

# Body Image Disorder and its Relationship to Parental Treatment Styles for Female University Students

Elamrousy, Nilly Hussien Kamel

Associate Professor of Counseling and Psychotherapy

Department of Psychology, Faculty of Education, King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia

Email: nalamrosi@kku.edu.sa

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## Abstracts

The aim of the current research is to reveal the nature of the relationship between body image disorder and parental treatment styles. The sample was 200 volunteer female university student participants. The research tools were applied to these volunteer female students during the academic year 2024, which are (the body image scale, prepared by Al-Desouky, (2004), and the scale (Parental Treatment Styles, prepared by El-Amrousy, (2018), the descriptive approach was used, and the results showed that there is no statistically significant correlation between body image disorder and parental treatment styles among female university students with regard to the image of the father and the image of the mother. There are statistically significant differences between The average scores of female students who have a positive body image and female students who have a negative body image on the scale of parental treatment styles (father image) are at a significance level (0.05) in favor of female students who have a positive body image. The study recommended the necessity of creating psychological counseling programs for female students. The university provides women with body image disorders to help them rebuild psychologically and reach psychological and social compatibility.

Keywords: body image disorder, parental treatment styles, female university students.

## 1. Introduction

Body image and appearance constitute an important aspect in a person's life, given that psychological health is linked to a positive body image. When a person has a positive image of his physical appearance and self-esteem, he lives in a normal state, and since each society has its own standards that contribute to adopting an ideal body image, If the body image matches these standards, the individual feels physically attractive, and if the body image differs from these standards, he develops negative attitudes towards his physical attractiveness, especially girls in adolescence are more susceptible to psychological disorders, and this may be a result of the psychological pressures that the girl suffers from, whether on the level The personal or family level and the prevailing different parental treatment methods, whether from the father or the mother. From this standpoint, teenage females who have a positive relationship with their parents feel satisfied with their body image and have a positive body image. Also Female university students have increased feelings of body image disturbance for various reasons, including parental treatment styles.

Porras, et al., (2020) explained that body image disturbance expresses negative evaluation and attitude towards oneself and is one of the basic symptoms of eating disorders, including bulimia nervosa. (Murry, et al., 2018) also stated that negative body image appears when the self-image differs from objective reality and psychological problems such as low self-esteem and depression appear.

In this regard; The results of the study (Hedgepeth, 2009: 4483) showed that family variables and parental treatment methods are among the strongest predictors of dissatisfaction with body image. The results of the study (Miller, 2001) also showed that the impact of parents in terms of the quality of parental treatment methods and attention to appearance is at its lowest in Middle adolescence.

In light of the above; (Greenberg, et, al., 2016) explained that body image is the image formed in a person's mind about what his body looks like, and the extent of his satisfaction with his body according to the standards he received from various sources such as family, peers, and the media. An individual's dissatisfaction with his body may result in Psychological disorders.

In addition to the above, peer influence contributes to shaping body image, which becomes a problem for adolescents (Geller & Goldner, 2000). Likewise, the media plays a major role in causing teenage girls to suffer from body image disorder (Amaral & Ferreira, 2017).

Griffiths, et al., (2021, 86) explained body image disorder as a set of neutral, positive or negative thoughts, beliefs and feelings about an individual's physical appearance, and that this disorder refers to some psychological disorders in which body image is a major psychological component, such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa.

Al-Desouky, (2006: 19-25) defined body image disorder as "when an individual is preoccupied with his physical appearance to the extent that it causes disruption in his life, this is called body image disorder. Also, (Salama, 2024: 56) defined body image disorder as the mental image that a person has of his body, whether neutral, positive or negative, which leads to weakness in the social, familial, psychological and professional fields. While (Veale. D., 2004: 113) defined body image disorder as an exaggerated preoccupation with an imagined defect in physical appearance, and this causes psychological disorder. Likewise (Abu Hashish, 2023, 632) he defined body image disorder as an adolescent's preoccupation with the presence of a slight or real deformity in a part of his body, which leads him to avoid others, situations, and social interactions. (Mahmoud et al., 2020) explained that parental treatment methods, with their positive and negative poles, may contribute to achieving the psychological health of children or causing them to develop some disorders, including somatic symptom disorder. Sulaiman & Baramily, (2024: 6) defined parental treatment methods as the sum of the methods used by parents during the care and upbringing of their children. These are the methods followed by parents to make their children acquire different types of behavior from values, customs, and traditions. They are the sum of small daily actions and events, and the group of words and dialogues that take place between parents and their children, which contain a strong influence on the children's feelings and personalities. El-Amrousy, (2018) defined parental treatment methods as the methods and behaviors that parents follow in raising their children and are clear in the treatment of these children during many life situations across the various stages of their development, and then

affect their personalities positively or negatively through mutual interaction between parents and their children. (Sabri, 2020: 180) pointed out that adolescence is the most sensitive stage of development, especially for females, and girls in adolescence tend toward perfectionism and idealism, which often leads to dissatisfaction with their body images and associated psychological disorders. Soliman & Brameli, (2024) determined that the individual's behavior is a response to the environment in which he lives, and that the lack of a family atmosphere that understands the individual's needs pushes him to behavior characterized by rejection directed toward the self, which leads to the emergence of some psychological disorders. Also, (Mahmoud; Saafan & Ajajah, 2020: 26) explained that parents contribute greatly to achieving the psychological health of their children. If the parental treatment methods are correct, they will protect the children from disorders and make them psychologically healthy. However, if the methods are incorrect, they will negatively affect them in all aspects of their lives and expose them to diseases and psychological disorders.

In light of the above; The idea of the current research came to study the correlation between body image disorder and parental treatment styles, whether from the father or mother, among female university students.

By reviewing the psychological literature, the results of some previous studies that dealt with body image disorder, such as the study of Schneider, et al., 2023, which showed a high level of body image disorder among students and recommended attention to reducing this disorder among them. The study of (Justino ; Enaes & Nucci, 2020) showed that body image disorder is widespread among male students, with 66% wanting to gain weight, 68% wanting to lose weight, and 12.1% feeling satisfied with their body image, while female students have a high level of dissatisfaction with their body image. Also, the study of (Faraj, 2023) found a statistically significant negative correlation between body image disorder and bulimia nervosa.

There have been many results of studies that dealt with body image and parental treatment methods, such as the study of (Haworth, 2000), which emphasized the important role played by the family environment and coercive parental control on the problems of eating disorders and dissatisfaction with body image, (Kichler & Crowther, 2001), which showed that negative family communication interferes in the relationship between maternal modeling and children's body image. (Salton, 2001), which showed that subjects who have a close relationship with their parents have high levels of satisfaction with body image, (Miller, 2001) which showed that teenage females who have a positive relationship with their parents feel satisfied with their body image. (Phares, 2004), which revealed differences between the sexes in parental influences and the influences of companions on body image disturbances, self-esteem, and psychological adjustment among pre-adolescent children, (Faul, 2007), whose results indicated that there is an effect Strong for perceived family pressures and shame on body image, (Cordero, 2007) whose results showed that critical messages from mothers and fathers influence dissatisfaction with body image, (Cooley, et, al., 2008) whose results showed that negative feedback provided by mothers It affects body image and is reflected in body image disorders in girls.

In light of the above; It turns out that there is no study - within the researcher's knowledge - that has addressed body image disorder and its relationship to parental treatment methods, especially in the Saudi environment, Hence, the aim of the current research is to reveal the nature of the

relationship between body image disorder and parental treatment methods, and to identify the differences between female university students who have image problems. Positive body students and their counterparts who have a negative body image on the parental treatment styles scale.

The importance of the current study is that it addresses an important topic in mental health. When body image is positive, it is normal (satisfaction), and when it is negative and disturbed, it is dissatisfaction. The sample of the current study is female university students in Saudi society, and they are more concerned with body image. In particular, the female students of the College of Education are future teachers, and it is important that they enjoy good psychological health, because of their influential role in the educational and pedagogical process. Also, the university stage, which is an important age stage, has certain characteristics, as it falls between the two stages (adolescence - young adulthood), so if they find problems in body image, this led to psychological disorders among them. This study will help in the possibility of planning to develop counseling and psychological treatment programs, to modify the misconceptions and negative thoughts of teenage girls and girls who have a body image disorder. The research problem crystallizes in answering the main question, "What is the correlation between body image disorder and parental treatment styles among a sample of female students at King Khalid University?" Therefore, the current research sought to verify the following hypotheses:

1- A) There is a statistically significant correlation between body image scores and parental treatment styles (father image) scores among a sample of female university students.

B) There is a statistically significant correlation between body image scores and parental treatment styles scores (image of the mother) among a sample of female university students.

2- A) There are statistically significant differences between the average scores of female students who have a positive body image and the scores of female students who have a negative body image on a scale of parental treatment styles (father image), in favor of female students who have a positive body image.

B) There are statistically significant differences between the average scores of female students who have a positive body image and the scores of female students who have a negative body image on a scale of parental treatment styles (mother image) in favor of female students who have a positive body image.

## **2. Method:**

### **2.1- Research Methodology:**

The current research benefited from the psychological heritage and previous studies in determining the appropriate methodology and sample and supporting its results. It relied on the descriptive, correlational approach to suit the nature of this research.

## 2.2- Types of Participants:

The participants were 200 volunteer students from the third and fifth levels in the Department of Psychology at the College of Education at King Khalid University in Saudi Arabia. Their ages ranged between (19-24) years, with the arithmetic mean for their ages being (20.27) and the standard deviation (1.11). This study received ethical approval from the Ethics Committee at King Khalid University.

## 2.3- Types of Outcome Measures:

The research tools were applied to these volunteer students during the academic year 2024, which is (Body Image Scale, prepared by Al-Dasouky, 2004) consisting of (34) statements, in which the examinee is asked to answer the statements according to five alternatives, which are always (4) degrees, often (3) degrees, sometimes (2), rarely (1) one degree, never (0) zero, and the degrees in the statements reflect (6, 11, 13, 19, 22, 24, 25) and a high score on this scale indicates satisfaction with body image, and a low score indicates disturbance/dissatisfaction with body image.

The scale (Parental Treatment Methods, prepared by El-Amrousy, 2018) consists of (9) consecutive dimensions (cruelty and strictness - discrimination - pampering - rejection - acceptance - overprotection - rejection and neglect - provoking psychological pain - correct methods of upbringing) and included (100) phrases, of which (50) phrases represent the image of the father, and (50) phrases represent the image of the mother in a manner consistent with the Saudi environment, according to the graduated weights, which are: Always applies (3) degrees - Sometimes applies (2) degrees - Not applicable (1) degree, and the high degree on the scale indicates that the student enjoys good parental treatment methods, while the low degree on the scale indicates poor parental treatment methods to which the student (the examinee) was exposed.

## 2.4- Meta-analytic Procedures:

The psychometric properties of these tools were verified on a survey sample of (80) female students from the College of Education at King Khalid University, aged between (19-24) with an average age of (20.12) and a standard deviation of (0.98), using construct validity (internal consistency) by calculating the Pearson correlation coefficient between the score of each statement (item) with the total score of the body image scale. It was found that the values of the correlation coefficients of the statements (items) of the body image scale with the total score ranged between (0.291, 0.682) and all of these coefficients are statistically significant at a significance level of (0.01). The calculation of discriminant validity showed that the critical ratio for the scores of the highest 25% and the lowest 25% reached a value of (23.28). This value indicates that the differences between the two groups are statistically significant at a significance level of (0.01), which indicates the ability of the scale to distinguish between those with high and low body image and thus The consistency of the scale and the validity of its content (items or phrases) in measuring body image disorder were demonstrated. The reliability coefficient was calculated using the Spearman-Brown equations, which amounted to (0.5817) and the Guttman equation, which amounted to (0.5254). These values are statistically significant at the significance level (0.01), indicating the reliability of the body image scale.

The correlation coefficients were also calculated between each phrase (item) and the dimension to which it belongs in both the father's image and the mother's image, and it was found that the correlation value between the phrases and their dimensions is statistically significant at a significance level of (0.01), except for phrase No. (17) which belongs to the third dimension, which is statistically significant at a significance level of (0.05), indicating the validity of the parental treatment styles scale, the father's image and the mother's image. The correlation coefficients were also calculated between each dimension and the total score of the scale in both the father's image and the mother's image, and it was found that the values of the correlation coefficients (Pearson) between each dimension and the total score of the scale in the mother's image and the father's image are high and significant at a significance level of (0.01), indicating the validity of the parental treatment styles scale. The stability coefficient of the parental treatment styles scale was also calculated for both the father's image and the mother's image using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, and the total alpha value was high, indicating that the parental treatment styles scale enjoys a high degree of stability.

3. Results:

3.1- Testing the validity of the first hypothesis:

- A) "There is a statistically significant correlation between body image scores and scores on parental treatment styles (image of the father) among a sample of female university students".
- B) "There is a statistically significant correlation between body image scores and parental treatment styles scores (image of the mother) This is for the benefit of female students who have a positive body image.

To verify the validity of this hypothesis, the Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated between the scores of the research sample members on the two scales of body image and parental treatment styles, and the following table shows this:

Table (1) Significance of the correlation coefficient between the scores of the research sample members on the two scales of body image and parental treatment styles

Measurement	Body image		sample (n)
Methods of parental treatment of the father's image	Pearson correlation coefficient	Significance level	200
	0,199	0,321	
Methods of parental treatment of the mother's image	0,150	Not significant	
		0,328	
		Not significant	

It is clear from Table (1) that the value of the Pearson correlation coefficient for the father's image reached (0.199) at a significance level of (0.321), which is a low value that is not statistically significant, and the value of the Pearson correlation coefficient for the mother's image reached (0.150) at a significance level of (0.328), which is a low value that is not statistically significant. Statistically significant. Therefore, the first assumption was not fulfilled.

As there is no significant correlation between body image and parental treatment styles among members of the research sample as a whole with regard to the image of the father and the image of the mother.

### 3.2- Testing the validity of the second hypothesis:

A) “There are statistically significant differences between the average scores of female students who have a positive body image and the scores of female students who have a negative body image on a scale of parental treatment styles (father image), in favor of female students who have a positive body image.”

To verify the validity of this hypothesis, the means, standard deviation, T value and their statistical significance were calculated, and the following table shows this:

Table (2) Means, standard deviations, T-value, and their statistical significance for female students who have a positive body image, female students who have a positive body image, and female students who have a negative body image on the scale of parental treatment styles (father's image)

the scale	The two comparison groups	Average	standard deviation	value (T)	Significance level
Parental treatment styles (father's image)	The highest quartile of female students has a positive body image	92,56	6,88	2,04	0,05 Sig.
	The lowest quartile of female students has negative body image	89,84	6,48		

It is clear from Table (2) that there are statistically significant differences between the average scores of female students who have a positive body image and female students who have a negative body image on the scale of parental treatment methods (father image) at a significance level of (0.05) in favor of female students who have a positive body image.

B) “There are statistically significant differences between the average scores of female students who have a positive body image and the scores of female students who have a negative body image on a scale of parental treatment styles (mother image) in favor of female students who have a positive body image.”

Table (3) shows the means, standard deviations, T value, and its statistical significance for female students who have a positive body image, female students who have a positive body image, and female students who have a negative body image on the scale of parental treatment styles (mother's image).

the scale	The two comparison groups	Average	standard deviation	value (T)	Significance level
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Parental treatment styles (mother's image)	The highest quartile of female students has a positive body image	95,72	7,34	0,996	0,322 Non Sig.
	The lowest quartile of female students has negative body image	94,24	7,83		

It is clear from Table (3) that there are no statistically significant differences between the average scores of female students who have a positive body image and female students who have a negative body image on the scale of parental treatment methods (mother image).

It is clear from Table (2) and (3) that the second hypothesis is partially correct, as statistically significant differences appeared at the level of significance (0.05) in the variable of parental treatment methods followed by the father, in favor of female students in the group of the highest quartiles of positive body image, while there are no Statistically significant differences in the variable of parental treatment methods followed by the mother, where the value of (t) = 0.996, which is a statistically non-significant value.

4. Discussion:

The result of the first hypothesis can be interpreted in light of the economic situation of members of Saudi society, especially Saudi women, and especially university girls, as the family is interested in providing material capabilities to its daughters, which enables them to take care of their personal appearance, regardless of whether the methods of parental treatment in general are normal or abnormal. The methods of parental treatment did not affect Followed by her upbringing regarding her physical image and her desire to pay attention to her physical attractiveness.

This result is consistent with the study (Faul, 2007), which showed that there is no influence of parents on body image, as there is no significant correlation between body image disturbance and parental treatment methods in general. But it differs with some results of studies

Haworth, 2000- Kichler & Crowther, 2001- Miller, 2001-Salton, 2001 - Cordero, 2007-Cooley, et al., 2008- Hedgепeth, 2009).

Which explained that the family environment plays a pivotal role in the development of body image disorders, and pointed to the role played by parents as protective factors against body image disorders, and also emphasized the importance of the role played by the quality of parental treatment methods and the quality of relationships between parents and children on body image and interest in appearance in adolescent girls.

The current results showed that there were differences between female university students who had a positive body image and their counterparts who had a negative body image, due to the parental treatment methods followed by the father in raising them, in favor of female students who had a positive body image.



The results of the second hypothesis are partly consistent with the results of both the study (Salton, 2001), which found that students who have a close relationship with their parents feel physically attractive and enjoy high levels of satisfaction with body image, and the study (Miller, 2001), which showed that females Adolescent girls who have a positive relationship with their parents have a positive body image, and a study (Hedgepeth, 2009) showed that positive relationships between parents and daughter are among the strongest predictors of a positive body image.

While the second part of the results of this hypothesis is that “there are no differences between female students who have a positive body image and their counterparts who have a negative body image, due to the correct parental treatment methods followed by the mother in raising them.”

This is consistent with the results of some previous studies, such as the study (Cooley, et al., 2008), which confirmed that negative feedback provided by mothers affects body image and is reflected in body image disorders in girls.

It differs from the results of some studies, such as the study (Howorth, 2000) on the importance of the role played by the family environment and coercive parental control in the problems of body image disorders, (Cordero, 2007), which showed that critical messages from mothers and fathers affect dissatisfaction with body image.

## 5. Conclusion:

There are many factors that influence body image, including parents and family, as family observations about the individual's weight and unreasonable expectations from the family are considered factors that lead to body image disorder. Childhood Adversity, as Veale (2004: 121) indicated that childhood traumas such as (harassment and feelings of discontent related to physical appearance, lack of family support) are considered factors that cause body image disorder.

Parental attitudes in treating children, their relationships with their fathers and mothers, and the methods of treatment they follow with them are among the most important problems that prevent them from mental health. Therefore, the current research was limited to studying parental treatment methods to determine its relationship to body image disorder among female university students who are in the stage of late adolescence and early adulthood. This is the stage in which the importance of physical appearance increases more clearly, regardless of whether the parental treatment methods are normal or abnormal, whether from the father or the mother. Which indicates a weak effect of the parental treatment styles of both the father and mother on the body image of female university students. The agreement and difference between the results of the current study and other previous studies can be explained in light of the civilizational and cultural differences of the societies in which these studies were conducted. The study recommended the necessity of creating psychological counseling programs for female university students who have a body image disorder to help them psychologically rebuild and reach psychological and social compatibility. Among the implications of the results of the current research is the need to benefit

from them in studies and research. The future in the field of personality. Both the father, mother, and family members should avoid critical messages directed at their children because they create in them a feeling of dissatisfaction with their body image and they show symptoms of body image disorder.

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