



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BODY IMAGE SATISFACTION AND SELF-ESTEEM IN ADOLESCENT GIRLS

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Abstract

This review outlines the present research on the relationship between self-esteem and body image satisfaction in adolescent girls. A sample of 100 adolescent girls was randomly selected and were given two questionnaires; The Body Shape questionnaire by Cooper et al and Self-esteem scale by Rosenberg. The scores were correlated using Pearson Product-moment correlation. It was found that 36% of girls are satisfied with their body image, 37% of girls have positive body image and 6% of girls are dissatisfied with their body image. It was also found that 12% of girls have very high self-esteem, 69% Of girls have positive self-esteem. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was calculated to be -0.50, thus establishing the negative relation between self-esteem and body image dissatisfaction. Results indicated that higher the body image dissatisfaction, lower the level of self-esteem. Results support calls for early educational intervention to help girls to develop positive body image and to deconstruct distorted images of ideal women from various sources. Further research could be done to relate body image with other variable such as eating attitudes, portrayal of women images in media, exercising patterns.

Key words: body image, body image satisfaction and dissatisfaction, self-esteem, adolescence.

Introduction

Body image is a person's perception of the aesthetics or sexual attractiveness of their own body. The phrase body image was first coined by the Austrian neurologist and psychoanalyst Paul Scindler in his book 'The image and appearance of the human body' (1935). A person's body image is thought to be in part, the product of their personal experiences, personality and various social and cultural forces. The body is the first thing perceived in social interaction. The body is always in the limelight and opens to other people's evaluations. Thus, the body image is crucial for the development of the body self-respect and general self-respect (Pokrajac-Bulian & Zivcic-Becirevic, 2005). The body image represents a psychological construct with cognitive, behavioural and perceptual dimensions, including attitudes regarding people's own bodies.

The development of body image is a lifelong process (Tantleff-Dunn & Gokee, 2002). The human body constantly changes from the birth till death. The changes in appearances and physical competencies are intensive particularly in puberty. The rapid physical changes occurred along with the maturation in the puberty have important effects on the body image (Cash, 2002). The body image in adolescence is an inter penetrated multidimensional structure which is integrated with identity formation. For females and males; all of the issues such as rapid growing and development, sexual maturation, identity formation and strengthening the sexual role in puberty affect the development of the body image.

The adolescence is the period in which the anxieties on the body images are more distinct (Stice & Shaw, 2002). The physical and psychological changes in puberty increase the strength of the

focus on the body. In this period, the adolescents develop images about what their bodies look like. During adolescence, the anxiety on the body is strong. However, especially in puberty this anxiety gets stronger than the end of the adolescence (Wright, 1989).

Self-esteem is the critical psychological factor that is closely related to mental and/or physical health and social behaviors (Mann, Hosman, Schaalma & Devries, 2004). Rosenberg (1965) defined self-esteem as “A favourable or unfavourable attitude towards the self”. High self-esteem is related to better health, positive social behavior, success and satisfaction, whereas low self-esteem is associated with risky health behaviors and social problems such as depression, anxiety, eating disorders and suicidal tendencies (Mann et al., 2004).

One of a broad range of critical factors that determine self-esteem is physical attractiveness, an attribute considered particularly important by adolescence. High self-esteem is shown in numerous research studies to protect against body dissatisfaction (Tiggemann & Williamson, 2000). Rosenberg (1965) describes a person of high self-esteem as an individual, who respects himself, considers himself worthy and not better than others, recognizes his limitations and expects to grow and improve. According to Glasser (1969) the most important aspects of self-esteem are feeling of belonging or of being needed, a sense of being accepted, and a feeling of being a competent person. On the other hand, a person with a low self-esteem shows self rejection, self dissatisfaction, self competent, lacks self respect, and paints a disagreeable self picture (Glasser). When youth reach adolescence with a negative self image, they get a feeling of ‘being stuck’ (Morganett, 1990). Because self-esteem is especially vulnerable during the period from 12 to 14 years, early adolescence is the ideal time for intervention.

Our society today portrays a very twisted image of beauty for men and women of all ages. When adolescents view these images they get torn between their own actual body image and their perceived body image and the result could be devastating. Self esteem and body image are the most prominent and important aspects among adolescents. The study will find the relationship between self esteem and body image satisfaction. The study of level of self esteem and body image satisfaction will help parents, teachers and counselors in identifying factors that may become hurdle in the proper development of adolescents.

Methodology

Method used: Descriptive survey method was used for collection of data.

Sample: measuring the entire population is impracticable though not entirely impossible. So one has to select the sample from the population concerned. The sample of 100 adolescent girls of the age group 12-16 years of Rohini area were selected by random sampling.

Tools used and description of tools:

The selection of the tools is very important in research. For present study and for collection of quantitative data, two scales were used:

- Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (1965)
- Body Shape Questionnaire by Cooper et al (1987)

Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (1965)

This self esteem scale was developed by Morris Rosenberg in 1965 to collect quantitative data about self-esteem of an individual. This scale is a self-report measure of self-esteem. This 10-item scale assesses an individual's feelings of self-worth when the individual

compares himself or herself to other people by measuring both positive and negative feelings about self. It was designed to represent a continuum of self-worth, with statements that are endorsed by individuals with low self-esteem to statements that are endorsed only by persons with high self-esteem.

Reliability: the test-retest reliability of the scale ranges from .82 to .85 and internal consistency ranges from .77 to .88.

Validity: validity of the scale is the extent to which a measure captures what it is intended to measure. The criterion validity of the scale is .55 and is correlated -.64 with anxiety and -.54 with depression.

Scoring: All items were answered using a 4-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree (4 points) to strongly disagree (1 point). Items 2,5,6,8,9 are reversed scored. Give “strongly disagree” 1 point, “disagree” 2 points, “agree” 3 points and “strongly agree” 4 points. Sum scores for all ten items. Keep scores on a continuous scale. Higher score indicates higher self esteem.

Body Shape Questionnaire by Cooper et al (1987)

The Body Shape Questionnaire (BSQ) scale measure the concerns related to one’s body shape and is based upon the notion that disturbed body image is a central feature of eating disorder. This scale consists of 34 items and is widely used to assess body dissatisfaction and treatment of eating disorders (Cooper et al). for the purpose of this study, I used a modified version of the scale consisting of 14 items to measure concerns about body image dissatisfaction and the experience of feeling fat among adolescents.

Reliability and Validity: Dowson and Henderson (2001) used the modified version for their study and found the internal reliability to be 0.93.

Scoring: All items were answered using a 6-point Likert scale, responses ranging from Never (1 point) to Always (6 points). Sum scores for all 14 items to get final score. Higher scores will indicate higher levels of body image dissatisfaction and lower scores will indicate higher levels of body image satisfaction.

Statistical Techniques Used

Statistical techniques are employed on the raw scores to make it more meaningful and to test the significance of scores. Keeping in view the nature of the study and objectives, Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to study the relation between body image satisfaction and self-esteem.

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient is a measure of the linear dependence between two variables, giving a value between +1 and -1 inclusive, where +1 is total positive linear correlation, 0 is no linear correlation and -1 is total negative linear correlation. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient when applied to a sample is commonly represented by the letter 'r' and may be referred to as sample correlation coefficient or sample Pearson correlation coefficient.

Results and Conclusion

Major findings of my research are:

- 36% of adolescent girls are highly satisfied with their body image, i.e., they have lower body image dissatisfaction.
- 37% of girls are satisfied with their body image.
- Nearly 6% of girls are dissatisfied with their body image, i.e., they have high body image dissatisfaction.
- 12% of girls have very high self-esteem, 69% of girls have positive self-esteem.
- Only 2% of girls have very low self-esteem.
- There is negative relationship between body image dissatisfaction and self-esteem, i.e., if girl is dissatisfied with her body image, she has low self-esteem and if girl is satisfied with her body image, she has high self-esteem.
- The girls feel fat about themselves when they are with peers or are in public. They feel good about themselves when they are alone.

Carl Rogers has rightly stated that “As no one else can know how we perceive, we are the best experts on ourselves.” The present research was done to study the relationship between self esteem and body image satisfaction in adolescent girls. It was found that there exists the negative relation between body image dissatisfaction and self esteem. Higher the body image dissatisfaction, lower the level of self-esteem and higher the body image satisfaction, higher the self-esteem.

The study has useful implications for parents, teachers and school counselors for identifying the adolescent girls with negative body image. If the student is dissatisfied with her body image, it will affect her self-esteem which may result in poor development of self

confidence, adjustment problem with peer groups and family members, unhealthy eating habits and many more.

Adolescence is the period of turmoil where the child undergoes numerous changes be it physical, social, cognitive, emotional. This is the phase where her true personality develops. The child has to be taken good care of and has to be supported by her parents and peers. The physical changes in girl during adolescence puberty period may led her to develop some negative feelings about her own body as these changes are drastic and fast. Adolescence is also the stage of self decoration, when they observe other females be it models, women portrayed in media and adult females who are beautiful, their own self-image gets distorted. This may lead to distortion in their actual image and ideal image, which further leads to problems.

Body image dissatisfaction is seen to undermine self-confidence, contribute to depression and lead to the onset of a range of physical, emotional and societal problems. Promoting positive body image is fundamental to addressing other social and public health programs facing young problems. Positive body image was identified as an important element of emotional well being and there is a need to equip both children and young people and important gatekeepers such as parents and teachers with the tools to deal with the social and cultural pressures to conform to unrealistic beauty ideals.

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