

Association of Media Appearance Pressure on Body Image Dissatisfaction and Quality of Life

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ABSTRACT

Background: As media technologies are easily available everywhere, people of all ages are seen to use it widely. Media psychology refers as the understanding of interaction that occurs between human and media technology. Media plays an important role in shaping human behaviour. Now a day, it is seen that media promotes thin body as ‘ideal body image’ which directly or indirectly encouraging the youth to adopt such trend, in return they tends to develop eating disorders such as bulimia, anorexia nervosa etc. **Objective:** This paper took an account of understanding the influence of media on body image and quality of life among youth of Kamrup metropolis. **Methodology:** The present study was a cross sectional design, conducted among 388 male and female students studying undergraduate courses in science, humanities and commerce in different colleges affiliating to Gauhati University. Convenient sampling method was applied to select the students. **Tools:** A self-developed sociodemographic schedule, Body area Satisfaction Scale, media pressure sub-scale (SATAQ-4), and WHO BREF quality of life scales were used. **Results:** Descriptive analysis indicates that, 96.3% students are familiar with social networking media (Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram etc.). Pearson correlation was used to find out the association and found that, media pressure was significantly negatively correlated with body image satisfaction ($r = -.128^*$) at 0.05 level and psychological quality of life ($r = -.192^{**}$) at 0.01 level (2 tailed). Regression analysis was used to see the factors that predicts quality of life and

found that media appearance pressure ($B = -.245$, $t = -1.892$, $p = .059$) and body image dissatisfaction ($B = .833$, $t = 9.227$, $p = .000$) made a significant contribution to quality of life in students.

Key words: Media influence, body image satisfaction/dissatisfaction, psychological quality of life.

INTRODUCTION

Media has a strong extraordinary communications potential that reach to vast number of people and increase public understanding of any discipline. This outlet has both positive and negative sides, like sometimes a negative, defamatory information goes viral through WhatsApp, Facebook or other mode of media, which directly or indirectly influence an individual mental health as well as psychological quality of life. Media can be defined in two ways, one is old media that is comprises with only television, newspaper, radio, magazine, where as another one is ‘New’ media, which is comparatively more fast and advance than old media. New media includes digital television, YouTube, WAP baes technology, WhatsApp, Facebook, twitter and other such social media. Social media and other digital technologies become a base in cultivating body image concern, forming positive or negative attitude towards own body shape, make individual learn more about styles to look good or dietary practices that can help to maintain figure. (Richard Perloff, 2014). Previous cross sectional as well longitudinal surveys have explained that, media exposure is a good predictor of body image dissatisfaction, thin body ideals and other eating disorder symptoms in female. (Botta 1999; Harisson and Hefner 2006, and Stice et al. 1994). Media influence on body image can be related to social learning theory developed by Albert Bandura. This theory refers that; people has a tendency to imitate or learn something by observing others. The media through its various mode that constantly portray thin body images gives an opportunity to public to learn from these images. Another theoretical frame that supports that the more time an individual spend socializing online, the less time they like to spend in mixing up with the offline world and which lead to decrease in wellbeing. (Jeffrey Hall, Kearney, Xing; 2018). According to Festinger, when people look at the images portrayed in magazines, or other type of media (TV, WhatsApp, Facebook etc.); they start comparing themselves with those pictures and make out self-judgements based on comparisons; and these kind of self-judgement may shrinkage quality of life. Quality of life is a subjective evaluation depending upon individual’s perception of their position in life. Individual’s quality of life can be affected by physical health status, psychological state, social relationships and their relationship to environmental factors. (Group 1998). Good quality of life indicates being

physically able to get around, free from worries and stresses, or being able make close relationship with family members or with society though physical communications whereas, poor quality of life is just inability to cope up with all these properly.

NEED OF THE STUDY

In this digital era, college students are mostly found to be engaged with mobile phone, computer or other digital gadgets, and in online world like, Facebook, Instagram they become very active and try to follow new trend always, which they got inspired by celebrities or friends. They feel that physical attractiveness is necessary in order to feel worth. After going through several studies, it was found that, in the North East India context special reference to Guwahati city, a few studies have been conducted, to see media appearance pressure on body image dissatisfaction and quality of life which is not sufficient to understand. Therefore, the present study was carried out to see whether media appearance pressure can influence body image satisfaction/dissatisfaction and quality of life in students of Guwahati city.

OBJECTIVE

1. To see the association between media appearance pressure with body image dissatisfaction and quality of life.

HYPOTHESIS

H₁ There will be significant relationship of media appearance pressure with body image dissatisfaction and quality of life

METHOD

The present study was a cross sectional study, descriptive in nature. Convenience sampling method was used in selection of colleges as well as students from Kamrup metropolis. The sample student of the study consisted of 200 Male and 188 Female undergraduate students from science, commerce humanities studying undergraduate course in the colleges of Kamrup metropolis, affiliating to Gauhati University. Students of both gender, aged between 18-21 (Undergraduate students of Science) and those willing to give consent were included.

Measures

Sociodemographic schedule: a self-developed demographic profile was used in the present study. It includes basic information of the student's background. Information like age,

gender, internet access, time spend in internet, habit of reading magazines etc. were asked to the participants.

Body Area Satisfaction Scale (BASS) (Cash, 2000): Body Area Satisfaction scale is a subscale of Multidimensional Body Self Relations questionnaire- Appearance Scales (MBSRQ-AS). MBSRQ-AS developed by Thomas Cash and fellow researchers. This scale has 5 subscales, and BASS is one of them. Body Areas Satisfaction Scale (BASS) assesses satisfaction or dissatisfaction with specific areas of the body on a 5-point scale (Complete Satisfaction to Complete Dissatisfaction). BASS consists of 9 items. BAS scale has a good psychometric properties and high level of internal consistency where, Cronbach alpha is .81.

Sociocultural attitude towards Appearance Questionnaire-4 (SATAQ-4) (Schaefer, Burke, et al., 2015): SATAQ 4 is a self-report questionnaire designed to measure perceived thinness and appearance pressures from family, peers and media. It has three subscales- family, peer and media and each consists of 4 items rated on a 5 point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (definitely disagree) to 5 (definitely agree). In the present study media subscale from this scale was used. Media pressure has good psychometric properties with Cronbach alpha is .90.

WHO BREF quality of life (World Health Organization. (1996): The WHOQOL-BREF questionnaire is a shorter 26-item version of the WHOQOL-100. The items are rated on a five-point scale (1-5). WHOQOL-BREF is based on a four-domain structure: Physical, Psychological, Social and personal relationships and Environmental quality of life. In the present study only psychological domain was used to measure psychological quality of life of students. Higher scores of each domain indicates higher or good quality of life. WHO BREF quality of life scale has a high Cronbach alpha value of 0.84.

PROCEDURE

Prior to beginning of the research, colleges were selected according to researcher's convenient and depending permission obtained from college authority. After granted permission to conduct the research, male and female students selected using convenient sampling method. Those who were selected they have explained the nature and objectives of the study. After that, they were asked to give consent and only after getting their consent to participate in the study and Participants are assessed with a socio-demographic datasheet and followed by applying MBSRQ –AS questionnaire, WHO BREF Quality of Life Questionnaire, SATAQ-4 (Media pressure) questionnaire.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Obtained data were analysed in SPSS 20 software system. To get an overview about socio demographical profile of students' as well as prevalence of body image dissatisfaction, descriptive analysis such as frequency and percentage was applied. Again Pearson correlation method was implemented to determine degree of association of media appearance pressure on body image satisfaction/dissatisfaction and quality of life in students. Lastly, to predict the factors that influencing quality of life, a regression analysis was adopted.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Purpose of the study was purely research oriented. There was no intention to harm others self-respect. Confidentiality was maintained regarding the results.

RESULTS

Obtained data were analysed in SPSS 20 version, consisting of descriptive statistics, person correlation, regression analyses. Cronbach alpha test was carried out to assess the internal consistency aspects of reliability of scales that measures quality of life (0.84), media appearance pressure (.90), Body satisfaction (.81). Table 1 shows socio demographic profile of students. It includes age, gender, internet access, time spend in internet, prevalence of social media users, etc. Age distribution of the students displays that, 42.0%, 37.4%, 10.3%, 10.3% students participated in the present study from age of 20 years, 19years, 18 years, and 21 years respectively. Table also shows that, 51.5% male and female (48.5%) students participated in the present study. Out of 388 students, 99% students expressed that they excess internet, whereas only 1% denied. Maximum students (49.7%) those who use internet reported that they spend more than 4 hours in internet per day, whereas, 31.2% use internet for 2 to 4 hours per day, and only 19.1% use internet less than 2 hours. 96.1% students are found to be familiar with social media and only 3.9% doesn't use social media. Similarly, 84.3% students stated that, they watch YouTube whereas 15.7% not acquainted to YouTube. Surprisingly, results show that, only a few students (25.77%) has a habit of studying magazines relating to fashion and other news, while 74.2% denied this habit.

Information obtained in table 2, reveals that, maximum number of students 258 (66.5%) are satisfied with their body image, however only a few students 130 (33.5%) has dissatisfaction regarding their own body appearance.

Table 3 displays quality of life of students in 4 different domains, such as, psychological, physical, social, and environmental. Outcomes signifies that, environmental (M= 26.12,

SD=5.11) and physical (M=24.98, SD=4.53) quality of life in students, was quite good as compare to psychological (M=19.70, SD=3.84) and social (M=10.30, SD=2.14) quality of life.

Table 4 shows media influence on body image dissatisfaction. Indicates that, media is significantly negatively correlated with body image satisfaction, where r vale is $-.128$, $p=0.05$. From this results it is possible to conclude that, when media appearance pressure increases, body image satisfaction level decreases, which means body image dissatisfaction occurs.

Table 5 indicates the association between media appearance pressure and Quality of life among college students. From table, it is found that, media appearance pressure has a significant negative correlation, ($r = -.192$, $p= 0.01$) with psychological quality of life. From this it can be assumed that, when the students feel greater appearance pressure from media, it leads to decreasing the level of psychological quality of life. Similarly, media appearance pressure is found to be negatively correlated with physical ($r=-.070$), social ($r= -.041$) and environmental ($r= -.085$) quality of life; and significantly found to be correlated with overall quality of life ($=-.142^{**}$, $p=0.01$) of students. So it implies that, increasing in media pressure regarding appearance can decrease overall quality of life.

To determine which factors predicted quality of life in male and female students, regression analysis was applied. As displayed in Table 6, media appearance pressure ($B= -.245$, $t= -1.892$, $p=.059$) and body image dissatisfaction ($B= .833$, $t= 9.227$, $p=.000$) made a significant contribution to quality of life in students.

TABLE 1

Socio- Demographic schedule (N=388)

Variables	Domains	Frequency	Percentage (100%)
Age	18 years	40	10.3
	19 years	145	37.4
	20 years	163	42.0
	21 years	40	10.3
Gender	Male	200	51.5
	Female	188	48.5
Internet access	Yes	384	99.0
	No	4	1.0

Spend time in	less than 2 hours	74	19.1
internet	2-4hours	121	31.2
	more than 4hours	193	49.7
Social media users	Yes	373	96.1
	No	15	3.9
Watching YouTube	Yes	327	84.3
	No	61	15.7
Reading magazine	No	288	74.2
	Yes	100	25.77

TABLE 2

Prevalence Body image satisfaction (N=388)

	Frequency	Percent (100%)
Body image dissatisfaction	130	33.5
Body image satisfaction	258	66.5

TABLE 3

Quality of life of students (N=388)

	Social Quality of life	Environmental Quality of life	Psychological Quality of life	Physical Quality of life
Mean	10.3041	26.1237	19.7010	24.9820
SD	2.14350	5.11523	3.84765	4.53379

TABLE 4

Media Appearance pressure on body image dissatisfaction (N=388)

	Body image Satisfaction	Significance
Media Appearance Pressure (Pearson	-.128*	Sig. (2-tailed) .012

correlation)

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

TABLE 5

Media Appearance Pressure on Quality of life (N=388)

	Physical quality of life	Social quality of life	Psychological quality of life	Environmental quality of life	Overall quality of life
Media Appearance Pressure (Pearson correlation)	-.070	-.041	-.192**	-.085	-.142**

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

TABLE 6

Predictors of Quality of life (N=388)

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.444 ^a	.198	.193	10.60088

ANOVA Table

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	10648.169	2	5324.085	47.376	.000 ^b

a. Dependent Variable: Quality of Life

b. Predictors (Constant): Body image dissatisfaction, media appearance pressure

Variables in the Equation

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	58.665	3.108		18.873	.000
Media appearance pressure	-.245	.130	-.087	-1.892	.059
Body image dissatisfaction	.833	.090	.425	9.227	.000

a. Dependent variable: quality of life

DISCUSSION

The present investigation was designed to assess the appearance pressure that triggers by media and identify its relationship with body image dissatisfaction, which may act as predictors for development of poor quality of life. According to Groesz, Levine, Murnen, (2002), messages regarding attractiveness, conveyed by media are largely responsible for creating a preoccupation with physical attractiveness. Analyses revealed that maximum students are well acquainted with accessing internet, using social media, watching YouTube videos, on the contrary, only one fourth students are found to have interest in reading magazines or other print media. Whereas, Majority of the respondents spent more than 4 hours in internet per day.

It was hypothesised that intense exposure to media images would lead to development of greater body image dissatisfaction and would be related to lowering down quality of life of students. Further, it was expected that, media appearance pressure, body image dissatisfaction would significantly predict quality of life.

Findings reveals that, 33.5% participants are affected by body image dissatisfaction, and media pressure on appearance was found to be associated with significant increase of body image dissatisfaction, whereas, media appearance pressure has opposite effect with significant decrease in both psychological as well as overall quality of life reported by the participants. In addition, media appearance pressure also related with diminution of physical, social and environmental quality of life. Current findings are inconsistent with Alvarenga, Phillippi et al. (2010), media is main cultural factors that responsible for influencing body image and these body dissatisfactions may threaten the psychological and physical wellbeing of both men and women (Griffith, Hay, Mitchison ,2016). Dohnt & Tiggemann (2006) also

stated about the existence of relationship between increased body image satisfaction and more frequent television viewing, frequent magazine reading. (Jones, Vigfusdottir, & Lee, 2004, Tiggemann & McGill, 2004).

However, in reverse to what originally hypothesised, media appearance pressure and quality of life were found inversely linked in the present study. It also shows that, social quality of life was negatively correlated with media appearance pressure, indicating that participants those spend more time in media; feels more pressurised and in turn it leads them to decrease their offline attachment with society as stated already by social displacement theory. Leung , & Lee, (2005) also found that, heavy use of internet, or computer games, actually degrade quality of life. Many researches on media suggests that, TV viewing contributes to a number of disputes including fractured family relation, increased violence, inactive life style, obesity, changes perception of the social value of thinness, body image dissatisfaction etc. (Brock, 2002; Kinnally, & Van Vonderen, 2014).

LIMITATION

- Present study had a quantitative research approach therefore it failed to understand insight of the problem.
- In the present study, convenience sampling method was used, so it cannot be generalized the results of survey to the population as a whole.
- As self-reported questionnaires were used in the present study, respondents might have tendency to portray themselves in good way so far.

CONCLUSION

The results highlights almost 99% participants are core users of media and those felt pressurised relating to appearance acquired via media was significantly correlated with body image dissatisfaction and quality of life. It also revealed that media appearance pressure and body image dissatisfaction was important predictors of quality of life. As this study was only limited with college going students, so future studies could focus on teenager's involvement in using media, looking into association with their academic performance, body image concern and their health as well as psychological function.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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