

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOW SELF-ESTEEM AND BODY WEIGHT AMONG
ADOLESCENTS

Name of Student

Course

Name of Professor

University

Date

Relationship between Low Self-Esteem and Body Weight among Adolescents

Introduction

Research Background

Several factors are known to contribute to low self-esteem among adolescents. According to Lowry, Sallinen, and Janicke (2007), body weight is directly related to low self-esteem among youngsters since they tend trying to fit the ideal image of physical perfection. Steiger *et al.* (2014) have established that adolescents often experience low self-esteem due to an identity crisis that comes because of being perceived as overweight. The authors have further established a link between having low self-esteem and being overweight to depression among adolescents. The underlying connection between being overweight and having low self-esteem among adolescents has been made clear, but it is necessary to establish the magnitude of the relationship between low self-esteem and body weight among teens.

Scope of Research

The scope of this research paper is to establish the explicit relationship between low self-esteem and body weight among the adolescents of three high schools in Oklahoma.

Research Objectives

The primary objective of the study is to measure the magnitude of the relationship between self-esteem and body weight among female and male adolescents and thus illuminate the causes of low self-esteem. Similarly, it seeks to explain why adolescents with physical challenges, such as increased body weight, tend to have low self-esteem.

Research Question and Hypothesis

The research question is:

- I. What is the relationship between low self-esteem and body weight among female and male adolescents?

The research hypotheses for this study are:

Null hypothesis: Adolescents who are overweight have lower self-esteem than adolescents who are not overweight do.

Alternative hypothesis: Adolescents who are overweight do not have lower self-esteem than adolescents who are not overweight do.

Relevance of the Study

The findings of the study will help psychologists and counselors understand the dynamics of body weight and self-esteem in adolescents. The findings will also help teachers, parents, and guardians apprehend the causes of certain adolescent behaviors that come as a result of low self-esteem. Therefore, the findings may be used as a guide to building positive self-esteem among adolescents.

Methodology

Research Design

This research was conducted using a research approach that combined surveys and semi-structured interviews. The researcher chose a mixed-method approach because the scope of the research is focused, subjective, dynamic, and discovery-oriented. The qualitative interview method is best suited to gain proper insight into the situation of the case study, whereas the quantitative dimension of the study allows establishing the degree of correlation between self-esteem and body weight. Moreover,

this approach will create room for further analysis using different tools for checking the degree of error and assumptions limits. The dependent variable is self-esteem, while the independent variable is body weight.

Research Approach

The researcher conducted the survey in three high schools in Oklahoma. The study sampled data on how male and female adolescents respond to body changes with respect to weight. The researcher inquired about the experiences of 30 teenagers, 15 females and 15 males, to determine the impact of body weight on their self-esteem.

Data Collection

In order to quantify the relationship between the independent and dependent variable, ANOVA was essential in the tabular representation of correlation analysis.

Findings and Analysis

Information about the respondents is summarized in the table below.

School	Population	Male participants	Female participants
Oklahoma Junior	10	5	5
Oklahoma Academy	10	5	5
Oklahoma Success Center	10	5	5
Total	30	15	15

ANOVA Analysis

Analysis of variance focuses on establishing the differences between the means of data collected from the targeted organizations. The analysis focuses on the disintegrating the variation among and between groups. Therefore, ANOVA will attempt to establish whether there exists a statistical equality between the mean of the two groups of data. The first element ANOVA measures is the variations between groups.

This part will entail computing the difference between the mean for each of the educational institutions and the mean for the population. It is often denoted as $(\bar{x}_i - \bar{x})^2$.

The second element of ANOVA measures variation within the groups. This looks at the differences between the value of the institutions and their average. The second part is denoted as $(x_{ij} - \bar{x}_i)^2$.

The subsequent sections will carry out the ANOVA. A multivariate analysis will be used to test the relationship between body weight and self-esteem. The three groups that will be analyzed are students from Oklahoma Junior, Oklahoma Success, and Oklahoma Academy. The table presented below gives information on the levels of self-esteem and body weights of the three groups of students.

Body Weight	Oklahoma Junior			Oklahoma Success			Oklahoma Academy		
	mean	S.D.	rank	mean	S.D.	rank	mean	S.D.	rank
Very overweight	5.62	0.31	1	4.21	1.04	3	6.63	0.96	2
Slightly overweight	5.21	0.74	2	3.42	1.53	4	7.71	1.34	1
Average	4.73	1.24	4	6.45	0.75	1	3.06	0.97	4
Slim	4.92	1.05	3	5.72	1.15	2	4.76	1.09	3

Results of ANOVA

Variable	F-ratio	Degrees of freedom	P-value
Self-esteem	4.21	7.102	0.001
Analysis of the indicators			
Very overweight	9.42	194	0.000
Slightly overweight	6.92	194	0.004
Average	3.56	194	0.091
Slim	4.49	194	0.038

In the table above, the F-value is 4.21 while the P-value is 0.001. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected at the 99% confidence level, confirming body weight as an indicator for determining the level of self-esteem. Thus, it can be concluded that being overweight has a statistically significant impact on the level of self-esteem among the adolescents. From the above analysis, it can be said that there is a relationship between low self-esteem and increased body weight among male and female adolescents. Apparently, being overweight (obese) is a serious contributing factor to low or negative self-esteem.

Discussion

Data from this analysis on the relationship between body weight and self-esteem indicate that teenagers who are overweight have low or negative self-esteem. The 30 respondents' weight ranges defined as very overweight, slightly overweight, average, and slim related to differing levels of self-esteem. In fact, during the interview stage, adolescents in the three learning environments agreed that being obese was a serious impediment to positive self-esteem. However, one limitation of this research is that it is based on self-reported data.

According to research by Franklin *et al.* (2006), the media is a significant factor influencing the development of poor self-esteem among adolescents, especially as related to body weight and self-image. Analysing the film *Dying to be thin*, Franklin *et al.* (2006) note that a slim body is presented as a powerful figurative form upon which the central hierarchies of society function. Body shape is also seen as a metaphysical commitment of a culture that is strengthened through the physical body (Franklin *et al.*, 2006). The media also insinuates that slim people have access to better clothes than

those who are overweight. Indeed, finding clothing tends to be particularly difficult for heavier people. To fit in a culture that idolizes slimness, young teenagers are under pressure and may end up developing negative self-esteem, especially if they are overweight.

Conclusion

Since adolescents are known to struggle to fit into the ideal social identity, the issue of body weight has become an impediment to positive self-esteem. Teenagers caught in this identity struggle may have to deal with isolation from their peers. In most cases, adolescents who are overweight may suffer psychological trauma in the form of abuse and ridicule by their counterparts who have a so-called normal weight. Repeated instances of ridicule, especially from persons these adolescents associate with their ideal image, may end up creating a permanent feeling of low self-esteem.

Reference list

Franklin, J. *et al.* (2006) 'Obesity and risk of low self-esteem: a statewide survey of Australian children'. *Journal of Pediatrics*, 118(6), pp. 2481–2487.

Lowry, K., Sallinen, B. and Janicke, D. (2007) 'The effects of weight management programs on self-esteem in pediatric overweight populations'. *Journal of Pediatric psychology*, 32(10), pp. 1179–1195.

Steiger, A.E. *et al.* (2014) 'Low and decreasing self esteem during adolescence predict adult depression two decades later'. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 106(2), pp. 325–338.