PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL TECHNOLOGIES FOR POSITIVE BODY IMAGE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: In the paper we discuss positive body image development in girls in their youth. 64 female students of Kemerovo State University aged 18-20 took part in the experiment, with 34 of them attending the 10-week psychological training aimed at forming of a positive body image. Data were collected using personality questionnaires and interviews. Results were processed using Student's t-test and ANOVA. The personal psychological training was conducted to contribute to a positive body image development among the girls; the training was aimed at reduction of concern about weight and body shape, broadening of internalized stereotypes about body, and improvement of value attitude toward body. This technology of personal training has confirmed its efficiency in positive body image development in girls in their youth.

Keywords: body image, psychological and pedagogical technologies, psychological training, determinants, positive body image, dissatisfaction with one's appearance, youth.

1 Introduction

In the contemporary society, unrealistic paragons of beauty and attractiveness are getting increasingly widespread, which, in its turn, leads to the growth of the number of eating disorder cases, particularly among adolescents and young women. Research shows that a negative body image is associated with people's having low self-esteem (O'Dea, 2012) and psychological well-being in general (Brechan & Kvalem, 2015; Meland et al., 2007). Data collected worldwide reveal one and the same trend – a growing number of children, adolescents, and young women having eating disorders, anorexia nervosa included (Amianto et al., 2016; Rauof et al., 2015). Disorders of body image also lead to issues in the people's reproductive and sexual spheres. There are data about a negative body image in women having an adverse effect on their sexual relationships (Quinn-Nilas et al., 2016) and reproductive sphere (Belogai & Morozova, 2018).

T. L. Tylka and N. L. Wood-Barcalow (2015) note that the notion of a "positive body image" needs to be conceptualized, and formation factors and mechanisms have to be explored for the said phenomenon. They argue that the influence a positive body image has on one's personality and life activity must be studied, too, and search for positive body image building technologies is necessary.

Historically, for a century, body image was studied within psychiatry and clinical psychology, so it was the pathology focus that prevailed in the consideration. While analyzing the system of factors determining body image, it can be found that most of them contribute to building a negative of body image at all stages of socialization. On the other hand, such a situation prevents one from making sense of determination of a positive body image. This is why it is so important to identify factors of building a positive body image, to outline possible ways of building one, as well as to develop psychological and pedagogical technologies facilitating solution of this problem.

2 Literature Review

Among the factors determining body image, both individual and environmental factors are distinguished. Sexual experience, particularities of appearance, diseases, injuries, and some personal traits belong to the former, while the latter include relationships with significant people (parents, partners), digital and conventional mass media, stratification of the society, and industrialization.

As for individual factors, first of all, women's sexual and reproductive experience should be mentioned; traumatization can play a decisive part in the body image change, too. For example, it has been known for quite a long time that in women, a negative body image and sexual dysfunctions are related (Anderson & LeGrand, 1991).

In adults' ideas about their bodies, essential and dramatic change can occur as a result of a physical injury. So, in her analysis of psychological aspects of burn injury, S. G. Lafi (2014) subdivides several injury experience periods noting that as the time passes, the issues associated with body image pile up but are not smoothed away. The authors believe similar changes occur in cases of other physical injury variants, too.

Concerning the effect relationships with a romantic partner have on body image, some studies demonstrate a woman can get sexual desire if she feels she is desired by her partner (Brotto et al., 2009). Such facts are explained by the responsive desire concept (Basson, 2002). The concept shows that for women's sexual functioning, internalized judgment can be as important as their own feelings and opinions.

Conventional mass media broadcast stereotypes unrealistically slim and sexualized bodies for young women. For example, such conclusions were made by S. Grabe et al. (2008) based on meta-analysis of seventy-seven experimental and correlation studies of the impact of media on women's dissatisfaction with body, internalization of the slenderness ideal, and eating behavior. In family movies broadcast on television during prime time, female characters have almost twice as small waist size as that of their male counterparts (Smith et al., 2013). Meanwhile, experimental studies demonstrate quite clearly that girls and women browsing pictures, magazines, and advertising clips where women embodying the ideal of slenderness are shown develop dissatisfaction with their bodies (Carey et al., 2014; Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2006).

As for digital mass media, their influence on human development has been going up in latest decades. Recent correlation studies have shown there is direct association between the time spend by women in social networks, their internalization of the ideal of thinness, and eating disorders (Dion et al., 2015).

The mesofactor of belonging to particular social groups – ethnic, confessional ones – can make its contribution to building body image, too (Herbozo et al., 2017).

Finally, a number of macrofactors can be singled out which influence establishment of body image. In particular, gender stratification of the society and industrialization belong to these factors (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Murnen & Don, 2012). Industrialization is associated with individualized culture for which perception of body as a project is characteristic, i.e. as an object of continuous work and modification to meet standards (Anderson-Fye, 2004).

Speaking about individual psychological determinants that condition establishment of a positive body image, a high self-esteem and optimism should be referred to them. For example, optimism not only protects a person from negative external influences but also triggers behavior associated with caring about one's own body (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015).

Family microfactors determining establishment of a positive body image include positive verbal and non-verbal feedback from family members, family messages, and family members' fulfillment of behavioral body strategies and practices based on value attitude toward body. Alongside these, a formed secure attachment to the primary attachment object is also important (Zinovieva et al., 2015; Tsurkin & Razuvaeva, 2014).

Peers can influence formation of positive ideas, too – which is the case if their comments on appearance challenge sociocultural paragons. For adult women, positive verbal and non-verbal feedback from romantic partners gains greater importance. The authors also suppose that a secure secondary attachment acts as a factor for women to build up positive ideas in their youth and adulthood.

In recent decades, researchers have developed and implemented various programs targeted at building a positive body image in young people. Most frequently, the programs are carried out within educational organizations and include discussion classes aimed at promoting value attitude toward body and enhancing body self-respect (Sundgot-Borgen et al., 2018). Success of such programs shows that realistic positive ideas about body can be built even within short-term programs which help the participants broaden their internalized ideas about beauty.

3 Research Methodological Framework

The authors believe that for adolescence, as self-awareness has been formed but individuals suffer identity crisis, personal training is the most efficient technology of work aimed at building a positive body image. A positive body image can also be formed using pedagogical technologies. In the research conducted, the possibility of building a positive body image by means of psychological and pedagogical technologies was studied.

The experiment was conducted in 2019; it involved 64 girls aged 18-20. 34 of them attended psychological training aimed at building of a positive body image, and 30 girls of the same age made up the control group. Participants of the experiment were female students of Kemerovo State University (studying at the institute of basic sciences and at the institute of history and international relations). All the girls participated in the research voluntarily. The research method was pedagogical experiment.

At the summative stage of research, the girls were tested using personality questionnaires. The following personality questionnaires were used for data collection: "The 34-item body shape questionnaire" (BSQ) – "Body shape concern" (BSC), "Verbal commentary on physical appearance scale" (VCOPAS) – "Commentary on appearance" (COA), "Appearance satisfaction pattern throughout life", "Body image", "My body", as well as interviews (Tsurkin & Razuvaeva, 2014). The tested girls were subdivided into the control group and the experimental one randomly, because all of them were willing to take part in the training.

The training program included ten classes lasting for three hours each. Every class of the training was subdivided into the following stages: warm-up activities, learning exercises, reflection and self-acceptance exercises, summing up, and analysis of home assignments. Alongside this, further information units were incorporated in the training for higher efficiency of the experience. The group work implied the female participants' completing home assignments (various exercises) and keeping a special diary to register their successes and failures, and any changes occurring to them. The following methods of psychological work were used in the process of interaction with the group: psychogymnastic routine, role-play games, group discussion, talk; story-telling; elements of art therapy, emotion-image therapy (EIT), and body-oriented therapy.

The content-related aspect of the training program involved covering several focus areas: comprehending the spatial component of ideas about body and body boundaries; optimizing the functions of body boundaries; reflecting on the information and evaluation component; searching for resource areas and working with troubled areas; diagnosing individual particularities of body image; correcting the rigid internalized stereotypes; reflecting on the body experience available.

The reflection and assessment stage is associated with assessing the efficiency results of the correction and development

measures. One month after completing the training, the female participants of the control and experimental groups were tested again using the same questionnaires as at the summative stage. Alongside standardized methods for assessing the efficiency of the training, the authors made use of the self-reporting method, as some specialists in training work believe self-reporting to be the most relevant method for assessing the efficiency of training experience.

The results obtained were processed using the methods of statistics, such as Student's t-test and analysis of variance.

4 Results and Discussion

Before training, the measured indicator values did not differ significantly in the two group $\mathfrak{L}(\mathfrak{p}1)$, so let descriptive statistics be given for the group in general (Table 1).

Table 1 Descriptive statistics for the group of girls in their youth

Tuore I Beser	ipu ve stati	otres for th	ic group or	5 m m m	youth		
Parameters	Average	Median	Minimum	Maximum	St.		
	value	value			dev.		
Objective characteristics Weight 58,0 55,0 40,0 94,0 11,2							
Height	164,6	164,0	146,0	178,0	7,5		
BMI	21,3	20,3	15,6	35,16	3,7		
Menarche	12,6	13,0	0,0	17,0	2,3		
onset age	ation and aval	uation comp	mant of the girl	s' body image			
Information and evaluation component of the girls' body image Degree of							
conformity to external standards	55,5	60,0	0,0	100,0	26,1		
Degree of conformity to internal standards	62,8	70,0	0,0	100,0	26,9		
Score (in the technique "My body")	14,3	17,0	-24,0	29,0	10,6		
Performance ("My body")	4,4	6,0	-11,0	12,0	5,1		
Activity ("My body")	2,3	3,0	-7,0	10,0	3,9		
Evaluation of build ("My body")	1,7	2,0	-12,0	12,0	5,8		
Score (in the questionnaire "Body image")	7,5	8,0	-20,0	24,0	10,7		
Performance ("Body image")	5,5	6,0	-12,0	20,0	7,6		
Negative comments on appearance (COA)	15,0	15,0	8,0	31,0	4,3		
Compliments (COA)	13,6	14,0	2,0	33,0	5,2		
Energy component of body image							
Acceptance ("Body image")	3,8	6,0	-14,0	20,0	8,1		
Body shape concern	59	51,0	0,0	180,0	45,0		
Emotional response to negative comments on appearance (COA)	12,4	11,0	0,0	28,0	6,6		
Emotional response to compliments (COA)	8,29	8,0	2,0	16,0	3,6		
	Temporal component of body image – appearance satisfaction extent						
at the age of 5	8,7	10,0	0	10,0	2,2		
at the age of 10	8,0	9,0	0	10,0	2,4		
at the age of 15	5,9	5,0	0	10,0	2,7		
at present	6,7	7,0	0	10,0	2,5		

Source: author's own processing

The girls of the examined group have the body mass index, weight, and height that conform to the age-appropriate normal values; the average menarche onset age is 12,6 years old. Although the girls' body mass indices are normal, the study of content-related characteristics of their *information and evaluation component of body image* reveals a high extent of its disagreement with their external and internal standards. On

average, the girls identify conformity of their bodies to external and internal standards as 56% and 63%, respectively. Among the examined ones, 7% of the girls note their bodies do not conform to external and (or) internal standards at all. Meanwhile, in the girls within the age period under consideration, opinion on conformity to their own ideals positively correlates with that on degree of conformity to external standards (the correlation coefficient is 0,74, at $\mathfrak{g}(0,01)$. Anyway, among the girls, there are ones having a low BMI (18-19) or even body weigh deficit (with BMI under 17,5) who nevertheless note the 30-40% conformity to standards.

In the psychosemantic technique "My body", the average score equaled 14,33 (with the possible maximum being 30 points), evaluation of performance was 4,25 points (with the possible maximum being 12 points), of activity – 2,31 (out of 12 points maximum), and body build was rated at 1,74 points (out of 12 points maximum) in this age group. Thus, quite low evaluation of body in general and, more specifically, of its functional and energy parameters is characteristic for the girls.

The authors obtained similar results using the questionnaire technique "Body image". So, on average, evaluation of body was 7,48 points (with the possible maximum being 24 points), while performance of body scored 5,48 points (out of 12 possible ones).

Thus, the authors' data confirm those of foreign studies about the spread of dissatisfaction with appearance and body among young girls and women. Across the board, in their interviews, girls also say they do not like a lot in their bodies: beginning with individual parts (breast, belly, nose, etc.) and ending with the body as a whole. For changing their bodies, girls are ready to use strategies relying on the "body as a project" stereotype, to keep strict diets, to exercise in a gym daily, and, given the opportunity, and to opt for plastic surgery.

Speaking about the energy component of body image in the period of youth, the body acceptance extent is rather low -3.8 points (with the possible maximum being 12 points), with the parameter falling into negative values in many girls. Meanwhile, emotional responses to negative comments on appearance are reserved enough – the girls seldom note that words about their putting on weight and similar comments cause a very abrupt reaction.

Concerning their emotional response to compliments, it is curious that some girls react with ambivalent and actually negative emotions even to compliments. Comparing these data with the data obtained by the author of the questionnaire using a sample of American girls, it can be seen that some Russian-speaking girls partially resemble their Latin American and African American peers: compliments in fact render their anxiety worse. S. Herbozo et al. (2017) associate the findings with the fact that ideals of female attractiveness include slenderness and white complexion, which is less achievable for Latin American and African American women. As for Russian-speaking girls, the authors associate their ambivalent reaction to compliments with particularities of the Russian culture – where praising is not customary but criticizing is – as a result of which the girls have difficulty receiving positive feedback from others.

As for body shape concern, this parameter in the group under study ranges from zero to 180, averaging at 59 points, which corresponds to absence of concern. However, this age group is highly non-uniform according to the considered attribute: in it, a group of girls stand out who have a moderate and a high concern about their weight and body shape.

In analysis of the girls' temporal component of body image, what has to be highlighted is the extent of satisfaction with appearance evaluated historically for childhood, adolescence, and the present time. The highest satisfaction extent is characteristic for preschool and school childhood. However, comparison of the average values shows the scores differ significantly (p≤0,001), i.e., the score goes down at the transition from preschool childhood to pre-puberty. Significance degree is

even higher for differences between evaluation of body in school childhood and adolescence ($\mathfrak{g}0,00001$) — by adolescence, the score demonstrates more than a 20% fall. In youth, evaluation of body grows as compared to adolescence $\mathfrak{s}\mathfrak{h},01$), however, it never gets as high as the "pre-adolescent age" scores.

To check the efficiency of the training, two examinations of the experimental group were conducted: before the training and in 3 months after its completion. The assessment criterion was improvement in level characteristics of the components of ideas about one's body and the female participants' subjective reports. The control group was subjected to examination twice, too. The time of diagnosing was the same for both groups.

Among other things, the authors asked the attendees to fill out self-reports, because the analysis thereof yields a considerable amount of useful information on the effects produced by the suggested training. So, as noted by the girls, their relationships with body have changed: they have begun to listen to it, their body acceptance extent and trust toward body have increased, and they have developed a higher respect for their needs and feelings. The female participants of the training have pointed out change in the system of internalized stereotypes, too; for example, they say their scores on attractiveness scale have become less diametrically opposed.

In the control groups, no significant differences of the girls' indicators have been found in two measurements. As for the experimental group, statistically significant differences have been registered there in average indicators of the information and evaluation component and the energy component of ideas about one's own body (Table 2).

Table 2 Behavior of indicators in the experimental group of girls in their youth (p<0.01)

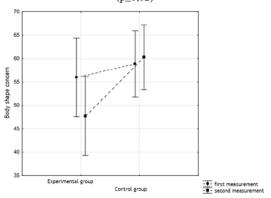
iii tileii youtii (p <u>s</u> o,or)				
Indicators in the Padri image technique	_	Average value in the group		
Indicators in the Body image technique	Before training	After training		
Information and evaluation component				
Evaluation of body	6,8	10,1		
Performance	4,7	5,6		
Energy component				
Acceptance	2.1	3.9		

Source: author's own processing

In the experimental group, the girls' evaluation of body, its performance (although to a smaller extent), and body acceptance extent have gone up. One can judge about changes in the spatial component of the ideas in question by self-reports and feedback provided by the female participants in the course of work. So, the girls note they have started to pay more attention to their needs, to say "No" more often when feeling it necessary, and to listen to their bodies more frequently, too. They have noticed their stereotypes in relation to beauty and external attractiveness have changed.

An important constituent of a positive body image is low concern about body shape and weight. In the experimental group, this indicator has changed significantly in the course of the training experience (see Fig. 1) while it has remained the same in the control group.

Figure 1 Comparison of body shape concerns in the experimental and control groups before and after training (p<0.02)

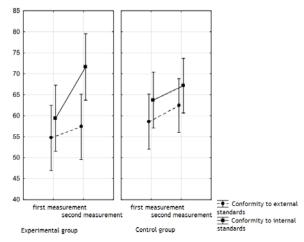


Source: author's own processing

Evaluation of the degree of conformity to external and internal standards in two groups are shown in Figure 2.

Before the training experience, the control group scored slightly higher in these parameters but did not statistically differ from the experimental group (Σ 0,01). After the training was completed, both groups featured higher scores but the only statistically valid distinctions were between the ways how the experimental group rated degree of conformity to internal standards before and after the training (Σ 0,01) and between the two groups after the training. The overall higher scores in both groups can be explained by the girls' taking part in the interview which focused their attention on the body image problem range.

Figure 2 Comparison of conformity rates in the experimental and control groups of girls before and after training (p≤0,05)



Source: author's own processing

Clearly, the experience in question has not had a significant effect on evaluation of their degree of conformity to external standards, but as noted by the female participants of the training, external standards have become much less important for them.

Alongside training technologies, in the course of their research, the authors developed the program of academic subject "Body-oriented approaches in psychological practice" which has been carried out for master's degree students in training area 37.04.01 Psychology (direction (profile) "Counseling and pedagogical psychology") at the social and psychological institute of Kemerovo State University for five years. According to the major educational program, master's degree students of this focus area of training not only have to know principal approaches in personal assistance, but they also must become proficient in relevant assistance practices and technologies of individual follow-up. The practice of working with student

groups has shown that almost all of them have certain problems related to body image, so laboratory classes within the designed course were aimed first of all at working with one's own body image in the context of certain practices. The principal distinction of the training technology from the pedagogical one consisted in the latter being oriented to a more profound study and theoretical analysis of practices under consideration. Alongside this, the pedagogical technology of skills workshop, unlike the training one, is designed for participants who have had some background in psychological assistance. The scope of the described subject amounted to 72 hours, with 36 of them being in-class work – laboratory classes.

The introductory part of the subject is dedicated to getting acquainted with body-oriented approach, its history, and principal provisions. Further classes are organized in the form of skills workshops: they are partially held by the teacher, and partially – by master's degree students guided by the teacher for the study group. The workshops deal with individual focus areas of the approach: bioenergetics, structural integration, F. Alexander's technique, methods of M. Feldenkreis and R. Silver, Eastern practices.

While mastering the techniques, the students gave feedback about their feelings and did home assignments. According to results of studying the subject, feedback was collected about observations and any changes having occurred in their body images. Within the five years as the subject in question has been taught, there have been two female students who did not take part in exercises involving pair or subgroup work and some girls who did not participate in specific exercises. However, body image changes occurred in this group of students, too.

Let it be noted that in spite of differences in technologies for training groups and study groups, the principal results were similar in the groups: a higher body acceptance extent, a smaller gap between the real and ideal body image, a broader range of internalized stereotypes, and change of the reference point in body behavior strategies and practices.

5 Conclusion

In the period of youth, girls' body image is associated with external standards and sociocultural stereotypes of a slim, sexualized female body and the idea of considering body as a project. However, gradually, owing to feedback of significant others - parents and romantic partners - a protective filter is formed which renders one's ideas more closed to external adverse influences. The indicators of information and evaluation component of body image are quite high in their youth, yet dissatisfaction with body is at a high level, too, and a significant part of girls rely on external standards when evaluating their attractiveness. Thus, body image in girls can be called ambivalent: it features both a positive opinion and, simultaneously, significant anxiety over weight. The authors' data confirm the data of foreign studies about dissatisfaction with appearance and body being widespread among young girls and women (Amianto et al., 2016; Anderson-Fye, 2004; Brechan & Kvalem, 2015; Carey et al., 2014). For changing their bodies, girls are ready to use strategies relying on the "body as a project" stereotype, to keep strict diets, to exercise in a gym daily, and to opt for plastic surgery.

The technology of personal training and pedagogical technologies have confirmed their efficiency in solving the problem of building a positive body image in girls in their youth. During the formative experiment, the authors have found that developing a positive body image is facilitated by personal psychological training addressing the following aims: lower concern about weight and body shape, broader internalized stereotypes in relation to body, better value attitude toward body, and reorienting from the body control and change strategies to the ones of caring about body. Specifically, the pedagogical technology of skills workshop has also demonstrated its efficiency within the context of the higher education system in training students majoring in psychology.

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Secondary Paper Section: AM, AN