

EFFECT OF SELF CONCEPT AND BODY DISSATISFACTION ON THE FEAR OF NEGATIVE EVALUATION AMONG TERTIARY STUDENTS IN KOGI STATE

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of self-concept and body dissatisfaction on the fear of negative evaluation (FNE) among tertiary students in Kogi State. Descriptive survey design was employed, while data were collected from 200 students through a self-developed 12-item questionnaire and the Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale. Results indicate that a significant proportion of students experience high levels of FNE, with 61% expressing fear of being found at fault and 55.5% fearing disapproval from others. The mean scores for self-concept and body dissatisfaction were 3.1 and 3.6, respectively, suggesting a strong correlation between these factors and FNE. The findings reveal that students with poor self-concept and body dissatisfaction are more likely to exhibit anxiousness, submissiveness, and social avoidance, which hinder their academic participation and overall productivity. This study highlights the urgent need for interventions to improve self-esteem and body image among students to mitigate the adverse effects of FNE on their educational experiences.

Keywords: Body dissatisfaction, fear of negative evaluation, self-concept, tertiary students

INTRODUCTION

Fear of negative evaluation (Atychiphobia) is a psychological construct reflecting apprehension about other people's evaluations, distress over negative evaluation by others and the expectation that an individual would be evaluated negatively (Irena, Randi & McCabe, 2015). Anxiousness, submissiveness, and social avoidance are related to fear of negative evaluation. Social anxiety is a response to perceived negative evaluations by others. Furthermore, fear of negative evaluation is related to the dread of being evaluated unfavourably in group and social situations. Downing et al. (2020) found that individuals who scored higher on social anxiety tests were lower on the expectancy to achieve goals, lower on self-esteem and lower on the frequency of self-reinforcement.

Self-concept is a collection of beliefs about oneself. It is also called self-structure, self-identity, and self-perspective. Rosenberg (2007) defines self-concept as the totality of an individual's thoughts and feelings regarding himself as an object. Self-concept is a theory that a person holds about himself as experiencing, functioning, and interacting with the world (Lee, Chan, & Ng, 2022; Xu et al., 2022). Body dissatisfaction is the negative perceptions and feelings a person has about

their body that are influenced by factors such as body shape and appearance, attitudes toward weight gain and cultural norms in relation to an ideal body (Lee, Chan, & Ng, 2022).

The fear of a negative evaluation is intricately tied to one's self-concept. Individuals with a poor self-concept, characterized by low self-esteem and self-worth, are more susceptible to this fear. Their tendency to internalize criticism and negative feedback, viewing it as a reflection of their value, exacerbates anxiety and social avoidance. They fear that unfavourable assessments from others will only reinforce their negative self-perceptions.

On the other hand, individuals with a positive self-concept, marked by high self-worth and self-esteem, demonstrate remarkable resilience when faced with unfavourable assessments (Lee et al., 2022). They are adept at not taking criticism personally and can discern between constructive feedback and baseless negativity. Their resilience allows them to navigate social situations with confidence, without the fear of a negative evaluation. In challenging circumstances, a positive self-concept acts as a protective shield, safeguarding their identity and sense of worth.

In social settings where one's physical appearance is under scrutiny, body dissatisfaction can significantly heighten the fear of a negative evaluation. Individuals who are dissatisfied with their bodies often experience increased anxiety and self-consciousness, fearing negative judgment based on their appearance (Xu et al., 2022). This fear can lead to avoidance behaviors, such as social disengagement or avoiding situations that involve physical exposure. Body dissatisfaction can also fuel a cycle of self-doubt and anxiety, reinforcing negative self-perceptions and increasing the fear of a negative evaluation.

Youths are the backbone of every economy, so it is imperative for them to be fully healthy and functional in terms of social, emotional, and mental aspects. The fear of negative evaluation is a destructive factor that has received little attention in recent decades. It is proven to adversely affect tertiary students academically by inflicting fear of participation. Many tertiary students in Kogi state find it difficult to express themselves and participate in learning activities; this is largely because of apprehension about how others will judge them, fear of rejection and the fear of being laughed at; this has greatly hindered them in social settings and have prevented them from tapping into their intellectual potentials. Preoccupation with the fear of evaluation from others negatively affects an individual's performance (Wong, 2011).

While cognitive and behavioural psychologists have made strides in detecting the fear of negative evaluation, there is still much to be done. Little research has been conducted on the influence of self-concept and body dissatisfaction on fear of negative evaluation and how this knowledge can improve students' attitudes. This study aims to fill this gap and explore the effects of self-concept and body dissatisfaction on fear of negative evaluation. By doing so, the study seeks to propose effective solutions to this pervasive issue among tertiary students in Kogi state, offering a ray of hope for their future.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. Will self-concept influence the fear of negative evaluation among tertiary students in Kogi state?
2. Will body dissatisfaction influence the fear of negative among tertiary students in Kogi state?
3. What is the relationship between self-concept, body dissatisfaction and negative evaluation among tertiary students in Kogi state?

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey research was used. The sample for this study consists of 200 students. The questionnaire method of data collection was involved for the research work. Two instruments were used to collect data from the students. The first was a self-developed 12-item questionnaire named self-concept, Body dissatisfaction Scale: PAAU (SBS-PAAU). The items were answered with a 4-likert response format. The second instrument was The Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale.

RESULTS

Table 1: Influence of self-concept fear on negative evaluation

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN
1	The way students feel about themselves hinders them from participating in sport activities.	90 50%	40 22%	30 17%	20 11%	3.1
2	I do not interact with everybody in my department because I do not think that I will fit into their conversations.	45 25%	55 30%	50 28%	30 17%	2.0
3	I do not answer questions during lectures because I may get them wrong and be laughed at by my mates.	90 50%	30 17%	40 22%	20 11%	3.1
4	I am not as intelligent as I should be.	120 67%	30 17%	20 10.5%	10 5%	3.4
5	I am not well skilled and talented as I should be.	90 50%	50 28%	30 17%	10 5%	3.2
6	I do not react to or handle situations adequately.	120 67%	50 28%	5 2.5%	5 2.5%	3.6
Grand Mean						3.1

Table 1 with a grand mean of 3.1 that checked the influence of self-concept on Fear of negative evaluation showed that self-concept influences the fear of negative evaluation among tertiary students in Kogi state.

Table 2: Influence of body dissatisfaction on fear of negative evaluation

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN
7	I am not satisfied with my body size and shape.	120 67%	30 17%	10 5%	20 10%	3.4
8	I wish to appear more like television models.	150 83.3%	10 5.5%	10 5.5%	10 5.5%	3.7
9	I think that people are displeased with my body size.	45 25%	55 30%	50 28%	30 17%	2.6
10	I believe that more people would be friendly towards me if I was taller or slimmer.	67% 37.3%	53 29.3%	40 22.3%	20 11.1%	2.9
11	Most people are mean to me because of my body shape or size	45 25%	55 30%	50 28%	30 17%	2.6
12	I hesitate from performing in academic and social activities because of fear of being criticized for my body size and shape	90 50%	30 17%	40 22%	20 11%	3.1
Grand Mean						3.1

Table 2 above that checked the influence of body dissatisfaction among tertiary students in Kogi State with a grand mean of 3.1 showed that most students are displeased with their body shape and sizes, and it influences their fear of negative evaluation to a great extent.

Table 3: Summary of data collected from the BFNE scale

S/N	ITEMS	5	4	3	2	1	MEAN
1	I worry about what others will think of me even when I know it doesn't make any difference.	55 30%	25 14%	30 17%	40 22%	30 17%	3.2
2	I am unconcerned even if I know people are forming an unfavorable impression of me.	20 11%	40 22%	40 22%	30 17%	50 28%	2.7
3	I am frequently afraid of other people noticing my shortcomings.	90 50%	20 11%	10 5.5%	30 17%	30 17%	3.6
4	I rarely worry about what kind of impression I am making on someone.	30 17%	20 11%	30 17%	30 17%	70 39%	2.5
5	I am afraid that people will find fault with me.	110 61%	30 17%	10 5.5%	20 11%	10 5.5%	4.1
6	I am afraid others will not approve of me.	100 55.5%	30 17%	15 8.3%	15 8.3%	20 11%	3.9
7	Other people's opinions of me do not bother me.	30 17%	20 11%	15 8.3%	55 30%	60 33%	2.5
8	When I am talking to someone, I worry about what they may be thinking about me.	80 17%	25 11%	15 8.3%	55 30%	60 33%	4
9	I am usually worried about what kind of impression I make.	60 33%	20 11%	50 28%	20 11%	30 17%	3.3
10	If I know someone is judging me, it has little effect on me.	10 5.5%	60 33%	40 22%	30 17%	10 5.5%	2.7
11	Sometimes I think I am too concerned with what other people think of me.	60 33%	30 17%	40 22%	20 11%	30 17%	3.4
12	I often worry that I will do or say the wrong things	70 39%	50 28%	30 17%	10 5.5%	20 11%	3.8

Table 3 checked the level of fear of negative evaluation among tertiary students in Kogi state; results from the table were analyzed using the BFNE scoring format. It revealed that more than half of tertiary students in Kogi state experienced fear of negative evaluation.

Table 4: Relationship between SBS-PAAU and BFNE-Revised

Variable	mean	Std. Dev.	N	r	P	Remark
SBS-PAAU	38.7	0.575774	12			significant
BFNE-Revised	36.7	0.479504	12	0.1	0.32	

It is shown in the above table that there was a significant relationship between SBS-PAAU and BFNE. It is noted that self-concept and body dissatisfaction has influenced BFNE in the study. The null hypothesis is rejected.

DISCUSSION

The research question which sought to find out the relationship between self-concept, body dissatisfaction and fear of negative evaluation among tertiary students in Kogi State was answered from data on Table 4 which used Pearson Product Moment Coefficient to calculate the relationship between SBS-PAAU and BFNE. The coefficient is 0.1, with a significance of 0.32. This correlation might be due to location or exposure of the respondents to this type of research. This agrees with Milligan & Pritchard, (2006) and Xu et al. (2022) who opined that self-concept correlates with several mental outcomes like poor body image and body dissatisfaction motivation for Weight loss and concern for weight, body shape among tertiary students. It also agrees with Tabachnick & Fidall, (2013) who opined that Individuals who score high on the fear of negative evaluation scale are also observed to mostly possess a poor self-concept or self-image, they display destructive behaviors such as anxiousness, submissiveness and social avoidance to avoid harsh evaluation from people, such individuals are extremely critical of their actions, their behaviors and their bodies.

CONCLUSION

Fear of negative evaluation has negative implications on students' productivity and contribution throughout their educational pursuit. Fear of negative evaluation among tertiary students up to the present time poses a threat to their participation in class, in sport activities and group work. The outcome of this study identified:

1. How self-concept and body dissatisfaction can influence the fear of negative evaluation among tertiary students in Kogi state.
2. How they prevent the individuals from experiencing social environment for fear of negative occurrence they believe will take place in the social environment.
3. That Self-concept can result in an increase in anxiety symptoms.
4. That self-concept and body dissatisfaction may lead to reduced participation in productive activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended from the study that:

1. Students should be given guidance and counselling support from members of the school and society such as school guidance and counsellor, their parents, peers, friends and the religious organizations to boost their self-concepts.
2. The media should streamline its contents towards encouraging young people to accept their body image.
3. Conducive learning environment should be made available to students in tertiary institutions, equipment that encourage self-expression should be provided and learners-centered method of teaching should be adopted to encourage participation.
4. Educational and sport psychologists should assist tertiary students to overcome psychological problems (such as fear of failure, low self-esteem and negative perception) affecting their participation in class and in sport.

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