ABSTRACT

Body image is an important component of self-image. As children move into adolescence, body image becomes an important aspect of psychological and interpersonal development. However, constant highlighting of what an ideal height and weight should be can lead to negative attitude towards one’s own body. Body dysphoria is used to describe general feelings of sadness or an uncomfortable mood. Individuals suffering from dysphoria often tend to view themselves as being larger or smaller as compared to their real body image. They often have an impacted self esteem because of their image, and their mental state is drastically affected.

Although various issues are involved in defining body dysphoria like height and complexion, weight is the most common and important issue that is used in defining one’s body image. Considering the role of weight in body dysphoria, the research aimed in studying the difference in body dysphoria among obese and non-obese college students in Goa.

Gratitude therapy helps people feel more positive emotion, improve their health, and build strong relationships. Similarly self-compassion evokes qualities of kindness and feelings of inter-connectedness which helps individuals in finding hope and meaning when faced with difficulties in life. Hence the major emphasis of this research work was to introduce Gratitude therapy and Compassion Focused therapy as interventions and determine their effectiveness in helping individuals cope with dysphoria. As Gratitude therapy involves counting of blessings and Compassion Focused therapy highlights on being compassionate to one’s self irrespective of the situations around, the study further aimed to investigate the difference in the impact of the interventions on body dysphoria.
Based on the objectives of the research study, following hypotheses were formulated:

**Ha₁**: There will be a significant difference in the pre-intervention and post-intervention scores of body dysphoria among college students from gratitude therapy group and compassion focused therapy group

**Ha₂**: There will be a significant difference in the post-intervention scores of body dysphoria among college students from gratitude therapy group, compassion-focused therapy group and control group

**Ha₃**: There will be a significant difference in the scores of body dysphoria among obese and non-obese students in Goa

The research design is a pre-post design test. The participants were administered a test to determine body dysphoria. The tools used were Personal data sheet (self-constructed) and Situational Inventory of Body Image Dysphoria (SIBID) by Cash (2000). Herein participants who scored higher in the test administered were noted and studied further. A pilot study was carried out to test the effectiveness of the research study. Thereafter the study was carried out on a sample of 180 participants that included males (n=90; 45 obese and 45 non-obese) and females (n=90; 45 obese and 45 non-obese) and these participants were divided into three groups i.e. Gratitude therapy group (n=60), Compassion focused therapy group (n=60) and, Control group (n=60). These students who volunteered to participate in the study were exposed to the therapeutic intervention which consisted of 21 sessions. The same measure (SIBID) was then re-administered after the completion of the 21 days sessions.

The collected data, which was complete in every aspect, was scrutinized as per the instructions given in the manual of the measure used. The obtained raw scores
were further analyzed by the Statistical package for Social Sciences (Version 17). The raw scores were first transformed into ‘T’ scores and then statistical techniques such as Paired t-test, ANOVA, Post-hoc test and t-test were applied to find out the significant differences between the variables as stated in the hypotheses formulated.

The results revealed that body dysphoria scores was significantly higher in the pre-intervention test than the post-intervention test scores among college students from Gratitude therapy group (P<0.001) and Compassion focused therapy group (P<0.001). However, no significance difference was obtained in the pre- and post-intervention scores of Control group (P>0.05).

The derived univariate ‘F’ ratio for Body Dysphoria of Gratitude therapy, Compassion Focused therapy and Control group validate hypothesis 2, wherein the expected outcome was that there would be a difference in the impact on body dysphoria among college students caused by the therapeutic interventions (P<0.001).

The results of t-test analysis revealed that obese students had significantly higher body dysphoria than the non-obese students (P<0.001). It was also observed that female students scored higher in body dysphoria as compared to male students.

Thus, the research study proved the efficacy of the interventions to help participants cope with body dysphoria and significantly improving body dysphoria levels. Compassion focused therapy was found to be more effective in reducing body dysphoria as compared to Gratitude therapy. No change observed in the post-intervention scores of control group reveals that body dysphoria can be reduced effectively by correcting the thought process of the individuals. Despite its limitations, the research study serves as a significant contributor to devise the therapeutic programs for different kinds of problems like depression and low self-esteem.

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