



Beauty and the perceptions of self-identity and esteem

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ABSTRACT

Beauty standards have a significant effect on our society these days. By their definition, many advertisements promote the image that a beautiful body is a perfect body. Consequently, people are at a higher risk of suffering from the most common low self-esteem to complex mental health problems. Not only low self-esteem but also poor self-image was the effect of beauty standards. Thus, the body shapes were specifically focused on in this study as it has affected many people and caused severe mental disorder such as Body Dysmorphic Disorder; to protect against these effects, healthy self-esteem with a healthy self-image was so important. In many of research showed that childhood is the age that can significantly influence and raised self-esteem. The age children could understand how different they are from others as an elementary schooler (7-11 years old). Playing with toys was a dominant activity during childhood and appears essential to child development. However, toys can be more effective when parents or caregivers play with children and talk to them about what they are doing and learning. So, we designed an educational toy like a puzzle of many different body parts. There are 3 parts of body, the upper, the middle, and the base. The materials are wood without toxic and used the magnets to joint for safety. And the children can decorate their toy as they want. This educational toy can help parents and caregivers understand beauty standards and approach children to help them understand the diversity of different body shapes without judgment.

Keywords: beauty standard, perceptions of self, identity, self-image, self-esteem, education toy, Body Dysmorphic Disorder

1. Introduction

Nowadays, media globalization has paved the way by communicating and advertising using images of people with thin bodies. All of this constant bombardment with images of thin, in their view, beautiful and perfect bodies. (A Poorani, 2012) With images of media's ideal beauty bombarding us daily, it is easy for it to become the standard that shapes us to be similar and therefore beautiful. Beauty is defined by society, by how people think. Likewise, society is also defined and tuned by beauty standards. According to Hoff (2019), in a recent survey of people, perfect bodies would be almost impossible to achieve as the proportions of the ideal body can only be achieved by using highly unhealthy means.



Thus in this study, body shapes were the specific focus. It has affected more people and caused more severe diseases such as Body Dysmorphic Disorder. Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD) is a mental health disorder in which you cannot stop thinking about one or more perceived defects or flaws in your appearance. Others cannot see a minor flaw, but you may feel so embarrassed and anxious that you may avoid many social situations. (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2019) Such as a family history of the disorder, parenting, and negative evaluations or experiences about your body or self-image.

Self-esteem is how you value and respect yourself; that is why if people think about their bodies not being perfect can develop low self-esteem. So, it is vital to increase self-esteem by turning people's opinion of themselves inside and out. A consensus is emerging about the way self-esteem develops across the lifespan. On average, self-esteem is relatively high in childhood and drops during adolescence. (Robins, Richard W, 2005) By the way, self-esteem in children who already have high self-esteem decreases over time. Our study focuses on increasing self-esteem and teaching children about the different body shapes. Educational toys have become one of the tools used to approach children in many development stages, for example, cognitive, fine motor and gross motor, social, and emotional. (Goldstein, 2012) Besides that, educational toys also have become essential tools for children since they can be the tool that makes children interested and stimulated.

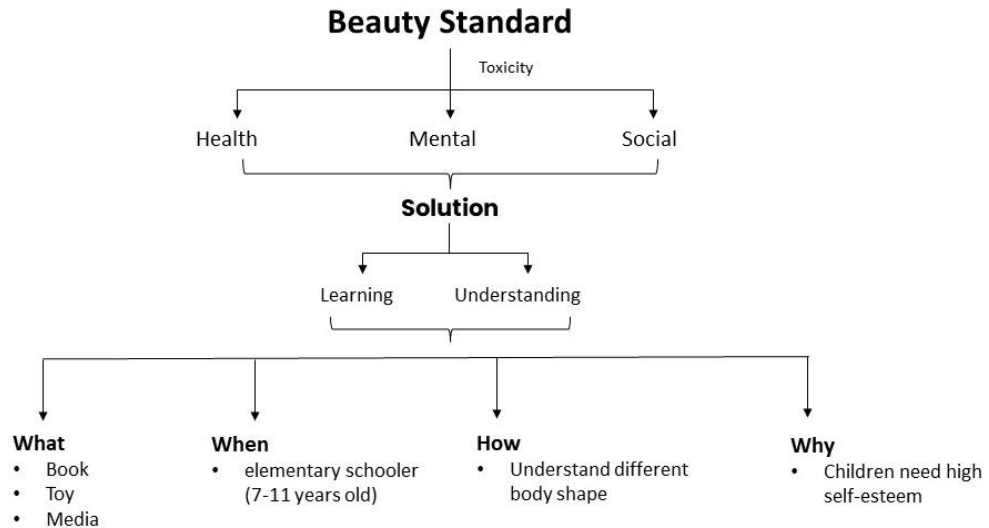


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

2. Objectives of the study

1. Approach caregivers to understand beauty standards.
2. Design a collection of educational toys.



3. Materials and methods

3.1 Beauty standards

The beauty standard is what any society recognizes as the ideal beauty. The beauty form may have been inherited from other cultures. Or it may be due to the criteria set by the opposite sex. As the popularity of the standard increases, this standard will be accepted and published. Therefore, each culture has different beauty standards, or they may be similar.



Figure 2 There are numerous people with different body shapes in the mirrors.

Source: <https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/center/htbw-main-page.html>

It can be seen that the beauty standards that we have learned are all set by humans. Without standing on the truth or the scales that will prove that this is more, less, or more petite beauty, most people will still hold onto that standard of beauty to bring themselves closer to the standard. Or higher than the standard to be accepted by society or attract more attention from the opposite sex.

White beauty standards in distinct cultures, small and sweet This is probably the standard of beauty for Thai women that are set by the opposite sex and the point of perception by the media. Therefore, it is not surprising that tanned, confident, and sexy women are immediately compared to being more suitable for a foreign partner because they have a beauty that does not meet the accepted Thai standards.

When projected to the South Korean society, the beauty standards that exist may not be that different from those of Thailand because South Korea's beauty has influenced Thailand through the entertainment industry that has grown as well as the beauty industry. But in recent years, South Korean entertainment media has begun to accept new beauty, emphasizing individuality. But it is also covered by specific values such as having a lovely face, a good figure and being stylish.



In the west, beauty standards may be neglected, but they have not entirely disappeared from the culture but changed from a single standard of beauty. There are many standards, depending on which standard of beauty a person chooses as their measure, for example, having an hourglass figure, wide hips, a narrow waist with a subtle tan like a Kardashians, tall, well-proportioned and not too skinny. Or a plump but stylish shape with good health, such as the role model of a plump woman like Ashley Graham.

The effect of beauty standards. Accepting outside judgment can be more difficult when you do not meet beauty standards. It can go beyond the point of being judged by others on different issues. For example, you might be judged for not loving yourself, or you might be compared to someone who has standard beauty standards. You may be discriminated against both intentionally and unintentionally. Or it may become a severe problem with mocking to the point of embarrassment, directly affecting mental health that can cause depression or wrong decisions about surgery to make yourself acceptable in the eyes of others.

But it is not only those who do not meet the standards of beauty that are affected. When the current demands for accepting diverse beauty are increasingly being talked about in society, this raises questions about the truth of beauty standards until there was a wave of countermeasures against people of standard beauty through the use of sarcastic, sarcastic words or other assessments of their abilities. Some people are happy to have beauty below the standards because there is a common belief that people with standard beauty are only good at being beautiful.

In the end, it may be considered more than the existence of standard beauty is 'Accepting the difference' without any conditions. Just understand that all human beings are created differently. But everyone is human, too, so no one would be hurt by the illusory standards of beauty anymore.

3.2 Self-image and Self-esteem

Body image is the mental picture of your body and how you see yourself when you look in a mirror.

Self-esteem is how you value and respect yourself as a person. In addition, self-esteem affects how you take care of yourself emotionally, physically and spiritually.

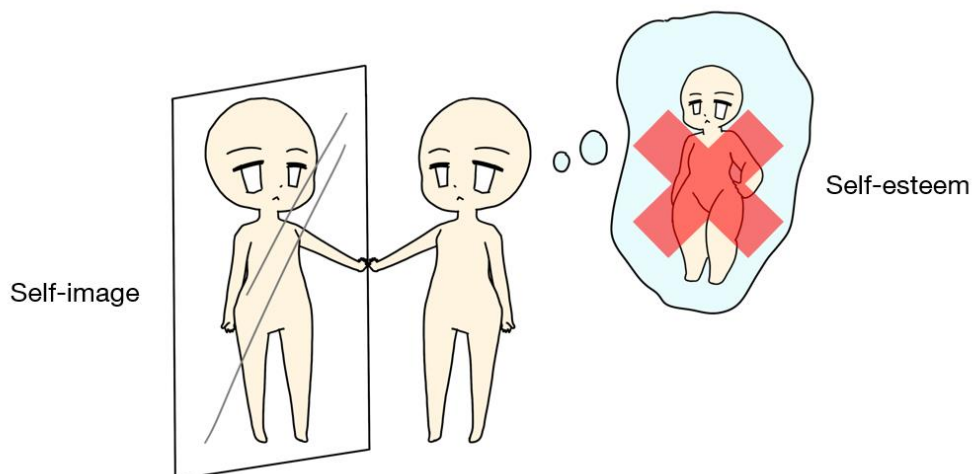


Figure 3 Self-image VS Self-esteem



Body image and self-esteem directly influence one another. When you have a healthy body image, you feel comfortable about your body and know how to care for it. When someone does not like their body, they may not feel good about themselves or care for themselves; this can mean not eating or sleeping enough, staying away from friends and family, or turning down chances to do things they would otherwise enjoy. Having a healthy body image means recognizing the qualities and strengths that make you feel good about yourself. A positive environment where friends and family support each other and accept each other's appearance is essential to self-esteem and body image. A positive environment where friends and family support each other and accept each other's appearance is essential to self-esteem and body image.

Young children have relatively high self-esteem, which gradually declines over childhood. Researchers have speculated that children have high self-esteem because of their unrealistically optimistic self-views. However, as children develop cognitively, they base their self-evaluations on external feedback and social comparisons. Thus, they form a more balanced and accurate appraisal of their academic competence, social skills, attractiveness, and other personal characteristics. For example, as children move from preschool to elementary school, they receive more negative feedback from teachers, parents, and peers, and their self-evaluations correspondingly become more negative.

3.3 Body Dysmorphic Disorder

The disease does not like your appearance. Some people have but do not even know it is a psychiatric illness. The concern with this disease is that it may cause other co-morbidities, especially depression, that could lead to suicide without the proper treatment. Therefore, it is considered a dangerous disease and should be appropriately treated. Most importantly, everyone should be acquainted with this disease to observe themselves and those around them before the illness becomes severe and leads to future danger.

The disease does not like your appearance. Also known as Body Dysmorphic Disorder is a feeling of dissatisfaction with your body and appearance beyond the norm, classified in the obsessive-compulsive disorder group. They were characterized by repetitive thoughts, dissatisfaction with others, and repetitive behaviors, such as frequently looking in the mirror and anxiously asking the other person. For a long time (average 3-8 hours per day) until affecting daily life or learning and work. They may also find actions to change themselves, including frequent surgeries.

However, the state of disapproval of one's appearance is not always a disease or ailment. It must be considered according to the frequency of symptoms, such as observing their appearance if it is frequent, on average 3-8 hours per day, therefore, classified as a disease. They may look in the mirror all day until they cannot work or study. There are constant thoughts of wanting to change yourself and having repeated surgery. Do not feel satisfied with yourself; that is an obstacle in life. This is a disease that should be treated, but if it is a normal self-observation, a standard mirror action after a few surgeries, I am satisfied. That is normal. It is not classified as a disease and does not require treatment.



The factors involved in the disease are often based on the patient's inner psyche. For example, having a lack of self-confidence and feeling worthless in yourself may be due to family values that pay attention to appearance due to the patient's social and environmental values. Including expectations from others or society in the patient himself in the media or celebrities who are popular with plastic surgery May have some effect, but not much It's just an additional factor, not a direct risk factor.

- 1) The mental basis of the patient
- 2) Values of family, society and environment around the patient
- 3) Age: Most patients were between 15-30 years (adolescence to early adulthood).
- 4) Gender: It was found that more women had the disease than men. Possibly a result of women being more elaborate than men. Therefore, care more about themselves and find more deficiencies.

There is a distinction between dislike disease and dislike mania; they can be similar such as observing oneself often and being dissatisfied with what one sees even after modifying oneself to have the correct appearance, such as losing weight until thin but still feeling fat and wanting to be thinner or face surgery to correct the defect but still dissatisfied and want more surgery. The difference is that being skinny is a generalized view of one's body shape and weight, but the disease mania is when one does not like the appearance. The disease mania often focuses on specific body parts and is more specific than dislike disease. The effects are different. Mania is affected by malnutrition, physically weak from excessive weight loss or an improper diet, including too much exercise. However, the disease does not like one's appearance and affects the mind and life.

3.4 Children and caregivers

As children develop from infants to teens to adults, they go through a series of developmental stages that are important to all aspects of their personhood, including physical, intellectual, emotional and social. Therefore, the proper role of the parent is to provide encouragement, support, and access to activities that enable the child to master essential developmental tasks.

Child Development specialists have learned that children are goal-directed to experiment and learn from each experience from birth. Child Development experts have taken the concept of scaffolding from the building trades. Just as scaffolding is put up to support the structure of the building as it is being built and gradually taken down as the building can support itself. Parents must provide the necessary support for a child to allow them to explore and learn from their environment safely and productively. As the child matures and develops mastery, the scaffolding is removed or changed to allow the child to become more independent. If the child is not quite ready, the support is reinstated and gradually withdrawn.

Parents are also known as people who are parenting their children. But the people who take care of the children and approach them are not only parents but also someone else in a family that we call a caregiver. In some families, children were supported by their grandparents. However, the caregiver is usually a more mature family member who can look after the children. So, our research will use the word caregiver, which includes the parents and



others. The role of the caregiver is to provide encouragement, support, and access to activities that enable the child to master critical developmental tasks. The child's primary social group is their family, which strongly influences learning and socialization.

3.5 Education toy

Play is a dominant activity during childhood and appears essential to child development (Piaget, 1962). And the studies of playing in childhood, at this age, playing with toys is the best choice for children. The toys category developed to assist the educational process is called an educational toy. An educational toy is a toy that was designed to stimulate children's minds and advance their learning while children play. The educational toy is becoming one of the tools that can support children in many development stages, for example, cognitive, fine motor and gross motor, social and emotional.

Research shows that educational toys and playtime are critical to a child's development. Toys and play are ways to help children learn faster. Learning by playing is the concept of the educational toy. However, learning is not the reason children choose to play with toys, but playing is the predominant way that children learn and "learn how to learn" (Domna-Mika Kakana, 2018)

Educational toys may enhance communication and cooperation between children, parents, and families (Björck & Kesson & Brodin, 1992). The educational toy can be more effective when parents or caregivers play with children and talk to them about what they are doing and learning (Jo Adetunji, 2017). Thus, the importance of playing depends on the caregiver's understanding of the correct choice of toy children play selectively use in play. While the children are playing with their toys, the caregiver can play with them and engage them in conversation about what they are playing (Nicola Yelland, 2021).

4. Results

From the problem of beauty standards, I choose to use educational toys to solve the problem. Educational toys often allow children to play alongside each other physically, which can develop children's social development, such as dolls. Our educational toy was developed to help parents and caregivers understand beauty standards. Also, to approach the children on understanding the diversity of different body shapes without judgment.

Material and size All educational toys have to be safe for children. The material that uses with educational toys must be non-toxic. Kate M. Cronan (2018) reported that art materials should be non-toxic be lead-free. Crayons and paints should be ASTM D-4236, meaning that the American Society has evaluated them for Testing and Materials. Toys should be large enough, at least 1¼ inches (3 centimeters) in diameter and 2¼ inches (6 centimeters) in length. And avoid marbles, coins, and balls that are 1.75 inches (4.4 centimeters) in diameter or less.

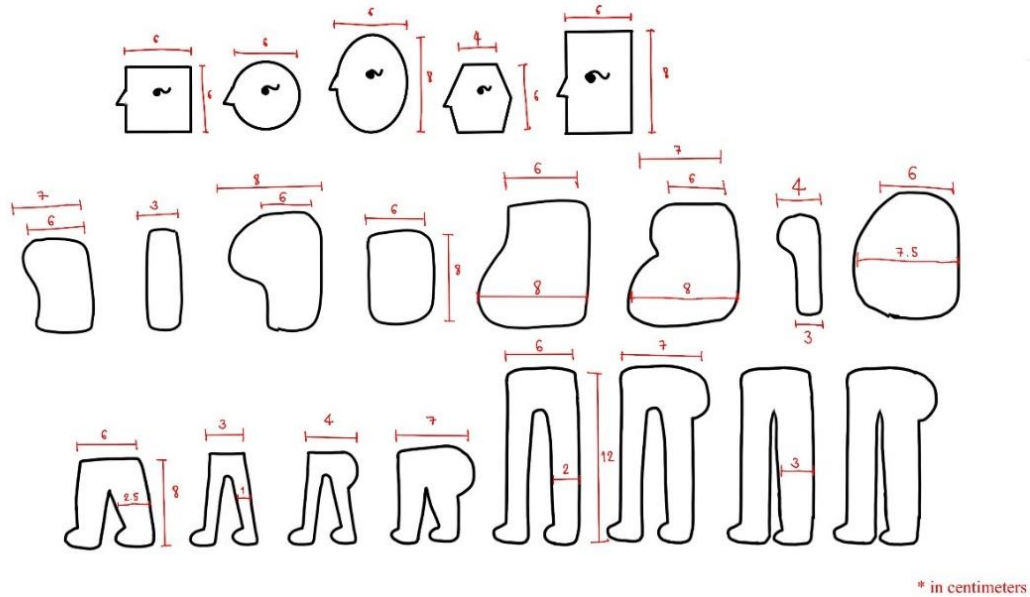


Figure 4 Toy design ideas based on Body Dysmorphic Disorder

This idea is based on BDD, such as Skinny / Fat, Short / Tall, Big / Small chest and Big / Small butt, and design the person's shape from the side to see the shape more clearly. The material used to make toys is wood because wooden toys are perfect for the environment. They are also suitable for children in terms of natural materials that are harmless, highly durable and allow children to think more creatively during playtime. I use the safety scale for a toy from those above that is large enough, at least 1¼ inches (3 centimeters) in diameter.



Figure 5 Collection of educational toys



The important thing is that the wood still matches the concept of my thesis that beauty is different for each person. So, wood with different and unique patterns can represent my thesis's concept. I used a magnet to hold it between the parts for a safe connection. Children can decorate as they like, such as sticking stickers and coloring.



Figure 6 Children can decorate the toy

"Be you tiful" is the name of the toy. I use the words Be you tiful at it is a play on words that means that you are beautiful when you decide to be yourself. And the logo that I designed; I want to represent a joyful life like high self-esteem.

I select the gem-shaped package because gems are luminous and beautiful on their own, just like the thesis concept. I designed the package to separate the space inside into three parts: head, body, and legs for easy-to-collect toys.



Figure 7 Package of toy "Be you tiful"



5. Conclusion

This paper has reviewed the importance of the effect of the beauty standard such as unhealthy to be a perfect body shape, low self-esteem, etcetera. Many research studies showed that self-esteem and self-image could improve in childhood. Our study designed an educational toy tool for increasing self-esteem and understanding body shapes. However, after exploring and trying the first design, we found that many parents or caregivers did not understand the word "beauty standard." Lastly, parental involvement is a crucial factor in developing children. Therefore, every play involving caregivers would provide advantages in guiding their children to have more confidence in expressing themselves. This study showed that the designer has to explore research to understand the point of the design. Thus, the designer could better understand children's development and how to approach the caregiver to implement the attributes of perception and expression in child play.

The conclusion demonstrated that our educational toy design draws upon academic research and carries us out to create quality and safe toys for children. Furthermore, to understand the perception of beauty without standard and aimed to contribute to approaching children about the different many body shapes.

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