Running Head: BODY IMAGE AND PREDICTED LIFE OUTCOMES IN ADULT MALES

Body Image and Its Effect on Predicted Life Outcomes in the Adult Male Population

Stephanie L. Morris

Marietta College

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Marietta College in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Psychology
Abstract

An important area of research that has emerged is the assessment of factors that contribute to the male population’s preoccupation with body image. The purpose of this study was to determine if perceived body image plays a different role in predicted life success for younger adult males (18-24 years old) or older adult males (25+). Expanding on research (Buss, 2002) that focused on personal qualities men find significantly more important for the success of their gender (outside of physical body image). It was predicted that because young men attending college may not have been afforded the opportunity to obtain success in other areas of their lives such as occupational, income, or marital achievements, body image would play a more important role in their overall evaluation of life success. 2) It was also predicted that older men would place less emphasis on body image. General research questions included: 1) Is there a significant relationship between the age groups on BMI and body image satisfaction? 2) What is the importance and motivation for exercise across the age groups? This final general research question was the only one supported by the data. Individuals who were motivated to exercise because they wanted to lose weight were more likely to have lower BIQLI scores.
Morris 3

Americans have become preoccupied with external appearance to the point where preoccupation with gaining a pound or two for some, could result in various negative behaviors such as a clinical diagnosis of an eating disorders or depression. Weight concerns are cultivated within an individual from infancy and can be a result of media consumption or social pressures (Walsh, 2009). The cause of weight difficulties can range anywhere from emotional to genetic factors. Research suggests there is a strong genetic component effecting individuals with unhealthy body weight. Having a family member who is severely overweight or who is diagnosed with obesity greatly increases the likelihood that additional family members could also incur these weight related issues (Hilbert, Dierk, Conradt, Schlumberger, Hinney, Heberbrand, Rief, 2009) About 25% of each state’s population in the United States is overweight and research findings suggest a link between body weight and severe physical health problems such as heart disease, stroke, sleep apnea. However, body weight does not affect an individual solely on a physical basis, overweight individuals also report various psychological affects such as low self-esteem, popularity, and an increase in victimization from peers (“Overweight & Obesity”, 2010).

Media and Body Image

Mass media outlets such as television programming and magazine articles and advertisements are a way for publishers to reach large audiences with their product or information. Research on various media messages and the cultivation of the ideal body image has found that there is a vast difference between the ideal female physique and the ideal male physique (Anderson & DiDomencio, 1992). The ideal female physique is extremely thin, with slim hips, thighs, and bottom. The ideal male physique is one of a general “V shape” with broad shoulders, large biceps and chest, and a slender waist (Anderson & DiDomencio, 1992).
Anderson and DiDomencio (1992) looked at the difference between weight related content of magazine messages for popular male and female magazines. They analyzed 10 popular women’s magazines and 10 popular men’s magazines for article and advertisement content to see if it was more diet centered or shape centered. They found that the 10 women’s magazines had 56 different diet advertisements or articles, and only 20 shape centered articles or advertisements. When they looked at the ten popular men’s magazines, they found only five diet articles and advertisements, and 17 shape articles and advertisements. Anderson and DiDomencio’s (1992) research shows how magazine content assist in the varying ideal body image ideals for the genders.

Magazines may be responsible for the creation of the body type ideal in American culture. But do magazine consumers actually internalize these ideals? Morry and Staska (2001) found that women who read mostly beauty magazines were likely to self-objectify and internalize the thin ideal, which predicted body shape dissatisfaction. For men, the internalization of these ideals was less likely based on exposure to fitness magazines, but if internalization of the perfect body ideal occurred, this also predicted self-objectification. Morry and Staska (2001) found that reading magazines was a correlate of eating problems for both men and women.

Groesz, Levine, and Mumen (2001) looked at the cultivation of the thin beauty ideal in the media and its effect on women. Their research suggests that when women cannot fit into the ideal standard of beauty that the media constructs negative consequences follow. These consequences can range from body dissatisfaction, negative affect, low self-esteem, dieting and exercise behaviors, and even a high prevalence of eating disorders. They found that overall body image was significantly more negative after viewing thin media images than after viewing average or overweight models, or inanimate objects. This supports the idea that participating in
media consumption likely influences an individual to internalize the ideal body type for their
gender, and as a result create concerns about physical appearance and eating behaviors.

Myers and Biocca (1992) suggest that women have an elastic body image that is always
in conflict between their actual body shape and weight. The mediated ideal body image causes an
unstable perception of perceived body image. Research by Groesz et al. (2001) has looked at the
differences between the genders on body image perception and image utility. They found girls
view their body as a tool used to attract other people, whereas boys view their bodies as tools in
which they can master their environment. Myers and Biocca’s (1992) research suggests a link
between the genders inability to achieve the ideal body image, which may cause them to feel
unable to activate the utility of their body—potentially resulting in negative mental representation
and feelings of ineffectiveness.

Body Image and Females

The majority of past research on body image perceptions and weight concerns has
focused on women. A national survey of over 800 adult women in the United States found that
over one half of the women surveyed held a negative mental representation of their appearance.
These women also reported a preoccupation with becoming overweight or being overweight
(Cash & Henry 1995). The results of this survey show how prevalent negative body image is in
the female population. This could be a reason that most of the previous research on body
perception has been heavily focused on women.

Research has shown that this preoccupation with body image is accompanied by
additional stereotypical perceptions of those who suffer from obesity and beliefs of control over
one’s weight which could contribute to prejudice, self-stigmatization, poor peer support, and
other negative emotional results. American culture supports the stereotypical perception that
accomplishments and failures are an outcome of personal motivation or lack thereof. Klacynski, Goold, & Mudry (2004) looked at the relationships among negative stereotypes of obesity and the perceptions of weight control. American culture supports the belief that accomplishments and failures are an outcome of motivation or lack thereof. Both adolescents and adults perceive individual achievements to be less a product of environmental factors such as economic or parental support, and more a result of individual achievement. Klacynski et al. (2004) have suggested the Western culture’s obsession with achieving the thin ideal body image is a product of our individualistic culture.

Klacynski et al. (2004) sampled 107 undergraduate students (17 males and 90 females) in order to analyze stereotypes of body image and weight control and measured the participants BMI. Self-esteem was measured by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1979), body esteem was measured by using the Mendelson and White (2001) Body Esteem Scale; Cause of Obesity Scale (Klacynski et al., 2004) was developed specifically for this study to determine if the cause of obesity was internal, physical, or social. The Cause of Obesity Scale (Klacynski et al., 2004) had participants rate statements such as “If obese people had more willpower they would stop eating so much.” Thin idealization was measured by the Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire (Heinberg, Thompson, & Stormer, 1995) where participants rated statements such as “Music videos that show thin women make me wish I were thin” and attitudes towards stereotypes of obese and overweight people was measured by adapting a version of the Antifat Attitudes Questionnaire where participants rated statements such as “I can’t stand to look at fat people because it disgusts me” on a 6 point scale and the Obese Stereotypes Scale (Klacynski et al., 2004). Control over weight was measured by the Personal Control Over Weight Scale (Klacynski et al., 2004) that featured statements such as “With
willpower I can control my weight” or “No matter what I do, I’ll always be as thin or as heavy as I am now” to which participants rated their response on a 4-point scale. They claim that youth are likely to view themselves and their peers’ weight, especially the female population, as a result of personal motivations or lack of motivation. They found a correlation between the more an individual deviates from an ideal body image, the more likely they are to have lower physical and social attractiveness ratings. Their research supported the belief that obesity is caused by personality shortcomings.

Previous research has suggested that women, regardless of race, are likely to make assumptions about another woman’s capabilities based on her physical appearances. Women are likely to believe that a woman who is successful at maintaining a thin ideal is also likely to be successful in all other areas of her life. Research has also suggested that making these assumptions about someone else has an affect on the person making the judgments view of themselves. Chin-Evans (2003) found that women feel extremely dissatisfied with their appearance after comparing themselves to other females who have successfully achieved the thin ideal. Results suggested that women associate a thin-ideal female body type with having a positive affect on other aspects of their lives such as overall life success. Chin-Evans (2003) results showed that women who compared themselves with the successful thin ideal felt more pessimistic about their own ability to have positive life outcomes. When they compared themselves with an unsuccessful thin ideal they felt significantly more optimistic about their potential positive outcomes and life successes.

Body Image and Males and Females

Men and women have different gender specific ideal body images, and as a result different physical appearance goals. Williamson, Serdula, Anda, Levy, and Byers (1992)
researched the goals, duration of weight loss attempts, and the rate of achievement in the general United States population. They used a sample who were surveyed using a random-digit-dialed telephone survey of each state’s non-institutionalized civilian population ages 18 and older. This phone survey had 65 questions assessing weight control practices, such as “Are you now trying to lose weight?” “Are you now trying to maintain your weight?” If they had indicated a desire to change their weight or that they were working towards losing weight, participants were asked follow up questions on the specifics of this process such as “About how long ago did you attempt to lose weight?” or “About how much did you weigh when you began your current attempt to lose weight?” “How much would you like to weigh?” The average age and BMI for the male sample was 44 years old with a BMI of 25.7. Of the males surveyed, 25% of them reported that they were currently trying to lose weight. The peak prevalence of trying to lose weight among the male sample occurred between the ages of 40 to 49 years old, with those with a BMI of 35 and higher being most likely to currently be dieting. Out of the 25% of men who were currently trying to lose weight, the average starting weight at the beginning of their weight loss goal was 209 pounds, with an average goal weight of 178 pounds (about a 30 pound weight loss goal).

The average age of the female sample was 46 years old with an average BMI of 24.2 which is lower than the 25.0 national estimate. Of the women surveyed 39% reported that they were currently trying to lose weight. Women around the ages of 40-49 were also the most likely to currently be dieting. Of the women attempting to lose weight, the average starting weight at the beginning of their weight loss was 164 pounds, with an end goal of 133 pounds, resulting in an average goal of losing about 32 pounds. Williamson et al. (1992) found a positive relationship between gender, starting weight, and goal weight. For those starting in the in the BMI category
range of 30 to 34.9, 39% of men compared to 80% of women had a weight loss goal that would place them in the leanest category. Among those individuals who started in the heaviest BMI category of 35 and over, 19% of men and 59% of women wanted to have an end goal that would place them in the leanest BMI category. Williamson et al. (1992) found that women are two to three times more likely than men to have a weight loss goal that would place them in the leanest weight category. These findings suggest that being underweight is of an aversive nature to men. Men have a different ideal body image, one that is not too lean and not too bulky but with a BMI somewhere in the middle of the categories, as opposed to the female ideal which is more unrealistic and places them in the lowest body mass category.

Body Image and Males

Cohane and Pope (2000) point to the fact that popular culture and scientific research lack focus on how men view their body. Most research focuses solely on females, or on a comparison of female and male samples to one another. Cohane and Pope (2000) claim that prior to the 1980s body image was mostly regarded as a female problem; their research claims that females who experienced the highest body dissatisfaction were overweight, as was predicted. Cohane and Pope (2000) found that body satisfaction is also positively correlated with male self-esteem and that overall a significant number of boys were not satisfied with their body.

Rancourt and Prinstein (2009) looked at how obesity in adolescents affects their peer relationships. They sampled 576 male and female children in grades six (36%), seven (30%), and eight (34%). They collected measures of BMI, a collection of height and weight, body dissatisfaction, measured by the Ideal Body Subscale (Cogan, Bhalla, Sefa-Dedeh, & Rothbulm, 1996). The Ideal Body Subscale (Cogan, Bhalla, Sefa-Dedeh, & Rothbulm, 1996) consists of 12 silhouettes where participants circled which body was their ideal body size and which body was
their actual body size), negative weight-related cognitions (featured questions such as “How often have you thought about wanting to be thinner?”), muscle-gaining behaviors (asked questions such as “How many times in the past 30 days did you exercise or work-out to gain weight or to get more muscular?”), weight management behaviors (asked questions such as “How many times in the past 30 days did you exercise or work out to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight?”), likeability and popularity (children were given a list of their classmates and asked to separate them into two groups those they “liked” and those they “did not like”), and victimization (classmates were asked to nominate their peers who “get threatened or hit by others or have mean things said to them” and “get gossiped about or has tumors told about them behind their backs”).

Rancourt and Pristein’s (2009) results suggest that popularity with peers is important to adolescents. They argue that in order for one group to be the in-group/popular group there must be an out-group for which comparison is meant. The out-group amongst their sample of adolescents was defined through weight related classifications, specifically children who failed to meet the ideal body image for their age group and were overweight; in-group adolescents victimize (tease, beat up, or talk about the victim behind their back) the out-group children due to their heavier body weights. Rancourt and Pristein’s (2009) research suggests that victimization and teasing by peers was related to body shape and cognitions. Rancourt and Prinstein (2009) suggest that peer status and peer victimization may be associated with the adoption, reinforcement, and maintenance of weight-related behaviors. Being satisfied with their bodies was associated with higher ratings of popularity over time. For boys exclusively, popularity was found to be associated with higher levels of muscle-gaining behaviors over time. This suggests that muscle-gaining behaviors are more salient for boys than girls and that boys are highly aware
of the ideal body image for their gender. Their focus on and attainment of this ideal increases their popularity among their peers, whereas their failure to achieve these standards lowers the likelihood of peer popularity.

This preoccupation with the ideal male body image follows men throughout their development. O’Dea and Abraham (2002) examined the college aged population of men and their eating and exercise behaviors. They used a survey to ask their sample questions such as “Is exercise Important to you?” “Does exercise make you feel better about yourself?” “Do you feel anxious or stressed if you do not get to exercise when you originally had planned on it?” They found that approximately 48% of students felt that exercise was important to self-esteem. They also found that 34% of college men felt distressed when they were unable to exercise as much as they desired. Males in this sample reported the reason they exercised was because they felt body shape was important for their self-esteem; these men reported a desire to achieve the lean muscular ideal for males. They reported that an inability to achieve this ideal would likely make them feel inhibited about their bodies. Overall, exercise motives were centered on achievement of lower body weight and ideal body shape for males.

McCabe and Ricciardelli (2004) were interested in looking at how body image dissatisfaction changes across the lifespan for males. They conducted a meta-analysis to report on body dissatisfaction in children, adolescents, and adult males. The literature they included in their analysis were those studies that separately evaluated body dissatisfaction in children, adolescents, and adulthood. McCabe and Ricciardelli (2004) reviewed literature that reported on various levels of body dissatisfaction for males and the sources of feedback that create these feelings.
McCabe and Ricciardelli (2004) included eleven studies that focused on male and female preadolescents or solely male preadolescents, ages 6-12 years old who were surveyed on perceived body satisfaction and sociocultural influences affecting their body image. The preadolescents were surveyed and asked questions concerning levels of happiness with the current appearance of their body, and whether or not they wanted to change the size of their body. The sample of preadolescent boys in the sixth grade were almost equally split between body weight satisfaction and body weight dissatisfaction. Out of the sixth grade boy sample, 48.3% of males wanted to lose weight, 13.8% of males desired no change in their body weight, and 37.9% of boys wanted to gain weight.

McCabe and Ricciardelli (2004) state the reason researchers conclude that preadolescent boys are often satisfied with their bodies is because they are almost equally split between wanting to lose weight and wanting to gain weight; since the percentages are so close they essentially neutralize the results. McCabe and Ricciardelli (2004) found a discrepancy in body dissatisfaction for males in grade 4-5 and 7-8. The boys in fourth and fifth grade typically desired a larger body shape. The older sample of boys in grades seven to eight reportedly desired a leaner shape. Researchers suggested that changes in body shape perception could be due to the fact that as boys age, they become more aware of the sociocultural ideal for males and recognize the pressure to achieve not only a larger body, but a body that exemplifies athleticism, strength, and good muscle tone.

Fourteen studies in this metaanalysis focused on male and female adolescents or solely male adolescents, ages 13-17 years old who were surveyed on perceived body satisfaction, sociocultural influences affecting their body image, and peer perception of body image. This age group was asked additional questions regarding their perception of how their peers viewed them
as either average weight, overweight, or underweight. Results showed that boys ages 13 to 15 years old were generally satisfied with their bodies as only 27% reported body dissatisfaction. They also reported the majority of their peers as perceiving them as being of normal weight. Approximately 6.1% of adolescent boys felt their peers perceived them as being overweight, 14.2% felt they were perceived as underweight, and 79.7% of adolescent boys felt they were perceived as normal weight for their age and gender.

McCabe and Ricciardelli (2004) suggest that the reason adolescent males have greater body satisfaction is because they value peer attachment above other important attachments such as parental. Research has suggested that peer relationships are likely to have the greatest influence on body image for adolescent males. Therefore, higher levels of body satisfaction in adolescent males can be explained due to a high emphasis on peer relationships and reported positive peer perceptions of body image in adolescent males.

McCabe and Ricciardelli (2004) included twenty studies that focused on male and female adults or solely male adults, 18 and older (with the majority being in the 18-23 year old range) who were surveyed on perceived body satisfaction and sociocultural influences affecting their body image. McCabe and Ricciardelli’s (2004) results were similar to those for the preadolescent males, and showed a similar split distribution between adult men wanting to gain weight (46 %) and adult men wanting to lose weight (32%). When they looked at a strictly college age sample they found 40% of college students (male and female) wanted to lose weight and 45% wanted to gain weight. A strictly college age study on male body satisfaction showed 32% wanted to lose weight and 46% wanted to gain weight, however an indication of desire to increase body fat or muscle was not reported. McCabe and Ricciardelli (2004) suggest the reason a slight majority of males desire to gain weight is due to the negative psychological effects being underweight has
for males. Underweight men demonstrate an extremely negative body image that impedes their social adjustment, even more so than women who were overweight. Poor social adjustment in these underweight men could be seen through feelings of discord and mistrust among peer groups.

Valuable Male Characteristics

Regardless of age women attach a higher importance on the attractiveness of their body to personal success than men (Buss, 2002). Women are also more dissatisfied with their body than men and men perceive themselves as being more attractive than women, (McCabe and Ricciardelli, 2004) but why? The discrepancy in reported concerns of males over body weight and higher levels of perceived self-attractiveness could be due to the fact that both males and females value other male personal qualities of higher importance than body image. Women reported the most unattractive qualities for males were not physical, but personality characteristics such as neediness and nervousness (Buss, 2002).

Meier and Dionner (2009) use evolutionary theory to explain that both men and women value a mate who is able to help them produce healthy offspring. For females this ability takes on a biological meaning in terms of reproductive success. In males however, their assistance in raising healthy children is based on personal abilities and achievements that afford the couple a comfortable and stable environment (Meier and Dionner, 2009). Dion and Berscheid (2000) add perceived marital competence and parental competence to the list of characteristics that females find valuable in the opposite gender. Marital competence was defined as equality of happiness, control, and responsibility. Parental competence was defined as the parenting behaviors, expertise, and approach that promote positive and adaptive child development.
Additional research by Buss (2002) supports past research on the importance of personal achievements for males; Buss (2002) focused on personal qualities that men find significantly important for the success of their gender. Men find the attainment of job prospects and financial prospects important in order to be perceived as successful. According to Buss (2002), economic potential and other qualities that lead to resource acquisition, such as independence, gentility, high social status, confidence, and outgoing personality traits, are important in determining the overall success of a male across his lifespan.

Lii and Wong (1982) researched male stereotypical qualities and their perceived ratings of social desirability. They found that masculine qualities such as restlessness (the drive to complete a task once started), self-confidence, adventurousness, and competitiveness were emphasized as being socially desirable for adult males. In addition to these qualities Perilini and Lippe (2006) identified effectiveness (the ability to achieve), congeniality, ambition, and industriousness as valuable male qualities. Another important male quality is power or the ability to influence people. Males with resources and status are most valuable; this is because these qualities are associated with power (Meier and Dionner 2009).

Negative body image affects the majority of women in the United States. However, growing research has suggested that male body image perceptions should not be discounted. Males depending on age pay close attention to achieving the ideal body shape, and hold a similar preoccupation with achieving the ideal body as women do. Previous research (McCabe and Ricciardelli, 2004) has also suggested that adolescent males report the highest levels of body dissatisfaction in comparison to all other age groups; according to Rancourt and Pristein (2009) this is due to heavy attention to peer perception which drives this age group towards muscle gaining behaviors. Preadolescent and adult males typically are almost equally split between
overall body satisfaction and dissatisfaction (however, the conclusions about body dissatisfaction in adult men are typically only generalizable to young adult men because most of the published research is a product of college samples).

Does body image have an affect on perceived personal value? Previous research (Buss, 2002) suggests that men place less importance on the physical appearance of their bodies in comparison to women. Men rely on other aspects such as their occupation, resource acquisition, and income to boost their perceived attractiveness and personal success. Age could play an important role in the utility of either body image or personal characteristics in perceived life success. For younger men in the college age population (ages 18-23) who lack personal characteristics such as high social status, resource acquisition, or occupational success, body image could be more important in order to increase their perceived attractiveness and life success. For older post collegiate adult males (25+ years older) who according to Williamson, Serdula, Anda, Levy, and Byers (1992) experience body dissatisfaction—body image may have less of an effect on their predicted life success due to their attainment of higher social status, resource acquisition, life sustaining income, and possibly the attainment of a life partner.

Summary and Hypothesis

The purpose of this study was to determine if perceived body image plays a different role in predicted life success for younger adult males (18-24 years old) or older adult males (25+). 1) It was predicted that because young men attending college may not have been afforded the opportunity to obtain success in other areas of their lives such as occupational, income, or marital achievements, body image would play a more important role in their overall evaluation of life success. 2) It was also predicted that older men would place less emphasis on body image. This study also looked at the general effects of being overweight versus underweight on body
image and life satisfaction across age groups. General research questions included: 1) Is there a significant relationship between the age groups on BMI and body image satisfaction? 2) What is the importance and motivation for exercise across the age groups?

Method

Participants

Participants were recruited from two different samples. The younger aged sample \((n=41)\) (between 18-24 years old) were Marietta College students recruited through the internet system Sona and through flyers presented to students during class time. The older sample \((n=41)\) (ages 30-66 years old) were employees recruited through email from a local business and Marietta College. See Table 1.

Instruments

Participants completed a demographic questionnaire asking them to report their age, height, weight, level of education completed, relationship status, household income, occupation, if the participant has ever been diagnosed with an eating disorder, if they take body enhancing supplements, and questions concerning their diet and exercise behaviors. See Appendix A. In addition to this they completed the Body Image Quality of Life Inventory (BIQLI) (Cash & Fleming, 2002) designed to assess how a person’s body image experience affects a broad range of life domains such as social functioning, emotional well-being, sense of self, sexuality, eating, exercise, and grooming. See Appendix B. The BIQLI (Cash & Fleming, 2002) is an assessment that is typically used to quantify the effects of one’s body image on various self-experiences and life contexts for both adult males and females (with ages ranging from 18 to 65). The BIQLI is a self-report assessment looking at the effects of body image on 19 different life domains. This survey utilizes a 7-point scale ranging from extremely negative (-3) to extremely positive (+3).
The BIQLI has been used a clinical tool to establish how one’s body image impacts an individual’s life and as an outcome measure of body image interventions. This measure’s internal consistency reliability was evaluated using a Cronbach’s alpha and had an alpha of .96 (Cash & Fleming, 2002). Validity was assessed by performing a Pearson correlation which reported high male validity r(152) = -.19, p < .01 and high female validity r(152) = -.26, p < .001 (Cash & Fleming, 2002). The BIQLI’s (Cash & Fleming, 2002) high validity scores suggest that body satisfaction and value placed on appearance and fitness have a positive influence on one’s success within various life domains.

Procedure

Participants completed questionnaires in a private setting. The younger participants were weighed in a separate room alone and than completed the measures in the conference room within Marietta College’s psychology department or their classroom. The older participants were weighed and completed the measures within their own private offices. BMI was calculated by taking an individual’s weight in pounds and height in inches and inserting the information into the following formula: \[ \text{BMI} = \frac{\text{Weight in Pounds}}{(\text{Height in inches})^2} \times 703. \]

The national average for male BMI is 25.9. Individuals with a BMI of 18.5-25 are considered “normal weight.” Individuals in the BMI range of 25-30 are considered “Overweight.” Individuals with a BMI of 30+ are considered “Obese” (Overweight and Obesity, 2010).

Participants initially completed an informed consent form providing them information on the voluntary nature of participation in this study. Within the informed consent participants indicated if they wished to receive follow up information concerning the results of this study. Following informed consent participants completed a demographic questionnaire. Following the
demographic survey participants were asked to complete the Body Image Quality of Life Inventory (BIQLI).

Analysis

A regression analysis was performed in order to determine if age and BMI had an effect on body image. A Multifactor Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was also used on the fourteen categorical independent variables within the study, to determine if they had an effect on body image ratings. These variables were highest level of education completed (doctorate, masters, bachelors, associates, some college coursework, high school diploma or GED, and less than high school), relationship status (single, committed long term relationship, married, divorced/separated, and widowed), yearly income (More than $150,00, $149,00-$100,000, $99,999-$75,000, $74,999-$50,000, $49,999-$25,001, Under $25,000), and occupation (salaried, hourly, or student), diagnosed eating disorder, the use of body enhancing supplements, if the participant was currently dieting or had dieted in the past year, the frequency of exercise (how often throughout the week), variety of exercise implemented (the number of different types of exercise practiced throughout the week), motivation to exercise (lose weight, gain muscle, maintain body weight, or maintain personal health).

Results

The hypotheses concerning predicted body image differences across the age groups were not supported. The general research questions concerning a significant relationship between the age groups on BMI and body image satisfaction was not supported. The regression analysis revealed no significant effect of body mass index (BMI) or age on the Body Image Quality of Life Inventory (BIQLI). There was also no significant relationship between age and BMI score.
The ANOVA determined the only significant predictors for the BIQLI were education, the use of body enhancing supplements, and motivation to exercise as weight loss.

The ANOVA identified a significant effect of education on predicting the BIQLI score. \( F(6)=25.04, p<.001 \). Individuals who had completed their Masters degree had the highest average BIQLI ratings \( (M=61.32, SD=17.07) \). The second highest average BIQLI rating was found within individuals who completed their Bachelors degree \( (M=46.83, SD=14.60) \). The individuals with the lowest average BIQLI score were those who had completed some college coursework \( (M=36.82, SD=13.92) \). See Table 2.

There was a significant relationship between the use of body enhancing supplements on predicting the BIQLI score \( F(1)=4.53, p=.04 \). Individuals who took body enhancing supplements had the highest average BIQLI \( (M=52.10, SD=14.01) \). Individuals who did not take body enhancing supplements had the lowest average BIQLI scores \( (M=39.55, SD=13.89) \). There was a significant relationship between motivation to exercise as weight loss on the BIQLI score \( F(2)=3.16, p=.05 \). Individuals who reported weight loss as their motivation to exercise had a slightly lower BIQLI score \( (M=21.37, SD=14.39) \) than those who did not want to lose weight \( (M=21.63, SD=18.44) \). Post-hoc tests for all the ANOVAs revealed no differences between groups. See Table 2.

Discussion

The hypotheses were not supported concerning age effects between the older adults versus the younger adults on BIQLI. However, some status variables did reveal a significant effect on BIQLI. The results of this study suggest education completed has a significant effect on BIQLI. The higher the amount of education an individual has completed the higher the individual’s BIQLI score. For example, individuals who completed their masters degree had the
highest BIQLI scores out of any educational category. Individuals who only completed some college coursework had the lowest average BIQLI scores. Previous research has been lacking in the area of education attained and how it effects body image. However, the results of the current study suggest that education plays an important role on body image. Motivation to maintain a positive body image and to pursue further education may be a result of general personality characteristics.

Research (Seibert and Kraimer, 2001) has suggested that there are specific personality traits that contribute to personal success. These personality traits are conscientiousness, mental ability, proactive personality type, openness, and extraversion. Conscientiousness is characterized by an awareness of one’s beliefs and attitudes (Seibert and Kraimer, 2001). Mental ability is the capability to understand and remember knowledge. Proactive personality is characterized by intention, drive, and motivation to make changes (Seibert, Crant, and Kraimer, 1999). These individuals are unconstrained by their environments or situations; they are motivated to solve problems. Openness is distinguished by ones ability to be accessible and flexible (Seibert and Kraimer, 2001). Extraversion is a characteristic defined by directing and expressing one’s interest and behaviors outward (Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, and Barrick, 1999). Qualities of extraversion have been found to be related to increased salaries, promotions, and career satisfaction. It may be possible that personality characteristics such as conscientiousness, mental ability, openness, proactive personality type, and extraversion which have been found to influence both personal and occupational success, may also influence the pursuit of higher education and the attainment of a positive body image. Further research in the area of personality characteristics and body image may help to further explain these findings.
Another significant finding was between participants who did not use body enhancing supplements and their BIQLI rating. Individuals who used body enhancing supplements had the highest average BIQLI scores. Another significant relationship was identified between losing weight as a motivator to exercise and BIQLI score. Individuals who were motivated to exercise because they wanted to lose weight were more likely to have lower BIQLI scores. These findings may be explained by an individual’s awareness of their overall body image.

Mass media outlets such as television programming, magazine articles, and advertisements are a way for publishers to reach large audiences with their product or information. These media outlets are also important contributors in the construction of the ideal body image. Previous research looked at what types of body image messages were typically found in ten popular male magazines (Anderson and DiDomencio, 1992). When Anderson and DiDomencio (1992) looked at the ten popular men’s magazines, they found only five diet articles and advertisements, and 17 shape articles and advertisements. This type of information is consistent with previous research on the ideal male physique is one of a general “V shape.” The “V shape” includes broad shoulders, large biceps and chest, and a slender waist (Anderson & DiDomencio, 1992).

Magazines may be responsible for the creation of the body type ideal in American culture. But do magazine consumers actually internalize these ideals? Anderson and DiDomencio (1992) found that women who read mostly beauty magazines were likely to self-objectify and internalize the thin ideal, which predicted body shape dissatisfaction. For men, the internalization of these ideals was less likely based on exposure to fitness magazines, but if internalization of the perfect body ideal occurred, this also predicted self-objectification. These results suggest that individuals who are highly aware of their body will be more likely to
participate in behaviors to improve their physical appearance. These behaviors may include the use of body enhancing substances such as protein shakes, steroids, or creatine or motivation to exercise in order to lose weight. The results of this study may suggest that males who participate in body changing activities such as the use of body enhancing supplements may be exhibiting a preoccupation with their ideal body shape, whereas individuals who are motivated to exercise in order to lose weight may be experiencing a preoccupation with their ideal body weight. These differences may suggest that the type of body changing activity that the men participate in (either exercise or body enhancing supplements) may depend on an individual’s interpretation of their own ideal body image (if they are more concerned with body shape or weight).

A discrepancy between each participant’s body type may have been a limitation for this study. For example, one male may meet the weight requirements for an ideal body image but not the ideal “V-shape,” and vise versa. Discrepancy between these body types may influence the body changing behaviors that individuals participate in. Future research may benefit from explaining the discrepancy between body changing behaviors and individual body shape.

This study was also limited by the smaller sample size. There were a total of 81 participants. However, the total number of participants, did not distribute equally into groups for education completed, income, and relationship status. These uneven groups could have reduced the chances of finding significance between groups within this study. Another limitation of this study was the two variables of age and education may have some confounding effects that are hard to separate from one another. For example, age and level of education may be unable to be measured independently due to the likelihood of the young adult group being in the same education group of completing some college courses. Personality characteristics may also influence the likelihood in which an individual will pursue higher education. Future research
Morris 24

may examine adults from various occupations outside of a college setting and personality traits of those pursuing higher degrees. This may expand the generalizability of the results.
References


Chin Evans, P. (2003). "If only I were thin like her, maybe I could be happy like her": The self-implications of associating a thin female ideal with life success. *Psychology of Women Quarterly,* 27, 209-214.


Morris 26


Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Younger Adult</th>
<th>Older Adult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Age (in years):</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average BMI:</td>
<td>28.62</td>
<td>26.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Relationship Status:</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Yearly Income:</td>
<td>Under $25,000</td>
<td>$74,999-$50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Occupation</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Salaried</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Education Completed:</td>
<td>Some College Course Work</td>
<td>Bachelors Degree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type I Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td>51901.87353</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1482.910672</td>
<td>5.201162</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>42832.36952</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7138.726503</td>
<td>25.03837</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Enhancing Supplements</td>
<td>1293.537673</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1293.537673</td>
<td>4.536955</td>
<td>0.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation Weight Loss</td>
<td>1803.245632</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>901.6228162</td>
<td>3.162352</td>
<td>0.052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>908.4773065</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>227.1193267</td>
<td>0.796598</td>
<td>0.534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearly Income</td>
<td>1467.242714</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>239.4485429</td>
<td>1.029242</td>
<td>0.412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>579.3818655</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>289.6909328</td>
<td>1.016062</td>
<td>0.370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating Disorder</td>
<td>27.09967975</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27.09967975</td>
<td>0.095049</td>
<td>0.759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently Dieting</td>
<td>121.5216258</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>121.5216258</td>
<td>0.426225</td>
<td>0.517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Year Dieted</td>
<td>701.4396431</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>701.4396431</td>
<td>2.46023</td>
<td>0.124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise Frequency</td>
<td>1034.037403</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>258.5093057</td>
<td>0.906956</td>
<td>0.468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type Of Exercise</td>
<td>804.3703186</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>160.8740637</td>
<td>0.56425</td>
<td>0.727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation: Muscle Gain</td>
<td>14.28654945</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14.28654945</td>
<td>0.050109</td>
<td>0.824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation: Maintain Bodyweight</td>
<td>216.3592119</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>216.3592119</td>
<td>0.758883</td>
<td>0.388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation: Personal health</td>
<td>98.51418804</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>98.51418804</td>
<td>0.345529</td>
<td>0.560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>13115.12647</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>285.1144451</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65017</td>
<td>81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. R Squared = .798 (Adjusted R Squared = .645)
Appendix A

Demographic Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Height: ______________</th>
<th>Weight: ______________</th>
<th>Age: ______________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Relationship Status:**
- Single
- Committed Long Term Relationship
- Married
- Divorced/Separated
- Widowed

**Education COMPLETED:**
- Doctorate Degree
- Masters Degree
- Bachelors Degree
- Associates Degree
- Some College Coursework (but no degree attained)
- High School Diploma or GED
- Less than High School

**What is your own yearly income?**
- More than $150,000
- $149,000-$100,000
- $99,999-$75,000
- $74,999-$50,000
- $49,999-$25,001
- Under $25,000

1. Have you ever been diagnosed with an eating disorder?
   - Yes
   - No

2. Do you take body enhancing supplements? (Example: steroids, protein shakes, creatine etc…)
   - Yes
   - No

3. Are you currently on a diet?
   - Yes
   - No

4. Have you dieted in the past year?
   - Yes
   - No

5. How often do you exercise?
   - Never
   - 1-2 times a week
   - 3-4 times a week
   - 5-6 times a week
   - Everyday

6. What type of exercise do you typically do?
   - Aerobic/Running
   - Weight Lifting
   - Biking/Spinning
   - Team Sports
   - Walking
   - Pilates/Yoga
   - Martial Arts/ Kickboxing
   - Swimming
   - Other ______________

7. What is your motivation for exercise?
   - Lose Weight
   - Gain Muscle
   - Maintain Body Weight
   - Maintain Personal Health

What is your current occupation?
- Salaried (Management)
- Hourly (Laborer)
- Student
Appendix B

The BIQLI Questionnaire

Instructions: Different people have different feelings about their physical appearance. These feelings are called "body image." Some people are generally satisfied with their looks, while others are dissatisfied. At the same time, people differ in terms of how their body-image experiences affect other aspects of their lives. Body image may have positive effects, negative effects, or no effect at all. Listed below are various ways that your own body image may or may not influence your life. For each item, circle how and how much your feelings about your appearance affect that aspect of your life. Before answering each item, think carefully about the answer that most accurately reflects how your body image usually affects you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>-3</th>
<th>-2</th>
<th>-1</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>+1</th>
<th>+2</th>
<th>+3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Negative Effect</td>
<td>Moderate Negative Effect</td>
<td>Slight Negative Effect</td>
<td>No Effect</td>
<td>Slight Positive Effect</td>
<td>Moderate Positive Effect</td>
<td>Very Positive Effect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. My basic feelings about myself—feelings of personal adequacy and self-worth. +3 +2 +1 0 +1 +2 +3
2. My feelings about my adequacy as a man or woman—feelings of masculinity or femininity. +3 +2 +1 0 +1 +2 +3
3. My interactions with people of my own sex. +3 +2 +1 0 +1 +2 +3
4. My interactions with people of the other sex. +3 +2 +1 0 +1 +2 +3
5. My experiences when I meet new people. +3 +2 +1 0 +1 +2 +3
6. My experiences at work or at school. +3 +2 +1 0 +1 +2 +3
7. My relationships with friends. +3 +2 +1 0 +1 +2 +3
8. My relationships with family members. +3 +2 +1 0 +1 +2 +3
9. My day-to-day emotions. +3 +2 +1 0 +1 +2 +3
10. My satisfaction with my life in general. +3 +2 +1 0 +1 +2 +3
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>-3</th>
<th>-2</th>
<th>-1</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>+1</th>
<th>+2</th>
<th>+3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Negative Effect</td>
<td>Moderate Negative Effect</td>
<td>Slight Negative Effect</td>
<td>No Effect</td>
<td>Slight Positive Effect</td>
<td>Moderate Positive Effect</td>
<td>Very Positive Effect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. My feelings of acceptability as a sexual partner. 

12. My enjoyment of my sex life. 

13. My ability to control what and how much I eat. 

14. My ability to control my weight. 

15. My activities for physical exercise. 

16. My willingness to do things that might call attention to my appearance. 

17. My daily "grooming" activities (i.e., getting dressed and physically ready for the day). 


©TF Cash, 2002