

BODY IMAGE AND SELF-ESTEEM AMONG TEENAGERS

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Abstract:

This article examines the relationship between adolescents' subjective perception of their bodies (body image) and their level of self-esteem. It analyzes the influence of social media, mass media, and peer pressure on attitudes toward appearance. Recommendations are provided for families and educational institutions to support adolescents' psychological well-being.

Keywords: body image, self-esteem, adolescent psychology, social media, appearance, self-perception.

ТАНАНИНГ ИДРОК ЭТИЛИШИ ВА ЎСМИРЛАРДА ЎЗ-ЎЗИНИ БАҲОЛАШ ДАРАЖАСИ

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Аннотация:

Ушбу мақолада ўсмир ёшдаги болаларнинг танаси ҳақидаги субъектив тасаввури (body image) ва ўз-ўзини баҳолаш (self-esteem) даражаси ўртасидаги боғлиқлик ўрганилади. Ижтимоий тармоқлар, оммавий ахборот воситалари ва тенгдошлар босимининг ташқи кўринишга муносабатга таъсири таҳлил қилинади. Психологик саломатликни қўллаб-қувватлаш бўйича оила ва таълим муассасалари учун таклифлар берилади.

Калит сўзлар: body image, self-esteem, ўсмирлар психологияси, ижтимоий тармоқлар, ташқи кўриниш, ўз-ўзини баҳолаш.

ВОСПРИЯТИЕ ТЕЛА И УРОВЕНЬ САМООЦЕНКИ У ПОДРОСТКОВ

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Аннотация:

В данной статье рассматривается взаимосвязь между субъективным восприятием собственного тела (body image) и уровнем самооценки (self-esteem) у подростков. Анализируется влияние социальных сетей, средств массовой информации и давления со стороны сверстников на отношение к внешности. Приводятся рекомендации для семьи и образовательных учреждений по поддержанию психологического здоровья подростков.

Ключевые слова: body image, self-esteem, психология подростков, социальные сети, внешность, самооценка.

Introduction

Adolescence is one of the most sensitive and impressionable stages in human physical and mental development. During this period, young people not only form their self-awareness, personal values, and social identity but also develop attitudes toward their physical appearance. Body image refers to the subjective perception and emotional evaluation of one's body, shaped by social environment, mass media, family upbringing, and peer feedback.

In today's globalized society, especially with the widespread use of the internet and social media, appearance-related ideals have become highly standardized and often unrealistic. Platforms such as Instagram and TikTok present filtered, curated images that create a gap between real life and online portrayals. This discrepancy can significantly impact self-esteem—the degree to which individuals value themselves.

Research shows that negative body image among adolescents is strongly associated with low self-esteem, which in turn can lead to depression, anxiety, social withdrawal, and even eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia. Therefore, addressing this issue is important not only for psychologists but also for educators, parents, and society as a whole.

Theoretical framework

The concept of body image

Body image refers to an individual's subjective thoughts, perceptions, and feelings about their body. This concept includes not only appearance but also emotional satisfaction, acceptance, and awareness of bodily features. Psychological research identifies two key components:

1. Perceptual component – how a person sees and perceives their body.
2. Affective component – emotional attitudes toward appearance, including satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Adolescence is a critical period when hormonal changes, physical development, and social comparison processes significantly influence body image.

The concept of self-esteem

Self-esteem is an individual's overall evaluation of their worth and capabilities. According to Maslow's and Rosenberg's theories, self-esteem is a decisive factor in psychological well-being and social adaptation. High self-esteem

helps individuals cope effectively with challenges, while low self-esteem may lead to anxiety, withdrawal, and depression.

The relationship between body image and self-esteem

Research indicates that adolescents dissatisfied with their appearance tend to have significantly lower self-esteem. This connection can be explained through:

- Social Comparison Theory – individuals evaluate themselves in relation to others.
- Influence of Idealized Images – media promotes unrealistic beauty standards.
- Peer Pressure – critical remarks from friends can negatively affect self-esteem.

Among girls, the ideal is often a slim figure, fair skin, and “model” body proportions. Among boys, muscular physiques and sports-related ideals are common.

The modern information environment and cultural influences

Social media has become one of the strongest influences on body image and self-esteem. While positive content exists, much of it is altered by filters, photo-editing, and aesthetic ideals, distorting reality. This often creates “self-discrepancy” — a gap between real and ideal self-images, leading to psychological dissatisfaction.

Cultural environments also play a role:

- Western culture often promotes fitness and slimness as ideals.
- Many Asian cultures value fair skin, thin faces, and slender bodies.
- In some traditional communities, higher body weight is associated with health and prosperity.

Prevention and support strategies

To reduce body image and self-esteem issues among adolescents, the following approaches are recommended:

1. Psychological Education – implement media literacy and self-esteem workshops in schools.
2. Parental Support – praise achievements and abilities rather than appearance.
3. Mindful Social Media Use – educate adolescents about unrealistic portrayals online.
4. Promoting Healthy Lifestyles – encourage physical activity for health, not solely aesthetics.
5. Psychological Support Services – strengthen the role of school psychologists and counseling centers.

Conclusion

In adolescents’ lives, body image and self-esteem are closely interlinked, playing a crucial role in personal development, psychological health, and social

adaptation. Modern information environments, especially social media, shape global appearance standards and strongly influence how young people perceive their bodies.

Key findings indicate:

- Dissatisfaction with appearance is associated with lower self-esteem, which can lead to depression, anxiety, and social withdrawal.
- Idealized media portrayals often create a “self-discrepancy” that fosters psychological discomfort.
- Family and school support systems are essential for mitigating these negative effects.

Addressing these challenges requires:

Increasing media literacy to help adolescents critically evaluate online content.

Implementing psychological prevention programs in schools.

Fostering positive family environments that value personal qualities over physical traits.

Promoting healthy lifestyles for well-being rather than purely for aesthetic purposes.

In conclusion, fostering a healthy body image and stable self-esteem among adolescents is essential for their psychological well-being and for the stable development of society. Collaboration between families, educational institutions, and media outlets is necessary to achieve this goal.

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