

Appearance-management behaviors in Thai and Slovak women and men

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ABSTRACT: *The current study examined the differences between the motivational salience and the self-evaluative salience determined in the ASI-R questionnaire in Slovak and Thai people. We bought the ASI-R questionnaire for a nominal fee from the author's web site at www.body-images.com in March 2016 and then translated the original ASI-R questionnaire from English to Slovak and to Thai language and back by three different people from both countries. We collected data from 283 people in age from 18 to 30, 146 were Thai people and 137 were Slovak people. Based on the normality Test (Kolmogorov-Smirnov test), the Mann-Whitney U-test was used to determine the significance of the differences arising from the ASI-R questionnaire between Thais and Slovaks, women and men. Our results in items of ASI-R are with little differences between Thais and Slovaks people. We have noticed that there is no statistical significance between the Thais and the Slovaks in motivational salience and self-evaluative salience. We also did not record statistical significance between the Thais and the Slovaks in composite ASI-R. Statistically significant differences between women and men of the whole sample is in composite ASI-R and self-evaluative salience of appearance at 1% level of statistical significance and in motivational salience is statistical significance at 5% level. Comparison of all area of ASI-R in the sample of Thai women and men shows statistical significance. Between the sample of Slovak men and the sample of Slovak women the results are statistically insignificant except for the self-evaluative area ($p = .014$).*

KEYWORDS: *appearance-management behaviours, body image, motivation, Slovak, Thai*

I. Introduction

We were interested in perception of physical appearance and motivation to engage in appearance-management behaviors of people from Slovakia and Thailand. We decided to find out and study the answers of 20 items from questionnaire among Slovak and Thai people. We had the opportunity to get questionnaires from Thai people and thus compare the results of the ASI-R questionnaire between people from Thailand and from Slovakia that is the country of our origin. We compare perceptual and attitudinal experiences about one's body, mainly one's physical appearance that is the domain of self-schemas. We study persons' importance, meaning, and influence of their appearance in their life and compare it between Thais and Slovaks.

II. Body image

Body image is a crucial element of complex mechanism of identity of human being [1]. First mention of body image comes from 50 years of 20 century and was used by author [2], who were interested in study those mechanisms of the central nervous system which are responsible to build up the spatial image of himself or herself. The body schema (Körperschema) according to Schilder (ibid) is the tri-dimensional image everybody has about himself and "we may call it body-image". But the body has also an inside, not only an outside. Author [3] stated that body image becomes very important phenomenon of society and it has huge influence of everyday living of individuals. The whole concept of body image means the perception, feelings and thoughts of individuals towards own body and appearance [4, 5]. The schema is defined as the cognitive structure used for self-related matters and derives from personal and social expectations and experiences. Especially self-evaluative salience shows the importance of appearance to an individual's sense of self-worth [6, 7]. Based on [8] each body emits signals, so we can talk about body language. Body language means: appearance, attitude of the body, body posture and also behavior. Body image support or destroy our chances to success. According to

[9] body image is the way how individual feels, thinks and percepts his body. It is created from objective and subjective part. Perception aspects create objective part and reflect the level of exactness how individual see shapes of his body. It is the answer if individual is able to percept his natural shape. Cognitive and emotional aspects create second parts of body image called subjective part. Which says about satisfaction of individual with his/her body[10].

2.1 Satisfaction and dissatisfaction

During assessment of own physical appearance can result come into two attitudes – positive and negative. Positive self-assessment is defined as satisfaction with its own, which each individual percepts as his confidence and self-awareness. Dissatisfaction is a negative attitude which is created by lack of confidence and weak self-confidence [11].

More positive self-perceiving grows up our self-confidence, which affects our self-acceptance, behavior, and self-presentation. On the other side, if negative self-perceiving continues can come with bad mood and worse self-confidence even paranoia[8]. Author [12] says that positive evaluation is more complete and stable and negative is characterized by lower self-confidence. Satisfaction with own body affects confidence and behavior [13, 14]. Body image is affected by media, individual psychological factors, other people, social and economic status, genetic links, cosmetic surgeries, gender, age and also ethnicity[15]. According to [16] medial stereotypes and celebrities influence young people and their satisfaction with their bodies. Authors [17] consider as main dissatisfaction of youngsters the dissatisfaction with their own bodies. Based on [18] exposure of which medial power and content has influence also in behavioral results on young people. Adolescents are in conflict between ideal and real appearance and they are-very affected and tend to behave according medial trends and its behavioral causes. Authors [19] found differences between real BMI and perceived body size, 72 % of girls aged 15-16 years and 63 % of girls aged 17-18 years tend to have underestimated self-perception of their BMIs than their real BMIs were.

2.2 Motivation

Motivations have roots in Latin language. It was created by words moveo, mover which means moving, action [20-22] and moio means movement, soul flowment. Motivation is defined as a psychical process which activates human being to various activities. Generally we can say that motivation consist of answer to aquestion why we act the way we act. Motivation is a physical process, which gives our behavior focus on particular aim and gives us answer to a question „why“[22]. We can deduce that each behavior of people has its cause, so person is motivated. Motivation to appearance-management behaviors may be caused by the effort to lose weight or gain weight. Hide the body by multi layered clothing, and grunge clothing that de-emphasize silhouette. For appearance-management when dissatisfaction with the body occurs many people accede to exercising [23].

III. Methods

3.1 Participants

Respondents from Slovakia and Thailand were asked to fill in the standardized questionnaire ASI – R short form. More of the respondents were students or young people from 18 to 30 years of age. We were able to collect 283 questionnaires, 146 Thailand people and 137 Slovak people. Respondent was offered an ASI – R questionnaire in Slovak and Thai language, which was translated by three different people from the English version into the Slovak version and three different people from the English version into the Thai version. The questionnaire was filled in by Thai respondents in Thailand and Slovak respondents in Slovakia.

SAMPLE

From Thailand		From Slovakia	
146		137	
Thai women	Thai men	Slovak women	Slovak men
78	68	77	60
Age		Age	
22.4 ± 2.5		22.5 ± 2.0	
22.4 ± 2.5	22.4 ± 2.4	22.3 ± 1.8	22.9 ± 2.3

3.2 Measures

To collect data, we used the standardized ASI-R questionnaire which license we bought from Cash web sides(<http://www.body-images.com/assessments/order.html>). The abbreviation of ASI-R means Appearance Schemas Inventory-Revised (ASI-R) and is empirically validated. It is the revision of [4] original assessment of individual’s psychological awareness of their physical appearance. The original version has 14 items, the Appearance Schemas Inventory (ASI) is a 14-item instrument that assesses body image investment in relation to certain beliefs or assumptions about the importance, meaning, and influence of appearance in one’s life[5]. This new one ASI-R (Appearance Schemas Inventory-Revised Short Form) has 20 measurement items and is composed of two subscales, termed Self-Evaluative Salience (of Appearance) and Motivational Salience (of Appearance), with 12 and 8 items respectively. Six of these 20 items are worded in the contraindicative direction and were reverse scored (i.e., 1 = 5, 2 = 4, 4 = 2, 5 = 1). Self-Evaluative Salience of Appearance or individuals’ beliefs about how their looks influence their personal or social worth and sense of self – reflects the extension how individuals define and measure themselves and their physical appearance, which affects their social and emotional experiences. Motivational Salience of Appearance assesses persons’ motivational salience of being attractive and managing their appearance – pertains to the extent to which persons attend to their appearance and engage in appearance-management behaviors. Self-evaluative salience reflects how people believe that their physical appearance determines their own self-worth. Motivational salience reflects an individual’s engagement with their appearance (grooming behaviours) [5, 24].

Respondent’s rate questions on 5-point type scale ranging from strongly disagree (1), mostly disagree (2), neither agree or disagree (3), mostly agree (4) to strongly agree (5). A higher Self-Evaluative Salience (mean of 12 items) score reflects a greater investment in physical appearance, whereas a higher Motivational Salience (mean of 8 items) score reflects a greater engagement in appearance-management behaviors. An overall ASI-R score can also be calculated by taking the mean of all 20 answers with higher scores reflecting greater levels of overall dysfunctional schematic investment in appearance [25].

3.3 Statistical analysis

Data were analyzed with statistical program IBM SPSS 23. Based on the Normality Test (Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test), the Mann-Whitney U-test was used to determine the significance of differences arising from the ASI-R questionnaire between Thai and Slovaks, women and men.

IV. Results

The means and standard deviations of 78 Thai women, 68 Thai men, 77 Slovak women and 60 Slovak men for each of twenty statements are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Items of ASI-R.

	Thai women	Thai men	Slovak women	Slovak men
ITEM 1	3.28 ± 1.14	3.47 ± 1.28	3.10 ± 1.05	3.18 ± 1.08
ITEM 2	3.23 ± 1.22	2.72 ± 1.29	3.05 ± 1.20	2.72 ± 1.14
ITEM 3	2.92 ± 1.09	2.96 ± 1.35	3.31 ± 1.10	3.37 ± 1.19
ITEM 4	3.68 ± 1.12	3.34 ± 1.20	4.00 ± 1.10	4.13 ± 1.00
ITEM 5	3.01 ± 1.30	3.00 ± 1.23	3.40 ± 1.06	2.95 ± 1.11
ITEM 6	3.65 ± 1.38	2.94 ± 1.43	3.38 ± 1.16	3.20 ± 1.13
ITEM 7	3.15 ± 1.14	2.65 ± 1.10	3.55 ± 1.11	3.15 ± 1.09
ITEM 8	3.55 ± 1.33	2.75 ± 1.51	3.88 ± 1.15	3.43 ± 1.24
ITEM 9	2.87 ± 1.06	2.96 ± 1.19	2.96 ± 1.27	2.77 ± 1.23
ITEM 10	2.83 ± 1.00	2.79 ± 1.24	2.96 ± 1.01	3.02 ± 1.07
ITEM 11	3.01 ± 1.19	3.32 ± 1.26	3.12 ± 1.05	3.08 ± 1.09

ITEM 12	3.50 ± 1.25	3.13 ± 1.17	3.47 ± 1.13	3.03 ± 1.23
ITEM 13	2.78 ± 1.28	2.66 ± 1.31	2.60 ± 1.25	2.47 ± 1.27
ITEM 14	2.91 ± 1.21	2.56 ± 1.11	2.78 ± 1.10	2.25 ± .95
ITEM 15	2.59 ± 1.22	2.69 ± 1.12	2.61 ± 1.11	2.38 ± 1.14
ITEM 16	3.12 ± 1.28	2.85 ± 1.45	3.10 ± 1.33	2.45 ± 1.23
ITEM 17	3.51 ± 1.37	2.78 ± 1.40	3.33 ± 1.12	3.17 ± 1.08
ITEM 18	3.40 ± 1.22	2.74 ± 1.37	3.05 ± 1.06	3.18 ± 1.10
ITEM 19	3.09 ± 1.11	2.82 ± 1.30	2.51 ± 1.01	2.48 ± 1.00
ITEM 20	2.68 ± 1.10	2.62 ± 1.25	2.04 ± 1.08	2.52 ± 1.35

Thai women have received the highest mean for statement “I have never paid much attention to what I look like”, which is marked with the reversed score, so it should be understand in opposite meaning, because they mostly disagree with this statement and the meaning should be that they always pay attention to what they look like. They mostly agree with the statements “I often check my appearance in a mirror just to make sure I look okay” and “If I like how I look on a given day, it’s easy to feel happy about other things” (Table 1).

Thai women gave seven neutral answers, which mean neither agree nor disagree, and three of neutral answers with the lowest scores are given to the statements “If I dislike how I look on a given day, it’s hard to feel happy about other things”, “My appearance is responsible for much of what’s happened to me in my life”, and “When I meet people for the first time, I wonder what they think about how I look”. We can say that body image or appearance, how we look like in the day is imprint for our feelings about other things on the day. The appearance is according to Thai women somewhat responsible or somewhat is not responsible for much of what’s happened to them in their life.

Thai men (Table 1) have the highest mean of the scores, because of reverse scores, for the statements “I spend little time on my physical appearance”, “I have never paid much attention to what I look like” “My physical appearance has had little influence on my life “. So, in fact they answered that they spend a lot of time on their physical appearance and that they pay attention to what they look like and their physical appearance had some influence on their life.

Thai men are interested in their appearance and they pay attention to the appearance. Thai men gave on average fifteen neutral answers and the three of neutral answers with the lowest scores are given to the statements “In my everyday life, lots of things happen that make me think about what I look like”, “My appearance is responsible for much of what’s happened to me in my life” and “When something makes me feel good or bad about my looks, I tend to dwell on it”.

Slovak women got the highest mean of statements (Table 1), “I have never paid much attention to what I look like.” This item is evaluated with reverse score, so the statement is considered as opposite meaning sentence. The second highest score was given to the statement “If I like how I look at a given day, it’s easy to feel happy about other things. “And” When something makes me feel good or bad about my looks, I tend todwell on it” with these statements

Slovak women mostly agreed. Slovak women pay attention to their look, when they are satisfied with the look at the given day, they feel happy also about other things. Six statements are given the neutral answers (neither agree or disagree) and the lowest score were given to the statements “By controlling my appearance, I can control many of the social and emotional events in my life”, “When I meet people for the first time, I wonder what they think about how I look” and “If I dislike how I look on a given day, it’s hard to feel happy about other things”. Slovak women mostly disagree with the statement “My appearance is responsible for much of what has happened to me in my life”.

For Slovak men the highest score reached the same statement as for Slovak women and Thai women (“I have never paid much attention to what I look like”). We must consider it in an opposite meaning then it is scored with the reverse score. So, in fact they pay attention to what they look like. Next statements “If I like how I look on a given day, it’s easy to feel happy about other things” and “I try to be as physically attractive as I can be”, these findings confirm that appearance is not just women’s matter but even for men it is very important. Four statements are in neutral answer (neither agree nor disagree) and two of them with the lowest score are “My appearance is responsible for much of what’s happened to me in my life”, and “When I see good-looking people, I wonder about how my own looks measure up”.

Five statements are in a range of the mostly disagree score and the lowest one score is for the statement “In my everyday life, lots of things happen that make me think about what I look like”. It means that Slovak men give no responsibility to their appearance what happen in a day to them.

The highest mean of scored statements got Slovak men (4.13) and the lowest mean got Slovak women (2.04)

Table 2 Motivational salience of Thai and Slovak people from our study.

MOTIVATIONAL SALIENCE OF APPEARANCE			
Thais		Slovaks	
3.19 ± .64		3.32 ± .61	
Thai women	Thai men	Slovak women	Slovak men
3.35 ± .65	3.02 ± .59	3.32 ± .62	3.31 ± .61

Eight statements of twenty given are composed to the motivational salience area. There is no statistical significance between the Slovak sample and the Thai sample in motivational salience Table 2. Statistical significance was recorded among women and men of the whole sample at 5% of the level of statistical significance $p = .031$. Women reported significantly higher levels of schematic investment on the ASI-R than did men. Thus, regardless of where they live, they always differ only between genders in motivational salience. The mean for women is 3.34 (SD .63). For men is the mean 3.16 (SD .62). Women give greater engagement in appearance-management behaviors; give more motivation to their appearance than men. We can confirm our results with other researches[5], which say, women focus more on body image or appearance, more focus on look and emotions. Furthermore, there is no statistical significance in the motivational salience of appearance between women and men from Slovakia, but between women and men from Thailand there is the statistical significance in motivational salience of appearance at 1% of the level of statistical significance $p = .003$. This means that Thai women are much more motivated to have a better appearance than Thai men. Slovak men are significantly more interested in motivational salience of appearance area than Thaimen $p = .007$.

Table 3 Self-evaluative salience of Thai and Slovak people

SELF-EVALUATIVE SALIENCE OF APPEARANCE			
Thais		Slovaks	
2.91 ± .55		2.86 ± .56	
Thai women	Thai men	Slovak women	Slovak men
3.01 ± .54	2.80 ± .55	2.97 ± .53	2.72 ± .56

Table 3 presents the data for Thais and Slovaks for self-evaluative salience of appearance. There is no statistical significance between the whole Slovak sample and the whole Thai sample in self-evaluative salience. The comparison from the point of view of gender of the Thais and the Slovaks in the self-evaluative is statistically significant. Between women and men of the whole sample, statistical significance is 1% of the statistical significance $p = .001$, with a mean for females of 2.99 (SD.54) and a male mean of 2.76 (SD55). Women more appreciate themselves and their appearance in comparison to men. Between Slovak men and Slovak women, this difference is significant in 5% of the level of statistical significance $p = .014$ and between Thai women and Thai men is the significance at the same level (5%) $p = .031$.

Table 4 Composite ASI – R score of Thai and Slovak people

COMPOSITE ASI – R score			
Thais		Slovaks	
3.02 ± .53		3.04 ± .50	
Thai women	Thai men	Slovak women	Slovak men
3.14 ± .52	2.89 ± .51	3.11 ± .49	2.96 ± .51

When comparing the results from the ASI-R total score– composite ASI-R score (Table4), between the whole sample of Thais and the whole sample of Slovaks, there is no statistical significance in composite ASI-R. Likewise, we did not notice the significance of statistics even between Slovak men and Slovak women. Statistical significance at 1% level of significance $p = .001$ in the composite ASI – R is between men and women from the whole sample. The average values for the total female population is 3.13 (SD .50) and the mean value for men is 2.92 (SD .50). And statistical significance at 1% of significance $p = .004$ between Thai women and Thai men.

V. Discussion

The same gender differences found out [5] among 603 USA college students (468 women and 135 men) in motivational salience of appearance and self-evaluative salience of appearance too. For both genders, the composite ASI-R and its two factors had high internal consistency and were significantly convergent with other pertinent measures of body image and psychosocial functioning. Author [26] reported, women were more invested in their appearance on the composite ASI-R scales and on both subscales. White women were more self-evaluatively invested in their appearance than were African American women, and African American men were more motivationally invested than White men. We did not recognize this phenomenon in comparison of Thais and Slovak women or men. ASI-R normative means by gender and race presented [26]in his investigation of composite ASI-R, which was 3.20 (SD .67) what is more than we found out in Slovak or Thai men. In women [26] found out the composite ASI-R with mean 3.47 (SD .62) what is more that we found out in Slovak or Thai women. Higher score of normative [26] is also found in self-evaluative salience and motivational salience in comparison to Slovak or Thai women and men.

From the point of view of differences in the world [27] wrote that regarding the body images men feel better than women in their bodies. More men are less stressed about their body images than women in Spain. In comparison between African American and Caucasian women, African-American ones feel more comfortable in their bodies. In China, women want to be small and skinny with curves in the right places. Men in China want to have perfect muscular bodies and they feel dissatisfaction about their bodies due to genetic preferences. The situation of body image of China's people is changing because of becoming more urban and media plays a big role too.

The geographers have shown relationship between bodies and spaces [28]. Author [28] drew together the limited references that geographers have made to fat bodies, spaces and places.

In results of our study we can see dissatisfaction in men and women too with their current weight. Most women wanted to lose weight, the men are evenly divided between those, who wanted to lose and those, who wanted to gain. Women, however were more dissatisfied with their bodies and places greater importance on their appearance as an influence on their feelings of well-being.

In the study of [29] the age, BMI, and marital status was the main predictor for body shape dissatisfaction. Youngsters and married females were predictors for body shape dissatisfaction. Collectively results show that body shape dissatisfaction and inactive lifestyle were prevalent among females in comparison to men.

The study of [30] consisted of 310 American university students and shows that the prevalence, magnitude of body weight status and shape dissatisfaction were more presented in female than in male students. Participants from Australian schools [31] were examined in a longitudinal study of the role of appearance schemas as a predictor of body dissatisfaction and found out changes over 2 years among adolescent girls and boys. Girls' body dissatisfaction worsened during the time compared to boys.

Body weight dissatisfaction was highly prevalent among girls than in boys, among overweight than in non-overweight, and among older adolescents than in younger adolescents in the study of [32] in comparison among girls and boys from 24 countries. The highest rates of body weight dissatisfaction were found among adolescent boys in Italy (39.9%), USA (37.7%), and Greece (35.2%), while the highest rates of body weight dissatisfaction among girls were found in Czech Republic (61.8%), Slovenia (56.8%), and Italy (55.2%). In every country where the research went, girls were more dissatisfied with their bodies than boys.

Authors [23] investigated and compared in Slovakia the opinion on own body among adolescent sporting boys (n=401), non-sporting boys (n=276), sporting girls (n=582) and non-sporting girls (n=372) and found that most satisfied with their body image were male athletes and the highest pride of own body in terms of attractiveness felt adolescent male athletes too.

The study of [33] examined differences in measures of perception of body shape and body satisfaction among 25 male and 165 female undergraduates from Taiwan. It was found that male ratings of the Ideal figure, the figure

of how they currently thought they looked, and the figure of how they felt most of time were almost identical, as were the figure of what they thought most attractive to women and the figure of how they thought others saw them. On the contrary, female ratings of the Ideal figure were significantly thinner than their perception of their current figure, the figure as others saw them, and the figure they felt most of time. Furthermore, the female figure that women rated as most attractive to males was thinner than the figure that males preferred. From this study we can see the same situation when males were more satisfied with their body and females were more dissatisfied with their body. This behavior is educated for all live through Medias and cultural standards.

Based on [8] the physical appearance and willingness to looks like ideal is linked with culture of that individual. Beauty and her perception is very individual but on the other hand exist trends which this has huge impact on this perception. People tend to live according the trends to be considered as beautiful. Ideal of beauty is specific for each culture and is determined by factors of each single society.

Authors [25] used ASI-R on 1,262 adults (422 men and 840 women, aged 18 to 98 years old), divided into young, middle-aged, older adults. Young and middle-aged women reported significantly more self-evaluative salience and motivational salience than their male counterparts.

The ASI is acceptably internally consistent, reasonably free of social desirability, and unaffected by subjects' body masses. Factor analysis suggested three moderately interrelated components of the ASI-termed body-image vulnerability, self-investment, and appearance stereotyping [4].

VI. Conclusion

The conclusion of the present study is that it does not matter where one lives but what gender is, because we did not find out statistical significance amongst Thais and Slovaks in our research. The statistical significance between all three areas (motivational, self-evaluative saliences, composite ASI-R) was compared within men and women of the whole sample, We measured cognitive-behavioral appearance investment in appearance and assessed appearance-management behavior in Thais and in Slovaks, who are from very different countries (not the same continent, not the same climate, not the same system of government, not the same religion, not the same race) and found out that there is no statistical significance between the whole Slovak sample and the whole Thai sample in motivational salience, there is no statistical significance between the whole Slovak sample and the whole Thai sample in self-evaluative salience, and between the whole sample of Thais and the whole sample of Slovaks, there is no statistical significance in composite ASI-R.

Surprisingly, we found that there was statistical significance in each surveyed area (motivational salience of appearance – $p = .003$, self-evaluative salience of appearance – $p = .031$, composite ASI-R – $p = .004$) between the sample of men and the sample of women from Thailand. This is not the same in the sample from Slovakia. Between the sample of Slovak men and the sample of Slovak women the results are statistically insignificant except for the self-evaluative area ($p = .014$).

Body image is researched in the worldwide. Men are more satisfied with their bodies than women are. Women want to be physically attractive for considered partner and want to be nice, not only for the outer world but for inner satisfaction with her own self.

The authors believe that they contribute with a small part to the mosaic of the large area of body image research from the small country of their origin, from the Slovakia, from the country in the very heart of Europe.

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