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Influence of Gender and Self-Confidence on Body Apperception in Undergraduate College Students

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Abstract: *An individual's gender and self-confidence are the two factors which have a significant influence on body apperception. The purpose of the study was to explore the influence of gender and self-confidence on an individual's body apperception in undergraduate college students and to understand the predictive nature of gender on body apperception. A sample size of 80 undergraduate college students were considered for the investigation. In the sample, males and females were equally distributed. Measure of body apperception (MBA) and self-confidence scale was used to measure body image perception and self-confidence. The research concludes that there exists a weak positive correlation between body apperception and self-confidence, and there is a significant difference of body apperception among male and female college students with a higher apperception in females. It is also revealed that gender is a stronger predictor of body apperception.*

Keywords: *Body apperception, Self-confidence, Gender, Undergraduate college students*

I. INTRODUCTION

Psychological functioning and well-being of a person are largely influenced by the perception of their own body image. Muth and cash stated that "body image is a multidimensional construct representing cognitive, affective and behavioural responses to an individual's own physical attributes" [17]. There are two primary components of body image satisfaction and they are approval or disapproval with one's own physical qualities and knowledge of discrete emotions. Body image plays a major role in the development of self-confidence in adolescents because of the fact that it functions as a valuable basis for self-assessment and evaluation by others [21]. The degree and nature of a person's body image have a significant influence on their performance in nearly all aspects of life, particularly in the developmental stages. The consequences caused by one's level of body satisfaction varies widely. Attainments in life [16], absenteeism in school [23], addictions and eating behaviours [18], bullying [7], mental health problems [20] have been reported to be positively correlated with one's own body satisfaction. Perceptions of physical appearance are one of the single strongest predictors of self-confidence among male and female adolescents [6]. Even though physical appearance serves different purposes in both the genders, it is important for maintaining popularity and self-confidence among them [2], [3]. A number of studies have examined the relationship between negative body image and low or negative self-esteem [1], [12]. Coherent sense of self and establishment of individuality are the two main developmental tasks to be achieved during the adolescent's period [19]. The eating disorder caused by poor self-confidence could lead to the dissatisfaction of body image [12]. The people who state a greater degree of body dissatisfaction also presented mediocre self-esteem [12], [22]. Generally, females are comparatively much more body-conscious than their male counterparts. Women were given greater focus when it comes to body image research [15]. Studies focused on their dissatisfaction with their own body and that could result in eating disorders in comparison to men [11], [10]. The concept of a thin ideal women body which the media and society are propagating often makes discrepancy between one's own body in females and this leads to body dissatisfaction [5]. There has been a proliferation of the ideal man body over the last decades. Numerous studies have revealed that men, like women, sense greater dissatisfaction when they are challenged with an ideal body of their own sex [9], [4].

II. SCOPE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is of great significance for the people belonging to the adult and adolescent population. It informs that a person's body image is an important factor that influences their self-confidence. This can be thus maintained to develop their confidence which would lead to overall success in their path of life. The prevalence of the ideal women concept within the society is clear from the data, showing that women are more concerned about their body image and the concept of an ideal man has been existing in the Western culture for long periods too. This concept of an ideal man has started its path in the Indian culture by putting men into the pressure of fitting to this concept like the women. Maintaining one's body image is thus an important influential factor which can be utilised by the marketing department and also by the individuals to grow a potential society.

III. AIM

The study is set out to explore the influence of gender and self-confidence on an individual's body apperception in undergraduate college students and to understand the predictive nature of gender on body apperception.

IV. HYPOTHESES

- A. There exists no statistically significant relation between body apperception and self-confidence.
- B. There exists no statistically significant relation between body apperception and gender.
- C. There exists no predictability between body apperception and gender.

V. PROCEDURE

Undergraduate college students with their age ranging from 17 to 21 were randomly selected from educational institutions around Irinjalakuda municipality. The sample contained an equal number of male and female students. Measure of body apperception (MBA) and self-confidence scale was used to measure body image perception and self-confidence among the selected college students. Simple linear regression, independent sample t-test and pearson correlation was used to evaluate the differences in data for statistical significance.

VI. METHOD

A sample size of 80 undergraduate college students were considered for the investigation. In the sample, males and females were equally distributed.

Measure of body apperception (MBA) was developed by Carver C.S in 2013 for measuring self-reported appreciation of body by individuals and the scale included 10 items. Item number 5 and 10 are filters. The maximum score obtained by the scale is 32 and the minimum score obtained is 8. The main sub-dimensions of the scale are investment in appearance and investment in body integrity. Item number 5 and 10 in the scale are filter items. Four-point scale was used to measure the response. Results of the scale reliability assessment using Cronbach's coefficient alpha showed that the MBA had good internal consistency reliability ($\alpha=0.77$) based on standardized items on measure. The MBA demonstrated face validity, adequate convergent and divergent validities indicated by statistically significant moderate correlations with the HADS.

Self-confidence scale was developed by Dr Manikandan, Dept of psychology, University of Calicut. It is a 13-item scale and has two sub-dimensions: personal factor and social factor. Personal dimension is considered as the "belief of an individual's ability to perform activities and succeed by virtue of his or her personal strength". Social dimension means the "belief of an ability to succeed a task as others in the group". Self-confidence of a person is the combination of these two factors. The minimum score obtained for the scale is 13 and the maximum is 75. The reliability estimated by the method of Cronbach alpha is found to be .74 for social dimension and .78 for the personal dimension and .84 for the whole scale. The external validity of the scale was estimated by correlating scores in self-esteem inventory and it was found to be .77. It's a 5-point Likert scale with response categories as Strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Undecided (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly disagree (1).

VII. RESULT & DISCUSSION

This study is set out to explore the influence of gender and self-confidence on an individual's body apperception in undergraduate college students and to understand the predictive nature of gender on body apperception. The Pearson correlation was used to verify the statistical significance of the relation between body apperception and self-confidence; independent sample t-test was used to evaluate the significance of the difference in body apperception among males and females; and simple linear regression was used to determine the predictive nature of gender on body apperception.

TABLE I
Pearson's correlation between academic stress and self-efficacy

| | Mean | Standard Deviation | 1 | 2 |
|----------------------|-------|--------------------|--------|---|
| 1, Body apperception | 20.66 | 4.534 | - | |
| 2, Self-Confidence | 46.06 | 9.713 | 0.219* | - |

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine the relation between body apperception and self-confidence. Table 1 has concluded that there exists a relation between body apperception and student self-confidence ($r(80) = -.219^*$, $p = .034$), such that higher self-confidence (Mean=20.66, SD= 4.534) result in higher body apperception (Mean=46.06, SD= 9.713) and vice-versa. The correlation result can be concluded that there is a weak relationship between body apperception and student self-confidence. The conclusion of the present study is in line with findings of the previous studies [1], [12].

TABLE II

Descriptive statistics and independent sample t-test of body apperception among Male and Female undergraduate college Students

| Gender | N | M | SD | F-value | Sig. |
|--------|----|-------|-------|---------|------|
| Male | 40 | 19.23 | 3.731 | | |
| Female | 40 | 24.10 | 4.845 | -5.042 | 0.01 |

The table II shows the mean value of body apperception among males (N= 40, M= 19.23, SD= 3.731) and females (N= 40, M= 24.1, SD= 4.845). To test the hypothesis that the gender brings up no significant change in the mean of student’s body apperception, an independent sample t-test was performed. The assumption of homogeneity of variances was tested and satisfied via Levene’s F test, $F(78) = 2.758$, $p = 0.101$. The independent sample t-test resulted in a statistically significant effect of gender on student’s body apperception, $t(78) = -5.042$, $p = .01$. It is clear from the data that gender plays a major role in body apperception as females show a higher mean than males. The observations also agree with the results reported by Keski-Rahkonen and Karazsia [11], [10].

TABLE III

Simple linear regression between academic stress with collage type and self-efficacy

| Variables | R | R ² | Change R ² | β | F value | Sig. |
|-----------------------|-------|----------------|-----------------------|---------|---------|------|
| X = Body apperception | 0.496 | 0.246 | 0.236 | 0.496 | 25.418 | 0.01 |
| Y = Gender | | | | | | |

To determine the ability to predict students’ body apperception based on their gender, simple linear regression was carried out. A significant regression equation was found ($F(1,79) = 25.418$, $p = .01$), with an R² of 0.246 between students’ body apperception and gender. Students’ predicted body apperception is equal to $14.350 + 4.875$ where gender is coded as 1 = Male and 2 = Female. Female students’ academic stress is 4.875 units higher than that of male college students.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The research concludes that there exists a weak positive correlation between body apperception and self-confidence, and there is a significant difference of body apperception among male and female college students with a higher apperception in females. It is also revealed that gender is a stronger predictor of body apperception.

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