

Original article

Psychological functioning, media pressure and body dissatisfaction among college women

Variables psychologiques, pression médiatique et insatisfaction corporelle en population étudiante

R.F. Rodgers*, P. Salès, H. Chabrol

*Centre d'études et de recherche en psychopathologie, pavillon de la recherche,
université Toulouse-II-Le-Mirail, 31058 Toulouse, France*

Received 1st April 2009; received in revised form 1st October 2009; accepted 1st October 2009

Abstract

The aim of this study was to explore the moderating effect of a number of psychological variables on the relationship between media pressure and body dissatisfaction. A total of 200 young women completed questionnaires assessing body dissatisfaction, perceived media pressure, self-esteem, depression, anxiety, and social phobia. Media pressure, anxiety and self-esteem revealed direct effects in the prediction of body dissatisfaction. However, when the interaction terms were examined, only the interaction between social phobia and media pressure was a significant predictor of body dissatisfaction. The findings of the study reveal the importance of psychological functioning regarding vulnerability to the effects of media pressure.

© 2009 Elsevier Masson SAS. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Body dissatisfaction; Mass media; Social phobia; Moderator

Résumé

L'objectif de cette étude était d'explorer l'effet modérateur de variables psychopathologiques sur l'association entre la pression médiatique envers la minceur et l'insatisfaction corporelle. Un échantillon de 200 jeunes femmes a complété un questionnaire évaluant l'insatisfaction corporelle, la perception de la pression médiatique envers la minceur, l'anxiété, la dépression, l'estime de soi et la phobie sociale. La pression médiatique envers la minceur, l'anxiété et l'estime de soi avaient un effet direct sur l'insatisfaction corporelle. Ces prédicteurs expliquaient 31 % de la variance de la variable dépendante. Le modèle utilisé pour prédire l'insatisfaction corporelle semble donc pertinent. Cependant, parmi les interactions, seule celle entre les pressions médiatiques et la phobie sociale était un prédicteur significatif de l'insatisfaction corporelle. Les résultats de cette étude mettent en avant l'importance des variables psychopathologiques dans la vulnérabilité aux pressions médiatiques envers la minceur.

© 2009 Elsevier Masson SAS. Tous droits réservés.

Mots clés : Insatisfaction corporelle, Médias, Phobie sociale

1. Introduction

In Western society, body image concerns are so prevalent among young women they have been called normative, with body dissatisfaction appearing in girls as young as 5 years old (Davison et al., 2003; Rodin et al., 1985; Schur et al., 2000).

The proportion of adolescent girls dissatisfied with their body shape has been reported to range between 37 and 54% (Børresen and Rosenvinge, 2003; Moore, 1988). This phenomenon has been largely attributed to the role of the mass media, which promotes an unrealistically slender body shape, which many young women strive to reach (Thompson et al., 2004). Peer and family influences have also been posited to play an important role with sociocultural frameworks (Byely et al., 2000), and media influences have been explored alongside peer and family influences in integrative models (Keery et al., 2004; Shroff and

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: roddgers.rachel@gmail.com (R.F. Rodgers).

Thompson, 2006). However, culture alone cannot be responsible for the appearance of body image concerns as all young women do not strive for this thin-ideal, revealing the importance of individual psychology (Brumberg, 1988). Despite the increasing amount of research devoted to the study of sociocultural pressure upon body shape, relatively little is known concerning the factors that moderate the relationship between the internalisation of the media-ideal and body dissatisfaction. The aim of this study was therefore to explore the effect of psychological functioning on the relationship between media pressure and body dissatisfaction.

The mass media constitutes one of the most powerful sources of pressure upon body image, and provides a context that is favourable to the development of body shape and weight concerns (Spettigue and Henderson, 2004). The body shapes portrayed in the media are rendered desirable by implicitly equating them with happiness, social success and professional achievement (Thompson et al., 1999b), yet the real-ideal body size gap is larger than ever (Spitzer et al., 1999). In some cases, such as with pro-eating disorder internet communities, images of extremely emaciated young women are set up as the goal to aspire to or “thinspiration” (Wilson et al., 2006). Media influence has been described as comprised as containing several dimensions, including the perception of media pressure, the internalisation of media portrayed ideal figures, and the information conveyed by the media (Thompson et al., 2004). The present study will focus on only one of these dimensions: perceived media pressure.

Perceived pressure from the media, to conform to the idealized images portrayed, has been shown to be consistently associated with body dissatisfaction though a variety of research designs including: qualitative studies (Paxton et al., 1999), cross-sectional studies (Ricciardelli and McCabe, 2001), experimental exposure (Rodgers and Chabrol, 2009; Groesz et al., 2002; Joshi et al., 2004), and longitudinal studies (McCabe and Ricciardelli, 2005).

Although the relationship between media pressure and body dissatisfaction has been well established, little is known regarding the individual differences that may affect this relationship. Psychological functioning, in particular, has been suggested to play an important role. A number of studies have examined the relationship between self-esteem and body dissatisfaction. Among young women, it has been suggested that low levels of self-esteem are associated with high levels of body dissatisfaction (McCauley et al., 1988; Posavac and Posavac, 2002), and that low levels of self-esteem prospectively predict an increase in body dissatisfaction (Gilbert and Meyer, 2005). Furthermore, self-esteem has been put forward as one of the variables likely to be involved in the moderation of media pressure (Thompson et al., 1999a, 1999b). Research using experimental exposure to ideal media images has identified women with low self-esteem as being more vulnerable to their effects on body image (Furnham and Greaves, 1994; Tiggemann and McGill, 2004).

Other mood dimensions have also been shown to be associated with body dissatisfaction. Depression has been associated with body image dissatisfaction among female adolescents (Kostanski and Gullone, 1998; Paxton et al., 1999), and college

students (Koenig and Wasserman, 1995). Similarly, anxiety has been shown to be associated with body dissatisfaction among adolescent girls (Kostanski and Gullone, 1998; Paxton et al., 1999) and young adults (Reed et al., 1991). One of the explanations put forward regarding these relationships is that body dissatisfaction engenders negative affects such as depression and anxiety because of the central role appearance plays in feminine identity in Western society (Stice and Shaw, 2001). Finally, the relationship between body image and social phobia has also received some attention (Grabhorn et al., 2006). It has been suggested that excessive preoccupation with body image might be understood as a means of managing interpersonal fears (Rodin et al., 1985). In line with this theory, it has been reported that social phobia is associated with body dissatisfaction (Izgcic et al., 2004).

In view of these relationships, the aim of the present study was to explore the role of self-esteem, depression, anxiety and social phobia as moderators of the effect of media pressure on body dissatisfaction.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The study sample included 200 female students from the Toulouse (France) area. Age ranged from 18 to 25 years, with mean age = 21.7 (SD = 2.0). Participants were primarily Caucasian and French was their first language. Neither ethnic origin nor socio-economic status were assessed. All of the participants were undergraduates, so although almost half of them (47%) were psychology students, their knowledge of these types of questionnaires and their aims would have been very limited. It is important to note that this sample offers no guarantees of being representative of the general French female population.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Body dissatisfaction

Body dissatisfaction was assessed using a brief version of the Body Shape Questionnaire (BSQ) (Evans and Dolan, 1993) in its French translation (Rousseau et al., 2005). This 8-item scale focuses on feelings of body dissatisfaction and concern with weight and shape. It is rated on a 6-point scale ranging from “1 = never” to “6 = always”, with higher scores indicating higher levels of concern, for example: “Have you felt excessively large and rounded?”. The brief form of the BSQ has been reported to have good internal validity with $\alpha = 0.84$ (Evans and Dolan, 1993) and good fit indices among nonclinical populations (Pook et al., 2008). The internal validity in our sample was $\alpha = 0.84$.

2.2.2. Media Pressure

The Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire (SATAQ-3) (Thompson et al., 2004), in its French translation (Rousseau et al., in press) is a multidimensional questionnaire designed to assess media influences on appearance. The present study used only one of the four subscales: perceived pressure. This subscale is scored on a 5-point scale

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات