Title: The relationship between self-esteem, body dissatisfaction and adolescent girls' tendency to go on a diet

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INTRODUCTION

The concept ‘body dissatisfaction’ is related to the image of someone's body. The image is related to the perception, feelings and thoughts of one individual to his own body and the psychological importance that it has in his appearance (Cash, Morrow, Hablony, & Perry, 2004; Grogan, 2008).

Body dissatisfaction is defined as a negative evaluation of the body forming shape, muscles tone, body weight and body size (Grogan, 2008). Usually this includes an inconsistency between the real body evaluation and the ideal body of the individual (Cash & Szynwalski, 1995). The phenomenon of the body dissatisfaction and the desire to be as thin as possible is a common problem in the female gender in the adolescence period (Dohrt & Tiggemann, 2006).

Self-esteem can be defined as the judgement of an individual for his own values (Rosenberg, 1965). Self-esteem is an important inside factor, which must be considered related to the body dissatisfaction. Body elegance is seen as a positive factor or achievement of someone, otherwise being obese, overweight or not elegant is seen as an achievement (Cash & Szynwalski, 1995).

Many studies have shown that those who have a tendency to go on a diet have higher body dissatisfaction than those who do not go on a diet. Adolescents and especially adolescent girls are overweight even when they are in a normal body weight conform their size or age (Coy, 2009). Going on a diet may be seen as a normal habit of being thin, but can have serious physical consequences, such as a delayed growth or a delayed puberty (Koesters, 1996). Many adolescent girls try to lose weight or try to keep much lower body weight, without taking in consideration if they are or not overweight (Hall & Grolnick, 2007).

Even self-esteem influence in this connection a lot (Davis & Oswey, 1992). Different studies conclude upon the relationship between these variables predicting that low self-esteem correlates positively with body dissatisfaction on adolescent girls (Beanar, Presnell, Martinez, & Stoic, 2006; Gardner, Freidman, Stark, & Jackson, 1999).

METHODS

The sample chosen for the study is composed of 196 adolescent girls of 15-18 years old. It is randomly chosen. The chosen age is based in literature and other studies (Taylor, Sharpe, Shlissak, Bryson, Estes, Gray, McKnight, Crag, Kraemer, 1998). The sample is chosen from different grades of high school. The used instruments have been:

BSQ (Body Shape Questionnaire) (P.J. Cooper, M.J. Taylor, Z. Cooper and C.G.Fairburn).

The questionnaire purpose is to measure the concerns about body shape in the young girls (α = 0.89). This questionnaire has an acceptable value of reliability in this study, that is more than α = 0.7.

Rosenberg’s Self-Esteem Questionnaire- which is used to measure the self-esteem level in the young girls with a value of α = 0.87 in the study.

Adolescent Tendency to keep Diet Scale (Patton et al., 1997), (r = 0.78)- this scale measures typical strategies of going on a diet of the individual (calories counting, reduction of food quantity, and meals overcoming) with an value of α = 0.78.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Pearson coefficient of correlation has been used to evaluate the correlation between body dissatisfaction and self-esteem. If there exists a moderate negative correlation between both variables, the coefficient will have a value between -0.30 and -0.70.

The Pearson coefficient of correlation has been used to evaluate the correlation between body dissatisfaction and self-esteem. The results are that there exists a moderate positive correlation between the two variables (r = 0.491), with a statistical significance (p < 0.005), which means that there is a moderate positive correlation between body dissatisfaction and self-esteem. The second hypothesis is confirmed that ahigher body dissatisfaction will be accompanied by a higher tendency to go on a diet.

The comparative analyses of the T test compared the reported average points between two groups. The first group is compound of girls that attend the art school high school. We expect that this group has a higher level of body dissatisfaction, a lower level of self-esteem and a higher tendency to go on a diet in comparison with the other group, the group of girls that attend a normal/general high school. T values of = 0.357, degrees of freedom (t=18) and p = 0.000 show that there exists a statistically significant difference between the reported average about body dissatisfaction in both schools. But the second group of girls, those who attend the normal/general high school reports a lower level of body dissatisfaction than the other group of girls, the art one.

The Pearson coefficient of correlation has been used to evaluate the correlation between body dissatisfaction and self-esteem in the two groups (r = 0.678) and (t=0.034 < 0.05) show that there exists a statistically significant differences. The second group of girls, who attend the general high school, has reported a lower level of body dissatisfaction between two groups. The first group is compound of girls that attend the art school high school. We conclude that even the second hypothesis is confirmed that ahigher body dissatisfaction will be accompanied by a higher tendency to go on a diet.

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CONCLUSIONS

There can be concluded these points from the study:

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We can assume over seeing all the gathered data that a higher body dissatisfaction level will lead to a higher tendency to go on a diet. The higher body dissatisfaction level is also connected to a lower level of self-esteem in the teenage girls of 15-18 years old. Also, there has been viewed that there are differences between two groups that have been studied in three both groups. The group of teenage girls that attend the art school high school had a higher body dissatisfaction, a lower self-esteem and a higher tendency to go on a diet.

Even though both hypothesis of the study were confirmed, this study needs to undertake further studies with a wider sample and with the inclusion of more influencing variables.

REFERENCES

The gathered data form the used instruments for the study have been analysed with SPSS 22-nb version. Pearson correlation has been used to study and verify the correlation between body dissatisfaction, self-esteem and tendency to go on a diet variables and t-test method to compare both groups of adolescents girls (those that attend the art school high school with those who go to school normal/general high school). For each variables there is evaluated and analysed the correlation and comparison in groups.

The Pearson coefficient of correlation has been used to evaluate the correlation between body dissatisfaction and self-esteem. If there exists a moderate negative correlation between both variables, the coefficient will have a value between -0.30 and -0.70.

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