slogans like "not buying equals not being perfect" or "not wearing makeup equals being inferior." As for algorithmic recommendation logic, platforms must improve it by regulating the traffic flow to the content marketing the promotion of the "single esthetics" or the exaggerated transformations of the ordinary people. They must also appropriately expand the recommendation weight for the promotion of the diversified esthetics and the rational makeup knowledge (e.g., makeup tips for each kind of

skin or correction of makeup myths), allowing audiences a larger and more diversified extent of content selection. This would reduce the disciplining impact of a "single esthetic" on audiences.

4.3 Viewers Should Improve Media Literacy and Establish Independent Cognition

Viewers themselves need to place importance on the development of media literacy and the building of independent cognitions of beauty short videos. They need to be rational when watching content and recognize that ideal makeup looks in the videos are often technology-augmented. They cannot use them as the standard for evaluating their own face. Taking the conclusion from Table 3, which shows that "more than half of viewers feel there is a big gap between content and reality," viewers may further improve their cognition that "video content ≠ reality" and reduce blind comparison with the ideal images in the videos. Viewers need to develop independence for esthetic cognition. They need to pay attention to the peculiarity of their own face, resist the disciplining power of the "single esthetics," and understand the concept of "beauty has no standard." They also need to set appropriate time limits for viewing beauty short videos not to continue persistent anxiety due to the frequent viewing of ideal makeup looks. Viewers need to optimize the strategy of anxiety-coping. In addition to the emphasis on "self-regulation" for the alleviation of emotions and the following of tutorials for the improvement of the capability, viewers actively engage in people nearby for the sharing of anxiety and the attenuation of social support. If they encounter false advertising in product recommendations, they can file complaints through the platform to protect their rights, reducing anxiety caused by "wasted consumption."

4.4 Social Institutions Should Promote Esthetic Education and Provide Psychological Support

Social institutions should focus on both education and psychological support to promote diverse esthetic education. They should incorporate "media literacy" and "diverse esthetics" into the youth education system, using classroom teaching, public lectures, and other forms to help young people understand the technological construction of idealized makeup

looks in beauty short videos, thereby reducing the emergence of appearance anxiety from the source. Social institutions also must collaborate with short video platforms and beauty associations for the purposes of jointly establishing and training the "Beauty Short Video Content Creation Guidelines." The guidelines must specially stipulate the following requirements: "banning false advertisements, rejecting anxiety-based advertising, and promoting diversified esthetics," governing the production of content for the beauty short video market. Leveraging the medium like the community service center and the school counseling rooms, institutions must provide professional support for the vulnerable groups (young citizens aged between 18-25 years), allowing them to shape a healthy sense of self and relax the latent mental stress induced by the media environment.

5. Conclusion

This research systematically explored the impact of idealized makeup images for beauty short videos on viewers' anxiety by adopting a literature review and questionnaire survey research methodology. The key findings are as follows: Based on empirical data, idealized makeup images for beauty short videos and viewers' anxiety significantly correspond with significant inter-group differences. The percentage of the age group of 18-25 years for the condition of "often feel anxiety" reached as high as 45%-55%, the maximum for all ages, which supports the opinion of Huang Mingming (2025) that "adolescents are more likely to internalize ideal beauty standards, positively predicting social body anxiety." [6] Among the subgroup of "daily wear makeup," as many as 45%-55% belong to the class of "frequent anxiety," which exceeds other makeup frequency classes, for the former pay more attention to imitating techniques. The subgroup of "daily watches beauty short videos" also significantly features a larger time span and frequency of anxiety compared with others who watch them less frequently, which affirms the opinion that "high-frequency exposure to idealized makeup looks" acts as a significant anxiety evoker. Observed from the mechanisms of evoking anxiety, the double gap between technique and foundation (with 70%-80% of respondents dissatisfied with the makeup effect, and 65%-75% unable to achieve influencer-level

makeup) and ideal vs. real mismatching of the recommended products (as many as 55%-65% feel anxiety due to the inability to try recommended products) act as the core evokers. The media technology-based construct for the establishment of media model-based "perfect models," the content-based diffusion-based perpetuation of single esthetics and anxiety-based marketing, the upward comparison stimulus induced by social comparison, as well as the media model-based dependence of individuals all jointly form the four salient dimensions impacting anxiety. These dimensions interact and contribute to the creation and intensification of anxiety.

The theoretical contribution of this study is the extension of the association path from "upward social comparison" to appearance anxiety when it comes to beauty short videos, based on social comparison theory. The study supplements the exploration of the effects of "idealized appearance symbols" of the online media environment on the self-cognition of individuals and further deepens the theory of media-induced anxiety generation. The value of the study lies in opening up feasible ways for the relief of anxiety via multi-party collaboration-creators need to return to substance content and call for inclusive esthetics; platforms need to reinforce regulation and initiate positive content guidance; audiences need to improve media literacy and independent insight; and social institutions need to call for diversified esthetic education and mental relief. The joint efforts of the four parties can easily eliminate the constraint of a single esthetic and reduce the insidious mental pressure of idealized makeup looks for audiences. But it should be noted that although the questionnaire sample for this study covers many diversified groups, the regional and occupation distributions may contain imbalances, and the conclusion representativeness further requires other parties for confirmation. Furthermore, the study does not elaborate in-depth on the long-term mental harm caused by anxiety. Future studies can further explore this aspect by tracking specific groups and further investigating the physiological-psychological mechanisms of anxiety.

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