A Study on Negative Physical Self Status-quo of Rural Middle School Students and Intervention

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ABSTRACT

This paper explored the negative physical self-status-quo of middle school students in the background of the school, aiming to find out the intervention program for different negative physical self. Method: It randomly selected students of 6 classes in a middle school in Xianning, Hubei Province, and NPSS scale was employed to measure the negative physical self-status of middle school students. Result: In these five dimensions, middle school students are most dissatisfied with the general feature (x =3.266), followed by the feature of short in stature (x =2.372). They show satisfaction at the appearance dimension (x =1.965), fat dimension (x =1.981) and thinness dimension. There is a significant difference in the general feature between male students and female students, and the score of females is higher than that of male (male=15.64, female=17.03, t=-3.074, p=0.002). The difference between male and female students at the fat dimension has statistical significance (Male=20.78, Female=23.08, t=-2.36, p=0.19). The difference between rural and urban students at the thinness dimension has statistical significance (urban students=16.06, rural students=17.84, t=2.43, p=0.15).

KEYWORDS

Negative physical self; NPSS scale; middle school students; intervention

INTRODUCTION

With the rapid development of China's economy, the extreme poverty in rural areas has gradually improved. Young students are paying more and more attention to their external image, such as appearance, height, figure, etc. Appearance is one of the determinants of human physiological attractiveness [1], which is better than physical attractiveness in predicting the overall attractiveness of individuals [2]. Individuals with better appearance often enjoy various priorities in life and work [3], and the appearance is particularly prominent in China as the dominant role in the attraction decision. With the development of social economy globally, the proportion of overweight and obesity of teenagers is increasing in countries, which has seriously threatened the physical and mental health of teenagers [4].

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Under the social environment influence that female's thinness and male's strongness is taken as the symbol of beauty, weighty problems, namely too fat or too thin, also cause negative perception of the body (consider to be too fat or thin) \[5\]. In recent years, the weight intervention of adolescents and children has drawn great attention. School is an important place where young people are promoted to keep healthy diet and exercise and improve public health behaviors. And in China, clinical subjects with overweight, obesity and other symptom are given medical and lifestyle intervention in the hospital or family environment, which can only alleviate the clinical symptoms of overweight and obese individuals. In order to fundamentally reduce the weight burden of adolescents, it is necessary to promote healthy diet and active exercise widely to prevent overweight and obesity.

Negative physical self, also called body image disorder, is the negative cognition, negative emotional experience and corresponding behavior regulation of individuals \[6\]. From the perspective of cognitive theory, researchers believe that the disorder of physical image is caused by distorted and negative self-schemas. It includes the rigid moodiness on weight, body shape and other aspects as well as overemphasis on evaluation \[7\]. This study is designed to use the existing mature scale to analyze the negative physical self of adolescents; for the status-quo of negative physical self, the author also aimed at exploring the suitable intervention model for adolescents with different negative physical cognitions, combined with the existing literature.

OBJECTS AND METHODS

Object

Students of 6 classes in a middle school in Xianning of Hubei Province were randomly selected as the study object. 500 questionnaires were sent out and 451 questionnaires were recovered, with a recovery rate 90%; 399 questionnaires were valid after 52 invalid questionnaires were deleted. The object consisted of 223 males and 176 females--270 rural students and 129 urban students.

Research indicators and tools

The negative physical self-scale (NPSS) compiled by Professor Chen Hong was used in this study. This scale consists of 48 items, including 5 dimensions, namely the general dimension, appearance dimension, short dimension, fat dimension and thinness dimension: the general dimension (NPSS-G) contains 5 items; the appearance dimension (NPSS-A) has 11 items; the short dimension (NPSS-S) covers 11 items; the fat dimension (NPSS-F) includes 11 items and the thin dimension (NPSS-T) contains 10 items. 1-5-grade scoring system is adopted: 0 means never conform and 4 implies always conform. If the total score and the score of each dimension are less than the critical value of 2, it indicates that the individual is satisfied at the dimension. If the average score is greater than 2, the individual feels dissatisfied at the dimension. The higher the score indicates that the individuals are less satisfied with their own body. The internal consistency coefficient of NPSS was 0.86, the test-retest reliability three weeks later was 0.89 and the split-half reliability was 0.83, which indicates the good criterion validity.
RESULTS

The status quo of negative physical self

After excluding invalid questionnaires, 399 people participated in the survey. 352 individuals were dissatisfied with their own general feature, accounting for 88% of the total number; 149 people were dissatisfied with their own appearance feature, accounting for 37%; 224 people were dissatisfied with their own short feature, accounting for 56%; 157 people were dissatisfied with their own fat feature, accounting for 39%; and 104 people were dissatisfied with their own thinness feature, accounting for 26%. On these 5 dimensions, the middle school students are most dissatisfied with the general features, successively followed by the short feature dimension and the fat feature dimension; they show satisfaction on the appearance feature dimension and thin feature dimension. The average score of each dimension from high to low respectively is: the general feature (3.266±0.97), short feature (2.372±0.92), fat feature (1.981±0.89), appearance feature (1.965±0.83) and thinness feature (1.727±0.69).

The general dimension of negative physical self

There is a significant difference between male and female students in the general feature, and the score of female is higher than that of male. (male15.64, female17.03, t=-3.074, p=0.002). The difference on the general dimension of students at all ages does not show statistical significance. The difference between rural and urban students on the general dimension does not have statistical significance.

The appearance dimension of negative physical self

The difference on the appearance dimension between male students and female students does not have statistical significance. The difference on the appearance dimensions of the students at all ages does not have statistical significance. The difference between rural and urban students on the appearance dimension does not have statistical significance.

The short dimension of negative physical self

The difference between male and female students on the short dimension does not have statistical significance. The difference on the short dimension of the students at all ages does not have statistical significance. The difference between rural and urban students on the short dimension does not have statistical significance.

The fat dimension of negative physical self

The difference between male students and female students on the fat dimension has statistical significance (male=20.78, female=23.08, t=-2.36, p=0.19). The difference on the fat dimension of the students at all ages does not have statistical significance. The difference between rural and urban students on the fat dimension does not have statistical significance.
The thinness dimension of negative physical self

The difference between male and female students on the thinness dimension does not have statistical significance. The difference of the students at all ages on this dimension does not have statistical significance. The difference between rural and urban students on the thinness dimension has statistical significance (urban students=16.06, rural students=17.84, t=2.43, p=0.15).

DISCUSSION

According to the result of this study on the general feature of negative physical self of middle school students, they overall are not satisfied with their own body, and most of the average scores were greater than the critical value 2. Seeing from all dimensions, negative physical self-dimension on which middle school students show high-to-low dissatisfaction successively is the general feature, short in stature, fat, appearance and thinness. This result is inconsistent with the results that Chen Hong and Chen Ruichuan obtained. Their study found that adolescents showed their high-to-low dissatisfaction respectively with the general feature, short in stature, appearance and fat (The thinness dimension was deleted because the dissatisfaction in this dimension was too low). The satisfaction of appearance feature is higher than that of fat dimension, and this study result is consistent with that of Ping Fan's research. According to his research, high school students showed high-to-low satisfaction successively with the appearance feature, negative feature, stature feature and movement feature. In recent years, the obesity rate of adolescents in China is increasing significantly due to adverse dietary habits. The problem of obesity has attracted the attention of adolescents, and most adolescents keep higher dissatisfaction with obesity than the appearance. Compared with other dimensions, the majority of middle school students presented a score greater than 2 on the general feature dimension of the negative physical self, and the negative degree of the general feature was significantly higher than that of other dimensions. This can be attributed to that the negative physical self is diffuse, and thus the negative degree of any aspect of the body can cause the overall negative level.

This study analyzed the impact of gender, living area and age on negative physical self. The result showed that females had higher negative physical self than males. This is because the information about ideal body standards of females is more than that about males, which makes females pay more attention to and internalize the standard. In addition, because of the differences between male and female students in the personality, female students generally focus more on their appearance and slim figure while male students prefer to be strong; The thinness feature dimension of rural middle school students in the negative body degree is significantly higher than that of urban middle school students, and there are significant differences. The reason is that the urban middle school students are superior to the rural middle school students in terms of living conditions and various material resources. Therefore, many urban middle school students have different degrees of superiority, and they are more optimistic about their self-evaluation.

Physical self plays an important role in individual development. It is a fact that the education of students' physical self-construction is grossly underemphasized, and some students have a higher negative physical self, and thereby the author proposes three countermeasures from levels of the family, school and society.
Firstly, from the family level, parents should always pay attention to children's inner thoughts. Middle school students are in a sensitive period, and thus the parents should often communicate with them, understand their internal psychological state and encourage them opportunely, so as to promote the objective evaluation of themselves. In addition, parents should also pay more attention to the children's diet, highlight the importance of breakfast and healthy diet, avoid overeating and control the intake of junk food.

Secondly, from the school education level, it is necessary to set up corresponding courses for the physical self-construction. In most schools, the investment in psychological education is very little and staff in this aspect is also insufficient. Schools should integrate more ideas and methods about mental health education in overall education. To students with high of high negative physical self, schools should apply group intervention activities, so as to guide them to treat the negative cognition of their body in a correct way, develop right physical awareness and evaluation, establish a scientific and correct physical value, and ultimately help them have a complete and healthy personality. At same time, schools should attach importance to the cultivation of middle school students' physical quality, encourage students to do more extra-curricular exercises and ensure students exercise time every day. In terms of diet, the school canteen should give special attention to nutrition collocation.

Thirdly, from the social level, people should give more attention to the family having middle school students with high negative physical self. For example, activities that are conducive to the self-acceptance and exploration of self-advantages should be more organized in the community. Only in this way can they evaluate themselves objectively and impartially, improve the satisfaction with the physical self, and thereby truly accept themselves and achieve a harmonious self-state.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Fund Project: Youth Project of the Education Department of Hubei Province: “Study on the Status-quo and Intervention of Positive Mental Quality of Migrant Children in the Process of Urbanization”. (Project No: 17Q170);

Xianning Think Tank: “Study on the Status-quo and Intervention of Negative Physical Self in Middle School Students in Rural Areas of Xianning”. (Project No: xnsk-z1739).

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