

Abstract

This research explored the relationship between gender identity, body image and ego strength in men. A questionnaire consisting of a demographic section, the Bem Sex Role Inventory, the Adonis Complex Questionnaire- Revised, and the Psychosocial Inventory of Ego Strength was administered to 74 male students from the School of Actuarial Science and Statistics at the University of the Witwatersrand during lecture time. Correlation analyses were used to infer the relationships between the three variables, while a multiple regression assessed whether particular combinations of gender identity and ego strength could predict higher body image dissatisfaction.

The results showed that both masculinity and androgyny had a positive effect on body image satisfaction, as did higher ego strength. The latter was also positively correlated with both femininity and masculinity, though not with androgyny. Body image disturbance did not correlate with any dimension of gender identity or ego strength. With regard to the interaction between the variables, higher ego strength was found to have a moderating effect on body image dissatisfaction in men who endorsed femininity, but not with men who endorsed masculinity. An androgynous orientation further predicted lower body image dissatisfaction irrespective of the degree of ego strength. Limitations of the study and recommendations for future research are discussed.

(Keywords: gender identity, masculinity, femininity, androgyny, body image dissatisfaction, body image disturbance, ego strength)