



Comparison of Difficulty in Emotion Regulation, Early Maladaptive Schemas and Body Image Concerns in Girls with and without Overweight

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Abstract

The aim of this research was conducted to comparing the difficulty of emotion regulation, early maladaptive schemas and body image in girls with and without overweight. The research method was post hoc-comparative. The statistical population was unmarried girls aged 18 to 25 using social networks, living in Tehran. By purposive sampling method 202 girls were selected. The data was collected using Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale, Early Maladaptive Schema Questionnaire and Body Image Concern Inventory questionnaires. The data was analyzed by covariance analysis. The results showed that the mean difficulty in emotion regulation, early maladaptive schemas, and concern about body image were different in girls with and without overweight. Based on the results of this study, it is suggested that counselors and therapists should pay attention to these variables in the treatment of psychological problems of overweight.

Keywords: Body image concerns, difficulty in emotion regulation, early maladaptive schemas, overweight.

Introduction

Overweight is one of the biggest public health challenges of this century (Breda, et al., 2019). Many psychological issues cause obesity, and on the other hand, obesity itself leads to many unfavorable psychological consequences. Research evidence emphasizes the role of emotions in overeating (Casagrande, et al., 2020). Overweight people have a lower ability to manage their emotions, which indicates difficulty in regulating emotions, which according to research evidence, this issue is associated with problems in overweight people. Psychological disorders, acute mental stress, and more chronic psychological and personality issues can all cause obesity and overweight (Jebeile, et al., 2021). Early maladaptive schemas are self-damaging emotional and cognitive patterns in a person (Kordlou, 2018), which make a person psychologically vulnerable to the creation of psychosomatic disorders. On the other hand, eating behaviors are associated with stress responses caused by fatigue, anxiety and tension (Van Strien, 2018). As a result, high levels of initial incompatible schemas with the intensification of tension and anxiety in people lead to the escalation of uninhibited eating behaviors, which causes weight gain in people. Research results show that overweight and obese people have defects in all areas of early maladaptive schemas (Basile, et al., 2019). On the other hand, a wide range of research shows that dissatisfaction with body shape and size is a common concern among teenagers and young adults, and women suffer from negative body image more than men (Gow, et al., 2020). In the past researches, psychological variables

such as the difficulty of emotional regulation, early maladaptive schemas, and concern about body image have not been paid much attention, and examining the aforementioned psychological variables can help overweight people in solving problems. Based on what was stated, the hypothesis of the research was that the difficulty of emotion regulation, early maladaptive schemas and concern about body image are different in girls with and without overweight.

Method

The research was descriptive and comparative design. The statistical population of the study was single girls aged 18 to 25 years old, using of Telegram and Instagram living in Tehran. After receiving 485 questionnaires, people who did not meet the criteria for entering the research (married women, women with a body mass index between 19 and 23) were omitted, and finally 202 people was selected. Data analysis was done with descriptive statistics and covariance analysis using SPSS 25 software.

Tools

Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS): This 36-item in a five-point Likert scale was developed by Gratz and Roemer (2004). They reported the reliability of this scale through retesting as 0.88 and the internal consistency of the scale through Cronbach's alpha as 0.93 for the entire scale and above 0.80 for the subscales, with the construct validity of using factor analysis. In this research, the reliability of this questionnaire was 0.94.

Early Maladaptive Schema Questionnaire (short form): The early 75 items questionnaire, with a six-point Likert scale, developed by Young (1990) confirming the construct validity of it using factor analysis, the reliability by internal consistency and retest method were 0.95 and 0.81, respectively. The reliability of this questionnaire in the present study, ranged from 0.81 to 0.94.

Body Image Concern Inventory (BICI): The 19-item on a five-point Likert scale was developed by Littleton, et al. (2005) reported its construct validity through confirmatory factor analysis, also its reliability by internal consistency method and obtained Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.93. In this research, the reliability of this questionnaire was 0.94.

Results

The results of covariance analysis are reported in Table 1. There is a significant difference between difficulty in emotion regulation, early maladaptive schemas and body image concerns in girls with and without overweight ($F = 12.262$ and $P < 0.001$). Also, according to the partial square ETA (0.157), overweight status explained 15.5% of the variance, difficulty in emotion regulation, early maladaptive schemas, and body image concerns between two groups of overweight and non-overweight girls.

Table 1: Results of analysis of covariance on the mean of the studied variables in girls with and without overweight

variables	SS	df	MS	F	sig	η^2
Difficulty in emotion regulation	6106.416	1	6106.416	10.171**	0.002	0.048
Error	120075.430	200	600.377			
Total	1682911	201				
Early maladaptive schemas	47511.475	1	47511.475	11.713**	0.001	0.055
Error	811253.045	200	4056.265			
Total	9052361	201				
Body image concerns	8482.769	1	8482.769	36.789**	0.000	0.155
Error	46115.607	200	230.578			
Total	529268	201				

Based on the size of the effects obtained, being overweight is able to explain 5, 6 and 2% of the variance of difficulty adjusting emotion, early maladaptive schemas and concern about body image and group of girls with and without overweight, respectively. Therefore, the research hypotheses were confirmed based on the level of difficulty in emotion regulation, early maladaptive schemas, and body image concerns in girls with and without overweight.

Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the findings, the difficulty in emotion regulation, early maladaptive schemas, and body image concerns are different in girls with and without overweight. Difficulty in regulating emotions increases tension and negative emotions and provides grounds for overeating. Schemas make a person vulnerable to psychosomatic disorders, and high levels of schema by intensifying stress and anxiety in people cause the intensification of eating behaviors, which causes weight gain in people. On the other hand, concerns related to body image, based on the feedback received from the environment, increase dissatisfaction with body appearance (Meneguzzo, et al., 2021), but when a person has a weight higher than normal and is in an environment with the people around, do not have a positive view of the person's body shape, the person gets into trouble. Therefore, people who are overweight are constantly worried about their appearance and other people's perception of their body image.

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Conflicts of interest

Authors found no conflict of interests.



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