

Self-efficacy in relation to weight preoccupation and body-dissatisfaction among adolescents females

Kirti Shekhawat^{1*}

ABSTRACT

The present study was designed to investigate the self-efficacy in relation to weight preoccupation and body image dissatisfaction among adolescent females. The sample comprises 30 females aged between 12-15 years studying in grade 6-8. Self Efficacy Scale (Wister et al., 2009) and Minnesota Eating Behavior Survey (Ranson et al., 2005) were used. Correlational analysis was done. The result indicates significant negative correlation between self-efficacy and body dissatisfaction. Whereas, no significant relationship was found in self-efficacy and weight preoccupation.

Keywords: *Self-efficacy, Body image Dissatisfaction and Weight Preoccupation*

Diet and nutrition play an important role in maintaining health and preventing diseases. If satisfactory nutritional habits are adopted in early life and maintained in long term decrease in morbidity and mortality rate can be achievable.

During adolescence, young people are assuming responsibility for their own eating habits, health attitudes and behaviors, during this period lack of nutritional knowledge and self-efficacy has been implicated as causing poor eating habits. Similarly, lifestyle to which individual are exposed to causing more harm than good among adolescents. These include sedentary lifestyles (activities such as watching, using the computer, listening to music, reading a book).

Among these eating habits, female adolescent years are often associated with weight and shape concerns and with disordered eating behavior because thin body is considered desirable by the society members. Although most of these attitudes and weight loss behavior are often benign, their presence can still carry significant psychological and medical risks and are associated with an increased subsequent risk of clinical eating behavior. Disordered eating behavior has negative effect such as smoking, alcohol, and drug use as well as psychological problems such as stress and depression.

There are previous studies which state that there is a role of self-efficacy in weight preoccupation, body image dissatisfaction in female which state that when there is a little

¹Psychologist (self-employed), India

*[Responding Author](#)

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confidence in the ability to avoid eating when anxious, a women ability to maintain a weight that she desires, or her ability to maintain a positive attitude about her own body when faced with unrealistic media images in all these cases self-efficacy plays an important role.

Albert Bandura (1986) gave concept of self efficacy and theorizes that people draw on these symbolic capabilities to understand their environment by purposeful actions, cognitively solve problems, develop reflective thoughts and effectively communicate with others. (Valutis et al., 2008) explanation of self-efficacy based on Bandura's theory of self-efficacy is that one's self-efficacy regarding weight, eating and body size can influence whether or not spends cognitive and behavioral energy on the discrepancy between one's current and realistic body image or ideal body image. (Toray and Cooley, 1997; Vanderlinden, Grave, Vnadereycken and Noordun, 2001; Waller and Matoba, 1999) has shown in clinical as well as non-clinical population, that eating can occur with emotional triggers and emotion related eating has been correlated with disordered eating symptoms.

Early adolescent girls are easily influenced by factors such as media, peer's and other societal influences where thin is considered desirable and girls with low self-efficacy easily become prey of variables like weight preoccupation and body image dissatisfaction. Therefore, poor self control and self-efficacy among girls make them to engage in unhealthy eating practices such as binge eating, taking dieting pills etc.

Body image refers to individual mental image of physical self, evaluation of physical self and influences of these on behavior. (Vaultis et al., 1999) explain that body image is not a one-dimensional construct, but one that consist of affective, cognitive and behavioral components.

Many researches state that in traditional societies young girls are too often brought up to believe that their appearance is not solely their own business how daughters look, for instance, is an open topic of conversation in many families making them feel their bodies are fair game for public scrutiny. Sadly, given the common gap between their actual selves and ideal, many come away feels exposed and shamed. The increased prevalence of eating disorders during last half century has coincided with this epidemic of body image dissatisfaction (Feingold & Mazzella, 1996).

Weight preoccupation refers to the constant worrying about one's weight. Although research certainly supports the idea that women exhibit more weight preoccupation than men, recent research has begun to suggest that it may depend on the specific attitude or behavior in question.

(Raudenbush and Zellner, 1997) suggest that there are gender differences in weight gain and weight loss attempts; correct weight male tend to think they are underweight and may try to gain weight, whereas correct weight females are more likely to believe they are overweight and may attempt to lose weight.

As a result, females exhibit higher levels of most weight preoccupation behaviors centered on losing weight, whereas males exhibit higher levels of excessive exercise in an attempt to "bulk up" extra weight (Tata, Fox and cooper, 2009; Grossbard et al., 2009; Kiefer et al., 2005; Anderson & Bulik, 2004)

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METHODOLOGY

Sample

The present study has been conducted on 30 early adolescent girls who studied from class vi to viii and who have family set up of a joint family is duly consider with age range of 12-15.

Tools

Wister et al., (2009) The Self Efficacy Scale, Ranson et al., (2005) The Minessota Eating Behavior Survey were used to collect the data.

RESULTS

Table 1: Correlation between Self-efficacy and Body dissatisfaction among adolescent girls.

Variable	Mean	SD	r
Self-efficacy	26.2	7.036	-0.53**
Body dissatisfaction	16.43	3.42	(significant)

*significant at 0.05 level

**significant at 0.01 level

Table 1 show that the correlation between Self –Efficacy and Body Dissatisfaction is significantly negative.

Table 2: Correlation between Self efficacy and Weight preoccupation among adolescent girls.

Variables	Mean	SD	r
Self-efficacy	26.2	7.036	-0.09
Weight preoccupation	14.43	3.92	(insignificant)

*significant at 0.05 level

**significant at 0.01 level

Table 2 reveals correlation between Self-Efficacy and Weight Preoccupation is insignificantly negative.

DISCUSSION

The results show that significant negative correlation between Self-Efficacy and Body dissatisfaction among adolescent girls is indicative of negative relationship between the two variables. The findings of the study reveal that girls who have high level of self-efficacy than their body dissatisfaction is negatively correlated with their increased level of self-efficacy. This states that girls who have positive image about their body and are not influenced much by what others think about their body image, are less depressed and better able to regulate their unhealthy eating behavior.

(Strecher et al., 1986) found a strong relationship between Self-Efficacy and both change and maintenance of eating behavior, as well as (Rimal, 2000) having pointed out that knowledge behavior correlations were greater among those with high Self-Efficacy, when compared with low Self-Efficacy.

Bandura, 2004; Kingrey, 1990 perceived self-efficacy that is the belief that an individual may carry out a specific behavior, was strongly related to healthy eating patterns. Motivation

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to adopt healthy eating pattern and self-efficacy are important determinants of behavioral change.

(Vaultis, 2004) explanation of self-efficacy based on Bandura's theory of Self-Efficacy is that one's Self-Efficacy regarding weight, eating and body size can influence whether or not spends cognitive and behavioral energy on the discrepancy between one's current and realistic body image or ideal body image.

Low Self-Efficacy in girls makes them to resort to unhealthy eating practices because of low confidence and self-esteem. This drives them to resort to binge eating and later regret their disoriented body image.

The results related to Self-Efficacy and Weight Preoccupation shows insignificant relationship between two variables. This indicates that adolescent girls do not show much consideration about their weight in regard to Self-Efficacy, they do concern about their weight issues but more influenced by what others think and perceive about them rather than their own consideration about being healthy and unhealthy.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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