

신체 이미지에 대한 실태조사

이 미 현[†]

배화여자대학 의상디자인과

A Research of Body Image

Mi Hyun Lee[†]

Dept. of Fashion Design, Baewha Women's College

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Abstract

Lookism is spread largely because many people think beautiful people are treated better and receive more favors. This trend has been influenced by mass media and impacted by commercial marketing strategy. The expectation for the beauty have risen higher than ever. People expect beautiful body and beautiful face which are more difficult to meet the standard of beauty. People desire tall and skinny body.

The purpose of this study was to find out body image from college females in the age which they are very sensitive to appearance. This research focused to find out how they perceived their own body shape and their perception of the most ideal body shape.

Measuring tool for the research was 9 pictures of body silhouette from very skinny to very fat. To analyse the respondents' objective body image, Body Mass Index were employed.

The result of this research indicated that there were distinct differences between their subjective body images and ideal body images. This result indicated that they were not satisfied with their own body shape and hence they were not confident towards their body images. Even though their objective bodies were normal or under weight, they still felt they were over weight. This meant their body images were misrepresented. They preferred thinner bodies even though their bodies were perfectly normal and healthy. But these misrepresented body images could be unhealthy physically, psychologically, or socially. These results showed that college females were overly obsessive with superficial appearance rather than improving ones capability to be more competitive in the society.

From this research, I tried to find out perception of body image and it's distortion which was debated a lot in our society. I also want to provide basic reference material for establishing the body image study.

Key words: lookism(루키즘), body image(신체 이미지), body image appearance(신체 이미지 왜곡)

I. The Goal and the Necessity of Research

With economic prosperous, interest for beauty became larger than ever. Lookism is spread largely because many people think beautiful person is better treated and accepted favorably. This trend became

[†] 교신저자 E-mail : mihyunl@baewha.ac.kr

powerful because of Mass Media and commercial marketing strategy.

The goal for the beauty became higher than ever. People expect beautiful body in addition to beautiful face. So it is so difficult to fulfill the beauty standard. People believe beautiful person should be tall and skinny. This became a standard of ideal beauty. Many people compare their appearance to professional models and movie stars. They longed to have a beautiful appearance and skinny body like them. Many people thought they are overweight even though they are normal or skinny in fact.

Many of them have strong fear for gaining weight and becoming fat. They are also very sensitive to their weight and body shape. This strong obsession for the appearance make people do the aggressive action to acquire the ideal appearance.

There were some cases of eating disorder like bulimia or anorexia and side effects of diet like depression, nervousity and etc.

From this research, I tried to find out perception of body image and it's distortion which was debated a lot in our society. I want to provide basic reference material for establishing the body image study.

II. Theoretical Research

1. Body Image

Body Image is psychological image on one's body, which is basic and important factor of self perception. Body image is subjective and emotional. One's perception of their body influence satisfaction on their own body. Especially, women tend to be dissatisfied

with their own body when they feel the big difference between their own body and socially accepted ideal body¹⁾.

According to Festinger's²⁾ social comparative theory, people estimate themselves by comparing with others. One's estimation about their body is forming by comparing with others in the context of culture and society.

Common measuring tool of body perception is contour drawing body scale by Thomson and Gray³⁾.

Objective body perception is measured by Body Mass Index. It is measured that weight is divided by height square and multiply 10⁴.⁴⁾

2. Appearance Management Behaviors

Desirable appearance which is skinny made people dissatisfied with their own body, comparing with other's ideal body. Many people have strong motivation to manage their appearance, trying to improve their appearance. Jangmyungsun⁵⁾ found attraction of appearance was related to self-esteem and appearance management behaviors. Many women pursue physical attraction by appearance behaviors.

Appearance management behaviors are varied from classic methods like dress, makeup, hair treatment to dangerous methods like cosmetic surgery, liposuction. Appearance management behaviors include various kinds of behaviors like exercise, diet for beauty, abuse medicine for diarrhea, urination.

Some people have eating disorder like anorexia, bulimia. In addition to these, they would suffer from psychological problems like nervousity, depression, insomnia. Some people are troubled with tuberculosis,

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- 1) M. J. Horn and L. M. Gruel, *The Second Skin: An Interdisciplinary Study of Clothing*(3rd ed.), (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, recitation, 1981).
 - 2) L. Festinger, "A theory of social comparison processes," *Human Relations* Vol. 7 (1954), pp. 117-140.
 - 3) M. A. Thomson and J. J. Gray, "The development and validation of new body image assessment scale," *Journal of Personality Assessment* Vol. 64 (1995), pp. 258-269.
 - 4) Minjung Sung and Heeun Kim, "College females's body shape and body perception by over weight estimation index," *Journal of Korean Clothing Industry* Vol. 3 No. 3 (2001), pp. 227-234.
 - 5) Kyungja Kim and Jaesuk Kim, "Desire of plastic surgery, self perception and clothing behavior according to body image," *Journal of the Korean Society of Hing and Textiles* Vol. 29 No. 3 (2005), pp. 391-400.

anemia, amenorrhea. Many people are apt to have distorted body image when they stick to their bodies⁶⁾.

Lennon and Rudd⁷⁾ said that women estimated other people by their appearance and body size. They tried to exercise, go on a diet severely to achieve desirable weight or stay in shape. They had desires to wear even more smaller sized clothes. Industries related to appearance management have been growing rapidly. People tried to do various appearance management behaviors to improve their own appearance.

III. The Method of Research

Respondents of this survey are 247 college females who were regarded to have strong interest for appearance.

Measuring tool is 9 pictures of body silhouette from very skinny to very fat⁸⁾. To find out the respondents' subjective body image, let them choose one silhouette out of 9 silhouettes which was regarded as the most similar with their own body shape. At the same time let them choose another picture out of 9 pictures of body silhouette which was regarded as the most desirable body shape.

If there were more differences between this two,

they were regarded that they would have more dissatisfaction on their own body. To figure out the respondents' objective body image, Body Mass Index (BMI) was employed for measuring tool. To measure the BMI, body weight is divided by height square and multiply 10⁴. According to the research by Minjung Sung and Heeun Kim⁸⁾, they estimated respondent's body shape: BMI<19; skinny, 19<BMI<24; normal, 24<BMI; obesity. For the data analysis, descriptive statistics like average, frequency, percent, χ^2 is employed by SPSS. Ver.12.0 program.

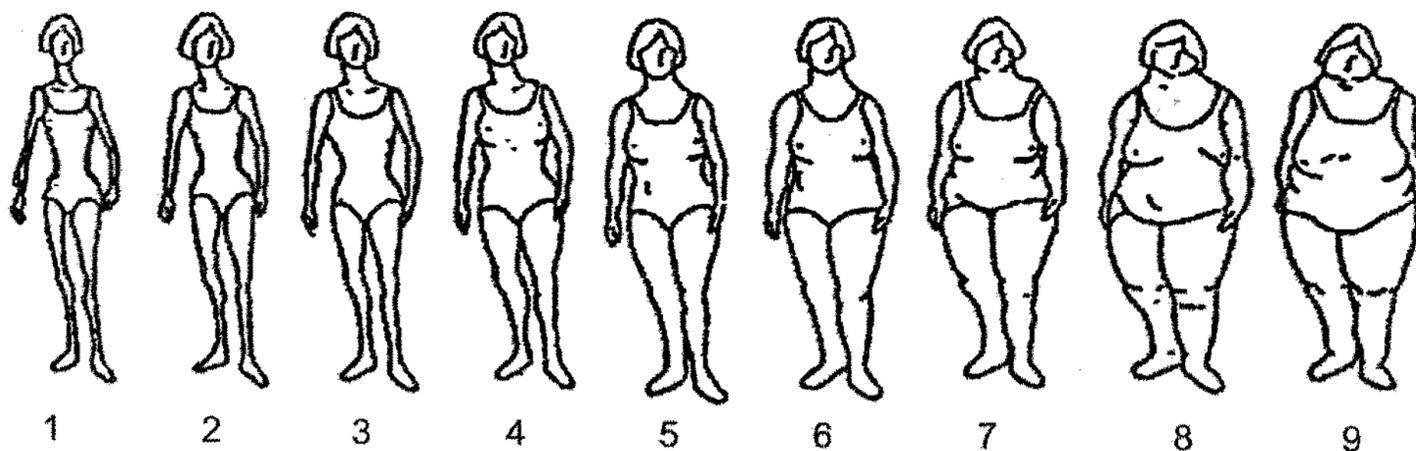
IV. The Result

1. Perception of Subjective Body Shape and Desirable Body Shape

Respondents chose picture 4 the most for similar body shape with themselves, the next is picture 3, 2, and 5. This represented their subjective perception of body.

But respondents chose picture 2 the most for desirable body shape which they eager to have. The next is picture 3, 4, and 1.

This result meant respondents preferred skinner body than their own body shape which they perceived



<Fig. 1> Silhouette Task.

6) Haewon Kang, *Social Psychology of Clothing*, (Seoul: Kyomun Publishing, 1995).

7) S. Lennon and N. Rudd, "Body satisfaction, self-esteem and appearance management behaviors in women," *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal* Vol. 23 (1994), pp. 84-117.

8) Minjung Sung and Heeun Kim, "College female's body shape and body perception by over weight estimation index," *Journal of Korean Clothing Industry* Vol. 3 No. 3 (2001).

〈Table 1〉 Subjective body and desirable body

Picture of body shape	Subjective body	Desirable body
	Frequency(%)	Frequency(%)
1	2(1)	11(5)
2	42(17)	154(62)
3	72(29)	66(27)
4	88(36)	16(6)
5	29(12)	0(0)
6	9(4)	0(0)
7	2(1)	0(0)
8	0(0)	0(0)
9	0(0)	0(0)
Total	247(100)	0(0)

subjectively.

2. Satisfaction on Their Own Body Shape

There were distinct differences between subjective perception of body and desirable body shape. This is represented by dissatisfaction on their own body.

There were 214 respondents out of 247 who were not satisfied with their body. The other hand, there were only 33 respondents who were satisfied with their body. This meant many of college females were dissatisfied with their bodies and they had negative body image.

3. Satisfaction on Body Parts

The result of satisfaction on body parts, which were questioned by 5 scale. The most satisfied body part

〈Table 2〉 Satisfaction on body shape

Body image	Frequency(%)
Satisfaction	33(13.4)
Dissatisfaction	214(86.6)
Total	247(100.0)

〈Table 3〉 Satisfaction on body parts

Body parts	Satisfaction	
	Average(standard deviation)	Rank
Height	2.70(1.19)	2
Weight	2.26(1.01)	7
Width of shoulder	2.86((1.00)	1
Circumference of breast	2.59(1.03)	3
Circumference of upper arm	2.53(0.98)	4
Circumference of waist	2.39(1.03)	5
Circumference of hip	2.33(0.98)	6
Circumference of thigh	1.90(0.91)	10
Circumference of calf	2.07(1.06)	9
Length of leg	2.21(1.07)	8

was width of shoulder, the next was height and the next ranking body part was circumference of breast, circumference of upper arms, circumference of waist, weight, length of leg, circumference of calf, circumference of thigh.

They satisfied with their upper parts the most and the next is middle parts and then the lowest parts of body. The lower the body parts, the lower the satisfaction. Even though their most satisfied body parts, which was the upper parts, the average score of satisfaction was only 2.86 out of 5.

Respondents were dissatisfied with their most body parts. 〈Table 4〉 also represented they were not satisfied with their lower body parts, especially circumference of thigh and calf. Relatively satisfaction

〈Table 4〉 Comparison of satisfaction on body parts

Body parts	Satisfaction	
	Average(standard deviation)	Rank
Whole body	2.48(0.86)	2
Upper body	2.59(0.67)	1
Lower body	2.13(0.76)	3

on upper body parts were higher than lower body parts.

4. Subjective Body Image and Objective Body Image

According their subjective body image, there were significant differences with objective body image. Respondents who were satisfied with their body had skinny body shape. The other hand, respondents who were dissatisfied with their body had normal or fat body shape.

They were tend to satisfied with their body when they were under weight. Even though their bodies were normal weight, they were dissatisfied with their own body. They preferred under weighted body.

5. Objective Body Image

Their objective body type was divided by three types by BMI, which were under weight, normal weight, and over weight. The result was there were 70% of normal weight, 30% of under weight, and only 3% of over weight. Most of them had normal or skinny body shape. There were quite portion of skinny body type. In fact there were very rare of fat body type of respondents.

But 86% of them were dissatisfied with their body subjectively even if they had had normal or skinny body shape as we saw <Table 1>. There were severe body image distortion of their perception of body.

<Table 6> Objective body image by BMI

Objective body image	Frequency(%)
Under weight	68(27.5)
Normal weight	172(69.6)
Over weight	7(2.8)
Total	247(100.0)

6. Eating Disorder

The result of answering the experience of eating disorder, no experience was almost 90%. They didn't experience eating disorder as side effect from diet severly compared that subjective body image distortion was serious.

In case they experience the eating disorder as we saw the <Table 8>, they experience nervosity or depression when they stick to diet. Rarely, some respondents experienced serious side effects like menstrual disorder, immunity disorder, insomnia, loss hairs.

<Table 7> Experience of eating disorder

Eating disorder experience	Frequency(%)
Yes	27(10.9)
No	220(89.1)
Total	247(100.0)

<Table 5> Differences between subjective body image and objective body image

Subjective body image	Objective body image			Row total
	Under weight	Normal	Over weight	
	Frequency(%)			
Satisfaction	24(72.7)	9(27.3)	0(0.0)	33(100.0)
Dissatisfaction	44(20.6)	163(76.2)	7(3.3)	214(100.0)
Column total	68(27.5)	172(69.6)	7(2.8)	247(100.0)

$\chi^2=39.157^*$ $df=2$

* $p<0.05$.

〈Table 8〉 Eating disorder

Eating disorder	Yes	No	Rank
	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	
Bulimia	9(3.6)	238(96.4)	4
Anorexia	12(4.9)	235(95.1)	3
Depression	17(6.9)	230(93.1)	2
Nervosity	23(9.3)	224(90.9)	1
Avoid people	7(2.8)	240(97.2)	5
Addiction of exercise	4(1.6)	243(98.4)	7
The others	5(2.0)	242(98.0)	6

V. Conclusion and Discussion

Lookism is spread all over our society, especially young women are overly obsessed with appearance and they have interest in appearance excessively.

They regard skinny body as ideal body and they believe that they have desirable appearance, they could acquire superior competitive power, social favor, and happiness. Mass media and consuming culture contribute to this trend more prosperous.

Desire and Passion over the desirable appearance sometimes occur the side effect physically, socially, and psychologically. I want to find out how do college females think about their own body subjectively and about their objective body shape. I also want to find out if there are any differences between subjective perception of body shape and objective real body shape.

From the research, I tried to find out how much the body image distortion were and the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their body.

In addition to body perception, I tried to find out how body image distortion influenced eating disorder, and if they experienced eating disorder, what were they?

Through this research, I want to provide basic

reference material for establishing the body image study.

Results of this research are as follows:

The respondents, who were college females had many interest for appearance.

They had negative body image as I expected.

They preferred skinnier body shape than they perceive their own body subjectively. They were more dissatisfied with their lower parts of body than the upper parts of body.

They were dissatisfied with their own body and preferred skinnier body type even though they had normal and healthy body.

But by BMI, respondents' objective body shape were normal or skinny. They rarely had overweight body. I acknowledged they had severe distorted body image, they didn't perceive their own body objectively. But there were not many respondents who experienced eating disorder compared to body image distortion being serious.

There were some cases of undesirable side effects which they experienced when they stick to skinny body. I was acknowledged again that respondents had severe interest for appearance and they regarded that under weight body was desirable as many mass communication indicated. But side effects by body image distortion was not that bad as I worried. Many young women aspire skinny body, This is not socially desirable as well as this is bad for the health.

Respondents were very appearance oriented and they regarded appearance can be more competitive power than any other. They did not try to improve their own capability and fulfill the real competitive power. This trend could make the real competitive power lower as they follow the superficial materials. This also occur various side effects.

From this research, I was trying to find out perception of body image and it's distortion which was debated a lot nowadays. But numbers of respondents is not enough and respondents were college females only, so meaning of this research might be limited.

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