The background features a complex geometric design. It includes a central circle with a light purple fill, overlaid with a black 'X' shape. The design is composed of various colored regions: magenta at the top and bottom, yellow on the left and right sides, and several triangular and quadrilateral shapes in shades of purple, pink, and cyan. All shapes are outlined with thick black lines.

A design to break weight
stigma internalisation
circle in the age of
social media

#FASHIONISME

#FASHIONISME:

**A design to break
weight stigma internalisation circle
in the age of social media**

Master Thesis

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October 2020

Design for Interaction
Industrial Design Engineering
Delft University of Technology

Supervisory team

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This graduation project starts from the big scope of weight stigmatisation on social media. At the beginning of research, primary research about weight stigma and social media was conducted to collect background knowledge and form an initial scope for further exploration. Explorative research was conducted to map out the situation and problems of weight stigmatisation on social media. Then the project scope was refined as weight stigma internalisation in the context of fast fashion, and focuses on the problem that female social media users internalise weight stigma when shopping for fast fashion products.

In the next step, I did user research to better understand how do social media influence people in their daily life, and how do people cope with stigmatising information. Then I did context research to understand the collaboration of social media and fast fashion (social shopping), and the internalising circle of weight stigma was concluded from the research.

Based on the research findings about social media and fast fashion, this design should enable young social media female users to be aware of the subtle but prevalent stigmatising contents, and therefore avoid internalising stigma, in which way a more supportive environment could be built for more people.

With clear design goal and qualities defined, the design starts with making use of the relevant elements in the whole shopping experience, including online interactions and in-store experience. The concept is developed through user-participatory iterations and evaluations. The final concept is a trans-media experience aiming to make the user encourage them to embrace the body shape diversity actively, and aware of the stigmatising environment on social media.

Finally the evaluation was conducted to validate if the concept fulfilled the design goal and reach the interaction qualities. A workable prototype and video were used to facilitate the evaluation online and offline.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank all people who have given me support and help during this long year, including:

- * My supervisory team, Niko and Natalia;
- * My family, for your unconditional support;
- * My old friends, especially Qianqian;
- * My new friends that I met during the process;
- * Myself for surviving it :) 🎉

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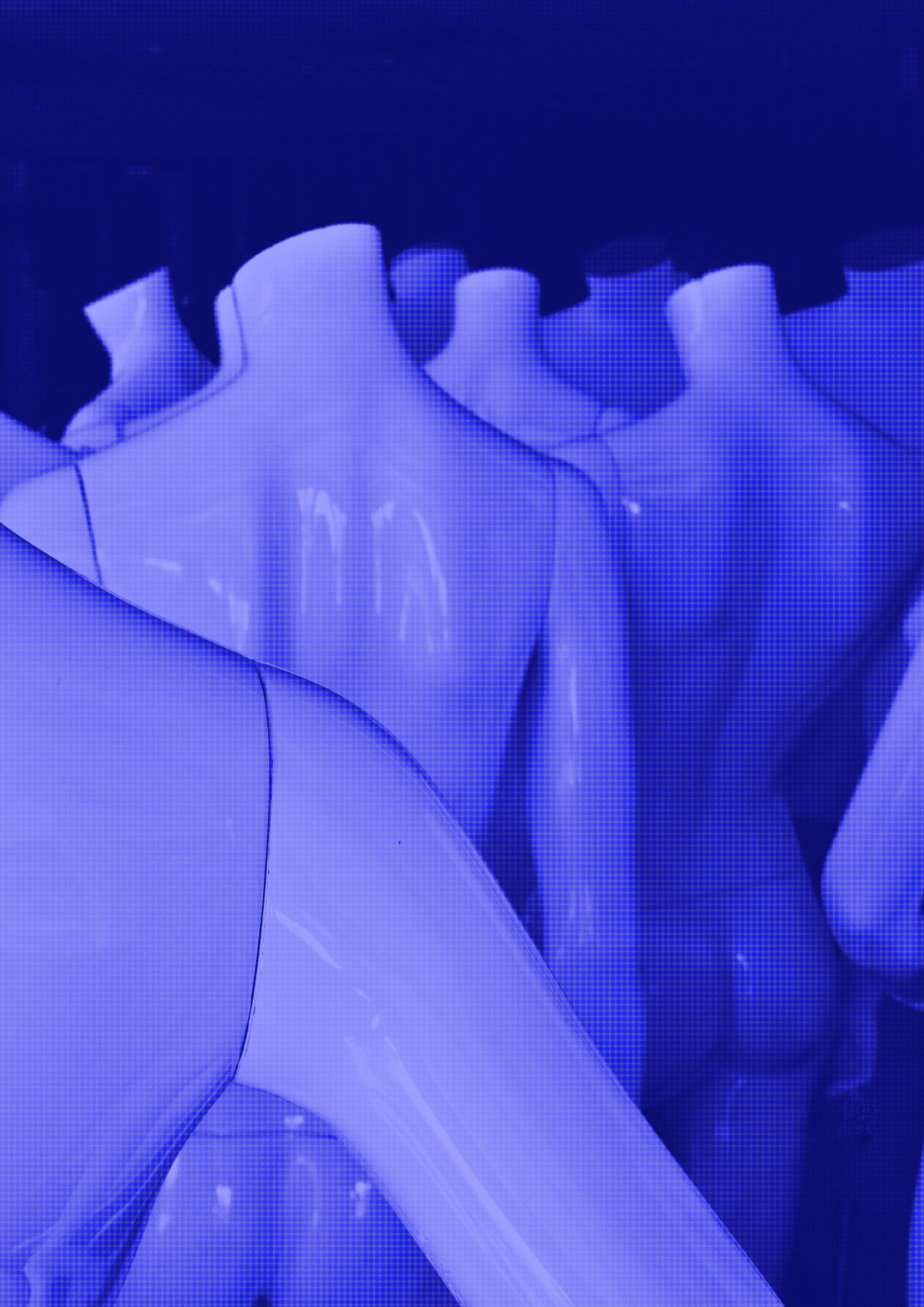
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0/Introduction

The project starts from the big scope of weight stigmatisation on social media, and focuses on the phenomenon that **female customers internalise weight stigma when shopping for fast fashion products**.

In the current fast fashion industry, the female body is always ideally shaped as a perfect skinny figure with an attractive curve at the same time. Most products are designed, advertised and sold for people of a certain body shape. This rigorous and unrealistic pursuit of "ideal figure" actually implies social stigma against "non-standard" bodies, especially against overweight people. As the majority of the consumer group, young women are influenced by this implicit stigmatising information in many aspects of their lives.

Based on the research findings about social media and fast fashion, the final concept is developed to make the user aware of the stigmatising environment on social media, and encourage them to embrace the body shape diversity actively.

Starting point: weight stigmatisation in social media

Weight stigma has been broadly defined as bias or discriminatory behaviours targeted at individuals because of their weight. It has brought difficulties and disadvantages for people who are overweight or obese.

Social media has provided space for people to interact with anyone on unlimited topics, including health and weight. The main type of information on social media is user-generated content (UGC). UGC is any form of content, such as images, videos, text and audio, that have been posted by users on online platforms. These contents can document the public attitude towards obesity. In some cases social media exacerbated weight stigma in user-generated online interactions, meanwhile there are also spaces for the stigmatised people to communicate and support each other (W Chou et al, 2014).

This project starts with the exploration on social media, then defining the core problems and designing for it.

Project scope

Prevalence and impacts of weight stigmatisation

Weight stigmatisation is pervasive and causes many negative affects on people's mental and physical health.

The prevalence of weight stigma has increased a lot, and is now comparable to prevalence rates of racial or gender discrimination (Andreyeva et al, 2008). This stigmatisation is often ignored, and mainstreaming social attributions tend to place blame on overweight individuals for their weight, with perceptions that weight stigmatisation is justifiable, and the stigma might even serve as a 'helpful' tool to motivate them to adopt a healthier lifestyle.

The context of weight stigma is also prevalent, including family, healthcare services, working environments, public services, etc (Phelan et al, 2015). Negative attitudes and stereotypes toward overweight people have been frequently reported by employers, coworkers, teachers, physicians, nurses, medical students, dieticians, psychologists, peers, friends and family members.

It leads to numerous negative impacts on different levels, including low self-esteem, stress and depression, reduced social support and healthcare support, etc.

Social media: a space that documents and shapes the public opinion

As a growing part of our daily life, social media addresses weight-related stereotypes and subtly shaping public opinions, including topics around weight stigma. For example, social media use is confirmed to be associated with body image distribution (Saiphoo & Vahedi, 2019). The users are perceiving the biased information everyday, then internalising the stigmatising messages, and even sharing or posting more similar contents online.

Fast fashion:

The launch context of this design is fast fashion. Fast fashion always pushes users to pay attention to and judge their body, and promoting its excessively strict standards of fashion. Meanwhile, fast fashion is more closely connected to social media and spreading its excessively strict body standards to more users. Therefore, being able to associate fast fashion with the fight against weight stigma could largely reverse people's attitudes.

The target audience of this design is young female user. The reason for focusing the target user on the young female user is that this part of the population is the most closely connected with weight stigmatisation. They pay more attention to their body image, and the gazing of the whole society is more fierce on them.

Defining research questions and objectives of the project

Through explorative research and analysis, the project scope involves the problem targeted by this design is young female social media users internalising weight stigma when shopping for fast fashion products.

Q1: What type of weight stigmatisations exists in social media?

Sub-questions:

- What is the current situation of weight stigmatisation in social media?
- Which type of the manifestations will be the focus of this project?

Q2: How does social media stimulate weight stigmatisation?

Sub-questions:

- How does social media influence our daily life?
- Why are fat people stigmatised on social media?
- How do people cope with weight stigmatisation on social media?

Q3: How could social media inhibit weight stigmatisation?

Sub-questions:

- How does social media integrated in the chosen context?
- What characteristics of social media can help to inhibit weight stigmatisation?
- What are the design opportunities to use social media to leverage the situation?

How to read this report:

The report is divided into six chapters.

In [Chapter 1](#), I will describe the whole project process and methods, and all research and design activities at each stage will be listed. The key insights of and conclusions will be summarised corresponding to the research questions.

The process and full results will be attached in the [Appendix](#).

In the next 2 chapters, I will directly use the results of research activities to present the project, from the initial scope to the focus context and problems ([Chapter 2](#)). The process of forming initial ideas and further refining the concept will be shown in [Chapter 3](#).

The final concept and evaluation goals will be explained in [Chapter 4](#). The process and results of the evaluation will be shown in [Chapter 5](#).

Lastly, I will reflect and discuss on the whole project, and envision the possible future works in [Chapter 6](#).



1/Approach and methodologies

This chapter will explain how the project started from the weight stigmatisation in social media, and then then design focus was defined through the research: the internalisation of weight stigma in the context of fast fashion.

This process can be divided into two parts. One part is the exploratory research to define the scope of the project, including scanning weight stigmatising contents on social media, selecting the fast fashion industry as the context, the problem statements, the target group, etc. Another part is to map design opportunities through the research, and eventually to develop a concept against internalised weight stigma.

1.1 Project approach and process

Process Overview

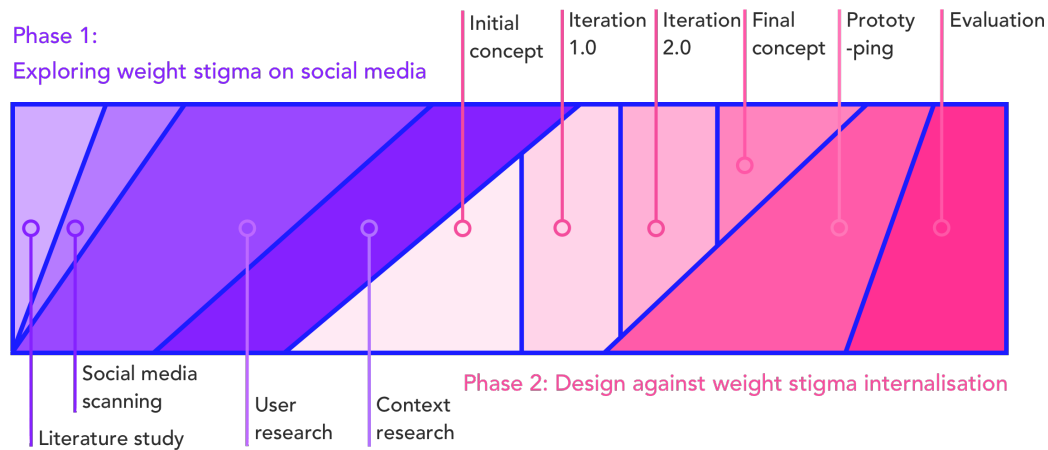


Figure 1. The project structure and timeline

Phase 1: Exploring weight stigma on social media

What type of weight stigmatisations exists in social media?

Literature study and social media data scanning were conducted to map out the current situation of weight stigma online. Stigmatising posts were collected and categorised to provide an initial scope for further research.

How does social media stimulate weight stigmatisation?

How could social media inhibit weight stigmatisation

In user research part, I did context mapping, interviews and focus group to better understand how the target user group are influenced by social media contents in daily life.

Based on the insights, the design focus is decided as stigma internalisation of fast fashion customers, and design goal is to make young female users embrace body shape diversity when shopping for clothes.

Phase 2: Designing against weight stigma internalisation

Concept development

The initial concept is formed from the ideation and then iterated through co-creation sessions with users.

Final concept

The final design is shown, including the installation set-up and user interface design. The technical feasibility is discussed.

Evaluation and conclusion

Users are invited to test and evaluate the concept. Conclusions of the research and design goals are drawn. Further development and recommendation are also discussed.

1.2 Methodologies and activities

This chapter will enumerate the research methods and theories used in each different stage for specific goals. The detailed research process and results can be found in Appendix X.

1.2.1 Phase 1: Explorative research

Starting from weight stigmatisation on social media, the first phase is to determine a project scope. At the beginning of research, primary research about weight stigma and social media was conducted to collect background knowledge and form an initial scope for further exploration. The elements of the assignment have already set some boundaries for the project, but each factor cover a wide scope itself. Thus, it is important to grasp a clear view and set boundaries.

Research methods and activities

Literature review, social media scanning, context mapping, focus group, user interview and activist interview.

RESEARCH QUESTION:

What type of weight stigmatisations exists in social media?

Methods

Scanning social media (Appendix 1)

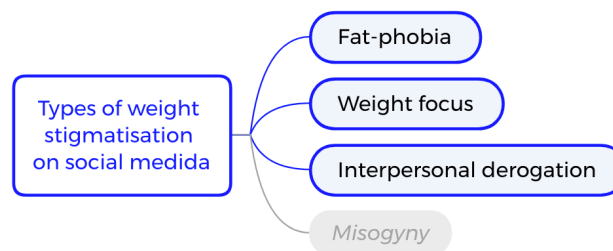
**SOCIAL
MEDIA
SCANNING**

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,

RESULTS

- Individual fat phobia: the perceptual fear of being a fat person often causes self-deprecation and self-blame;
- 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".
- 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.

RESEARCH QUESTION:**How does social media stimulate weight stigmatisation?****How could social media inhibit weight stigmatisation?**

- How does social media influence our daily life?
- How do people cope with weight stigmatisation on social media?
- What characteristics of social media can help to inhibit weight stigmatisation?
- What are the design opportunities to use social media to leverage the situation?

Methods

Context mapping (Appendix II), Focus group (Appendix III), Individual interview (Appendix IV), Activist interview (Appendix V)

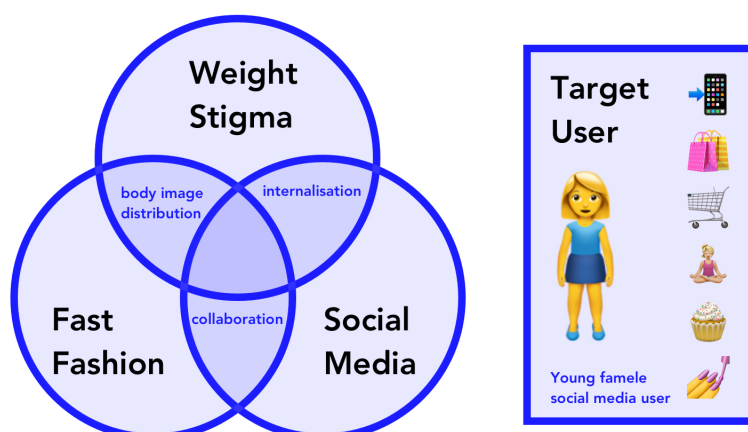
CONTEXT MAPPING	To understand how is social media integrated into our daily life
	Participant: 9 participants (2 males), aged 23-29, which belongs to the most active age group (18-29) or social media user.
	Key insight: Most of participants feel that they spent too much time on social media, and abducted by statistics and the endless feeds generated by algorithms.
FOCUS GROUP	To discuss about the current situation of weight stigmatisation on social media, and how do they cope with it.
	Participant: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Female, Heavy use of social media, Experienced weight stigma Female, Medium use of social media, Not experienced weight stigma Female, Light use of social media, Experienced weight stigma Male, Medium use of social media, Not experienced weight stigma <i>*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.</i>
	Key insight: The "innocent" posts that can't be blocked or ignored. Most people who have experienced weight stigma said that they would manually clear out their social media feeds (unfollow/dislike/block) to avoid the source of stigmatisation. However, there are still many "innocent" posts prevalently in their feeds. (<i>Ads of gym that insults or teases fat people, embarrassing moments when editing their own pictures, etc.</i>) These intentional or unintentional micro aggressions are still actively conveying stigmatising messages, and they can come from anyone, including the user himself/herself.

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
	Key insight: Weight stigmatisation is rarely recognised or discussed because being fat has already been a pressure, people don't want to be seen as too serious or sensitive on the subject. Meme is an example of how social media deconstructs serious social issues.
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)
	Key insight: The existence of weight stigma is often neglected. It is even more difficult to confront than gender, culture, race, or illness. 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, and they are being impacted by weight stigmatisation as well.
CONCLUSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media addresses weight-related stereotypes and subtly shaping public opinions. Users are perceiving the biased information everyday, then internalising stigma and even adding more stigmatising contents online. • The target user group is young female social media user with any body types because anyone can be affected no matter if she is fat or not. • Thus the design focus of the project will be people internalising weight stigma and the relevant posts on social media.

IDEATION	<p>To find out what triggers people to internalise weight stigmatisation in various scenarios, and select one context.</p> <p>Participants: 6 design students</p> <p>Key insight: People internalising stigmatisation when comparing to social norms unwittingly. We can find that the common theme of these scenarios is “comparing oneself with the ideal body”. Then people unwittingly accept judgements and social standards on female body shape, and form their ideal body shape based on these social norms.</p>
RESULTS	<p>Fast fashion is closely related to weight stigma internalisation.</p> <p>It also covers a wider user group, which matches the previous research results: the target user group is young female social media user with any body types.</p> <p>Its connection with social media also provides many design opportunities.</p> <p>Therefore, the context is decided to be fast fashion shopping.</p>

Through explorative research and analysis, the project scope of this design is defined as follows: the problem targeted by this design is young female social media users internalising weight stigma when shopping for fast fashion products.

To sum up, this design should enable young social media female users to be aware of the subtle but prevalent stigmatising contents, and therefore avoid internalising stigma, in which way a more supportive environment could be built for more people.



1.2.1 Phase 2: Conceptualisation and evaluation

The second phase starts from context research and the synthesis of research findings. Then the design brief is formed, and the concept is developed through user-participatory iterations and evaluations.

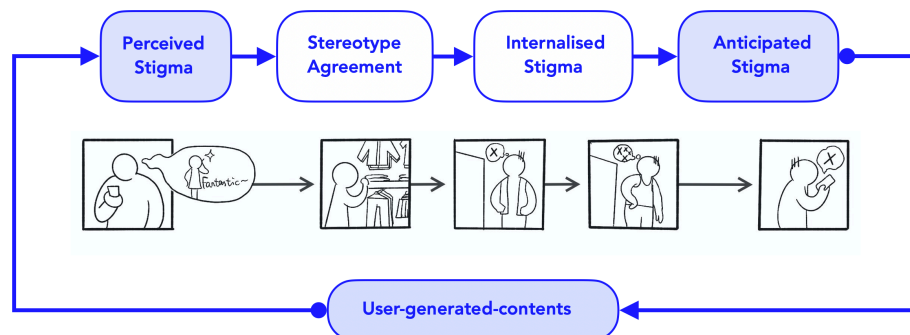
Methods and activities

Literature research, context walkthrough, emotion footprint, brainstorming, role-play, play test (Appendix VII and VIII).

CONTEXT WALKTHROUGH	To define the problems and design opportunities in the specific context
EMOTION FOOTPRINT	Participants: 2 female users, aged 25

RESULTS

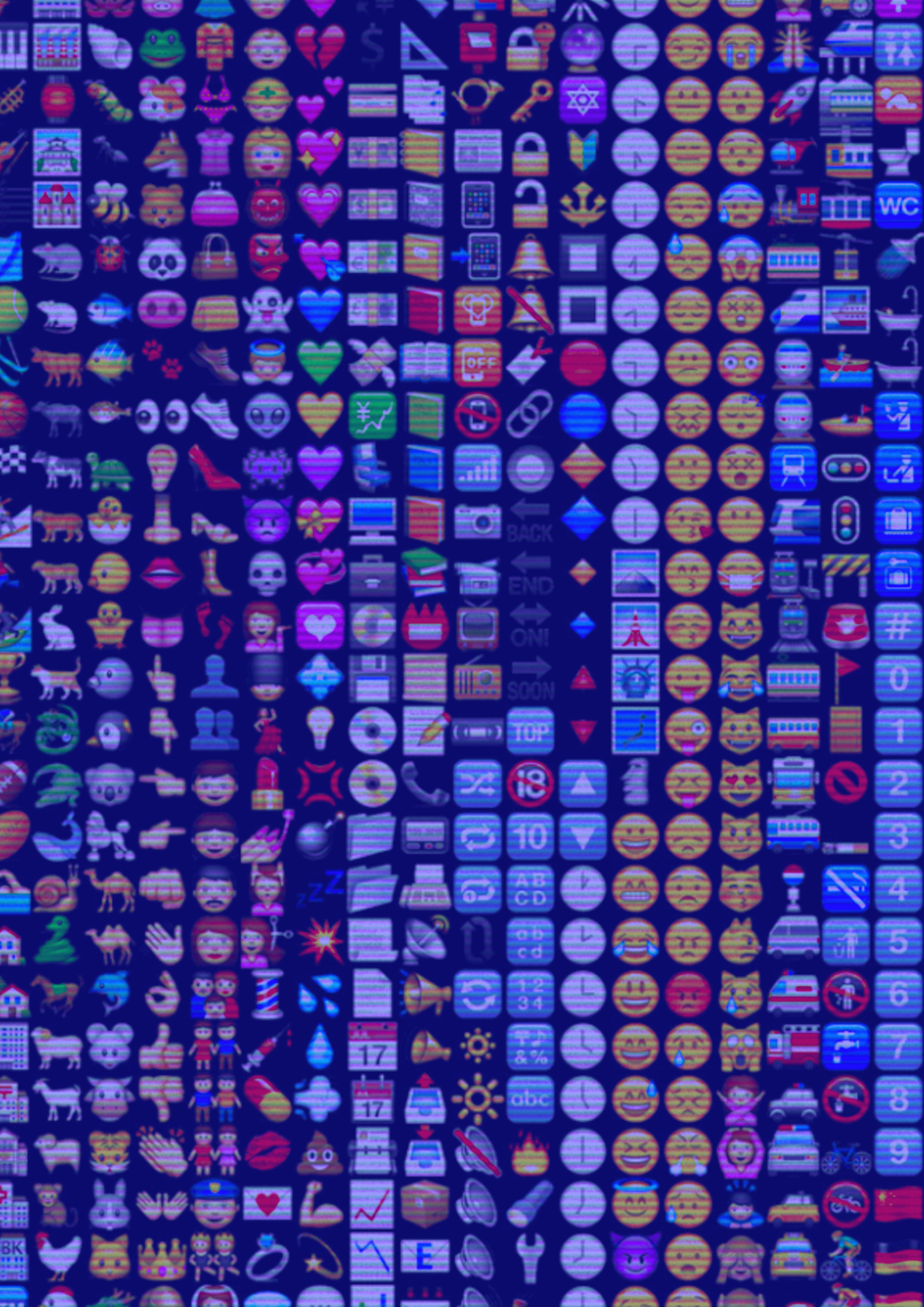
Circle of internalising stigmatisation in social shopping experience:



Problem statement in the context:

- 1) Lack of body shape diversity representation on social media
- 2) Disappointing comparisons leading to internal attribution
- 3) Avoiding posting selfies without fine editing

BODY-STORMING	To refine the concept from perspectives of interactions and contents.
PLAY TEST	Participants: 7 design students
RESULTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The concept will use gesture-based interaction.• The communication style is reset as “fun and casual”, and some universal elements like Emoji are added to make it more humanised.• Simple and delightful physical movements (warm-up, poses) are used to engage the user.• The preset choices for hashtag are transferred from real body types without any bias.



2/Weight stigmatisation in social media

2.1 Theoretical understanding of stigmatisation in social media

2.1.1 Types of stigmatisation in social media

To get a statistic view on the current situation of weight stigma on social media, I did social media scanning on 3 different sites (Instagram, Twitter, Douban), to collect the stigmatising contents (Appendix I). It's a mixed method to explore the context with both quantitative and qualitative approaches. I checked online contents related to weight stigma with different methods and tools, including manually searching, mining and also data visualisation tools.

The results shows that weight stigma is prevalent on social media in various aspects, mostly about appearance, diet, fitness, lifestyle. Main types of the manifestations are categorised.

1) FAT-PHOBIA:

Fatphobia is irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against, obesity or people with obesity. It also manifests as a perceptual fear of being a fat person, which often causes self-deprecation and self-blame. It isn't just a matter of interpersonal bias, it is a structural issue that affects every aspect of our lives. It's also the last culturally accepted bias (Brochu & Esses, 2011), which makes fat-phobia more persuasive and often ignored.

EXAMPLES:

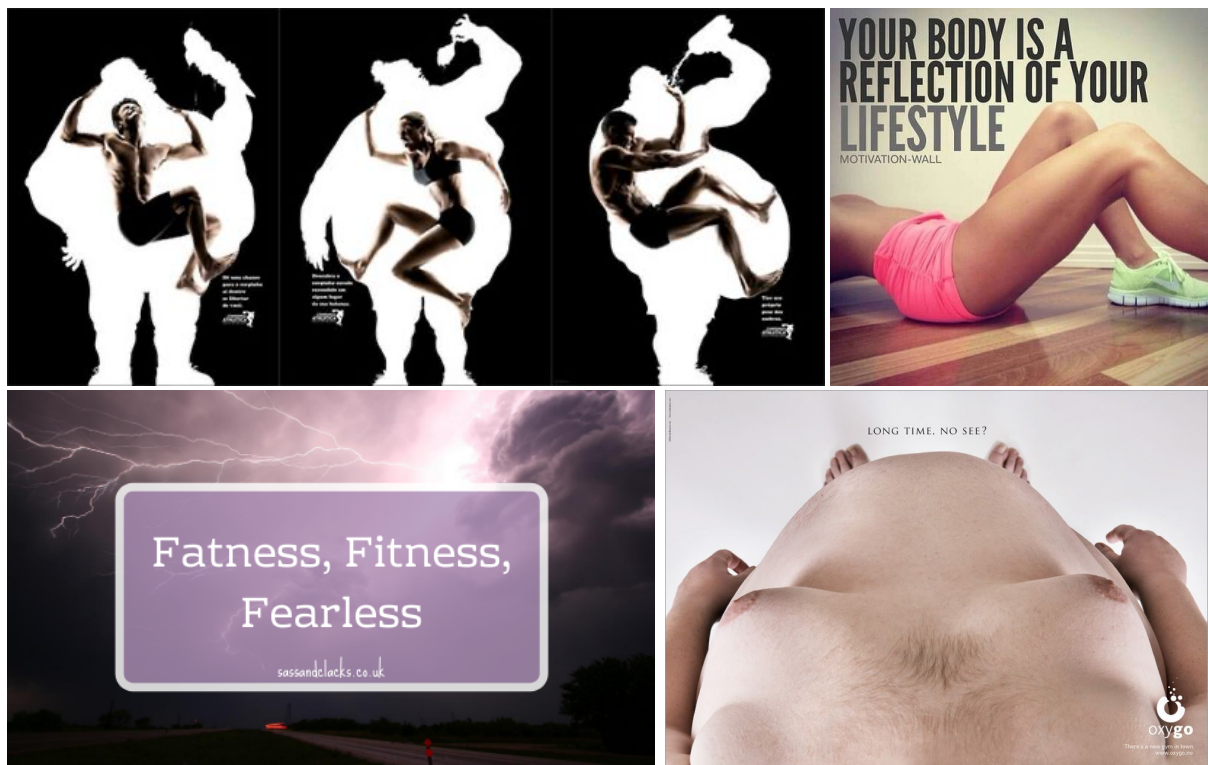


Figure 2-1. Offensive advertisements of gyms addressing separation of fat from personal identity

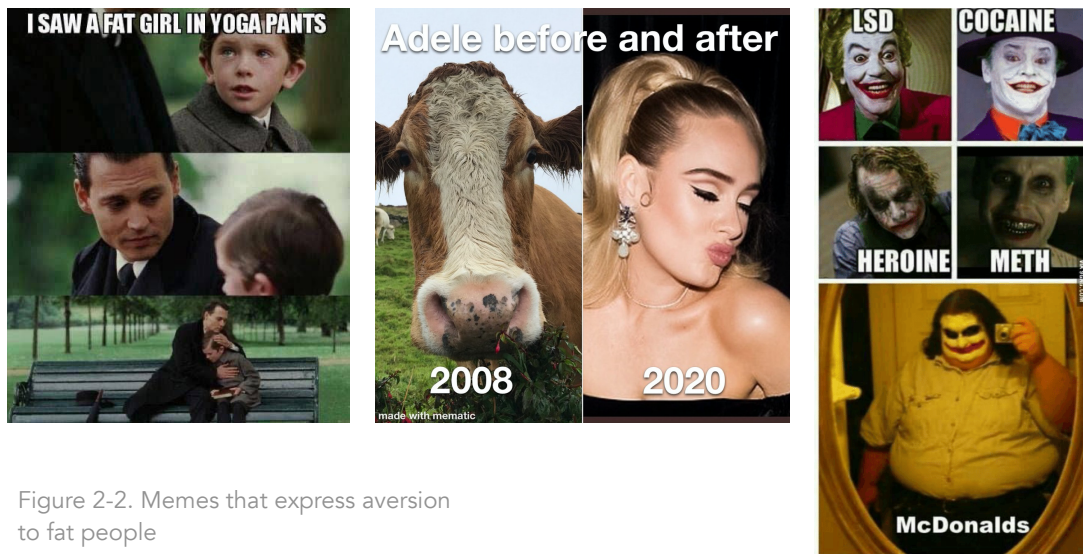


Figure 2-2. Memes that express aversion to fat people

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”. The difference between fat-phobia and weight focus is that weight focus often manifests on individual behaviours: people will put much attention and effort on their weight change, and take real actions to lose weight.

EXAMPLES:

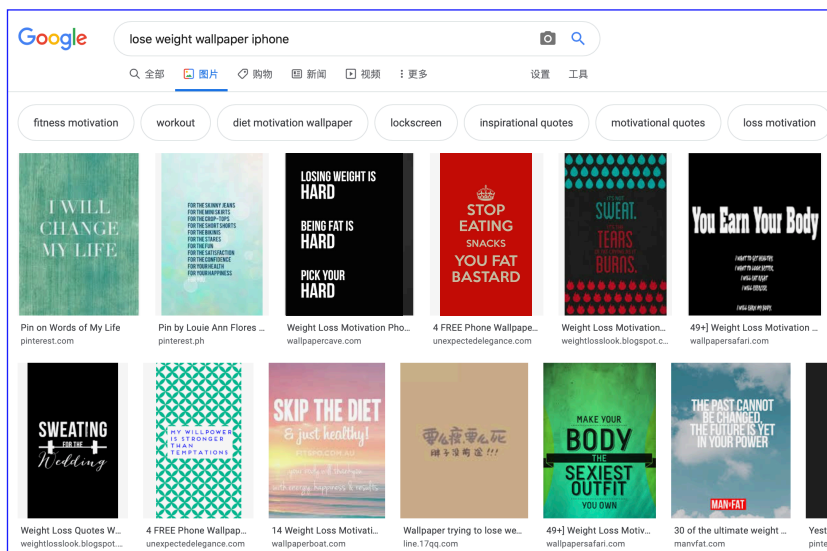


Figure 2-3. Wallpapers to motivate losing weight

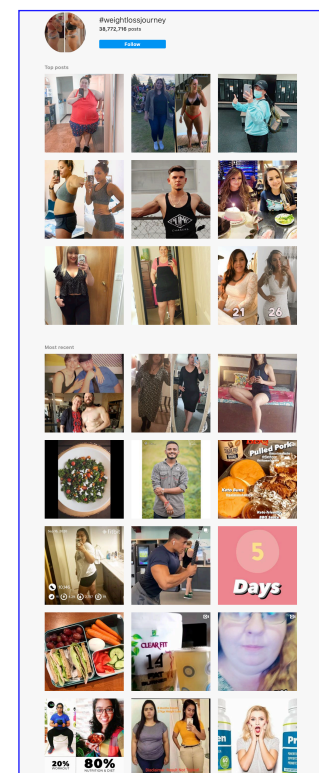


Figure 2-4. 38,772,716 posts of #loseweightjourney on Instagram

3) INTERPERSONAL DEROGATION

Some social media users aggressively attack and degrade fat people. The targets are usually strangers.

4) PLUS, WOMEN ARE AFFECTED MORE.

The user group that weight stigma affects on social media platforms is mainly female. The requirement for female sexual attractiveness seems to be social norm. Women are naturally related to these topics: fashion, beauty, cosmetics, fitness, food/diet. The stigmatising contents are mostly targeted at females.

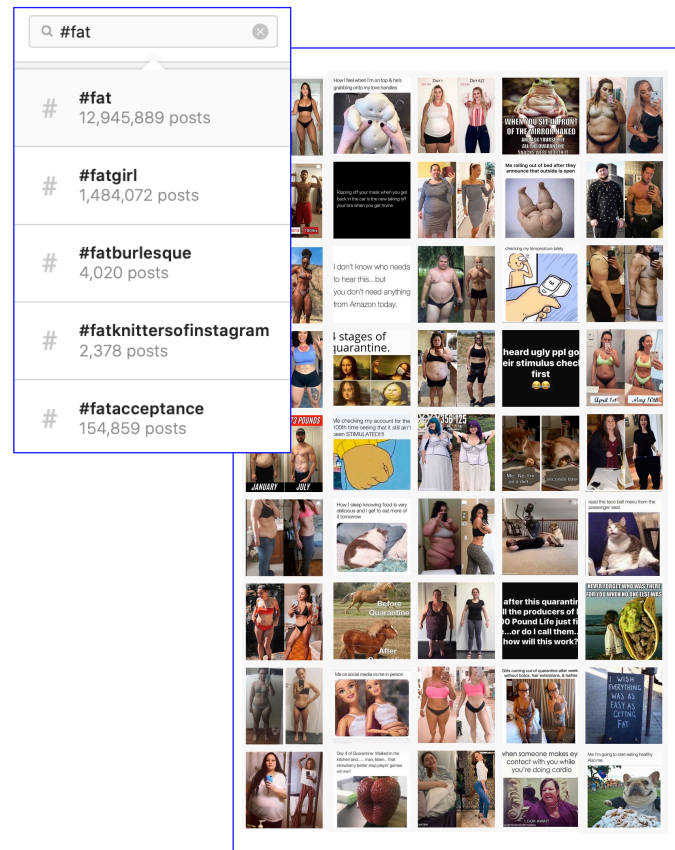


Figure 2-5. The top hit hashtags about fat on Instagram

Figure 2-6. Most of the photos of #weightloss are female

2.1.2 Theoretical model of social media stimulating weight stigmatisation

After the main types of the stigmatisation are categorised. We can start answering the next research question: how does social media stimulate weight stigmatisation?

This part aims to better understand social media users and understand how social media affects their real life. Literature research about social media and user research were conducted, including context mapping, individual interviews, focus group and activist interview. These sub-questions will be answered:

- How does social media influence our daily life?
- Why are fat people stigmatised on social media?
- How do people cope with weight stigmatisation on social media?

Social media: user-generated-content & algorithms

FEEDING THE USER WITH HOMOGENISED INFORMATION

User-generated content (UGC) is any form of content, such as images, videos, text, and audio, that has been posted by users on online platforms. The development and expansion of social media service makes the connection between people no longer only relies on geographic and kinship. People with the same interests and aesthetic taste can break the limitations of time and space to communicate in social media.

Meanwhile social media sites are using **algorithms** to create endless feeds to win over users to constantly swiping up to browse more contents of similar topics or opinions. Algorithms are optimised to achieve higher commercial interests (O'Neil, 2020). The user's feed will be flooded with homogenised information based on what she or he viewed/liked/followed/shared.

In this way, it is hard to get access to new information of different interests or opinions. The so-called filter bubble (Pariser, 2011) is formed, which makes the users always reinforcing their beliefs in this immersive environment.

STIGMATISATION PERCEIVED CAN BE INTERNALISED

In the case of weight stigmatisation, it's pervasive and often ignored, especially around the topics of fitness, dieting, lifestyle and fashion. If a user follows these topics or accounts, she/he might be fed with many contents containing stigmatising messages. According a theoretical model of self-stigma (Watson et al, 2007), the flooded contents from social media feeds can subtly affect the user, and make them internalise stigma (figure 2-7).

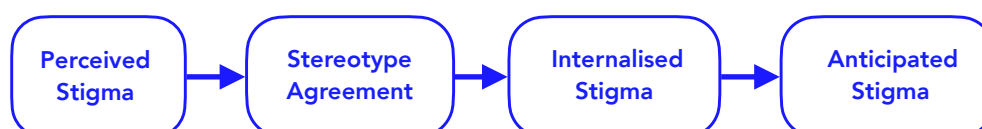


Figure 2-7. A model of self-stigma

In the case that the social norm defines the "ideal body" as slim, people will gradually accepting the idea and take actions. When you start following weight loss, or fitness topic (/hashtag), then you will be surrounded with posts of people showing their weight management updates. People with "ideal body" will be more keen to show their figures on social media to get more followers, and the trending apps all provides filters and editing tools to kindly help people improve their photos to fit in the standards.

A recent study also proves this kind of influence: actively engaging with attractive peers' social media causes worsened body image in young adult women (Hogue & Mills, 2019).

In such an environment, people are reinforcing the unrealistic body standards without any doubt. They accept and internalise stigma after being flooded with the biased contents.

Users: contributor to their own social media feeds

There is an insight from the context mapping session: your image on social media are gradually covering the real person: people get to know you from your Instagram stories, get to hang out with you via facebook activities,... People are getting used to express themselves and know about others on social media sites. To maintain their personal identity and social network, users are more likely to generate (post/repost/comment/like/share) contents online.

If the user has internalised some weight bias, the contents she/he generates are more likely to contain the same stigmatising message as well, which will be perceived by others. In this way a vicious circle is formed (figure 2-8).

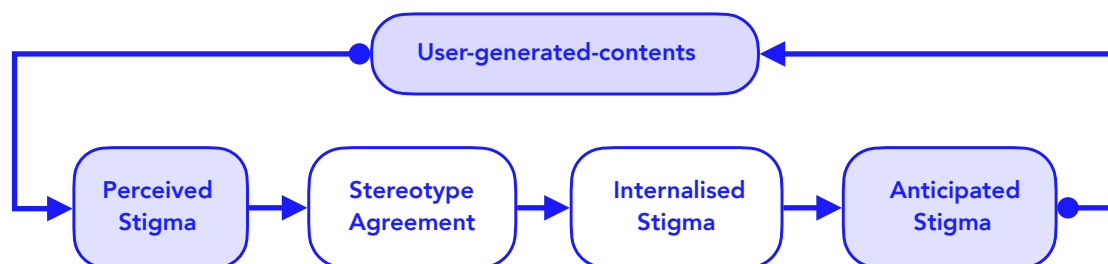


Figure 2-8. The circle of weight stigmatisation on social media

In summary, social media addresses weight-related stereotypes and subtly shaping public opinions. Users are perceiving the biased information everyday, then internalising stigma and even adding more stigmatising contents online. The target user group can be people with any body types because anyone can be affected no matter if she is fat or not. Thus the design focus of the project will be people internalising weight stigma and the relevant posts on social media.

DESIGN OPPORTUNITY:**POP THE BUBBLE, MAKE THE UCG MORE DIVERSE**

As mentioned before, the algorithms are not objective, but optimised to predict and collect the contents that the user may be willing to spend more time on. There are certain opinions and values embed with code. The opinions and values are still shapable by the market, or the user.

If the design can trigger user to hear new voices, take a look at different opinions, and even post contents against weight stigmatisation, her social media feeds will also be adjusted accordingly by the same algorithm. The positive content she created will have an impact on her followers and anyone who views it as well.

2.2 User research understanding of stigmatisation in social media

2.2.1 Defining target user group

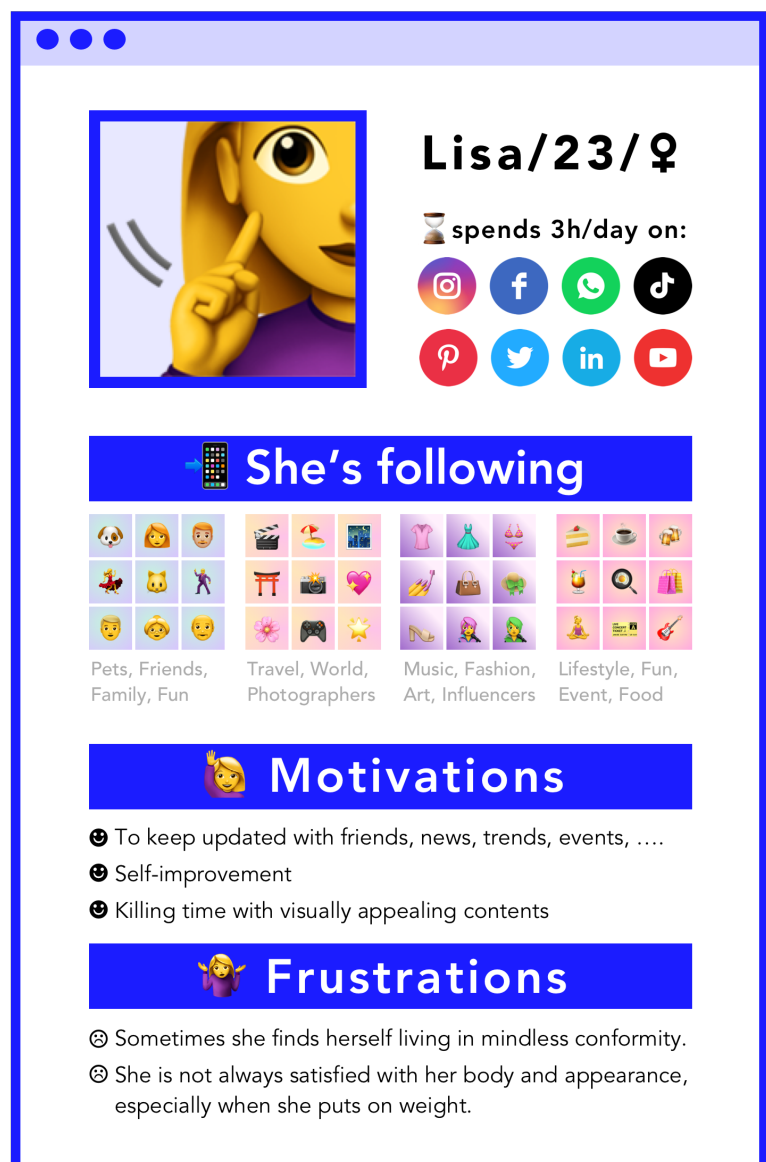
The previous literature research has shown that females stand in the breach when it comes to weight stigmatisation: statistics shows that women seem to experience higher levels of weight stigmatisation than men, even at lower levels of excess weight. Moreover, women report weight discrimination at lower levels of excess weight than men. Women tend to report experiencing notable increases in weight discrimination at BMI of 27, while men at BMI of 35 or higher (King & Puhl, 2015).

According to the results of scanning social media and focus group, the requirements for female attractiveness are seen as part of social norms (Appendix I&III). The stigmatising contents on social media are mostly targeted at females. They are also active on social media and fast fashion business.

Therefore, the target group of the project is young female social media users, age 18-29.

To represent the target user, I make a persona for the project (figure 2-9). The persona will be later used in the evaluation stage as well to introduce and empathise the participants with the target group.

Figure 2-9.
The persona of the target user group



2.2.2 Scenarios of the user internalising weight stigmatisation

During the user research, many scenarios were mentioned: when working out, wearing swimsuits, taking photos... To find what elements will affect the user to internalise weight stigmatisation, I invited 6 design students to ideate of the scenarios that people will pay attention to their body image and feel stigmatised.

The results were clustered:

- **Taking/editing/viewing the photos**
 - Other people/Me judging the photos of others/mine;
 - Taking photos/making a pose;
 - Selecting photos;
 - Adjusting selfie before posting it online;
 - ...
- **Trying on/buying clothes**
 - Fail to fit common standards: "the clothes are designed for skinny people"
 - ...
- **Doing physical activities**
 - Work out in gym;
 - Wear swimsuit;
 - ...



Figure 2-10. Ideation session

People internalising stigmatisation when comparing to social norms unwittingly

We can find that the common theme of these scenarios is "comparing oneself with the ideal body". Young women often feel gazed, from friends or family, strangers in her gym or on the Internet, or even from themselves. It's the expansion of male gaze, the perspective of a notionally typical heterosexual man considered as embodied in the audience or intended audience for films and other visual media, characterised by a tendency to objectify or sexualise women ("Male gaze", 2020).

This gazing is constantly manifested and felt. Then people unwittingly accept judgements and social standards on female body shape, and form their ideal body shape based on these social norms. The standards, which usually contain stigmatising messages, are planted in their mind every time when she is asked to fill in weight number, or when she add a slim filter on her selfie, or just seeing photos of models of perfect body online.

From the user interview and focus group, most participants who have experienced weight stigma said that they would manually clear out their social media feeds (unfollow/dislike/block) to avoid

the source of stigmatisation (Focus group, Appendix V). However, there are still many “innocent” posts prevalently in their feeds. For example, advertisement of gym that insults or teases fat people, greetings from families and friends, embarrassing moments when editing their own pictures, etc. These intentional or unintentional micro aggressions are still actively conveying stigmatising messages, and they can come from anyone, including the user himself/herself.

**DESIGN OPPORTUNITY:
CREATE OWN STANDARDS**

In the context, the user accepts a strict social standard of what is the ‘ideal’ body type, agrees with the stereotypes, and applies them to herself.

The design should confront the user with the stereotypes that they were not aware of, and further encourage the user to create her own standards instead of passively accepting judgements of others.

2.3 Contexts

2.3.1 Social shopping: collaboration of social media and fast fashion

The stigmatisation in fast fashion industry has impacted customers through different scenarios: when receiving advertisements, browsing and purchasing clothes, etc. It is important to locate the touch points and choose a workable context for further research. Nowadays the context is growing wider from physical advertisements and stores to online marketing campaigns, including newsletter, personalised advertising service, endorsement by influencers.

With the high user engagement and endless personalisation feeds, social media has been a match with fast fashion these days. They collaborate to streamline the buying process for customers and increase the efficacy of social media ads for brands. Here are some the most popular social media commerce features across the big social media networks.

PERSONALISED SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

Most social media platforms also have lots of personalisation features, like Facebook retargeting or Instagram business, which can improve the efficiency of advertisement and post. Many brands are also starting to use micro-influencers* to promote their products, because they are more trusted and relatable to a certain target group and they are able to create conversation around the brand or products. They can deliver personal care tips to more audience groups. They also use the creator hashtag and their posts are more often used on the brand website (figure 2-11). The brand can transform itself to various styles in specific groups. There's also a harmony between the brand's website and its social channels, which creates cross-platform engagement with links. The result is an audience who treats the brand as a style resource in addition to a place to shop. In 2018, personalised recommendations have influenced 43% of purchase in fast fashion.

**Micro-influencers are individuals that have between 1,000 to 1,000,000 followers/audience members and are considered experts in their respective niche.*

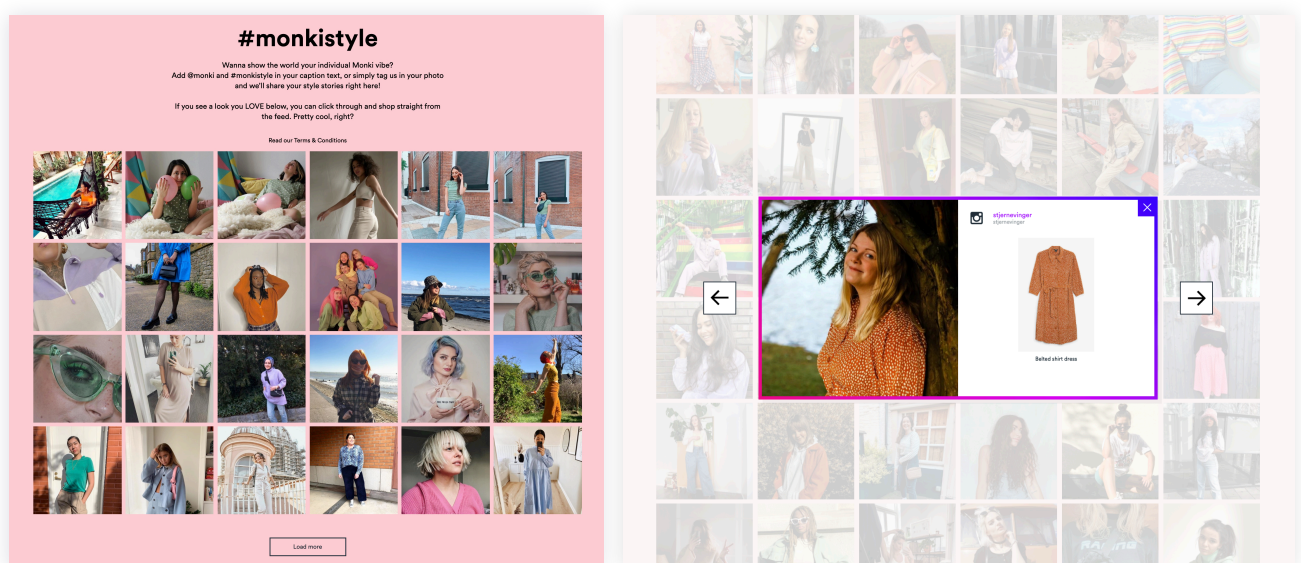


Figure 2-11. Examples of brands using hashtag to collaborate with micro-influencers.

ACTIVE USER PARTICIPATION

The buyers actively participate in writing reviews and giving rates by sharing the pictures and videos with the product, in which way they provide feedback to the brand and give recommendations for other users. The speed and ease make it easier for the company to test new products or explore new markets.

Many fashion brands have an instagram page that mixed official promotion contents and the reposted contents from customers. Bergström and Bäckman address the use of hashtag on Instagram is a beneficial marketing strategy to build and maintain customer relationships (2013). Specifically, when the brand reposts contents from followers, it tags the source account and uses one hashtag. It urges other followers to use the brand's hashtags for a chance to be featured. The shopping link of product in the photo will be tagged, which pushes the shopping option way more closer to the customer. Sometimes the contents from the hashtag are also used in offline stores. For example, Beshrka uses #bershkastyle as the creator hashtag. The brand account reposts some photos from this hashtag with purchase link attached (figure X), while the offline store use the post collection on their display (figure 2-12).

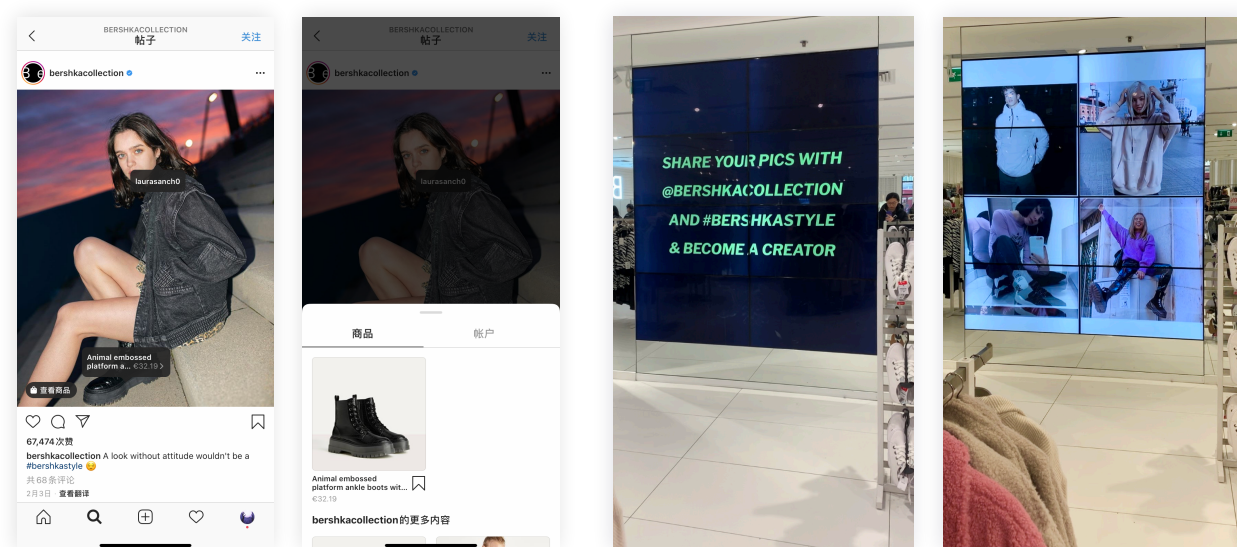


Figure 2-12. Example of brand using hashtag

SHOPPABLE GALLERY AND STORIES

Shoppable posts allow brands and users to add links of specific products with multi tags wherever they are in a post or story. On one hand, social media platforms are launching this feature in their application updates, it has already taken off on Instagram. On the other hand, online shopping platforms are adopting the core structure of social media: the infinite stream of posts—the user can literally add products into you cart when browsing stories in a web shop.

REVIEW BASED PURCHASE

With the convenience of user generated content, the user can make their purchase decisions by reading others' reviews on social media instead of the product description on an official page. In this way, photos and videos are inherent parts, which helps users to look at the product in real scenes and decide if they want to have it or not.

2.3.2 Circle of internalising stigmatisation in social shopping experience

To map the entire experience journey, I went shopping with two target users and used emotion capture cards (Desmet, X) to dig into the user's emotions and then analyse their concerns during the shopping process. Figure 2-13 shows the process of internalising stigmatisation in the shopping journey.

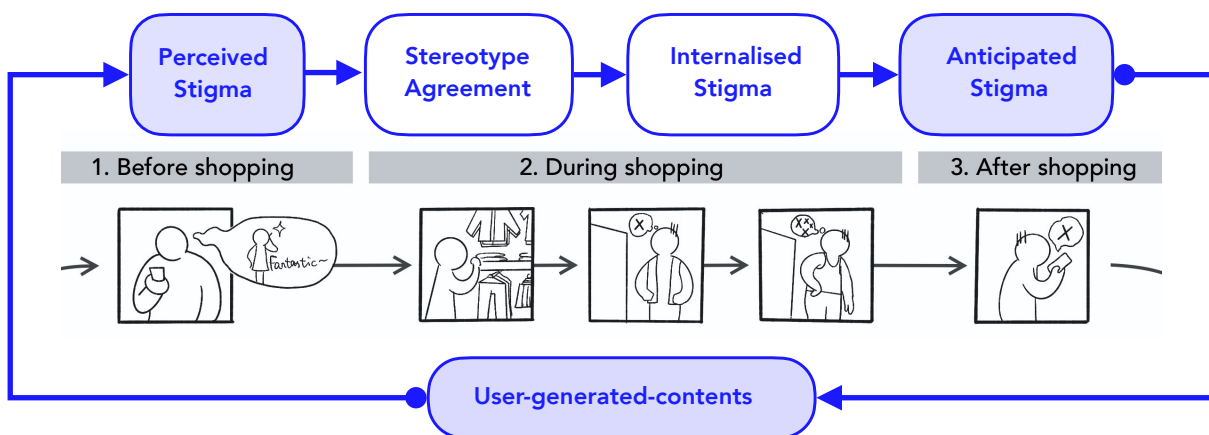


Figure 2-13. The internalising circle

Before shopping: stigmatisation perceived

Shopping never starts in the store

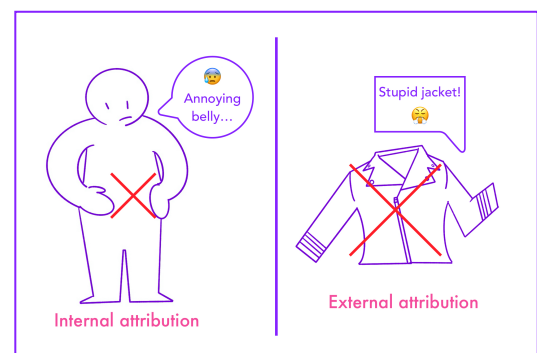
The personalised recommendation system is feeding these marketing information to social media users. The purchase links are tagged on photos and short videos from various resources: brand accounts, influencers, subscribed updates. People have already pictured themselves in the clothes based on the social media feeds before shopping offline. However, most figures match the perfect supermodel standard. This impression does not only come from the brand look-book, but also the posts of other customers. The vast majority of this 'perfect' beauty standard has its impact on people: many young females might have unrealistic standards of their ideal body image.

During shopping: stereotype agreement and internalised stigma

Internal attribution for disappointed shopping experience.

When the user keeps feeling dissatisfied with the clothes that she tried on, the negative emotions will add up and she tends to attribute the result to her own body instead of the clothes. Unpleasant shopping experience, which is caused by the comparison of her ideal body image and the reality, will impact her perception of her own body.

The opposite type of people can stay detached, and tell themselves that the problem is with the clothes rather than their body shapes.



After shopping: anticipated stigma

The frustrations from shopping experience have long-term influence on the user: she might psychologically resistant to dressing herself, avoid trying on new fashion styles, and reinforce the negative perception of her own body. The user might also resist posting her selfies without using applications to 'beautify' her body shape.

2.3.3 Problem statement in the contexts

1) Lack of body shape diversity representation on social media

The fashion industry has portrayed an unrealistic standard for female body for a long time. It has been witnessed in advertisements, massive media, actresses and celebrities, etc. Now it has been trending on social media. In fact, even most of the fashion trends are particular fit for skinny people.

Lack of body diversity on social media and fashion industry shapes an unrealistic standard for 'ideal' body. Only few percents of women naturally own the body type which is portrayed as ideal on social media. While, there are numerous women struggling to fit themselves into the standard that they will never meant to be part of. Many of them are adopting unhealthy approaches to the unreachable goal, which results in eating disorders, obsession with losing weight, low self-esteem, and mental illness like anxiety and depression.

2) Disappointing comparisons leading to internal attribution

Once the ideal body type is set, people will keep comparing themselves to the standards and usually the result is disappointing. Then they tend to attribute the upsetting results to themselves.

In the context of shopping for clothes, the customer will easily compare herself to the mannequins in the window, or commercial photos online, or her imaginary ideal image in a new outfit. With the disappointments adding up, the user might feel that she is too fat for these clothes.

The active engagement of social media makes it even worse. Studies have also examined that social media use can influences the body image satisfaction of young female users: social media engagement with attractive peers increases negative body image dissatisfaction (Hogue&Mills, 2019).

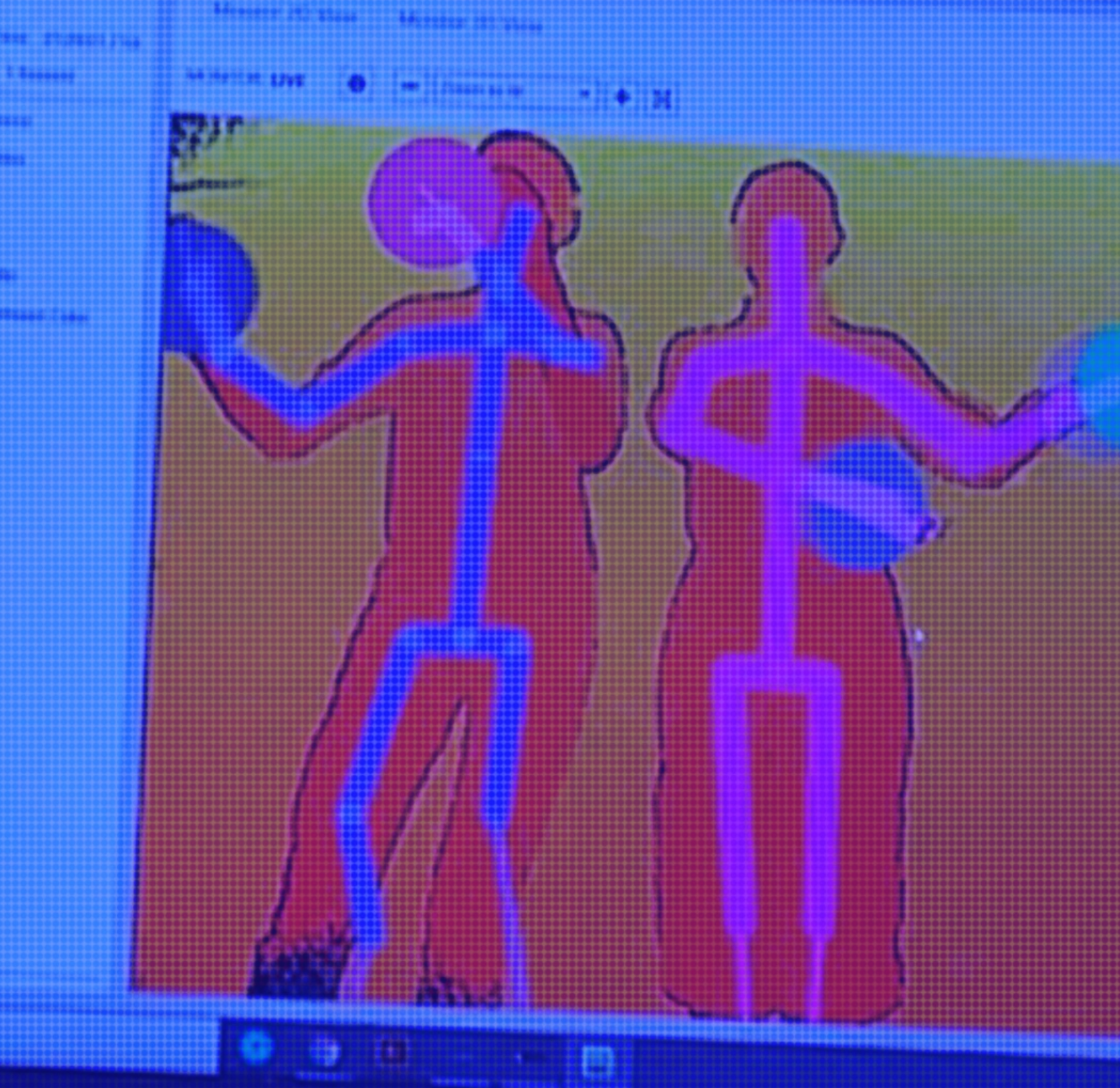
3) Avoiding posting selfies without fine editing

Today we can barely find photos without any filter among the current contents on social media. Photos are polished to be "perfect" pretty so that it gets more positive feedback. Sometimes we even find strangers judging others' appearance with rude comments. Therefore, people are even more cautious when posting their photos.

The user will resist posting her selfies without using applications to 'beautify' her photos. Most social media platforms provide built-in filters, with which the user can finely polish the photos to fit into the mainstream standards of a 'pretty' body or appearance.

In this way, the contents on social media are reinforcing the internalised stigmatisation.

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3/Designing for internalised weight stigma

3.1 Design goal (connect to theoretical and user research findings)

To make young female social media user appreciate herself and embrace body shape diversity in an amusing and confronting way when shopping for fast fashion products.

3.1.1 Intended effects

Immediate effect

1. Encouraging the user to feel free to enjoy fashion regardless of her body shape.

The design should make the users (young female social media users) feel supported and appreciated when shopping in fast fashion stores. The message conveyed is that fashion is for everyone, and everyone should be able to freely and happily explore the world of fashion with their own body.

When trying on clothes, the target group often receive comments or feedback on their appearance that are built on a singular and strict body standard. The comments may come from friends who come along or from themselves: "This camisole doesn't fit your belly." "Okay these pants are only for the thin legs..." "how can my flat butt fill this skirt?"

In this scenario, I want the concept to make their choice not judgementally commented. Instead, they will be encouraged to explore, and to break the social norms in fashion, so that they will not be frustrated by inappropriate comparisons.

2. Triggering the user to engage with the topic by posting their photo on social media and following a certain hashtag to contribute to body positivity culture.

During and after shopping, the design should induce the user to share photos of them confidently trying on different clothes on social media, which will contribute to body diversity in the user-generated content online. Moreover, if the user is willing to follow the topic of body positivity, it will be more likely that she will get more information and join in to speak for diversity.

Besides, the design should not only impress the users with a glance, but also involve them into action, in which way they will get higher engagement with the concept and the influence will be prolonged.

Long-term effect

3. Feeding more contents to the followers in the future to gradually influence their perception on body shape.
4. Providing an online space for people to expressing themselves freely.
5. Making body positivity part of the branding.

After the experience in store, the design should try to prolong its influence, so that the awareness of body positivity can be preserved for a longer time. For example, new contents can be fed to the followers to get higher exposure. It can be seen as a safe space online for users to encourage and support each other.

Above this, body-positivity can potentially bring in considerable business benefit for a brand. On one hand, this attitude can delight customers and raise up their enthusiasm of purchasing; on the other hand, more consumers might be attracted by the branding because of the trending topics on social media.

3.1.2 Interaction qualities: amusing and confronting

The design aims to raising awareness and informing the user of body positivity message in a delightful way. From the insights of context mapping session (Appendix X), social media often serves as chilling and casual entertainment, but not suitable for serious discussions. Users will just ignore the contents that takes much time or efforts to understand.

Therefore I chose amusing and confronting as the interaction quality. Kids playing the game "paste the face" is used as the interaction vision.



Figure 3-1. The example of interaction vision

3.1.3 Design criteria

According to the design goal and intended effects, the concept should be engaging and encouraging, in order to trigger the user to actively contribute to the body positivity contents on social media. For the interaction part, it should fulfil the goal in a confronting and amusing way. Therefore, the design should be encouraging, engaging, amusing and confronting. The detailed testable targets are formed based on it.

Encouraging

- The experience should evoke positive emotions for any user regardless of her body type or dissatisfaction of her own body.
- The design should be easy to use and understand.
- The user should get positive feedback after the experience.

Engaging

- The concept should be able to attract customers to interact with it.
- After the experience, the user should be willing to further follow the topic.
- After the experience, the user should be willing to post, share or interact with body positivity contents on social media.

Amusing

- The user should feel amused during the whole experience.
- The user's take-away should also be amusing and delightful.

Confronting

- The experience should make the user be more aware of the existing stigmatisation in fashion industry.
- The experience should make the user be more aware of the existing stigmatisation on social media.
- The experience should make the user reflect on her previous standard of fashion and body image.

3.2 Design directions

3.2.1 Transmedia storytelling: social media + fast fashion store

Living in the world of information explosion, people get flooded with abundant data all the time. The recommendation algorithms of social media sites are feeding the user homogenised contents, which easily reinforces stereotypes and creates barriers to accept new ideas. Besides, people who internalise weight stigma need a long process to be affected, from being aware of the facts to taking action on it. Based on the above analysis, interactive storytelling as a form of communication design, has its inherent advantages against weight stigma on social media.

Firstly, the core characteristics of storytelling: representation and persuasion (Gray, 2009) can be used to shape the attitudes, values and beliefs of the audience. People tend to be more impressed with the content related to themselves. With an immersive atmosphere, the user can easily generate empathy and resonate with the scenario. In this way, the message of embracing body positivity will be better conveyed and accepted by the audience.

Secondly, Interactivity is rooted in basic communication. Interactive storytelling is a form that invites the user to participate in the experience. The freedom can enhance their feeling of agreement and engagement, so that the user can be encouraged to take the awareness agreement to active behaviour. Interest in interactive storytelling has grown with the increase in human-computer interaction. There are more possibilities to integrate various medium and techniques to build an engaging story.

Besides, social media has changed the source of new information and the way how people get it. People get less patient to read long text, but prefer visual and video contents. Videos keep booming this year. For example, TikTok has surpassed the likes of Facebook, Instagram, Messenger, and Snapchat in Q3 2019 App Store and Google Play installs. Interactive media becomes an appeal for young social media users comparing with plain text or photos.

Our minds do not like random facts or random objects and so they create their own stories to make sense of otherwise discrete, isolated events and items. We naturally and often subconsciously connect the dots (Pratten, 2011). Information only streaming on social media or only promoting offline is not enough to make a difference. The collaboration of social media and fast fashion happens to provide more touch points to communicate the concept. There are many opportunities in user-generated content. The advantage of UGC is that it is a quick, easy way to reach the masses.

Form the perspective of business, the companies could use social media for branding, and set up platforms for the audience to submit their own creations (Daugherty et al., 2008). The consumers and general audience members like to engage, and use a storytelling platform to both share and converse with others. 71% of consumers like personalised ads.

UGC can also raise awareness, whether it be for an organization, company, or event.

3.2.2 Platforms and techniques available

The implementation of the design can be considered from two perspectives:

1. What are technical possibilities of the physical experience in the fast fashion store?
2. How can the relevant marketing activities be carried out on social media?

Interactive installation

The offline physical experience should be eye-catching enough to achieve the goal of instant effects. An interactive installation can be used in the scenario of in-store shopping.

Design requirements:

- 1) For the experience in public space, privacy and time duration of use should be considered.
- 2) The concept should match the characteristics of fast fashion, and can be integrated into the shopping environment with intuitive interaction.
- 3) Connection with social media must be included.
- 4) The Body Positivity message should be communicated through the experience.

Techniques:

Interactive projection

Pressure detection

RFID

Motion sensor

Gesture recognition

Leap motion

Online activity

The online part of the design aims to make the topic to gain continued exposure and popularity on social media. In order to achieve its purpose, online medium should be visually attractive, and highly recognisable, and adapt to the rules of social networks with low communication threshold.

Possible platforms and features:

Instagram (story, hashtag), TikTok, Twitter, Facebook, web shops,...

Pictures, short videos, editing tools (filters, stickers, themes...), games, challenge activities...

3.3 Conceptualisation

3.3.1 Design elements in fast fashion shopping experience

In this part I have listed some elements from the user journey in Chapter 2:

Before shopping: receiving the ad feeds, viewing the display photos, viewing the posts of influencers and other buyers, adding items to Favourites or shopping cart...

During shopping: browsing among racks, picking up the suitable pieces, checking the size and price, trying on clothes, checking in the mirror, taking photos, comparing, and asking friends for opinions...

After shopping: purchasing items, trying on clothes at home, editing the photos, adding new posts, online to see others' likes and replies

Among these elements, "*trying on clothes, taking selfies when checking in the mirror, and then editing and posting it online*" is a common journey. It is also closely related to social media, and becomes the basis of the initial concept. Interaction with the mirror, which is similar to editing selfies on the cell phone, is the core of the experience. I take the media editing part from social media apps to the full-length mirror (figure 3-2). The built-in filters and hashtag editing are used to communicate the body positivity messages.

When trying on clothes and looking in the mirror, the user will get positive interactive feedback, and be guided to take photos with fun filters and add new posts online. The design aims to make more people to join the body positivity community and contribute to the user-generated-contents in the hashtag.

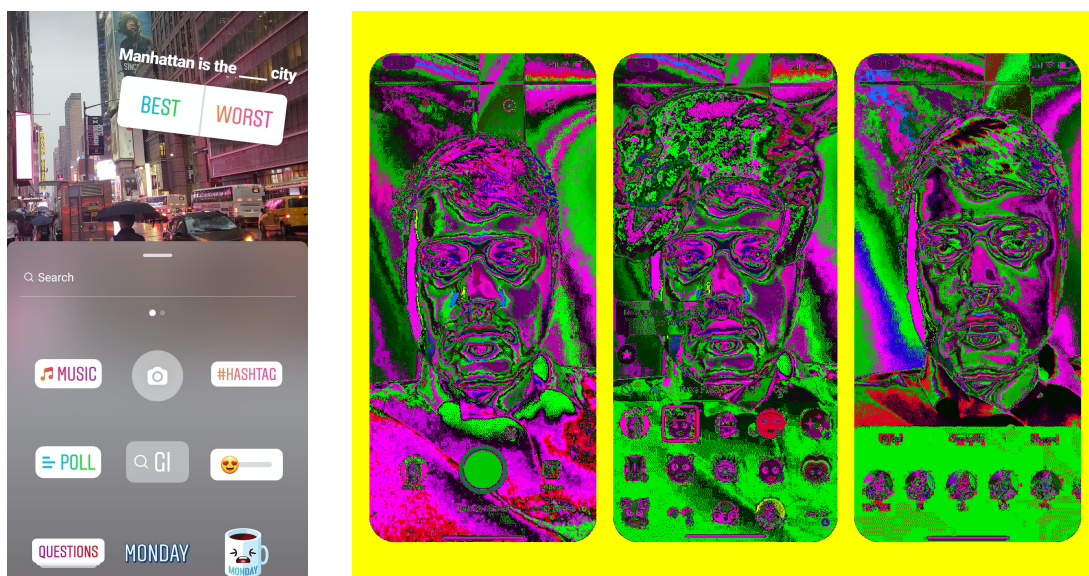


Figure 3-2. The interface of social media apps

3.3.2 Initial concept: interactive mirror connected to social media

The concept is an installation design based on the dressing mirror in the public space of a fast fashion store. It invites customers to try on the clothes and take photos as the brand model. The whole experience includes to look in the mirror, make a pose, take a shot, and choose the hashtag. The hashtag editing part is *#fashion is* _____ with a group of preset choices like "Size 0", "always dieting", which are typical stereotypes to fashion. Each hashtag comes with a filter that changes her body shape in the photo. The user can also choose "ME" and get a shiny sparkling filter on the photo without changing her body shape. The edited photo can be posted to the display screens in the store and the page of the brand account on social media.

Additionally, the photo collection posted online with *#fashionisme* by the customers is also a component of the concept. The platform I chose is Instagram, because it is suitable for presenting a photo and video gallery, and it has already been an important commercial approach for fashion brands.



Figure 3-3. The use scenario of initial concept

The desired effects at each stage are:

1. The user can get non-judgemental feedback when trying on the clothes, and filters of exaggerated effects are used to make the user to relax and take pictures for entertainment. At the same time, the user can know about the concept of "Fashion is Me", and realise that people can enjoy fashion with any body type.

As the **design opportunity: create own standards** (page 32) states, the hashtags and filters will confront the user with the stereotypes that they were not aware of, and further encourage the user to create her own standards instead of passively accepting judgements of others.

2. Afterwards the user will be encouraged to post photos to the Internet with the hashtag to participate in the construction of this body positivity community, which will make use of the **design opportunity: pop the bubble, make the UGC more diverse** (page XX). If the design can trigger user to hear new voices, take a look at different opinions, and even post contents against weight stigmatisation, her social media feeds will also be adjusted accordingly by the same algorithm. The positive contents she created will have an impact on her followers and anyone who views it as well.
3. Lastly, the hashtag will gather these user-generated-contents and make a bigger impact. When other users browses product displays online, there will be more figures of different body types to show the clothes, which makes the user form more realistic impressions and standards of a "pretty" body. From the perspective of the user, she will probably also get more "Like"s because of the higher exposure with the hashtag, and this will be encouraging and motivate further engagement with the topic.

3.4 Design choices

In the process of forming the final concept, I invited some users to co-create (including a body storming session and a play test) to gradually refine and improve the details of the design. This section explains the design decisions of each step.

3.4.1 Gesture-based interaction

There are several options for how a user interacts with the mirror, such as tapping that completely simulates the touchscreen of the mobile phone, but this interaction style is too plain and ordinary to make the user feel amused or confronted. A more active and intuitive interaction approach is chosen: interaction based on body gesture recognition. I simplified the interactive parts, and used visual guidance to let users accept this interaction approach at the first step. Figure 3-4 shows the UI of how a user is guided to actively interact with the mirror.

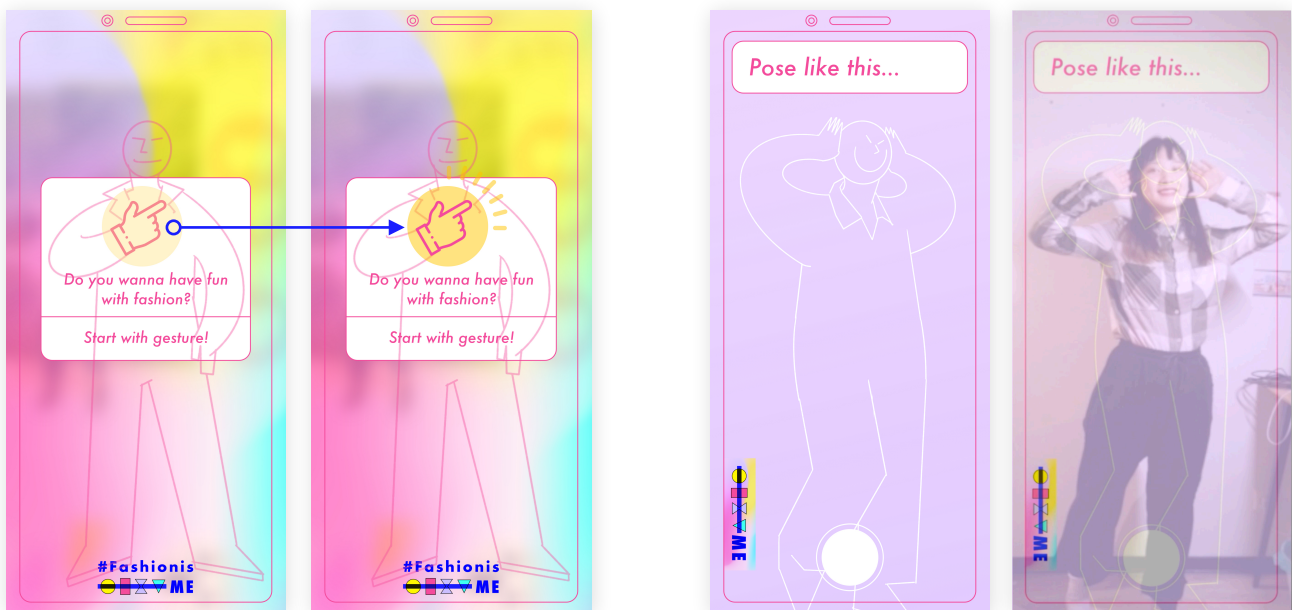


Figure 3-4. The visual guidance at the beginning and how a user follows the instruction to interact by her body movement

3.4.2 Onboarding and engaging instructions

Communication with the mirror: a non-judgemental attitude

The core part of the concept is when user looking into the mirror and then creating her own fashion shot. The message I want user to take away is that fashion should be enjoyable for anybody. Body shape is a sensitive topic, especially in public situation, so the communication between the mirror and the user should be cautiously designed to avoid any bias or the sense of lecturing people.

The first 2 steps were initially designed as the mirror telling the user how great she looks in the clothes after. However, this comment actually magnified the judgement and standard of beauty. After the discussion with users, the communication style is reset as “fun and casual”, and some universal elements like Emoji are added to make it more humanised. Figure 3-5 shows the mirror's instructions at the redesigned onboarding step.

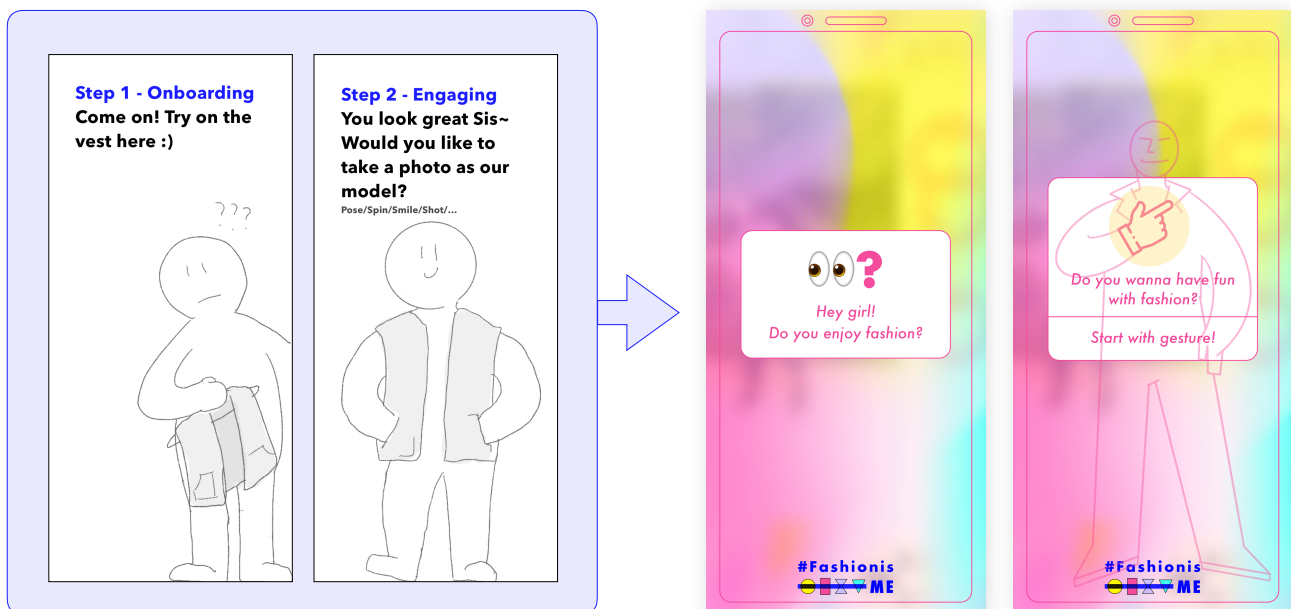


Figure 3-5. The redesign of onboarding step

Engaging the user with simple and delightful physical movements

These simple gestures also provides a warm-up time before taking a photo, which makes the user feel less nervous when using it in public (Figure 3-6).

For the same reason, the gestures for taking a shot are selected from the play-test (Appendix IX). Out of 10+ poses collected from the look books of fashion brands, these 4 gestures (Figure 3-7) are evaluated by the participants as the most fun and not too embarrassing to make in public.

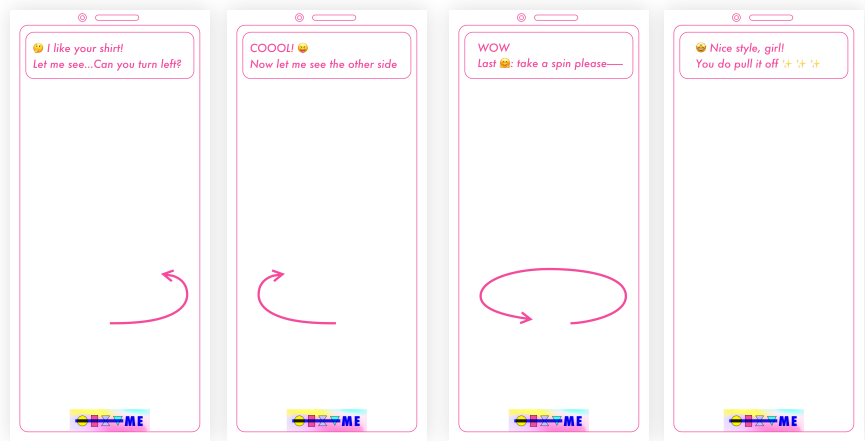
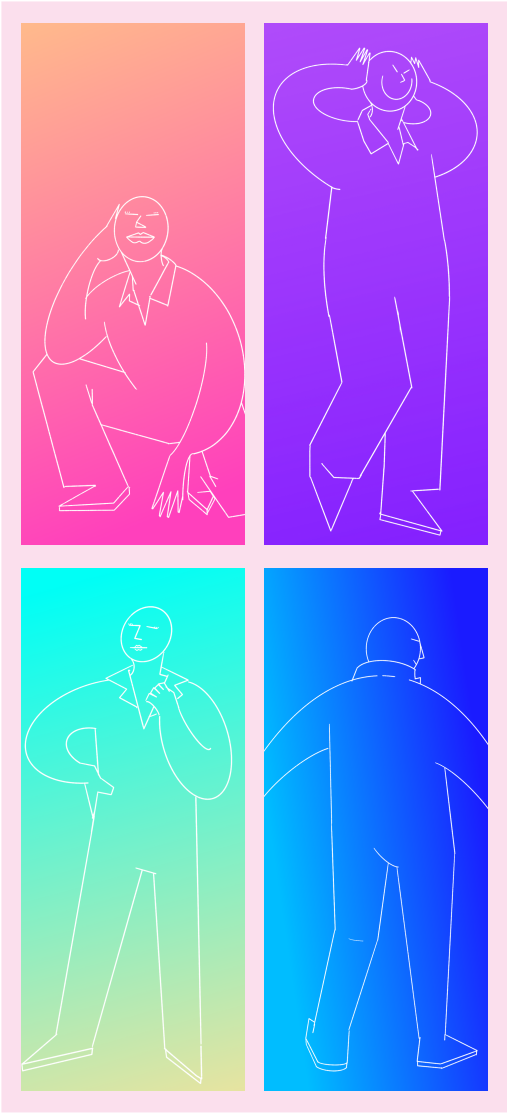


Figure 3-6. The instructions to engage the user with simple warm-up movements



Figure 3-7. The pose collection for the play-test, and the most selected ones



3.4.3 Selecting a hashtag

The preset choices transferred from real body types

Choosing a hashtag to fill in “Fashion is ____” is where user can express herself. The selection of hashtags should be:

- related to real body shape types;
- no judging or offensive (no size00 or celebrities);
- inclusive (fat, skinny, curvy,...).

According to the common female body types (figure 3-8), the preset choices are set as “Me/ Round/Hourglass/Triangle/Rectangle”, which are simplified as geometric shapes (figure X) to make the visual effect less realistic and more amusing.

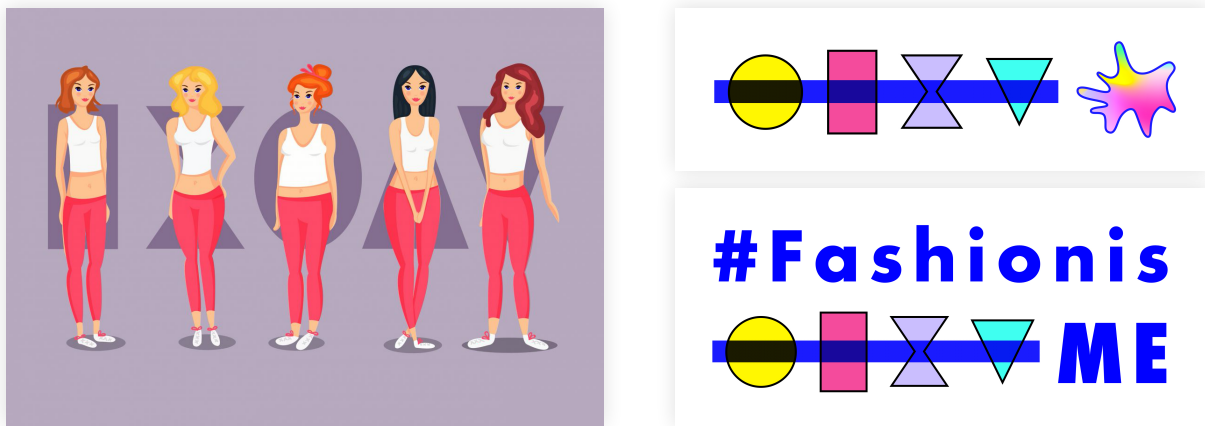


Figure 3-8. The resource and visual of the hashtag selection

Fun and quick interaction to choose a hashtag

The initial assumption of user's choice is that most people would chose #Fashionisme, but the result of co-creation sessions indicates that the choice dose not matter: as long as people take their own photos, the message of “*Fashion is me*” will be implied. Besides, the various choices can represent the diversity as well. Therefore, the interaction of hashtag selection step is designed to be funny and quick: the user can quickly view different filter effects, and choose one within limited time (countdown). In this way, she won't think too much and compare different body sizes, but simply enjoy the fun of fashion with a random body shape.

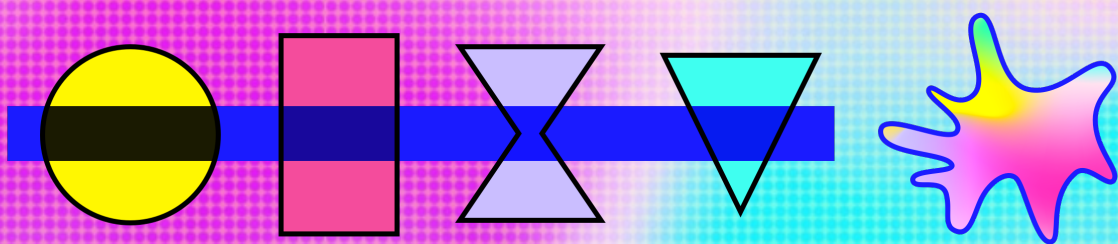
3.4.4 Back to social media

The last step is to let the user get the edited photo with her selected filter and hashtag. I chose QR code to make it can be easily downloaded with any smartphone.

First of all, it is designed to fulfil the *intended effect 2: to trigger the user to engage with the topic by posting their photo on social media and following a certain hashtag to contribute to body positivity culture*. The common use flow of "take a photo, then choose a filter and edit the hashtag" aims to make the user intuitively finish the last step: to post it on her social media page and share it to her friends.

From the user interviews, we know that encouragement and support from family or friends are not enough, the support of the online community is also very important for the target user group. For example, the user often deletes a certain post because of too few 'Like's or comments. Assuming that most of the users who view or follow the hashtag #Fashionisme hold a supportive and friendly attitude to body positivity, the user's post would get more positive responses, which will enhance her confidence and engagement with the topic.

In addition, user-generated-content and algorithms are the essential component of social media. When the user actively changes the content that she posts, views or follows, her online world will also change accordingly. The definition of what is fashion has always been supervised by a small group of people in upper class, but with the platforms of social media, everyone can have a voice. Therefore, it can be seen as a challenge to the fashion system, and serve as a tool to express themselves freely and boldly.



4/Final concept

4.1 The concept #fashionisme

The final concept consists of 2 parts:

- 1) An in-store interactive installation based on the dressing mirror in the public area;
- 2) Online contents with hashtag #fashionisme.

The concept is designed for one fast fashion brand, and the installation and online marketing work are also served for this certain brand.

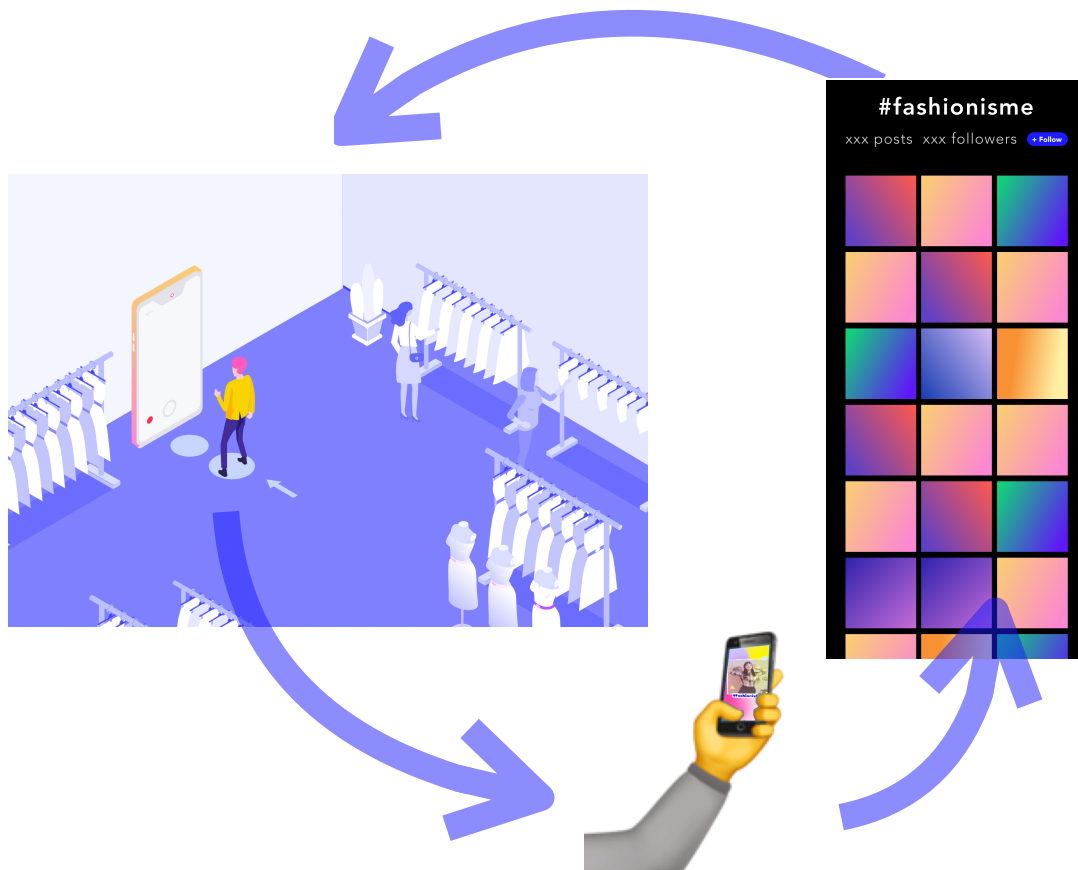


Figure 4-1. The overview of the final concept

4.2 Scenarios in use

4.2.1 Scenario 1: In-store experience with the mirror

1. Inviting

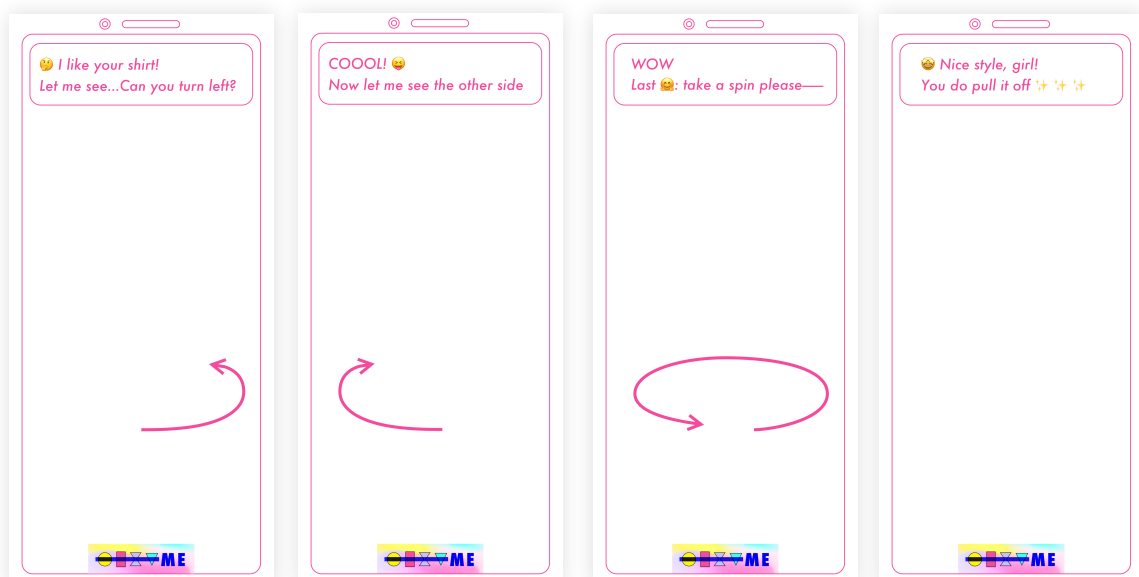
The experience starts when the user walks close, the mirror will start to invite her to interact with it by asking "Do you wanna have fun with fashion?".

The user can use hand gesture to unlock and start the experience.



2. Onboarding

The mirror will ask the user to move their body for a while, which also works as warm-up to reduce the nervousness of trying an interactive installation in public space.



3. Taking a photo

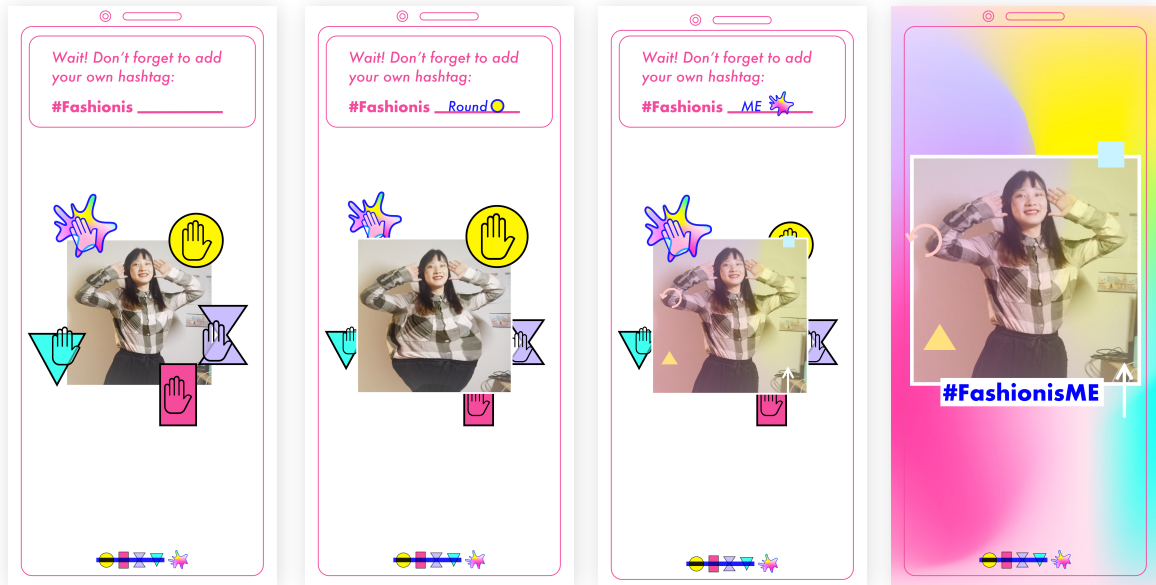
Next step the mirror will give a random posing gesture and the user can take a photo in this pose.

Figure X shows other poses, and they all give a bold and confident vibe to make the user enjoy the Photo Booth moment.



4. Choosing a hashtag

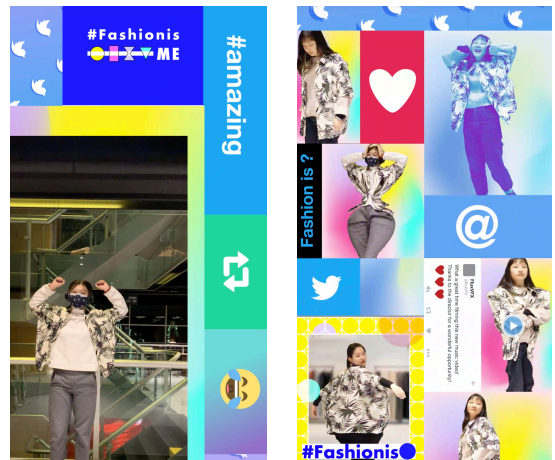
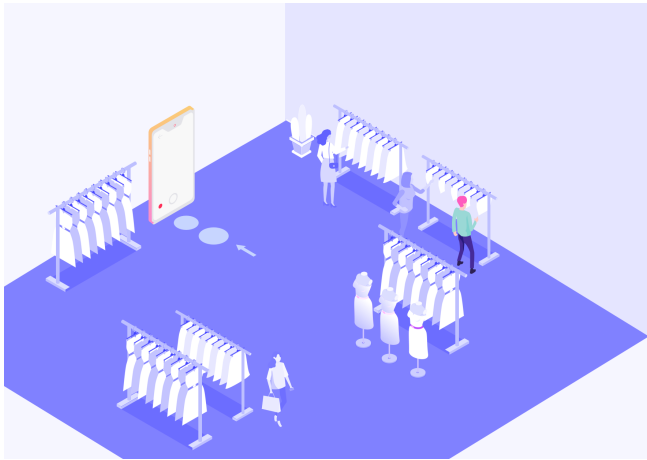
After the photo is taken, the hashtag will show up around the photo, and user can use hand hovering on any hashtag to see the filtered effect. There will be time countdown to automatically end the selecting. Besides, the photo will be scaled smaller in this step to avoid embarrassment.



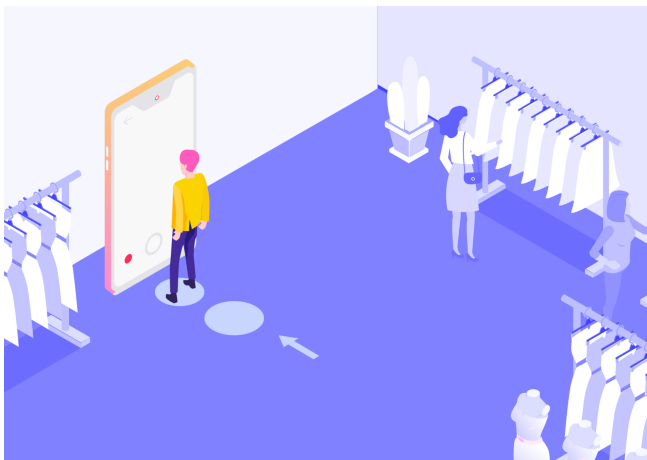
Here are examples of other hashtags:



Other modes of the mirror



When there is no person nearby, the mirror will work as a regular display, to mainly show the previous photo collection.



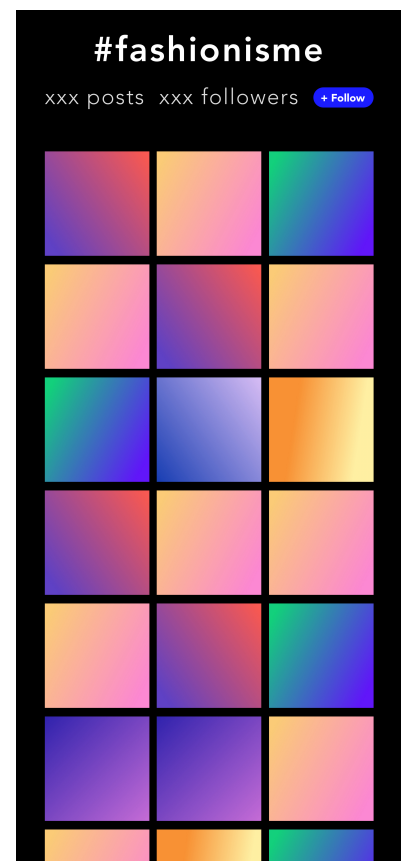
When the user walks close to the mirror, more detailed information about #Fashionisme will be shown, including texts, product recommendations, and QR code linked to the hashtag on social media sites.

4.2.2 Scenario 2: Online interaction with the photo and hashtag

The concept aims to encourage user to wear and post whatever they like on social media. Therefore, the hashtag #fashionisme will be a collection of posts from people of diverse body shapes. The brand will add their original posts about body positivity into this hashtag, and keep updating new feeds for followers.

Ideally, the hashtag can be a space for people to express themselves and gradually influence the current situation on social media.

In addition to the instant experience in store, the hashtag leads the user to a more informative and constant space. If people follow the hashtag, it will be an active feed of body positivity contents which will have more subtle influence in the long term.





5/Evaluation

5.1 Assessment criteria and evaluation

5.1.1 Assessment criteria

Based on the 4 qualities concluded in Chapter 3.1, the specific assessment criteria are formed for the evaluation (Table X). The evaluation questions corresponding to the criteria are listed on next page.





Encouraging 	The experience should evoke positive emotions for any user regardless of her body type or dissatisfaction of her own body.
	The user should get positive feedback after posting or sharing her photo.
	The design should be easy to use and understand.
Engaging 	The installation should be able to attract customers to interact with it.
	After the experience, the user should be willing to post or share the photo.
	After the experience, the user should be willing to view and interact with the contents with the hashtag #fashionisme. (Like/follow/comment/share)
Amusing 	The user should feel amused during the whole experience.
	A certain percentage of the users (>50%) will choose the funny filters (Fashionis●/■/▼/✕) in order to make the posts with the hashtag #fashionisme be more amusing.
Confronting 	The experience should make the user be more aware of the existing stigmatisation in fashion industry.
	The experience should make the user be more aware of the existing stigmatisation on social media.
	The experience should make the user reflect on her previous standard of fashion and body image.

Table X. Assessment criteria of the concept

5.1.2 Evaluation Plan

Test set-up

OFFLINE TEST

The participants were guided through the background story of the target user, then they were free to interact with the prototype. They were asked to fill in the questionnaire and answer the open questions.

ONLINE TEST

The tests were conducted on online meeting tools. With my screen being shared, the participants were guided through the background story of the target user, then watched a video of a user interacting with the prototype. They were asked to fill in the questionnaire and answer the open questions.

Materials (Appendix IX)

- User persona and use scenarios
- Workable prototype connected with a beamer (offline)
- Video of a user interacting with the installation (online)
- 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.

[illegible]

- 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 extent would you describe the experience as confronting (1-5)? Which elements in the context make you feel that?

Q6: To what extent 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.

Participants

8 participants participated in the test (3 offline and 5 online). The age range is 19-28. They are all women who are receiving/have received college education. Their use of social media applications is above 2 hours per day and followed more than 5 influencers in fashion field or fashion-related public accounts.

They didn't know much about weight stigma internalisation before the test. Two of the participants were the stigmatisers that I interviewed online in the research phase. The offline test uses projection to simulate the user experience, and the online test uses storyboards and videos to show the entire concept.

Results

The results and user quotes (shown in the form of *positive quotes* / *negative quotes*) of the user tests are summarised in next section to evaluate the concept based on the criteria. The complete results are attached in Appendix X.

5.2 Test results

5.1.1 Encouraging

1. The experience should evoke positive emotions for any user regardless of her body type or dissatisfaction of her own body.

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

The overall feedback is quite positive. The most mentioned emotions are:

• Curious Interested Amused Inspired Encouraged Proud Happy Delighted

2. The user should get positive feedback after posting or sharing her photo.

↳ Q7: What will you do with the photo?

↳ 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.

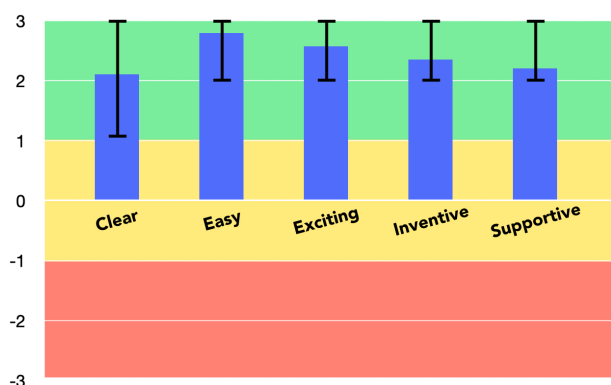
- 8/8 will share it with friends (for fun);
- 5/8 will view the posts with #fashionisme, and
 - 4/8 will *like* some funny/cool/confident posts;
 - 2/8 will *like* the posts to show their encouragement and support.

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

I will like the funny ones.

3. The design should be easy to use and understand.

↳ UEQ-usability evaluation



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

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.

Hold and hover, feels like Ironman, powerful.

The visual guidance of the installation is not visible enough.

In general, the concept is quite encouraging in various parts. All participants reported positive emotions. The experience of the in-store installation is playful and easy to understand. The effect of funny filters also work well: they are willing to share the photos with their friends or family, who are likely to give them positive feedback.

For the photos posted online by other users, most participants are willing to “like” the photos when they viewing the contents with hashtag #fashionisme. In this way, people who post their photo will get higher exposure and more supports than usual.

The usability of the concept got positive comment as well. **Gesture-based interaction** is easy to accept and understand for the user. As a participants said, the warming-up steps were playful, so even she did not understand what it was about, she could still enjoy it till “choosing a hashtag” part conveyed the clear messages about body positivity.

The **poses** provided in “take a photo” part and the **gesture** to select a hashtag are physically active, which avoids the user paying attention to her body image but just enjoying energetic body movements.

5.1.2 Engaging

1. The installation should be able to attract customers to interact with it.

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

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

Yes, but probably when there are less people around.

I will definitely use it with my friends.

Shopping is not usually an individual activity, and this design is in a relatively public space, which means when the user is shopping with company, they are willing to use it; but if she is alone, she might feel nervous or embarrassed to try this concept in public. Therefore, for the further development, **a multiplayer mode** should be taken into account, to allow friends have fun and get a photo together.

Yes, especially with some "too" fashionable clothes.

Shopping is not always for purchase. Trying new styles is also a big part, and it's part of the design goal: to encourage people **freely explore fashion**. The fun and casual vibes of the design can engage the user to be more open and bold to try the clothes that she's not used to wear.

2. After the experience, the user should be willing to post or share the photo.

↪ Q7: What will you do with the photo?

- 8/8 will share it with friends
- 4/8 will post it on social media (including ins story)

It's convenient . I don't need to edit the selfie later.

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.

A photo is a convenient material to share or post. It is the most common media in our life, so the users can easily understand it and use it in without thinking. Besides, it can also be used as a tool to add more personal spices to that photo to **express themselves**. They can just make their own poses, make a face, or even make a finger to show a stronger attitude against body shaming. After all, it's about everyone personally but not about just taking a photo of same fixed styles.

3. After the experience, the user should be willing to view and interact with the contents with the hashtag #fashionisme. (like/follow/comment/share)

↪ 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.

- 5/8 will **view** the posts with #fashionisme;
 - 4/8 will like some funny/cool/confident posts;
 - 2/8 will like the posts to show their encouragement and support.
- 2/8 will follow it;
- 2/8 might follow it, depending on the contents;
- 4/8 will not follow it because of personal preference.

It depends. Only if I really like that brand then I'll be willing to get inspirations from real users instead of the models.

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

I like using hashtags, but I don't follow them.

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

They (other users who post with the hashtag) are strangers. I don't care about them :)

The **use of hashtag** is engaging. First of all, it is a very familiar social media element. Most of the participants will just tap it and view the photos, and "like" some photos to show their support and encouragement. The hashtag functions well in the short term.

However, there are fewer people who are willing to follow the hashtag because it challenges their use preference of social media sites. Therefore, to attract more users to follow this hashtag and to be influenced in the long term, the **contents online requires maintenance** from the fashion brand, including updating new photos and providing useful recommendations of suitable fashion outfits.

5.1.3 Amusing

1. The user should feel amused during the whole experience.

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

- 4.6/5
- The effect of filters, posing part, fun with friends, funny photos of others

2. A certain percentage of the users (>50%) will choose the funny filters in order to make the posts with the hashtag #fashionisme be more amusing.

Q3: Which hashtag will you choose and why?

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

The funniest one, to be the spotlight haha.

It's also a sarcasm, a rebel to the traditional standard.

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

Weight stigma is a serious and unnoticed topic that people don't usually talk about in their daily life. The whole experience is amusing, and this quality has transferred an ignored issue into hilarious photos, something visible that we can laugh at and think about.

Two of the participants are the stigmatisers online who I have interviewed before. They also had fun with this concept, chose a funny filter and shared the photo with their friends. In fact, if a user saves the photo, it also means the design has successfully plant this hashtag #fashionisme in her mind. To **put this concept into their daily system of discourse** is the first step to make them aware of the existing stigmatisation.

Because most of the participants would choose the funny filter, when others tap into this hashtag, they will also get the fun and positive vibes from the existing photos. Then they will be more motivated to interact with these posts.

"I've already known it, but this funny/dramatic experience provides me another perspective to understand #BOPO".

For people who has already been familiar with this topic, the amusing experience also provides **another perspective** to think about it: weight stigma is something we should fight against, but the process or the approach can be delightful and enjoyable.

5.1.4 Confronting

The extend of confronting can be concluded from these Question 4 and 5. Awareness is hard to quantified from interview questions, so I use a open question (Q4) to understand how well were the messages communicated through the experience.

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

- 3(3.13)
- Choosing the filter part

I already knew it (body positivity).

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 an obvious rebel.

My hesitation is actually confronting. Usually I would take dozens of photo, choose some, use suitable filters, and then post the prettiest one online. So I was considering if it is pretty enough... The hesitation makes me reflect on my standard.

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

- 4/8 get the idea that we can enjoy/define/play with fashion with any body type;
- 3/8 understand it is about body positivity;

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

I feel moved.

- 2/8 have better impression for the brand;

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

- 2/8 talked about it after days;

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

There's a podcast about the freedom of women's dressing, like your concept.

1. The experience should make the user be more aware of the existing stigmatisation in fashion industry.

Yes, it can be easily related to the weight stigmatisation in fashion industry. Actually it is a really visible problem in fashion: the advertisements, shows, and the promotion mails are directly manifesting their value of beauty. They do feel encouraged and supported:

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

Some brands have already taken actions to show their support to body positivity, like the advertisement of Calvin Klein (2020) which was mentioned by more than one participant. 2 users also said they would have a better impression for this brand. They will be more willing to follow the updates and styles of the brand. Being inclusive is able to bring benefits in business.

2. The experience should make the user be more aware of the existing stigmatisation on social media.

The awareness of existing weight stigmatisation in social media is not that clear as it is in fashion. Although the users are happy to use the hashtag or interact with the posts online, they were rarely aware that actually their participation itself had already made a difference to the social media environment. In the same way, they were hardly aware that the current environment of their social media life has already posed negative impacts on them.

To address the connection with social media, there are several possible touch points in the process of a user downloading her photo, then posting it online and interacting with other posts.

A. The media of take-away material:

It is currently designed as a photo with the hashtag #fashionisme.

To better communicate the information about weight stigma, more contents with intents can be attach on it. It can be informative about weight stigma, or more engaged with social media trends. For example, to make it more like a social media challenge: "Join in the challenge to the old fashion standard! Post it on your ins story and @us (brand account), we will share your post on our page."

One participant suggested that the process of choosing the hashtag is more confronting than just getting one photo. A short video might be able to convey more information, and not as plain as pictures and texts.

I will shoot the process and post the video on Instagram Story. The choosing process seems more meaningful. Can I have the video of me switching filters?

B. More valuable feedback online:

Since the user were not aware of their contribution to online environment, the brand should give more positive feedback on every post about this concept. They could comment on the post and briefly explain the messages behind the design, and even provide link to where there are more detailed information about weight stigmatisation and body positivity.

3. The experience should make the user reflect on her previous standard of fashion and body image.

There are not much direct thoughts about personal reflection, which makes sense because it is an amusing and short experience.

In the short term, only one participant said she was confronted and reflected after choosing the hashtag. She was hesitated because this photo would not match her usual standard and style.

My hesitation is actually confronting. Usually I would take dozens of photo, choose some, use suitable filters, and then post the prettiest one online. So I was considering if it is pretty enough... The hesitation makes me reflect on my own standard.

In a longer term, the concept did make an impression, and the user is likely to think of it in the future, especially if she follows the hashtag. There is another participant who used to stigmatise herself and often tries to lose weight, she also told me that she wanted to use the concept in real life to cheer up. Once the concept of embracing body positivity is in their mind, people will naturally notice more contents about it. Hopefully the social media algorithms will notice this change and make adjustments as well.

5.3 Conclusions

5.3.1 Pros and Cons

+ Use of hashtag

The use of hashtag is engaging. It is a common social media element that everyone are familiar with. Most of the participants will just tap it and view the photos, and "like" some photos to show their support and encouragement. The hashtag functions well in the short term.

+ Gesture-based interaction

Gesture-based interaction is easy to accept and understand for the user. The warming-up movements are simple and playful, people can enjoy it even if they don't understand what it is about. The poses provided in "take a photo" part and the gesture to select a hashtag are physically active, which avoids the user paying attention to her body image but just enjoying energetic body movements.

+ Effect of the funny filters

Weight stigma is a serious and unnoticed topic that people don't usually talk about in their daily life. The whole experience is amusing, and this quality has transferred an ignored issue into hilarious photos, something visible that we can laugh at and also discuss about. The amusing experience provides another perspective to think about it: weight stigma is something we should fight against, but the process or the approach can be delightful and enjoyable.

The funny photos have also successfully planted this hashtag #fashionisme into people's daily system of discourse, which is the first step to make them aware of the existing stigmatisation.

+ Business benefits for the brand

Young people are not simply purchasing a product any more. They are willing to pay for the values, the story, or a new concept in the product. Being a body-inclusive brand will bring more benefits in business.

- Messages not explicit or informative enough

The experience is not confronting enough for users. The messages of existing weight stigmatisation were not clear communicated to the users. The internalisation of stigma was not understood either.

- Uncertain impacts in the long term

If a user didn't follow the hashtag, her connection with the concept would just end with the photo. Since there is not a promising method to get people follow the hashtag, the influence in the long term is also unpredictable.

5.3.2 Room for improvements

1. Multi-player mode

Shopping is not usually an individual activity, and this design is in a relatively public space. If the user is alone, she might feel nervous or embarrassed to play with it in public. Therefore, for the further development, a multiplayer mode, which allows friend take the photo together, might be able to create more possibilities and unexpected funny effects.

2. Different medium to take away

The take-away material is the carrier of more information and the invitation to further interaction. Therefore, the medium and contents can be more trendy, including gifs, short videos, interactive videos, etc. The contents can be more intentional to lead the user as well. There are many video trends, or challenges going viral everyday, they are great examples to explore new take-away medium.

3. More maintenance of the online contents

The awareness of existing weight stigmatisation in social media was not strongly aroused. Although the users are willing to use the hashtag or interact with the posts online, they were rarely aware that their participation was also making a difference to the social media environment. To encourage more meaningful interactions online after the in-store experience, the brand has responsibility to manage the contents, and interact with the users more positively and individually.

6/Discussion and future work

Contribution

This project focus on a new context of weight stigmatisation, social media. The research includes how does social media influence our daily life, and how does it stimulate stigmatisation. As an increasingly important part of our life, social media is feeding people overloaded information in various medium. User-generated-contents and algorithms are subtly shaping the world we live in. The existence of weight stigma is often neglected. It is even more difficult to confront than gender, culture, race, or illness. For the target group, young female users of any body shape, this problem is even less recognised. The concept is intended to leverage the features of social media to make the problem more visible and create a positive environment. The project also works as a practice of trans-media storytelling design, to explore how could we shape our own social media environment.

Personal reflection

Design ↔ Communication

This project was a clueless exploration at the beginning, and is now still a complexity to communicate with others. To present the core problem in current context and explain the design focus, I spent months on organising and restructuring the research process and findings. To well communicate the research and design is challenging for me, especially by writing. Till now I've explained my project to dozens of people of different backgrounds and I believe I've made progress.

Keep motivated

The project does not involve business stakeholders or any other external institutes. Without enough participation of others, I was often uncertain if it really make any value to anyone during the process. It is difficult to push forward a project without solid motivation. It's also partly caused by COVID-19. In the future, I will make more contacts and keep connected with stakeholders to avoid this kind of situation.

Recommendations for future work

About social media

The research defines a circle stigma internalisation stimulated by social media, and the design attempts to address the awareness through social media as well. As a significant and influential part of our world, there could be some moral regulations to supervise its actions in the future.

About the gender difference in weight stigma

Weight stigma is almost invisible for people who are not overweight. However, for females it actually poses much impacts on their daily life. Some people might think that weight stigmatisation, especially in fashion, is a universal issue for all genders. Through the process of digging into the topic, I find there is often an underlying difference between the judgement on female and male users. For men, fashion is just a perspective of lifestyle. Men have many other ways to prove their accomplishments. For women, the judgements on body shape or fashion choices are easily expanded to criticism on their personal values. No matter how successful they are in other aspects, appearance is still the inescapable target. The social media is also addressing this attitude, which makes internalising weight stigma a tougher issue for females.

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