

Original Research Article**AGE DIFFERENCES IN BODY IMAGE PERCEPTIONS OF TRIBAL
ADOLESCENTS****ABSTRACT**

The present study on age differences in body image perceptions of tribal adolescents was conducted at Tribal welfare schools and colleges in and around Adilabad district. Expost-facto design was adapted for the study. The sample comprises of early adolescents in the age range of 11-13 years (90) and late adolescents in the age group of 16-18 years (90), thus total 180. The major results of the study late adolescents had low positive perceptions on body image and had more regrets on their hair texture, used more cosmetics, accessories and took more initiatives like changing diet to lose weight for their physical outlook when compared to early adolescents. The first preferred change for early adolescents was height and weight whereas for late adolescents was complexion and hair length.

Key words: body image perceptions, tribal adolescents

Introduction

Adolescence comes from the Latin word “Adolescere” which means grow to maturity. It is a transition stage from childhood to adulthood which takes place between the age of 10 and 19 years. It is usually divided in two phases: early adolescence, 10 to 14 years and late adolescence from 15 to 19 years (World Health Organization, 2014). Adolescence is a period of life during which many important body changes take place that are determined by pubertal development. Going through puberty can amplify body image concerns. During the pubertal period morphological changes occur in both sexes. Such sudden changes in physical appearance may influence adolescents' assessment of their body image, which is a multidimensional construct involving the accuracy of the perception that the person has regarding body shape size, facial features and physical attributes. Thus Perceptions of the physical body are part of self-concept, and they form an integral part of overall self-worth. The evaluation of one's size, weight, or other aspects of the body are the essential components of the physical aspect of body image and satisfaction. Holsen *et al.* (2012) indicated that body satisfaction gradually increases through adolescence and stabilizes in adulthood for both the genders.

Materials and methods

The study was taken up to find out the age differences on body image perceptions of tribal adolescents. A sample of 180 adolescents with in the age range of 11 to 13 years and 16 to 18 years was collected randomly from schools and colleges in and around Adilabad district. Body image perceptions schedule (Divya and Mayuri, 2014) was used for measuring the body image perceptions of the tribal adolescents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1.1 Age differences in perceptions of body image of tribal adolescents

Perceptions of body image	Early		Late		t cal value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Looking beautiful/ handsome is most important for success in life	4.25	0.85	2.18	1.20	13.24**
Beautiful people get more advantages in life	2.84	1.15	2.13	0.99	4.43**
No other talent can replace physical beauty	2.73	1.05	2.52	1.40	1.02
It is important to try and look as beautiful as possible	3.86	1.37	3.1	1.37	3.74**
It is important to spend money in order to look beautiful	3.92	1.18	3.43	3.40	1.28
Beautiful people need not try very hard to succeed	2.24	1.343	2.15	1.26	0.45
Beautiful people are loved more by others	4.05	1.21	3.64	1.36	2.13*
Happiness depends on how beautiful one is	2.8	1.475	3.63	1.36	3.947**
TOTAL	26.68	3.92	22.81	5.47	5.45**

**P-value < 0.01 level of significance, * < 0.05 level of significance

From the above table related to age differences on general perceptions of body image it can be inferred that body image of early adolescents had high perceptions when compared with late adolescents which means young adolescents perceived that looking beautiful is important for success of life as it had more advantages and it is important to try to look beautiful as beautiful people were loved more by others and happy in their lives when compared to late adolescents. The overall body image was also found to be significantly high for early adolescents when compared to late adolescents. Which might be because physical self-concept would be high among early adolescents as they were extreme conscious about their body and spend more time in taking care of their body when compared to late

adolescents. Whereas late adolescence driving their importance more on career and life settlement. The present finding is supported by Hargreaves and Tiggemann (2006) who found that physical appearance was more important to early adolescents.

No significant age differences were found on perceptions like talent can replace physical beauty, it is important spends money to look beautiful and beautiful people need not to try very hard for success. This indicates that both the age groups might agree on beauty is important and it is essential for the success of life.

1.2 Age differences in the extent of satisfaction towards physical attributes of tribal adolescents

Extent of satisfaction towards physical attributes	Early		Late		t cal value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Height	7.12	2.20	8.01	1.83	2.93**
Weight	7.04	2.21	7.68	1.82	2.13*
Complexion	6.37	2.42	7.37	2.11	2.94**
Skin texture	6.00	2.258	7.81	1.84	5.89**
Hair length	6.45	2.60	7.37	2.30	2.51*
Hair texture	6.6	2.30	7.28	2.06	2.11*
Hair Colour	6.85	2.33	7.63	2.67	2.08*
Chest measurement	6.81	2.18	7.58	2.15	2.40*
Waist measurement	6.37	2.19	7.25	1.82	2.91**
Hip measurement	6.7	1.96	7.18	2.16	1.58
Eye colour	6.92	2.45	7.7	2.50	2.10*
Eye size	6.08	2.35	7.48	2.58	3.79**
Nose shape	6.36	2.07	7.73	2.22	4.25**
Ears Shape	6.45	2.32	7.78	2.43	3.72**
Mouth shape	6.58	2.37	7.96	2.08	4.20**
Neck shape	7.13	2.02	8.05	2.11	2.98**
Shoulders	7.36	1.92	8.2	1.81	2.98**
TOTAL	113.26	24.37	130.14	23.83	4.69**

P-value<*0.05 level of significance, **0.01 level of significance

The above table clearly showed that early and late adolescents have significant differences on physical attributes such as height, complexion, skin texture, waist measurement, eye size, nose shape, ears shape, mouth shape, neck shape and shoulders at 1% level of significance. And for the other attributes such as weight, hair length, hair texture, hair color, chest measurement and eye color the differences were at 5% level of significance.

It can be inferred that early adolescents had low satisfaction with regard to their physical body attributes when compared to late adolescents. This might be because the social comparisons with thin media ideal, living in fantasy, imaginary audience may be more for younger adolescents when compared to older adolescents. Hence, they may be dissatisfied. Late adolescents had high satisfaction towards physical attributes than that of early adolescents which might be because late adolescents reached their growing stage and they do not have control over it. Hence, they may accept their body.

No differences were found on hip measurement for both the age groups which means both early and late adolescents have similar levels of satisfaction on hip measurement, which may be due to efforts taken by adolescents for body maintenance to secure thin ideal image.

1.3 Age differences on regrets about my body image of tribal adolescents.

Regrets about my body	Early		Late		t cal value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
height	2.12	0.99	1.86	0.98	1.733
weight	2.01	0.93	1.8	0.81	1.623
complexion	2.28	0.95	2.35	0.92	0.476
hair length	2.15	0.87	2.3	0.92	1.074
Hair texture	1.97	0.94	2.32	0.88	2.520*
eyes size	2.02	0.87	1.76	0.91	1.919
eye color	1.62	0.90	1.75	0.87	1.002
nose shape	1.73	0.81	1.83	0.93	0.761
skin texture	2.44	0.86	2.27	0.94	1.233
mouth size	1.61	0.63	1.48	0.60	1.327
neck shape	1.48	0.76	1.52	0.82	0.280

shoulders	1.52	0.83	1.71	0.91	1.444
Chest measurement	2.05	0.90	1.77	0.87	2.099
Waist measurement	1.77	0.85	1.72	0.79	0.450
Hip measurement	1.76	0.87	1.9	0.82	1.053
TOTAL	28.6	6.33	28.4	5.82	0.220

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77 For the regrets about their body no differences were found on any aspect except for
 78 the hair texture at 5% level of significance which indicates that early adolescents had high
 79 regrets on hair texture when compared to that of late adolescents.

80 Though there was no significant difference, it was also observed that early
 81 adolescents had regrets on noticeable features such as height, weight, chest and waist
 82 measurement and late adolescents had regrets on facial features of the body. This indicates
 83 early adolescents low acceptance of their body attributes and worried more about body image
 84 than late adolescents. As age increases interest towards maintaining a functional healthy
 85 body image increases.

86 **1.4. Age differences on extent of usage of cosmetics and accessories for maintaining**
 87 **desirable body image of tribal adolescents.**

Types of cosmetics and accessories	Early		Late		t cal value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Clothes	2.92	0.64	3.15	0.71	2.302*
Shoes/ Sandals	2.68	0.61	2.54	0.62	1.572
Fairness Creams	2.23	1.23	3.31	0.97	6.482**
Moisturizers	1.78	1.08	2.88	1.10	6.731**
Accessories (Ear rings, Bangles, Bands)	2.38	1.08	3.16	0.96	5.078**
Talcum powder	3.08	1.09	3.06	2.19	0.085
Hair straighteners	1.17	0.57	2.2	0.92	8.904**
Hair smootheners	1.05	0.34	2.51	0.98	13.212**
Blemish removers	1.04	0.20	2.23	0.94	11.615**
Face Cleansers	1.17	0.71	2.74	1.11	11.216**

Face packs	1.18	0.55	2.81	1.06	12.754**
Sun screen lotions	1.14	0.55	2.12	0.84	9.184**
Eye liners	1.05	0.31	1.55	0.82	5.389**
Eye shadow	1.02	0.21	1.48	0.76	5.559**
Complete makeup set	1	0	1.37	0.68	5.270**
Hair removers	1	0	1.74	1.05	6.692**
Shaving kit	1	0	1.86	0.93	8.760**
Visits to Beauty Saloons	1	0	2.24	0.97	12.107**
TOTAL	27.97	3.95	43.03	8.26	15.585**

88 P-value<*0.05 level of significance, **0.01 level of significance

89 The usage of all the cosmetics and accessories, late adolescents spend more money and have
90 high concerns when compared to early adolescents. Late adolescents spends more on clothes,
91 Fairness Creams, Moisturizers, Accessories, Hair straighteners, Hair smootheners, Blemish
92 removers, Face Cleansers, Face packs, Sun screen lotions, Eye liners, Eye shadow, Complete
93 makeup set, Hair removers, Shaving kit and going to Beauty Salons for desirable outlook and
94 regular body maintenance. Because late adolescents may be more aware of body care and
95 more concerned towards their facial features which are noticed by others. Hence, they are
96 spending more on their accessories and cosmetics when compared to early adolescents.

97 Whereas no significant differences were found on shoes/sandals and talcum powders which
98 means both the age groups were buying the product at equal plane. As basic needs are vital
99 for any individual to protect themselves and to maintain their self (Divya and mayuri, 2014).

100 1.5 Age differences in initiatives taken to maintain a desirable body image of tribal 101 adolescents.

Initiatives taken to maintain a desirable body image	Early		Late		t cal value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Changed diet to lose weight	1.24	0.64	2.52	1.31	8.273**
Changed diet to gain weight	1.71	0.98	1.78	1.17	0.481
Exercised at home	2.02	0.63	2.11	0.62	0.945
Joined a gym for exercise	1.95	1.33	1.73	0.90	1.307

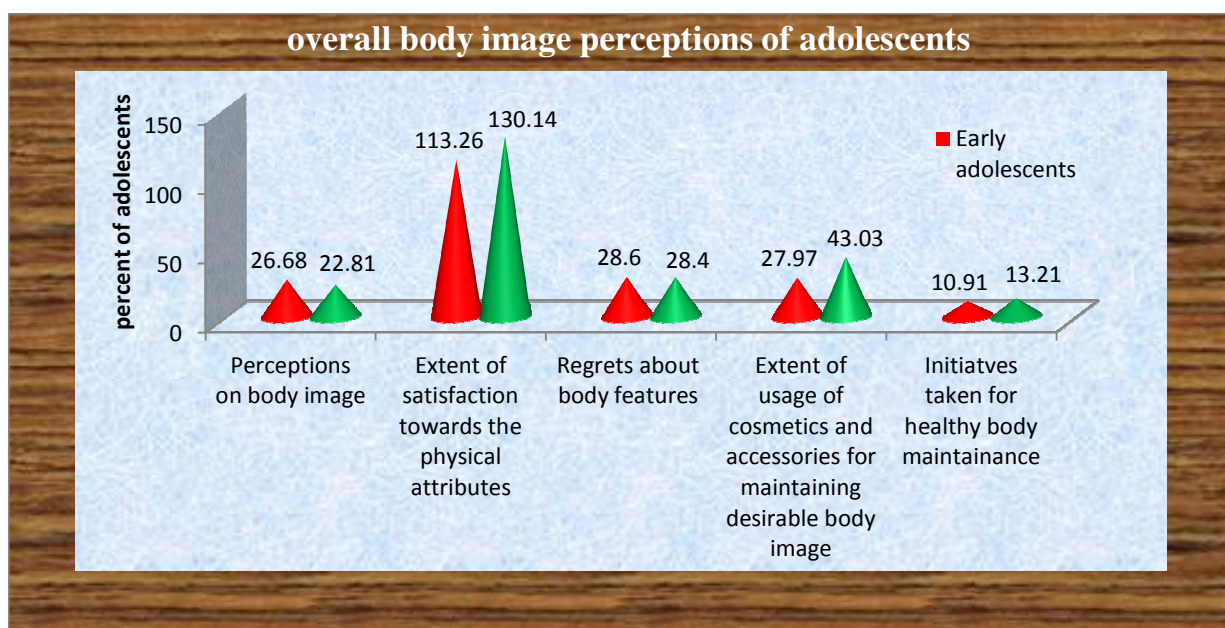
Joined a yoga center	1.87	1.23	2	1.12	0.695
Went to skin clinic for treatment	1.06	0.44	2.05	1.40	6.349**
Joined Weight reduction Programs	1.03	0.31	1	0	1
TOTAL	10.91	3.08	13.21	4.17	4.201**

P-value<*0.05 level of significance, **0.01 level of significance

From the above table, it can be inferred that respondents showed significant differences to the statements on “changing their diet to lose weight” and “visiting skin clinic for treatment” at 1% level, in which late adolescents took more initiatives when compared to early adolescents. Which might be because late adolescents are more conscious about their fitness for healthy body. Similarly Meland *et al.* (2007) revealed that girls in older age groups reported dieting and dissatisfaction with regard to weight and appearance more often than boys and younger age groups.

It is also interesting to note that there were no differences found on additional diet for weight gain, doing exercise at home and joining in gym, yoga center or weight reduction programme, which means both early and late adolescents were on par with each other in the above activities for maintaining desirable outlook.

124 **Total perceptions on body image of tribal adolescents**



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126 From the above graph it can be concluded that there were age differences on overall body
 127 image perceptions of early and late tribal adolescents. Early adolescents had high perceptions
 128 regarding importance of beauty and felt being beautiful has more advantages and in life. Late
 129 adolescents were more satisfied with their physical attributes than that of early adolescents.
 130 Late adolescents spent more money on usage of cosmetics and accessories and took more
 131 initiatives for maintaining fit and healthy body image than that of early adolescents. Both
 132 early and late adolescents were on par with each other and expressed similar level of regrets.

133 Finally it can be concluded that there is a strong sense of body image perception among
 134 adolescents, and they are concerned about changing unsatisfactory dimension if they can
 135 being strongly influenced by the fashionable world and are trying to compete in almost all the
 136 aspects. Education programmes should be given to early adolescents to avoid undue
 137 importance to physical body. Parents should guide and motivate their adolescents to have
 138 realistic perceptions and to give more focus on functional aspects of body rather over
 139 emphasizing their esthetic body to promote body satisfaction, self-esteem and healthy
 140 psychological development.

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