



Body Image Satisfaction As A Predictor Of Psychological Wellbeing Among Undergraduate Students

By:

Chinawa, Francis Chukwuemeka

Department of Psychology Godfrey Okoye University, Thinkers Corner Enugu

Anike, Raphael Ugwu

Department of Psychology Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT)

Ekwo Jude Chukwudi

Department of Psychology Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT)

Omeje, Obiageli

Department of Psychology Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT)

Chikwendu, Chimezie Emmanuel

Department of Psychology Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT)

Umeokonkwo, Chidimma Nkoli

Department of Psychology Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT)

Douglas, John Ufuoma

Department of Psychology Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT)

Corresponding author: douglasufuoma@gmail.com

Abstract

The study investigated the impact of body image dissatisfaction on psychological well-being, with one hundred and eleven (111) undergraduate students with a mean age of 21.16 and SD of 2.24 drawn using multi-stage sampling techniques (cluster, simple random (by balloting) and purposive) sampling techniques from three faculties of Enugu State University of Science and Technology. Psychological Well-Being Scale and Sandoz and Body Image and Action Questionnaire (BIAQ) were used for data collection, with a correlational design being adopted, while multiple hierarchy regression was used for data analysis. Results show that body image satisfaction $St\beta = 235^*$ and $t = 2.336^*$ a $p < .05$, which is lower than the threshold of at $p < .05$. Hence students should be encouraged to be self-determined to increase their psychological well-being to reduce the pressure on how their body image is like.

Keywords:

Body image, satisfaction, psychological well-being, students.



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Introduction

The concept of well-being encompasses an individual's valued experiences (Bandura, 1986), which contribute to their enhanced effectiveness in various domains, as emphasized by Huang et al. (2016). Psychological well-being, a multifaceted process, comprises interconnected constructs and dimensions, as articulated by Weiss et al. (2016). Rooted in positive psychology, it pertains to positive functioning, happiness, personal growth, and self-fulfilment, among other aspects (Zaki, 2018). Psychological well-being denotes a state of sound mental and emotional health (Fox, 2021). Tribhuvan (2020) provided a definition of psychological well-being as the manifestation of positive emotions and overall satisfaction with various aspects of life, including family, education, and employment, encompassing both emotional and cognitive elements.

Mercer (2020) expounded that psychological well-being reflects an individual's capacity to utilize personal resources and strengths to imbue life with meaning. Li (2021) further characterized psychological well-being as a multifaceted construct that incorporates subjective as well as objective dimensions. The construct of psychological well-being is considered as a social and context-sensitive entity that is continually shaped by the interplay of various factors including conditions, environments, actions, mental resources, and interpersonal relations (La Placa et al., 2013 as cited in Li, 2021). This perspective underscores the active role of individuals in constructing and shaping their well-being while acknowledging the influence of sociocultural contexts and policies in this regard (Li, 2021). Although individuals may experience periods of mental or emotional distress, psychological well-being enables them to effectively manage and cope with such challenges. Additionally, this state of being not only impacts mental and emotional health but also exerts an influence on an individual's physical well-being. A state of psychological well-being is characterized by the absence of significant mental or emotional disturbances in one's life (Fox 2021). Furthermore, mentally ill patients who have effectively managed their conditions can significantly benefit from the state of psychological well-being. If their long-term issues are appropriately addressed, their disorders can be considered in this state; however, this is not the case if they are exhibiting signs of their disorders (Fox 2021).

A person who is in good psychological health is typically content, socially adept, and emotionally steady. Being in a condition of psychological well-being is not always feasible. Certain pressures might lead to people feeling depressed, emotionally agitated, or estranged from others around them (Fox 2021). A person may still be in good psychological health if these disorders are only transient. However, if they continue, the individual might require medical attention to get healthy again (Fox 2021). Psychologically sound individuals are devoid of mental disorders and have effectively managed their stress to prevent it from encroaching upon their capacity to savour life and actively engage with society (Fox 2021). Psychological well-being encompasses a subjective sense of contentment, happiness, and satisfaction with life experiences, as well as one's role in the workplace, a sense of accomplishment, belonging, and absence of distress or worry (Naci & Ioannidis, 2015). Ryff has identified six dimensions of psychological well-being, including positive relationships with others, personal mastery, autonomy, a sense of purpose and meaning in life, and personal growth and development (Iosif, 2020).

The advantages of psychological well-being are numerous. Stressors have less of an impact on someone who is mentally healthy. Although it is impossible to completely remove stressors from a person's life, having a healthy psychological profile helps people deal with challenges and find solutions when they emerge (Fox 2021). These people typically think through issues rationally and thoroughly, which helps them make better decisions than emotionally reactive people, who are highly impacted by stress. They are also less prone to mental or emotional breakdowns (Fox 2021).

Psychological well-being has many obvious mental health benefits, but it also has general health benefits (Fox 2021). Numerous health issues can arise from mental discomfort. A person's psychological health can influence their blood pressure, gastrointestinal issues, and level of energy (Fox 2021). A person's immune system can be strengthened by psychological well-being, making it more difficult for bacterial and viral diseases to spread. If a person is mentally well, their pre-existing medical issues will likewise heal more quickly (Fox 2021). People with morbid obesity who experience body image dissatisfaction have been found to have lower psychological well-being (Yazdani et al., 2018). Similarly, there exists a favourable correlation between students' contentment with their bodies and their subjective and psychological well-being (Lemes et al., 2018; Abbasi&Zubair, 2015). While it is well known that males exhibit greater satisfaction with their bodies (Fernandez-Bustos et al., 2019) and psychological well-being (Matud et al., 2019), not much literature that covers both variables among undergraduate students, hence the need to study body image relationship psychological wellbeing among undergraduate students.

According to Joo et al. (2018), body image is increasingly frequently described as a multidimensional construct involving perception, mood, and conduct. Body image can be understood as a multifaceted construct that includes behavioural aspects such as body-related behaviours (e.g., checking behaviours), perceptual aspects such as judging one's body size or weight, and cognitive-affective aspects such as attitudes, thoughts, and feelings regarding one's body (Vocks, et al., 2018). By contentment with the body's physical capabilities, functional body satisfaction is defined (Frisén&Holmqvist, 2010; Wood-Barcalow et al., 2010; Al Sulaimi, et al., 2022). However, those who are regarded more for their beauty than for their abilities may be more susceptible to eating disorders. There's a widespread belief (held by many people worldwide) that communities and nations struggle to convey the value of having a favourable body image (Anderson-Fye, 2012; Al Sulaimi, et al., 2022). Being overweight may be seen as a personal shortcoming by those in Western cultures who are self-conscious about their looks (Vilhjalmsson et al., 2012; Al Sulaimi et al., 2022). Individuals might be categorised as good or wicked, desirable or undesirable, or ugly within a group based solely on their appearance (AndersonFye, 2012). As time goes on, more people will resort to alternative cosmetic procedures to hide stigmatised traits. In other words, the weight that people place on their bodies as a result of suffering injustice shapes their ideas of themselves and their needs, and society imposes cultural standards on looks (Trekels&Eggermont, 2017). According to the sociocultural theory of body perception, race influences expectations about what constitutes an acceptable body image and how important these standards are to particular individuals. Culture plays a significant role in explaining how people view their bodies (Abrams &Stormer, 2002; Al Sulaimi, et al., 2022). Women's exposure to fashion on television and in magazines was found to be substantially connected with body dissatisfaction and the desire to be thinner in Egypt, an Arab nation (Keshk et al., 2019).

The self-determination theory of psychological well-being was adopted as the theoretical framework because it was concerned with the motivation behind choices people make without any external influence and interference. Self-determination theory focuses on the degree to which an individual's behaviour is self-motivated and self-determined. For instance, determination to achieve a particular will encourage the teacher to push on irrespective of the job demand, because self-determination will increase the self-belief to do or complete the job at hand, which will help to bring about psychological well-being. The zeal to understand the factors that necessitated the relationship between body image satisfaction and psychology among undergraduate students prompted this study, the result obtained will help clinicians with the idea of the correlation between two variables. It will help to guide parents

and caregivers on how to address psychological well-being among young adults. These factors lead to stating the following hypothesis

Hypothesis

This set of hypothesis was tested:

Body image dissatisfaction will play an impact on psychological wellbeing

Method

Participants

One hundred and eleven (111) undergraduate comprising 70 females and 41 males with mean age of 21.16 and SD of 2.24 were selected using multi-stage sampling techniques (cluster, simple random (by balloting) and purposive) sampling techniques from three faculties of Enugu State University of Science and Technology. The students were cluster according to their faculty, and then simple random (balloting) was used to pick the faculties used for this study, from forty (40) students from management science, thirty-one (31) from law, and twenty-nine (29) from applied natural sciences, all from Enugu state University of Science and Technology (ESUT)

Instrument

The following instruments were used:

- I. Psychological Well Being Scale (Ryff, 1989)
- II. Sandoz and Wilson's (2006) Body Image and Action Questionnaire (BIAQ)

Psychological Well Being Scale (Ryff, 1989)

Psychological well-being scale is an eighteen (18) self-report scale designed to measure psychological well-being by Ryff (1989). The instrument consists of six sub-scales (with three items in each sub-scale): (a) Autonomy, (b) Environmental mastery, (c) Personal growth, (d) Positive relationships with others, (e) Purpose in life, and (f) Self-acceptance. "The autonomy dimension assesses self-determination, independence, and an internal locus of control. The environmental mastery dimension measures one's ability to manipulate and control complex environments. The personal growth dimension measures one's needs to actualize and realize one's potentials. The positive relationships with other's dimension assess the ability to love, trust, and establish deep relationships with others. The purpose in life dimension is to measure one's sense of direction and goals. The self-acceptance dimension assesses positive attitudes held toward the self" (Akin, 2008). Participants were made to respond on a 6-point scale that ranges from "strongly agree" (1) to "strongly disagree" (6). The following items are reverse: 1,5,9,10,12,13,15,18. Higher scores indicate higher psychological well-being within the respective dimension. The internal consistency reliability coefficients as reported by Ryff (1989) ranges from .86 to .93 for the six sub-scales.

Sandoz and Wilson's (2006) Body Image and Action Questionnaire (BIAQ)

Sandoz and Wilson's (2006) Body Image and Action Questionnaire (BIAQ) was developed to measure an individual's level of satisfaction, acceptance and/or worry over his/her body weight and size/shape. It is a 29-item self-report inventory that measure body image in two dimensions such as weight (12 items), and shape/size (17 items) of the body. Shape/size deals with being thin or fat while weight deals with being heavy or light. The BIAQ is rated on a seven point Likert scale response format ranging from "Never true (score 1) to "Always true" scored (7). Reverse scored items include 2,3,4,7,8,10,11,14,15,17,18,19,21,22,23,24,25,26,27, 28, and 29. Direct scored items are 1,5,6,9,12,13,16, and 20. An individual's possible total score ranges from 29 – 203 (weight=12-84,

shape/size=17-117) and scores ranging from 105 and above is an indication of acceptance and satisfaction with one's body image while scores ranging from 29-104 indicates non-satisfaction with one's body image (Sandoz & Wilson, 2006). Sandoz and Wilson (2006) reported an internal consistency Cronbach's alpha of .93 and a construct validity coefficient of .89. Examples of items in the BIAQ are: "I get on with my life even when I feel bad about my body", "I cannot stand feeling fat"; "There are things I do to distract myself from thinking about my body shape or size". In order to validate the BIAQ for a Nigerian sample, Chinweuba (2016) carried out a validation study involving 80 senior secondary school two (SS2) students drawn from Community secondary school, Obukpa. Item analysis on the BIAQ data yielded Cronbach's alpha of .90. The principal component analysis of the BIAQ showed that it measures body image in two domains (weight and shape/size) with a mean construct validity index of .68. A total of Thirty (males = 15, and females = 15; mean age = 21.03 years) undergraduate students of Ebonyi State University Abakaliki completed the BIAQ for the pilot study and a Cronbach's alpha coefficient value of .88 was obtained, which indicates high correlation, giving credence that the BIAQ is highly reliable. Hence, it can be used to obtain data for the investigation (see appendix C, page 74).

Procedure

Participants for this student were selected with the aid of multi-stage sampling techniques, the student were first cluster according to their faculties, then simple random sampling (balloting) techniques was used to pick the three faculties used for this study, before purposive sampling techniques was use to select students that participated in this research. Research assistants whom are the faculties' student executives were employed to distribute and retrieve the questionnaire. One hundred and twenty copies of the questionnaire were send out, one hundred and thirteen were return of which two were not properly filled which brought the numbers to one hundred and eleven properly filled questionnaire that were used for this study.

DESIGN/STATISTICS

A correlational design was adopted based on the researcher investigating the level of interaction between body image satisfaction and psychological wellbeing. Thus, multiple hierarchy regressions with the aid of S.P.S.S version (23), was applied as a statistic to analyse the data in order to test the hypothesis.

Results

Table 1: descriptive statistics

| S/N | Variables | M | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|-----|-------------------------|----------|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1 | Psychological wellbeing | 91.1789 | 15.53512 | 1.000 | .235 | .129 | -.111 |
| 2 | Body image satisfaction | 150.5158 | 25.97129 | | 1.000 | .070 | -.110 |
| 3 | age | 21.1579 | 2.23757 | | | 1.000 | -.516 |
| 4 | gender | 1.7368 | .44268 | | | | 1.000 |

Table 1 above shows that psychological well-being and body image satisfaction are positively related at $r = .235$, this means that the increase in body image satisfaction will lead to an increase in psychological well-being. Psychological well-being and gender indicated negative interaction at $r = -$

.111), which means that an increase in gender will cause a decrease in psychological well-being. Body image dissatisfaction and gender indicated a negative interaction at $r = -.110$, this means that when gender is increasing body image dissatisfaction will be going down. Age and gender show a negative relationship at $r = -.516$ this shows that age and gender cannot meet, the presence of age will cause the absence of gender.

Table 2: regression statistics

| S/N | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | UnSt | St | t |
|----------------------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|--------|-------|--------|
| 1 | .235 ^a | .055 | .045 | | | |
| Body image dissatisfaction | | | | .141* | .235* | 2.336* |
| 2 | .263 ^b | .069 | .039 | | | |
| age | | | | .656 | .094 | .800 |
| gender | | | | -1.303 | -.037 | -.313 |

Dependent variable= psychological wellbeing, at $p < .05$. r = relationship, r^2 = relationship square, UnSt= unstandardised, St= standardised

Table 2 above shows that body image satisfaction $St\beta = .235^*$ and $t = 2.336^*$ $p < .05$ have an impact on psychological well-being among undergraduate students. This shows that body image satisfaction and psychological well-being are associated and that the way the individual perceives his or her body can have an impact on their psychological well-being. Age $st\beta = .094$, $t = .800$ and gender $st\beta = -.037$, $t = -.313$ failed to predict psychological well-being.

Discussion

The hypothesis tested which stated that body image satisfaction will play an impact on psychological well-being was confirmed, hence the hypothesis was accepted. The findings suggest that body image significantly influences students' psychological well-being. If students perceive their physical appearance as inadequate, it can lead to psychological distress. The research indicates that students are highly attuned to their self-perceptions, and discomfort with body image can result in feelings of unease and diminished self-esteem. This, in turn, may contribute to a decline in overall psychological well-being. The findings imply that body image dissatisfaction is a major factor that can determine psychological well-being among undergraduate students, any feeling of poor body image, or unsatisfied with body image makeup might lead to a reduction in psychological well-being which affects their school activities or lead to take action that might cost them their lives.

Implication of the findings

The findings are in line with the Self-determination theory of psychological well-being which was adopted as the theoretical framework because it was concerned with the motivation behind choices people make without any external influence and interference. Self-determination theory focuses on the degree to which an individual's behaviour is self-motivated and self-determined. For instance, determination to achieve a particular will enhance the student to push on irrespective of the stressful situations, because self-determination will increase the self-belief to do or complete the job at hand, which will help to bring about psychological wellbeing.

The findings revealed that body image satisfaction has an impact on psychological wellbeing among undergraduate students, hence students should be encouraged to be self-determined to increase their psychological wellbeing to reduce the pressure on what their body image is like. Clinicians and counsellors should try and help students to be positive about their body image, this will help to reduce the negative thoughts they have about themselves. Caregivers and parents should encourage undergraduate students to accept their body structure how it is, for them to be psychologically well.

Limitations of the study

So many factors militated against this study, one of such is the sampled population. The school used for this study were in the exam period which discouraged some of the students from participating due to the tight academic schedule, more participants would have involved assuming this research was carried out outside the exam period.

Secondly, there was a departmental academic activity like accreditation which reduces the workload of the supervisor. This work would have move smoothly assuming enough time was given.

Finally, the sampling technique adopted reduces the numbers of student that participated; the numbers of participants would have increase assuming a favourable technique was adopted.

Suggestion for further study

Future researcher should consider sampling schools that are not in serious academic activities like exams, accreditations so as to give room for more student to participate.

Future researcher should apply a favourable research sampling techniques that can accommodate more participants.

Summary and conclusion

The study investigated the impact of body image satisfaction on psychological wellbeing among undergraduate student, and findings implies that the independent variable played an impact on psychological wellbeing among undergraduates.

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