

159 - BODY IMAGE THROUGH SILHOUETTE MATCHING TASK OF THIRD AGE FEMALE ACADEMICS OF UFAM

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INTRODUCTION

The Third Age can be easily deduced through a chronological concept (the real age of person), a biological concept (whereas the biological body establishes boundaries) and a personal concept, that is the most difficult of being set, and it's not usually mentioned among researchers, the matter has been developed from personal experiences and related to internal life experiences of each one. (COSTA, 1998).

Getting old brings factor that are often discussed nowadays. The elderly realizes in himself a degradation of his global physiological capacities, with discrete progressive way or in a very apparent way. This issue does not implies only in somatic changes, but also in psychosocial origin, including memory, intellect, behaviour, personality, social relationship, familiar and socioeconomic levels, etc. (COSTA, 1998).

The psychosocial aspects related with the human aging has been studied with diverse emphasis, analysing the body image of elderlies through different methods, as draws, scales and questionnaires.

The Body Image is the way that the person sees himself and feels about his own body (TAVARES, 2003). For SHILDER (1999), it's an entity in constant self-construction and self-destruction, in constant changing, growing and developing. It is part of this construction, conscious and unconscious processes; it isn't only a cognitive construction. It involves sensations that are given to us from the external part, as well as from the internal part, from the entrails, muscles and its inclosures. It also involves our experiences, our memories, as well as our desires and tendencies. Our relation with the environment and with the body image of others, the attitudes of others with their own bodies and their relation to us.

According to Okuma (1998) apud SUZUKI (2005), the elderlies who practice physical activities, besides feeling good, they have more willing inside and outside the family, they are less dependent and they know their bodies, breaking limits and boundaries that many times are self-imposed. There's a great decrease of the insomnia, of stress, an increase of cognitive functions, of self-esteem and body image, and more socialization.

A study performed by TRIBESS (2005) with 265 elderly women with ages between 60 to 96, shows that they were unsatisfied with their own body image, and this unsatisfaction was related with their nutritional state, but not on the physical activity level, on the age, on the health perception or on health problems self-pointed by the elderlies.

When they were shown the Silhouette Matching Task of Stunkard et al (1983) to beginner and veteran academics of Third Age of Universidade São Judas Tadeu in São Paulo; MATSUO, VELARDI, BRANDÃO E MIRANDA (2007) they realized that between the two groups there was a significant difference: the elderly women from the non-practitioner physical activities group (the beginners) showed unsatisfaction with their silhouette, wishing a slimmer body, appointing a bigger vulnerability to influences of social stereotypes, plus they had suffered more severely the common biological decreases of aging.

Using the Evaluative Assertion Analysis Technique, drawned by Osgood, Saporta & Nunnally, SIMÕES (1996) writing opinions were caught from 36 participants of the Third Age University of UNIMEP. Those opinions expressed the idea of elderlies about their own body and, the conclusion was the following one: who showed unsatisfaction with the body, a big part of this fact is related with stetic standards, defined culturally. According to SIMÕES (1996), statements like "I'm fat", "I need to take better care of myself and lose weight a little bit", "my body is a calling card", and others, express the concern about the beauty standard defined by society, which most of times, has as reference the slim body of the productive adult, ready to yield without obstacles. One of the participants of the group, for example, exposed this concern through the following way: The society establishes a beauty standard whereas my body does not fit, in my age". On the other hand, other interviewed people express apathy to the way society see them, saying: "the society is something we cannot take as basis, in the moment that a society, specially ours, has a very distorted sight". SIMÕES (1996) focused on another ways to see the body that elderlies had expressed, making references to a submissive body or even in total service for the spirit. The seen body like a divine gift, a gift from the Criator.

As TAVARES (2003) said, "the relevance of studies about body image is on its connection with the development of the identity of the human being and plus the fact that it is the guiding point of the relations of the man with the world. The contradictions and difficulties on his study aim the need to expand our comprehension about the theme. Several knowledge have been developed in special areas of Psychoanalysis, Neurophysiology and Sociology, which expand our comprehension when we absorb them inside a vision of body image as a dynamic and personal experience subjected to an identity and to a subjectivity of every single person."

The Body Image is an expression often used by professionals who are focused on the human body, among them the Physical Education Professionals, the doctors, the physiotherapists, the psychologists, etc. Although the use of this term may be understood in different senses among professional categories, some references seem to make sense and are well accepted for those groups of professionals. Making an intervention with the purpose of "develop or increase the person's body image", or realize that a person with any pathology or inability presents "variation or disturb with the body image", in order to subsidize a purpose of treatment or pedagogic action are expressions that seem to have clear meanings. So, the body image is a real and changeable element, passive of development, vulnerable to the deleterious effects of traumas and diseases.

INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES

For the evaluation of the body image perception of the female elderlies, it has been applied the SMT (Silhouette Matching Task) purpose by Stunkard et al. (1983) and adapted by Mash and Roche (1996).

This evaluation is a table with 12 silhouettes in progressive scale, where the third age academics matched the figure that they defined as their real body (RB), other picture as their ideal body (IB), and the observed body (OB) who will be the silhouette that the observer considered it was seen.

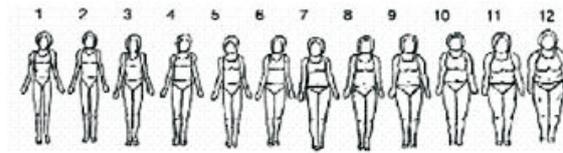


Figure 01. SMT (Silhouette Matching Task) purpose by Stunkard et al (1983) and adapted by Mash and Roche (1996). The Third Age academics were individually caught by the researchers, identifying the real body and what they considered to be the ideal one. After the researchers matched the observed body.

RESULTS

We obtained as personal results, the following table:

Individuals (n=30)	Real Body (RB)	Ideal Body (IB)	Observed Body (OB)
Arithmetic Mean	7.1	5.1	9.0
Deviation	2.81	2.16	1.58

The 30 women interviewed showed an average of 7.1 for the real body, 5.1 for the ideal body and the researcher observed as final rate 9.0 for the observed body.

The average 7.1 inside the scale adapted by Mash and Roche (1996) is between the intermediate near of 6, what means that most of the interviewds don't feel or don't see not so slim, not so fat, they realize themselves in an equilibrium point.

Figure 02. Distribution of the sample in relation with the real silhouette.

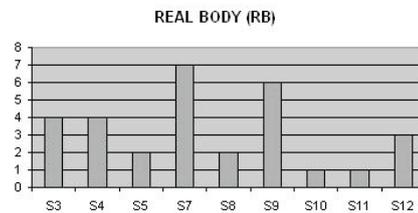
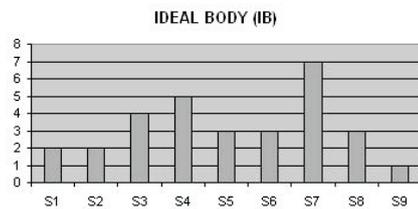


Figure 03. Distribution of the sample in relation with the choice of the ideal silhouette.



According to the Real Body (Figure 02), the majority recognize themselves as S7 and S9. Referring to Ideal Body (IB), the Figure 03 points a prevalence of the silhouette 7, meanwhile, the average pointed the silhouette 5 as favorite. The averages 4 and 3, were, respectively, the most voted after the 7th, representing, so, the desire of the interviewd to be more slim and, therefore, as consequence, decreasing the average to 5.

Between the interviewd, 53.3% chose the same silhouette as IB and RB, manifesting satisfaction with their own body image, and no one of those results had agree with the OB of the researchers. In other hand, 47.7% of the female elderlies didn't match BR and BI equal, but the opposite, they manifest their unsatisfaction with their own body image, wishing a silhouette very low comparing to the silhouette they have. However, the BR of them is much more equal with the OB matched by the researchers.

Observed Body (OB) related to Real Body (RB)

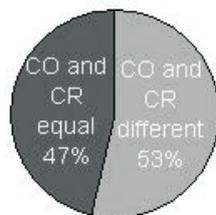


Figure 04. Distribution of the sample in relation to the Observed Body by the researchers and the Real Body matched by the interviewd.

DISCUSSION

Related to what was realized, the majority of the studies related to females manifest that losing weight is an ideal for women.

A study performed by MATSUO (2007) using the Silhouette Matching Task by Stunkard et al. (1983) concluded that

praticants of hydrogymnastics have much more satisfaction with their own body image than the non-praticants.

NOVAIS (2005) found, through a questionnaire of perception of body silhouette of STUNKARD and SORENSEN (1993) that, of 15 women from 51 to 60 years old, 44.44% were satisfied with their body image. Of 20 evaluated from 71 to 80 years old, the dissatisfaction was more embracing: 53.84% were not happy with their body image. The researchers still noted that, with the growing of the age, there is an increased conformism with the current image.

HALLIWELL and DITTMAR (2003) interviewed 42 women and men. The results revealed that women tend to focus the body on the appearance.

The researchers observed that the average is 9; demonstrating in their observation that the satisfied interviewed don't see themselves in the silhouette that they really are. They realize themselves and would like to be smaller. A similar result is found in some investigative nature research, performed by ALMEIDA et al. (2005), who verified that the group who chose more the size 3 (overweight) as representative of woman with normal size was the group of morbid obese women and this information directly reflects that the own body size can be influencing the evaluate of the concept of normal.

The group of six women who chose the silhouette 9 as RB has an exceptional case of a interviewed who matched the same silhouette as her IB, and the OB of the interviewed was S10. Even that this group realize itself as overweight, this volunteer proved that, further on being well with her body image outside the patterns, she wishes to proceed with the same and her recognition as BR was very near of OB that the researchers had observe.

The 16 elderly female (53.3%) who chose the same silhouette as BI and BR seem to show a good acceptance with their own body image. However, there is a possibility that exists a distortion in the self-perception of this image, overestimating or underestimating it, because they matched a silhouette for BR very far of the silhouette OB. The unsatisfied totalized 47.7% and their choices for Real Body, being too similar to the Observed Body, suggest that exists a biggest self-knowledge of their own, a biggest sense of reality, even in the presence of a low self-esteem.

These results are similar to TRIBESS (2006), who found dissatisfaction with the body image of 265 elderly female of 60 years old. Of them, the Ideal Body was similar to the Real only in 14 interviewed of 40.

A study performed by LIMA (2008) used the Silhouette Matching Task by Stunkard et al. (1993) with 9 silhouettes. They investigate how 30 women practitioners of cooper saw themselves and what would they do like to be. The majority presented the real silhouette ranging between borderline normal and borderline overweight, where, adapting to the scale we used in this study, would be, about S7 and S9. As ideal silhouette, they chose the borderline normal, who covered S5 and S7, suggesting, so, that they would be unsatisfied with the body image, mainly because the excess body weight.

The big and rounded bodies in some ages were consider signs of opulence and power, having a positive appreciation, contrasting with the depreciation and charging who defines our last decades, tending to appreciate slim and thin bodies. In this sense, the obesity have been considered a stigmatized condition by the society and have been associated with negative features, facilitating discrimination and dissatisfaction feelings. (ALMEIDA et al apud COELHO & FAGUNDES, 2007, p.S38).

The sociocultural rules have been immortalizing the stereotype of the association between thinness and positive attributes, mainly between women. (Friedman & Brownell, 1995; Ogden & Evans, 1996; Paul & Brownell, 2001 apud ALMEIDA et al., 2005).

Related to women with overweight, in the borderlimit situation where they are found, it's possible that the normative standard could have a different value according to personal expectations and even though with adherence to the collective. Related to obese women, Leonhard e Barry (1998), using similar methods, found special results about the choices of own size, because these obese women tended to underestimate their body size. Comparing these both results, we can think that the overweight class, possibly, could be more vulnerable to variability, involving not only the personal features, but also the sociocultural expectations in various contexts and, even though, the history of the permanence in this weight class or the inclusion in others. New studies could test the influences of these variances. (ALMEIDA et al., p. 32-33, 2005)

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study suggests that, even practicing physical activity regularly, being potentially healthy and being satisfied with their own body image, the Third Age female academics don't have a tasteful perception about themselves, letting be influenced, so many times, by patterns conveyed through the media and imposed by society and by the collectivity around. The unsatisfied, in other hand, have a perception more realistic about themselves, but it not means that they don't wish a body beloved by society and inside the patterns imposed. This is only a biggest self-knowledge about themselves. It's necessary a multidisciplinary work for the self-knowledge development for all, bringing the rescue of the self-esteem and the affect of the elderly in relation with its own body.

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BODY IMAGE THROUGH SILHOUETTE MATCHING TASK OF THIRD AGE FEMALE ACADEMICS OF UFAM ABSTRACT

The objective of the present study was verifying the perception of elderly female's body image. This study characterizes itself as correlational-descriptive, with the sample of 30 academics Third Age women from UFAM, with ages between 60 to 85', selected randomly. For the measurement of the Body Image, it was used the Silhouette Matching Task, purposed by Stunkard et al. (1983) and adapted by Mash and Roche (1996), whereas the researches successively matched the observed body (OB), the real body (RB) and ideal (IB), appointed by the interviewed. We concluded that 53.3% are satisfied with the Body Image silhouette, but there is a hypothesis that a body image distortion of those interviewed exists, because their matched Real Bodies (RB) are very different from the Observed Body (OB).

KEY-WORDS: body image, gerontology, gerontologic physical education.

L'IMAGE CORPORELLE PAR L'ÉVALUATION DES SILHOUETTES DES ACADÉMICIENNES DU TROISIEME ÂGE DE L'UFAM RESUMÉ

L'objectif de l'étude ci présente c'est de vérifier la perception de l'image corporelle des femmes âgées. Cette étude se caractérise comme descriptif corrélationnel. Comme objet d'étude, 30 académiciennes du troisième âge de l'UFAM, qu'ont entre 60 et 85 ans, sélectionnées de façon aléatoire. Pour la mensuration de l'image corporelle, le test pour l'évaluation de l'image corporelle choisi a été proposé par Stunkard et al. (1983) et adapté par Mash et Roche (1996), où les chercheuses signalaient successivement le corp observé (CO), le corp réel (CR) et le corp idéal (CI) identifiés par les chercheuses. Nous concluons que 53.3% sont satisfaites de leur silhouette de l'image corporelle, par contre il existe l'hypothèse d'avoir une distorsion de l'image corporelle pour une partie des auditionnées satisfaites, puis que les corps signalés par les mêmes comme réels, se diffèrent beaucoup de la silhouette observée (CO).

MOTS-CLÉS: l'image corporelle, gérontologie, l'éducation physique gérontologique.

LA IMAGEN CORPORAL A TRAVÉS DE LA EVALUACIÓN DE SILUETAS DE LAS ACADÉMICAS DE TERCERA EDAD ADULTA DE LA UFAM RESUMÉN

El objetivo del presente estudio fue verificar la percepción de la imagen corporal en ancianas. Este estudio se caracteriza como descriptivo correlacionado con muestras de 40 académicas de la tercera edad adulta de UFAM, en una edad media de 60 a 85 años, seleccionadas de forma aleatoria. Para la mensuración de la Imagen Corporal, fue utilizado el test para evaluación de la Imagen Corporal propuesto por Stunkard et al. (1983) y adaptado por Mash y Roche (1996), donde las pesquisadoras realizaban anotaciones constantemente del cuerpo observado (CO), cuerpo real (CR) y ideal (CI) apuntados por las pesquisadas. Se concluye que el 53,3% están satisfechos con la silueta de la imagen corporal, pero existe la posibilidad de tener distorsión de imagen corporal por parte de las entrevistadas contentas, porque los cuerpos que se informó como real, son muy diferentes de la silueta observada (CO).

PALAVRAS-CLAVE: imagen corporal, gerontología, la educación física gerontológica.

A IMAGEM CORPORAL ATRAVÉS DA AVALIAÇÃO DE SILHUETAS DAS ACADÊMICAS DA TERCEIRA IDADE ADULTA DA UFAM RESUMO

O objetivo do presente estudo foi verificar a percepção da imagem corporal de idosas. Este estudo caracteriza-se como descritivo correlacional, com amostra de 30 acadêmicas da terceira idade adulta da UFAM, na faixa etária de 60 a 85 anos, selecionadas de forma aleatória. Para a mensuração da Imagem Corporal, foi utilizado o Teste para Avaliação da imagem corporal proposto por Stunkard et al. (1983) e adaptado por Mash e Roche (1996), onde as pesquisadoras assinalavam sucessivamente o corpo que observavam (CO), o corpo real (CR) e ideal (CI) apontados pelas pesquisadas. Concluímos que 53.3% estão satisfeitas com a silhueta da Imagem Corporal, porém existe a hipótese de haver distorção de imagem corporal por parte das entrevistadas satisfeitas, pois os corpos que as mesmas assinalaram como reais, diferem muito da silhueta observada (CO).

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: imagem corporal, gerontologia, educação física gerontológica.

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