

An Exploratory Study on the Perception of Female Adolescents About the Non-Corset Movement

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Abstract

This study is an exploratory study to analyze the relationship between female adolescents and non-corset movement. Online survey was conducted for 9 days to find out female adolescents awareness of the non-corset movement, how non-corset movement affect female adolescents and how female adolescents participate. According to the survey, 86% of subjects know the non-corset movement, especially through online. In addition, subjects were influenced in psychological, cognitive and behavioral aspects, particularly the perception of makeup changed. Besides, 40% of subjects expressed their intention to participate in the non-corset movement and the reason is personal perception, not the social aspects.

Keywords: *Non-Corset movement, Female adolescents, Exploratory Study, Makeup trend*

1. Introduction

As time goes by, the age of makeup is thought to be possible is gradually decreasing. According to Kim's study, 93% of female elementary school students first encountered makeup before fifth grade [1]. Likewise, the frequency of makeup for female adolescents has increased, with 42.4% of subjects doing makeup in their daily lives [1]. This means extent of makeup has expanded to all ages of women, including adolescents.

In the country, the non-corset movement is rejecting a culture seen as an area of women symbolized by the embellishment labor such as makeup, diet, and heels. This movement was supported by more than a majority of women in their 20s in Korea, according to the 2018 study by the Korean Women's Development Institute [2]. In addition, more than 10,000 posts including the "#non-corset" hashtag were confirmed on SNS used in the Korea, in the same year 2018 [3]. This shows that the non-corset movement has been socially activated.

The social trend that female adolescents were the target of makeup and the non-corset movement rejecting enforcement of women's makeup is completely opposed. Therefore, in order to predict future trend of makeup, correlation between female adolescents and non-corset movement should be analyzed. Prior researches are analyzing adolescents' makeup or non-corset movement itself, not considering their associations [1][3]. In this study, it is focused on female adolescents and non-corset movement is thought to be as an element that

Article history:

Received (January 28, 2020), Review Result (March 15, 2020), Accepted (April 24, 2020)

may affect female adolescents, rather than forcing meaning the non-corset movement itself. By this, this study could be served as the basis for finding empirical, realistic implications of the non-corset movement.

2. Literature review

2.1. Non-corset movement

Non-corset, term of combination of “corset” which is a body corrected underwear for women and “Non(脫)”, a Chinese words for “escape”, is a movement which means movement to reject what has been defined as femininity” [4]. It ultimately aims to break down gender stereotypes, extending the radius of physical activity by changing clothes from high heels to sneakers to pants and reduce the inferiority complex caused by physical discomfort [5]. It is considered as a feminist movement, as or creates a feminist identity through the non-corset movement and creates a sense of solidarity among participant [6].

2.2. Non-corset movement in adolescents

The makeup within the Korean adolescents is progressing, but there are also female adolescents who join the non-corset movement. Through the non-corset movement, they recognize that they have been forced to become “feminine” through makeup and dieting. By breaking the rules to be “feminine”, they try to resist the typical femininity which society has defined [7]. They have used the hashtag “#Corset which students experience” to oppose and share the corset they go through as students [8]. In the FGI of the preceding study by Kim, a female adolescent said the term “non-corset” is considered of freedom and liberation for students [6]. That is, non-corset movement is seen as a reaction to the suppression of “Girls should do makeup”, against dominant peer culture [6].

3. Study method

This study is an exploratory study, which is to find out the status of female adolescents about the non-corset movement. For this, the survey was conducted online for Korean female middle and high school students, the age of 13~19, in Seoul. The survey was conducted for 9 days from November 18 to November 26, 2019, and total number of samples used in this study is 134.

The subject of study, “Non-Corset Movement”, is relatively recent social issue. Because of this, the scale of this study is barely based on prior researches but formed through meetings centered on consumer studies researchers and professors. As a result, a 46 questionnaire was completed to find out the variables in three categories: awareness, social and personal impact, and participation.

4. Analyses and results

4.1. Demographic characteristics and makeup status of the subjects

The age of subjects was from 14 to 19 years old, especially consist of 127 high school students and seven middle school students, and they are all female adolescents in Seoul. In questions about the frequency of makeup, 39.6% answered they were not doing makeup while 46.3% answered they did it once or twice a week. In addition, 40.3% answered agree or strongly agree in question asking the preference of makeup, while 27.6% said disagree or

strongly disagree. On the other hand, 64.9% agreed or strongly agreed about the question that society is forcing makeup to women, while 12% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

4.2. Status of awareness of non-corset about female adolescents

86.6% of subjects answered they had heard the term “non-corset”. In addition, 79% said they had seen SNS posts breaking cosmetics in online, and 73.1% answered they had seen posts certifying short-cut hairstyles. In summary, it shows that many female adolescents were exposed to the non-corset movement in online.

Similarly, 72.3% of the subjects answered they had seen short-cut hairstyle in offline, while only 16.4% answered they had seen breaking or throwing cosmetics away in offline, contrary to online. This indicates non-corset movement’s aspects that female adolescents exposed differs between online and offline.

4.3. Social impact female adolescents perceive

The responses to the opinions about social impact of the non-corset movement were identified as shown in [Table 1] below. First, 60.4% of the subjects agreed or strongly agreed about the sentence of “The non-corset movement is socially positive movement.” On the other hand, 29.1% answered normal and only 10% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

For reasons, 61.1% agreed the non-corset movement relieved the social impose of makeup and 58.2% agreed feeling of freedom and liberation. Additionally, according to other opinion, 11 subjects said non-corset movement contributed to gender equality. These results mean that Korean female adolescents considered the non-corset movement positively.

Table 1. Social impacts female adolescents think

Variable	Question	Answer					
Social impacts of non-corset movement	Non(脱)-corset movement is socially possitive.	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree	sum
	Frequency	2	12	39	54	21	134
	Rate	1.5	9	29.1	40.3	20.1	100(%)
	Are the followings the socially positive aspects of non(脱)-corset movement?			agree	disagree	sum	
	It reduces the social impose of makeup.			82	52	134	
				61.2	38.8	100(%)	
	It brings economic benefit.			38	96	134	
				28.3	71.7	100(%)	
	It helps to save time.			61	73	134	
				45.5	54.5	100(%)	
	It eliminates physical discomfort.			60	74	134	
				44.7	55.3	100(%)	
	It gives a feeling of free and liberation.			78	56	134	
				58.2	41.8	100(%)	
Others			11		11		

4.4. Personal impact female adolescent perceive

The responses to the opinions about personal impact of the non-corset movement were identified as shown in [Table 2] below. Throughout other opinions, the impact they received can be divided into psychological, cognitive and behavioral changes. Psychological impacts included correcting sexual fixation or changing mentality about makeup, and 41% of them agreed with the sentence that the burden on makeup had decreased. On the other hand, cognitive part, 44% of subjects agreed they had been aware of feminism, and there were other opinions such as “I learned about how to practice feminism” and “A wrong way of movement can create antipathy”. On the behavioral part, there are opinions such as “Spend time and money watching movie rather than makeup”, “consider shout-cut hairstyles”, and “Being careful with stereotypical saying”.

Table 2. Personal impacts female adolescents think

Variable	Question	Answer					
Personal impacts of non-corset movement	Non(脫)-Corset Movement affects personally.	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree	sum
	Frequency	6	24	51	37	16	134
	Rate	4.5	17.9	38.11	27.6	11.9	100(%)
	Are the followings the personal effects of non(脫)-corset movement?	agree		disagree		Sum	
	Pressure on makeup is decreased	55		79		134	
		41		59		100(%)	
	Confidence in appearance is increased	24		96		134	
		17.9		82.1		100(%)	
	Being aware of feminism	59		73		134	
		44		56		100(%)	
Others	12						

4.5. Participation of the non-corset movement

The responses about participation of the non-corset movement were identified as shown in [Table 3] below. 40.3% of the subjects agreed to participate in the non-corset movement, while 22.3% of them disagreed. 51% wanted to reduce makeup when out, while only 12.6% agree to post “non-corset” hashtag online. It shows that female adolescents want to participate in the non-corset movement through offline rather than online.

To the next, for the question of why they want to participate in the non-corset movement, 41% answered because they thought don’t have to dress up. In contrast how they think it is socially positive, only 22.3% answered it is socially helpful. As a result, Korean female adolescents mostly want to participate in non-corset movement because of their personal reasons.

Table 3. Participation of the non-corset movement

Variable	Question	Answer					
Participation Of Non-corset movement	I'm willing to participate in the non-corset movement.	strongly disagree	Disagree	normal	Agree	strongly agree	sum
	Frequency	8	22	50	36	18	134
	Rate	5.9	16.4	37.3	26.9	13.4	100(%)
	Are the followings the way you want to try?		Agree		disagree		sum
	Post or set a "non-corset" hashtag on SNS		17		114		134
			12.6		87.4		100(%)
	cut their hair short		36		98		134
			26.8		73.2		100(%)
	boycott cosmetics		21		113		134
			15.6		74.4		100(%)
	reduce makeup when out		69		65		134
			51.4		48.6		100(%)
	Are the followings the reason you want to participate in?		agree		disagree		sum
	It takes long time to do makeup		36		98		134
			26.8		73.2		100(%)
	It takes economic consumption to decorate.		25		109		134
			18.6		71.4		100(%)
	Thinking don't have to dress up		55		79		134
			41		59		100(%)
	It is socially helpful.		30		104		134
		22.3		77.7		100(%)	

5. Conclusion

This study looked non-corset movement as one of the socials which could affect female adolescents, not just feminism-related movements, and explored how teenagers as future consumers were affected. The conclusions of the study are as follows.

First, many Korean female adolescents were exposed to the non-corset movement, which proves that the non-corset movement is not irrelevant to female adolescents. In particular, they were exposed to online non-corset movement such as SNS posts breaking cosmetics or certifying short-cut hairstyles. Similarly, many of them encountered short-cut hairstyle women, while rare to see breaking cosmetics actually in reality. Second, female adolescents thought the non-corset movement had positive impact on society. The reason was it decreased the atmosphere of makeup and brought a sense of freedom and liberation. In addition, subjects answered it affected them personally, by lessening the burden of makeup. In summary, it could be inferred that the non-corset movement plays a role in removing the burden of makeup at both socially and personally, for Korean female adolescents. Third, 40% answered they were willing to participate, saying they want to reduce makeup when going out. In addition, the reason to participate was personal reasons rather than social reasons, especially they thought they didn't have to decorate themselves.

This study has academic and empirical significance in that it is an exploratory study that explores the current status of non-corset movement in female teenagers, thinking that it can

be applied not only to adult women but also to adolescents. Furthermore, it shows the significance of non-corset movement for female adolescents, which was not just focused on feminist movement, but the freedom and liberation of choice of embellishment labor.

However, this study has the following limitations. First, a scale of this study may have questions about reliability due to lack of prior research. It is expected that in-depth study will be developed based on this study. Also, because the subjects are focused on students of particular age and resign, it is hard to represent all Korean female adolescents. Despite these limitations, this study has meaning as an early study of the non-corset movement for adolescents, and has set the stage for further research.

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