

Body Image, Self-Consciousness and Fear of Negative Evaluation in Adolescents: A Mini Review

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ABSTRACT

Adolescence which is characterized as onset of puberty includes physical as well as psychological changes in both boys and girls. This is the most challenging time for teenagers to understand and deal with bodily changes and accept them. The study explored the relationship of body image with reference to self-consciousness and fear of negative evaluation in adolescence. 220 participants were included in the study, 110 boys and 110 girls respectively. The results highlighted positive relationship of body image with self-consciousness and fear of negative evaluation. Significant gender difference was also found in fear of negative evaluation. Understanding issues and problems faced by adolescents can help to develop better interventions plans and outcomes. Considering negative body image issues should be compared with psychiatric controlled group of anxiety, eating disorders and obesity which have body image issue as a major concern.

Keywords: Body image, Self-consciousness, Fear of negative evaluation, Adolescents

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence which is characterized as onset of puberty includes physical as well as psychological changes in both boys and girls. This development phase between childhood and adulthood is often described as a time full of turbulence and confusion for teenagers. It is to be noted that every individual goes through these changes, but the impact of these changes is different for each one of them, dependent on the nature and nurture of the adolescent [1]. The changes can be emotional, psychological, physical, or cognitive in nature.

Teenagers are depicted as stereotypically frustrated souls, because of the hormonal rush in their body, who might engage in risk-taking behavior, rebel and fight against parents, and experience attraction. These factors are found in all primates and cultures in the developmental phase of an adolescent.

Body image

Body image is an integration of an overall identity or self-worth of an individual. It is defined as the way individual feels about their body and themselves. Body image has a huge impact on the psychological wellbeing of an individual especially teenagers [2]. Explored to understand the conceptual gaps in body image and found that people have stereotypical views about body image of an individual, self-perception of positive or negative body image. If they have positive body image, they are likely to be more confident,

well-adjusted and maintain healthy relationships with others as compared to teenagers with negative body image.

Negative approach towards body can lead to social anxiety, consciousness, and depressive symptoms in them. This can cause psychiatric illness like eating disorders, substance use or body dysmorphic disorder.

Self-consciousness

Self-consciousness is defined as preoccupation with oneself. It is one of the major contributors to negative body image. Higher self-consciousness is associated with feeling of being watched by others, experiencing social anxiety and shyness. It is often associated with feeling embarrassed due to what an individual feels he/she looks like which leads to lack of pride and lower self-esteem and confidence.

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Fear of negative evaluation

It is defined as “apprehension about others” evaluation. Distress over their negative evaluation and expectations that others would evaluate him/her negatively [3]. Individual with higher FNE tends to seek social validation and also avoids situations where she/he feels evaluated. FNE can be a contributor for developing negative body image or vice versa along with other mental health problems. Psychological distress, poor body image leads to fear of negative evaluation. Fear of negative appearance evaluation is a risk factor of eating disorders. There is a significant association among physique social anxiety, body weight, eating habits and FNE [4].

METHODOLOGY

The aim of the study was to explore body image with reference to self-consciousness and fear of negative evaluation.

Hypotheses

H1: There will be a significant relationship between body image and self-consciousness.

H2: There will be a significant relationship between Body image and Fear of negative evaluation.

H3: There will be a significant gender difference in fear of negative evaluation.

H4: There will be a significant gender difference in self-consciousness.

Sample

220 participants were selected for the study, 110 boys and 110 girls respectively from the age group of 16-18 years. The data was collected from various schools of Delhi/NCR from Indian population.

Tools Employed

The multidimensional Body-Self Relation Questionnaire [5]: It is a self-report inventory consisting of 69 items which aims to measure self-attitudinal aspects of body image. This scale has two dispositional dimensions- evaluation and orientation.

Fear of Negative Evaluation- Revised [6]: It is a 12 item self-report measure.

Self-Consciousness scale Revised [7]: It is a self-report measure consisting 22 items with three dimensions- private self-consciousness, public self-consciousness and social anxiety.

PROCEDURE

Data was collected from schools of Delhi NCR, with permission obtained from the head of the institutions. Rapports were formed with the participants and were explained to complete the questionnaire. Confidentiality was ensured throughout the administration process [8]. They were

informed about the purpose of the study after the administration and seminar was conducted to make them aware about body image and psychological functioning.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The objective of the study was to see the relationship between body image and psychological factors like self-consciousness and fear of negative evaluation [9]. Also, to see the gender difference on these factors.

Hypotheses 1 of the study was accepted as there was a significant correlation of body image and self-consciousness among adolescence (0.40). Self-consciousness in adolescent girls in relation to body image was found high as they had high drive and inspiration to be thin [10]. Hypothesis 2 of the study was accepted as there was a significant correlation of body image and fear of negative evaluation (0.30). Many empirical studies have shown people with high public self-consciousness and social anxiety tend to show bodily symptoms and negative attitude towards self and in social gatherings [11].

Hypotheses 3 was also accepted as there was a significant gender difference in fear of negative evaluation (Mean for Male: 32.69, Mean for female: 35.87; $p=0.01$) [12]. The way individual perceives situation varies for both male and female. Females are more prone to experience negative emotions and fear of evaluation when faced with criticisms, opinions and suggestions as compared to men.

Hypotheses 4 was rejected as there was no significant difference in self-consciousness (Mean for male: 37.5, Mean for female: 38). Private and public self-consciousness is similar for both males and females [13]. Boys who are underweight or obese, with below average height have social anxiety whereas women with darker skin tone, obesity or masculine voice experience public self-consciousness [14].

CONCLUSION

Despite the work done in the present study, there as many limitations that future researches or studies should look at. Interventions on understanding and insight on this concept can help in changing eating habits and adding alternative techniques like meditation and yoga as serve as solution to develop positive self.

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