



ISSN: 0976-3031

Available Online at <http://www.recentscientific.com>

CODEN: IJRSFP (USA)

International Journal of Recent Scientific Research
Vol. 8, Issue, 10, pp. 20647-20650, October, 2017

**International Journal of
Recent Scientific
Research**

DOI: 10.24327/IJRSR

Research Article

BODY IMAGE SATISFACTION AND SELF-ESTEEM AMONG UAE RESIDENTS

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DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24327/ijrsr.2017.0810.0933>

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 17th July, 2017

Received in revised form 21th

August, 2017

Accepted 28th August, 2017

Published online 28th October, 2017

Key Words:

Self-esteem; Body Image Satisfaction;
Social Influence; Perception

ABSTRACT

Numerous studies found an association between body image and self-esteem. Yet factors like religion, cultural diversity, and luxury lifestyle in UAE could modify such associations. This study aims to investigate the association between body image satisfaction and self-esteem among adults in UAE. A cross-sectional study was used to enroll a convenient sample of adults 20-40 years old. Subjects filled out questionnaires where body image satisfaction was assessed using a five-point Likert scale while Rosenberg's test and CIMEC test were used to measure self-esteem and social influence respectively. A total of 326 subjects were included in the study. A significant positive association was found between body image satisfaction and self-esteem. Among those not satisfied 12.3% had high self-esteem, compared to 80.2 % among the satisfied group ($\chi^2=19.548$, $p=0.001$). Those who were satisfied with their body image showed more self-confidence, perceived themselves as people of worth, and showed positive attitude towards themselves.

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INTRODUCTION

Body image can be defined as a person's perception, attitude, and feeling about his or her body. Perceptual body image and attitudinal body image are two different themes within body image perception. According to Grogan, perceptual body image relates to the accuracy of self-estimation of body size to actual size, while attitudinal body image is assessed by measures of four components: satisfaction (evaluation of the body), affect (feelings associated with the body), cognitions (investment in appearance, beliefs about the body), and behaviors (such as avoidance of situations where the body will be exposed). Moreover, Muth and Cash in 1997 talked about two aspects of body image attitude; evaluation (satisfaction or dissatisfaction with one's physical attributes) and affect (experience of discrete emotions). Other studies have also found that many other factors may influence body image perception and hence satisfaction. These include socio-demographic factors, nutrition, and psycho-social factors like stress, social support and quality of life. [1][2]

Light has been spotted on how the body is viewed and evaluated by the individual and by others and research has

proven that women desire to lose weight in order to satisfy their ego, whereas men tend to fluctuate between losing and gaining weight. Hence size and shape play a role in determining the positivity and negativity of one's perception of his body image. Its acceptance by the individual will result in positivity. However, negativity will lead to embarrassment, disappointment and anxiety. [3] [4]

Media plays also an important role in determining the ideal body image. For example, girls are encouraged to be "thin and sexy" and boys are encouraged to be "big and muscular". An Australian study studying the media's role found that 6-10 year old girls who looked at women's magazines had greater dissatisfaction with their appearance. Additionally, another American study found that 70% of adolescent girls believed that magazine pictures influenced their idea of ideal body shape and 47% of them wanted to lose weight as a result of that. Whereas males, on the other hand, were more interested in exercise rather than dieting in order to achieve their ideal body. [4][5]

The National Association for Self-Esteem defines self-esteem as: "The experience of being capable of meeting life's

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challenges and being worthy of happiness." Glasser in 1969 stated that the most important aspects of self-esteem are a feeling of belonging or of being needed, a sense of being accepted, and a feeling of being a competent person. A person with a low self-esteem shows self-rejection, self-dissatisfaction, and self-contempt, lacks self-respect, and paints a disagreeable self-picture. [1][2]

Numerous studies have found an association between satisfaction with body image and self-esteem. Yet, none of them have been conducted in UAE, where factors like religion, cultural diversity, and luxury lifestyle could modify such an association. This study aims to investigate the association between body image satisfaction and self-esteem among adult population in UAE.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

A non-probability, convenience sampling method was used to collect data from 326 participants. Participants age ranged from 20 to 40; 203 were males and 123 were females.

Materials

Rosenberg's test: Rosenberg's test was used to measure self-esteem. The scale consists of ten statements that participants' answer rating on a 5-likert scale from with strongly disagree (score of 0), disagree (score of 1), uncertain (score of 2), agree (score of 3), or strongly agree (score of 4). Example of the questions "I feel that I have a number of good qualities. "Five question had a reversed scoring, example of question "I certainly feel useless at times." Then, the overall score was calculated by summing up the scores from the questions and a total ranging from 10 to 40 was obtained. Thereafter participants were categorized into low self-esteem, average self-esteem, or high self-esteem groups from the total. The SES has a reported reproducibility coefficient of .92 and a test retest correlation over 2 weeks of .85. Convergent validity is reported between $r = .56$ and $r = .83$ (Robinson and Shaver, 1973). In addition, SES was used in a research in Al-ain and in that research the Cronbach's alpha of the scale in the present study was .86, and the 2-weeks test-retest reliability coefficient was 0.79. [6]

9-figure-Silhouette picture test: 9-figure-Silhouette picture (Fig.1) was used to measure body image perception. Maryam Yebes *et al.* in 2015 have proven in their research that 9-figure-Silhouette picture test is still valid to be used with an area under the graph of 0.91, standard error of 0.01, and confidence interval of 0.89-0.93 in male and 0.89, 0.01, and 0.87-0.91 respectively in female. Participants were asked to choose a body shape that reflects their current shape and also to choose what shape they would prefer to look alike.[7]

5-likert Scale test: 5-likert scale test was used to measure body image satisfaction. In which participants answered the following question "How satisfied are you with your body image?" rating them on a 5-likert scale from Not satisfied at all, not satisfied, Uncertain, Satisfied, and Very satisfied. In which after they were merged to three groups; not satisfied, uncertain, or satisfied.

CIMEC (Questionnaire on Influences on Body Shape Model): CIMEC was used to measure the social influence. In

this study, it was modified to accommodate the cultural differences. 15 questions were extracted from CIMEC test. An example of the questions is "Is anyone in your family doing anything to slim, or has anyone done so recently?" Participants answered the questions with no (score of 0), uncertain (score of 1), or yes (score of 2). Overall score was calculated by summing the score on the individual answers ranging from 0-30. Thereafter participants were categorized into low social influence, moderate social influence, or high social influence groups. Torto *et al.* in 2005 have proven CIMEC to be validated to use in their research with the internal consistency being 0.80-0.85 in their research. [8]

Procedure

Upon receiving the ethical and research committee approval from the University of Sharjah, the researchers approached people who understand Arabic or English, at public places in Sharjah city, UAE. Participants were explained about the aim of the study and strictly confidentiality of the collected information. Once a written consent was obtained a self-administered questionnaire was distributed among participants, in Arabic or English depending on their preference which included participant's demographics, SES, altered CIMEC, 9-figure-Silhouette picture and the 5-likerts scale for body image satisfaction.

Data Analysis

The data were entered and analyzed in "SPSS" software. Descriptive analysis was used to fulfill the aims of the research. The correlation between body image satisfaction and self-esteem was done using Chi-square test. Other correlations were done between body image satisfaction and other variables.

RESULTS

Descriptive Results

The study included 326 people; 203 were males and 123 were females. 222 participants were satisfied with their body image, while 47 and 57 were uncertain and unsatisfied, respectively. 16 (5.3%) participants had low self-esteem while 81 (27.0%) had high self-esteem. Remaining participants had moderate self-esteem. (Fig.2 (a), (b))

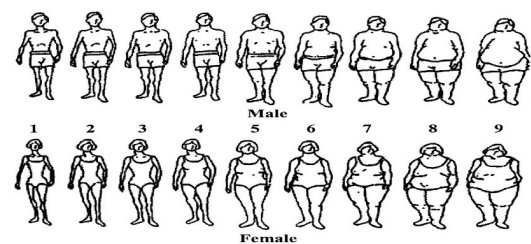


Fig 1 9-figure-Silhouette picture used in questionnaire

In 9-Figure-Silhouette, Males chose figures 4 and 5 more frequently (28.6% and 24.6% respectively) which they think that these figures almost resemble their body image. However, females chose figures 3 and 4 more frequently (23.8% and 35.2% respectively). Meanwhile, a difference also was found in the perceived ideal body image among gender. Males preferred figures 3 and 4 (25.1% and 36.5%) to be the ideal body image for them.

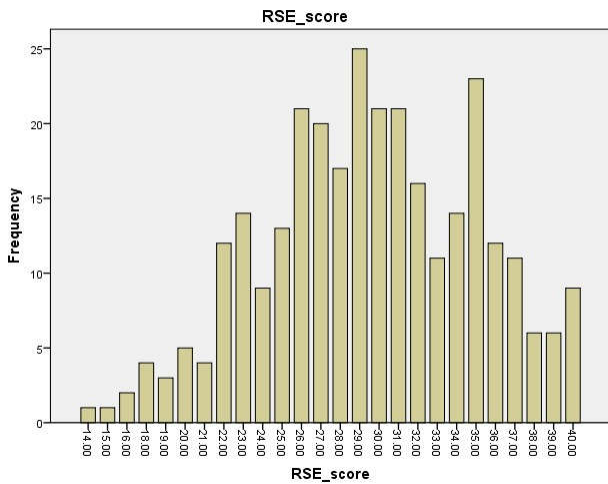


Fig 2 a Scoring on Rosenberg's test

Almost half of females (49.6%) perceived figure 2 as the ideal body image, while 31.4% preferred figure 3. (P-value = 0.000) (Fig.3 (a), (b))

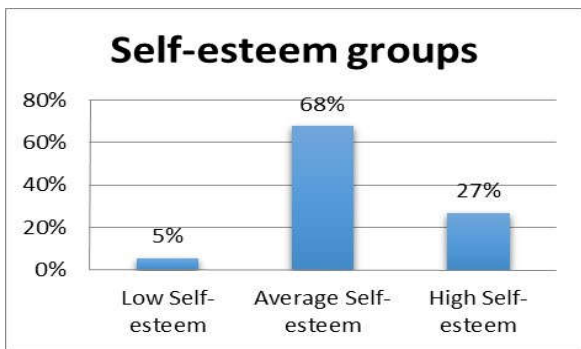


Fig 2 b Grouping of Rosenberg's test scores

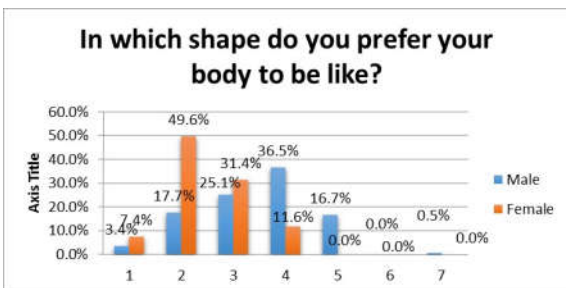
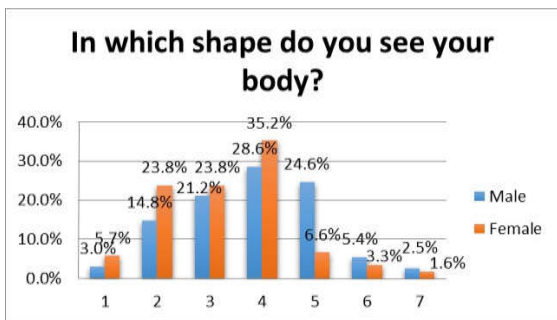


Fig 3(a), (b) Participants answers to the –figure –Silhouette picture questions (a) current shape perception (b) preferred shape perception.

Correlation Results

In Rosenberg's test, those satisfied with their body image scored higher (Mean score 30.6 +/- 5.2) than those unsatisfied (Mean score 27.1 +/- 6.1) (p-value= 0.000).

Participants categorized themselves as thin, just right, overweight, or obese (BMI was not calculated). Those who felt "just right" reported higher satisfaction with their body image. While those who felt "obese" were more likely to be unsatisfied. That correlated significantly with body image satisfaction (p-value= 0.002). (Fig.4)

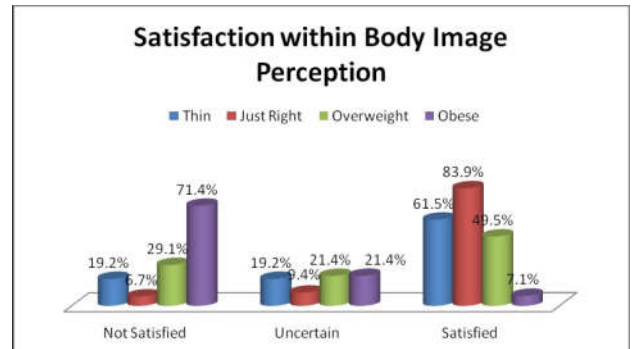


Fig 4 Participants Body Image Perception within their Body Satisfaction

Males were more likely to be satisfied with their body image (75% vs. 13%) in contrast to females (56% vs. 25%) (p= 0.002). However, there was no significant difference in self-esteem scores among males and females (p=0.310). (Fig.5)

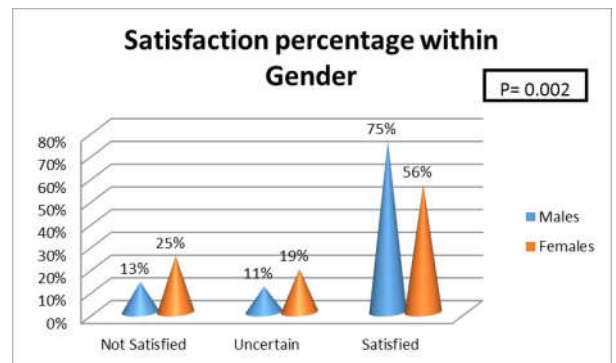


Fig 5 Gender Percentage with Body Satisfaction Groups

A significant relation does exist between social influence and body image satisfaction (p=0.004). Those satisfied reported low social influence (Mean score 13.6 +/- 5.0) compared to those not satisfied with their body image (Mean score 17.2 +/- 4.5) (p-value= 0.000).

DISCUSSION

The present study showed a significant positive correlation between body image satisfaction and self-esteem. Those who were satisfied with their body image showed more self-confidence, perceived themselves as people of worth, and showed more respect and positive attitude towards themselves. They attributed this to a variety of reasons: being healthy and in shape, feeling comfortable and socially acceptable.

Our findings are in accordance with Wang & Say, 2013 who found that among university students, those with lower self-esteem were more likely to be dissatisfied with their body image. Hence he concluded that self-esteem had a significant negative correlation with body satisfaction. [9]

Similarly, another study investigating the prevalence of body image satisfaction among female medical students in Mangalore, India also found that the majority (80%) of those

who felt they were normal were satisfied with their body image whereas the minority (11.8%) of those who felt overweight was satisfied. A finding that further supports the findings of the present study where 73.8% of those who felt “just right” were satisfied compared to only 42.9% and 0.0% of those who felt overweight or obese respectively. [2]

In the present study, 28.6% and 24.6% of adult males perceived their body image as figures 4 and 5, respectively. A similar result was also found in a study on adolescents in Dubai where 32.2% and 26% of the boys perceived their body image as figures 4 and 5, respectively. On the other hand, a difference was found between the adult and adolescent females’ perception where 23.8% and 35.2% of adult females perceived themselves as figures 3 and 4, in contrast to 26.2% and 35.2% of adolescent girls selecting figures 2 and 3, respectively.

Regarding the ideal body image, adult males preferred figures 3 and 4 (25.1% and 36.5%, respectively) whereas adolescent boys preferred figures 4 and 5 (27.9% and 45.1%, respectively). This has proven a little different among females where half of adult females (49.6%) selected figure 2 as the ideal body image, compared to adolescent girls who preferred figures 3 and 4 (39.9% and 30.7% respectively). Interestingly, there was more consistency in adolescents between the current and the preferred body image. Adult females strongly preferred thinner body image than what adolescent girls preferred. [10]

The present study has also found that the majority of those who consider themselves under low social influence were satisfied with their body image (90.3% in males, and 84.6% in females). This correlation was found significant in females ($p=0.022$), while in males; it was not ($p=0.273$). However, there was no significant difference in the distribution of satisfaction between males of different social influence. This conclusion was also supported by another study done in Spain, which found a significant correlation between body dissatisfaction and the CIMEC scale among females and adolescent males only but not among adult males. [4]

CONCLUSION

This study showed that among UAE adult population, in spite of the strong influence of cultural diversity, religious aspects and luxury lifestyles, a significant positive correlation was found between Body image satisfaction and Self-esteem where those satisfied with their body image significantly proved to have higher self-esteem than those who are not.

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How to cite this article:

Omar Y. Allassaf et al. 2017, Body Image Satisfaction and Self-Esteem Among Uae Residents. *Int J Recent Sci Res*. 8(10), pp. 20647-20650. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24327/ijrsr.2017.0810.0933>
