



Influence of Television Viewing on Body Image of Adolescent Boys and its Correlation with Self-concept

KEYWORDS

body image television viewing self-concept

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ABSTRACT

Adolescence is the developmental stage in which anxieties on body image are most prevalent. Television plays a big role in the internalization of certain standards related to physical appearance and attractiveness. Very negative self-evaluation occurs as long as an individual compares himself with the ideal images presented in the television. The present study was undertaken on 90 adolescents of 11 to 18 years of age. Data analysis indicated that television viewing has a negative influence on body image, providing support to the danger of adapting the distorted and hazardous messages media communicates by emphasizing certain body types. The correlation coefficient 0.038 between body image and self-concept asserts that body image and self-concept possess no relation and both the factors are independent.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a critical stage of development and identity formation is an important virtue to be achieved in this stage. Physical attractiveness and acceptance are found to play a strong role in formation of self-identity (Lopez, 2012). Adolescents form positive or negative attitudes due to the physical changes they undergo during this stage. Lured by the need of perfection, adolescents fall prey to television- one of the major mass media. Television is a huge industry and to its vast and varied audience, it portrays body shape, size, weight, strength and attractiveness which is completely ideal and unattainable (Khalid et. al., 2010). Television depicts such gender images through its programs that they affect the adolescents to evaluate their own body and physical attractiveness. Evaluation of one's own body is known as body image. It can be explained as how an individual comprehends his body- his thoughts, feelings and perceptions regarding his body (Barlett et al., 2008; Grogan, 2008; Asfoor, 2009). It may be negative or positive but it is dynamic. Body image is subject to change in accordance with factors like mood, perceptions, emotions, environment (McCabe et. al., 2005). A vast range of empirical research suggest body image of an individual is associated with his self-concept, which is a person's knowledge about one's own self- thoughts, beliefs, talents, abilities, aims, desires, values, traits (Asfoor, 2009).

Adolescents tend to compare their body with television ideals. Discovering themselves to identify with these ideals, they develop a positive image of their body. In the opposite case, they undergo body dissatisfaction or what is called a negative body image. As a consequence, susceptibility of various psychological ills ranging from eating disorders- anorexia nervosa and bulimia to sunken self-concept hover over them (Huang et. al., 2007). For this reason, body image is thought of as a significant aspect to study as it has a crucial role in the development of self-concept.

OBJECTIVES

- To assess the influence of television viewing on body image of adolescent boys
- To explore the association between body image and self-concept of adolescent boys

Participants- Convenience sampling technique was adapted in this study. The sample was derived from among the students of IX, X, XI and XII standard of Shakuntalam Boys School in Banasthali. The age of students ranged between 11 to 18 years with mean age 14.6 years. Most of the adolescents came from nuclear and middle income group families where all fathers and a significant percentage of mothers (64.4) were working.

Tools used for the study- For the collection of data two checklists were developed to assess body image as influenced by television viewing and self-concept, respectively. The body image checklist comprised of 20 items and the self-concept checklist comprised of 22 items. In addition to this, background information on age, income group, type of family and occupation of parents of the respondents was also collected.

Statistical Analysis- Frequencies, percentages, mean, standard deviation and coefficient of correlation were calculated to fulfill the research objectives.

RESULTS

• Body image

Out of the total sample of 90, 41 (45.5 per cent) adolescent boys showed that their body image was negatively influenced. The following table displays the extent of negative influence of television viewing.

Table 1 Influence of television viewing on body image of adolescent boys

Body Image	Frequency	Percentage
Highly influenced	10	24.3
Moderately influenced	21	51.2
Less influenced	10	24.3

Table 1 presents frequency percentages depicting the influence of television viewing on the body image. From among 41 (45.5 per cent) adolescent boys whose body image was found to be affected by television viewing, the majority (51.2 per cent) displayed moderate influence of television viewing on their body image.

• Body image and self-concept

In order to assess the association between body image

and self-concept, percentages and correlation coefficient for the same were calculated.

Table 2 Percentage distribution of negative body image and positive self-concept

Variables	Percentage
Negative Body Image	45.5
Positive Self-concept	68.3

Table 2 shows percentage calculations of negative body image and positive self-concept and indicates that despite of 45.9 per cent adolescents reflecting negative body image as a result of television viewing, a significant percentage (68.3) of adolescents reflected positive self-concept. This suggests that there might be some mediating factor in the relationship of body image and self-concept.

Table 3 Correlation between body image and self-concept

Variables	N	Mean	S.D.	Correlation
Body Image	90	10	3.6	0.038
Self-concept	90	13.6	4	

Table 3 shows the correlation coefficient of body image and self-concept (0.038), depicting negligible correlation between the body image and the self-concept of adolescent boys.

DISCUSSION

The current research underlines two important findings. First, television viewing has a negative influence on body image of adolescent boys. Second, body image and self-concept are unrelated, supported by the findings of Furnham et al. (2002). The research draws attention towards one of the many impairments brought about by television to its audience. Television is an indispensable part of modern living but it is also a medium that delivers distorted beauty and manliness standards. Adolescents are under great amount of pressure and strive to gain parental, peer group and societal acceptance. They consider this acceptance is to be based on physical dimension. Television images win over the hearts of adolescents and make room for body dissatisfaction or negative body image. Comparison with ideal, gender-matched media images displaying virtual attractiveness is consequent of making adolescents feel miserable about their bodies.

Howsoever negative they feel about their bodies, adolescent boys displayed no association with self-concept. In addition to this, there are possibilities of existence of some mediating factors between body image and self-concept, like- congenial family environment, parental role modeling, quality time spent between parents and children, optimistic attitude towards self. The research work draws attention towards the idea that self-concept is more concerned with person's thought processes, feelings, strengths, weaknesses, likes-dislikes, characteristics, specialties, capabilities, goals, accomplishments. It is focused on the person's knowledge, comprehension or awareness about these aspects.

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