A study on the influence of Television shows (Reality shows, Science Fiction shows and Sports television shows) on Self-Surveillance

Biaknungi[1] , Ringngheti Khenglawt[2] and Prof Lallianzuali Fanai[3]

[1]Sampurna Montfort College, Bangalore, Karnataka, India

[2]CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bangalore, Karnatak, India

[3]Institute of Advanced Studies in Education, Aizawl, Mizoram, India.

Abstract

Body image may be described to be the perceptions, attitudes, emotions and personality reactions of the individual in relation to his or her own body (McCabe et al., 2007). The aim of this research is to explore the influence of watching television series like reality television shows, science fiction and sports television shows on body surveillance. The study, conducted in Mizoram, consists of 30 samples between the age group of 16 to 20. After filling out the demographic sheet and the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS), the results of the study revealed that gender differences exists among viewers of reality, science-fiction and sports television series in their body surveillance. The results also reveal that there is no significant relationship between viewers of reality, science fiction and sports television series with regard to their self surveillance.

Key words: *reality television shows, science-fiction television shows, sports television shows, self-surveillance.*

Introduction

There is no denying that the media plays an important role in our body image. The media has become so important in our lives that it has seeped into our conscious and subconscious without us being able to control it. Two recent meta-analyses have reported that television and magazine exposure is positively associated with body dissatisfaction, with small to moderate effect sizes (Grabe et al., 2008; Murnen et al., 2007). While research has mainly focused on scripted television, magazines and television ads (Bergstrom et al., 2009; Dohnt&Tiggemann 2006; Tiggemann., M &Barrett.,W 1998), not many research focuses on reality

television shows. The media, particularly television shows and movies show us the ideal body for men and women and how if one have this body, he or she will get all the attention he wants. This "ideal body" can affect a person in so many ways and lead to depression, eating disorders, body dissatisfaction, body shame, body surveillance, extensive cosmetic surgeries and also influence our control beliefs. Millions of men and women all around the world are worried about how they look and with the media portraying "ideal body image" will inevitably lead to having low self esteem. Tiggemann (2008) reported that the internalization of thin ideal mediated on the type of media.

Television and Body image

 Many people in the world are not satisfied with the way they look. They want to look better as they feel that they are not 'good enough'. Being satisfied with what you have or who you are is quite not possible. Millions of people get influenced by what they see or what they read on the media. Television plays an important role in shaping our body image. They portray 'ideal' body images for men and women. For women, being thin and slender has always been the ideal body image and for men, having a toned muscular body is usually the ideal body image. Although the ideal body image has changed for women overtime, the concept that being thin is beautiful is still followed by many women. Television provides us with such kind of messages whether it may be directly or indirectly. This will inevitably lead to eating disorders, low self-esteem, depression and many other negative impact. Body dissatisfaction is common among many adolescents. According to Erikson's theory of psychological development, adolescents is the period when people form their identity. They may get influenced by their environment like their peers, family, media be it social or mass media. As mentioned, television provides images that are not realistic and show them as the ideal body image, which will influence teenagers in the process of forming their identity. Individuals who cannot meet up to the expectation of what see will eventually engage in unhealthy habits and this will have a negative impact in the physical and mental wellbeing of the person.

Significance and Rationale of the study

Television shows play an important role in forming our body image hence leads to formation of our identity. According to Erikson's theory of psychological development, it is during the age of 12 to 18 that people form their identity. Adolescents may get influenced by their environment like their peers, family, media and many other variables when forming their identity. The content of television shows also play a vital role on how it influences the individual, whether it has a positive or negative impact.   The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between viewing of reality television shows, science fiction shows and sports television shows and self surveillance. The study is the first of its kind to be conducted in the state of Mizoram, north eastern part of India.

Objectives of the study

1) To explore the relationship between viewing of reality television shows, science fiction shows and sports television shows and self surveillance.

2) To study if gender differences exist between viewers of reality television shows, science fiction shows and sports television shows and self surveillance.

3) To study if differences exists between viewers of different genres i.e. sports, science fiction and reality on self surveillance.

Hypotheses

H1: Gender differences exists between viewers of reality television series, sports series and science fiction television series on self-surveillance

H2: There is no significant difference between viewers of reality television series, science fiction series and sports television series with regard to self-surveillance.

Sample

A sample of 30 students between the age group of 16 to 20 years was selected as part of the study. The sample consists of both females and males. The primary sampling technique used is convenient sampling technique and quota sampling technique. The sample consists of the population of Mizoram.

Inclusion criteria.

☐ Students between the age group of 16 to 20

☐ Students who watch either reality or science fiction or sports television series

Exclusion criteria.

☐ Non-Mizo students

☐ Students who watch the three genres i.e. reality or science-fiction or sports television series for the same amount of time.

Research Design

The research followed a quantitative research design, to explore the relationship between viewing of television shows and self surveillance. After inclusion criteria were met tools were administered to the samples to test the various hypotheses.

Tools

Informed consent form. The informed consent form was used to obtain permission from the students for data collection. The form included the purpose of the study, phases of data collection, and a guarantee of anonymity and confidentiality of all information given. Since the sample included minors, parental consent was also offered.

Demographic data sheet. This contains information about the kind of television series watched, the frequency of viewing and the numbers of hours spend on it will be taken. Only those who watch either reality or science fiction or sports television series will be included in the study.

Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (revised). The study uses the revised Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS) developed by Lindberg, S.M., Hyde, J.S., & McKinley, N.M. (2006). The scale consisted of 14 questions which measures selfsurveillance, body shame and control-beliefs.

Procedure

Preliminary phase. Data was collected from St.Paul's higher secondary school and Pachhunga University, Aizawl, Mizoram. Permission was obtained from the Principal and Department of Counsellors prior to data collection. The OBCS, the informed consent and the demographic sheet form were also approved by the institution. The participants of the study were selected and appointments were arranged with the students.

Secondary phase. Rapport was established with the students and the purpose of the study was explained. After the students signed the Informed Consent Form volunteering to participate in the study committedly and without compensation, the study was conducted. To collect the required data, the demographic sheet and the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale was administered to them. The scale was administered to them as per the manual of the test. General instructions included that all information would be kept confidential; all items of the scale must be answered as honestly and as carefully as possible.

Final phase. The obtained data was scored according to the OBCS-manual. All data was sorted according to the sample criteria-30 who watch reality television series, 30 who watch science fiction television series and 30m who watch sports television series.

Data was analyzed using the two way analysis of variance. (Two way ANOVA).

Data Analysis

After data collection and scoring, results were tabulated and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 20 software. After the scores are noted, a two way analysis of variance (two way ANOVA) was used to analyze the data collected.

Results

This chapter contains the results of the data collected. Data of 30 students between the age group of 16 to 20 were collected which comprises of students who watch reality, science fiction and sports television shows. As mentioned under methodology, there are two hypotheses and two way ANOVA was used to analyze the hypotheses.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics of students in the area of self surveillance

Gender	Genre	Mean	Std.Deviation	N
Male	sports	4.17	1.08	22
	Science fiction	4.85	1.37	8
	Reality	3.92	1.47	10
	Total	4.24	1.25	40
Female	sports	4.33	0.89	8
	Science fiction	4.53	1.11	22
	Reality	4.52	1.55	20
	Total	4.59	1.25	50
Total	Sports	4.21	1.02	30
	Science fiction	4.62	1.17	30
	Reality	4.32	1.52	30
	Total	4.38	1.25	90

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of students who watch sports, reality or science fiction television series in the area of self-surveillance. The mean score of males who watch sports in area of self-surveillance is 4.17 which is lesser than the mean score of females who watch sports in the area of self-surveillance with the score of 4.33. The standard deviation score of males who watch sports is 1.08 which is higher than females who watch sports with the score of 0.89. The mean score of males who watch science fiction in area of self-surveillance is 4.85 which is more than the mean score of females who watch science fiction in the area of self-surveillance with the score of 4.53. The standard deviation score of males who watch science fiction is 1.37 which is higher than females who watch science fiction with the score of 1.11. The mean score of males who watch reality in area of self-surveillance is 3.92 which is lesser than the mean score of females who watch reality in the area of self-surveillance with the score of 4.52. The standard deviation score of males who watch reality is 1.47 which is lesser than females who watch reality with the score of 1.55. The total mean score of males for all the genres combined is 4.24 which is lesser than females who received a score of 4.49. Hence this proves the hypothesis which states that gender differences exists between viewers of reality television series, sports series and science fiction television series on self surveillance.

Table 2

Table showing tests of between-subjects effects for self surveillance

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	d.f	F	Sig.
Gender	1	0.25	0.62
Genre	2	1.05	0.32
Gender * genre	2	0.808	0.45
Corrected total	139.620	89	

Table 2 shows that for genre i.e. reality, science fiction and sports television series the f ratio (1.05) to be not significant as the significance level is p <0.34>.Thus this proves the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between viewers of reality television series, science fiction series and sports television series with regard to self-surveillance.

Discussion

The results obtained suggested interesting findings with regards to checking the hypotheses of the study. This chapter would discuss the results obtained in detail with reference to previous findings by various researches. All the hypotheses of the research are accepted as mentioned above. The aim of the research is to explore the relationship between watching television serials and body image. For the purpose of this research two way ANOVA was used to test the hypotheses.

The first hypothesis states that gender differences exists between viewers of reality television series, science-fiction television series and sports television series on self-surveillance. In support of the first hypothesis, females show higher level of self surveillance as compared to males. The mean score were higher for females than for males. This shows that on average, females have higher levels of concern in relation to body surveillance, while males have low levels of concern in relation to body surveillance when compared to females. A research on objectification theory by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) found that women learn to internalize an objectifying observer's perspective of their bodies more than men, which then leads to body shame and body dissatisfaction among women and this study reported that women have higher objectified body consciousness than males in western culture. A study done by Tiggemann and Pickering (n.d.) reported there was a positive correlation between watching soap operas and reality serials among adolescent women. Body consciousness has always been linked with women. But men also get affected by what they see on television. Another study done by Tiggemann (2005) also stated that body dissatisfaction has also become increasingly common among men. After viewing well-toned body on television or media, they become more conscious about their looks and hence leads to body dissatisfaction and a drive to look more toned and muscular.

The second hypothesis states that there is no significant difference between viewers of reality television series, science fiction series and sports television series with regard to self-surveillance. This hypothesis is supported by the research as the results showed that with regard to self-surveillance, there is no significant difference between viewers of reality television series, science fiction series and sports fiction series. A study done by Tiggermann (2005) stated that the types of television shows watch has an effect on body image and not based on the amount spent watching the show. There is a positive relationship between watching reality television series and sports television series and body dissatisfaction among boys and girls and there is not much significance between them except that drive for muscularity exists only among boys. (Tiggermann, M.2005)

Limitations of the Study

There were a number of limitations that may have affected this study. Firstly, the size of the participating population was less due to time constraint. This may have been too small, which may have had an effect in carrying out this research. As the study aims at the population of Mizoram and the sample size was only 30, therefore it is not representational. If the sample size was increased, results may have been different and more representative.

Secondly, the research was primarily dependent on the honesty of the participants. The results were analysed based on the assumption that the participant responded honestly. It is possible that participants responded to these questions based on how they believe it is more acceptable, therefore leading to a bias in their answers, resulting in a bias in the research.

Another limitation of the study was that since English is not the mother tongue of the people of Mizoram, some of the participants had difficulty in understanding the questions and their meanings. This may result to bias in the result as the participant could've answered without understanding what the question means.

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