

BODY IMAGE AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH SHYNESS AMONG FEMALE STUDENTS OF THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS SCIENCES - UNIVERSITY OF BASRA

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Abstract

The study aimed to investigate the nature of the relationship between body image and shyness among a sample of female students from the College of Physical Education and Sports Science. Additionally, it aimed to determine the level of shyness among these students and explore the statistically significant relationship between body image and shyness. The study sample consisted of 60 female students from the College of Physical Education and Sports Science at the University of Basra. To achieve the study's objectives, the researcher employed a descriptive-analytical method. Questionnaires were used as the primary tool for data collection, with two specific instruments: one to measure body image, comprising 29 items, and another to measure shyness, comprising 26 items. These tools were initially applied to a pilot sample of 15 students from the study population. After verifying the validity and reliability of the instruments and ensuring they had good psychometric properties, they were distributed to a random sample of 60 students. Multiple statistical methods were used to analyze the responses of the sample members.

Study Results:

1. Body image is not constant but changes according to life events. It varies between illness and health and across different life stages, as well as according to economic and social conditions.

Key Recommendations:

1. Guide students who suffer from negative thoughts about their body image and help them overcome the psychological difficulties they face.

Keywords: Body image, Shyness, Female students

1. Introduction

In the context of the media revolution and the dominance of image and its culture, women and girls, in their quest for an ideal body free from obesity, often feel the need to reshape their bodies. Many constantly feel dissatisfied with their physical selves, causing a significant concern that affects their self-perception and body image.

University students, particularly female students, are among the most concerned about their appearance and are keen on maintaining it. They pay close attention to their body shape and appearance and consider others' evaluations of them critically. Body image is a pressing issue for them, more so for females than males. It reflects a psychological perspective encompassing the functional, neurological, and physical aspects of the body, forming an individual's self-

concept and relationship with the environment. It also influences the behavior an individual practices.

Cultural and social factors play a significant role in an individual's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their body image, influenced by others' judgments and evaluations. Thus, the body's importance stems from others' perceptions rather than the body itself. These factors increase anxiety levels among female students, especially when comments about their bodies come from significant people in their lives, such as life partners, leading to feelings of shyness and even depression regarding their body shapes (Kafafi & Al-Nayal, 1996:7).

A negative body image is associated with various emotions like anxiety, disgust, despair, shyness, and confusion in different situations. Dissatisfaction with one's body can lead to psychosomatic disorders, distorting body image. This issue arises when the body shape does not align with societal ideals, emphasizing that a negative self-concept often results from a distorted perception of body image (Al-Ansari, 2002:181).

Shyness is a social and psychological condition that dominates an individual's personality, affecting their intellectual capacities, creative potential, and mental abilities, freezing their behavior and actions towards themselves and society. Students who suffer from shyness lack self-confidence, find it difficult to integrate with their peers, and miss out on acquiring many life skills and new experiences that come from social engagement. This issue also impacts academic achievement, leading to feelings of failure and a paralyzed will and thinking concerning body image.

Importance of the Research: The significance of this research lies in using the body image and shyness scales, which help us understand the level of shyness among students concerning their body images and the body image perceptions of female students at the University of Basra.

1.2. Problem Statement: The researchers identified the current research problem after reviewing several studies on the term "body image." Social and cultural factors create a particular human behavior concerning their body image and physical attractiveness. Few studies have addressed the impact of beauty or its lack on body image, with only a few researchers attempting to study this topic. Through this concept, individuals seek security, self-confidence, and possibly marriage, believing that their physical appearance facilitates achieving these goals or at least part of them. Therefore, the current research problem arises from the researchers' observation that some female students complain about their body image, prompting consideration of developing a counseling program to help them accept their body image and overcome shyness. The study aims to understand the effect of such a program on students' shyness concerning their body images. The study can be summarized by exploring the following question:

- What is the relationship between body image and shyness?

1.3 Research Objectives: The current research aims to:

1. Determine the level of body image among female students at the College of Physical Education and Sports Science.
2. Determine the level of shyness among female students at the College of Physical Education and Sports Science.
3. Identify the statistically significant relationship between body image and shyness among female students at the College of Physical Education and Sports Science.

1.4 Research Domains:

- 1 - Human Domain: Female students at the College of Physical Education and Sports Science, University of Basra.
- 2 - Temporal Domain: From February 3, 2024, to May 15, 2024.
- 3 - Spatial Domain: College of Physical Education and Sports Science, University of Basra.

1.5 Definition of Terms:

Body Image: A mental representation or mental image that an individual forms based on their experiences through various events and situations. Therefore, body image is subject to modification and development (Kafafi & Al-Nayal, 1996, p.10).

Shyness: A feeling that overwhelms an individual when exposed to a particular social situation, causing a loss of ability to respond appropriately to the encountered situation (Jaafar, 2007, p.8).

2. Theoretical Studies

2.1 Concept of Body Image: Body image is a concept that researchers define in various ways. It is not merely a person's outward appearance but goes deeper. While some may understand body image as only the external appearance, it includes cognitive and behavioral aspects. Body image is not fixed; it changes due to multiple subjective, social, and cultural factors throughout different life stages (Pruzinsky, 2004, pp. 72-73).

Body image is considered a multi-dimensional construct that includes self-perception and attitudes related to physical appearance. There are two main aspects to attitudes towards physical appearance: evaluation (satisfaction or dissatisfaction) and the psychological importance of physical appearance. The individual's mental image of their physical composition and functional performance efficiency is determined by factors such as the shape of body parts, their symmetry, the overall body shape, functional body efficiency, and the social aspect of body image (Anwar, 2001, p. 134).

2.1.2 Concept of Shyness: The concept of shyness can be perplexing. Some people praise it, while others criticize it. Shyness is a personality factor with an emotional tint, varying in intensity and manifestation from person to person, situation to situation, age to age, and culture to culture. It also comes in different forms and types, with a range of social, emotional, and cognitive symptoms (Al-Nayal & Abu Zaid, 1999, p.1).

Shyness is considered a social and psychological condition that dominates an individual's personality, affecting their intellectual abilities, creative potential, and mental capacities. It freezes their behavior and actions towards themselves and society. Shyness itself is not dangerous, but the danger lies in the consequences, such as lack of integration into life (Shikshik, 2009, p.111).

3. Research Methodology and Procedures

3.1 Research Method: The researchers employed the descriptive method and survey technique for this study.

3.2 Research Population and Sample: The research population consisted of female students from the College of Physical Education and Sports Science at the University of Basra, attending regular morning classes for the academic year 2023-2024, totaling 75 students. For ease of access, a random sample was chosen, consisting of 30 second-year students and 30 third-year students, along with a pilot sample of 15 students. These groups represent the observed phenomenon addressed in the research problem.

Table 1.

Group	Sample Size	Pilot Sample	Total
Second Year	30	10	40
Third Year	30	5	35
Total	60	15	75

3.3 Equipment Used in the Research:

- A laptop (HP).

3.3.1 Resources Used in the Research:

- Arabic and foreign sources and references.
- The internet.

3.4 Research Tool: The development of tests and measures has a long history, focusing not only on the number and variety of these tools but also on the methodological approaches used in developing their statements or items. These tools facilitate application, scoring, and interpretation. Each tool has specific design, application, and interpretation features, requiring careful attention to principles and conditions before starting the development process. This approach ensures high levels of effectiveness, validity, accuracy, practicality, and objectivity (Al-Nabhan, 2013).

3.4.1 Body Image Scale: After reviewing educational literature and previous studies related to the research problem and consulting experts in psychology and education through informal interviews, the researchers adopted a body image scale to assess the body image of female students at the College of Physical Education and Sports Science, University of Basra. The final version of the scale consists of 29 items (Appendix 2).

Field Procedures for the Scale:

1. Researchers reviewed scales addressing body image, including:
 - Body Image Scale by Zeinab Shuqeir (2005)
 - Body Image Scale by Kafafi and Al-Nayal (1996)
2. Researchers examined relevant previous studies closely related to the research topic.

3. The initial version of the scale included both positive and negative items, with a total of 29 items covering various aspects. The scale was presented to a panel of 10 experts in psychology from the Department of Psychological Counseling and Educational Guidance for evaluation (Appendix 1). After their review, no significant modifications were necessary, and the scale was applied to the pilot sample to calculate validity and reliability, resulting in 29 items used on the actual sample.

1. Validity of the Scale:

Validity ensures that the tool measures what it is intended to measure. The researchers verified the validity as follows:

- **Expert Validity:** The initial version of the questionnaire was presented to a group of university professors from the College of Education for Human Sciences at the University of Basra. They provided feedback on the relevance of the items to the study topic and their clarity. Based on their feedback, no items were excluded, but some were modified (Appendix 2).

2. Reliability of the Body Image Scale:

After applying the scale and entering the data into the SPSS software, the reliability was calculated using two methods:

- **Cronbach's Alpha:** The scale was applied to a pilot sample of 15 students from the second and third years of the College of Physical Education and Sports Science at the University of Basra. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the overall scale was found to be 0.88, indicating a high level of reliability.

3. *4.2 Shyness Scale:* After reviewing educational literature and previous studies related to the research problem and consulting a sample of specialists in the psychological and educational fields through informal personal interviews, the researchers adopted a shyness scale to identify the prevalence of shyness among female students and its relationship with body image among the sample members. The final version of the scale consisted of 26 items (Appendix 2).

Field Procedures for the Scale:

First: After reviewing available studies and scales that addressed the topic of shyness, the researchers found a lack of comprehensive studies, particularly in the Arabic context. This led the researchers to adopt a new shyness scale, as existing scales did not fully align with the research topic and sample. The scales reviewed included:

- Shyness Scale by Hussein Al-Dreini (1998)
- Social Shyness Scale by Abdul Hamid Abu Zaid and Maissa Al-Nayal (1999)

Second: The researchers reviewed previous related studies that were closely linked to the research topic.

Third: The initial items of the scale, including both positive and negative items, were developed by the researchers. The scale consisted of 26 items covering various aspects. It was presented to a panel of 10 experts in psychology from the Department of Psychological Counseling and Educational Guidance for evaluation (Appendix 1). Following their review, no significant modifications were needed. After applying the scale to the pilot sample and calculating validity and reliability, the final scale consisted of 26 items and was applied to the actual sample.

First: Validity of the Scale

Validity ensures that the tool measures what it is intended to measure. The researchers confirmed the validity through the following method:

1. Expert Validity: The initial version of the questionnaire was presented to a group of university professors from the College of Education for Human Sciences at the University of Basra. They provided feedback on the relevance of the items to the study topic and their clarity. Based on their feedback, no items were excluded, but some were modified (Appendix 2).

Second: Reliability of the Shyness Scale

After applying the scale, its reliability was calculated using the following method:

1. Cronbach's Alpha: The scale was applied to a pilot sample of 15 students from the second and third years of the College of Physical Education and Sports Science at the University of Basra. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the overall scale was found to be 0.93, indicating a high level of reliability.

3.5 Pilot Study: The researchers conducted a pilot study with a sample of 15 students from the College of Physical Education and Sports Science at the University of Basra, encompassing both second and third-year students. This was done over a single day. The researchers re-applied the pilot study to the same sample, revealing that the items were clear and understandable, requiring no modifications. The average time taken to complete the scale ranged from 10 to 20 minutes.

3.6 Final Application of the Scale: After completing the necessary procedures for the scale, it was ready for application on the sample starting from 2/4/2023. The final version of the Body Image Scale consisted of 29 items, and the Shyness Scale consisted of 26 items, as shown in Appendix 2.

3.7 Statistical Methods The researchers used the following statistical operations:

- One-sample t-test
- Independent samples t-test
- Pearson correlation coefficient
- Hypothetical mean

4. Results and Interpretation

4.1 First Objective: The General Level of Body Image in the Sample: The sample's scores showed a mean of 63.567, a hypothetical mean of 87, and a standard deviation of 23.339. Using the one-sample t-test, the calculated t-value was 7.714, which is greater than the tabulated t-value of 1.671 at a significance level of 0.05 and 59 degrees of freedom. Comparing the calculated t-value (7.714) with the tabulated t-value (1.671), the researchers found that the calculated t-value was greater than the tabulated value, indicating statistically significant differences between the sample mean and the hypothetical mean, as shown in the table.

Table 2. One-Sample t-Test for Body Image in the Sample

Variable	Sample Size	Mean	Standard Deviation	Degree of Freedom	Hypothetical Mean	Calculated t-Value	Tabulated t-Value	Significance Level	Judgment
Body Image	60	63.567	23.339	59	87	7.714	1.671	0.05	Significant

This indicates that there are statistically significant differences between the sample mean and the hypothetical mean, suggesting the need for further investigation into the relationship between body image and shyness among the students.

This result can be interpreted in light of the fact that the study sample is in their youth, and hence the physical growth disturbances experienced in early adolescence are moving towards stability, leading to greater satisfaction with their body image. Additionally, the Islamic religious influence teaches girls from a young age that their bodies are created by God, and that God has shaped their bodies in the best form, which they should be content with regardless. This result contrasts with the findings of the studies by VALE (2001) and Khalil (2006), which showed a prevalence of body image disturbance among university students.

4.2 Objective Two: General Level of Shyness among the Study Sample: The sample scores showed a mean of 66.917, a hypothetical mean of 87, and a standard deviation of 66.917. Using the t-test for one sample, the calculated t-value was 6.970, which is greater than the table t-value of 1.671 at a significance level of 0.05 and a degree of freedom of 59. The researcher compared the calculated t-value (6.970) with the table t-value (1.671) and found that the calculated t-value was greater than the table value, indicating statistically significant differences between the sample mean and the hypothetical mean, as shown in the table below.

Table 3 One-Sample t-test for Shyness Variable among the Study Sample

Variable	Sample Size	Mean	Standard Deviation	Degree of Freedom	Hypothetical Mean	Calculated t-value	Table t-value	Significance Level	Decision
Shyness	60	66.917	66.917	59	87	6.970	1.671	0.05	Significant

The results indicate that the participants experience shyness, which the researchers attribute to the lack of guidance programs to overcome feelings of shyness. The students might learn various negative behaviors such as violence, reprimand, and ridicule from their upbringing. This indicates that the environment in which the students live is characterized by parental conflicts, causing this level of shyness, which in turn affects their academic achievement or their self-esteem. This finding is consistent with the studies by Fayad, Al-Shinawi, and Youssef & Khalifa.

4.3 Objective Three: Correlation between Body Image and Shyness Variables among the Study Sample: To determine if there is a statistically significant relationship between body image and shyness among the study sample, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used. The results showed no significant statistical relationship between these two variables, with a correlation coefficient of 0.040. To determine the statistical significance of the extracted correlation coefficient, the table below shows the results.

Table 4. *Correlation Coefficient between Body Image and Shyness*

Correlation Coefficient between Body Image and Shyness	Sample Size	Calculated Correlation Coefficient	Significance Level at 0.05
0.040	60	0.306	1.671

By comparing the theoretical table values of the correlation coefficients to determine the significance and validity of the correlation, the results showed that the calculated correlation coefficient of 0.306 is less than the theoretical table value of 1.671 at a significance level of 0.05, indicating no significant statistical differences. The researchers attribute this to the fact that students' attitudes affect their overall self-view and their specific view of their body. Additionally, body image contributes to shaping the concept of shyness towards oneself, as shyness is related to multiple determinants such as satisfaction, need fulfillment, self-acceptance, and self-efficacy. A person with a positive body image is more confident and assertive in general life.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions:

1. Body image is not fixed but changes according to life events, differing in sickness and health, various life stages, and depending on economic and social conditions.
2. There is a positive significant statistical relationship between body image scale and shyness, with a decrease in body mass leading to a decrease in shyness about body image.
3. There is a negative significant statistical relationship between body image scale and height among the study sample, with a decrease in height leading to an increase in shyness about body image.
4. There is a negative significant statistical relationship between the body image scale and shyness.

5.2 Recommendations:

1. Provide guidance to students who suffer from negative thoughts about their body image and help them overcome the psychological difficulties they face.
2. Promote awareness of proper nutrition methods not only to students but to all segments of society, starting with school students of all grades, through university students, and reaching older age groups.
3. Launch media campaigns to educate individuals about the harms of obesity and weight gain and to promote acceptance of body image

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