

Master Thesis by Fan Sun 2020

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I. Social Media Scanning

SOCIAL MEDIA SCANNING

To map out types of weight stigmatisations existing in social media

3 selected social media sites:

- Instagram: focusing on self expression. Photo and short video , hashtag
- Twitter: communication with short text. Retweet, comment
- Douban: Web forum based social net. Group, post and discussion

Tools: Literature research, social media aggregator, hashtag visualisation,

Process and findings

The scanning methods and findings on each site are shown on the next 3 pages.

Results

Over all, weight stigmatisation on social media is pervasive, mostly about appearance, diet, fitness, lifestyle, etc. Main types of the manifestations are:

- 1) Individual fat phobia: the perceptual fear of being a fat person often causes self-deprecation and self-blame;
- 2) Weight focus: losing weight is a common topic on various platforms, and there are many subtle and implicit contents. The posts are not directly targeted on fat people, but they are actually on the premise of "being fat is wrong".
- 3) Interpersonal derogation: aggressively attacking and degrading fat people.

Plus, women are affected more. The user group that weight stigma affects on social media platforms is mainly female.

<1/3>

Instagram: a well polished showcase of your life

Instagram is an American photo and video-sharing social networking service. It allows users to upload photos and videos which can be edited with filters, and organised with hashtags and location. Users can like photos, and follow others to add their contents to a feed.

Method:

Literature about the motives of hashtag use (Erz et al., 2018) was reviewed. Hashtag is an important element, so I used displaypurposes.com to visualise the hashtags about "fat" (figure X). Besides, as a polished showcase platform, Instagram appeals to some users who want to share their personal journey in a decent way. I downloaded 1000 posts with #fat and filtered them by the length of text to find long posts that depicted personal experience of being overweight.

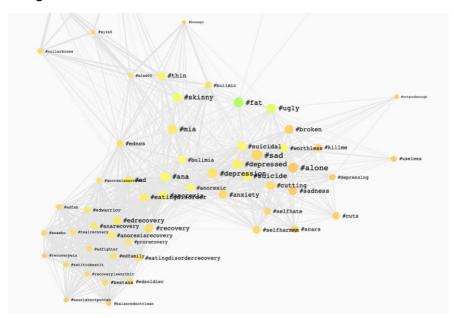


Figure X. The neighborhood of hashtag "fat" on Instagram

Finding:

- 1. Generally the figure X shows a negative image around #fat, the hashtags connected to #fat (were mentioned in one post) include #anxiety, #suicidal, #selfhate, #anorexic.
- Weight focus
 There are many people recording their weight losing journey with photos of their diet and gym and "before/after" comparisons.
- 3. There are also contents helping people who are struggling with weight. Self-disclosure is also an important part of the downloaded posts. People share their experience of trying to lose weight and suffering from relevant issues to support and encourage other buddies. The popularity (shown from likes and comments) of these posts is relatively lower.
- 4. Many photos are implying similar standard of beauty: to be thin and curvy (/muscular) at the same time.
- 5. Most relevant users are female.

Keyword: weight focus, implicit fat phobia

<2/3>

Twitter: a public stage for micro and fragmentary debate

Twitter is an American microblogging and social networking service on which users post and interact with messages known as "tweets". Tweets were originally restricted to 140 characters. Twitter provides instant, short and frequent communication. In recent years it has played a role in more public topics.

Method:

Literature about obesity related contents on Twitter was reviewed, and I used online aggregator (<u>walls.io</u>) to collect and then skim streaming posts containing the word "fat" or "weight" or "fat shaming".

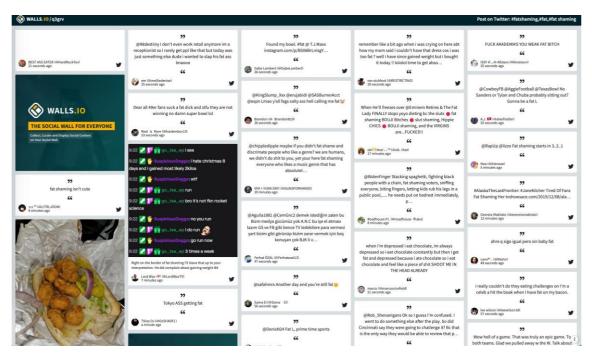


Figure X. Online aggregator collect and display posts from Twitter

Findings:

- 1. There are many negative contents, especially teasing and attacks on obese people: The linguistic analysis from a study of W Chou et al. (2014) shows that the most prevalent theme in the obesity-related tweet corpus is derogation and stigma against overweight individuals.
- 2. Misogynistic contents.
- 3. Most posts are emotionally repeating stereotypes about fat people:

 People are letting out their bad emotions on random strangers. Their attitude is aggressive and offensive but the is not specifically targeted.

Keyword: Verbal attack, misogyny, internet trolling

<3/3>

Douban: a dynamic hub for cultural discussion

<u>Douban.com</u> is a Chinese social networking service website that allows registered users to record information and create content related to film, books, music, recent events, and activities. There is a Group section where strangers connect through the same interests and viewpoints where people can discussing freely.

Method:

For this study, I focus on the "Group" section, where people sharing same interests gather and form a community. I followed these steps:

- Step 1: Search weight stigma related keywords and check the relevant groups;
- Step 2: Join the trending groups and skim the posts;
- Step 3: Write new post to invite people to share their experience or opinion around weight stigma.

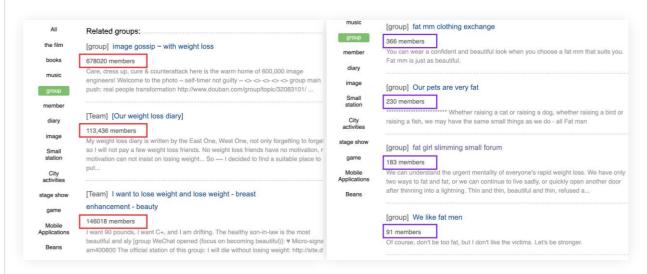


Figure X. The comparison

Finding:

- 1. There are many weight loss groups with huge amount of group members.
- 2. The discussions in the groups shows that people are strict and harsh on themselves, and they might choose some unhealthy but 'effective' methods to lose weight.
- 3. The low interest of being fat implicitly reveals fat phobia:

 The popularity of "Lose weight" is significantly higher than "Fat/Overweight/Obese",
 which shows from the number of relevant group members (figure X): 300+ members in
 plus-size clothes group vs. 600000 members in losing weight group. This attitude of
 ignoring fat people's life implies stigmatising message: the life of a fat person should just
 be losing weight.
- 4. Most relevant users are female.

Keyword: Weight focus, fat phobia, body image dissatisfaction

II. Context Mapping

CONTEXT MAPPING

To understand how is social media integrated into our daily life

Participant:

9 participants (2 males), aged 23-29, which belongs to the most active age group (18-29) or social media user.

Goal:

The main research question of this session is to understand <u>how is social media integrated into our daily life?</u>

It can be decomposed into several sub questions:

- -What do people use social media for?
- -What's the difference between online and offline life?
- -What do people post on social media?
- -What kind of information from social media would leave an impression?
- -What kind of information from social media will arouse thinking?

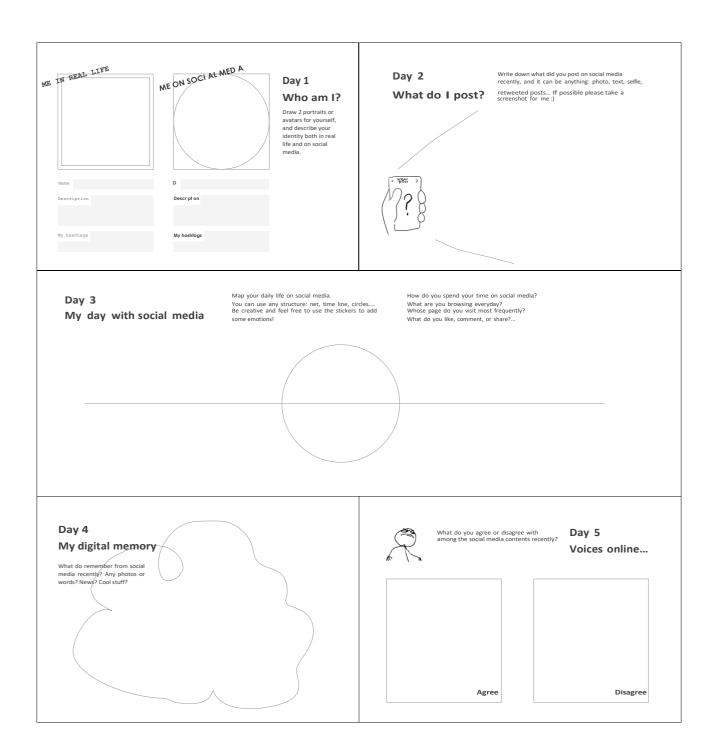
Material

Booklet: *Me on Social media*Contents are on the next page.



Findings

- People use social media for entertainment and getting information, including news and updates of friends.
- Most of participants feel that they spent too much time on social media, and abducted by numbers of likes, retweets, followers, and responses.
- Social media creates an irrational atmosphere, instead of a space for valuable conversation.
- Memes can decompose serious issues, including social stigma.



III. Focus Group

FOCUS GROUP

To discuss about the current situation of weight stigmatisation on social media, and how do they cope with it.

Participant:

- I. Female, Heavy use of social media, Experienced weight stigma
- II. Female, Medium use of social media, Not experienced weight stigma
- III. Female, Light use of social media, Experienced weight stigma
- IV. Male, Medium use of social media, Not experienced weight stigma

*According to statistics in 2018 [x], people age 25-34 uses social media for 2.5hours everyday. Thus, I set 1.5-3 hour per day as medium use, over 3 hours as heavy use, and less than 1.5 hour as light use.

Goal

The purpose of this session is to gather social media users with different backgrounds to discuss about the current situation of weight stigma on social media. The discussion will be around a main topic: Why are overweight people stigmatised on social media?

Method

Focus group is a form of qualitative research consisting of interviews in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards a product, service, concept, advertisement, idea, or packaging. Questions are asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk with other group members.



Process

The whole session lasted for 1 hour, and the participants were guided to get familiar with the topic at first, then start discussion about the given questions.

Sensitising:

General discussion about their social media use, explanation and examples of weight stigma

Questions to discuss:

- Have you experienced weight stigma on social media? Or anything similar, and makes you feel uncomfortable about weight?
- How did the stigmatising content make you feel? How do you deal with it? What do you think is the reason behind these posts?
- How did you know about stigma? What's your attitude and how did you form it?
- What is the impression or experience of being overweight?

Findings

- The posts that make people feel stigmatised: 1) The implicit message under polished female image online; 2) Critical remarks on the celebrities; 3) Judgements from strangers.
- To deal with it, people tend to 1) unfollow/dislike, or just delete related posts to avoid further conflict; 2) retweet someone's comment which holds the same opinion; 3) share with friends and discuss in private.
- Possible reasons behind weight stigma on social media are: 1) Singular standard of beauty:
 Being fat means being ugly; 2) Low threshold to post; 3) High motivation: easy to express opinions and gain satisfaction; 4) Anonymity.
- Gender is naturally related with weight stigma: women are told to be femininely pretty and attractive, which means they should be tiny and slim. That's why weight stigma is mostly about female, while men are having trouble with height stigma similarly.

IV. Individual Interview

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW

To understand the way of people who are(/were) fat coping with weight stigmatisation

Participant:

5 participants (1 male), aged 22-27

2 of them have stigmatised other people who can't lose weight

Goal

To hear voices from people who are (or were) overweight, and understand how they cope with weight stigma.

Findings

 All of participants who is or used to be overweight have tried to lose weight with different methods, and they all managed to lose weight at least once. Some people avoid to tell others about their weight-lose plan because of pressure.

"If I create a brand image of 'trying to lose weight', then people will know if I fail. That's too much pressure, so I just behave like I don't care..."

- To maintain an 'ideal' body shape needs a lot of efforts.
- Self-mockery is the universal defence.
- Cultural difference between Asia and Europe
 Fat people in China always reveal a nice and friendly image. One advantage of being fat (at least in China) is that people will assume you are easy to get along with.
 - "One good thing of being fat is that it makes it easier for people to like you."

However, they find this principle does not apply to Dutch people: overweight dutch people are somehow tense. European don't even speak of the word 'fat'.

- No weight stigma ≠ overweight people are suddenly attractive
- No weight stigma = overweight people are just normal people
- Other subjects that people mentioned to explain why they rarely talk about weight stigma:
 - Feminism
 - "I know some opinions, like feminism, they are right, but I don't post that. I do support them, but I'm a bit afraid to discuss that topic, cause that would result in an impression: 'that person is feminist, she's hard, don't mess with her'. That's not helpful for my career."
 - Politics

"I won't say I support XXX because that will definitely attract some trolls. So I just don't retweet these stuff."

V. Activist Interview

ACTIVIST INTERVIEW

To understand the way of people who are(/were) fat coping with weight stigmatisation, and the support they need

Interviewee: an organiser of a support group (Dikke Vinger)

Goal

To hear voices from people who are (or were) overweight, and understand how they cope with weight stigma.

Findings

- A fat person must be proud of and work hard at a certain aspect, which is just not keeping fit.
- About this topic, thin people always speak louder than who are actually fat, but it does not mean more fat people are supposed to speak up. Because speaking up draws attention and requires more courage to be stared and judged. Therefore, it's important to educate people who are not fat. They can actually speak up without burden.
- The existence of weight stigma is often neglected. It is even more difficult to confront than gender, culture, race, or illness.
- Gender is naturally related with weight stigma: girls were told to be pretty and beautiful, which
 means that they were supposed to keep a perfect body image. (same as boys were educated to
 be brave and smart)

VI. Ideation

IDEATION

To ideate the scenarios of the user internalising stigmatisation, and ideas to break weight stigma in different contexts

Participants: 6 design students

Goal

During the user research, many scenarios were mentioned: when working out, wearing swimsuits, taking photos...

To select one specific context, I invited 6 design students to ideate various scenarios when the user pay attention to their body image, then cluster them into 3 contexts, and brainstorm the elements to break weight stigma in different contexts.

Process

The ideation session consists of 2 parts with 6 design students. The first step was to ideate various scenarios when the user pay attention to their body image, then these scenarios were clustered and 3 of them were selected to be the contexts: fashion store, gym, and home.



- Other people/Me judging the photos of others/mine Taking photos, adjusting selfie before posting it online, choosing camera filters,...
- Trying/buying clothes
 Fail to fit common standards: "the clothes are designed for skinny people"
- -Physical activities

 Work out in gym, wear swimsuit, ...

pas clot of r and con	ook at herself when assing by a mirror, try on othes, look at the outfit models, take selfies ad share online, ampare, find clothes that eatch others	Change clothes, do their hair, store belongings, weigh herself, take a break, use different facilities, record their training, check messages, take selfies, post progress	browsing weight related contents on social media (lose weight tips, fitness posts, diet methods, etc.)
Privacy Publication Publication	blic space	Semi-public place with fewer people	Private space
bra soc	ne user, the fashion and, other customers, cial media contents out #fashion	The user, the gym brand, other people working out there, social media contents about #fitness	The user, social media accounts she's following
stigma and stereotypes in her Treation fash in her Politipeo in her respond to the stereotypes in her stereotypes in her respond to the stereotypes respond to the stereotypes in her respond to the stereotypes respond to the stereoty	e fashion models with erfect' body shape "I have to be as thin as or to look good." ends determined by the shion brands every season "I should dress as the look book." slished selfies taken when ople try on clothes "I'm not pretty enough to lost my selfie."	Posts in #fitness on social media → Feel ashamed to share her selfies Weigh herself before and after training → Feel obliged to go to the gym	When intensely browsing "beautiful" bodies on Instagram, people tend to see that as the standard, and they hardly have the chance to pause and reflect at this moment because there is not a stop cue in social media feeds.

Fast Fashion Context Gym Home Intended -Help her understand the -Interrupt the user from -Discourage comparison; training progress better; one type of feeds; effects -Encourage the user to appreciate her look and -Break the immersion -Encourage the user to get rid of strict standards appreciate her look and from recommendation get rid of her strict of beauty; system; standards of beauty; -Increase diversity in usergenerate-contents online. -Make her feel powerful and confident; ...

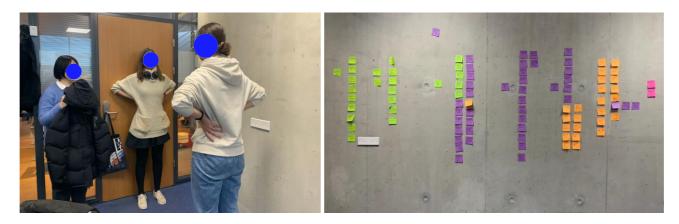


Figure X. Role play session and the ideas for each step

STEP 1: INVITE THE USER TO THE MIRROR

Ideas:

- Personalised recommendation
- Models walking back and forth in the mirror
- "Come here, I will tell your size!"
- "Come get your personalised clothes guides." "Come here, I will tell the style fits you best!"
- Put user's face on the model's head
- Change the clothes on the user when she's passing by
- A model walking with the user
- Play the "Magic Mirror"

Insight:

It's not necessary to create too much triggers because looking at the mirror is a natural action.

STEP 2: ASK THE USER TO TAKE THE CLOTHES

Ideas:

- The user in the mirror just grabs the certain piece of clothes (Harry Potter)
- The clothes should be within reach
- Show the information of the clothes: price, discount,...
- Predict the user's size "You should wear Medium."
- *Mess the size guide: "Go grab size 85 of that jacket."

Insight:

The "inviting" interface should go off.

Make sure the clothes are just within easy reach.

STEP 3: WHEN THE USER PUT THE CLOTHES ON

Ideas:

• Show previous users' photos

- Buyers Show
- Take a spin
- Take a video of spin and show all views
- Guide the user to (perfectly) pose
- Show the strange views, or the ugly ones
- Try the specific views that the user concerns
- Capture the best moments
- Show and convince the user that the clothes will be stunning in certain situations
- Guide the user pose according to the features of the clothes
- Selling the product >< Showing the user her great looks
- Different contents depending on the time spent in front of the mirror
- "This jacket does not deserve you./is not for you."
- "Please do xxxx. Oh right your left side is super!!"
- Reasonable praise
- History
- · Change the background
- Recommend others if this one does not look good
- Suitable praise for internal/external attribution personality

Insight:

This step the design should give user positive comments on their look. TO make it convincing, the user will be asked to take a spin in front of the mirror and some good shots will be taken.

"You look so cool with the zip up to the top!"

STEP 4: TAKE A SHOT

Ideas:

- Slot machine
- Dance pad
- Add background: dancer partners
- Stomp
- Hand gesture (Ironman)
- Feedforward: stay here don't move forwards
- Huawei gesture camera, TikTok
- Physical buttons around the user (area/stage)
- Security/Dance 2020: the shape of body
- The safe pose
- ApplePay (contactless)
- Audio guide
- TikTok changing face filter
- Ask people to try the clothes differently: zip up, hands in pocket, hat on...
- Text(?): instruction on the screen?
- Guide on the floor: dance pad
- · Audio assistance needed.

[&]quot;Perfect colour for you."

Insight:

It's a public installation, so people might be nervous when interacting with it. It should look natural and reasonable (not a big scene). The interaction for this step should be subtle and intuitive.

Some audio guidance as notification and confirmation will be enough, since many stores always have their playlist on.

- 1. Gesture detection can be used to confirm the user's answer: would you like to take a photo now?
- 2. Facial expression: smile
- 3. Footsteps might be awkward..
- 4. Will it be better if we could skip asking for their consent?

STEP 5: HASHTAG SELECTION

Ideas:

- Light effects with the same style of the clothes
- Turn around
- Stomp
- Shake head
- · Random assigned
- Split the screen with two choices
- bubbles changed with the number chosen
- Make the choice for you
- Animal to make it funny: Fashion is skinny = Giraffe
- Metaphor
- · Design a set of avatars
- Emoji
- Pop up/ floating upwards (Fruit Ninja)
- Emoji stack as a human figure
- Cover her face

Insight:

The hashtag can be chosen after photo being taken.

- 1. Limit the choices and make it random (1 out of 2: turn left or right, spin)
- 2. Pour the choices and make it hard to choose with too much consideration (bubbles pop up and float away if you don't poke it.
- 3. Amused and universal: emoji, animal, ...

HASHTAG SELECTION

The filters are supposed to be non-biased, no judgement(size0)

- strong (colour)
- unique
- powerful inside
- strange

- nothing
- healthy
- truth
- fat
- skinny
- fit
- muscle
- circular
- confidence
- sexy

Insight:

Fashion is [any option] = Fashion is ME, because the user defined it.

IIX. Play Test

PLAY TEST	To refine the the detail interactions of the experience			
	Participants: 3 design students			

The session is focused on the the core experience: trying on the clothes and then take a photo. 3 participants were invited to play-test the the interaction with the mirror and think out aloud during the process. In the end they were asked to think about their take-away from the experience.

Material

Photos of models from the gallery of several fashion brands. Photos of the participants that have been edited to show the effect of filters.





Results

Some simple gestures provides a warm-up time before taking a photo, which makes the user feel less nervous when using it in public.

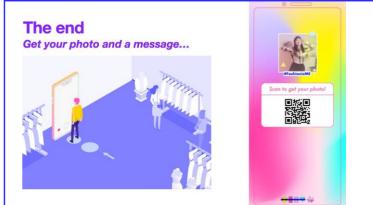
4 gestures for taking a shot are selected from the play-test out of 10+ poses collected from the galleries of fashion brands. They are evaluated by the participants as the most fun and not too embarrassing to make in public.

The filters are simplified as geometric shapes to make the visual effect less realistic and more amusing.

IX. Evaluation Setup

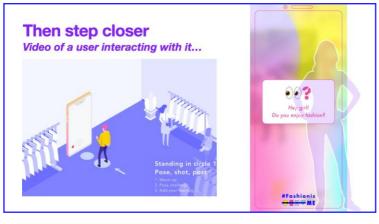
• User persona and use scenarios:











• Workable prototype connected with a beamer (offline test)



• Video of a user interacting with the installation (online test)



• User Experience Questionnaire:

For the assessment of the product, please fill out the following questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of pairs of contrasting attributes that may apply to the product. The circles between the attributes represent gradations between the opposites. You can express your agreement with the attributes by ticking the circle that most closely reflects your impression.

Example:

attractive ! " ! ! ! ! unattractive

This response would mean that you rate the application as more attractive than unattractive.

Please assess the product now by ticking one circle per line.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Clear	Ā	Ī	<u> </u>	Ī	Ā	Ī	Ī	Confusing
Easy	Ā	Ī	Ī	Ī	Ī	Ī	Ā	Complicated
Boring	Ī	Ī	Ī	Ī	Ī	Ī	Ī	Exciting
Inventive	Ā	Ī	<u> </u>	Ī	Ī	Ī	Ī	Conventional
Supportive	Ā	Ī	Ī	Ī	Ā	Ī	Ā	Obstructive

• Interview questions:

Q1: Would you like to use the installation when shopping in a fast fashion store?

Q2: What kind of emotion is evoked during the experience?

Q3: Which hashtag will you choose and why?

Q4: What is your take-away from the experience?

Q5: To what extend would you describe the experience as confronting (1-5)? Which elements in the context make you feel that?

Q6: To what extend would you describe the experience as amusing (1-5)? Which elements in the context make you feel that?

Q7: What will you do with the photo?

Q8: Will you follow the hashtag #fashionisme and why?

Q9: If you have followed the hashtag, will you have further interaction with it? Including just browsing other photos, adding new post in the hashtag, sharing or reposting, etc.

X. Evaluation Results

Q1: Would you like to use the installation when shopping in a fast fashion store?

Results:

















- 7/8 will use it
- 1/8 will only use it when she is with her friend(s)

Quotes:

- Yes, especially with some "too" fashionable clothes. Those I won't buy but are fun to give a try.
- Yes, but probably when there are less people around.
- I will definitely use it with my friends.

Q2: What kind of emotion is evoked during the experience?

Quotes:

Excited, curious, self-satisfied, happy, neutral(when sharing it afterwards)

Because of the coldness of modern people, you know, we tweet "hhlee" with a poker face.

Encouraged, socialising, inspiring, positive, convenient ("I don't need to edit the selfie again")

Curious, interested

Interested, curious, excited, surprised

feel warm, moved (when seeing fashionisme)

Q3: Which hashtag will you choose and why?

Results:

- •6/8 chose the most funny filters
- 2/8 chose #FashionisME

Quotes:

The funny one, the most visually impressive filter, and people will immediately know it's not real. For entertainment!

But I'd like to save #fashionisme photo, but not share it around.

The funniest one, to be the spotlight haha. It's also a sarcasm, a rebel to the traditional standard.

Me, to show my own values.

Other hashtags are not aesthetic enough. I only post photos of high quality.

Q4: What is your take-away from the experience?

I get it, it's anti-body shaming, right? I know it because of the advertisement of Calvin Klein.

I think this brand is inclusive, not pursuing the one standard of body shape.

It (the brand) will leave a good impression.

It's proud to be ME. Because I chose it, and the action of make the choice (holding like Ironman) is firm. It makes me feel determined and empowered.

The pose makes me feel active, and it prevents me from focusing on my body shape.

Q5: To what extend would you describe the experience as confronting (1-5)? Which elements in the context make you feel that?

The message is not strong enough. You can interpret it in different perspectives: just for fun; or tackling a serious concern.

For example, the advertisement of CK is confronting because it's a rebel.

I already knew it (body positivity).

My own hesitation is actually confronting. Usually I would take dozens of photo, choose one, use a fancy filter, and then post the prettiest one online. So I was considering if it is pretty enough... The hesitation makes me reflect.

Q6: To what extend would you describe the experience as amusing (1-5)? Which elements in the context make you feel that?

Funny photos of other people:

It feels like communicating with them.

The effect of the filters is amusing.

Pose, filters, text

Q7: What will you do with the photo?

I'll post it on my page with the most radical filter, but I'll give a finger to make a stronger message, to show my attitude.

I'll share it in group chat with my friends and family, but I won't post it on my page because it does not match my style on Instagram.

I will post it with the hashtag. I like using hashtags.

I will post it if there is **no brand name** in the hashtag.

I will shoot the process and post the video on Instagram Story. The choosing process seems more meaningful. Maybe not just a photo as the take-away material?

They can use it as the profile photo, or wallpaper, if you can add some stuff... Not just simply a photo.

You can intentionally encourage people to use it as their profile photo, like the trending challenges on Youtube. (/TikTok)

Q8: Will you follow the hashtag #fashionisme and why?

They are strangers. I don't care about them:)

I only follow hashtags of my interests (#photogragher/#football/...). =Body positivity is not a topic that I will care about in my daily life.

I don't like following hashtags.

I follow hashtag to collect photos, so...no.

If the contents are creative and delightful, (not too serious), I will follow it.

"Probably not. Only if I really like that brand then I'll be willing to get inspirations from real users instead of the models."

Q9: If you have followed the hashtag, will you have further interaction with it? Including just browsing other photos, adding new post in the hashtag, sharing or reposting, etc.

I will like the funny photos.

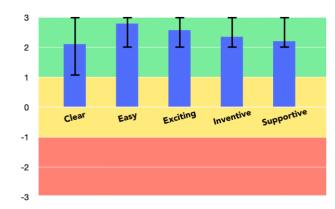
I'll like the photos with #fashionisme. I want to support, encourage them.

Other feedback:

I'm fat. I think I need your thing (to cheer up).

UEQ-questionnaire:

Results:



Clear - Confusing: 2(1.875)
Easy - Complicated: 1(1.13)
Exciting - Boring: 1(1.38)
Inventive - Conventional: 2(1.63)
Supportive - Obstructive: 2(1.75)

Quotes:

The visual guidance of the installation is not visible enough. Will my photo be added to that gallery?

At the beginning (warm-up and take a photo) I don't really understand it, but it's fun. Then choosing the hashtag is exciting and clear.

The (gesture) interaction is intuitive, I like it.