

Research Paper

Shame of Body Image as An Obstacle to Lifestyle Self-Efficacy Affecting Weight: Qualitative Identification of The Causes and Perpetuating the Shame of Body Image

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ABSTRACT

While some hypothesize that shame of body image can motivating lifestyle self-efficacy affecting weight, this article challenges this hypothesis. This study was conducted with two objectives: 1) to investigate the relationship between shame of body image and lifestyle self-efficacy affecting weight and 2) qualitative identification of the causes and perpetuating the shame of body image. To accomplish the first goal of the study, 55 overweight or obese volunteers answered the questionnaires lifestyle self-efficacy affecting weight of Clark et al (1991) and Shame of body image of Duarte et al (2014). Data were analyzed by Pearson correlation coefficient. In order to carry out the second purpose of the research, the interviews continued until the data were saturated (11 volunteers). Data were analyzed by content analysis method. The findings of the first objective showed that shame from body image has an inverse and significant relationship with lifestyle self-efficacy that affects weight ($p < 0.05$). This includes all its dimensions including Self-efficacy when negative emotions, Self-efficacy when food is available, Self-efficacy during social pressure, Self-efficacy in physical discomfort, and Self-efficacy during positive activities ($p < 0.05$), So that the more shame of body image, decreases the self-efficacy in these dimensions. The findings of the second objective of the study showed that childhood and adolescence experiences include criticism and blame by parents, ridicule by peers, blame by teachers, ridicule by others, and media propaganda for the ideal body, cause shame of body image. Current experiences also include ridicule and criticism by those around, motivate change through self-blame, media ads for the ideal body, social encounters, overeating as a stress reduction strategy, avoidance of community and Self-judgment about body stabilizes the shame of body image.

Keywords: *Shame of Body Image, Weight Loss, Lifestyle Self-efficacy Affecting Weight, Overeating, Overweight, Obesity*

Most people who are overweight or obese seem to have two major concerns, one related to their health and the other to their body image. However, the most of their efforts to lose weight and change their lifestyle fail (Dousti, 2021). In fact, eating behavior, in addition to being biologically necessary for humans, but also has deep

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personal and cultural meanings for individuals and is sometimes affected by cognitive, environmental, biological and emotional variables (Schlundt, 1995). One of these variables appears to be negative memories of body image that indirectly increase the severity of the symptoms of overeating (Duarte & Pinto-Gouveia, 2016) and shame in general is a risk factor for eating problems that is thought to be associated with eating disorders (Laura Mendes, Cristina Canavarro & Ferreira, 2021) and today, psychological interventions based on reducing fear of body image have attracted the attention of some researchers (Dousti, Hosseininia, Dousti & Dousti, 2021). Other research suggests that blame (either by others or in the form of self-blame) has a significant effect on the initial state of shame from body image and irregular eating behavior (Duarte, Pinto-Gouveia & Stubbs, 2017). Therefore, shame is considered as one of the main components of psychopathology of eating today, but the specific effect of body image shame on overeating and its mechanisms have not been properly elucidated (Duarte, Pinto-Gouveia & Ferreira, 2014). Other findings suggest that increased perception of bad body image is significantly associated with overeating, and body image, especially with feelings of shame and concern for general appearance, is strongly associated with overeating (Cargill, Clark, Pera, Niaura & Abrams, 1999). Another study found that embarrassing memories of childhood and adolescence, especially shame in body image, predict the symptomatology of overeating (Duarte & Pinto-Gouveia, 2017). Therefore, as mentioned, in a range of studies, shame had been introduced as a strong predictor of eating and overeating problems. All of previous studies are valuable. However, there is a need for newer studies on the relationship between shame of body image and lifestyle self-efficacy affecting weight, as well as identifying the qualitative factors that causes and perpetuate shame of body image. Accordingly, the first aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between shame of body image and weight self-efficacy affecting weight. Another aim of this study was to qualitatively identify the factors that cause and perpetuate the shame of body image.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The statistical population of the study was all the volunteers who referred to Avaye Dousti Psychology Clinic in the period of May to June 2021. By purposive sampling method, 55 overweight or obese people who were ashamed of their body image were included in this study. To accomplish the first goal of the study, 55 overweight or obese volunteers answered the questionnaires lifestyle self-efficacy affecting weight of Clark et al (1991) and Shame of body image of Duarte et al (2014). In order to carry out the second purpose of the research, the interviews continued until the data were saturated (11 volunteers).

Instruments

Two measures were used in this study,

- 1. Lifestyle self-efficacy affecting weight questionnaire:** The lifestyle self-efficacy affecting weight questionnaire was developed by Clark et al (1991) to measure self-control ability among obese individuals seeking treatment. This questionnaire is a 20-item self-report tool that measures a person's confidence in abstaining from eating in a variety of situations. This questionnaire has 5 dimensions: Self-efficacy when negative emotions, Self-efficacy when food is available, Self-efficacy during social pressure, Self-efficacy in physical discomfort, and Self-efficacy during positive activities. Factor loads for these 20 items ranged from 0.62 to 0.92. Internal consistency coefficients (alpha), respectively, 0.76 and 0.83 for the subscale of availability, 0.87 and 0.99 for the subscale of negative emotions, 0.82 and 0.84 for

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the subscale of physical discomfort, 0.70 and 0.79 were obtained for positive activities and 0.90 and 0.89 for social pressure subscale.

2. **Body Image Shame Scale:** The Body Image Shame Scale was developed by Duarte et al (2014) to measure the social shame of body image. This tool has 14 items on a five-point from 0 (never) to 4. Duarte et al used Cronbach's alpha coefficient to evaluate the internal consistency of this questionnaire, the value of which was 0.92 for the whole test. Also, the retest coefficient of this tool was 0.75 in one month interval.

Procedure

This research was conducted in two parts: quantitative and qualitative. The research method in the descriptive quantitative part was of the correlation type with the aim of investigating the relationship between shame from body image and lifestyle self-efficacy affecting weight. This research was conducted in the qualitative part by content analysis with the aim of qualitatively identifying the factors that cause and perpetuation of the shame of the body image. Inclusion criteria included conscious satisfaction, shame about body image, and being overweight or obese. In order to observe the ethical principles of the research, the candidates were given explanations about the research design. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to analyze the data of the quantitative part of the research. Qualitative data were analyzed by content analysis.

RESULTS

The Table No. 1 lists the demographic characteristics of the study.

Table No. 1 Demographic characteristics

Age	Sex	
Mean	M	F
27/5	5	50

The Table No. 2 describes the research variables.

Table No. 2 Descriptive characteristics of research variables

Variable	N	Mean	Std
Shame on the body image	55	29/81	14/81
Lifestyle self-efficacy affecting weight	55	3/80	1/37
Self-efficacy when negative emotions	55	4/27	0.18
Self-efficacy when food is available	55	4/30	1/69
Self-efficacy during social pressure	55	4/52	2/10
Self-efficacy in physical discomfort	55	5/04	1/72
Self-efficacy during positive activities	55	4/79	2/01

Before performing parametric analysis, the normality of the data was checked using Kolmogorov-Smirnov analysis and the results showed ($P > 0.05$), so the data are normal. Also, the equality of variances with Leven test was examined and the results showed ($P > 0.05$), so the variances are equal. Table No. 3 shows the Pearson correlation coefficient between the research variables.

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Table No. 3 Pearson correlation coefficient between research variables

	Shame on the body image	Lifestyle self-efficacy affecting weight	Self-efficacy when negative emotions	Self-efficacy when food is available	Self-efficacy during social pressure	Self-efficacy in physical discomfort	Self-efficacy during positive activities
Shame on the body image	1	-0/68 0/00	-0/72 0/00	-0/80 0/00	-0/79 0/00	-0/83 0/00	-0/84 0/00
Lifestyle self-efficacy affecting weight	-0/68 0/00	1	0/87 0/00	0/93 0/00	0/81 0/00	0/79 0/00	0/83 0/00
Self-efficacy when negative emotions	-0/72 0/00	0/87 0/00	1	0/86 0/00	0/76 0/00	0/88 0/00	0/71 0/00
Self-efficacy when food is available	-0/80 0/00	0/93 0/00	0/86 0/00	1	0/86 0/00	0/89 0/00	0/86 0/00
Self-efficacy during social pressure	-0/79 0/00	0/81 0/00	0/76 0/00	0/86 0/00	1	0/90 0/00	0/90 0/00
Self-efficacy in physical discomfort	-0/83 0/00	0/79 0/00	0/88 0/00	0/89 0/00	0/90 0/00	1	0/83 0/00
Self-efficacy during positive activities	-0/84 0/00	0/83 0/00	0/71 0/00	0/86 0/00	0/90 0/00	0/83 0/00	1

The findings of Table No. 3 show that shame from body image has an inverse and significant relationship with lifestyle self-efficacy that affects weight ($p < 0.05$). This includes all its dimensions including Self-efficacy when negative emotions, Self-efficacy when food is available, Self-efficacy during social pressure, Self-efficacy in physical discomfort, and Self-efficacy during positive activities ($p < 0.05$), So that the more shame of body image, decreases the self-efficacy in these dimensions.

Table No. 4 analyzes the content of the interviews conducted with 11 volunteers and shows the factors that cause and perpetuate the shame of the body image.

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Table No. 4 Content analysis of the factors that cause and perpetuate the shame of the body image

Code	The main category	Subcategory	Number of repetitions of answers in the interviews
Factors that cause shame of body image	Childhood and adolescence experiences	Criticism and blame by parents	10
		Mocked by peers	9
		Blame by teachers	7
		Ridiculed by those around	8
		Media ads for the ideal body	11
Factors that perpetuating shame of the body image	Current experiences	Ridicule and criticism by those around	11
		Motivate change through self-blame	11
		Media ads for the ideal body	11
		Social encounters	10
		Overeating as a stress reduction strategy	8
		Avoidance of community	10
		Self-judgment about body image	11

The findings of Table No. 4 show that childhood and adolescence experiences include criticism and blame by parents, ridicule by peers, blame by teachers, ridicule by others, and media propaganda for the ideal body, cause shame of body image. Current experiences also include ridicule and criticism by those around, motivate change through self-blame, media ads for the ideal body, social encounters, overeating as a stress reduction strategy, avoidance of community and Self-judgment about body stabilizes the shame of body image.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the first objective of this study showed that shame from body image is inversely related to all dimensions of lifestyle self-efficacy affecting weight (Table No. 3). These findings are consistent with the findings of Laura Mendes et al (2021), Duarte et al (2017) & Duarte et al (2014) in that body image shame is associated with eating problems. In explaining this finding, it can be said that the perception of shame causes a disturbing state for the person. The person evaluates herself negatively and as a result she experiences feelings of inferiority and weakness. Following this experience, when faced with situations that require an effective response, the combination of the experience of feeling inferior and constant weakness, leads the person to get rid of this painful feeling. His shaky self unconsciously offers a repetitive response to his inability to manage the situation. The experience of successive failures frustrates the person and acts as a barrier that, instead of giving a different answer based on self-control, gives an answer similar to the previous ones, but this time with the justification that I want not to change.

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The findings of the second objective of the study showed that childhood and adolescence experiences include criticism and blame by parents, ridicule by peers, blame by teachers, ridicule by others, and media propaganda for the ideal body, cause shame of body image. Current experiences also include ridicule and criticism by those around, motivate change through self-blame, media ads for the ideal body, social encounters, overeating as a stress reduction strategy, avoidance of community and Self-judgment about body stabilizes the shame of body image (Table No. 4). These findings are consistent with the findings of Duarte & Pinto-Gouveia (2016) & Duarte & Pinto-Gouveia (2017) in that childhood memories are associated with body image shame and eating problems. Explaining these findings, we can refer to the view of Gilbert & Allan (2002) who stated that shame can be considered as a defensive response to protect oneself from perceived lack of attractiveness or against the negative evaluation of others. This response may be accompanied by hiding the body or avoiding social situations. Therefore, it can be concluded that childhood and adolescence experiences of criticism, blame, ridicule and etc. by parents, peers, teachers and anyone around them as a negative assessment of the person, indicates that him not is it unattractive in the minds of others and may be rejected or set aside. This way of thinking, along with media advertisements for the ideal body, social interactions and etc. now causes more tension and negative self-judgment, which confronts the person with strategies such as overeating.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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