

## RELATIONSHIP OF BODY IMAGE WITH SELF ESTEEM AND DEPRESSION OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

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### Abstract

The purpose of this research study was to investigate the relationship of body image with self esteem and depression of college students. Hundred male college students from north 24 Pargana District of West Bengal were selected as subjects for this study whose age range between 18 to 20 years. Body shape questionnaire (BSQ-8), Center for epidemiologic studies depression scale (CES-D) and Rosenberg self-esteem scale were used to find out the relationship of body image with self esteem and depression of male college students. To find out the relationship of body image with self esteem and depression, Pearson product moment correlation coefficient statistical method was applied at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the study showed that significant relationship exist among these three variables. Improvement of body image is strongly recommended.

**Key words:** Body image, Self esteem and Depression.

### INTRODUCTION

Body image, and contributions to a person's body image, is often a topic of debate. Research has found that women tend to compare themselves to media images, and this comparison has contributed to the quest for the perfect body type. It was also found that those who failed to live up to the body images their thought were perfect experienced of higher levels of depression (Van den Berg, Paxton, Keery, Wall, Guo, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2007). Furthermore, Franzoi and Herzog (1987) began researching what men and women find attractive across the same sex and in the opposite sex. They measured body-esteem in both women and men. Aspects of the female body included weight concern judgments as a predominant factor of female attractiveness, while upper body strength was the most predominant judgment in male attractiveness. The researchers also found that women were more judgmental, and found themselves to be less attractive, compared to men, who were less judgmental of themselves (Franzoi & Herzog, 1987). Culture also plays an important role in how a woman perceives her body image. McCarthy (1990) proposed a model in which the westernized "thin ideal" was causing a decrease in women's body perceptions and increasing their incidence of depression.

Body image and self esteem have always been in direct relationship. The fact is that both low and high self esteem can be caused by the way we perceive ourselves. In a world where the physical appearance occupies such a high position, there is no wonder that our mind starts believing that if we are not perfect, we are not good enough.

The idea of perfection changes all the time in the modern world and what was once considered to be a perfect body can be changed in a split second. If, in the past, a woman with well defined forms was thought of as being beautiful, these days she is seen as being overweight according to the new standards.

These changes and many other factors that have to do with the perception of body image can have a great influence on self esteem. People who suffer from low self esteem are always under the impression that, whatever they do, it is not good enough, and, whatever they choose, they can never look perfect. In fact, the desire for perfection is one of the consequences of the body image and self esteem relationship.

Body image is closely connected to a person's self-esteem. While men tend to obtain their self-esteem through achievements, power status and control, women's self-concept and self-esteem is often based on desirability and attractiveness. Thus, women are under greater pressure than men to lose weight. Body image refers to the picture that a person forms of their body in their mind. This may have no bearing at all on actual appearance. Physical appearance differs in meaning and importance for males and females; concerns surrounding body weight and shape also differ. Many women want to be slim, since slim is regarded as beautiful, while being overweight is viewed negatively.

The relationship between body image and depression has also been found in a number of different ethnicities (Davis & Katzman, 1997). Davis and Katzman examined the relationship between depression and body image on Chinese men and women and concluded that women had significantly lower body images and higher depression levels, when compared to men. Women also indicated that they wanted to weigh less, whereas men wanted to have a more muscular build. Their results were similar to those in European American samples (Davis & Katzman, 1997). Similar results were found among Swedish, Australian and American adolescents (Ivarsson, Svalander, Litlere, & Nevonen, 2006; Kostanski & Gullone, 1998; Stice & Bearman, 2001).

Depression and self-esteem are intertwined and contribute to negative affect. Research has shown how self-esteem influences depression, and some studies have suggested that depression works negatively to decrease self-esteem. Understanding how each of these conditions affects the other is essential in order to effectively treat depression and other conditions that co-occur such as anxiety. In an attempt to determine the nature of the relationship between depression and self-esteem with body image, the researcher has undertaken such study.

Depression is a state of low mood and aversion to activity that can affect a person's thoughts, behavior, feelings and physical well-being. Depressed people may feel sad, anxious, empty, hopeless, worried, helpless, worthless, guilty, irritable, or restless. Depression may be described as feeling sad, blue, unhappy, miserable, or down in the dumps. Most of us feel this way at one time or another for short periods. The term self-esteem comes from a Greek word meaning "reverence for self." The "self" part of self-esteem pertains to the values, beliefs and attitudes that we hold about ourselves. In psychology, the term self-esteem is used to describe a person's overall sense of self-worth or personal value. Self-esteem is often seen as a personality trait, which means that it tends to be stable and enduring. Self esteem means loving and feeling good about yourself unconditionally. The meaning of high self esteem is critical in your life. Self esteem is that feeling at the centre of your being of self-worth, self-confidence, and self-respect. High self esteem means that you feel good about yourself.

Self-esteem is a term in psychology to reflect a person's overall evaluation or appraisal of his or her own worth. Self-esteem encompasses beliefs (for example, "I am competent", "I am worthy") and emotions such as triumph, despair, pride and shame. (Hewitt, John P. 2009)

Body image is a person's mental opinion or description of his or her own physical appearance. It also involves the reactions of others toward that person's physical body based on what is perceived by that person. A person's body image is thought to be, in part, a product of his or her personal experiences, personality, and various social and cultural forces. The concept of body image slowly develops over time, generally beginning in infancy. Perception of body image among people can widely range from very negative to very positive. Depending on age and other factors, the degree of concern with body image can also widely vary among an individual.

The concept of body image is used in numerous disciplines, including psychology, medicine, psychiatry, psychoanalysis, philosophy and cultural and feminist studies. The term is also often used in the media.

## METHOD AND MATERIALS

### Subjects:

The study was descriptive survey type. Hundred male college students from north 24 Pargana District of West Bengal were selected randomly as subjects for this study, whose age range from 18 to 20 years. Standardised questionnaires were used for measuring the depression, body image and self esteem of the college students.

### Tests/Tools:

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, body shape questionnaire (BSQ) and Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale were used to collect the data for this study.

#### 1. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale:

It was used to assess the self esteem of college students. Self-esteem was assessed using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), which comprises 10 statements, 5 positively worded and 5 negatively worded. Participants rate the extent to which they agree with each statement on a four-point Likert scale. The scale ranges from 0-30. Scores between 15 and 25 are within normal range; scores below 15 suggest low self-esteem.

#### 2. Body Shape Questionnaire (BSQ-8):

For the measurement of body image Body shape questionnaire (BSQ) was used for this study. The BSQ is a self-report measure of the body shape preoccupations typical of bulimia nervosa and anorexia nervosa. It was first reported by Cooper, P.J., M.J. Taylor, Z. Cooper and C.G. Fairburn (1986). It measured by 6 point scale, "Never" = 1 and "Always" = 6. Less than 19 scores indicate no concern with shape, between 19 to 25 indicate mild concern with shape, and between 26 to 33 indicate moderate concern with shape and over 33 indicate marked concern with shape.( Evans, C. and Dolan, B. 1993).

#### 3. Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D):

The CES-D is a valuable tool for identifying a group at-risk for depression and for studying the relationship between depressive symptoms and other variables, was used in the current study to assess level of depressive symptoms. CES-D is a 20-item self-report scale designed to measure multiple dimensions of affective symptomatology and current depressive symptoms within the last week in the general population. Each item is rated on 4-point Likert-type scale indicating the degree of their occurrence during the last week. The items' responses range from 0 (rarely or none of the time) to 3 (most all of the time). A total score is ranged from 0 to 60. A score of 22 or higher indicates probable Major Depression.

## STATISTICAL PROCEDURE

Pearson product moment Correlation coefficient statistical method was used to find out the relationship of body image with self esteem and depression.

## FINDINGS

**Table -1**

**Mean, Standard Deviation and Coefficient Correlation of Body Image with Depression**

| VARIABLES  | SUBJECT | MEAN  | S.D. | R        |
|------------|---------|-------|------|----------|
| BODY IMAGE | 100     | 31.37 | 7.11 | - 0.203* |
| DEPRESSION | 100     | 23.82 | 6.24 |          |

\* Significant at 0.05 level of Significance  $r_{(0.05)(98)} = 0.195$

**Table -2**

**Mean, Standard Deviation and Coefficient Correlation of Body Image with Self Esteem**

| VARIABLES   | SUBJECT | MEAN  | S.D. | R      |
|-------------|---------|-------|------|--------|
| BODY IMAGE  | 100     | 31.37 | 7.11 | 1.198* |
| SELF ESTEEM | 100     | 23.61 | 1.12 |        |

\* Significant at 0.05 level of Significance  $r_{(0.05)(98)} = 0.195$

## CONCLUSION

In this study, aimed to investigate the relationship of body image with self esteem and depression among the male college subjects. It was found from the above statistical calculation that a strong negatively significant relationship exists between body image and depression where as positively significant relationship exist between Body image and self esteem among the male college students.

Evidence has been found that suggests a relation between an individual's body image, self-esteem, and self-concept. Many factors are related to an individual's self-concept, but self-worth (esteem) has been found to have great significance in this area. Negative body image tends to correlate with negative behavior towards one's self ("Body Attitude", 2001).

Research in the area of self-concept has provided new insight to the links between ethnicity, body image, and self-concept. Research has been consistent in finding that body image, self-esteem, and self-concept are correlated to some extent. (Henriques & Calhoun, 1999).

The current study supports existing research in finding that there is a relationship between certain areas associated with body image and depression (Davis & Katzman, 1997; Ivarsson et al., 2006; Stice & Bearman, 2001). A more negative body image is related to lower self-esteem. (Guinn B, Semper T, Jorgensen L, Skaggs S. 1997)

Depression and self-esteem are intertwined and contribute to negative effect. Research has shown how self-esteem influences depression, and some studies have suggested that depression works negatively to decrease self-esteem.

It was also found that those who failed to live up to the body images they thought were perfect experienced higher levels of depression (Van den Berg, Paxton, Keery, Wall, Guo, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2007).The current study supports existing research in finding that there is a relationship between certain areas associated with body image and depression (Davis & Katzman, 1997; Ivarsson et al., 2006; Stice & Bearman, 2001).

Body image involves our perception, imagination, emotions, and physical sensations of and about our bodies. It is not static- but ever changing; sensitive to changes in mood, environment, and physical experience. It is not based on fact. It is psychological in nature, and much more influenced by self-esteem than by actual physical attractiveness as judged by others. It is not inborn, but learned. This learning occurs in the family and among peers, but these only reinforce what is learned and expected culturally so developing your healthy body image is strongly recommended.

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