



Influence Of Physical Comparison With Media Images On Body Appreciation, Self-Esteem, And Appearance Anxiety Among Adolescents

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Abstract: This study has been undertaken to examine the influence of physical comparison with media images on body appreciation, self-esteem, and appearance anxiety among adolescents. The sample consists of 271 adolescents (136 males and 135 females) within an age group of 10-21 years. The tools used are the Appearance Anxiety Inventory, Self-Esteem Rating Scale, and Body Appreciation Scale-2. The statistical analysis used in the study includes Pearson's product-moment correlation, ANOVA, and t-test. From the result, it is evident that self-esteem is slightly negatively correlated with appearance anxiety and moderately positively correlated with body appreciation. There is a mild negative correlation between appearance anxiety and body appreciation. The result also shows that there is a significant difference in self-esteem based on age and that body appreciation significantly differs in terms of family type.

Index Terms - Body appreciation, Self-esteem, Appearance anxiety

I. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a crucial period of transition from childhood to adulthood, characterized by rapid physiological changes and psychosocial maturation. During this stage, young people are intensely influenced by their peers and the outside world, particularly the media. A growing body of evidence suggests that various media have multiple negative effects on adolescents' identity and body image. The common use of very thin and attractive models in print and social media communicates a "thin ideal," reflecting how people believe they should look to be attractive.

Social media platforms, in particular, lead individuals to engage in social comparison. Users often present an idealized version of themselves, uploading only the most attractive images. Research indicates that appearance comparisons to peers may be particularly influential for body image. This can lead to body dissatisfaction, which is a primary risk factor for unhealthy behaviors, including eating disorders. The purpose of this study is to determine how comparing oneself with social media personalities affects self-esteem, appearance anxiety, and body appreciation among adolescents.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology section outlines the plan and method of how the study was conducted. A correlational cross-sectional design was adopted for the present study.

2.1 Population and Sample The sample of the present study consisted of 271 adolescents. The sampling technique adopted was convenient sampling. The sample included both males (n=136) and females (n=135) between the ages of 10 and 21 who acknowledged comparing their physique with media images. Physically and mentally challenged individuals were not included.

2.2 Data and Sources of Data Data was collected directly from nearby schools and tuition centers, as well as through online Google Forms. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and the confidentiality of their data was assured. The following measures were used:

1. **Appearance Anxiety Inventory (AAI):** A 10-item scale measuring cognitive and behavioral aspects of body image anxiety.
2. **Self-Esteem Rating Scale (SERS):** A 40-item scale assessing positive and negative levels of self-esteem.
3. **Body Appreciation Scale-2 (BAS-2):** A 10-item measure of positive body image and acceptance.

2.3 Statistical Tools The data was coded and entered into IBM SPSS Statistics Version 22. The statistical techniques used to analyze the data were Pearson's Correlation, One-Way ANOVA, and the Independent Samples t-test.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

Preliminary analysis showed that the data for all variables were normally distributed.

- **Correlation Analysis:** There was a slight negative correlation between self-esteem and appearance anxiety ($r=-.324, p<0.01$). A moderate positive correlation was found between self-esteem and body appreciation ($r=.499, p<0.01$). A mild negative correlation was found between appearance anxiety and body appreciation ($r=-.328, p<0.01$).
- **ANOVA (Age):** A significant difference was found in self-esteem based on age ($F=4.035, p<0.05$), with the 18-21 age group showing the highest mean self-esteem. No significant age differences were found for appearance anxiety or body appreciation.
- **t-test (Gender):** No significant gender differences were found for self-esteem, appearance anxiety, or body appreciation.
- **t-test (Family Type):** A significant difference was found in body appreciation based on family type ($t=-2.496, p<0.05$). Adolescents from joint families reported a higher mean body appreciation (38.792) compared to those from nuclear families (36.185). No significant differences were found for self-esteem or appearance anxiety.

3.2 Discussion

The findings indicate that higher self-esteem is associated with lower appearance anxiety and greater body appreciation, suggesting it acts as a protective factor. The negative relationship between appearance anxiety and body appreciation aligns with the logic that constant worry about one's appearance prevents acceptance and respect for one's body.

The result that self-esteem is highest in the 18-21 age group may reflect increased cognitive maturity and a more stable sense of self in late adolescence. The finding that adolescents from joint families have higher body appreciation is noteworthy; this may be because a larger family network provides a wider support system and more diverse perspectives on appearance, buffering against narrow media ideals. The lack of gender differences suggests that body image pressures may now be affecting males and females in increasingly similar ways.

IV. CONCLUSION

From this study, it is concluded that self-esteem is negatively correlated with appearance anxiety and positively correlated with body appreciation. Significant differences were found in self-esteem based on age and in body appreciation based on family type. These results highlight the complex interplay between media exposure and adolescent self-perception and underscore the importance of interventions aimed at enhancing self-esteem and body appreciation.

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