



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Clinical Psychology

GENDER COMPARISON IN THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING AND WEIGHT PERCEPTION AMONG ADOLESCENTS

KEY WORDS: Adolescent, weight perception, psychological wellbeing

Sameeta Ng

HOD in-charge, Department of Clinical Psychology, RIMS, Imphal.

Jane Zodingliani Lailung

Ex-M.Phil Trainee, Department of Clinical Psychology, RIMS, Imphal.

ABSTRACT

Background and Objectives: The aim of the present study is to compare genders in association between psychological wellbeing and weight perception among adolescents. **Methods:** The sample consists of 511 school going adolescents from Aizawl. Of the total samples, 233 cases were adolescent boys and 278 cases were adolescent girls. Students within the age group of 10-19 years, and who were willing to give consent for participating in the study were selected through convenient sampling technique. Semi-structured proforma was used for collecting the socio-demographic profiles of the participants and DASS (Depression Anxiety Stress Scales) was used to assess the psychological wellbeing of the adolescents. **Results:** The findings of the study showed no gender difference in the relationship between psychological wellbeing and weight perception. The data shows that the p-value of 0.906 indicates no significant difference between males and females with regards to the relationship between having depression and weight perception. The data also shows that the p-value of 0.822 indicates no significant difference between males and females with regards to the relationship between having anxiety and weight perception. The data also shows that the p-value of 0.326 indicates no significant difference between males and females in regards to the relationship between having stress and weight perception. **Conclusion:** The present study concluded that the result showed no gender differences in the relationship between psychological wellbeing and weight perception. The findings of the study may help people to be aware of their weight, perceived weight and how these may be associated with their psychological wellbeing. It can also help them to adopt a better way in improving their health by trying to achieve the appropriate weight.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is derived from the Latin word adolescere meaning "to grow up".¹ Adolescence is defined by World Health Organization (WHO) as the period in human growth and development that occurs after childhood and before adulthood, from ages 10 to 19. It characterizes one of the critical transitions in the life span that is marked by a tremendous pace in growth and change.²

The beginning of adolescence is marked by the onset of puberty, the physical changes in both primary sex characteristics and secondary sex characteristics that occur in the body.³ So, some of the most foremost parts of pubertal development involve distinct physiological changes in an individual which includes height, weight, body composition and circulatory and respiratory systems.⁴

Perceived weight is one of the important aspects of body image and it indirectly reflects subjective expectation of one's body weight or deal body weight.⁵ Perceived weight being an important aspect of it, body image may be understood on terms of a multifaceted construct that involves a person's perceptions, thoughts and feelings about her or his body size, shape and structure.⁶ Stang J, in 2005 also showed in his study that strong social and cultural forces influence body image in young people.⁷

Psychological Wellbeing takes many forms and has no single index. The two words that comprised wellbeing, 'well' and 'being' point directly to its meaning, living in a state that is in some sense good. So, wellbeing involves one's life, usually through judgments made by the individual himself or herself.⁸ Most researchers believe that wellbeing is a multi-dimensional construct.^{9, 10, 11} Wellbeing may also be understood in terms of good life (Rogers, 1961)¹² and happiness.¹³ Psychological wellbeing can be defined as our mental health, emotions, behaviors and beliefs.¹⁴

OBJECTIVES

Table 1 Showing The Relationship Between Depression And Weight Perception Between Boys And Girls

Parameters	Depression			No Depression		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Weight Interpretation						

The objective of the present study is to compare genders in association between psychological wellbeing and weight perception among adolescents.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

A descriptive study design was used in the present study. The study was conducted in the Department of Clinical Psychology, RIMS, Imphal. The sample consists of 511 school going adolescents from five English medium schools in Aizawl. Of the total samples, 233 cases were adolescent boys and 278 cases were adolescent girls. Students within the age group of 10-19 years, and who were willing to give consent for participating in the study was selected for the present study. Once these procedures were carried out, a semi structured proforma was used for collecting the socio-demographic profiles of the participants and DASS (Depression Anxiety Stress Scales)¹⁵ was then administered to assess the psychological wellbeing of the adolescents.

Procedures:

In the present study, the researcher approached the English medium schools situated in Aizawl. Necessary permissions were taken from the concerned authorities and thoroughly explained about the purpose of the study. After this, the students were again informed about the purpose of the study. An informed consent was also taken from each of the participants. Once this procedure was carried out, a semi structure Performa scale consisting of questions on socio-demographic details and DASS (Depression Anxiety Stress Scales) were administered.

RESULT:

The present study deals with gender comparison in relation to psychological wellbeing and weight perception. It explores if there is a significant gender difference in the relationship between the different areas of Psychological wellbeing like depression, anxiety and stress and the different categories of weight perception like underweight, normal weight and overweight among the samples. The results are depicted on the following tables.

Underweight	2(9.1)	2(8.7)	4(8.9)	20(9.5)	17(6.7)	37(7.9)
Normal weight	12(54.5)	14(60.9)	26(57.8)	151(71.6)	158(62.0)	309(66.3)
Overweight	8(36.4)	7(30.4)	15(33.3)	40(19.0)	80(31.4)	120(25.8)
Total	22(100)	23(100)	45(100)	211(100)	255(100)	466(100)
Chi-square	.198			9.667		
d.f.	2			2		
p-value	.906			.008		
Remark	Insignificant			Insignificant		

Table No.1: This table shows the presence and absence of depression in relation to weight perception between males and females. Chi-square analysis shows that the p-value of 0.906 indicates no significant difference between males and females with regards to the relationship between having depression and weight perception. However the p-value of 0.008 indicates significant difference between males and females with regards

to the relationship between not having depression and weight perception. Of the samples having no depression, 9.5% of the males have underweight perception and 6.7% of the females have underweight perception, 71.6% of the males have normal weight perception and 62% of the females have normal weight perception, and 19% of the males have overweight perception and 31.4% of the females have overweight perception.

Table 2 Showing The Relationship Between Anxiety And Weight Perception Between Boys And Girls

Parameters	Anxiety			Not anxiety		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Weight Interpretation						
Underweight	7(8)	7(6.9)	14(7.4)	15(10.3)	12(6.8)	27(8.4)
Normal weight	61(69.3)	68(66.7)	129(67.9)	101(70.3)	104(59.1)	206(64.2)
Overweight	20(22.7)	27(26.5)	47(24.7)	28(19.3)	60(34.1)	88(27.4)
Total	88(100)	102(100)	190(100)	145(100)	176(100)	321(100)
Chi-square	.393			9.080		
d.f.	2			2		
p-value	0.822			0.011		
Remark	Insignificant			Significant		

Table No.2: This table shows the presence and absence of anxiety in relation to weight perception between males and females. Chi-square analysis shows that the p-value of 0.822 indicates no significant difference between males and females with regards to the relationship between having anxiety and weight perception. However the p-value of 0.011 indicates significant difference between males and females with regards to

the relationship between not having anxiety and weight perception. Of the samples having no anxiety, 10.3% of the males have underweight perception and 6.8% of the females have underweight perception, 70.3% of the males have normal weight perception and 59.1% of the females have normal weight perception, and 19.3% of the males have overweight perception and 34.1% of the females have overweight perception.

Table 3 Showing The Relationship Between Stress And Weight Perception Between Boys And Girls

Parameters	Stress			Not stress		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Weight Interpretation						
Underweight	5(7.7)	5(6.7)	10(7.1)	17(10.1)	14(6.9)	31(8.4)
Normal Weight	42(64.6)	46(61.3)	88(62.9)	121(72.0)	126(62.1)	247(66.6)
Overweight	18(27.7)	24(32.0)	42(30.0)	30(17.9)	63(31.0)	93(25.1)
Total	65(100)	75(100)	140(100)	168(100)	203(100)	371(100)
Chi-square	.326			.849		
d.f.	2			2		
p-value	8.878			0.012		
Remark	Insignificant			Significant		

Table No.3: This table shows the presence and absence of stress in relation to weight perception between boys and girls. Chi-square analysis shows that the p-value of 0.849 indicates no significant difference between males and females in regards to the relationship between having no stress and weight perception. However the p-value of 0.012 indicates significant difference between males and females in regards to the relationship between not having stress and weight perception. Of the samples having no stress, 10.1% of the males have underweight perception and 6.9% of the females have underweight perception, 72% of the males have normal weight perception and 62.1% of the females have normal weight perception, and 17.9% of the males have overweight perception and 31% of the females have overweight perception. Thus there is no significant gender difference in the relationship between psychological wellbeing and weight perception.

Mizo society, there is not much discrimination between the males and the females and hence when they are treated equally, their psychological wellbeing maybe more or less the same, reducing the likelihood of putting more pressures on the males or expecting the girls to behave in a certain way. Moreover, all the subjects are selected from the same five schools; all being adolescents, from the same society, same religion and all being brought up by both parents may reduce the likelihood of having differences in their psychological wellbeing. Thus even when there is a difference in their weight perception their similar good psychological wellbeing may reduce the probability of association between the two factors. The difference in their weight perception thus is not enough to bring about a difference in its association with their psychological wellbeing, hence gender difference minimized or in this case non-existent. The data shows that the p-value of 0.906 indicates no significant difference between males and females with regards to the relationship between having depression and weight perception. The data also shows that the p-value of 0.822 indicates no significant difference between males and females with regards to the relationship between having anxiety and weight perception. The data also shows that the p-value of 0.326 indicates no significant difference between males and females in regards

DISCUSSION:

The present study was carried out to compare gender difference in the association between weight perception and psychological wellbeing among adolescents. On statistical findings no gender difference was found in the association between psychological wellbeing and actual weight. In the

to the relationship between having stress and weight perception. The finding of the study has been supported by some studies. A study by TerBogt TF et al on 7556 students showed that adolescent girls are more dissatisfied with their weight than boys, however the relationship between weight perception and problem behavior is the same for both genders.¹⁶ Another study done by Atlantis, E and Ball, K in 2008 on Australian adults aged 19 years and above also showed that though overweight perception compared to underweight perception has higher correlations with psychological distress, however there was no significant difference between males and females in their findings.¹⁷

CONCLUSION:

The present study concluded that the result showed no gender differences in the relationship between psychological wellbeing and weight perception. However, with regard to weight perception, girls tend to perceive themselves as overweight more than males. The findings of the study may help people to be aware of their weight, perceived weight and how these may be associated with their psychological wellbeing. It can also help them to adopt a better way in improving their health by trying to achieve the appropriate weight. This further suggests the school counselors and other health professionals to keep in mind the potential association between the two.

REFERENCES

- 1) Macmillan Dictionary for students Macmillan, Pan Ltd, 1981, 14, 456 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adolescence> (Retrieved on 22/10/2013)
- 2) http://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/topics/adolescence/dev/en/ (Retrieved on 22/10/2013)
- 3) Ciccarelli, S.K., Meyer, GE. Psychology. South Asian edition. Dorling Kindersley (India) pvt.Ltd., 2013
- 4) Marshal, W. Puberty. In F. Falkner & J.T. Tanner (Eds), Human growth, Vol. 2. New York: Plenum, 1978 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adolescence> (Retrieved on 22/10/2013)
- 5) Ozmen, D., Ozmen, E., Ergin, D., Cetinkaya, A.C., Sen, N., Dundar, P.E., Taskin, O. The association of self-esteem, Depression and body satisfaction with obesity among Turkish adolescents. BMC Public Health. Doi:10.1186/1471-2458-7-80. 2007;7:80.
- 6) Grogan, S. Body image and health: contemporary perspectives. J Health Psychol 2006; 11: 523-30.
- 7) Stang, J. Story M (eds) Guidelines for Adolescent Nutrition Services, 2005, 155 http://www.epi.umn.edu/let/pubs/ado1_book.shtm (Retrieved on 22/10/2013)
- 8) In M. Wang, Sinclair, R.R., and Tetrack, L.E. (eds.), Research Methods in Occupational Health Psychology. New York: Psychology Press/Routledge, 2012, in press http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.1574541/file/warr_pdf_Well-being_Measurement_Chapter.pdf (Retrieved on 23/10/2013)
- 9) Diener, E. Subjective well-being. In E. Diener (Ed.), The science of well-being. New York: Springer, 2009, 11-58 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.125.2.276> (Retrieved on 23/10/2013)
- 10) Michaelson, J., Abdallah, S., Steuer, N., Thompson, S., & Marks, N. National accounts of well-being: Bringing real wealth onto the balance sheet. London: New Economics Foundation 2009
- 11) Stiglitz, J., Sen, A., & Fitoussi, J. P. Report by the commission on the measurement of economic performance and social progress, 2009
- 12) Rogers, C. On becoming a person. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961; 186
- 13) Pollard, E., & Lee, P. Child well-being: a systematic review of the literature, Social Indicators Research, 2003, 61(1), 9-78. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1023/A:1021284215801> (Retrieved on 23/10/2013)
- 14) Dr. Les Smith http://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=5&cad=rja&ved=0CEUQFjAE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.hwuk.com%2Fppt%2FWhat_is_wellbeing_WEB%2520BASICS_intro_slides.ppt&ei=WNzUq3eLsbWrQfV4oCICA&usg=AFQjCNEdnxE34IP40cXrV5viNHylA3PWYA (Retrieved on 23/10/2013)
- 15) Lovibond, P.F., and Lovibond, S.H. The Structure of negative emotional states: Comparison of the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS) with the Beck Depression and Anxiety Inventories, 1995
- 16) TerBogt TF, van Dorsselaer SA, Monshouwer K, Verdurmen JE, Engels RC, Vollebergh WA. Body mass index and body weight perception as risk factors for internalizing and externalizing problem behavior among adolescents. Journal of Adolescent Health. Jul; 39(1): 27-34. 2006 <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16781958> (Retrieved on 18/2/2014)
- 17) Atlantis, E. and Ball, K. Association between weight perception and psychological distress International Journal of Obesity, 2008; 32, 715-721