

Interaction among Social Skills, Body Image and Social Affiliation

Kavya A. S.

Student, Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, Jalandhar- 144411, India

Dr. Pankaj Singh

Assistant Professor, Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, Jalandhar-144411, India

ABSTRACT

Models of perfect bodies are increasingly becoming influential with both men and women seemingly due to media ideals. However, striving for the perfect body is associated with a number of negative psychological and physiological outcomes including risk taking behaviors such as anabolic steroid usage, eating disorders and excessive exercise dependence. The study aims to explore the interaction among social skills, body image and social affiliation among college students. This sample for the study was randomly selected and consisted of 99 females and 103 males of various schools of Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, Punjab on self report measures of Multidimensional Body Self Relations Questionnaire (Cash, 2000.), Liking People Scale (Filsinger, 1980) and Social Skills Scale (Goswami & Gupta, 2017). The age ranges of the students were from 20 to 39. Results revealed that social affiliation is not influenced by social skills or body image for both males and females. It shows a weak positive correlation among social skills, body image and social affiliation for male and female college students. It also shows no gender difference in body image, social skills and social affiliation.

Keywords: Social skills; Body image; Social affiliation

INTRODUCTION

Individuals look for social connection or affiliation through improvised body image and utilize it as a key device. Social skills are crucial instruments for creating solid and strong associations with others. It empowers a person to learn, convey, request help, coexist with individuals, get their requirements fulfilled in reasonable ways, make companions, develop sound relations, watch them, and in expansive range, have the capacity to coordinate with the society pleasantly (Tom, Tierney & Jeff, 2017).

Women were found to be significantly more socially skilled and were rated as being more physically attractive than men (Sarason, Sarason, Hacker & Basham, 1985). People with low social contacts or involvement utilizes face book more oftenly, and may further increase the utilization of face book when encounters malfeelings. They were also concerned more about how others seen them on face book. Although individuals had high number of social connection virtually, still it was found that they had low social involvement along with poor social skills (Oldmeadow, Quinn & Kowert, 2013).

Social skills help people to be affiliated with the society. Social connection might be base on help, fellowship, age, sex, assurance, shared interests, accomplishment of physical assets, or social strain to adjust; affiliations go past the typical affiliation hierarchical structures of the larger part social orders. People have a requirement for alliance (*Naff*) as the craving to build up and keep up many remunerating relational connections. The requirement for connection motivates dynamic, dominant social conduct with an accentuation on the wideness and quantity of social contacts (McClelland, 1988).

Healthy social lives are very common at workplace and also that correlate strongly with the fulfillment, meaning, and pride in workplace. Well-paid employees were much more prone to experience a healthy social life at workplace than the lower-level employees. Men were involved more socially at workplace than women (Hodson, 2004).

People seek for social affiliation through improvised body image and using it as a as a key tool whereas improving social skills could be a better option than enhancing body image. We as a whole have a body image. People have sentiments about the manner in which they look and they have thoughts and emotions about how others consider our looks. Our general body image can go from extremely positive to exceptionally negative. Negative body image thinking habit uniquely accounted for variance in self esteem and eating disturbance propensity over and above body image dissatisfaction. Considering negative body image thinking as a mental habit contributes to a deeper understanding of body dissatisfaction in adolescents (Verplanken & Velsvik, 2008)Body image is characterized as the attitudes and perceptions that an individual holds toward his/her own body, especially, however not exclusively, one's physical look (Cash & Pruzinsky 2004). Body image is also not limited to the aesthetic characteristics of the individual, also taking into consideration about his/her state of health, sexuality, and skills (Mountford & Koskina, 2015).

Body satisfaction was lower in feminine women than did androgynous or masculine identified participants. Body images were more positive for those who shared their gender and also sexual orientation than those who shared only their gender. In contrast, social affiliation was unrelated to body satisfaction (Ludwig & Brownell, 1999).

Individuals who are more dissatisfied with the body image have inadequate social support and regard that their problem solving abilities to be insufficient. This therefore makes the individuals more depressed, and it causes them to gravitate more towards social media (Ceyhan, Ceyhan & Kurtyilmaz, 2012).

Body image dissatisfaction is more widespread in women than in men, yet men were also clearly affected by body dissatisfaction (Maggie, Lalonde & Bain, 2010). For both men and women, self-perceptions of body attractiveness and of social attractiveness were positively related to the intimacy they found in interaction. Self-perceptions of social attractiveness were positively related to women's confidence in social interaction and their perceived influence over interaction, whereas for men, confidence and influence were unrelated to social attractiveness. For both men and women, body image was unrelated to how enjoyable people found interactions to be and was weakly related to how responsive they felt others were to them. For both men and women, body image was also unrelated to how socially active people were and to the relative distribution of same- and opposite-sex interactions (William & Mary, 1999).

Rationale of the study

The aim of this study was to examine the interaction among social skills, body image and social affiliation among young adults. Cultivating a close, warm-hearted relationship will automatically puts the mind at ease. It helps to remove whatever insecurities people have and also gives the strength to cope with any obstacles people encounter. As the main motive the current study is about social affiliation and how body image and social skills influence social affiliation. There were no prior studies conducted on the combination of social skills, body image and social affiliation and that becomes the ultimate need for the study. The findings may contribute to the future researches in exploring the probable cause of ensued differences and will open the way for future research in this field. In present world young adults are more conscious about their body images and also need for social affiliation which is a primary motive of all individuals. They also need to be in contact with the society. Involvement of them in the social media is the best and apt example for that. The study would greatly benefit the youth, educationalists and psychologists as

it would reveal the interaction among social skills, body image and social affiliation among young adults. The study also benefits the students, researchers and scholars who are interested in developing further study on the subject matter.

METHOD

Participants

The sample for the study was randomly selected and consisted of 99 females and 103 males of various schools of Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, Punjab. The age ranges of the students were from 20 to 39. Confidentiality of the individual's data was ensured.

Instruments

1. Social Skills Scale by Sharma, Goswami and Gupta (2017)

Social Skills Scale consists of 48 statements. There is no time limit to fill it. An average respondent requires approximately 15-20 minutes to complete the scale. The scale measures four components of social skills- (a)conversation skills, item 1 to 12 (b)relationship skills, item 13 to 24 (c)self control, item 25 to 37 (d)mannerism, item 38 to 48.

2. The Multidimensional body- self relations questionnaire by Cash (2000)

The Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire (MBSRQ) is a 69 item self report inventory for the assessment of self attitudinal aspects of body image construct. The MBSRQ is intended for use with adults and adolescents (15 years or older).

Appearance Evaluation: Feelings of physical attractiveness or unattractiveness; Satisfaction or dissatisfaction with one's looks. High scores feel mostly positive and satisfied with their appearance; low scores have a general unhappiness with their physical appearance.

Appearance Orientation: Extent of investment in one's appearance. High scorers place more importance on how they look, pay attention to their appearance, and engage in extensive grooming behaviors. Low scorers are apathetic about their appearance; their looks are not especially important and they do not expend much effort to "look good".

3. Liking People Scale Revised by Filsinger (1980)

Liking People Scale is a 15 item Likert scale in which the subject is required to answer with one of the following options- (a)strongly disagree, (b)moderately agree, (c)neutral, (d)moderately disagree or (e)strongly disagree- to questions that measure how much they

'like people'. This scale is thus helpful in measuring this aspect of need for affiliation, interpersonal orientation and social interaction.

Procedure

The research started by selecting a random sample of university students. After taking their consent three scales were presented to them i.e. Social Skills Scale, the Multidimensional body- self relations questionnaire and Liking People Scale. Instructions were given to subjects before filling the questionnaires and their queries were answered before responding. After scoring, data was computed through SPSS 20, on Pearson Product Moment Correlation, Multiple regression and t- test.

RESULTS

Table 1: Effect of social skills and body image on social affiliation (N=202)

| Variable | R | Adjusted R square | Standardized coefficients | Sig. |
|---------------|------|-------------------|---------------------------|------|
| Social skills | .324 | .096 | .321 | .000 |
| Body image | | | .011 | .871 |

Table 1 shows the effect of social skills and body image on social affiliation. The R value is .324 which shows weak positive correlation. That is there is a weak positive correlation among social skills, body image and social affiliation in college students.

The adjusted R square or multiple regression is 0.96 which is statistically significant but weak in prediction which indicates that the null hypothesis is false, that is, there is no significant influence of social skills and body image on social affiliation in relation to male and female college students.

The standardized coefficient beta is .321, and was statistically significant for social skills. Here the beta value suggests that social skills are predicting social affiliation. For body image, the standardized coefficient beta is .011 which is very low and is significant with value of .871. Hence body image is not predicting social affiliation of the group.

Table 2: Gender differences among Body image, Social affiliation and Social skills (N=202)

| Variable | Gender | N | Mean | Std Deviation | t-value | Sig (2 tailed) |
|--------------------|--------|-----|---------|---------------|---------|----------------|
| Body Image | Female | 99 | 61.93 | 5.181 | -1.058 | .292 |
| | Male | 103 | 62.73 | 5.540 | | |
| Social Affiliation | Female | 99 | 48.323 | 7.2236 | -1.041 | .299 |
| | Male | 103 | 49.408 | 7.5763 | | |
| Social Skills | Female | 99 | 133.899 | 24.0787 | -1.124 | .262 |
| | Male | 103 | 137.748 | 24.5727 | | |

Table 2 shows the mean, standard deviation and t values of body image, social affiliation and social skills. The mean obtained by the variable body image is 61.93 for females and 62.73 for males. The SD is 5.181 and 5.540 respectively. The t score is -1.058, which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. It reveals that there is no significant difference in relation to gender in body image.

The mean obtained by the variable social affiliation is 48.323 for females and 49.408 for males. The SD is 7.2236 and 7.5763 respectively. The t score is -1.041, which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. It reveals that there is no significant difference with regard to gender in social affiliation.

The mean obtained by the variable social skills is 133.899 for females and 137.748 for males. The SD is 24.0787 and 24.5727 respectively. The t score is -1.124, which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. It reveals that there is no significant difference in relation to gender in social skills.

DISCUSSION

The aim of the study was to examine the interaction among social skills, body image and social affiliation. The result indicates that social skills predict social affiliation but body image is not predicting social affiliation of male and female college students. The same is in alignment with that of the study conducted by Ludwig and Brownell (1999) which examined the gender roles and social group affiliation on lesbians, bisexual women, and body image. The findings indicate that social affiliation was unrelated to body satisfaction.

The result also indicates that there is no gender difference in body image and the same is validated in a research conducted by Halliwell and Dittmar (2003) which says men and women construed the importance of their bodies differently, that is, a man tended to focus on functionality, and women tended to focus on display. Within the society it appears that body image concerns or dissatisfaction with one's body is a female-exclusive problem. However the above mentioned research suggests that men do experience body image concerns, but on different aspects of the same variable.

Result also revealed that there is no gender difference in social skills. The result is contradictory with the study conducted by Sarason, Hacker and Basham (1985) which examined the naturally occurring relations among self reported social support and social skills, on the other hand, and

behavioral measures and rated physical attractiveness on the other. The findings showed that women were found to be significantly more socially skilled and were rated as being more physically attractive than men.

Result also revealed that there is no gender difference in social affiliation. This is in contrary with the study conducted by Mazur (1989), which shows that men consistently had lower affiliation motivation and affiliation values than women.

As its evident that social norms and value system of the society have gradually changed due to globalization and impact of media, the ideal concept no longer exists and there are no gender differences in terms of social affiliation, social skills and body image.

Between the journey of life individuals can be extremely busy and stressful. Balancing of abundant responsibilities also can be affected by a normal individual. The study has been conducted among young adults (college students) were the age vary from 20-39. Here the individuals are running through an important stage of their life. People might involve in their education, career planning, marriage, family planning etc. In short individuals are in their turning point of life bearing a lot of duties and responsibilities. There are three important components which are playing a major role in our lives: Social affiliation, social skill and body image. Here the study aimed to find out the interaction among social affiliation, social skill and body image. Three factors are very essential but it can differ from individual to individual.

While analyzing the above mentioned table, it is understood that there is no relationship and difference between three variables. The important reason behind this result is human being is too much concerned about their life. So they are not connecting there social skills, body image and need for affiliation. Instead of comparing and judging the relationships of their skills and needs people comparing their lives with others. The present study is conducted on young adults and here they are comparing their needs with other's needs, their skills with others skills, their body image with other's body image. That can be an important reason behind the obtained results in the study.

The other thing is individual difference. These three factors are not the same in all human beings. There will be variations and similarities. But for sure without any doubt we can explain that individuals are unique with their appearance, social skills and social affiliation.

Self-acceptance can be the other factor which influences the present results of the study. If the individual is enough confident in one's own body image then automatically other factors like

social skills and need for affiliation can't form a relationship or difference between the components. Same way beliefs can also be a factor, if the individual have a strong belief in their social skills, then he or she will never give any importance to other factors. Self-consciousness can be also a factor which can be influence the present result of the study.

As we discussed there are lot of factors which support this study, those are evidently proved in our daily lives. Human beings are blessed with lot of skills and potential's. There are different components which can influence them in their life time. But according to this study it is proved that there is no gender difference in relation to the three variables in one's life and social skills predict social affiliation..

CONCLUSION

The study was conducted to explore the interaction among social skills, body image and social affiliation among college students. According to the result obtained, some hypotheses were rejected and some were accepted accordingly and the following conclusions were obtained. There is influence of social skills on social affiliation and there is no influence of body image on social affiliation on both male and female college students. There is a weak positive correlation among social skills, body image and social affiliation in both male and female college students. There is no gender difference in social skills. There is no gender difference in body image. There is no gender difference in social affiliation.

Future perspective

The study gives some insights about the role of social skills and body image on social affiliation of young adults. Future research is needed to pinpoint the specific reasons that aid to reduce the social skills in present world. Our findings can be helpful for researchers to understand the holistic view of social skills, body image and its connection with social affiliation. Future researchers can carry out this study on all the age groups and not restricted to the young adults or other categories of young adults too and not only on students. They can also expand this research on a sample from all parts of India and not restricted to only a specific area. The study also provides feedback to the counselors, psychiatrists, policy makers and researchers to frame intervention programs and policies that will promote social skills among young adults.

REFERENCES

Brennan, M. A., Lalonde, C. E., & Bain, J. L. (2010). Body image perceptions: Do gender differences exist. *Psi Chi Journal of Undergraduate Research*, 15(3), 130-138.

- Cash, T. F., & Pruzinsky, T. (2004). *Body image: A handbook of theory, research, and clinical practice*. The Guilford Press.
- Ceyhan, A., Ceyhan, E., & Kurtyilmaz, Y. (2012). The effect of body image satisfaction on problematic internet use through social support, problem solving skills and depression. *The Online Journal of Counselling and Education*, 1(3), 83-95.
- Dowd, Tom P.; Tierney, Jeff (2017). *Teaching Social Skills to Youth: A Step-by-step Guide to 182 Basic to Complex Skills Plus Helpful Teaching Techniques*. Boys Town Press. [ISBN 9781889322698](https://www.google.com/books?id=9781889322698) – via Google Books.
- Halliwell, E., & Dittmar, H. (2003). A qualitative investigation of women's and men's body image concerns and their attitudes toward aging. *Sex roles*, 49(11-12), 675-684.
- Hodson, R. (2004). Work life and social fulfillment: Does social affiliation at work reflect a carrot or a stick?. *Social Science Quarterly*, 85(2), 221-239.
- Ludwig, M. R., & Brownell, K. D. (1999). Lesbians, bisexual women, and body image: An investigation of gender roles and social group affiliation. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 25(1), 89-97.
- Pinto-Gouveia, J., Ferreira, C., & Duarte, C. (2014). Thinness in the pursuit for social safeness: An integrative model of social rank mentality to explain eating psychopathology. *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy*, 21(2), 154-165.
- Mazur, E. (1989). Predicting gender differences in same-sex friendships from affiliation motive and value. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 13(3), 277-291.
- McClelland, D. (1988). *The achieving society*. Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand Company Inc
- Mountford V.A., Koskina A. (2015) Body Image. In: Wade T. (eds) *Encyclopedia of Feeding and Eating Disorders*. Springer, Singapore
- Oldmeadow, J. A., Quinn, S., & Kowert, R. (2013). Attachment style, social skills, and Facebook use amongst adults. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29(3), 1142-1149.
- Sarason, B. R., Sarason, I. G., Hacker, T. A., & Basham, R. B. (1985). Concomitants of social support: Social skills, physical attractiveness, and gender. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 49(2), 469.
- Verplanken, B., & Velsvik, R. (2008). Habitual negative body image thinking as psychological risk factor in adolescents. *Body Image*, 5(2), 133-140.