



## THE DESCRIPTION OF THE BODY IMAGE OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS DURING PUBERTY

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### ABSTRACT

Physical changes during puberty are very rapid and are not balanced with psychological changes, which can cause adolescents to pay more attention to their body shape and appearance. If adolescents are unable to accept their body image, it can affect their daily behaviors such as self-confidence, eating patterns, and dietary behavior. This study aims to determine the description of the body image of adolescent girls during puberty at SDN Cingcin 01. This research design is quantitative descriptive. This study used a total sampling technique with a sample size of 55 female students at SDN Cingcin 01 who had reached puberty. Total sampling was used in this study because the population is less than 100 people. Data was collected using the Multidimensional Body Self Relations Questionnaire-Appearance Scale (MBSRQ-AS) to measure the body image with validity test results ranging from 0.438-0.795, and the reliability test results 0.922. Univariate analysis was carried out using descriptive statistics. The results showed that 28 respondents (50.9%) were in the negative body image category. Based on the dimensions, respondents had negative perceptions of appearance evaluation (56.4%) and overweight preoccupation (52.7%), positive perceptions of appearance orientation (56.4%), body area satisfaction (58.2%), and self-classified weight (78.2%). In conclusion, half of the respondents had a negative body image. It is recommended for schools to do health education to improve the body image of their female students.

Keywords: adolescent girls; body image; puberty

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### INTRODUCTION

Puberty is the most important sign of the beginning of adolescence, which is a rapid change in physical maturity, including bodily and hormonal changes (Kemenkes RI, 2018). Physical changes during puberty are not balanced with psychological changes, which can cause adolescents to pay more attention to their body shape and appearance (Kemenkes RI, 2018). The psychological aspect that occurs in adolescents during puberty is great attention to their body image, which is their opinion about how and what their bodies look like, therefore adolescents feel more dissatisfied with their bodies during puberty compared to late adolescence (Santrock, 2014). Adolescent girls are less satisfied with their bodies and have a negative body image during puberty, while adolescent boys become more satisfied during puberty due to increased muscle mass (Santrock, 2014). This can happen due to several factors, including the pressure to look attractive, which is more common in women, and a lot of media showing the ideal body for women (Voges et al., 2019).

SDN Cingcin 01 is an elementary school with the most students in Soreang District, Bandung Regency. The results of preliminary research conducted by researchers on five female students at SDN Cingcin 01 showed that most of the female students felt insecure about their appearance and were dissatisfied with their body shape. Based on the results of interviews with teachers at SDN Cingcin 01, there have never been any reports of female students regarding dissatisfaction with their bodies due to the absence of a guidance and counseling teacher which can lead to a lack of supervision and attention regarding issues such as body image. If the problem of negative body image is not immediately resolved, it will have negative impacts, such as eating disorders, anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, binge-eating, depression, and anxiety (Fikawati et al., 2017; Griffiths et al., 2016; Pakki & Sathiyaseelan, 2018).

Research related to the body image of adolescent girls has been conducted by previous studies. The results of research conducted by Waghachavare (2014) in India show that 40.8% of adolescent girls had a negative body image (Waghachavare et al., 2014). The results of research conducted in Riau Province at SMP Al-Ulum Pekanbaru found that 31 female students felt dissatisfied with their bodies, while 25 other female students felt satisfied (Aritonang, 2015). The results of other research show that adolescent girls often give negative assessments and feel dissatisfied with their bodies, which can lead to a loss of self-confidence (Wati & Sumarmi, 2017). The research that has been done was conducted on junior and senior high school students, so the purpose of this study is to determine the description of the body image of adolescent girls during puberty at elementary school students based on five dimensions of body image. This research aims to determine the description of the body image of adolescent girls during puberty at SDN Cingcin 01. The results of this research can be used as an evaluation in recognizing body image, so that female students can have the awareness to take precautions when it comes to body image issues.

## **METHOD**

The research method used is descriptive quantitative to describe the body image of adolescent girls during puberty. This study uses one variable, namely body image. The research was conducted in SDN Cingcin 01, located in Cingcin Village, Soreang District, Bandung Regency. The population of this study was 60 female students in grades 5 and 6 of SDN Cingcin 01 who had reached puberty. The sampling technique used is total sampling. Total sampling is a sampling technique where the number of samples is the same as the population (Sugiyono, 2017). The reason for using total sampling is because according to Sugiyono (2017), if the population is less than 100 people, then all of them are used as the research sample (Sugiyono, 2017). The number of samples who had been approved by their parents to become respondents after being given informed consent in this study amounted to 55 people. Data were collected using the Multidimensional Body Self Relations Questionnaire-Appearance Scale (MBSRQ-AS) which consists of 27 statements to measure five dimensions of body image and was modified by Nur Lailatul Husna in 2013 with validity test results ranging from 0.438-0.795 with an *r* table value of 0,349, reliability test resulted in a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.922 (Husna, 2013). The scores obtained will be summed up from all 27 statements to find out the overall results, and the scores from each dimension of the body image to find out the result of each dimension. This analysis used univariate descriptive statistics to describe the body image of adolescent girls during puberty and displayed it in the form of a frequency distribution. The data analysis results were categorized into two categories based on the mean value: positive body image  $\geq 67.5$  and negative body image  $< 67.5$ .

**RESULTS**

Table 1.  
Respondent characteristics (n= 55)

Respondent characteristics	f	%
Grade		
5	18	32.7
6	37	67.3
Age		
10	1	1.8
11	17	30.9
12	30	54.5
13	7	12.7
Puberty Status		
Has reached puberty	55	100
Has not reached puberty	0	0

Table 1, the characteristics of respondents in this study, most respondents came from grade 6 (67.3%). It can be seen that the age of most respondents is 12 years (54.5%). Then, based on puberty status, all respondents have reached puberty (100%).

Table 2.  
Respondent Body Image (n= 55)

Body Image	f	%
Positive	27	49.1
Negative	28	50.9

Table 2, the majority of respondents in this study had a negative body image category (50.9%).

Table 3.  
Respondent Body Image Dimension (n= 55)

Body Image Dimensions	f	%
Appearance evaluation		
Positive	24	43.6
Negative	31	56.4
Appearance orientation		
Positive	31	56.4
Negative	24	43.6
Body area satisfaction		
Positive	32	58.2
Negative	23	41.8
Self-classified weight		
Positive	43	78.2
Negative	12	21.8
Overweight preoccupation		
Positive	26	47.3
Negative	29	52.7

Table 3, the majority of respondents in this study had a negative perception of appearance evaluation (56.4%), and overweight preoccupation (52.7%). Most of the respondents had a positive perception of appearance orientation (56.4%), body area satisfaction (58.2%), and self-classified weight (78.2%).

**DISCUSSION**

Body image is an individual’s perception of their body shape and weight, as well as their behavior leading to their assessment of their physical appearance (Cash, 2004). Cash conceptualizes body image into five dimensions, namely appearance evaluation, appearance orientation, body area satisfaction, self-classified weight, and overweight preoccupation (Cash &

Pruzinsky, 2002). Based on the results obtained, all respondents were female students who had reached puberty, the majority of respondents were 12 years old (54.5%), and most of the respondents were in grade 6 (67.3%). Cash & Pruzinsky revealed that 40-70% of adolescent girls experience negative body image or are dissatisfied with their bodies. Puberty is one of the factors that can affect body image, there is an increased concern about body image when entering puberty due to the weight gain associated with puberty (Cash & Pruzinsky, 2002).

The results of this research show that half of the respondents had a negative body image (50.9%). The results of research by Oktaviani & Budiarti (2013) at SMPN 1 Siwalan, Pekalongan Regency found that 66.4% of female students had a negative body image during puberty, this is because the hormone maturation process increases growth at puberty (Oktaviani & Budiarti, 2013). Then the results of research by Gaddad (2018) in New Delhi, India show that 62% of adolescents had a negative body image, and this problem is more experienced by adolescent girls (Gaddad et al., 2018). The results of Rochmania (2015) in Malang City showed that 64.1% of female students had a negative attitude towards physical changes that occurred during puberty (Rochmania, 2015). This is in line with Santrock's opinion that adolescent girls are less satisfied with their bodies and have a negative body image during puberty because adolescents experience significant changes in their bodies (Santrock, 2014). Changes in body shape and weight during puberty can cause body dissatisfaction that causes adolescents to change their body shape (Hughes et al., 2018). Grogan (2022) pointed out that concern about the body among adolescents is very strong, especially in the early adolescent group, which occurs because early adolescents experience puberty where body changes begin to occur. When these changes do not conform to the ideal standards, adolescents are vulnerable to experiencing negative body image (Grogan, 2022).

The results of the description of the body image of adolescent girls during puberty at SDN Cingcin 01 show that respondents who have a negative body image are more numerous and almost comparable to the frequency of positive body image. These results are supported by the results of research by Aninda (2016) in Bintaro District, South Jakarta, where the percentage of negative body image is 49% and positive body image is 51%, which is almost equal, although positive body image dominates, a negative body image is caused by a lack of experience in overcoming interpersonal conflicts related to changes that occur in their body during puberty (Aninda, 2016). In addition, the results of research by Zahidah (2020) show that female adolescents during puberty had a negative body image of 46.920 with a mean value of 49.72 (Zahidah, 2020). Individuals with a negative body image will perceive themselves as having an unattractive or less attractive appearance, adolescents who experience dissatisfaction with body image tend to be passive and depressed (Damayanti & Susilawati, 2017).

### **Appearance Evaluation Domain**

Based on the results of this study, the appearance evaluation dimension in adolescent girls during puberty at SDN Cingcin 01, most respondents (56.4%) had negative perceptions. This shows that they consider their bodies unattractive and believe that other people also think the same thing. They also feel dissatisfied with their body shape and physical appearance. This can happen when a young woman finds herself in a situation where her condition is different from the ideal standards that society has developed, and then she feels dissatisfied with her body shape (Rahmadiyah & Munthe, 2020). Adolescent girls who are dissatisfied with their body shape often reject the reality of their physical changes and often seem to isolate themselves because they feel insecure (Nadhiyah, 2015).

### **Appearance Orientation Domain**

Based on the results of this study, the appearance orientation dimension in adolescent girls during puberty at SDN Cingcin 01, most respondents (56.4%) had positive perceptions. The results show that respondents are making good efforts to improve their appearance, even though overall the individual has a negative body image. They will pay attention to their appearance, try to follow current trends, take care of their bodies, and get ready before leaving the house so they can look attractive. This can happen because women are very concerned with appearance, most of the time women are judged based on how they look, not based on who they are (Vetrikandana, 2016).

### **Body Area Satisfaction Domain**

Based on the results of this study, the body area satisfaction dimension in adolescent girls during puberty at SDN Cingcin 01, most respondents (58.2%) had positive perceptions. This shows that respondents feel satisfied with specific parts of their bodies, such as their faces, arms, hips, and thighs. Based on the results of the statement items in this dimension, the highest positive results were in the statement “I am satisfied with the current shape and condition of my face”, and in the statement “I like the size of my arms”. This shows that respondents have the same perception as this statement, even though overall the individual has a negative body image.

### **Self-Classified Weight Domain**

Based on the results of this study, the self-classified weight dimension in adolescent girls during puberty at SDN Cingcin 01, almost all respondents (78.2%) had positive perceptions. These results indicate that respondents categorized their bodies in a positive way. They consider their weight to be in the normal category and feel satisfied with their weight, even though overall the individual has a negative body image. Based on the results of the statement items in this dimension, the highest positive result was in the statement “I am in the overweight category”, which shows that the respondent has a perception that is opposite to this statement. A person may have a normal body weight, but they can be perceived as slim or fat by their perception (Cash, 2004). The results of research by Wati & Sumarmi (2017) with 36 female student respondents at SMP Santa Agnes Surabaya showed that overweight girls tended to have a negative body image, while non-overweight girls tended to have a positive body image (Wati & Sumarmi, 2017).

### **Overweight Preoccupation Domain**

Based on the results of this study, the overweight preoccupation dimension in adolescent girls during puberty at SDN Cingcin 01, most respondents (52.7%) had negative perceptions. These results indicate that the respondents are worried about their bodies becoming fat. They also try to lose or maintain their weight, such as adjusting their diet and avoiding certain foods or drinks. This is supported by the results of research by Prima & Sari (2013), which shows that the higher a person's level of body dissatisfaction, the more the person will develop dieting behavior (Prima & Sari, 2013). The existence of problems regarding eating disorders in adolescent girls with negative body image is related to adolescent's desire to have a slim body shape and low body weight (Wangu et al., 2023).

## **CONCLUSION**

This study was conducted to determine the description of the body image of adolescent girls during puberty at SDN Cingcin 01. Based on the results of this study, it was found that half of the respondents had a negative body image, which included negative perceptions of appearance evaluation and overweight preoccupation, as well as positive perceptions of appearance orientation, body area satisfaction, and self-classified weight. The results indicate

that negative body image is mostly generated from appearance evaluation and overweight preoccupation. The results of this study can be used by community nurses to prevent negative body image in adolescent girls by collaborating with the school department to deal with adolescent girls who experience psychological problems during puberty.

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