

IMPACT OF BEAUTY STANDARDS ON THE CHOICE OF COSMETIC PROCEDURES AND THE INCIDENCE OF BODY IMAGE DISORDERS AMONG STUDENTS AT UNIEVANGÉLICA

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To investigate how the pursuit of ideal aesthetics affects individuals of different ages, genders, and ethnicities, analyzing the incidence of surgical procedures and other aesthetic behaviors, such as tattoos, and the influence of these factors on self-image perception and the importance of appearance in different relationship contexts. **Methodology:** The descriptive and cross-sectional study involved 60 students from the Evangelical University of Goiás, from the Architecture and Urbanism, Engineering, and Law programs, using questionnaires on self-image and self-esteem, in addition to anthropometric measurements to assess body satisfaction. **Results:** The results revealed that 62.8% of participants are between 19 and 20 years old, a critical age group for aesthetic concerns. It was observed that 42.4% considered fat removal, while 74.08% reported the habit of pinching areas with fat accumulation, especially in the abdominal region. The analysis also showed that 70.03% of participants believe that aesthetic pressure persists even in romantic relationships. **Conclusion:** These data highlight the continuing influence of aesthetic norms on the self-image and behaviors of the individuals studied.

Keywords: Beauty standards; aesthetics; dysmorphic disorder; self-perception; body

INTRODUCTION

Body image refers to the way a person perceives and feels about their own body, including its shape, form, and individual characteristics. This perception is shaped by a combination of cognitive, emotional, physiological, cultural, and behavioral factors (Jiotsa et al., 2021; Lacerda et al., 2018; Miranda et al., 2018). The way we see ourselves is often based on comparisons with other people and socially idealized aesthetic standards (Sousa et al., 2019).

This multifactorial process results in the construction of a uniform standard of beauty for everyone within a society, widely disseminated by the media in both direct and indirect ways (Machado et al., 2021). As a consequence, social pressure to these

aesthetic standards and stereotypes associated with the perfect body affects how individuals perceive themselves, often leading to personal dissatisfaction (Sousa et al., 2019).

The relentless pursuit of the ideal body can lead to restrictive diets, excessive physical activity, cosmetic procedures, and plastic surgery (Machado et al., 2021). Such practices can cause a distortion of body image, resulting in a conflict between the real body and the idealized body, which can lead to behaviors that are harmful to health, such as the indiscriminate use of medications, inadequate diets, and invasive procedures, in addition to contributing to the development of psychopathologies such as anorexia, bulimia, and body dysmorphia (Lacerda et al., 2018; Jiotsa et al., 2021). The objectives of this study were to investigate how the pursuit of ideal aesthetics affects individuals of different ages, genders, and ethnicities, analyzing the incidence of surgical procedures and other aesthetic behaviors, such as tattoos, and the influence of these factors on self-image perception and the importance of appearance in different relationship contexts.

METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive and cross-sectional study with a quantitative and qualitative approach. The study population consisted of students of Architecture and Urbanism, Engineering, and Law. The final sample included a total of 60 participants. The guests received explanations about the motivation for the study and the importance of their participation, and questions about the FICF (Free and Informed Consent Form) and the risks, benefits, and harms were clarified.

The research project began in April 2023 and was completed in September 2024. The inclusion criteria for the study were academics over 18 years of age, enrolled at UniEvangélica, who agreed to participate in the study after receiving explanations about the FICF. The exclusion criteria were candidates who filled out the questionnaires incorrectly or did not participate in the anthropometric data collection stage.

To analyze the degree of body satisfaction or dissatisfaction, the modified Body Shape Questionnaire and the Beyond the Mirror questionnaire were used. After completing the questionnaires, participants were weighed and measured to interpret their BMI. The final data were analyzed using percentages, sums, and response frequencies. This study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee (CAAE 78229224.6.0000.5076).

RESULTS

First, based on the analysis of the participants' epidemiological profile, it was possible to observe that 62.8% of the participants were between 19 and 20 years old, an age that also corresponds to the first cosmetic procedures. This data suggests that youth is a critical period for concern with body appearance, possibly reflecting the influence of aesthetic norms prevalent in this age group. Regarding the students' skin color, 61.8% identified themselves as white, 32.1% as "pardo", and 6.1% as black. In this sense, skin color did not show statistical relevance in body dissatisfaction, since the levels of dissatisfaction were similar among participants who identified themselves as black, pardo, or white. This finding indicates that skin color is not a determining factor in the perception of body dissatisfaction within the sample studied, suggesting that other factors may be more strongly associated with this perception. It was possible to observe that beauty standards exert a significant influence on both men and women.

Additionally, regarding dissatisfaction with increased body fat, 42.4% of respondents said they had considered removing excess fat. This data is corroborated by the fact that 74.08% of participants reported the habit of pinching areas with greater fat accumulation, especially in the abdominal region. The prevalence of this behavior suggests a concern focused on visibly more adipose areas, which is strongly correlated with the response of 70.06% of participants who reported feeling better on an empty stomach. These data indicate that the perception of adiposity and the desire for control over body appearance strongly influence behaviors related to aesthetics.

Finally, the analysis of the impact of aesthetics in the context of relationships showed that 70.03% of participants believe that aesthetic pressure has not decreased

due to involvement in a romantic relationship. This result points to the persistence of aesthetic pressure even in intimate contexts, suggesting that aesthetic norms continue to exert a significant influence on individuals' self-image, regardless of their relationship status.

These analyses highlight the persistent concern with aesthetics and associated behaviors, reflecting the continuing importance of body appearance in the lives of the individuals studied.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the epidemiological profile reveals that concern with body appearance is predominant among young people aged 19 to 20, highlighting the influence of aesthetic norms in this age group. Although skin color did not show relevance in body dissatisfaction, the desire for control over adiposity is significant, with many participants considering fat removal and reporting behaviors associated with this concern. In addition, aesthetic pressure persists even in romantic relationships, highlighting the continuing importance of appearance in individuals' self-image.

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