

THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF SOCIAL PHYSIQUE ANXIETY IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OBJECTIFIED BODY CONSCIOUSNESS AND BODY-ESTEEM AMONG BELLY DANCE PARTICIPANTS

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to examine the mediating effect of social physique anxiety in the relationship between objectified body consciousness and body-esteem among a sample of belly dance participants. The subjects consisted of 347 adult women (aged 20 and older) who participated in belly dancing in Korea. In July 2022, the convenience sampling and self-evaluation writing methods were used as URL delivery methods through an online Google questionnaire. For data analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, reliability analysis, frequency analysis, and Baron & Kenny's (1986) mediator regression analysis were conducted using SPSS 26 and AMOS 26 software. The results are as follows. Social physique anxiety completely mediates the relationship between physical surveillance and body-esteem (a sub-factor of objectified body consciousness), but it does not have a mediating effect on the relationship between physical shame and body-esteem. Meanwhile, it partially mediates the relationship between control beliefs and body-esteem. Based on these findings, belly dance instructors must make efforts to develop, organize, and implement programs that help correct objectified body consciousness and foster positive and self-directed body-esteem by reducing social physique anxiety. It is hoped that the results of this study can be used as a theoretical basis for participating in belly dance as well as practical/basic data for the development and growth of belly dance on a larger scale.

Keywords: Belly dance, Objectified Body Consciousness, Body-Esteem, Social Physique Anxiety, Leisure Activities.

INTRODUCTION

Since the turn of the 21st century, as social and public interest in improving the quality of life and participating in leisure activities have increased, practical dance has become popular, due to its psychological and emotional benefits such as physical training, artistry, creativity, and expressive development (Kim, 2011). In this regard, practical dance refers to dancing in which people voluntarily participate and enjoy on their own (Park, 2021). Although it has been mostly recognized as a "hobby" that only a few people undertake, there is a growing interest in learning and/or making a living in various genres such as K-POP dance, street dance, choreography, and belly dance (Kim, 2009). In Korea, practical dance has been recently established as a subject in art high schools and colleges (Jeong, 2018), and its positive influence in society, culture, and education has greatly expanded (Kim, 2011). In particular, belly dance, introduced in Korea around 1995, is not only easy to learn, but it also strengthens flexibility and creates a beautiful attitude, which, in turn, helps train a healthy body and foster positive emotions.

In related research on the physical benefits of belly dance, Jang (2012) found that metabolic syndrome factors are improved, helping to prevent certain diseases that frequently occur in obese middle-aged women and improving blood lipid levels and arterial blood flow rates, thus lowering potential risk factors for the vascular system. In addition, Choi (2009) indicated that an aerobic exercise with music (barefoot) and movements using the abdomen are effective for muscle exercises that move internal organs in this region of the body. Specifically, belly dance's shimmy movement is a total body exercise that is effective for removing waist fat, increasing physical vitality, and improving health-related issues, due to aging, poor blood circulation, and lack of exercise (Kim, 2008; Park, 2013). Meanwhile, developing the ability to express emotions and foster self-expression has garnered interest since the early 2000s, in recognition of the value of proper body consciousness, thus contributing to the popularization of practical dance (Kang, 2013; Yang, 2017; Jang, 2021). As for Korea, the perception of belly dance has been recognized as an effective rhythmic exercise that can cultivate both the mind and body, while emphasizing its beauty, expertise, and artistry.

The motivation for this research is twofold; 1) the social demand in correcting body anxiety and increasing body consciousness and body-esteem (Lee, 2009); and 2) the limited research on this topic. In this study, there are three psychological variables that belly dance participants experience. First, objectified body consciousness refers to the distorted psychological tendency to deliberately control and damage the body by recognizing it as an object, without respecting the body itself (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). It is also a factor that significantly affects the quality of life and mental health of belly dance participants, especially those who are sensitive to public gaze due to body exposure. Second, social physique anxiety refers to situational anxiety that predicts a negative evaluation of one's body type (Hart, Leary, & Rejeski, 1989). In other words, it means worrying about other people's evaluations of one's body type, rather than the ability to perform the physical tasks at hand (Kim, 2014). Third, body-esteem is an important factor that is not naturally established and fixed, but is transformed through one's growth and maturity. In other words, it is defined as one's attitude toward the body (Kim, 2005), which is especially important for belly dance participants pursuing an attractive body. Therefore, this study examines the mediating effect of social physique anxiety in the relationship between objectified body consciousness and body-esteem among a sample of belly dance participants.

McKinley (1999) found that objectified body consciousness and body respect have a negative (–) correlation, especially among women, while Lee (2004) indicated that high self-esteem or body control belief does not directly help maintain appearance satisfaction. However, appearance satisfaction has a significant effect on self-esteem. In related research, a sample of female college students in dance fitness classes believed that the higher the positive body shape evaluation, the more desirable the physical self-concept (Nam, 2009). Moreover, Yang Eun-sim (2010) found that female dancers place social physique anxiety into the relationship between self-objectification and body dissatisfaction. Based on these findings, this study presents the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). Social physique anxiety has a mediating effect between surveillance and body-esteem, as a sub-factor of objectified body consciousness.

Hypothesis 2 (H2). Social physique anxiety has a mediating effect between body shame and body-esteem, as a sub-factor of objectified body consciousness.

Hypothesis 3 (H3). Social physique anxiety has a mediating effect between objectified body consciousness and body-esteem, as a sub-factor of appearance control beliefs.

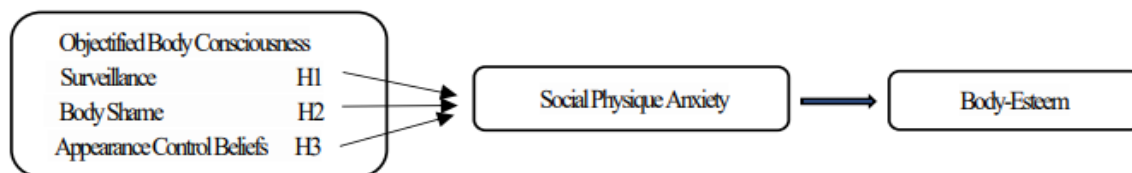


Figure 1. Theoretical Model

METHOD AND TOOLS

The subjects in this study consisted of 347 women (aged 20 and older) participating in belly dancing in Korea. In July 2022, convenience sampling and self-evaluations were conducted through an online Google questionnaire. Based on the demographic characteristics in Table 1, 63 people (18.2%) were aged 20–29, 89 (25.6%) were aged 30–39, 130 (37.5%) were aged 40–49, and 65 (18.7%) were aged 50 or older. According to their occupations, 233 (67.1%) were classified as ordinary persons, while 114 (32.9%) were classified as belly dance instructors. As for their participation periods, 41 (11.8%) had participated for less than one year, 55 (15.9%) had participated for one to three years, 53 (15.3%) had participated for three to five years, and 198 (57.1%) had participated for more than five years. Additionally, 65 non-participants (18.7%) and 282 (81.3%) participants had experience in belly dance performances/competitions.

Objectified Body Consciousness: Kim, Yoo, and Park (2007) developed a body consciousness scale (regardless of gender) by adapting the objectified body consciousness scale of McKinley & Hyde (1996). Following Lee (2012), we used 14 questions, with three sub-factors: surveillance, body shame, and appearance control beliefs.

Social Physique Anxiety: Kim, Kim, and Kim (2014) developed a social physique anxiety questionnaire for female college students. Following (2018), we used 14 questions.

Body-Esteem: Mendelson & Wheat (1998) developed a 23-question body-esteem scale for adults and adolescents. Following Oh (2014), we used 19 of these questions. In total, our study includes 51 questions based on a five-point Likert scale, with four questions on demographic and sociological characteristics.

Table 1. Demographic and Sociological Characteristics and Frequency Analysis

		N	%
Age	20–29 years old	63	18.2
	30–39 years old	89	25.6
	40–49 years old	130	37.5
	Over 50 years of age	65	18.7
Occupation	Ordinary persons	233	67.1
	Belly dance instructors	114	32.9
Participation period	Less than a year	41	11.8
	One to three years	55	15.9
	Three to five years	53	15.3
	More than five years	198	57.1
Belly dance performances/competitions	None	65	18.7
Participation status	Yes	282	81.3
Total		347 people	100%

Data Processing

For data analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, reliability analysis, frequency analysis, and Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediator regression analysis were conducted using SPSS 26 and AMOS 26 software.

Validity, Reliability, and Correlation Analysis

The content validity of the questionnaire in this study was reviewed by one supervisor and three doctors, while the structural validity was conducted by confirmatory factor analysis. Following Kim (2010), the model fitness index is less than or equal to a normed χ^2 (NC) value of 3.0, less than or equal to a RMSEA value of .08, less than or equal to a RMR value of .05, and more than or equal to a GFI, NFI, CFI, and TLI value of .90. Meanwhile, χ^2/df (= CMIN/df) is determined to be a good model if the value is 3.0 or less, or a very satisfactory model if the value is 2.0 or less. In this study, the χ^2 (334.428), df (149), and χ^2/df (2.244) values were found to be good, while the values for CFI (.956), TLI (.944), GFI (.913), and NFI (.924) met the model's suitability criteria. In addition, the RMSEA value was .06, indicating a good model fit. As for convergent validity, it is determined to be secure when the CR value is .7 or higher and the AVE value is .5 or higher (Kim, 2020). As shown in Table 2, the AVE value for appearance control beliefs (a sub-factor of objectified body consciousness) was slightly lower at .405. However, since the CR values were between .793~.931, convergent validity was secured. Finally, if Cronbach's α is .60 or higher, then the reliability is confirmed. Specifically, a value of .70~.80 is considered as good and a value of .80~.90 is considered as very high (Song, 2012). In this study, Cronbach's α values were found to be high, since they were between .760~.965, while Pearson's correlation analysis showed that there was no multicollinearity issue (.158~.601).

Table 2. Validity, Reliability, and Correlation Analysis ($p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$)*

		CR	Cronbach' α	AVE	A1	A2	A3	B	C
A. Objectified Body Consciousness	1. Surveillance	.799	.784	.579	.761				
	2. Body Shame	.908	.912	.665	.350**	.815			
	3. Appearance Control Beliefs	.793	.792	.405	.053	.332**	.636		
B. Social Physique Anxiety		.931	.965	.820	.390**	.601**	.488**	.906	
C. Body-Esteem		.887	.760	.728	.158**	.581**	.416**	.405**	.853

Notes: A1: Objectified Body Consciousness Surveillance, A2: Objectified Body Consciousness Body Shame, A3: Objectified Body Consciousness Appearance Control Beliefs, B: Social Physique Anxiety, C: Body-Esteem

RESULTS

The Mediating Effect of Social Physique Anxiety in the Relationship between Surveillance and Body-Esteem, as A Sub-Factor of Objectified Body Consciousness

As a result (Table 3) of verifying the regression coefficient of Model 1, the first condition for the mediating effect analysis was satisfied because surveillance was positively significant to social physique anxiety, with $\beta = .390$ and $p = .000$. In Model 2, surveillance had a positive effect on body-esteem, with $\beta = .158$ and $p = .00$, satisfying the second condition. In Model 3, surveillance had a p -value of .05 or more for body-esteem, which was not statistically significant, whereas social physique anxiety was statistically significant to body-esteem, with $\beta = .405$ and $p = .000$. In other words, surveillance had a direct positive impact on body-esteem, but its influence disappeared after social physique anxiety was introduced. Thus, Hypothesis 1 is supported.

Table 3. The mediating effect of social physique anxiety in the relationship between surveillance and body-esteem, as a sub-factor of objectified body consciousness (* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$)

M	Step	B	SE	β	t(p)	F(p)	R ²	adjR ²
1	(Constant)	1.176	.208		5.647***			
	Surveillance → Social physique anxiety	.427	.054	.390	7.865***	61.852***	.152	.150
2	(Constant)	2.749	.093		29.498**			
	Surveillance → Body-esteem	.072	.024	.158	2.981**	8.884**	.025	.022
3	(Constant)	2.550	.090		28.237***			
	Surveillance → Body-esteem	.000	.024	.000	.008			
	Social physique anxiety → Body-esteem	.169	.022	.405	7.570***	33.821***	.164	.159

The Mediating Effect of Social Physique Anxiety in the Relationship between Body Shame and Body-Esteem, as A Sub-factor of Objectified Body Consciousness

As a result (Table 4) of verifying the regression coefficient of Model 1, the first condition for the mediating effect analysis was satisfied, since body shame was positively significant to social physique anxiety, with $\beta = .601$, $p = .000$. In Model 2, body shame had a positive effect on body-esteem, with $\beta = .581$ and $p = .000$, satisfying the second condition. In Model 3, body shame had a positive effect on body-esteem, with $\beta = .528$, $p = .000$, whereas social physique anxiety was not statistically significant because the p -value was .05 or higher. In this regard, the third condition was not satisfied. Meanwhile, body shame was found to have no mediating effect on body-esteem through social physique anxiety. Thus, Hypothesis 2 is rejected.

Table 4. The mediating effect of social physique anxiety in the relationship between body shame and body-esteem, as a sub-factor of objectified body consciousness (* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$)

M	Step	B	SE	β	t(p)	F(p)	R ²	adjR ²
1	(Constant)	.865	.143		6.040***			
	Body shame → Social physique anxiety	.600	.043	.601	13.257***	194.859***	.361	.359
2	(Constant)	2.252	.061		37.020***			
	Body shame → body-esteem	.242	.018	.581	13.257***	175.756***	.338	.336
3	(Constant)	2.220	.064		34.788***			
	Body shame → body-esteem	.220	.023	.528	9.654***			
	Social physique anxiety → body-esteem	.037	.023	.088	1.612	89.585***	.342	.339

The Mediating Effect of Social Physique Anxiety in The Relationship between Objectified Body Consciousness and the Sub-Factors Appearance Control Beliefs and Body-Esteem

As a result (Table 5) of verifying the regression coefficient of Model 1, the first condition for the mediating effect analysis was satisfied, since appearance control beliefs was positively significant to social physique anxiety, with $\beta = .488, p = .000$. In Model 2, the second condition was satisfied, since appearance control beliefs had a positive effect on body-esteem, with $\beta = .416, p = .00$. In Model 3, appearance control beliefs had a positive effect on body-esteem, with $\beta = .286$ and $p = .000$, while social physique anxiety was statistically significant, with $\beta = .266$ and $p = .000$. Hence, the third condition was also satisfied. In Model 2, the influence of appearance control beliefs on body-esteem was $\beta = .416$, whereas a partial mediating effect was found because social physique anxiety decreased to $\beta = .286$ in Model 3. We also found that appearance control beliefs (as a sub-factor of objectified body consciousness) had an indirect positive effect on body-esteem through social physique anxiety. Hence, Hypothesis 3 is supported.

Table 5. The mediating effect of social physique anxiety in the relationship between objectified body consciousness and the sub-factors appearance control beliefs and body-esteem (* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$)

M	Step	B	SE	β	t(p)	F(p)	R ²	adjR ²
1	(Constant)	.931	.183		5.074***			
	Appearance control beliefs → Social physique anxiety	.633	.061	.488	10.371***	107.567***	.238	.235
2	(Constant)	2.366	.080		29.686***			
	Appearance control beliefs → Body-esteem	.225	.027	.416	8.486***	72.006***	.173	.170
3	(Constant)	2.263	.080		28.285***			
	Appearance control beliefs → Body-esteem	.155	.029	.286	5.264***	50.399***	.227	.222
	Social physique anxiety → Body-esteem	.111	.023	.266	4.898***			

DISCUSSION

This study verified the mediating effect of social physique anxiety in the relationship between objectified body consciousness (including surveillance, body shame, and appearance control beliefs) and body-esteem among a sample of belly dance participants. Based on the findings, surveillance had an indirect positive effect on body-esteem through the complete mediation of social physique anxiety. Additionally, body shame had a direct positive effect on body-esteem, with no mediating effect of social physique anxiety, whereas appearance control beliefs had an indirect positive effect on body-esteem through partial mediation of social physique anxiety. In this research, surveillance refers to monitoring one's body to fit the ideal body image imposed by society, due to repeated self-objectification (McKinley & Hyde, 1996; Spitzack, 1990), while body shame refers to the shame perceived when one believes that his/her body and appearance do not match the ideal body image presented by society (Seo, 2011). As for appearance control beliefs, it refers to the internal characteristics that make one believe that he/she can control his/her appearance and body (Kim et al., 2007). Among the belly dance participants in this study, surveillance, body shame, and appearance control beliefs had a positive(+) effect on body-esteem.

These results are in line with Song Soon-ja's (2017) study of adult women participating in yoga, which reported that objectified body consciousness had a positive effect on positive thinking. In this case, the higher the surveillance and appearance control beliefs, the higher the subjective satisfaction and appearance control beliefs among positive thinking. In addition, the studies by Kim (2023) (a Pilates participant) and Kang (2023) (a college student majoring in dance) reported that surveillance had a positive effect on body-esteem, partially supporting the results of this study. The findings of related research are as follows. First, Lee (2009) verified that the higher the surveillance, the higher the body-esteem, self-esteem, emotional state, and vitality, which indirectly supports the results of this study, while Jeong (2015) found that the appearance control beliefs of female college students participating in leisure sports had a positive effect on their weight and physical function. Second, Taylor (1989) explained that people who believe that they can control themselves have higher self-esteem and psychological and physical well-being, while Tucker (1981)

stated that people who exercise regularly have higher body satisfaction, which, in turn, improves their emotional stability, confidence, and happiness. Third, Jeong Yong-Hak (2015) found that appearance control beliefs had a negative effect on external persistence. This indicates that the more one controls the body, the lower the tendency to show off to the public, which is in line with the result that higher inner self-esteem leads to lower ostentatious tendencies or narcissism (Lee, 2004). Furthermore, improving appearance control beliefs through participation in sports increased internal self-esteem and lowered conspicuous tendencies, which indirectly supports the results of this study.

Based on the aforementioned research, participants in daily fitness activities, such as belly dance, Pilates, and leisure sports, can overcome objectified body consciousness through continuous body training and related development. As for belly dance, it consists of various movements that highlight femininity (e.g., the chest, abdomen, and pelvis), as seen in the two-piece costumes with high body exposure. In this regard, participants can gradually improve their surveillance and body shame during practice or stage preparation as well as cultivate their appearance control beliefs. Meanwhile, the accumulation of exercise through belly dance can bring positive body changes (e.g., weight loss, body shape correction, and physical strength) as well as increase one's self-satisfaction and body-esteem. This confirms the importance of belly dance as a leisure activity that can help improve body consciousness and body respect, while increasing both personal and public value.

Finally, belly dance should be promoted as a desirable practical dance that can enhance one's self-concept, values, and overall view of life by improving participants' body consciousness and confidence. This is especially pertinent in today's society, which continues to emphasize the importance of body appearance, regardless of gender. Meanwhile, body-esteem is influenced by various demographic and sociological characteristics, such as age, gender, weight, body type, and psychological, emotional, and social influences, all of which change over time. As for the quality of life and social relationships, they may vary, depending on the level of awareness of one's body. Therefore, based on the empirical results in his study, it is important to recognize belly dance as a way to improve one's body-esteem by overcoming objectified body consciousness and social physique anxiety. At the same time, belly dance can help internalize desirable body values by training the mind and body through continuous voluntary participation, healthy and beneficial experiences, and emotional and behavioral immersion.

CONCUION AND SUGGESTIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine the mediating effect of social physique anxiety in the relationship between objectified body consciousness and body-esteem among a sample of belly dance participants. Based on the findings, belly dance has a positive effect on body-esteem by correcting and improving participants' negative attitudes and perceptions of their body and alleviating social physique anxiety. Such participation also promotes one's quality of life, satisfaction, and wellness, which are especially important in today's image-based society. Additional conclusions are as follows. First, people with high objectified body consciousness should cultivate body-esteem by preventing psychological and emotional contraction, due to the negative factors of social physique anxiety. In this regard, belly dance instructors should determine how to improve participants' confidence by identifying their strengths and individual characteristics. Second, belly dance instructors should induce participants to improve their body awareness through various educational programs and teaching methods. Third, belly dance instructors, managers, and executives should consider the effectiveness of belly dance and provide various activities, such as performances, competitions, and festivals, not just classes. In Korea, belly dance has become increasingly recognized as a leisure activity that can positively impact one's body shape, physical strength, athletic ability, and artistic literacy.

Finally, the suggestions of this study are as follows. First, in order to generalize the results, future research should employ a sample survey method that only targets the survey respondents. Second, future studies should specifically investigate and interpret the emotional and psychological issues of the participants. Third, since this study did not include face-to-face interviews, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, future research should include such interviews to support the findings. Fourth, since the subjects in this study mainly consisted of older participants, subsequent studies should equalize the age distribution of the sample group and separate the instructors from the general public. Finally, future qualitative studies should include observations, in-depth interviews, and participants' narratives.

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