

THE EFFECTS OF MEDIA ON BODY IMAGE AND SELF ESTEEM

Sinead Gorman, 1770159. Supervised by Dr Bernadette Quinn

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of the mass media on self esteem and body image in both males and females, aged between 18 and 25.

There were a total of 150 participants who took part in this study; 89 females and 61 males. Participants completed a questionnaire booklet containing three different questionnaires, including The Self Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), a body image questionnaire (Maynard, 2009), and a media usage questionnaire, which was designed for this particular study.

Data from these questionnaires was analysed using SPSS. The analysis revealed that males have lower body image than females, but there is no relationship between media usage and body image or self esteem. It also revealed, contrary to assumption, that there is a negative relationship between self-esteem and body image, for both males and females.

INTRODUCTION

The media is a conveyor of socio-cultural values regarding ideal body shape and size, which creates an understanding of the ideal man and woman (McCabe, Butler & Watt, 2007). The present study aims to extend the research on the effects of the media on body image and self esteem, for both men and women, aged between 18 and 25. This study is also concerned with the body image of men, in comparison to women.

Objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) is based on the idea that females are prone to internalize an observer's perspective as a primary view of their own physical bodies. This theory argues that girls and women, and sometimes men, subject their body to constant monitoring, which in turn leads to body dissatisfaction and sometimes, even eating disorders.

The present study aims to discover if men have equal or lower body image than women, whether media use affects body image and self esteem, and if there is any correlation between low body image and low self esteem.



HYPOTHESES

- ❖ Males will have equal or lower body image than women.
- ❖ There will be a negative correlation between media use and body image. Participants, both males and females exposed to the media more, will have lower body image.
- ❖ There will be a positive correlation between body image and self esteem. Participants with lower body image will also have lower self esteem.
- ❖ There will be a negative correlation between media use and self esteem. Participants exposed to the media more, will have lower self esteem.

METHOD

A non experimental correlational design was used for this study. All participants completed a short booklet of the three questionnaires. Most data was collected through Facebook, which was linked to Survey Monkey. A total number of 150 questionnaires were collected and this was then analysed with the use of SPSS 22.

RESULTS

1 out of 4 hypotheses were proven in this study. Results show that there was no correlation between body image and or self esteem for neither females nor males. The results also show that there is a negative relationship between self esteem and body image, but that males had lower body image than women.

Gender	Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Female	Media use	88	13.00	28.00	20.5682
	Self esteem	86	10.00	38.00	27.7093
	Body image	84	11.00	20.00	17.3452
Male	Media use	59	7.00	26.00	20.1525
	Self esteem	60	18.00	40.00	29.5667
	Body image	58	10.00	20.00	14.7414

DISCUSSION

Ultimately the present research did not support what most previous research has argued. Majority of research illustrates that the media, whether it be model images or movies and TV, does in fact have a negative effect on the body image of young people across the globe, and it turns their self esteem.

The present study demonstrated that men have lower body image than women, and this contradicted various outdated research, but proved comparable with a handful of recent studies. Conclusively, this study did not prove that there was a correlation between media and body image or self esteem, but it did suggest that men can have as low body image as women.

REFERENCES

- ❖ Fredrickson, B. L. and Roberts, T.-A. (1997), Objectification Theory.
- ❖ McCabe, M., Butler, K., & Watt, C. (2007). Journal of Applied Behavioural Research. Media influences on attitudes and perceptions toward the body among adult men and women.