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Analysis of Chinese Contemporary Young Females' Attitudes and Experiences toward Menstruation
and Feminine Products

By

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Honors Thesis

Submitted to:

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Abstract

Menstruation is not only a biological body practice that influences females' daily lives but also contains cultural, economic, social, and political meanings that are related to women's gender identity and social status. While traditional Chinese culture examined menstruation as taboo and stigma, modern Chinese society absorbs western feminism and creates a more liberal, open-minded menstrual etiquette. Lived in the rapidly developing modern society, the Chinese young generation's viewpoints were influenced and shaped by traditional Chinese thoughts and the emerging feminist thought. This research draws on in-depth interviews with ten Chinese youth females to explore their knowledge, experience, and attitudes about menstruation and feminine products. The young female generation refers that their thoughts have been shaped by their interaction with family, peers, school, social media, and social norms. Although it's inappropriate to conceal, hide, and shame the normal menstruation phenomenon, the mainstream patriarchal society still puts restriction and limitation on menstrual females' actions, thoughts, characteristics, and identity.

Introduction:

Menstruation is a body practice in females' daily lives, which influences the meaning of females' bodies, their daily lives, and self-recognitions. With the progressing society development, more and more social media and groups of people started to pay attention to the topics related to menstruation. In 2019, news about the lack of supplement pads for front-line nurses during the covid-19 period boarded the hot search on multiple social media platforms. In 2020, another story about bulk pads and cheap pads was introduced to the public. From that, more and more people realized the importance of feminine products and started to treat them as necessary. Period poverty also brought attention to marginal female groups with low income. Menstruation not only is regarded as a biological phenomenon but is also discussed in cultural, social, scientific, and political aspects. Chinese females, especially the contemporary young feminist generation, grew up in a contradictory environment. They were educated by their traditional parents and studied with conservative peers while absorbing advanced, scientific knowledge of menstruation from the internet. Their feminine identities and thoughts showed more open-mindedness compared to their parents' generation but were still influenced by the conventional society.

There is a massive western research focus on females' attitudes and experiences of menstruation, but there is rarely Chinese menstruation research of menstruation. To complement the blank space for Chinese contemporary menstruation research, my research will analyze the contemporary young Chinese females' experiences and attitudes on menstruation and feminine products.

Literature review:

In western society, menstruation has been studied in various research and academic fields. Including medical science, anthropology, psychology, education, and sociology. While the massive Chinese study of menstruation mainly focuses on medical science and doesn't obtain much social

science research. My research literature review will analyze most research from western countries, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, and will classify them from four aspects: religious and anthropological view, social-cultural view, Western feminism view, and traditional Chinese view.

(1) Religious and anthropological view:

The religious view of menstruation concentrates on the “menstruation taboo”, which means women’s actions and behaviors will face lots of restrictions and rules during their menstruation period. According to the article “Menstruation Taboo”, in the primary society, people normally related blood with death and contagious (Cao Juren, 2003). Add to that, due to the limitation of access to scientific knowledge, they will also relate the normal menses with the idea of death. The deduction of mysterious menstruation makes people connect menses with other negative concepts, such as dirty, dangerous, and contagious. According to the article “Women, Contagious and Symbolic Religious Anthropological View of Menstruation Taboo”, primary society believed that this natural phenomenon was caused by demons’ punishment or ancestries’ souls, which are evil and awed. As a result, menses became a “blood taboo” that should be isolated from mainstream society to protect normal, healthy people (Li Jinlian, 2006). As a result, people believed that anyone or any items that touched or indirectly touched menses or a female who is experiencing menses will encounter misfortune in the nearby future. Therefore, menstrual women are not allowed to attend rituals, economic activities, have sex lives, or live with families, and they are isolated and self-concealed from their husbands, family, and groups.

While women spend the fifth or seventh part of their time in menstruation, these menstrual restrictions and distress may also influence their family lives. In the book, *Sex Taboo and Pepping Psychology*, Chen Jianxian points out that while pregnant, delivering, and raising children is considered a family or public contribution, menstruation is regarded as a personal affair that doesn’t need much other help (1999). With the occurrence of private ownership, women’s social status

decreased and their bodies became low-quality. With the mutual interaction concepts of “menstrual taboo” and “inferior body”, the menstrual taboo rules and restrictions are reproduced by generations and become both spiritual and physical shackles for menstrual women. Add to that, the limitations on women’s behavior have been strengthened not only during menstruation; but also extend and influence their normal lives. As a result, women’s actions are been considered unimportant, concealed, and marginalized in society.

Durkheim examines menstrual taboo in his book, “Incest: The Nature And Origin of the Taboo” with the binary concept of “purity-filth”(1897). While each group member’s body contains that group’s totems, they are not allowed to bleeding. However, menstruation breaks these sacred rules and brings fear, contagiousness, and danger to the mundane group. As a result, other group members regard menstrual females as filth that breaks the group’s purity. Mary Douglas complements Durkheim’s binary theory in the article, Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo, by adding the theory of the metaphor system (1996). While menses became a symbol of disorder and deviant for social order, they obtain potential threats and danger to the social system. Young women and married women then have the power to subvert male dominant society’s rules and could be a symbol of social power. In the article, “The Woman in the Body: A Cultural Analysis of Reproduction”, Emily Martin points out that while people find menses could be related to reproduction and break the ideal male-dominant family structure, it contains dual concepts of security and danger (1987). While females have a chance to ensure their genes inherit successfully, males found it’s risky to pass their genes through women’s bodies. Therefore, the male dominant society chooses to discriminate against and control women’s pregnancy and body through multiple restrictions and limitations. As result, the creation of menstrual blood and menstrual stigma can be regarded as a tool to maintain males’ social status and suppress female rights.

(2) Social-cultural view:

The social-cultural view of menstruation examines menstruation as a female character that is shaped by various social norms and dynamics. In this view, menstruation becomes both a physical and social-cultural phenomenon. In the book *Masculine Domination*, Pierre Bourdieu examines how symbolic violence works to constrain female speaking rights, and social behaviors, and create a society that benefits from male domination (1990). The stigma of regarding menstruation as a dirty, private thing has been reinforced through social norms and ignored by the dominant male group. As a result, males are excluded from the “female topic”, while menstruation disappeared from public affairs. Sophia Laws call on the theory that “the treatment of menstruation reflects the way show society treats women.” in her book, *Issue of Blood: The Politics of Menstruation* (1990). She uses the concept of menstrual etiquette to describe a set of complicated social rules that act on the interaction between women and women, men and women, which reflect the culture through physical representation. The menstrual etiquette standardizes the appropriate language to describe mensural, limited menstrual topics, and people talking about menstruation. It also specializes in the categories of period products and how to buy, use, store and describe them. In conclusion, the main purpose of menstrual etiquette is to hide menstruation from the public through the restriction of female behaviors.

Iris Young uses the concept of the menstrual closet to analyze the social-cultural construction of menstrual stigma and menstrual pressure in the book, *Throwing Like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Compartment Motility and Spatiality* (1980). While the male dominant society regards menstruation as a shame, dirty, and detesting existence, the mainstream will ask females to keep clean and behave appropriately in the public. This split standard let menstruation become an abnormal phenomenon that females tried to avoid and hide in the public area. The concealment of menstruation is repeated and processed in social activities and communication. According to the article, *Menstruation in covid-19: Analysis of Feminine Products During the Coronavirus Period*, Song Sulin contrasts blood presentation between menstrual and bandage advertisements(2021). While the bandage advertisement uses red color liquid to represent the blood, the menstrual advertisement always

uses blue. The package of the period product also hides the real content and tries to eliminate the sense of the existence of these products. As Xu Peixin mentioned in his article, *What Cause Tampon Unpopular in Taiwan: an Analysis of World View*, females' bodies are cultural texts written by social activities and cultural habitus, which is a tool of social controls (2010). Females accept and obey gender differentiation theory and cultural standards through social practices, and put them into gender constraints.

(3) Western feminism view:

The feminist view emphasizes the real-life mensural experience of females, calls on the female subjective initiative, and focuses on females' voices. It criticizes the religious anthropology view only emphasizes the negative aspects, such as the filth and threats meaning of menstruation, and narrows the research result. Emily Martin condemns the over-medicalization of menstruation in her article, *The Women in the Body: A Cultural Analysis of Reproduction* (1987). In the article *Medicalization and Social Control*, Peter Conrad explained medicalization as the process of "Non-medical phenomenon been defined and explained by medical terminology of illness and disorder, followed by a series of therapies." (1980). Examined with the feminist view, several menstrual-related illnesses such as premenstrual tension (PMS) and female menopause are all created by medicalization and social control. Society creates and tags common female physical phenomena as deviant, abnormal illnesses, which represent the gender power within Western medical knowledge. The construction of PMS is grounded on fictional knowledge. The social norms in the patriarchal society standardize the specific, desired female character to be a docile housewife that is obedient to males. So women need to control their temper, avoid getting angry and show any other aggressive emotion or behavior to the public. Therefore, the unstable emotional change during PMS are been regarded as an abnormal and social disorder, which should be cured. In this process, according to Shi Wenfei's article, *The Personal Experience of Tampon in Taiwan Society*, the medical voices became tools that suppress the female

personal experience and strengthen the concept of male-dominant value (2015). As a result, how to naturalize and normalize the menstruation phenomenon through women's own experiences and voices became the main examination of feminism's view.

Post-modern western feminism focus on the subjective construction based on the female experience. They tried to redefine and construct women's bodies and female characteristics through social normal and authorities, which play an important role to correct and relieve the gender bias and stigma built by the patriarchal system. Simone De Beauvoir systematically records, analyzes and presents the menstrual experience of females of different ages in her book, *The Second Sex*(1949). She described the conflict thoughts teenage girls hold and how they try to maintain elegantly through the menstrual period. She presents real-life complaints and viewpoints from women through in-depth interviews and conversations. She held a dual recognition of menstruation: On the one hand, she believes that the women's pressure and negative feeling of menstruation are completely caused by social construction; on the other hand, she admits that menstruation represents females' innate biological reproductivity ability. The western feminist movement from 1965 to 1975 brought feminism conscious awakening. One of the most representative feminist books, *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, let American women examine their bodies, menopause, and menstruation to retrieve their body autonomy. Martin also points out that if women can discuss their menstruation in daily, usual languages instead of in-depth scientific languages, they can experience less alienation and get more control of their bodies. She found that most menopause women feel happy to get rid of the menstrual influence and they believe that they can embrace a more positive, energetic lifestyle without losing their female character. In conclusion, western feminism appeals to people to regard and accept menstruation as a normal physical phenomenon that shouldn't be alienated, discriminated and conceal from mainstream culture.

(4) traditional Chinese view:

In the traditional Chinese view, women also face some extent of menstrual taboo as in western society. However, different from the western religious and anthropological view of regarding menses as evil, dangerous things and creating restrictions to eliminate fear, the traditional Chinese view of menstrual taboo mostly focus on the filthy and contagious characteristic. According to Li Xia's article, *Mother's Family and Mother-in-law's Family*, Chinese women's identities are vague and inferior since they spend all of their lifetimes transforming from their mother's family to their mother-in-law's family (2010). According to traditional Chinese culture, the un-married girls are considered outsiders of their own families, while married women are the inferior good affiliated to their husband's families. While marriage brings identity change to women, their identities' uncertainty has been kept in an eternal status since both families don't accept her in the relative relationships. Therefore, the indeterminacy of female identity creates disorder in social status due to the transforming status. The idea of contagiousness is also been created through the transformation since such uncertainty may influence and disturb the status quo. As a result, the female identity contagiousness contains a potential spiritual threat to male domination and male relative relationships. The dual identity of the married female, "outsider-affiliate", create conflicts, threatens, and challenges the patriarchal system and the mother-in-law's family's blood lineage foundation. As a result, the menstrual taboo is created to restrain uncertain feminine power that is feared by the male domination system.

(5) Conclusion:

In modern Chinese society, although scientific knowledge has eliminated the physical and superstitious stigma toward menstruations and people no longer regard menses as filth that may contain evil power or germ, the alienation of menstruation still existed and influences females in different social norms. While western society obtains a series of systematic research examinations on menstruation and menstruation dilemma, it's hard to find primary, qualitative research on the Chinese female regarding menstruation. In the book, *Chinese Women's Feelings and Sex*, Li Yinhe shows

teenage girls' attitudes toward Menarche can be divided into three parts: fear caused by unknown features; negative feelings including shame, self-abased and detest; usual feelings (2009). However, Li Yinhe doesn't analyze the causation behind these attitudes. In my research, I would like to analyze the Chinese young female generation's attitudes and experiences toward menstruation and examine the potential influence of micro-level, and macro-level factors.

Data and Methods:

To examine Chinese young females' attitudes and experiences toward menstruation, I interviewed 10 young female adults on the internet. I actively searched on a Chinese social media, Weibo (similar to Instagram) with the keywords "menstruation shame" and "period poverty". The female internet users who commented or wrote original posts related to these two topics were my targeted interview group. I gradually selected 20 female users who criticized the relative menstruation problem and spent a month sending private messages to invite them to attend my interview. I chose this specific group of female users because they already had some reflection and awareness of menstruation problems and were more likely to accept my invitation. Given the time and payoff that interviewees may spend in my research, I gave each of them a one-month quantity of female products, including tampons and pads, as compensation and reward. As a result, half of them agreed to join my research while the remaining of them either didn't have time or didn't reply to my message.

I used the qualitative research method to examine the females' experiences through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The questions were based on the interviewee's juvenile and adult experiences of menstruation and female products. I also made a pre-interview with my college friend who is also interested in menstruation topics. She didn't feel awkward answering and talking private questions about her family and sex. During the pre-interview experience, I revised some of my interview questions, changed the outline, and knew the proper way to drive conversations and evoke speakers' sharing desires. The formal interview took place through phone calls and each one lasted for

about 70-90 minutes. To eliminate the interviewees' nervous emotions, I introduced myself and my background to them and tried to make the conversation close to friends' talk. Before the formal talk, I explained the research purpose of this interview and asked the interviewee to sign the consent form. So I got permission to record the interview, deleted them after I finish my research, and used their basic background knowledge with pseudonyms. The name, age, background information, and summary of interviewees' important viewpoints are shown in table 1:

Table 1:

Name	Age	Education/ job experience	Family background	Main points
Lu	21	Preparatory class, plan to enter university in Russia next year	Lower level middle class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends family with traditional thoughts • Use sanitary towel instead of female products • Went to see doctor, and doctor only give simple suggestion: no spicy food, no cold water • Social media use pad as insole, insult, inappropriate ways
Meteor	20	Professional high school, part time job in KFC, full-time job in electronic factory (4000-5000).	Working class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has experiencing period poverty • Lose mother and have no menstruation knowledge from male parents • Has no extra money to buy female products and have to use living expenses • Aunts teach menstruation knowledge
Nanako	19	Second-category	working class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of menstruation: "M"

Name	Age	Education/ job experience	Family background	Main points
		university, freshman		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has experience of using lunar cup, pads, tampons, and made comparison • Suggestion of more sport to improve dysmenorrhea • No requisite for “female characteristic” from family
Nine	20	Private junior college, sophomore	Upper level middle class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dirty restroom environment of changing pads when she was young • Boys put pads on social media to make joke • Receive free pad package from government in middle school
Alcohol	26	Top 2 Graduate school, phd	Middle class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has study abroad experience, and high education • High education level Parents are willing to talk about menstruation and famine product, • More optimistic about future policy and social change on menstruation
Seabiscuit	27	Third-category university, Monthly salary 10k	Middle class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive view about menstruation, “womb is a gift” “menstruation is symbol of energetic and health” • Friends eat contraceptive pill to delay menstruation for final exams • Related menstruation to feminism and cares about women status
Betty	22	Fourth Study in US	Upper middle class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear about menstruation • Fear to use tampon, and don’t know body structure • “Traditional” parents never talk about menstruation • Has a feminism elder sister who teach her about menstruation

Name	Age	Education/ job experience	Family background	Main points
Caroline	23	Master degree, first-category university, Monthly salary 3k	Lower Middle class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donate money to help girls in mountain to buy female products • Classmates will hold a beautiful “pad bag”to hold pads when they go to washroom • Use different types of nickname to call female products and menstruation
Yao	20	Study abroad in Russia, pre-university class	Middle class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese doctor didn’t give much help on dysmenorrhoea • Have classmates who are not allowed to eat painkillers • Conceal pads in store
Mary	22	Foreign University student, senior	Upper middle class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cry for menarche, not scare but losing something • Have menstruation education in primary school only for girls • Extreme heavy dysmenorrhoea, want to die to relieve • Didn’t eat pain killer until junior year in university.

I set up my research questions with inductive reasoning, which was a logical approach where people start with specific observations and form general conclusions. At the beginning of my research, I set up the premise that all of my interviewees have some extent of experience and reflection on the contemporary Chinese menstrual phenomenon and problems such as menstruation shame and period poverty. I began with a series of specific questions related to menstruation and menstruation products, so I could write transcript memos based on the conversations with the qualitative analysis tool Atlas Ti. Then I developed 4 general themes from the transcripts: 1) knowledge of menstruation; 2)

experience, and attitude towards menstruation; 3) selection of menstrual products; 4) problems of menstruation and menstrual products. The first theme included two codes: ways to get menstruation knowledge, and types of knowledge they get. The second theme comprised of the following codes: experiences of menarche, and attitudes toward menstruation. The third theme consisted of the characteristics of menstrual production, usage condition of menstrual production, money spends on menstrual products. The last theme showed problems of menstruation and female products, which covered physical health problems, mental health problems, economic problems, and cultural problems.

Results:

All of my interviewees are younger generations who grow up in the same Chinese culture. Although they have different family economic conditions or education levels, they obtain similar changes in experiences and attitudes toward menstruation through the cumulative appropriate scientific knowledge and awakening of feminist thoughts. I identified four main themes to record and analysis the changes in interviewees' viewpoints through menstruation knowledge, attitude and experience with menstruation, the selection of menstrual products, and the problems of menstruation.

Knowledge of menstruation:

Most interviewees indicated that they first know or heard about menstruation from their peers or family members with very blurred, general, and indirect descriptions before they experience Menarche. Interviewees' peers and classmates used vague language to care about each other's menstruation situation. It normally brought confusion to the audience who didn't involve or have menstrual experience. As a result, the girls who didn't have menstrual experience may be excluded from the menstrual group and misguided by the scattered information pieces they had received. Meteor recalled:

When I was in primary school, I heard my female classmate ask each other: "Are you

coming?”, “How long have you come?”. I didn’t know they are talking about the duration of menstruation. I thought they were asking how long did that girl attend school.

The morse code type language became a tacit rule when talking about menstruation between primary school girls. Other menstruation knowledge may be learned secretly through the unintended observation of peers’ menses and pads. Betty told her story about when she first know menstruation from her classmate:

When I was in 5th grade of my primary school. One day, I found a small dark bloodstain on my best friend’s jeans. It was located on her hip and I was curious about it. I asked her, “Are you okay? You got blood on your pants.” She was stunned for a moment and her face started blushing. She asked me to close my mouth because there are a few classmates who had heard my question and they were looking at her. I could tell that she felt so embarrassed at that time and run out of the classroom to the restroom. I didn’t know what happened until another female classmate told me that “she got menstruation.” That was the first time I know that we will experience such things and menstruation will cause a bleed.

A similar situation also happened in other interviewees’ primary and junior high schools. Interviewees learn general knowledge of menstruation through other classmates’ secret actions of “borrow pads” and get a “probable scope of what happened”. This knowledge was also not allowed to be talked about in other classes in clear, detailed language. In the middle school biological class, only 2 out of 10 interviewees showed that their science teacher talked scientific knowledge about the formation of menstruation in a formal, detailed, scientific way. The rest of the interviewees mentioned that their science teachers either skipped the chapter about sex organ structure or asked the students “learn by themselves because there is nothing to teach.” Add to that, about half of the interviewees pointed out that they had health classes in primary school to teach menstruation knowledge unified. Mary said:

When I was in primary school, our female sports teacher once asked all the 5-6 grades, girls, to aggregate together in a hall during lunchtime. We didn’t know what will happen until we

reached there. The teacher shows us PowerPoint pictures about whom and vagina structure and explained the formation of menstruation to us. All of the girls felt excited, and curious but also shame to watch the colorful, lifelike pictures. We even don't look the eyes of each other during the lecture and giggled when she mention the physiological norms such as whom and vagina. At the end of the lecture, the teacher also shows us the proper way to use the pad. I even can't distinguish the difference between the sizes and types of pads at that time.

Another 2 interviewees mentioned that they have experienced similar health classes in primary school, but all of them indicate that "only girls can attend that course" and "boys are not allowed to listen". In these cases, the knowledge of menstruation was restricted to females, while men were excluded from the menstruation context even when they are little boys. The different treatments based on gender restrained menstruation to "a girl's problem."(Rayka Zehtabchi, 2008). The differentiated gender education creates gaps between females and males thus letting girls believe it's inappropriate to talk or discuss menstruation directly in the public since there may be a male audience. While school played an important role in children's development viewpoints, it invisibly set up estrangements for girls. The process of teaching menstruation knowledge was to hide and conceal it from the public and avoid other people, especially males, knowing it (Young, 2007).

The family also played an important role in the instruction of menstrual knowledge, since family members were the closest supporters for children to rely on. All of the interviewees learned knowledge from mothers or female relatives. None of their father or male relatives were involved in menstruation topic. Meteor lost her mother when she was 5 years old, and she experienced a hard of learning menstruation and menstrual products knowledge:

I lived with my grandpa and my father when I was young. None of my family members talked about this (menstruation), although I think they really should teach me Since they are my guardians, it's their responsibility to talk (about menstruation). So I didn't have any

menstrual knowledge until it comes and I got my pants dirty. My female classmates discovered it and helped me fix it. After that, my aunt came and only taught me how to use and exchange pads without any knowledge about menstruation.

A similar menstrual teaching method happened in each family, including Yao who has a mother who worked in a gynecology and obstetrics hospital as a nurse. Mothers only teach superficial and general knowledge of menstruation: “It will come once a month and last for 5-7 days.”, “Your under below will bleed so you need to use pads.” “It’s a representation of growing up.” When interviewers asked about the causation of menstruation, most of the parents chose equivocation, “You will know when you are elder.” or not answer the question, “Please stop asking.”

While kids normally feel curious about unknown knowledge, they couldn’t either get a clear, comprehensive answer from their classmates or their parents. Add to that, interviewees also received invalid, misleading, incorrect knowledge of menstruation from peers, families, and even doctors. All of the interviewees’ mothers said “don’t catch a cold. Drink hot water. Don’t eat ice cream. Don’t wash hair. Don’t eat mango.” when their daughters experienced menstruation. However, none of them could explain the scientific principle behind it convincingly. Nanako’s best friend had experienced a more absurd recognition of menstruation from her mother. The friend's mother didn’t allow her to eat painkillers to relieve dysmenorrhoea because “Pills will cause infertility.” Lu mentioned that when she saw a traditional Chinese medicine to solve dysmenorrhoea problems, “the doctor only said don’t eat spicy food or drink cold water during menstruation. He didn’t provide any useful, scientific knowledge to solve my problem. It’s not working.” The inappropriate menstruation knowledge was the modern representation of traditional Chinese superstition thoughts(Zhang Xiaohong, 2014).

With the use of the internet and social media, interviewees have a chance to get direct, broad, complete, and scientific knowledge about menstruation and menstruation products. Some of the interviewees actively search for relative menstrual knowledge. Nanako said she consciously searched for menstruation knowledge in middle school “to show I’m growing up and mature. Want to be an

adult. Could flaunt my knowledge in front of my classmate.” Yao also mentioned that she actively searched for menstrual products and the formation of menstruation from several popular science bloggers on different media platforms, including articles and videos. Other interviewees gradually saw relative knowledge of menstruation through the internet unconsciously. As a result, social media in contemporary society then provided more chances for teenagers to build up correct and appropriate menstruation knowledge systematically when they grow up. This could give interviewees a more scientific way to deal with menstruation problems including both physical and mental health issues, which relieve the young generation from traditional discourse restraint.

Experience and attitudes towards menstruation:

According to Li Yinhe, there are mainly three kinds of reactions toward menarche for modern females living in 20 century: fear, shame(detest), and neutrality mood (2009). My interviewees present different reactions compared to Li’s findings. Half of them held a neutral mood toward menarche since they already got superficial knowledge and recognition of “There is this thing(menstruation).”, “It’s not a big deal. It’s a normal thing”. Others may hold negative feelings or a combination of feelings, which are mainly caused by unknown fear and worries of trouble. “I saw there was blood on my underwear and didn’t know what happened at first. But when I realized what’s going on, I thought I was in trouble and need to solve it every month,” The word interviewees choose to describe menarche is still obscure, most of them just use the description: “first-come” instead of menarche. Mary mentioned she cried for her menarche in a very complicated mood:

I had my menarche later than my classmates. I knew that I will have menstruation one day. I was just worried about why it didn’t come and started worried about my health. But when I finally got it, I was also scared since I need to bleed each month and it was just a brand new thing. I didn't know if I’m ready to grow up and accepted my new life stage.”

Mary's complex mood is similar to Beauvoir's quote: "Understandably, the awkward age should be for the girl a period of painful disturbance. She does not want to remain a child. But the adult world seems frightening or boring."(1949). Different from Li Yinhe's finding, none of the interviewee's show detests or shames toward menarche. This showed that without much influence from mainstream society, young girls were not detested or felt the shame of menstruation. They only regarded it as a normal physiological phenomenon that may cause fear due to the natural fear of blood. Another finding is that several interviewees feel nervous when they found their menarche occurs early or late. Similar to Mary's worry about late menarche being caused by potential illness, "Strangely, I had menarche much early than my classmates and I felt I'm abnormal from my (female)group.", "Is the early menarche caused by hormone problem?" These time problems showed that interviewees worried more about their conformity to their belonging group than menstruation itself. While the occurrence of menarche broke the status quo, it became deviance for the person who experienced it. That person then became the outsider of her group when she regarded herself as an outsider and others also view her as an outsider. (Howard Becker, 1973) The identity and definition of menstruation outsider also shifted with the body development and time change. While girls who experienced menarche earlier than their peers are regarded as outsiders in primary school, girls who didn't have menstruation in junior middle school are regarded as outsiders. The different attitudes towards menarche in different periods showed that the definition of abnormal or deviant was built through social constructions and decided by the mainstream society.

Through the process of socialization, interaction with people, and changing performance of menstruation, some girls' attitudes may be influenced by their peers, family members, and macro society. The attitudes towards menstruation through different gender shows a big difference between father(male relatives) and mother(female relatives). Although mothers thought it was unnecessary or awkward to teach young daughters depth knowledge about menstruation, most of them were still willing to give direct care and advice directly related to menstruation, regardless of the correctness of

the information they provide. As a result, the interviewees hold a more positive view of menarche and menstruation when they grow up. Caroline mentioned that her mother brought her a little cake to celebrate her menarche and said it's a signal of growing up. "That's sweet and impressive. I related menarche to cake and celebration after that. I didn't have much fear about bleeding although I'm ignorant about the (menstruation)formation." Alcohol's parents have both taken undergraduate education. She also said that her mother taught her some basic physiological knowledge about development and body change when she was young, so she "Didn't feel nervous or panic. Felt very excited about having it(menarche). Borrow pad from my peer and fixed it(menarche)." Add that, Mary's mother also taught her related menstruation knowledge and put a piece of the pad in her bag to prepare for her menarche when she was in primary school. Mary indicated that her mother's actions help her relieve her unknown fear of menstruation, and also created her imagination about menstruation and adult lives.

While mothers believed it was their responsibility to provide general and basic knowledge of menstruation, menses, and choices of menstrual products, most fathers disappeared in menstrual-related conversations. This showed a modern representation of traditional thoughts on menstrual taboo, where men are excluded from the menstrual conversation and related scenes. Daughters and fathers seem to make a default consensus to not discuss menstruation. Betty showed her experience when she dealt with menstruation and pads in her home with indirect interaction with her father:

My father and I never directly discuss or had formal conversations about menstruation. He might believe it was my mother's responsibility to teach me such knowledge and there was a gender difference between us. I remembered I was traveling with my father during middle school summer vacation, while I was experiencing menstruation and running out of pads one day. It was late the night and we live in different bedrooms. I felt embraced to knock on his door and directly ask him if he could buy me a package of pads, so I texted him on my

phone, “could you buy a package of pads for me? My menstruation came.” A few moments later, I heard him open the door, go out for a while, and go back. Then I received a brief text message from him: “Put it on the table in the living room.” So I waited for a while and sneaked out of my room to get pads. I felt I’m acting like a thief.

Betty’s interaction with her father showed that the father or male relatives normally disappeared from the female physiological phenomenon. While girls tried to conceal menstruation from their fathers, fathers also avoided getting contact with these topics actively. Mary mentioned when she experienced super severe dysmenorrhoea in-home, it was her mother to take care of her and her dad choose to leave the house. “I don’t what did he think. Maybe he just didn’t want to hear my screaming and crying since there was little he can help. Maybe he just thought it was awkward to stay at home and tried to avoid arousing suspicion.” The different treatments and attitudes toward menstruation cultivate the concept of gender differentiation in young girls. Since the fathers were the closest opposite sex they could contact and learn, their fathers’ avoidance attitude may influence their recognition of menstruation as a girl’s problem that should be hidden in front of males (Period End Of Sentence, 2019).

Girls also extend their family’s conceal attitudes about menstruation to school and other public areas. While girls were shy to talk and discuss menstruation in the public area, they created a series of codes and nicknames to refer to menstruation. Almost all interviewees mentioned that they would use various words to avoid using the scientific term menstruation, and these names are also accepted, understood, and used by other groups, such as male peers, teachers, salespersons, and even social media. The most common nickname for menstruation is “aunt”, which comes from a traditional Chinese story. Other types of nicknames included “lunar events”, “M”, and “come”. The nickname “aunt” was originally used to avoid having sex during menstruation. While the female indirectly showed her “relative visits” and was inconvenient to have sex with her male partner, both of them understand the meaning behind the words. The other nicknames using abbreviations and verbs of menstruation all showed language restraint created for females and enforced by the public.

Besides language, menstrual females would take cautious movements to cover up their menstruation. All interviewees experienced similar menstruation actions when they needed to borrow pads from their peers and went to the restroom to exchange the used pads. Nine described the process of the proper way to hold and borrow pads from others:

The girls would whisper close to the other's ear and asked whether they bring "aunt pads", which normally took place in a relatively unnoticed scene. Once the lender received that request, she would put her hand in her school bag interplay and grope for the pad. Once she found the pad, she would fold it into a smaller piece and quickly pressed it into the borrower's hand. The whole process only took a few seconds and the girls would use their bodies to hide the transaction to keep it secret. The borrower would also hide the pad in her sleeves, put it in pockets, or store it in the book when she went to the restroom. After changing to a new pad, she would roll up the used pads to hide the blood surface because it's ugly.

Girls were just shy to talk or even think about it. Caroline complemented that some female classmates would use a beautiful little bag to hold pads to the restroom, which were tied to their wrists. "Those pads were really beautiful. But unnecessary."

Except for the menstrual girls themselves, other people would also use actions to show that menstruation is something need to conceal. The most direct actions were the male peers and classmates' reactions to pads and menses. Meteor recalled her male junior classmates' reaction to pads:

One day someone left an unpacked pad on the classroom's floor. A bunch of boys saw it. They started crazy and exaggerated laughing, screaming, and joking about it. Some of them even kicked on it as they were playing soccer. All of the girls felt embarrassed and we just sit on our chairs pretending nothing happened. This event ended when the teacher came in and picked it up. I just didn't know why they think it was funny and could make jokes about it.

Nine also mentioned her junior school male classmates' actions of pad and menses:

My menstrual volume was really large. It was normal for me to get menses on the white school uniform pants. The boy who sat behind me saw that awkward situation, but both he and I pretended nothing happened. Other male classmates didn't show such gentle reactions to menstruation. One of them posted an opened, unused pad on the public social media with comments: Oh that's PADS. He might think it's cool to detect "girl's secrets".

But I thought that action was stupid.

The male classmates' actions generally showed two types of reactions towards menstruation: while some males had relative knowledge of menstruation, they would choose to self-isolate from the female etiquette; other boys who didn't have much menstrual knowledge would make jokes about menstruation due to their immature thoughts.

Other constructions of menstruation rules included social practices and social norms from media, slogans, and advertisements. "The young girl is dedicated to "purity" and "innocence" just when she is discovering in herself and all around her mysterious stirring of life and sex. She was supposed to be white as snow, transparent as crystal."(Beauvoir, 1949) The request of girls to remain pure was also shown in the pads advertisements. The most repeated words they used to describe the pad functions are "clean", "security", and "portable". The most common scene was a beautiful, energetic young teenage girl dancing when she put on pads. Seabiscuit felt confused when she saw this type of presentation of menstruation: "That was gender stigma, why didn't they show other scenes of using pads, such as sports?" Caroline also commented on other pads advertisements: "There was a pad advertisement portrait pads as your boyfriend who took care of you during the menstruation. I didn't get the point cause most men, in reality, disappear in menstruation conversation." These advertisements portrayed a fantasy, veiled demonstrated scene to encourage females to keep clean, purity and elegant during menstruation, which reinforces the rivalry concept "pure-dirty" between menses and pads. However, for both "dirty" menses that should be solved and "pure" pads that are

designed to solve the menstrual problem, females needed to hide both them from the public since it's a private problem(Douglas, 1966).

The examples of concealment of languages, hidden actions, and gender isolation for menstruation showed Sophia's viewpoint of menstrual etiquette, where females were asked to conceal menstruation from the public through restrained rules(1990).

Selection of female products:

The selection of female products also reflects females' and society's changing attitudes and recognition toward menstruation. All of the interviewees used pads as their primary female products, while 7 of them tried tampons during their middle school or college. 2 of them didn't choose to use tampons after their first try. They either failed to put tampons in or felt uncomfortable due to the incorrect position of the tampon. 5 of them switched to a combination of pads and tampons during their menstruation. As Lu said, "I used tampons in days and nights when I got a large volume of menses for the first few days of menstruation. Then switch to smaller pads when the menses volume decreased." Of all interviewees, only Nanako tried all three types of female products: pads, tampons, and lunar cup, and decided to stick on the lunar cup for future use.

Interviewees made a comparison among three types of female products' advantages and disadvantages based on their user experience. Pads were easy to learn and use, and became the most popular novice products. However, they also obtained several disadvantages. "I was not feeling good when I used pads." Lu complained about the pads' function, "My underwear pants got sticky and smelly because of the menses. When I had a large volume of menses, pads couldn't absorb menses quickly and my pants were easily got dirty." Betty made comments about the appearance of pads: "The scope(of the pad) was conspicuous in summer when you wear light and tight pants." Add to that, Yao said pads were inconvenient due to the requirement of high changing frequency. "When I was in middle school and experienced a large volume of menses, I had to change my pad during each class break. Sometimes the teacher would occupy part of the break so every time I changed pads in a rush."

To solve the problems created by pads, many interviewees switched to tampons, a more advanced product. China didn't introduce tampon until recently, so it wasn't widely used and sold in Chinese society. According to Guardian, only 2% of the contemporary Chinese female used tampons in China(2016). The implantable characteristics brought difficulties for girls to put them in. Meteor described her tampon learning as "progress whenever I tried a new tampon. It may feel uncomfortable when you first tried it. But you would find the right place to put it and then got relieved." Almost all tampon users described their positive feelings about tampons as "felt nothing" and "menses suddenly disappeared and I was back to usual." The biggest difficulty for interviewees to use tampons was related to the fear of "putting it into an unknown place." Betty mentioned that she never touched her vagina until now and felt scared about putting a tampon inside "a place that was so small. It would hurt" Betty's thoughts represented a large number of Chinese young generations' thoughts. Besides the fear of hurting oneself, another popular misguidance about tampons was "it would break the hymen. I won't be a virgin after I use a tampon." The lack of physiological and sex knowledge was caused by the disappearance of proper, clear education from family and school. The proportion of correct sex education was increased with an area's economic development and family members' education level(Liu Wenli, 2008). Add to that, traditional Chinese culture which emphasized girls' virginity and purity also became the major block of tampon use. Most believed that girls should "give their first inside sexual experience to their husband." and "became dirty if she had pre-marriage sex activity." The most convincing for a girl's virginity was "bleeding during her first sexual intercourse." So society would worry the implantable character would "take girl's first sexual experience." Alcohol judged these traditional thoughts of virginity are "superstitious beliefs." She mentioned that proper sexual activity may not cause the "first-time blood" for a virgin and hymen had opening holes that allowed menses to go out. "On the one hand, tampon won't break the hymen. On the other hand, females' bodies belonged to themselves, so they had the right to treat their bodies based on their desire. Society didn't have the power to slut shame and put a stigma on females' choices." Most of the

interviewees learned similar tampon knowledge from social media, “Bloggers explained the function behind tampon exhaustively, so I’m no longer be afraid of using it. Girls should learn to treat themselves better.” As a result, tampons not only gave females a more convenient, relaxed user experience but also showed the ideology of liberation from traditional feudal restraints.

The usage of the lunar cup was much rare than tampons in China. Most of the interviewees only heard the name or function of the lunar cup but didn’t want to try it for sanity reasons. Almost all of the interviewees showed hygiene concerns. Since the lunar cup needed very strict environmental hygiene conditions to take off the body, clean, and put back into the body, it’s so complicated to use it and keep it clean. To solve the potential hygiene problem, Nanako described the way she used the lunar cup: “You only need to change a lunar cup twice a day. You needed to wash your hands before you touch them. After the menstruation, you need to use ultraviolet disinfection to keep it tidy. I chose it because it’s really soft and environmentally friendly. It’s cheap because one cup could be used for 5 years.” Based on the strict use conditions of lunar cups, all interviewees agreed that lunar cups couldn’t solve the period poverty problem. The primary design purpose of the lunar cup was to eliminate period poverty for poor females, but poor people didn’t have the eligible environment, including clearwater and disinfection facilities, to use lunar cups(Zhao Weiru, 2019).

Table 2 showed the interviewees’ selection of female products, their menstruation conditions, the money they spend on female products, and the purchasing channel for female products.

Table 2:

Name	Selection of female products	Frequency of changing female products /day	Duration of menstruation	Money spend on female products per month	Purchasing channel of female products
Lu	Pad, tampon	5-6 pieces	5 days	50 RMB	Store, Online

Name	Selection of female products	Frequency of changing female products /day	Duration of menstruation	Money spend on female products per month	Purchasing channel of female products
Meteor	Pad, failed in tampon	3-4 pieces 5-10 pieces	4-5 days	12 RMB	Store, Online
Nanako	Pad, tampon, lunar cup	5-6 pieces	7 days	50 RMB -> 200RMB(5-7 years)	Store, Online
Nine	Pad, tampon	5-7 pieces	4-5 days	35-50 RMB	Store, Online
Alcohol	Pad, tampon	5-6 pieces	7 days	150 RMB	Store, Online
Seabiscuit	pad, failed in tampon	3-4 pieces	5 days	50 RMB	Store, Online
Betty	Pad	6 pieces	5 days	100 RMB	Store
Caroline	Pad	5-6 pieces	5 days	50-100 RMB	Store, Online
Yao	Pad	3-6 pieces	5 days	50 RMB	Store
Mary	Pads, tampon	5 pieces	5 days	75 RMB	Store

The table showed that the maximum money spend on female products per month is 150 RMB, for Alcohol. That's because Alcohol chose import pads and tampons since she was allergic to other local brands. The median number of purchasing money was 50 RMB per month. While some interviewees used the pads bought by their mothers, others needed to use their living expenses to pay this extra expenditure since "my family members forget or have no consciousness to give my extra money to buy female products." While the average living expenses were 1000 RMB for interviewees,

they need to spend 5% of the total money on the necessary goods during their student age. Most of them complained, “the female products are so expensive.” Meteor who use extreme less money on female products: 12 RMB a month. She only got living expenses of 200-300 per month and could buy local niche brands of pads with lower qualities for her student ages. When interviewees grew up, many of them chose to buy online sales female products. “During the online promotion, I would buy a one-year quantity of pads and tampons to save money. Lots of pads were bought one get one free.” As a result, the development of social media not only dispel traditional superstitious thoughts about menstruation but also helped the younger generation deal with the financial crisis.

Problems of menstruation and feminine products:

The most direct influence of menstruation was its inconvenience to females’ bodies. All girls experienced different extents of physical or mental changes before or during menstruation. However, the mainstream emphasized, exaggerated, and criticized these common physiological phenomena. Yao showed examples of how society showed less tolerance for a female who was experiencing menstruation.

It’s normal to feel depressed, stressed, anxious, or irritated before you got your menstruation. Everyone may experience such a period of depression. But the depression caused by other outside reasons, such as getting fired or getting sick, seemed more reasonable to society. While people showed sympathy and understanding for an angry, crazy man who just lost his job, they would ask a girl who was experienced severe dysmenorrhea to control her temper.

Furthermore, if people hold cultural beliefs that the menstrual cycle causes women to be physically (menstrual phase) or mentally (premenstrual phase) disordered, then the stigma of menstruation also marks women as ill, disabled, out-of-control, unfeminine, or even crazy (Chrisler 2008; Chrisler and

Caplan 2002). As a result, people would use menstruation as a descriptive word to criticize women's behavior. Once a female showed intense emotion or queried others, especially males, aggressively, the other people would ask her if she was experiencing menstruation. The hidden meaning showed that society regarded the feminine to appear weak, futile, and docile (Beauvoir, 1949). Female was asked to repress their spontaneity and played feminine role formulated by society. The abnormal and deviant actions during menstruation then became female illnesses that need to be solved by females themselves.

While society stigmatized menstruation as a symbol of deviance, menstruation itself may bring more severe biological side effects to women. About half of the interviewees said they had experienced dysmenorrhoea since their menarche. While the light effect of dysmenorrhoea included faint abdominal pain and diarrhea, more severe dysmenorrhoea would lead to severe abdominal pain last for hours, nausea, cold sweat, and fatigue (Ji Bo, 2008). Primary dysmenorrhoea created a negative influence on females' daily lives due to its high incidence and severe side effect. Although pain killers could effectively relieve dysmenorrhea caused by increasing testosterone, most girls still didn't choose to eat it. Mary had experienced extreme dysmenorrhoea every month since primary school, but didn't eat painkillers until she became an undergraduate student:

I couldn't do anything when I was experiencing dysmenorrhoea. I needed to ask for a sick leave once a month when I was in middle school ages. At that time, I knew painkillers such as ibuprofen could solve my problem, but I hesitated. I thought it may cause addiction or drug resistance if I ate them once a month. So I would rather endure such pain in my bed.

After I got into undergraduate school, I saw my classmates eat painkillers and it helped to improve her dysmenorrhoea. So I also tried a painkiller and it works well.

Now, I didn't need to suffer that monthly torment anymore and could embrace normal life.

While some interviewees chose to not eat painkillers due to drug properties and potential negative side effects, others were restrained by guardians' superstitious beliefs. Painkillers would cause menopause,

and infertility were two main misconceptions held by the older generation. So they asked their daughters to bear dysmenorrhea to avoid the infertility risks. These superstitious thoughts were common in underdevelopment areas, while people cared about procreating.

Traditional Chinese thoughts left more cultural problems besides false cognition of painkillers. Although the international era was developing rapidly and gave the Chinese young female generation a more open-minded public opinion environment, the remaining stigma of menstrual taboo and menstrual shame still restrained females from different aspects. All of the interviewees said that they didn't realize they grew up in a menstrual shame culture until they knew the concept of menstrual shame from the internet. Betty gave a series of examples of menstrual shame:

Girls were afraid to show pads in the public area. When I bought pads in the store, the cashier deliberately used a black, opaque plastic bag to hide the pads. My parents never discuss menstruation formally with me, especially my father. The advertisements use blue liquid to show menses. The various nicknames of menstruation. The lack of menstrual education in primary school...Menstrual shame was everywhere in our culture and everyone seemed to get used to it.

The menstrual shame culture seemed cultivated in Chinese society. Women showed self-consciousness and hyper-vigilance concerns about the revelation of their's menstrual status(Oxley, 1998). With menstrual etiquette, self-monitoring women tried to hide their menstrual status so they could look their best in public areas (Foucault, 1979). Objectification theory (Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997) may help to explain why certain women are self-conscious about menstruation and hide or eliminate their periods. In the male-dominated culture, women's bodies were routinely sexually objectified and criticized through the lens of the male gaze. Women's bodies were considered as her father's or husbands' wealth, and their purity and dignity were constructed and constrained to serve the patriarchal society (Shen, 2005). The main society used taboo and shame to alienate women from their bodies, and inherited these thoughts through generations. The menstrual shame concepts within the

mainstream environment created pressure and restrictions on the open-minded young generations. Yao held a pessimistic thought to break the menstrual shame status quo:

I grew up in menstrual shame and didn't think much about it. I felt uncomfortable and tired of those restrictions and fetters. However, when I realized my uncomfortable sense was created by menstrual shame from the mainstream, I found it's difficult for individuals to combat and change the deep-rooted traditional thoughts. Although I knew those thoughts were wrong, I was still afraid to hold pads on the street fair and square because of others' attention and judgments.

Another problem created by menstrual shame was period poverty, which was the lack of sufficient resources needed to manage menses, such as toilet, bathing, and laundering facilities; general menstrual education or information; and basic menstrual management supplies like tampons and pads (Rossouw, 2021). According to the National development plan for children in poor areas(2014-2020), there were 4 million Chinese female girls who lived in a period of poverty. Meteor was grow up in a rural area and said that "period poverty" was designed to describe her childhood experience. She could only afford pads in bulk that were sold in the food market. "The average price was 0.2 RMB per piece. It was cheap. No one guaranteed it was safe. But that was the best choice for me." Nine also grew up in rural areas. She pointed out that the sanitary condition of the school's toilet was very poor. "There was no door for the cubicle. No flush key for water. You could see pads with menses being thrown on the floor. It was dirty and smelly in summer and no one wanted to use it." However. There wasn't an efficient solution to solve the period of poverty. Caroline said she donated money to an NGO program that provided free feminine products for rural girls. But she also believed her and NGO's power was too little to solve period poverty problem:

Only a small group of people realized this problem(period poverty). It was hard to change the status quo if the government didn't involve and revised related policies. However, since our government was made by man, they couldn't admit there was this

problem that needed to be solved.

Period poverty reflected females' low social status. While Chinese health insurance covered male circumcision, the expropriation tax for female products tax was still 13% and much higher than other necessities. Gloria Steinem pointed out that if men could menstruate, menstruation would become an enviable, boast-worthy, masculine event. She suggested, for example, that "sanitary supplies would be federally funded and free."(1978). As a result, menstruation became a biological, cultural, economic, and political problem that only belonged to women.

Discussion:

In my research, I conducted in-depth interviews with 10 Chinese young females to explore their knowledge, attitudes, experiences, and problems with menstruation and menstrual products. Surrounded by the main research question, I divided my research into 4 themes.

The first theme, knowledge of menstruation and feminine products, showed young females normally get various menstruation knowledge from their family, peers, classes, and social media. The most direct learning method of menstruation was from the family since parents held the responsibility of raising and educating children. However, the ambiguous, evasive, and absent family menstrual education indicated Chinese parents' dereliction of guardian responsibility. Other Chinese girls learned menstrual knowledge from their peers, while they noticed menses or pads unconsciously. Similar to the family education, the menstrual words and actions used by peers were also vague and concealable, which would create mis-consciousness for ignorant girls. Due to the different education levels and economic developments, the form of menstrual-related classes also varied across the country. While developed areas obtained more detailed and comprehensive physiological hygiene courses, developing areas usually skipped related courses about menstruation. As a result, the lack of clear, comprehensive, and valid menstrual knowledge created confusion and fear for girls when they dealt with the unknown bleeding physiological phenomenon. The types of knowledge also varied through platforms. While

family and peers provided general, subjective menstrual notes and restraints based on the inherited traditional Chinese experience and thoughts, schools and social media provided more scientific, comprehensive, and detailed explanations of the formation of menstruation, the proper treatment of menses, and broader selections of female products. Social media provided opportunities for girls to screen, judge, filter, and compare various menstrual information from massive social media platforms, and learn from scientific articles and videos. It helped teenagers correct invalid recognition of menstruation knowledge learned from their peers or family, and eliminate potential physical and mental health problems.

The second theme, attitudes, and experience toward menstruation examined the social construction process of their menstrual attitudes and experiences within the Chinese social and cultural context. For menarche, girls often showed neutral moods, anxiety about abnormal arrival times, and fear of growing up, while none of them felt shame for their menses. However, broader society regarded menstruation as a private problem that should be solved by females themselves. To conceal the menstruation phenomenon, society created a series of restrictions and rules on menstrual females' actions, languages, and interactions with others (Laws, 1990). In the family, only the mother would teach the general limitations of menstruation and the usage of pads, while the father disappeared in the menstrual etiquette. The avoidance of male characteristics in menstruation education created gender consciousness for girls, and let them believe that menstruation was a private thing that they should conceal from the public. As a result, girls would conceal their menstruation status in other public areas, such as school. The languages and actions for girls to use were deliberately designed to hide their menstrual status and related feminine products among girl-girl interactions and girl-boy interactions. Males, who inherited the male-dominated society, held default attitudes to maintain and promote the restricted rules build for females. While advertisement worked as a representation of culture, it also portrayed menstruation as a girl's problem that needed to be solved. As a result, normal menstruation was considered a dirty illness that polluted a female's pure body, which created a contradictory

relationship between females and menstruation, “purity vs. filth”, and urged females to solve it. The deviant, abnormal identity of menstruation was built through social constructions and decided by mainstream society. The creation of “don’t to do” menstruation rules and the “conceal your problem” concept constrained young modern generations’ freedom and width of knowledge through social norms, rules, and experience from generation to generation.

The third theme, selection of the female product, presented characteristics of different female products, explained the cultural and economic dynamics behind them, and reflected girls’ awakening feminist thoughts. Pads were the most commonly used feminine products for girls due to their simple usage functions, but they also contained a series of problems. With the development of the network, young generations had more opportunities to get in contact with various types of feminine products, such as tampons and pads. Tampon enhanced user experience and solved problems, such as exudation risk and high changing frequency. However, the implantable design of tampons offended the traditional Chinese value of “virginity” and was refused by mainstream society. Other girls, especially virgins, refused to try tampons because they were either afraid to break their hymen, or scared to touch their vaginas. These thoughts were caused by the lack of scientific knowledge due to the conservative environment, while girls were alienated from their bodies and scared of self-exploration. The lunar cup was originally designed to solve the period poverty problem, but it was impractical in reality due to its strict hygiene requirement. For the purchasing money spend on female products, all-girls needed to spend about 5% of their living expenses on feminine products, while most of their parents neglect these necessary goods. To save money, most girls bought staled feminine products from E-commerce platforms nowadays. The development of social networks not only broke the stigma and bias toward virgins, awaken females’ feminist thoughts, but also provide an economic guarantee for the purchase of necessities.

The final theme indicated biological, cultural, economic, social, and political problems related to menstruation. The side effect of menstruation caused menstruation to become a stigma description

word for females' emotional or aggressive actions. That also represented female characters' subordinate stereotypes in a male-dominated society. The other biological phenomenon dysmenorrhoea was also ignored or suppressed by superstitious beliefs. Add to that, the whole society works together as a machine to force women to live in fixed templates designed by the society. Social and cultural norms behind menstruation brought shame and suppression to females, lowering their class status to the second sex (Beauvoir, 1949). The concealment, depreciation, and neglect of menstruation created an economic problem: period poverty. The lack of money support, filthy sanitary environment, and lack of general menstrual education brought inconvenience for poor girls. The high tampon tax and period of poverty then became a political problem created by the patriarchal society, where females' voices, rights, and needs were suppressed by the male domination groups (Bourdieu, 1990).

My research showed contemporary examples of how Chinese young females' menstruation experience. Lived within the rapid development of information society, their viewpoints were influenced and shaped by both traditional Chinese thoughts and the emerging feminist thought, many of them had already seen the problems and restrictions caused by the male-dominated society, but believed it's difficult to change the traditional ideas. These problems all related to the ways in which females saw their bodies and how society looked at their bodies. Instead of concealing, hiding, and shaming the normal menstruation phenomenon, a more healthy, rational, and scientific is to show attention, respect, and care for it. Obviously, the scientific road of regards menstruation as a women's normal physiological development was still very long.

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