



Body-self-unity: Gender difference concerning the body-self-unity. Do the genders differ in the evaluation of their self and body?

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Abstract:

Body-self-unity refers to an integrated view of body and self in a unity which is expected to be balanced in healthy individuals. Body-self-unity is related to body-esteem and self-esteem. The present study aims to examine the differences between men and women on the concept of body-self-unity and the concepts of body-esteem and self-esteem. The relationship between body-esteem and body-self-unity was assessed on the basis of sources of body-evaluation in men and women as well. The underlying theoretical framework was evaluated for validity. We further assumed women to have a lower body-self-unity, body-esteem and self-esteem in contrast to men. These hypotheses were significantly confirmed. Further we assumed women to evaluate their body primarily on aspects of their physical attractiveness and men on aspects of their physical fitness. These hypotheses were not confirmed. Women and men were found not to be differing in their sources of body-evaluation.

Keywords: Body-self-unity; body-esteem; self-esteem; gender differences

Abstract (NL):

Lichaam-zelf-eenheid is de integratie van lichaam en zelf in een eenheid. Het wordt verwacht dat deze eenheid uitgebalanceerd is in gezonde individuen. Dit onderzoek wil de verschillen tussen mannen en vrouwen op het concept lichaam-zelf-eenheid en de concepten lichaamswaardering en zelfwaardering onderzoeken. De relatie tussen de constructen lichaamswaardering en lichaam-zelf-eenheid werd onderzocht op basis van de bronnen van lichaamsevaluatie bij mannen en vrouwen. Verder werd het onderliggende theoretische kader op validiteit geëvalueerd. We zijn ervan uitgegaan dat vrouwen een lager lichaams-zelf-eenheid, lichaamswaardering en zelfwaardering hebben in vergelijking met mannen. Deze hypothesen werden significant bevestigd. Verder zijn we ervan uitgegaan dat vrouwen hun lichaam evalueren via hun fysische attractiviteit en mannen op basis van hun fysische fitness. Deze hypothesen werden niet bevestigd. Het werd gevonden dat vrouwen en mannen niet verschillen in hun bronnen of lichaams-evaluatie.

Sleutelbegrippen: Lichaam-zelf-eenheid; lichaamswaardering; zelfwaardering; geslachtsverschillen

Introduction

The discussion of the human body as separate of the self is already many years old. The French phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty stated that “all human perception is embodied, we cannot perceive anything and our senses cannot function independently of our bodies. This does not imply that they are somehow ‘glued’ together, as the Cartesian notion of the body might suggest, but rather there is something of an oscillation between the two” (Watson & Nettleton, 1998, p. 9).

Sally Gadow elaborated this statement and used it as the basis for her notion of body-self unity. According to Gadow, the self is anchored in the body. Body and self form a unit (Gadow, 1980). Gadow distinguishes between different states of embodiment. In the condition of the so called “Lived Body” there exists no decomposition between body and self. The body is experienced as a matter of course and the individual does not really think about it. A disruption of this unity is experienced when the body behaves in an unexpected manner (Hudak, McKeever, & Wright, 2007). This can be caused by an injury or a disease. The so called “Object Body” represents such a condition. The individual experiences tension between body and self (Gadow, 1980). The body becomes separated of the self and is viewed as an object acting opposed to it (Bloom, 1992). The individual experiences a splitting of the self and the body which leads to an unpleasant condition. Body-self-unity is on the one hand composed of the body and on the other hand of the self. If one of these two aspects is deranged, the unity can become imbalanced.

There are some closely related concepts such as body esteem and self esteem. Self esteem refers to the thoughts and feelings of one’s own worth and

importance. It reflects one’s positive or negative attitude toward oneself (Rosenberg, 1965). Body esteem applies to the self evaluation of one’s body or appearance on a global dimension (Mendelson, White, & Mendelson, 2001). Self-esteem and body-esteem are significantly interrelated to each other (Mendelson, White, & Mendelson, 1996). Since the body is experienced as the expression of the self (Fallon, 1990), a negative attitude toward one’s body also implicates lower self-esteem (Mintz & Bety, 1986). Many studies have shown the positive outcomes of high self- and body-esteem. High self-esteem is positively related to good social relationships (Neyer & Asendorpf, 2001), occupational status (Judge & Bono, 2001) and feelings of wellbeing (DeNeve & Cooper, 1999). Further body-esteem and self-esteem are positively correlated. Negative feelings about one’s body have been shown to predict negative self-perception and low quality of life (Huang, Norman, Zabinski, Calfas, & Patrick, 2007). Yet, there are some conditions in which the experience of body or self changes.

A serious illness could result in changing perceptions of body-esteem or self-esteem. Charmaz (1983) stated that chronic illness affects self-esteem. The loss of control of life, caused by an illness typically results in a derangement of the self. According to her, ill individuals experience a heightened self awareness; comparing the old self with the new one. In this case the old self represents the self in healthy condition which they have lost and the new self represents the self in ill condition (Charmaz, 1983). It is empirically supported that chronic illness leads to a diminished body-esteem as well (Taleporos & McCabe, 2001). We considered that the loss of the self during a chronic illness, as

stated by Charmaz (1983) is caused by the change in body experience (body-esteem) which in turn initiates a derangement of the body-self-unity and therefore leads to low self-esteem.

We stated that body-esteem and self-esteem must be in balance, integrated in a whole (body-self-unity), so that there can be a healthy state for the individual. This statement can also be drawn out of the definition of the “Lived Body” (Hudak, McKeever, & Wright, 2007; Gadow, 1980) which means that in normal condition the individual does not experience a disruption of body and self. The theoretical framework of the concept body-self unity assumes that the body-esteem component has direct influence on the unity of body and self. Self-esteem is formed out of this unity. Additionally, there exists a causal relationship between body-esteem and self-esteem (see Figure 1).

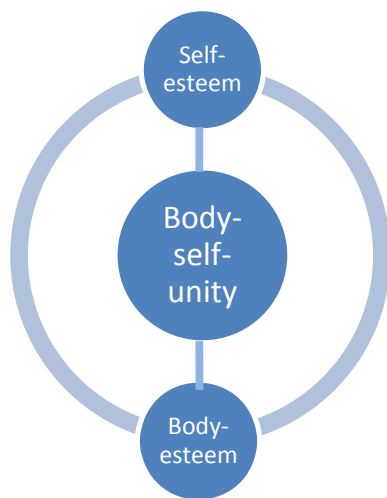


Figure 1: Body esteem, in women composed of sexual attractiveness, in men composed of physical fitness is directly related to body-self-unity which in turn influences self-esteem. Body-esteem and self-esteem are positive interrelated.

There are differences in individuals which lead to differential perception of body-esteem and self-esteem. Bolognini et. al stated that young women between 12 and 14 years experience a more global dimension of self-esteem including body-esteem

(Bolognini, Plancherel, Bettschart, & Halfon, 1996). This means that these two concepts body-esteem and self-esteem are not perceived as separated from each other but rather as a global dimension of self-esteem with the subunit body-esteem. We conclude that there also must be a higher correlation between self-esteem and body-esteem in this sample of adult women because they experience it as one single domain. If one concept is deranged, it has greater influence on the other. Further Bolognini stated that boys experience the concepts of body-esteem and self-esteem as more differentiated (Bolognini, Plancherel, Bettschart, & Halfon, 1996). They experience the concept self-esteem more separately of the concept body-esteem so that a changing perception of one concept does not necessarily lead to a changing perception of the other concept. We could thus assume that the link between self-esteem and body-esteem is less strong in men than in women. If one concept is deranged, it does not necessarily lead to a disruption of the other concept.

Evaluating the two gender studies by Mendelson et al. (1996) and Henriques and Calhoun (1999) one can also see that there are differences in how men and women experience body-esteem and self-esteem. These two studies clearly show adolescent and youngster women scoring significantly lower on self-esteem and body-esteem scales than men of the same age do. This study was conducted on a sample of college students and youngsters from high school. The results of these studies formed our basis for the assumption that women score lower on body-self unity scales.

A possible explanation for this phenomenon is given by the objectification theory which states that the exposure to chronic sexual objectification through media environment and beauty ideal of the society

evokes an objectified image of women's bodies, even regarding their own ones. The objectified view results in habitual body monitoring and has negative consequences for women's psychological, emotional and behavioural functioning (Calogero & Thompson, 2009). The "third-person-perspective" might lead to "increased opportunities for shame and anxiety, reduced opportunities for "optimal experience" and "diminished awareness of internal bodily states" (Fredrickson, Noll, Roberts, Quinn, & Twenge, 1998). Thus we could assume that the experience of the body as an object implicates a splitting of body and self which was stated by Bloom (1992) as well. This disturbed body-self unity causes self-esteem to diminish.

Another reason for the difference between the genders might be that the sources of body-esteem vary. Men's body evaluation is characterized by their body's capability rather than by their outer appearance (John & Ebbeck, 2008; Mendelson, White, & Mendelson, 1996). In contrast, women's body-esteem is more likely to be formed by their physical or sexual attractiveness (Silberstein, Striegel-Moore, Timko, & Rodin, 1988). Western culture imprints women to be thin. The enduring exposure to this beauty ideal via media results in body dissatisfaction (Bessenoff, 2006). Women gain feedback regarding their outer appearance through social interaction (Wade & Cooper, 1999). The restriction of the personality to outer appearance and attractiveness leads to dissatisfaction which is reflected by lower body-esteem. Lower body-esteem diminishes the body-self unity and can result in a low self-esteem.

The evolutionary theory gives us another explanation why men and women differ in the evaluation of their body. The various mate selection techniques have

socialized men and women to view different aspects to be attractive. Individuals focus on whether their body fulfills the evolutionary relevant features for mate competition (Wade & McCrea, 1999). Women who are physically attractive are evolutionarily regarded as much more fertile. Outer appearance represents a key reproductive resource (Buss, 1988). This could probably be the reason for women to form their body-esteem mainly out of their physical attractiveness (Wade & Cooper, 1999). The main role of the prehistoric man was hunting and the protection of the family (Euler & Hoier, 2008) which could have resulted in emphasizing the power of the body as the major aspect of attractiveness. Further, women had to be sure that the man was able to nourish the family. Intrasexual mate competition helps us to understand which aspects men and women consider to be attractive to the other sex and which they accentuate to impress their mate. During intrasexual mate competition members of the same sex compete against each other to gain mating access to the member of the opposite sex (Buss, 1988). Several studies showed that men more often use their occupational status and resource possession during intrasexual mate competition to impress women (Buss, 1988). The body-attractiveness of men was much less important. Together these different perspectives might give an explanation for the difference between the genders with respect to body – and self evaluation. The beauty ideal of the society might be formed by the evolutionary background which leads to the importance for women to be attractive and for men to be occupationally successful today, and years ago, powerful and strong. This might have caused women and men to evaluate themselves by taking different sources into account. For women the outer appearance is the source of evaluation

which is an indication for her fertility. For men physical fitness and their occupational status are more important because it demonstrates in which way the man is able to protect and nourish the family. Society and media leads women to focus on their body to fulfill the given beauty ideal which is nearly impossible. These results in women experiencing their bodies as an object separated from their self. Body-esteem gets lower and causes the body-self-unity to become low which in turn has a negative influence on self-esteem.

Our conceptual model states that body esteem in women formed out of their sexual attractiveness and in men out of their physical fitness directly influences the body-self-unity. If the body-self-unity is high, the individual experiences a high sense of self-esteem which in turn has a positive influence on his/her body-esteem. Body-esteem and self-esteem are positively related to each other.

We hypothesized women to experience lower body-self-unity in contrast to men (1). Further we expected women to have lower body-esteem (2) and self-esteem (3) in contrast to men. We assumed that higher body-esteem would imply higher body-self-unity. We hypothesized a stronger positive relation between body-esteem-attractiveness and body-self-unity in women than in men (4a) and a stronger positive relation between body-esteem-physical-fitness and body-self-unity in men than in women (4b). Further we hypothesized a positive relation between body-self-unity and self-esteem (5). Finally, we expected the relation between body-esteem and self-esteem to be stronger in women than in men (6).

Methods:

Participants:

The participants were drawn from the University of Twente, Netherlands. The participants were Dutch speaking ranging from age 17 to age 31 and had an average age of 22. The sample included in total 109 students with 54 women and 55 men. The sample consisted of 5 respondents which were under psychological treatment, 6 respondents which were under treatment because of an acute health problem and 4 respondents which had a chronic disease. The sample consisted of 50.5 percent respondents which had a partner.

Procedure:

In total 150 questionnaires were handed out. The participants were recruited on the Campus. They were asked to answer the questionnaire in public space by giving a short explanation about the topic of the questionnaire. In total 27 percent of the sample did not want to answer the questionnaire because of lack in time.

The participants were instructed how to fill in the questionnaire. Additionally they were asked to give the first answer which comes to mind. The researcher was available to answer questions.

Measures:

Self-esteem:

To assess the concept of self-esteem, we used the Rosenberg 10-item Self-Esteem Scale (RSE) (Rosenberg, 1965). This scale is the most widely used self-report scale to assess the global self-esteem (Marsh, 1996). The scale consists of 10 items, 5 of which are positively worded and 5 negatively worded.

A sample item is “I feel that I’m a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.” The items answer format ranges from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (4) with a range from 10 to 40 where a high score implies high self-esteem. The total score was computed by adding up all individual items scores. Cronbach’s alpha in the present study is .89 which indicates a very good internal consistency. The scale was translated into Dutch by a Dutch and English native speaker using the forward backward translation methodology.

Body-esteem:

The concept body-esteem was assessed by using the “body-esteem scale for adolescents and adults” (BESAA) (Mendelson, White, & Mendelson, 1997). This scale was developed by Mendelson et al. in 1982 to test children but was refined and tested over the past 19 years to become an instrument for testing adolescents and adults as well (Sullivan, 2007). The scale consists of three subscales that measure “general feelings about appearance” (BE_Appearance), “weight satisfaction” (BE_Weight) and “positive evaluations about one’s body and appearance with regard to other people perception” (BE_Attribution) on a 5 point Likert scale. The answer format of the scale ranges from *never* (1) to *always* (5). A sample item for the subscale “BE_appearance” includes “I like what I look like in pictures” the subscale ranges from 10 to 50 and includes 10 items (1,6,7,9,11,13,15,17,21,23 see Appendix). One sample item for the “BE_weight” subscale is “I am preoccupied with trying to change my body weight”. The subscale consists of 8 items (3,4,8,10,16,18,19,22) and has a range from 8 to 40. A sample item for the subscale “BE_attribution” is “Other people consider me good looking”. The

“BE_attribution” subscale consists of 5 items (2,5,12,14,20) with a range from 5 to 25. Some items (4,7,9,11,13,17,18,19,21) were negatively worded and had to be recoded for scoring. The total score for the body-esteem scale, including all subscales, ranges from 30 to 150 with higher scores indicating higher body esteem. The total score was computed by adding up all individual items scores. The body-esteem questionnaire assesses facets of attractiveness with its three subscales “Attractiveness”, “Attribution” and “Weight”. To measure the concept of body-esteem on the basis of the fitness component as well, we developed 7 items (24-30) with an adjusted answer format. The “BE_fitness” subscale ranges from 7 to 35. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for the “BE_fitness” subscale is .87. Cronbach’s alpha is .94 for the “BE_weight” subscale and .70 for the “BE_attribution” subscale which indicates an adequate internal consistency. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for the “BE_appearance” subscale is 0.90 and Cronbach’s alpha for the total body-esteem scale in the present sample is .95. The body-esteem scale was translated into Dutch by a Dutch and English native speaker using the forward backward translation methodology.

Body-self-unity:

To measure the concept of body-self unity, we used the Body Experience Questionnaire (BEQ) developed by Anouk van der Heij (2007). The scale consists of 2 subscales with one measuring the “Alienation of body and self” and the other assessing “the Harmony between body and self”. The scale consists of 10 items ranged from *totally disagree* (1) to *totally agree* (4) on a 4-point Likert scale. The total score was computed by adding up all individual items scores. A sample item for the “Alienation” subscale is: “My

body is a burden to me". The subscale consists of 6 items ranges from 6 to 24. Cronbach`s alpha for this subscale is .76 which indicates a good internal consistency. A sample item for the "Harmony" scale is: "My body feels familiar to me". Originally the scale consisted of 4 items. The alpha coefficient computed by reliability analysis showed an inadequate internal consistency so we had to delete one item ("I think about what is good for my body".) to obtain an alpha coefficient of .65. The "Harmony" subscale ranges from 3 to 12. Cronbach`s alpha coefficient computed for the total scale is .80 .

Data Analysis:

To test a normal distribution we used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. With $p > .05$ we could not assume a normal distribution for the sample on the body-experience questionnaire and the corresponding subscales. Further the sample had a normal distribution on the self-esteem scale and on the body-esteem scale. To analyze the mean difference between the genders on the body-esteem and the self-esteem scale we used an "*Independent sample T-test*" and compared the total means for men and women. To assess the difference between men and women on the body-experience questionnaire, we use a nonparametric *Mann Whitney U* test and compared the mean scores. The correlation coefficients were assessed by using a bivariate correlation analysis distinctive for the relations between body-esteem and body-self-unity, body-self-unity and self-esteem and self-esteem and body-esteem. All correlation coefficients concerning the concept body-self-unity were indicated in Spearman`s rho because the sample does not show a normal distribution on this concept. The rest of the correlation coefficients were indicated in a Pearson correlation. To compare the correlation

coefficients we used Fisher`s Z-transformation as implemented in the program MedCalc for Windows version 10.4. Other data were analyzed by using the statistical program SPSS version 16.0 for Windows.

Results:

Hypotheses:

- 1) We hypothesized women to have a lower body-self-unity in contrast to men.
- 2) We hypothesized women to have lower body-esteem in contrast to men.
- 3) We hypothesized women to have lower self-esteem in contrast to men.
- 4a) We hypothesized a stronger positive relation between body-esteem-attractiveness and body-self-unity in women than in men.
- 4b) We hypothesized a stronger positive relation between body-esteem-physical fitness and body-self-unity in men than in women.
- 5) We hypothesized a positive relation between body-self-unity and self-esteem.
- 6) We hypothesized a stronger positive relation between body-esteem and self-esteem in women than in men.

Analysis was conducted to assess the difference between the genders concerning the three concepts. Table 1 presents the mean values of men and women on the three scales and corresponding subscales. Table 2 shows the correlation between the concepts for the two genders.

Table 1 presents the mean values for men and women. It was evident that women score significantly lower on body-self-unity in contrast to men. This outcome confirmed our first hypothesis that women score lower on the concept body-self-unity in contrast to men (1). Further the data showed that women score significantly lower on body-esteem in contrast to men

which supported our second hypothesis (2). Our third hypothesis was also supported because it was shown that women score significantly lower on the concept of self-esteem in comparison to men (3). All

differences regarding these measures were significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 1
Mean Score and Standard Deviations, t-value/Z and p-value on the BEQ, the SES the BES and corresponding subscales of men and women computed with Independent Sample T-Test and Mann Whitney U

	Group		t-value/Z	p
	Men	Women		
Body-experience questionnaire (BEQ)	31.3 (3.3)	29.5 (4.5)	-2.2	0.02 ²
BEQ_Alienation	8.7 (2.5)	10.1 (3.4)	-2.2	0.03 ³
BEQ_Harmony	10.0 (1.4)	9.6 (1.6)	-1.6	0.12 ³
Self-esteem-scale (SES)	34.3 (4.3)	31.9 (6.5)	2.2	0.01 ²
Body-esteem-scale (BES)	109.5 (13.6)	92.4 (20.9)	5.1	0.00 ²
BES_Weight	31.8 (5.0)	23.4 (7.8)	6.8	0.00 ³
BES_Appearance	38.8 (5.1)	34.1 (7.3)	3.8	0.00 ³
BES_Attribution	16.0 (2.7)	15.9 (3.6)	0.2	0.85 ³
BES_Fitness	22.9 (4.8)	19.0 (5.4)	4.0	0.00 ³
BES_Attractiveness	86.6 (10.4)	73.4 (16.7)	5.0	0.00 ³

N = 109

² one-tailed

³ two-tailed

Correlation analysis was used to examine the relation between the concepts BE-attractiveness and body-self-unity separate for men and women. We hypothesized that the correlation might be stronger for women than for men (4a). The results are shown in Table2. The positive correlation between BE-attractiveness and body-self-unity was found to be statistically significant for both men ($r(107) = .43$, $p < .01$) and women ($r(107) = .66$, $p < .01$). By comparison of the correlation coefficients the data showed that the difference is not significant which

stands in contrast to our hypothesis. The comparison showed a tendency in women correlation stronger than in men with $p = 0.05$. The correlation between BE-fitness and body-self-unity is found to be significant in women ($r(107) = .32$, $p < .01$) but not in men ($r(107) = .15$, $p > .05$). Through comparison of the correlation coefficients it is shown that they do not significantly differ. These results are in contrast to our hypothesis (4b). We further hypothesized a positive correlation between body-esteem (BES) and self-esteem (SES) (5). This hypothesis was

significantly ($r(107) = .66, p < .01$) confirmed. We stated that the correlation between body-esteem and self-esteem might be stronger for women than for men (6). The correlations are found to be significant for men ($r(107) = .44, p < .01$) and for women ($r(107) = .73, p < .01$). By comparison of the two correlation

coefficients it is shown that the correlation is significantly stronger for women than for men. This result supports our assumption that the correlation between these two concepts might be stronger for women than for men (5).

Table 2
Intercorrelations between psychological relevant variables for men and women

	Correlation coefficient		z-statistics ¹	p-value
	men	women		
Body-experience-questionnaire (BEQ) -body-esteem-attractiveness(BE_A)	.43**	.66**	-1.67	0.05
Body-experience-questionnaire (BEQ) -body-esteem-fitness (BE_F)	.15	.32*	0.92	0.18
Body-esteem (BES_T)– Self-esteem (SES)	.44**	.73**	2.32	0.01

**p < .01 (one-tailed)

*p < .05 (one-tailed)

¹ Fisher transformation: 'z' as statistical value of testing a significant difference between the correlation coefficients
N = 109

Table 3
Pearson and Spearman's correlations between the scales and subscales for men and women

	BEQ_T	BEQ_A	BEQ_H	SE_T	BES_T	BE_W	BE_Ap	BE_At	BE_F	BE_A
BEQ_T ¹	1	-.93**	.71**	.45**	.52**	.50**	.55**	.28**	.32**	.56**
BEQ_A ¹		1	-.42**	-.37**	-.50**	-.48**	-.55**	-.23*	-.32**	-.54**
BEQ_H ¹			1	.44**	.45**	.43**	.43**	.30**	.29**	.48**
SE_T ²				1	.66**	.55**	.69**	.45**	.46**	.67**
BES_T ²					1	.91**	.89**	.63**	.82**	.98**
BE_W ²						1	.73**	.41**	.71**	.91**
BE_Ap ²							1	.57**	.57**	.92**
BE_At ²								1	.41**	.66**
BE_F ²									1	.69**
BE_A ²										1

BEQ_A = alienation; BEQ_H = harmony; BE_W = weight; BE_Ap = appearance; BE_At = attribution; BE_F = fitness; BE_A = attractiveness

**p < .01 (two-tailed)

*p < .05 (two-tailed)

¹ Spearman's rho

² Pearson Correlations
N = 109

Table 4

Intercorrelations between the scales and subscales for women

	BEQ_T	BEQ_A	BEQ_H	SE_T	BE_T	BE_W	BE_Ap	BE_At	BE_F	BE_A
BEQ_T ¹	1	-.95**	.70**	.63**	.63**	.62**	.66**	.37**	.32*	.66**
BEQ_A ¹		1	-.48**	-.56**	-.59**	-.55**	-.65**	-.33*	-.33*	-.62**
BEQ_H ¹			1	.55**	.52**	.55**	.48**	.29*	.27*	.53**
SE_T ²				1	.73**	.66**	.78**	.52**	.48**	.76**
BE_T ²					1	.91**	.91**	.74**	.83**	.98**
BE_W ²						1	.75**	.52**	.72**	.90**
BE_Ap ²							1	.73**	.63**	.94**
BE_At ²								1	.47**	.78**
BE_F ²									1	.71**
BE_A ²										1

BEQ_A = alienation; BEQ_H = harmony; BE_W = weight; BE_Ap = appearance; BE_At = attribution; BE_F = fitness; BE_A = attractiveness

**p< .01 (two-tailed)

*p< .05 (two-tailed)

¹ Spearman's rho² Pearson Correlations

N = 54

Table 5

Intercorrelations between the scales and subscales for men

	BEQ_T	BEQ_A	BEQ_H	SE_T	BE_T	BE_W	BE_Ap	BE_At	BE_F	BE_A
BEQ_T ¹	1	-.86**	.71**	.19	.36**	.29*	.40**	.19	.15	.43**
BEQ_A ¹		1	-.35*	-.09	-.35**	-.34*	-.42**	-.13	-.13	-.43**
BEQ_H ¹			1	.30*	.39**	.26*	.34*	.33*	.20	.42**
SE_T ²				1	.44**	.24	.44**	.34*	.33*	.42**
BE_T ²					1	.86**	.77**	.61**	.76**	.95**
BE_W ²						1	.57**	.40**	.56**	.87**
BE_Ap ²							1	.34*	.33*	.86**
BE_At ²								1	.39**	.62**
BE_F ²									1	.53**
BE_A ²										1

BEQ_A = alienation; BEQ_H = harmony; BE_W = weight; BE_Ap = appearance; BE_At = attribution; BE_F = fitness; BE_A

= attractiveness

**p< .01 (two-tailed)

*p< .05 (two-tailed)

¹ Spearman's rho² Pearson Correlations

N = 55

The hypotheses (1,2,3) concerning the difference of men and women on the three scales were confirmed.

The correlation analysis revealed that women and

men do not differ in the correlation between body-esteem-fitness/attractiveness and body-self-unity (4a, 4b). The positive relation between body-esteem and self-esteem was supported in the study (5) and was found to be stronger in women than in men (6).

Discussion

This exploratory study revealed similarities and differences between men and women on the concepts self-esteem, body-esteem and body-self-unity. A gender difference on all three concepts was found. It was shown that women have a lower body-self-unity. The reason might be the unrealizable beauty ideal given by the society. Not achieving the beauty ideal results in a “third-person-perspective” of the body (Frederickson, Noll, Roberts, Quinn & Twenge, 1998) and therefore in the disunity of body and self. Another explanation for the present effect might be that women experience greater self-attention. This means that they are more aware of their self and much more self-reflective in contrast to men. Ingram et. al showed in their study that women are more disposed to direct attention internally (Ingram, Cruet, Johnson, & Wisnicki, 1988). Because “women react more strongly to situational factors that induce self-focus” (Csank & Conway, 2004), they are much more critical to themselves which prompts them score lower on the three scales. Women are more self-attentive concerning their body which is reflected in taking a “third-person-perspective” and observing the own body. They are more self-attentive concerning their self as well (Ingram, Cruet, Johnson, & Wisnicki, 1988). The increased self-attention leads to higher demands toward the self and the body so that not achieving results in a disrupted body-self-unity.

Contrary to our assumption the correlation between the concept body-esteem-attractiveness and body-

self-unity was not found to be significantly different in men and women. The results showed a tendency in women correlation somewhat stronger than in men, but the difference was not significant. We assume that the importance of attractiveness is the same for men and women concerning their body-evaluation. Further it is shown that the correlation between body-fitness and body-self-unity did not significantly differ in men and women. The correlation is actually somewhat stronger for women than for men but this relationship was not found to be significant. This effect stands in contrast to our supposition. We assumed the importance of the fitness component with regard to the body-self-unity to be stronger for men than for women. Wade & Cooper (1999) showed in their study that women’s belief about their body’s health also has predictive influence on their perceived attractiveness. Physical fitness is an indicator of a healthy body (Blair, Cheng, & Holder, 1994; Wade T.,2000) which explains the importance of the fitness component for womens body-evaluation. Women and men possibly do not differ in their sources of self-evaluation. Both genders include attractiveness and physical-fitness in gaining an evaluation of their body. The different views of attractive features in men and women based on the evolutionary theory might be false nowadays. We could assume the evolutionary perspective to be antiquated because of the changing prototypes of men and women during the years. Women are no more only accountable for the family and child bearing. They have become more emancipated and independet of men whereas men are more involved in houseworking (Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer, & Robinson, 2000) These new gender roles are formed by the interaction with the evironment (Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999). As the environment changes and develops, new sorts of

gender roles are shaped. There might be a convergence of the genders concerning the gender prototype which makes the evolutionary theory not applicable on the present sample.

A significant difference is found in the correlation between body-esteem and self-esteem for men and women. The correlation between the two concepts is significantly positive which supports our conceptual model. The correlation is stronger for women than for men, which shows that self perceived attractiveness and self-esteem are strongly linked to the body for women, but weakly for men (Wade, 2000). This outcome supports also the expectation that women experience self-esteem as a global domain (Bolognini, 1996) because of the stronger correlation between the concepts. We can assume that body-esteem forms a part of their self-esteem.

A shortcoming in the present study is the self-report character of the scales. An objective measure of the psychological variables was impossible. The selective sample of students makes it difficult to generalize the outcomes, which forms another shortcoming of the study. The sample consisted of high educated individuals which could have had an effect on self-esteem. Bachman et. al found educational attainment

to be positively correlated with self-esteem in young men (Bachman & O'Malley, 1977). This could also be the case in women so that the present sample might have had higher self-esteem. We propose that a study with a lower educated sample could result in different outcomes. Additionally, the used body-experience questionnaire, developed to assess the body-self-unity in a rheumatism population, reduces the validity on the present study. The fact that we had to delete one item shows that the underlying construct does not mean the same in a healthy sample. In the rheumatism sample the item "I think about what is good for my body" measured the "Harmony" between body and self. In healthy condition high scoring on this item indicated disharmony with the body. As a healthy individual explicitly thinks about his/her body, it might be a "pre-stage" of the "object body" (Hudak, McKeever & Wright, 2007) in which the body becomes objectified so that the body-self-unity becomes disrupted.

A practical implication for further studies is the use of a body-self-unity-scale which is more sensitive for measuring the concept in a healthy sample. Further it might be interesting to verify the outcomes within a less selective sample

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Appendix:

Beste medestudent

In het kader van mijn bachelortheses ga ik een onderzoek uitvoeren met betrekking tot lichaamsbeleving. Het doel van mijn studie is het valideren van drie vragenlijsten in verschillende populaties.

De vragenlijsten bevatten stellingen die dienen te worden beantwoord. Elke stelling geeft vier antwoordmogelijkheden van "helemaal oneens" tot "helemaal eens". Let op dat je de vragen eerlijk en zo goed mogelijk beantwoord. Kies het antwoord dat als eerste in je op komt.

Voorbeeld:

	helemaal oneens	beetje oneens	beetje eens	helemaal eens
5) Ik voel me niet heel.	X	O	O	O

Het invullen van de vragenlijst duurt ongeveer 15 minuten. De antwoorden worden anoniem behandeld en alleen maar in dit onderzoek gebruikt. Als er nog vragen zijn wil ik die graag beantwoorden. Aan het eind van de vragenlijst bestaat er nog een mogelijkheid voor opmerkingen en suggesties.

Hartelijk bedankt voor jouw medewerking!

Leeftijd: _____ jaar

Geslacht: man O vrouw O

Studie: _____

Partner relatie: ja O Nee O

Ben je op dit moment in behandeling bij een arts of therapeut? Nee O Ja O

Indien `JA` waarom? _____

Let op! Dit document is tweezijdig!!!

De volgende 10 meten jouw lichaamswaarneming.

helemaal oneens beetje oneens beetje eens helemaal eens

1) Ik denk na over wat goed is voor mijn lichaam.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2) Mijn lichaam is mij tot last.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3) Het voelt alsof mijn lichaam niet van mij is.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4) Ik voel me niet heel.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5) Mijn lichaam laat mij weten wat goed is.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6) Mijn lichaam is onvoorspelbaar.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7) Ik voel me verraden door mijn lichaam.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8) Ik zou graag een ander lichaam willen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9) Ik voel mijn lichaam goed aan.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10) Mijn lichaam voelt vertrouwd.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Let op! Dit document is tweezijdig!!!

De volgende 10 vragen meten jouw zelfwaardering.

helemaal oneens beetje oneens beetje eens helemaal eens

1) Ik vind dat ik een waardevol persoon ben, minstens even waardevol als anderen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2) Ik vind dat ik een aantal goede kwaliteiten heb.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3) Al met al ben ik geneigd om te denken dat ik een mislukking ben.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4) Ik kan de dingen even goed doen als de meeste mensen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5) Ik vind dat ik niet veel heb om trots op te zijn.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6) Ik neem een positieve houding aan tegenover mezelf.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7) Alles bij elkaar ben ik tevreden met mezelf.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8) Ik wou dat ik meer respect kon hebben voor mezelf.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9) Soms voel ik me beslist nutteloos.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10) Soms denk ik dat ik totaal niets waard ben.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Let op! Dit document is tweezijdig!!!

De volgende 30 vragen meten jouw lichaamswaardering.

	Nooit	zelden	soms	vaak	altijd
1) Het bevalt me hoe ik eruit zie op foto's.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2) Anderen vinden dat ik er knap uit zie.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3) Ik ben trots op mijn lichaam.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4) Mijn aandacht is erop gericht mijn lichaamsgewicht te verminderen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5) Ik denk dat mijn uiterlijk me kan helpen een baan te krijgen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6) Ik ben blij met wat ik zie als ik in de spiegel kijk.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7) Er is veel dat ik zou veranderen aan mijn uiterlijk als het kon.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8) Ik ben tevreden met mijn gewicht.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9) Ik zou willen dat ik er beter uit zag.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10) Mijn gewicht bevalt me best goed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11) Ik wens me dat ik eruit zag als iemand anders.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Let op! Dit document is tweezijdig!!!

	Nooit	zelden	soms	vaak	altijd
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12) Mensen van mijn leeftijd vinden dat ik een goed uiterlijk heb.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13) Mijn uiterlijk maakt me van streek.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14) Ik zie er net zo goed uit als de meeste mensen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15) Ik ben best blij met hoe ik eruit zie.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16) Ik vind dat ik een goed gewicht heb voor mijn lengte.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17) Ik schaam me voor mijn uiterlijk.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18) Mezelf wegen maakt me ongelukkig.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19) Mijn gewicht maakt me ongelukkig.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20) Mijn uiterlijk helpt me om afspraakjes te krijgen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21) Ik maak me zorgen over mijn uiterlijk.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22) Ik vind dat ik een goed lichaam heb.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Let op! Dit document is tweezijdig!!!

Nooit zelden soms vaak altijd

23) Ik zie er zo leuk uit als ik zou willen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24) Ik voel mezelf lichamelijk fit.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25) Ik heb een goed getrainde lichaam.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26) Anderen zijn jaloers op mijn getrainde lichaam.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27) Ik wens me om getrainder uit te zien.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28) Ik schaam me voor mijn ongetrainde lichaam.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29) Ik ben trots op mijn gespierde lichaam.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30) Anderen vinden dat ik sportief ben.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Hartelijk bedankt voor jouw medewerking!!!!

Ruimte voor opmerkingen of vragen.

<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
