

Objectified Body Consciousness and Social Interaction Anxiety: Self Confidence as a Moderator

Dr. Aneesh V Appu & Ms Vineetha Lukose

Abstract

Social interaction is one of the inevitable aspects in development process of all individuals. In adolescents' period, all kinds of physical changes can happen which affect their physical perception about themselves. They may highly bother about their appearance. Present study aims to find out the relation between objectified body consciousness and social interaction anxiety among adolescents. Current study examined the moderating impact of self confidence in relation between objectified body consciousness and social interaction anxiety. Total 120 students were included in the study which comprised both boys and girls. The age range varied between 13 to 21 years. OBC scale (Objectified Body Consciousness, McKinley and Hyde 1996), Self-confidence inventory (Basavanna,1975), and social interaction anxiety Scale (SIAS) constructed by Mattick and Clarke (1998) were used to collect the responses from the participants. The dimensions of OBC include body shame, surveillance and control belief. Self-confidence is another variable which is used as moderating variable. Result shows surveillance is negatively and significantly related with self-confidence. Body shame and social interaction anxiety shows positive relation in participants. Surveillance and social interaction anxiety found positively correlated. And self-confidence also shows negative significant association with social interaction anxiety of the participant. Current study reminds the importance of right perception among adolescents. The negative self-evaluation may spoil their life, so developing self-confidence is a vital process in mature social development.

Key terms: objectified body consciousness, social interaction anxiety, self confidence

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Adolescent period is concerned with curiosity that correlates with their physical, social and psychological maturation. One of the inevitable aspects in development process of all individuals is social interaction. Different kinds of physical changes can happen in adolescent period which influence their physical perception about themselves. They may show high concern about their appearance. They can experience Stress and anxiety as they may think others make evaluation about their appearance. Mass is a form of energy and this is the key to understand body consciousness and its roots. This energy and consciousness are different indication of the same substance, that is a specific quantity of energy is in the form of mass. This represents our unique body isa unique consciousness. It has a unique view and unique perspective and a purpose unique to itself because it is a unique consciousness. Current research is an attempt to find out the connection between body consciousness and social interaction anxiety among adolescents. Also, the moderating role of self-confidence in association with body consciousness and social interaction anxiety among adolescents is also investigated by the researcher.

Objectified body consciousness (OBC) is a third person perspective about a person's own view about their body from an outsider's perspective rather than how her/his body looks like. Also, it is an inclination to make a view about oneself as an entity to be look over and assessed by others.

The theory of OBC (McKinley & Hyde, 1996) explains how low body esteem develops in adults and how this makes adverse outcomes. According to this theory, adults especially girls, face an increasing level of sexual objectification from others. This sexual objectification leads some girls to internalize their view points about them over time; as a result, they develop OBC. If an individual's level of OBC is high, he or she focus more on the factors which are specific to cultural standards of appearance, may obsessed with frequent body-monitoring thoughts and behaviours, and more importantly they encounter with body

shame when they are inconsistent with their body appearance and cultural standards (McKinley & Hyde, 1996; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). OBC is distinct from imaginary audience behaviour and an adult's familiarity with self-consciousness. One of the social factors that affects OBC is public self-consciousness. If self-consciousness is the awareness about oneself, public self-consciousness is the awareness about oneself, it includes self-presentation in public (Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975). The phenomenon of public self-consciousness is not limited to any age period but some research shows that this feeling is enhanced in early adolescence (Ryan & Kuckowski, 1994). Imaginary audience is the thought that adolescents believe people around them are very much concerned about them like as they do (Elkind, 1967; Elkind & Bowen, 1979). The belief of imaginary audience was verified. Research shows the belief of imaginary audience normally develops at the time of early adolescence after that it declines (e.g., Elkind & Bowen, 1979; Pesce & Harding, 1986; cf. Peterson & Roscoe, 1991). The main focus of OBC is body and its presentation appearance and in the case of self-perception it is by the sense of awareness about oneself in public and imaginary audience.

Feminist theorists insist OBC have three components (Bartky, 1988) and it is important in the experience about women's body which includes (a) body surveillance, (b) body shame (c) control beliefs.

Self-surveillance

OBC theory stated that the body of females are set up as an object of male desire and thus helps to be recognised by males and others. Constant self-surveillance makes females to ensure the cultural body expectations by seeing them same as the way others see them and oppose unfair assumptions. Women see their body themselves as objects which is analogue to how a person's view about a particular object. Generally, women watch their body for attain self-love, commitment towards health and individual achievement.

The effects of continuous self-surveillance somewhat affect woman negatively. Because studies have shown that if we give more focus on ourselves and we are obsessed with behavioural standards, we try to compare ourselves to the standards persists and try to minimize and avoid the inconsistency between them. If we fail to decrease inconsistency, we feel sad and develop negative attitude towards body (Carver & Scheier, 1981). Experimental evidences make the assumption that self-focus about the appearance of body makes a person more sensitive to the judgements and evaluation of others and thus reduce his or her ability to mingle and concentrate on the external world (Carver & Scheier, 1981).

Body Shame

Woman always compares herself her body with the cultural body standards. When incorporating these cultural standards women are enforced to behave accordingly. But mostly, this is a person's free will to act accordingly. Generally, women are more sensitive to follow them. One important factor which enhances this tendency is substantial economic and interpersonal pressures for attaining a particular physique (Bartky, 1988). The choice between being feminine and masculine connects the attainment of specific cultural body standards to the identity of woman and this helps them to personal empowerment.

Intense body shame is rooted by the inconsistency between cultural body standards and the body structure (Bartky, 1988). Different regions have different concepts about body structure and shape so that it is really different and difficult to understand expectations and social norms for the female body. Genetic studies shows that body type is not environmentally determined rather than by genetically, because the genetic makeup of monozygotic twins raised away from each other have similar body makeup than that of dizygotic twins lifted together. Woman's gaining of weight is much different from men's do because their weight gain is linked with normal biological milestones such as puberty, labour, and menopause.

Viewpoints regarding feminine body depend upon the cultural standards they possess. It seems very difficult to generalize the concern about body type. Woman who internalizes these standards would feel shame, if they are not connected with those standards. A common emotion woman feels in accordance with this inconsistency is shame. This shame is not only about negative but also about oneself too. Bartky (1988) concluded that the body shame and cultural standards are related. Because if a person is more concerned with their cultural standards, chances for developing high body shame increases.

Responsibility for Appearance: Control Belief

OBC theory conveys the idea that females are sensitive to their bodily appearance and regulate their appearance with cultural standards. It is necessary to convince woman that they are responsible for the appearance and make them accept attractiveness according with the standards persists. Appearance can be controlled via constructing the achievement of cultural body standards.

Appearance is related not only with one factor but also with many other factors. In working with the control of appearance women can sort out the discrepancy between being lady like and being objectified. Women are not easily giving up with controlling appearance (Bartky, 1988). If people believe, they have the capacity to control their appearance their physiological and physical well-being will be enhanced (Cromwell, 1977). This is an important fact that because many of the people face difficulties to attain cultural standards for body appearance. This is an illusion of control but helps people to stick on their goals during stressful situations (Taylor, 1989). This relieved people have a crucial role in the control of their appearance along with body surveillance and the cultural body standards.

Self Confidence

All most all influential motivators and regulators accept that they can control their appearance (Bandura, 1986). An individual's self-confidence about their growing body plays crucial role in marinating body appearance (Bandura, 1977, Ericsson, Krampe, and Tesch-Romen ,1993). Self-confidence is not only a motivational aspect by itself but also it is a judgment about one's own capacities to take decision at a difficult time

According to Bandura (1986), self-confidence seems as an important motivator for themselves but does not indicate its direction. Self-confidence has an optimistic value because it helps a person to behave in a successful manner. Self-confidence is an awareness about one's ability to act at a certain level.

Bandura (1986) asserts that the outcomes in an activity or any other behaviour are depending upon the confidence level a person possesses. Individuals are more concerned and depended about their confidence. And they are rewarded according with the achievements. But in the case of a fixed outcome, minimal amount of performance level does not boost up self-confidence. In those particular cases outcome and confidence expectations would not be related. Bandura (1986) emphasised that, an individual's future behaviour can be modified by self-confidence beliefs. Individuals with lack of self-confidence question their ability. If one doubtfully looks their ability, it will lead to lack of self-confidence and forced to face failure (Collins, 1982). Attributions and self-confidence are linked, because attributions are important for developing an individual's future confidence (McAuley, 1990; Schunk and Cox, 1986). Success in a particular performance helps a person to build self-confidence only when the success is followed by own ability not to chance success.

Self-confidence considered as a valuable individual asset. A person's success comes from the belief about the level of self-confidence he possesses. It is a key to success. Self-

confidence also boosts the level of motivation. It helps to face the situation and attainment of goal.

Social Interaction

Social interaction is the communication individuals. It is the building block of society. Interaction occurs between more than one people, so that it can be studied with more than one pupil. Social interactions help to form rules, norms, institutions and systems within the society. It is the process occurs around an individual to act and react to those around him. In a nutshell, social interaction involves a give and take mechanism between the societies. It is easy to have a rapid conversation with a closed one. According to Goffman (1959), he argued that different forms of social interaction play role in sociology but not much focus given to them. Social interaction contains many behaviours and it can be divided into five categories. They are exchange, competition, cooperation, conflict and coercion.

Methods

Participants

In the present investigation, the sample comprises of one twenty students (N=120) studying in three various levels high school, higher secondary and college. The prescribed sample consists of both boys and girls. The age of the students ranges from 13 years to 21 years. Simple random sampling method was adopted for data collection from the participants. Data collection permission was obtained from the institutional authorities and concerned staffs. As a first step rapport was established with each individual subject. A brief introduction regarding the purpose of the study was given and after that all the questionnaires were administered individually and provided necessary instructions were provided. Assurance was provided to the participants regarding their anonymity and confidentiality about the information which they were provided.

Measures

Personal information regarding the participants age, gender which are appropriate for the current study was collected by using a socio demographic data sheet.

Objectified body consciousness (OBC) Scale

McKinley and Hyde (1996) developed OBC scale for studying the effect of body consciousness in adults. This is a self-report scale to measure body consciousness. OBC scale includes three subscales and they are body surveillance –this is the measure of defining how the body looks like. Body shame – it is the measure of someone’s belief that they are bad if they fail to encounter the cultural expectations about the body appearance. Appearance controls beliefs – a measure that a person believes their appearance is in their control or other factors. For the present study, test –retest reliability of the sub scales is adequate. The coefficient alpha is 0.62, 0.70 and 0.81 for body shame, control belief and surveillance respectively

Self Confidence Inventory

M. Basavanna, Professor, Dept. of Psychology, S.V. University, Tirupati, developed and standardized the inventory (1975). The scale has 25 items. Among them 15 are positive and 10 are negative statements. The reliability coefficient was found to be 0.94. Adequate validity is shown by the scale for the self-confidence measurement.

Social Interaction Anxiety (SIAS) Scale

The anxiety that occurs during interactions with others can be measured by using the scale social interaction anxiety scale (SIAS). And developed and published by Mattick and Clarke (1998). Items on the test are correlated shows high levels of internal consistency. In addition, the scale has high test-retest reliability of .86. The scale has high discriminate

validity. It discriminates not only people with social phobia and healthy volunteers, but also different multiple types of social phobia and anxiety.

Statistical Analysis

Current study used coefficient of correlation to find out the relationship between the variables. Present study used self-confidence as moderator on the relationship between OBC and social interaction anxiety. A moderator is any factor which either enhances or reduces the relation between independent and dependent variable. Moderation analysis also used to find out the interaction effect of self-confidence on the relationship between the three dimensions of OBC namely-control belief, body shame, surveillance and social interaction anxiety of the participant. Regression analysis was used through enter method, each variable separately entered and analysed.

Results

Statistical Package for Social Science version 20 was employed for data analysis. The correlation analysis is shown in the table 1. Here researcher tried to find out the relation between three dimensions of the objectified body consciousness and social interaction anxiety of the participants. Body shame, surveillance and control belief are the different dimensions included here. Self-confidence is another variable which is used as moderating variable. Result shows surveillance is negatively and significantly related with self-confidence ($r = -0.24, p < 0.05$). Body shame shows significant positive relation ($r = 0.3, p < 0.01$) with social interaction anxiety of the participants. Surveillance shows significant positive relation ($r = 0.27, p < 0.05$) with social interaction anxiety. And self-confidence also shows negative significant association ($r = 0.5, p < 0.01$) with social interaction anxiety of the participant.

No other dimensions found significant association with social interaction anxiety and

self-confidence other than these dimensions. The moderation analysis of the variable is depicted in Table 2. Here self-confidence is used as moderator variable, which interacts with the relationship between the dimensions of objectified body consciousness and social interaction anxiety of the participant. Body shame positive association with social interaction anxiety ($\beta=.36 p=0.01$) and body shame interacting with self-confidence, then the positive relation become reduced ($\beta=-.12$). No significant association was found between control beliefs and social interaction anxiety of the participant. But control beliefs interacting with self-confidence then it shows negative relationship between control belief and social interaction anxiety ($\beta=-.42 p=.01$). Surveillance also shows significant positive correlation with social interaction anxiety ($\beta=.27 p=.01$) interestingly, surveillance interacting with self-confidence, then it shows no significant relation with social interaction anxiety of the participants.

Table 1
Mean, SD and correlations of the variables

Variable	Mean values	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Body shame	19.64	3.78	1				
Surveillance	11.89	3.11	.21*	1			
Control Belief	12.76	3.11	-.12	.01	1		
Self Confidence	69.36	13.49	-.17	-.24*	.40	1	
Social Interaction Anxiety	57.04	10.129	.36**	.27*	-.13	-.51**	1

Note: *=p=0.05, **=p=0.01

Table 2*Moderated Regression Analysis Results with Social Interaction anxiety as Dependent Variable*

Predictors	Social anxiety					
	B	SE	β	R^2	ΔR^2	F
Body Shame	.9	.23	.36**	.13	.12	17.5
Body shame \times Self Confidence	-.004	.003	-.12	.015	.007	1.8
Control Beliefs	-.44	.29	-.13	.019	.01	2.23
Control Beliefs \times Self Confidence	-.01	.003	-.42**	.18	.17	25.7
Surveillance	.87	.28	.27*	.07	.06	9.2
Surveillance \times Self Confidence	-.004	.004	-.08	.008	.000	.9

Discussion

In the current study researcher attempted to find out the role of objectified body consciousness towards social interaction anxiety among the college students. Surveillance, body shame and control belief are the three dimensions included in OBC. Researcher also tried to analyse the impact of self-confidence on the relation between these dimensions and social interaction anxiety. The result reveals that based on their social relationships of the college students some dimensions of objectified body consciousness of the college students can create anxiety. Surveillance is positively associated with social interaction anxiety among college students. So problems related with social interactions can be created by surveillance of the body. A major factor among the adolescents is feeling of body surveillance, this creates social interaction anxiety among college students as they feel their body is being observed by others as an object. As a result they unknowingly withdraw from social gatherings and do not entertain interactions with others. At the same time they have the propensity to monitor their body and give day by day a leaning to body changes.

Another dimension of objectified body consciousness is body shame, shows positive association with social interaction anxiety of college students. Negative Perception about the body can lead to making comparison with others and traditional body appearance. A feeling of shame is created about themselves by this comparison which indirectly forces them to withdraw from social interactions and gradually it leads to interaction anxiety. Control beliefs show negative relation with social interaction anxiety among college students. But it does not show significant association with social interaction anxiety. Control beliefs imply that individuals have the capacity to control their body appearance with respect to their cultural standards. At this perspective, individuals control beliefs can reduce their interaction anxiety.

In table 2, researcher demonstrates the moderation effect of self-confidence on the relation between domains of OBC (surveillance, control belief and body shame) and social interaction anxiety of college students. Body shame independently positively correlated with social interaction anxiety and it is contributing 1.2% of the total variance of the social interaction anxiety. This kind of anxiety of the adolescents is largely based on body shame. According to Bartky (2008), body shame and cultural body standards are linked to the identity of woman. Thus it builds probable origin of social interaction anxiety. But it interacts with self-confidence, there shows negative relation with social interaction anxiety and contribution level is reduced to .7% of the total variance of the social interaction anxiety. Hence it reveals that the social interaction anxiety of the college students can be reduced by self-confidence. Particularly during this period, college students are pre occupied with their body changes and may often feel negative attribution about their body. This can cause high degree of anxiety and leading them to gradually withdraw from social gatherings. But findings of the present study imply, their negative attribution about their body can be reduced by self-confidence and it can also provide positive attitude in social interactions. Control beliefs about their body shows negative relation with social interaction anxiety ($\beta = -.13$). It is

the beliefs that they can control their body appearance. If people have believes that they can control or not, which can enhance their physiological and physical well-being (Cromwell, 1977). When control beliefs interacting with self-confidence the relation between control beliefs and social interaction anxiety become significant negative association. The high control beliefs with self-confidence, then social interaction can be reduced. Yet another dimension of objectified body consciousness is surveillance which is negatively associated with social interaction anxiety of college students. A kind of surveillance is the feeling that others are observing our body. Here, surveillance showing positive association with social interaction anxiety ($\beta=.27^*$) and it contributes 6% of the total variance of social interaction anxiety. Interestingly, self-confidence is interacting with surveillance the positive relation has reduced ($\beta=-.8$) and contributing role of surveillance is found to be less. Hence self-confidence as a moderator shows significant changes in the relationship between surveillance and social interaction anxiety in participants.

Conclusion

In this study, researcher used self-confidence as a moderator on the relation between objectified body consciousness and social interaction anxiety. Through two dimensions namely surveillance and body shame make high level of body consciousness. And interaction anxiety among adolescents is also creates by these dimensions. Though, this anxiety can be reduced through self-confidence. Current study reminds the importance of right perception among adolescents. Their life may be spoiled by negative self-evaluation, so developing self-confidence will be a vital role in mature development. A new insight is provided by the study in adolescents' research as it is provided reliable findings in the present research.

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