HOW MEDIA IMPACT FEMALE BODY IMAGE

Abstract:

The article is devoted to the peculiarities of the influence of the mass media on the physical Self and appearance of girls aged 18-23 years old. It was proven that social standards of visual attractiveness, imposed by the media, have an impact on the girls’ attitude to body image and self-esteem.

Keywords: image of the physical Self, appearance, media influence, self-esteem, body image.

Introduction

Today an ideal body, as well as the current stereotypes of visual attractiveness are an integral part of the media’s content information flow. Perception and acceptance of one’s appearance, adequacy of perception of one’s body and attitude to the personality as a whole, as well as successful social adaptation depends on the development of the body image, its improvement and overcoming deficiencies of its formation. Social researchers emphasize that society contributes significantly to the creation of individual body image [1].
The personal attitude to the image of the physical Self of girls affects the structure of self-esteem; a positive assessment of the physical Self-image in the mind of a person can significantly affect the positiveness of his or her self-concept as a whole; therefore, a negative assessment may entail a decrease in overall self-esteem [5, c. 800-804]. In addition to promoting the exaggerated image of the ideal appearance of a person, the media immediately propose various adaptation-compensatory ways of transforming appearance to get closer to a given ideal. Aside from this, social media offer an observance of various diets and various bodily practices, correcting the body, hair extensions, eyelashes, plastic surgery, etc.

**Research approach**

The purpose of the current study is to identify the influence of social and psychological factors on the formation of the image of the physical Self, appearance and self-esteem of modern girls in Russia. The study was conducted on the basis of the social network Instagram, using the “Body Image Questionnaire” (Skugarevsky O.A., Sivukha S.V., 2006) [6] and the “Body Satisfaction Inventory” (Skugarevsky O.A., 2009) [7]. The survey involved N=60 respondents (F=49, M=11) aged from 16 to 23 years old.

**Results and discussion**

According to the results obtained, 83% of the respondents (M=82%, F=84%) believe that the media influence the girls’ appearance, whereas 17% (M=18%, F=16%) do not think that the media affect female appearance.

The appearance components include: physical appearance, functional signs (facial expressions, gestures, posture, voice, gait, glance, smile), “get-up” of the external appearance (clothing, hairstyle, etc.) [2, c. 71-75]. According to the results of the survey, 26% of the respondents indicate Angelina Jolie and Audrey Hepburn as their ideals of beauty; 46% of the respondents believe that their ideal of beauty includes the following features: expressive eyes, long hair,
full lips, nice skin, slim body and slender legs. Furthermore, 54% of the respondents confirm that they are observing their ideal of beauty in the media.

TV commercials and glossy magazines contribute to the image of perfect appearance which is becoming the image of the desired result [3, c. 40]. According to the analysis of the survey, 57% of the respondents find the physical attractiveness and appearance of ad characters, presenters, and TV show participants attractive. Moreover, 67% of the respondents believe that the actors and models advertising cosmetics are the most attractive in appearance.

In the course of the study the female participants were divided into two groups (60% of the respondents who watch TV several times a week and 40% of the respondents who watch TV every day). 71% of Group 2 are “blinded” by the beauty of advertisement and are guided by it when buying goods, the respondents of Group 1 prefer to pay more attention to the advice and recommendations of their friends, including cosmetologists (80%), personal experience (19%) or product composition (14%).

According to the results of the Body Image Questionnaire and Body Satisfaction Inventory, 19% of the respondents of Group 1 and 36% of Group 2 are not satisfied with the image of their body. Modern girls consider hair, face, eyes, flat stomach, body weight, legs, buttocks, and breast to be the most important elements of the beauty standards. However, the respondents experience more satisfaction with their ears, neck, hands and feet. The respondents of Group 2 feel dissatisfied with the abdomen and body weight.

The survey revealed that 71% of the respondents have a positive attitude to plastic surgery and do not mind using these procedures themselves. The most popular desires include such manipulations as ‘to enlarge lips / breasts’, ‘to change the nose’, ‘to get rid of cellulite’. More than half of the girls of the first group (66%) report that instead of improving their appearance they choose a healthy lifestyle, ‘high spirits and a smile on their face’.
Therefore, the media impose the beauty criteria of a person, insisting that success depends on physical attractiveness and appearance. The respondents from the second group are more exposed to the social impact of the media and are more focused on the imposed standards of the body image. They prove to be more dissatisfied with themselves than the first group and express desire to change their appearance.

**Conclusion**

Thus, it has been shown that the social standards of visual attractiveness, broadcast by the media have a negative influence on the personal attitude to the body image.

**References**


7. Skugarevsky O.A. Body Satisfaction Inventory. – https://sites.google.com/site/test300m/sust

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