

A Comparative Study of Body Image and Academic Behaviour

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ABSTRACT

The review of present research on the relationship between body image and academic behaviour among adolescence boys and girls. The study was carried out in the schools of Chandigarh on a sample of 100 adolescents (50 Males + 50 Females) from Schools were randomly selected. The tools used in the investigation were the socio-personal profile developed by the investigator, The Body Image Satisfaction and Academic Behaviour Scale. The finding revealed irrespective of caste and religion. Significant relation found between the male and female in body image and academic behaviour where as highly significant positive correlation between body image and academic behaviour.

Key Words : Body image, Academic behaviour

INTRODUCTION

Body image:

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. Human society has at all times placed great value on beauty of the human body, but a person's perception of their own body may not correspond to society's standards. It is a multidimensional construct consisting of perceptual, cognitive, affective, and behavioural elements (Wertheim and Paxton, 2011). Muth and Cash (1997) conceptualized body image in two self-evaluative ways including satisfaction or dissatisfaction with one's physical attributes and experience of discrete emotions. The concept of body image as a psychological phenomenon was initially established in 1935, by the Austrian psychiatrist Paul Ferdinand Schilder (1886-1940), who said that the mental images that individuals have of their own bodies explain the way their bodies are introduced to them. Body image can have a wide range of psychological effects and physical effects. Throughout history, it has been extremely difficult for people to live up to the standards of society

and what they believe the ideal body is. There are many factors that lead to a person's body image, some of these include: family dynamics, mental illness, biological predispositions and environmental causes for obesity or malnutrition, and cultural expectations (e.g., media and politics). People who are both underweight and overweight can have poor body image. However, because people are constantly told and shown the cosmetic appeal of weight loss and are warned about the risks of obesity, those who are normal or overweight on the BMI scale have higher risks of poor body image. This is something that can lead to a change in a person's body image. Often, people who have a low body image will try to alter their bodies in some way, such as by dieting or undergoing cosmetic surgery.

Body image can be of 2 types:

Positive body image:

A positive body image feeling happy and satisfied about your body, as well as accepting the way you look. It involves understanding that healthy bodies come in many shapes and sizes and that physical appearance don't say anything about your character.

Negative body image:

A negative body image is being unhappy with the way you look. It is associated with wanting to change your body size. People with negative body image tend to feel that their size /shape is a sign of personal failure.

Academic behaviours:

Academic behaviours refer to a pre-adolescent or adolescents' views about their school work and how well they think they come prepared to class. Fonseca, Matos, Guerra, and Gomes-Pedro (2010) confirmed that 5.4% of overweight adolescents performed below average at school and reported a poorer perception of academic achievement as compared to 4.4% of normal weight adolescents. Children who are rejected by their peers develop academic problems (Parker and Asher, 1987). Better grades and involvement in extra-curricular activities also help in the prevention of negative behaviours, development of optimal adolescent functioning, and future well-being and success (Schmidt and Padilla, 2003).

Academic behaviour is mainly influenced by our body image, if we are satisfied with our body we will feel happy and dissatisfaction may lead to negative behaviour, low grades, low interaction with peers and in society. There is a major concern between academic behaviour and body image. Low body image may lead to low academic performance whereas high body image may lead to high satisfaction and confidence in each and every aspect of life. It may lead to holistic development of the student.

Significance of the study:

Physical development during adolescence plays a role in the emotional and social development of an adolescent and has an effect on their body image satisfaction. Girls are usually encouraged to look pretty at a very early age to enhance their self-worth and boys on the other hand are encouraged to be strong. Body image dissatisfaction is associated with academic problems and low self confidence in students.

METHODOLOGY

A comprehensive study was conducted in the

selected Private School of Chandigarh (UT). A list of all Schools of Chandigarh was obtained. From this list, 1 School was selected randomly. From school, 50 Males and 50 Females were selected randomly irrespective of their caste, creed, economic status and ordinal position.

Psychological tool used:**Body image satisfaction scale:**

A newly developed 17-item Likert scale with items based on a four-point scale ranging from never (0 point) to always (3 points) and took about ten minutes to complete it. This scale was developed by the school committee and some questions in this scale looked like; "I am proud of my body", "My weight makes me feel unhappy", and "I feel ashamed of how I look".

Academic behaviour scale:

A newly developed 20-item Likert scale with items based on four-point scale ranging from never (0 point) to always (3 points). This scale was developed by the school committee and questions were used to measure students' frequency (*i.e.* how often) to a countable behaviour with regards to their academics and took about ten minutes to complete it. Some questions in this scale looked like, "I like hard work because I see it as challenge", "I get distracted easily when I am studying", and "I finish an assignment by the deadline"

Statistical analysis:

The data was analyzed. To find out the difference in mean scores of various variables in males and females, t-test was used. Karl Pearson's Coefficient of Correlation was applied to find out inter correlation among various variables of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**Difference in various variables of the study**

In order to find out the difference between Males and Females with regard to scores of various variables of the study- Body Image and Academic Behaviour of class 10th students, t- test was applied. Mean, standard deviation and t- values were calculated and data have been incorporated in Table 1.

Table 1 : Significance of Mean Difference between Scores of Males and Females of Body Image (N=100, 50 Males/ 50 Females)						
Sex		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value
Body Image	Males	50	18.76	5.42	2.488	.015*
	Females	50	21.36	5.02		

Table 2 : Significance of Mean Difference between Scores of Males and Females of Academic Behaviour (N=100, 50 Males/ 50 Females)

Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value
Academic Behaviour	Male	24.94	6.76	2.377	.019*
	Female	28.00	6.09		

Significant difference existed between the mean scores of Males and Females where as females seemed

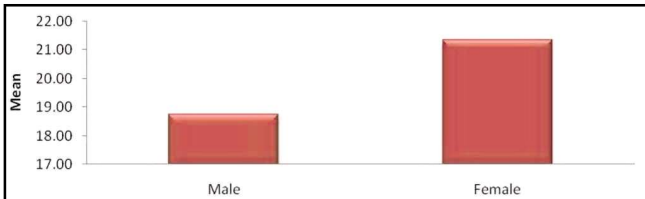


Fig. 1 : Body image

to have more satisfaction in body image.

Significant difference existed between the mean scores of Males and Females seemed to have more satisfaction in academic behaviour.

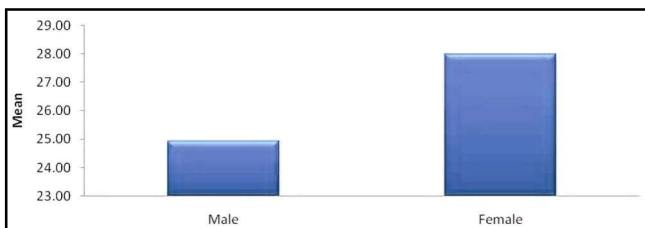


Fig. 2 : Academic behaviour

Inter correlation among different variables:

It is clear from Table 3 that there existed a highly significant positive correlation between body image and academic behaviour (r=.632**, p<0.01). It states that when the scores of body image satisfaction increase if scores of academic behaviour also increases.

Table 3 : Inter - correlations among various variables (N=100, 50 Males/ 50 Females)

Variables	Body Image	Academic Behavior
Body Image	1	.632**
Academic Behavior		1

Yanover and Thompson (2008) offered insight that speaks to an indirect but important relationship between body image and academic performance. They noted that body image dissatisfaction might lead to high level of

school absenteeism due to social anxiety regarding one's appearance. The possible justification for the obtained result could be because those students who feel dissatisfied with their image may have social anxiety and will not be able to mix well with peer and loose interest in studies.

Recommendations for parents:

Parents are expected to meet all the basic human needs such as food, clothing, and shelter of and child's emotional, intellectual, and social needs so that they will grow up to have a healthy body image and positive academic behaviour. Parents need to be educated about the importance of their own attitudes with regards to food choices, weight, and appearance and its impact on their children. Parents can model healthy eating behaviours in front of their children and make meal planning a fun activity rather than a tedious chore and this in future relates to academic influence in life.

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