

The Role of Personality Factors and Sexual Self-schema in Body Image Dissatisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The aim of this study was to investigate the role of five major personality factors and sexual self-schema in body image dissatisfaction.

Methods: In this study, a correlational design was used and 270 individuals (Male: 135, Female: 135) with age of 17 to 40, citizens of Tehran, who were selected by the available random sampling were included. They completed Neo-PI questionnaire, Fisher body image scale (Fisher, 1970), and Sexual Self-schema Scale (Cyranowski & Andersen, 1998).

Results: The results show a meaningful and positive relationship between neuroticism and body image dissatisfaction; there is also a meaningful and negative relationship between conscientiousness, openness to experience, extroversion, agreeableness and body image dissatisfaction. General sexual Self-schema, the personality factors of neuroticism and agreeableness can predict 26.9 percent of body image dissatisfaction variance.

Conclusion: Low scores in positive personality characteristics such as conscientiousness, openness to experience, extroversion and agreeableness and high scores in the neuroticism with poor sexual Self-schema make the individuals vulnerable to negative messages about their body sizes and shapes that finally results in their body image dissatisfaction.

1. Introduction

The findings of previous researches has shown that approximately 65 percent of the adolescents (Flegal, Carroll, Ogden, & Johnson, 2002), 15.5 percent of teenagers (between 12 and 19), and more than 15.3 percent of children (between the ages of 6 and 11) are affected by overweight or obesity (Hedley et al., 2004). These numbers are in deep contrast with the low weights of the models presented in the advertisements of mainstream media because their weights are usually 20 percent less than the normal weight (based on the body mass index). The intensity

of “the ideal fitness” becomes visible more clearly if we just get to know that 15 percent of these underweight women suffer from disorder of neural loss of appetite and their weights are 18.5 percent under the normal size of body on the basis of body mass index. The most prominent theoretical formulizations about the state of the body image dissatisfaction growth emphasize on the multiple factors affecting the etiology of this disorder. According to the researches, body features (especially large size of body, social, environmental, and cultural emphasis on delicate body and appearance) and the psychological factors like low self-confidence, depression and the attitudes concerning the prominence of beautiful

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and delicate body increase the danger of body image dissatisfaction (Cash, Jakatdar, & Williams, 2004).

That is the reason why the body image dissatisfaction can be considered as the consequence of a personality-psychological pattern that makes the individual vulnerable to the cultural-social pressures based on the ideals of beauty and fitness (Miller, Smith, & Mackie, 2004). Researches done on the correlations of body image dissatisfaction show that the body image dissatisfaction is related to obsessive rumination in females (Etu & Gray, 2010), negative affections and social inhibitions in males (Potgieter & Venter, 1995), high levels of completion in both groups of male and female (Peden, Stiles, Vandehey, & Diekhoff, 2008), and the poor positive and mutual relationships in both groups (Sanftner, Ryan, & Pierce, 2009).

Nevertheless, there is little information about the relation between personality traits and the individuals' appearance orientation. In fact, most of the researches that have been investigated the role of personality in body image dissatisfaction, have mostly focused on the structures related to the individuals' appearance orientation such as self-centralization and body surveillance that are investigated through the measurement of mental occupation of the physical appearance. Due to this fact, these structures have conceptual resemblance to the appearance orientation (Davis, Dionne, & Shuster, 2001).

A few researches that have been carried out in this field, explain that there is a relation between body image dissatisfaction and the personality factors. Nevertheless, with the exception of the neuroticism factor, which is correlated with the increase of body image dissatisfaction, there can be found controversial information about the role of five major personality factors in body image dissatisfaction in the research literature (Davis et al., 2001) (Miner-Rubino, Twenge, & Fredrickson, 2002).

On the other side, shape and size of the body plays an important role in sexual attractiveness. Interesting results obtained from some of the researches that focused on the relation between the size, shape of the body and the perceived sexual attraction (Brown, Cash, & Mikulka, 1990) (Seal, Bradford, & Meston, 2009) (Reissing, Laliberté, & Davis, 2005); (Donaghue, 2009) (Satinsky, Reece, Dennis, Sanders, & Bardzell, 2012). For example, a research on 200 English female which proved that the sexual attractiveness is one of the most important factors, motivated the women to have a fit and thin body. For most of the women, having such a

body was the necessary condition to protect their current sexual relationships. Charles and Kerr (1989) concluded that the body image has a close relationship with the sexual attractiveness, and therefore, women make their best attempts to access the ideal fitness for protecting their sexual attractiveness or gaining access to more sexual attractiveness.

As a result, the inaccessible standards of beauty lead to more dissatisfaction of women from their body images, and the perceived pressure from the sexual partner is one of the prominent factors of this dissatisfaction (Grogan, 2007). Thus, the sexual self-schema refer to the opinions of the individual about his personality and how these traits make him sexually attractive (Cyranowski & Andersen, 1998). Danghey (2009) in a study entitled as "body satisfaction, sexual self-schema and perceived psychological welfare" presented that there is a relationship between some of the dimensions of sexual self-schema and body image satisfaction.

For instance, physical attractiveness for women is one of the essentially decisive factors in attracting the sexual and amorous sensations of men. Therefore, mostly the women who are physically attractive have more positive sexual self-schema in comparison with those without this attractiveness. Similar to physical attractiveness, the state of sexual self-schema has a direct relationship with the size and shape of the body in a way that generally most of the men prefer the women with fit and thin body. Naturally, this cultural attitude has a deep effect on the state of shaping sexual self-schema and the standards related to the shape and the size of body.

The sensation of disability in obtaining such standards could lead to intense dissatisfaction from the appearance and the physical condition. Nevertheless, up to this time, a few studies have investigated the role of the dimensions of sexual self-schema in body image. On the other hand, no study has been done on this field in our country, Iran.

In the literature of the foreign researches, we notice only to one study that investigated the effect of personality traits on the individuals' perspective towards his body by considering their attractiveness rate. In this research, Costa et al (1992), in a study "the relation among sexual attractiveness, personality factors and body image in female patients", has shown that there is a high correlation among neuroticism, low level of sexual information and disordered body image, between extroversion and passionate sexual fantasy, among openness to experience- one of the important personality factors-

between high level of sexual information, satisfactory sexual activity, and satisfactory sexual image.

For male patients, the neuroticism factor is correlated with low level of sexual information, lack of sexual experience, negative self-image of body, and low levels of sexual pleasure. On the contrary, the factor of extroversion has a positive effect on sexual experiences, sexual desire, positive body image, and sexual pleasure. The openness factor in addition to such positive effects has also high correlation with sexual information. Based on these results, it is concluded that our sensations towards our body have abundant prominence in our sexual attitudes and activities.

However, no research has been ever done to investigate the effect of attitude and sexual functions in body image dissatisfaction of Iranian population and the relationship between this variable and the personality traits of Iranians. Yet, regarding the cultural context of our country, there is no exact information concerning the characteristics of sexual self-schema in both Iranian males and females, and about the rate of body and facial dissatisfaction, and also the number and method of plastic surgery. Just a few socio-psychological studies that have been carried out in this field (for example, Zokaee, 1386), explain that the culture of fitness and ideals of beauty seep through the major classes of young and adult citizens of our country by means of international media.

Studying the relationship between personality factors, sexual self-schemas, and body image dissatisfaction in Iranian samples can help to determine the main psychological aspects playing a role in body image dissatisfaction of Iranian population at the first time. Findings of this study could help to design the cultural relationship preventing such disorders in Iranian population.

2. Methods

Research design

This is a causal-comparative study which is placed in the domain of descriptive researches and is considered as a post-incident one. The statistic population of the present research is comprised of 270 women and men with ages of 17 to 40 years who were selected by accessible sampling from recreation areas such as parks, cinemas and cultural centers. The population was citizens of Tehran, and had no physical handicap or deficiency and was not affected by any sexual identity disorder. The questionnaires applied in this research will be described in detail.

Five-factor personality inventory (NEO)

This questionnaire has 60 items that are acquired through the factorial analysis of the extended-form scores (NEO-PI) which was performed in 1986. There are 12 questions for each factor in this questionnaire which are chosen by considering their having the most loading in relation with the desired trait. The result of the studies of Mackerrry and Costa (1995) showed that the subscales of the short form questionnaire have a suitable internal consistency.

They reported the alpha coefficient from 0.68 for the personality trait of agreeableness up to the alpha coefficient of 0.86 for the personality trait of neuroticism. This questionnaire was standardized in Iran by Garusi (1998). By the application of the method of test-retest for 208 students for the interval of 3 months, the credit of the questionnaire is reported in order as 0.83, 0.75, 0.80, 0.79, 0.79 for the factors of N, E, O, A, C. Cronbach's alpha coefficient obtained from this test by Molazadeh (2002), is in order 0.86 for neuroticism, 0.83 for extroversion, 0.74 for openness, 0.76 for agreeableness, and 0.83 for conscientiousness.

Fisher body image questionnaire:

The body image test was made in 1970 by Fisher and having 46 items in which every item has a value between 1 and 5 (1=very dissatisfied, 2=dissatisfied, 3=average, 4=satisfied, 5=very satisfied). Earning the score of 46 in this test means disorder and earning the scores higher than 46 means lack of disorder. The credit of this test was investigated by Yazdanjou (2010) in Iran.

The calculated correlation coefficient of the test in the first and second administration with the method of Pearson is 0.87 for the third-year students, 0.84 for the second-year students, 0.81 for the first-year students and 0.84 for all the students. Considering the meaningfulness level of the coefficients ($P < 0.01$), it could be accepted that there is a meaningful correlation between the scores obtained from the first administration of the test and the scores of the second administration of the body image test. In the present research, the reliability of the body image questionnaire was also calculated by two methods of Cronbach's alpha and division that are 0.93 and 0.91 in proper order.

Sexual self-schema scale of females and males (Cyranowski & Andersen, 1998): the sexual self-schema scale of females is comprised of 50 attributes and the subjects must be designated in a Likert scale with 7 degrees

Table 1: Correlation coefficients of personality dimensions and body image satisfaction/dissatisfaction.

Variables	Personality factors	P	Coefficients
Body image satisfaction/Dissatisfaction	Neuroticism	-0.408**	0.001
	Extroversion	0.363**	0.001
	Openness	0.140*	0.038
	Agreeableness	0.372**	0.001
	Conscientiousness	0.424**	0.001

**correlation at the level of 0.01 (two tailed).

*correlation at the level of 0.05 (two tailed).
(N=270)

(0=never 6=very much) that up to what extent each of these attributes describe them. The test has 26 main items and three subscales including passionate and romantic, frank and easy-going, timid and prudent. This test is standardized on a sample including 221 female students.

Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the subscale is 0.81 for passionate and romantic, 0.77 for frank and easygoing, 0.66 for timid and prudent, and the alpha coefficient of the whole scale is reported as 0.82. The re-testing reliability for the whole scale is 0.88 for the interval of 9 weeks. The sexual self-schema scale of men is comprised of 45 attributes and the subjects should be designated in Likert scale with 7 degrees (0=never, 6=very much) that up to what extent each of these attributes describe them. This test has 27 main items and three subscales including passionate and affectionate, powerful and aggressive, open-minded and forward-looking. This test is standardized for the sample of 87 male students. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the subscale is 0.89 for passionate and affectionate, 0.78 for powerful and aggressive, 0.65 for open-minded and forward-looking, and the alpha coefficient for the whole scale is 0.86. The re-testing reliability of the whole scale is 0.81 for the interval of 9 weeks.

The method for collecting and analyzing data: after obtaining the letters of introduction and the necessary permissions to research, at the first stage, the body image questionnaire, NEO personality and sexual self-schema

tests were presented to 160 female and male students living in the dormitories of rehabilitation and welfare university of Tehran. At the second stage, by visiting the parks and shopping centers, requesting for information from different individuals and explaining the nature and the aims of the research, 122 males and females have completed the body image questionnaire, NEO personality, and sexual self-schema tests.

In these two stages, the filled questionnaires of 270 students were identified as creditable from among the available 282 subjects who filled the questionnaires, and 12 subjects were excluded because of their information deficiency or being blemished. We have used the software of SPSS 19 in order to analyze the data. Considering the research questions and the type of hypotheses, the research data were analyzed through conducting statistic tests of Pearson correlation, multivariable regression analysis, t-test of independent groups, and one-way variance analysis.

3. Results

Pearson's correlation test was performed to study the relationship between personality dimensions and the rate of body image dissatisfaction. The correlation coefficients of the variables are shown in Table 1. The results show that there is a meaningful relationship between all the personality dimensions and the rate of body image dissatisfaction in a way that the neuroti-

Table 2: Correlation coefficients of sexual self-schema dimensions of females and their body image satisfaction/dissatisfaction.

Variables	Sexual self-schema	Coefficients	P
Body Image Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction	Passionate-romantic	-0.207*	0.044
	Open-direct	0.154	0.074
	Embarrassed-conservative	0.048	0.581

**correlation at the level of 0.01 (two tailed).

*correlation at the level of 0.05 (two tailed).
(N=135)

Table 3: Correlation coefficients of sexual self-schema dimensions of males and their body image dissatisfaction.

Variables	Sexual self-schema	Coefficients	P	N
Body image satisfaction/Dissatisfaction	Passionate-loving	-0.404**	0.001	270
	Powerful-aggressive	0.149	0.172	270
	Open minded-liberal	0.338**	0.001	270

**correlation at the level of 0.01 (two tailed).

*correlation at the level of 0.05 (two tailed).

(N=135)

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cism factor have a negative relationship with the rate of body image satisfaction and all the other personality factors (extroversion, openness, agreeableness, conscientiousness), and a positive relationship with the rate of body image satisfaction. Based on these results, whenever the neuroticism scores of the individuals are increased, the body image dissatisfaction of individuals will be also increased. We used Pearson's correlation test in order to study the relationship between the sexual self-schema and the rate of body image dissatisfaction. Correlation coefficients related to the sexual self-schema dimensions and the rates of body image dissatisfaction are shown in Table 2. The results show that there is a positive and meaningful correlation between the passionate-romantic dimension from the sexual self-schema dimensions of females and the body image dissatisfaction in them ($P < 0.05$). Therefore, whenever the scores of the females increase in this dimension, with high probabilities, they will be more satisfied from their bodies.

Table 3 includes the correlation coefficients concerning the sexual self-schema dimensions of males and the rate of their body image dissatisfaction. According to the results of the table above, there is a positive relationship between the dimensions of passionate-affectionate, open minded-forward looking of the sexual self-schema dimensions of males and the rate of body image satisfaction ($P < 0.01$). Therefore, whenever the sexual self-schema dimensions of passionate-affectionate, open minded-forward looking of males become stronger, their body-image satisfaction will be increased.

Table 4 includes the results of the prediction model of body image dissatisfaction on the ground of personality factors and sexual self-schema. Predictor variables:

neuroticism, extroversion, openness, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and sexual self-schema. Dependent variable: body image satisfaction/dissatisfaction

Based on the results, the five major personality factors and general sexual self-schema of the individual can predict 26.9 percent of the variance of body image satisfaction/dissatisfaction ($P < 0.01$; $F = 14.464$).

The investigation of regression coefficients of each personality factor and general sexual self-schema for prediction of body image dissatisfaction rate revealed that the neuroticism factor ($P < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.234$), agreeableness factor ($P < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.199$), conscientiousness factor ($P < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.214$), and general sexual self-schema ($P < 0.05$; $\beta = 0.130$) are able to explain a part of body image dissatisfaction variance.

4. Discussion

Every day, every individual becomes the target of various commercial advertisements for body and the meaning of beauty. That is why the socio-cultural pressures for being fit and distant from the ideals of fitness is known as the main reason of their dissatisfaction from their body images for the individual living in Western and developing societies. In spite of the various commercial pressures, the individuals are affected varyingly from the presented ideals of beauty by the cultural-social commercials. Hence, the rate of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction from their bodies will also be different. But there are several questions, "Which traits do influence their encounters with such ideals? Which traits of individuals reinforce them in reshaping of their approaches towards their bodies? And which traits make them vulnerable by reshaping their attitudes towards their bodies and causing dissatisfaction from it?"

Table 4: The abstract of prediction model of body dissatisfaction based on the personality factors and the total score of sexual Self-schema.

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Sd. error of the estimate	F	P
1	0.537	0.289	0.269	21.0262	14.464	0.001

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Depending on the results of the present research, there is a negative relationship between neuroticism factor and the rate of body image satisfaction, and the factors of extroversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, conscientiousness have a positive relationship with the rate of body image satisfaction. On this basis, whenever the scores of the individual become higher in neuroticism dimension, the probability of his body image dissatisfaction would be increased. This finding is consistent with the findings of many previous researchers in this domain (Davis et al., 2001) (Miner-Rubino et al., 2002) (Kvalem, von Soest, Roald, & Skolleborg, 2006) (Costa Jr, Fagan, Piedmont, Ponticas, & Wise, 1991) (Swami, Buchanan, Furnham, & Tovée, 2008). For example Davis et al (2001) revealed that the females who have high scores in neuroticism and the females who respond emotionally to social cues, have more sensibility towards their own appearances.

Neuroticism factor is connected with negative affections and social insecurity. It seems that high scores in neuroticism affect the negative evaluation and excessive concentration on appearance. The importance of the effect of insecurity and social anxiety on body image dissatisfaction is determined from two different research domains that are simultaneously the complement of one another.

The first domain is related to the studies investigating the relationship between contemptuous messages from peers and the eating disorders. The studies showed that the contempt of peers has a deep effect on their body image dissatisfaction (Thompson & Psaltis, 1988); (Thompson, Fabian, Moulton, Dunn, & Altabe, 1991). Nevertheless, the rate of individuals' sensitivity is more important than the amount of contemptuous messages that they receive. The second domain is related to the research background of the anxiety disorders. According to Atlas (1994), the individuals who are socially sensitive or anxious would consider the ordinary conditions as contemptuous and would experience more negative emotions in relation with such conditions (Aarestad, 2000). The presence of such traits would make these individuals to have pessimistic view towards their own bodies and to have more tendency to exaggerate the deficiencies of their bodies (Rasooli & Lavasani, 2011).

In addition, it seems that the extrovert females that are identified with the traits of being active, positive affections and tendency to communicate with new people have more positive views regarding their bodies than the introvert and shamefaced females. It gives us the impression that warm and social behaviors of extrovert individuals make them ready to gain positive experience in their relationships with others. This case would lead them to reinforce their views towards themselves and their bodies.

Concerning the relationship between the factor of openness to experience and the rate of body image satisfaction, it should be noted that this personality factor has a relationship with the acceptance of larger size of the body. This finding is in accordance with this theory that the openness to experience is correlated with the resistance before the social and cultural norms of attractiveness and beauty and the acceptance of unconventional ideals (Roberts & Good, 2010).

High scores in this factor bring on idealizing the large sizes of body and the expansion of the range of the attractive body size that help the individuals to protect themselves from accepting the beauty standards that lead to body dissatisfaction. The factor of agreeableness is recognized by traits like respecting and attaching importance to others, being kind-hearted and the sense of cooperation. The relation of this factor with the body image satisfaction of the individual leads us to the conclude that because these individuals pay so much attention to the others, they also attach importance to their own bodies since body is the first and the most important thing for them that the others encounter for the very first time (Rasooli & Lavasani, 2011).

The factor of conscientiousness is determined by discipline, trustworthiness, diligence and self-adjustment ability. Although it is assumed that the personal comparison with the present ideals lead to the decline of the individual's self-esteem, according to the social comparison theory (Grogan, 2007). From one side, negative or positive self-evaluation depends on the psychological process launched by means of comparison, and from the other side, on the features of the compared ideal.

Basically, the effect of social comparison on the self-image depends on the identification with or alienation from the compared idealized object. Provided that the individuals could identify themselves with the compared ideal object, they would have a higher self-confidence. On the other hand, if the individual's self-image opposes to the ideal image, the individual would experience the decline of self-esteem. The individuals who receive high scores in conscientiousness factor have top-level capabilities in obtaining self-efficiency. They would probably have less weakness before the idealized images and if physical beauty and attractiveness be important for them, by having high self-confidence, they would be inspired from the present ideals. Finally, it can be concluded that for the individual with powerful conscientiousness, the social comparison leads to identification and the increase of body image satisfaction. In general, it seems that the personality factors adjust the experiences obtained through negative messages about the appearance in body image prediction (Kvalem et al., 2006).

Furthermore, the results of the present research reveal that among the sexual self-schema dimensions of females, the dimension of passionate/romantic has a positive correlation with the rate of body image satisfaction. On the other side, the dimensions of passionate-affectionate and open minded- forward looking- from the male sexual self-schema dimensions- have a positive correlation with the rate of body image satisfaction. Therefore, it can be concluded that the potency of the positive dimensions of male and female sexual self-schema leads to relative satisfaction from their own body images.

This finding is in accordance with some of the studies that revealed a positive relationship between general body satisfaction and the life-long sexual experiences of the individuals (Cash et al., 2004) (Seal et al., 2009); (Reissing et al., 2005) (Donaghue, 2009) (Satinsky et al., 2012). Nevertheless, the results of some other researches reveal that there is no relationship between the self-assessment of physical attractiveness and sexual experiences (Flegal et al., 2002).

It is clear that the positive prospect of the individuals about their physical attractiveness can increase the chance of involvement in sexual relationships and their positive self-assessments by means of multiplying the self-confidence of them in their interactions with the opposite sex.

In the similar way, due to the fact that females are different on the degree of concentration on their bodies, the degree of their social avoidance originated from the anxieties of physical attractiveness would also be different. In other words, the females who believe that their appearances might not be appreciated by males and avoid the social conditions might reduce their chances of being involved in affectionate and sexual relationships. From the other side, being in the conditions that are in accordance with the individuals' sexual self-schema could lead to remodeling in the rate of body image satisfaction through increasing the general self-concept. The studies revealed that the individuals assess themselves differently in various domains which altogether shape their own concepts and the individuals' assessment in various behavioral domains establishes the base for self-satisfaction (Stein & Corte, 2003). That is why the positive sexual self-schema of individuals leads to the rise of body satisfaction rate through recovering the individual's self-concept condition.

According to the results yielded from multiple regression analysis, five major personality factors and general sexual self-schema of individuals can predict 26.9 percent of body image remodeling. Up to this time, no research has ever been investigated the interactive role of five ma-

ior personality factors and sexual self-schema in the rate of body image dissatisfaction for females and males. The only research performed in the context similar to this one was the research of Costa et al., (1992) that investigated the relationship sexual attractiveness, personality factors and the body image of females.

In this research, Costa and Mackerry (1992) realized that neuroticism factor has a high correlation with low level of sexual information and disordered body image, the extroversion factor has a high correlation with expanded sexual fantasy and openness factor- one of the most important personality dimensions- with high levels of sexual knowledge, satisfactory sexual activity and suitable body image. For male patients, the neuroticism factor has a relationship with low level of sexual knowledge, the lack of sexual experience, negative body image of oneself and low levels of sexual pleasures. In contrast, the factor of extroversion has a positive effect on sexual experiences, sexual desire, positive body image, and sexual pleasure. The openness factor has high correlation with rich sexual knowledge in addition to such positive effects.

In general, in accordance with the social comparison theory, the individuals have natural inclination towards critical self-assessment—assessing skills, thoughts and appearances of oneself-in comparison with the other members of the group in which they live. In addition, the researches revealed the fact that the social comparison can be made with the individuals who are not the members of a determined group and the individual has no social interaction with them. Based on this assumption, it can be concluded that the commercials shape the social frameworks and can have negative effect on the perception of individuals from themselves (Martin & Peters, 2005). Nevertheless, some of the fundamental traits of the individual can reinforce the individual before such commercials. In agreement with the results of the present research, it is expected that five major personality factors and sexual self-schema play significant roles in the rate of body image dissatisfaction. The mechanism of the effect of positive personal traits such as high scores in agreeableness, conscientiousness and positive dimensions of the sexual self-schema and low scores in neuroticism factor occur via the psychological reinforcement of the individuals before the negative social messages in relation with their body features. Due to the type of research objectives, small sample size, and the type of measurement tool, this research had limitations in dealing with the prevalence rate of different sorts of body image dissatisfaction among Iranian males and females. Up to this time, in spite of the present evidences showing the high rate of body image dissatisfaction, no research has ever performed on this field. That is the reason why it

is proposed that in the later researches with larger sample size, the rate of body image dissatisfaction and the state of sexual self-schema must be measured among Iranian males and females.

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