

Body Image Model Based On The Object Relations An Mediating Role Of The Personality And Ego Strength In Applicants Of Cosmetic Surgery

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Abstract

Introduction: The decision to have cosmetic surgery is greatly affected by psychological problems. The high number of cosmetic surgery requests, which can be one of the consequences of psychological damage in the stages of mental development, shows the significance of paying attention to the role of thematic relationships, personality organization and ego strength. This study aimed to explain the body image model based on object relations, and the mediating role of personality and ego strength in people referring to cosmetic surgery centers.

Method: This study was conducted through a descriptive - correlational approach. The statistical population included all people who referred to Vanak Cosmetic Surgery Center in Tehran in spring and summer of 2020, a sample of 350 subjects were selected by available sampling method. Data were collected through Body-Self Relations Questionnaire, Bell's Object Relations Inventory, the Kernberg's Inventory of Personality and Psychosocial Inventory of Ego-strengths. The data were analyzed by a path analysis of structural equation modeling.

Results: The structural equation modelling of body image, object relations, personality organization and ego strength directly and indirectly demonstrated significant fitness (RMSEA: 0.07). Among indirect paths, mediator variables including personality organization and ego strength were significant.

Conclusion: Injury in the initial object relations can affect the creation of a negative body image among people seeking cosmetic surgery by creating a negative feeling in the person and then by affecting the personality organization and ego strength.

Declaration of Interest: None

Keywords: Body image, Object relation, Personality organization, Ego strength.

Introduction

The decision to have cosmetic surgery is greatly affected by psychological problems (1). Studies conducted on the characteristics of patients before cosmetic surgery have indicated that these patients go through more dissatisfaction about the specific physical characteristics that might require surgery compared to others. Therefore, the motivation of patients undergoing cosmetic surgery is to improve their specific physical characteristics (2). Body image is a complex construct and body image distortion and body dissatisfaction are common in both clinical and nonclinical populations (3). Body image is defined as one's feelings about one's physical and sexual attractiveness. In other words, it is the way a person views his body and how he feels about it and thinks how others see his body. Body image is partly the result of personal experiences, personality, and various social and cultural factors, including the definition of beauty (4). Body image is defined as the internal representations of the external aspects of the body (5).

Body image is manifested differently in every person; People's image of their body is not always what their bodies are in reality (conceptual aspect), everyone has a special feeling about his appearance that is rooted in the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with his appearance (emotional aspect) and the feeling that a person has about his body is often associated with certain beliefs and thoughts (cognitive aspect) and the things that a person does or does not do because of his body image of himself (behavioral aspect) (6). Among the factors that create a negative body image, insecure attachment

styles (7), parents' attitudes (8), and cognitive elements can be mentioned (9). Sarwer et al. proposed that cosmetic surgery is actually cosmetic surgery of the body image and psychological improvement is created by improving the body through surgery. However, in these people, the lack of satisfaction with the appearance will continue after surgery and there is a possibility of requesting surgery again (10). A study of 188 patients with body dysmorphic disorder showed that after repeated surgeries, 83% of patients reported an exacerbation of symptoms or the absence of any changes, and only in 17.4% of cases the symptoms improved (5).

Several studies have shown that object relations are associated with psychopathologies (11, 12), Body image disorders are more common in people with borderline personality organization than in individuals without mental condition, and body dissatisfaction is higher in borderline patients who experienced sexual abuse in their childhood (13). Survivors of childhood sexual abuse report disturbances in the cognitive and emotional components of their body image (4). Many people with body dysmorphic disorder are abused and neglected during childhood (14).

Psychoanalytic approaches consider childhood abuse as failure in object relations and damage to personality organization (15). The components of object relations and personality organization are used as indicators to diagnose the level of general damage. If important developmental tasks such as trust and autonomy are not well formed in childhood, the person suffers from mental disorders later in life. (16). Explaining personality development, Kernberg stresses on the impact of childhood

experiences on an individual's perception of himself and his relationships with others. He looks at personality as the outcome of internalizing the primary relations that shape the capacity of ego and trigger defense mechanisms (17). In another study, it was found that the motivation to go for cosmetic surgery is based on a combination of psychological, emotional and personality factors, and the personality traits and characteristics of cosmetic surgery volunteers may be directly to the defensive and coping mechanism they choose (18). Despite the significance of the role of object relations, the organization of personality and ego strength in various aspects of mental health and also the high number of cosmetic surgery requests can be one of the consequences of injury in the stages of mental development, little research has been done in this area. In the meantime, there is a particular need to provide a conceptual model to explain this phenomenon better, and the present study aims at doing so.

Method

The present study is a descriptive and correlational research design. To analyze the data, path analysis method of structural equation modeling is used. The statistical population of the study includes all individuals who referred to Vanak Cosmetic Surgery Center in Tehran for cosmetic head and face surgery in the spring of 2020. The sample size was limited to 350 people due to the spread of Corona virus. The subjects were selected through available sampling method. The inclusion criteria for participants were being at least 18 years of age, intending to have cosmetic surgery and exclusion

criteria included unwillingness to operate, being under 18 years of age, not intending to have cosmetic surgery and failure to complete the questionnaires.

BSRQ (Body-Self Relations Questionnaire): This tool contains 69 questions that are answered by the individual himself and is designed to assess the individual's attitude towards the various dimensions of the body image structure. This test has three subscales related to the body (BSRQ), satisfaction with different parts of the body (BASS) and a person's attitude towards weight. The validity of this questionnaire was reviewed and confirmed by Brown, Cash and Mikula (1990) and its reliability was reported to be 0.81 (19). In the present study, the reliability of the test was calculated through Cronbach's alpha for the subscales related to the body itself 0.77, satisfaction with different body parts 0.68, and individual attitude about weight was 0.79.

Bell Object relations Inventory (BORI): This questionnaire was designed by Bell in 1955 and has four subscales of Alienation, Insecure Attachment, Egocentricity, and Social Incompetence. In this questionnaire, alienation refers to lack of trust in relationships, frustration, and failure in intimacy of relationships. Insecure attachment is related to painful interpersonal relationships, sensitivity to rejection, and extreme emphasis on the approval of others. Egocentricity includes distrust of others and the exercise of power over others. Social incompetence is defined as to shyness and doubt about one's abilities in relationships. Bell obtained the scale reliability coefficient with a time interval of 2 weeks from 0.58 to 0.90 (20). In the present study, the

reliability of the test was calculated through Cronbach's alpha for the subscales of alienation (0.71), insecure attachment (0.75), egocentricity (0.83) and social incompetence (0.70).

Kernberg's Inventory Personality Organization (IPO): This questionnaire was designed by Kernberg and Clarkin in 1995 based on the Borderline Personality Organization with 155 questions. Of these, 57 questions measure the three most important dimensions of early psychological defenses, identity confusion, and reality testing. The rest of the questions were related to the type and extent of interpersonal relationships that were not used in the main study (21). In this study, the 37-question form of the Borderline Personality Organization (2002) was used. The answers are based on a five-point Likert score. Internal consistency of identity confusion, reality testing, and early psychological defenses were reported to be 0.88, 0.88, and 0.81, respectively. Also, the validity of the check list was estimated to be 0.83, 0.80 and 0.81, respectively, using the retest method (22). In the present study, the reliability of the test was calculated through Cronbach's alpha for the subscale of the first psychological defense (0.79), identity confusion (0.81), reality

testing(0.89) and borderline personality 0.84.

Psychological Inventory of Ego Strengths (PIES): to test the fragility of ego, Strom et al.'s Questionnaire (1977) will be used to assess ego fragility (23). This questionnaire has 64 questions that are scored using the five-point Likert method. The face validity and content and structure of this questionnaire have been confirmed. Its reliability has been reported to be 0.68 by Cronbach's alpha method (24). The reliability of the check list on the Iranian sample is equal to 0.91 and the reliability of its halving is equal to 0.77. The reliability of the questionnaire in this study was calculated 0.27 through Cronbach's alpha test.

After receiving the necessary permits to conduct the research, first we explained the objectives of the research and obtained the subjects' informed consent, the necessary clarification on how to respond to the questionnaires was provided to the subjects. Data analysis was performed using Amos software and structural equation modeling method.

Results

The average age of participants in the study was 25-43 years with a standard deviation of 9.14. Other information on demographic variables is reported in Table (1).

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	73	20.86
	Female	277	79.14
Marital status	Single	256	73.14
	Married	94	26.86
Education	No school degree	11	3.14
	High school diploma	47	13.43
	Associated degree	79	22.57
	Bachelors degree	163	46.58

	Postgraduate	50	14.28
	Employed	112	32
Job status	Student	147	42
	Unemployed	91	26

Table (2). Descriptive indicators of research variables

variable	M	Std	Min	Maxi
Object relation	29.82	5.64	8	44
Ego strength	131.61	9.93	67	252
Personality organization	264.76	11.38	89	582
Body image	126.72	13.53	74	245

Given that the correlation matrix is the basis for analyzing causal models, especially structural equation modeling, the correlation matrix of research variables along with correlation coefficients and their significance levels is presented in

Table (3). It shows that there is a positive and significant relationship between body image and the other three variables ($p < 0.01$). There was also a positive and significant relationship between object relations, personality organization and ego strength ($p < 0.01$).

Table (3). Correlation matrix of research variables

Row	Variable	1	2	3	3
1	Object relations	1			
2	Personality organization	**	1		
		0.33			
3	Ego strength	**	0.55**	1	
		0.53			
4	Body image	**	0.28**	0.24**	1
		0.41			

** is significant at the level of 0.01.

The results obtained from the model fit in Figure (4) show that all the good fit indices obtained from the modified model test significantly fit the data and therefore,

the proposed model has a good fit with the data. Table (5) also shows the path coefficient.

Table (4) Indicators of research model's fit

indexes	Results	The status
χ^2	100.2	The chi-square index is also significant with a freedom degree of 49. Unacceptable
NFI	0.94	Acceptable
CFI	0.94	Acceptable
IFI	0.95	Acceptable
RFI	0.9	Acceptable
GFI	0.92	Acceptable

PGFI	0.44	Acceptable
RMSEA	0.07	Acceptable

Table (5): Direct coefficients of the research model

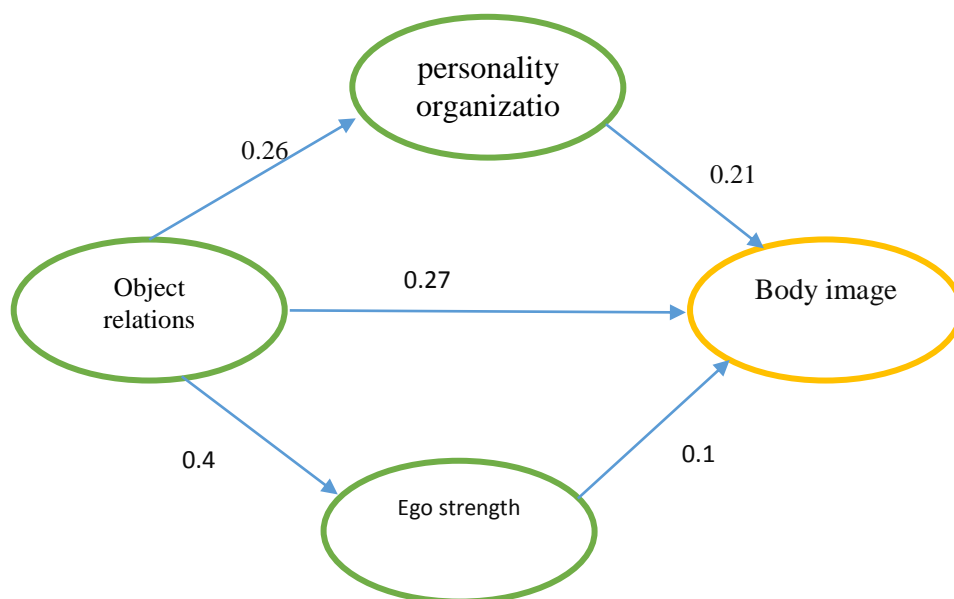
paths	Path coefficient	Error	P
The path of object relations to personality organization	0.26	0.08	0.001
The path of object relations to ego strength	0.45	0.06	0.001
The path of object relations to body image	0.27	0.03	0.001
The path of ego strengths to body image	0.21	0.03	0.001

As Table (5) shows, all pathways of the model are significant at the 0.01 level. Bootstrap test was also used to show the indirect effects and mediating role of Table (7).

personality organization and ego power in the relationship between object relations and body image. The results are shown in

Table (6): Bootstrap test results

indirect paths	Effect	Min	Max	P
Indirect path object relations to body image with the mediating role of personality organization	0.166	0.11	0.33	0.001
Indirect path of object relations to body image with the mediating role of ego strength	0.129	0.12	0.37	0.001



Graph 1. The standard path coefficients of the present research model

As the contents of the table above shows, because the effect obtained at the level of 0.01 is statistically significant and does not include the upper limit and the lower limit of zero, it can be claimed with 99% confidence that the personality organization and ego strengths play a significant mediating role in the relationship between object relations and body image.

Discussion and Conclusion

Findings indicated that object relations have a significant positive relationship

(26). Didie et al. (2006) also showed that among people with body dysmorphic disorder, 7.78% reported a history of childhood abuse, including emotional neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse, and physical neglect sexual abuse. Forty percent of these individuals experienced severe abuse (14). Guigliamo (2006) concluded that negative body image and low self-esteem were associated with communication problems, negative emotions, and traumatic childhood events (27).

Body image is a person's view of himself that is formed and transformed by the individual's experience and the interpretation of that experience by others. According to Carnes, when children grow up, they form fundamental ideas through how the family works and deals with them (28). A child who is born and raised in a family that gets a lot of attention has a great chance of growing well, trusting others, and having personal honesty. On the other hand, a child who grows up in a neglected family will grow up in an unhealthy way and develop fundamentally negative beliefs. They grow up believing

with body image with the mediating role of personality organization and ego strength directly and indirectly. This finding is related to the results of previous research. Semiz (2007) showed that borderline patients with body deformity disorder had a higher level of pathology of borderline disorder, traumatic childhood experiences and suicide attempts, substance abuse and self-harm than patients without dysmorphic disorder (25). In another study, a significant relationship was observed between borderline personality organization and body image

that other people do not care about them. Thus, the person will have terrible relationships and feelings of separation from others and will also have a negative feeling towards himself and negative body image is one of the dire consequences of such feelings (29).

When a person is disappointed in being accepted by others, he/she creates a negative self-image, a combination of dependent or dramatic personality patterns in a borderline personality organization will follow. Such individuals show a kind of domineering attachment to only one or two important figures in their lives. The predominant personality traits in these individuals include not only loyalty, conscientiousness, humility, and avoidance of competition, but also self-harming attachment and obedience, as well as parasitic attachment. Borderline patients whose predominant traits are of the dependent and dramatic type are particularly prone to display physical symptoms. To strengthen and consolidate their relationship, they insist on clinging to whoever is available (16). However, despite having a negative body image of

themselves, to compensate for this deficiency, in an erosive effort, they make continuous and extensive changes in the appearance of their body, in order to reduce their negative mental body image and gain acceptance from others.

In this study, it was found that a person's body image has a direct relationship with the first object relations, it is also direct relationship with the personality organization and ego strength in borderline patients. If any of the variables is damaged, a person's body image regarding himself becomes negative as well.

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