

## PECULIARITIES OF BODY IMAGE INFLUENCE ON THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN INDIVIDUALS WITH HIGH AND LOW LEVELS OF PHYSICAL

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*The article discusses the peculiarities of the influence of body image on the quality of life in individuals with high and low levels of physical perfectionism. The analysis of scientific literature shows that today, satisfaction with one's appearance and a healthy body image are among the key aspects of the psychological and physical health of a modern person. In our study, we define the concept of "body image" as a person's perception of his or her body, not only in terms of appearance and the degree of its attractiveness. It is also a set of ideas about one's physical abilities, health, body endurance, etc. By the term "physical perfectionism" we mean a system of personal beliefs and attitudes related to a person's appearance: increased concern and dissatisfaction with one's appearance, the desire to meet high body standards, to achieve the best results in the struggle for an ideal figure, as well as a painful attitude to any critical remarks about one's appearance. To test the theoretical construct of those psychological features that determine the specifics of the impact of body image on the quality of life in individuals with high and low levels of physical perfectionism, we used diagnostic tools, namely: Physical perfectionism scale (A. B. Kholmogorova, A. O. Dadeko, adaptation on the Ukrainian sample by M. I. Babchuk); The Situational Body Image Dissatisfaction Inventory (SIBID) (T. Cash); Body Image Influence on Quality of Life (BIQLI) (T. Cash). The next step was a differential psychological analysis of the results obtained, which consisted of: first, grouping the subjects by qualitative and quantitative combination of indicators of physical perfectionism, and second, studying the personality traits inherent in the representatives of the selected groups. Subsequently, on the basis of the constructed profiles, the psychological characteristics of individuals from the selected groups with high and low levels of physical perfectionism were compiled and described.*

**Key words:** *body image, perception, physical perfectionism, levels of physical perfectionism, quality of life, psychological characteristics, personality traits.*

### **Бабчук М. І. ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ВПЛИВУ ОБРАЗУ ТІЛА НА ЯКІСТЬ ЖИТТЯ В ОСІБ З ВИСОКИМ ТА НИЗЬКИМ РІВНЕМ ФІЗИЧНОЇ АКТИВНОСТІ**

*У статті розглядаються особливості впливу образу тіла на якість життя в осіб з високим та низьким рівнем фізичного перфекціонізму. Аналіз наукової літератури свідчить, що сьогодні задоволеність власною зовнішністю та здоровий образ тіла є одними з ключових аспектів психологічного та фізичного здоров'я сучасної людини. У нашому дослідженні ми визначаємо поняття «образ тіла» як сприйняття людиною свого тіла не тільки з точки зору зовнішнього вигляду та ступеня його привабливості. Це також сукупність уявлень про свої фізичні можливості, здоров'я, витривалість організму тощо. Під терміном «фізичний перфекціонізм» ми розуміємо систему особистих переконань і установок, пов'язаних із зовнішністю людини: підвищену стурбованість і незадоволеність своїм зовнішнім виглядом, прагнення відповідати високим стандартам тіла, досягти найкращих результатів у боротьбі за ідеальну фігуру, а також хворобливе ставлення до будь-яких критичних зауважень про свою зовнішність. Для перевірки теоретичного конструкту тих психологічних особливостей, які визначають специфіку впливу образу тіла на якість життя в осіб з високим та низьким рівнем фізичного перфекціонізму, ми використали діагностичний інструментарій, а саме «Шкала фізичного перфекціонізму» (А. Б. Холмогорова, А. О. Дадеко, адаптація українською М. І. Бабчук); «Ситуативний опитувальник незадоволеності образом тіла (СОНОТ)» (Т. Кеш); «Вплив образу тіла на якість життя (ВОТЯЖ)» (Т. Кеш). Наступним кроком став диференціально-психологічний аналіз отриманих результатів, який полягав у: групуванні досліджуваних за якісним та кількісним поєднанням показників фізичного перфекціонізму, а також у вивченні особистісних рис, притаманних представникам виокремлених груп. Згодом на основі побудованих профілів були складені та описані психологічні характеристики осіб з виділених груп з високим та низьким рівнем фізичного перфекціонізму.*

**Ключові слова:** *образ тіла, сприйняття, фізичний перфекціонізм, рівні фізичного перфекціонізму, якість життя, психологічні характеристики, особистісні риси.*

**Introduction.** Body image in terms of perceptions of appearance, in turn, is also a complex psychological construct and consists of two components: 1) perception of one's body (psychological representations of its size, shape, and skin color). Body perception is how objectively a person can perceive his or her appearance, based on its real physiological characteristics; 2) attitude to one's body. Body image is a complex and multifaceted set of thoughts, feelings, and beliefs related to one's appearance. It can be divided into two main components: 1) body esteem (the degree of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with your body). Body image

is a positive or negative belief and cognitive assessment of one's own appearance. For example, a person may be convinced of his or her attractiveness or unattractiveness and whether his or her weight (figure, nose, etc.) is acceptable. Body image assessment also has an emotional component: feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with one's body, feelings of pride or shame for one's appearance or its individual parts; 2) the level of importance of appearance for self-esteem. The level of importance of appearance for self-esteem is how high appearance is in a person's system of value orientations, and even his or her beliefs about how much appearance affects people's lives [1–2].

Body dissatisfaction is a phenomenon that includes negative thoughts and feelings about one's own appearance, negative assessments of the size, shape of the body and its individual parts [3; 4]. In the presence of a positive body image, a person feels comfortable in his or her "own body" and is satisfied with his or her appearance, while a negative image of the physical self provokes the emergence of physical perfectionism up to pathological manifestations. The aforementioned scientific interest is primarily dictated by a practical request: every year more and more people feel dissatisfied with their bodies, which is becoming one of the key psychological problems of modern man.

Body dissatisfaction in everyday life is known to fluctuate, even among those with elevated body image disorders. Existing evidence relies on empirical findings from cross-sectional and experimental studies to identify potential predictors of condition-like changes in body dissatisfaction in everyday life. Of these, perhaps the most frequently tested and supported predictor is appearance-based comparisons [5].

Much current body image research comes from a perspective that conceptualizes body image as a function of cognitive social learning processes, including the cognitive mediation of emotions and behavior. The appraisal aspect refers to positive to negative cognitive evaluations and beliefs (e.g., satisfaction or dissatisfaction with appearance). Body image investment refers to the psychological importance of one's own appearance, including its attention and cognitive salience (i.e., self-concept), as well as efforts to manage appearance and regulate body image evaluations and emotions.

Situational events affect a person's self-esteem by triggering schematic appearance processes that influence how information is processed within and about the self. Self-schemas have been described as "cognitive generalizations about the self derived from past experiences that organize and direct the processing of self-related information contained in an individual's social experience" [6–9]. In terms of a person's appearance, the schemas of the self trigger affective experiences when they are triggered by contextual events, which then trigger self-regulatory actions. T.F. Cash and E. C. Fleming [10] suggested that people with negative body image attitudes and schemas have distorted or dysfunctional thought processes about their appearance (e.g., magnification and overgeneralization deficits, overuse of appearance-related causal attributions for negative events, and biased social comparison). These cognitive processes often trigger dysphoric reactions such as anxiety, shame, or depression. In turn, people use coping strategies to cope with their potentially disturbing experiences of their bodies.

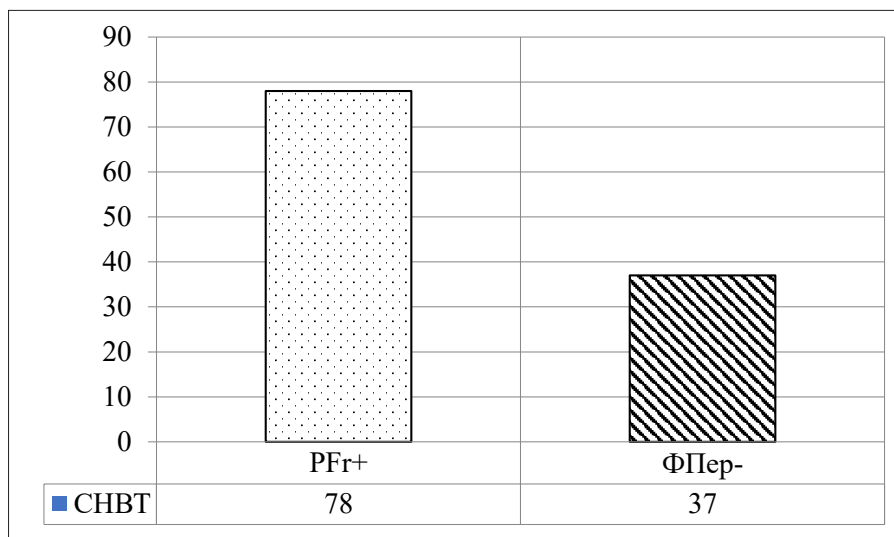
According to T.F. Cash, body image is a multidimensional phenomenon that cannot be limited to a narrow definition of the picture of one's own body formed in the individual's imagination [10]. When discussing body image, it is necessary to take into account the existence of different bases for its definition, for example, by emphasizing body satisfaction, satisfaction with its weight, satisfaction with appearance, assessment of one's appearance, accuracy of ideas about one's own body size, orientation to appearance, body self-esteem, body anxiety, body dysphoria, body dysmorphia, body schema, body perception, body image distortion, body image, body image disorders, and body image disorders [11]. The analysis of the set of such definitions of the concept of "body image" allows us to consider it as a cognitive structure of self-awareness.

**Methods.** To empirically study the peculiarities of the influence of body image on the quality of life in individuals with high and low levels of physical perfectionism, the following methods were used in our work: Physical Perfectionism Scale (A. B. Kholmogorova, A. O. Dadeko, adaptation on the Ukrainian sample by M. I. Babchuk); Situational Body Image Dissatisfaction Questionnaire (SIBID) (T. Cash); Body Image Influence on Quality of Life (BIQLI) (T. Cash).

The sample consisted of 576 students from different faculties of the South Ukrainian National Pedagogical University named after K.D. Ushynsky. All scores were previously converted to percentiles to bring the distribution of values closer to normal. This made it possible to identify groups of people with a high level (fourth quartile of the distribution from 75 to 100 percentile) and a low level (first quartile from 0 to 25 percentile) of physical perfectionism. Thus, groups of people with high (PFr+, n=112) and low (PFr-, n=132) values of the general indicator of physical perfectionism.

**Results.** In Fig. 1 shows the results of diagnosing situational dissatisfaction with body image (SIBID)

According to the SIBID methodology (situational body dissatisfaction) The higher the score, the more pronounced the dissatisfaction with body image. It has been found that representatives of the group with a *high* level of physical perfectionism experience negative body image perception in more situations than representatives of the group with a *low* level of physical perfectionism, which is consistent with the reports



**Fig. 1. Results of diagnosing situational dissatisfaction with body image of individuals with high and low levels of physical perfectionism**

received by individuals in this group. More situations may make PFr+ feel negative about themselves and therefore be more dissatisfied with their bodies on average. The specific situations in which they experience a negative body image deserve further research. The study showed that respondents in this group tend to experience significantly more negative body emotions in different situations. In addition, they suffer from negative body image perceptions when talking about their appearance. This may suggest that they are aware of their appearance problems, which indicates uncertainty in behavior, stiffness, especially when it is a direct topic of conversation and they feel that others may think about their appearance.

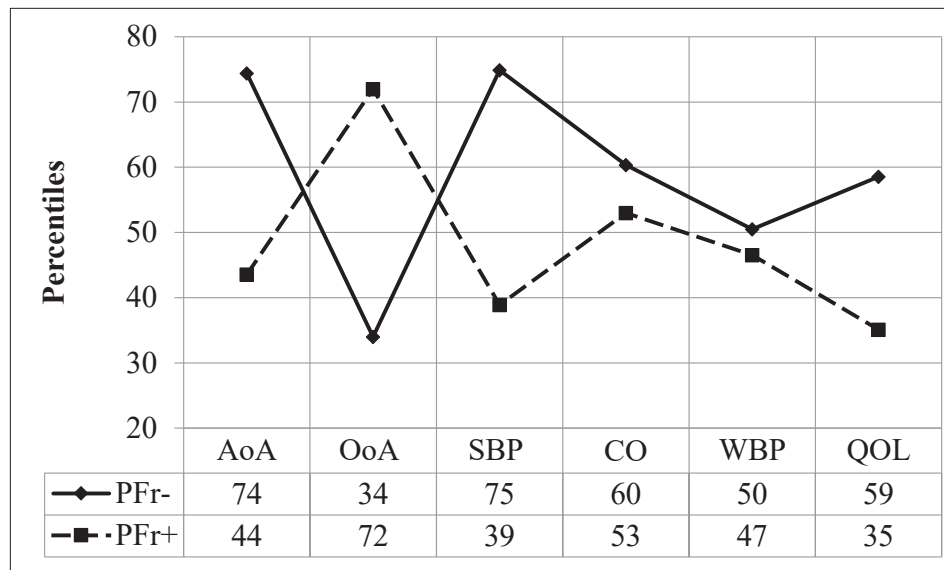
However, it should be noted that there are no significant differences between representatives of both groups in situations that cause negative attitudes towards their own bodies “when someone looks at parts of their body they do not like”, “when someone speaks negatively about their appearance”, “when they get on the scales”, “when I am with attractive people of the other sex”, “when the topic of conversation is about appearance” reported experiencing sometimes negative body image and moderately often. This may indicate that representatives of both groups experience somewhat negative levels of body image perception in the presence of people of the opposite sex. It is possible that they care about how potential partners evaluate their appearance or that they feel physical attractiveness is an important factor in heterosexual relationships.

There were no significant differences in body image perceptions “during certain entertainment activities,” which may indicate that participation in entertainment activities provides a different way of perceiving the body. Viewing the body as a tool rather than an object may contribute to a healthier body image.

In Fig. 2 shows the results of diagnosing the impact of body image on the quality of life in individuals with high and low levels of physical perfectionism.

Individuals in the group with a **high** level of physical perfectionism (PFr+) have negative tendencies in their attitude to their own appearance (AoA). Such dissatisfaction may be related to and even caused by the discrepancy between the ideal and real self. In their imagination, people in this group can appear as anyone. For example, they can “feel” and imagine themselves slimmer, more fragile, but in reality, looking at themselves in a photo or in a mirror, they feel frustrated. These respondents are characterized by a desire to change their appearance. With regard to the perception of other people with similar “inconsistencies” of the same features in the appearance of other people, such respondents remain quite tolerant, i.e. they usually support a positive perception of other people’s bodies regardless of physical abilities, size, gender, race or appearance. These individuals are conditioned to believe that appearance is of great importance, they pay a lot of attention to their appearance, performing numerous grooming procedures. Women overuse decorative cosmetics or cosmetic procedures (OoA+). They demonstrate satisfaction with most parameters of their body (SBP+). These individuals demonstrate concern and control over their weight, vigilant attitude to weight fluctuations, dieting, and restraint in eating (WBP+).

The respondents of the group with a **low** level of physical perfectionism (PFr-) demonstrated a high level on the scale of self-appraisal, which is characterized by a mostly positive perception of themselves. It can be assumed that they are generally satisfied with their appearance and features, and changes in their image are mostly unnoticeable or not a key need for them at this stage. They are characterized by a certain indifference to their appearance, appearance is not a key need for them. They use a minimum of cosmetic

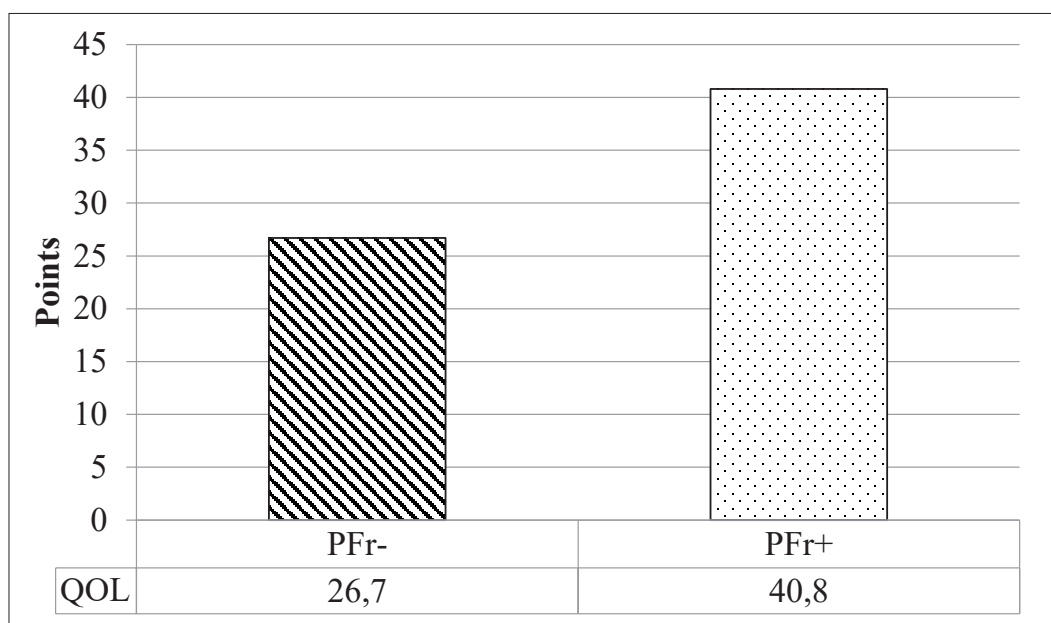


**Fig. 2. Results of diagnosing the impact of body image on the quality of life in individuals with high and low levels of physical perfectionism**

**Notes.** Conventional abbreviations of indicators: AoA – assessment of appearance, OoA – orientation to appearance, SBP – satisfaction with body parameters, CO – concern about overweight, WBP – assessment of own weight, QOL – general indicator of the impact of body image on quality of life

care, show indifference to new clothes, cosmetics, etc. (OoA). There is dissatisfaction with body parameters or assessments of certain parameters (SBP). They are concerned about the problem of excess weight, try to control it, monitor weight fluctuations, and therefore follow a diet and abstain from eating.

The next step in the study was to determine the specifics of the impact of body image on the quality of life of individuals with different levels of physical perfectionism using the Body Image Impact on Quality of Life (BIQLI) questionnaire developed by T. F. Cash. According to the BIQLI (Body Image Impact on Quality of Life) methodology, the lower the total score, the more negative the impact of body image on quality of life and the more it manifests itself in such personal characteristics as self-esteem, optimism, social stability, and eating behavior. The results of the diagnosis are shown in Fig. 3.



**Fig. 3. The results of the study of the degree of influence of body image on the quality of life of people with different levels of physical perfectionism**

According to the author's interpretation, the test assesses the impact of body image perception on various psychosocial areas of life, namely: daily emotional state, self-esteem, sexuality, social interest/avoidance of contacts, interpersonal relationships, diet and sports, self-care, and overall life satisfaction. This methodology identifies the positive and negative impact of body image on quality of life, the scores can be with a "+" and "-" sign, so this system for assessing the degree of influence of body image on quality of life is used separately to assess the positive and negative impact.

According to the results of the diagnostics of the total score of the influence of body image on the quality of life in the group of people with a **high** level of physical perfectionism (PFr+), a strongly pronounced influence of body image on the quality of life was revealed, while in the group of people with a **low** level of physical perfectionism (PFr-) a moderately pronounced influence of body image on the quality of life was revealed.

From Fig. 3 shows that in the (PFr-) group, body image is not the main and determining factor of quality of life, namely, everyday emotional state, self-esteem, sexuality, social interest, interpersonal relationships, diet and sports, self-care, and overall life satisfaction. Most of them assessed the impact of body image on their quality of life as slightly positive. Below is a qualitative analysis of the results by the groups under study.

Analyzing the results, it can be determined that in the group with a high level of physical perfectionism (PFr+) there is a sense of self-worth (self-worth), recognition of oneself as a good enough person who is worthy of love and positive attitude and respect of others. They demonstrate adequate perception without any resistance to the assigned sex: a comfortable feeling in a female (if assigned female at birth) or male (if assigned male at birth) body. They are comfortable in communication and interaction with other people.

When meeting new people, they are characterized by the involvement of experiences regarding the assessment of their own appearance by new people, they will be more likely to feel uncertain, shy, stiff, due to the idea that the new person evaluates primarily the person's appearance and necessarily focuses on "flaws".

These respondents are characterized by stiffness, concentration on appearance flaws, including imaginary ones, which can lead them to present an image that does not correspond to reality. In the process of communicating with friends, they achieve maximum physical and psychological comfort in interaction, due to the absence of a significant impact of real or imaginary flaws on communication with them. The majority of respondents in this group demonstrated a negative level, which means that feelings of discomfort and stress are dominant when interacting with family members, which can be seen as a certain negative due to possible criticism of appearance. They are characterized by the situational influence of body image on everyday emotions, which is why they will be overly focused on body image, and any emotions will be viewed through the prism of body image. They demonstrate an average level of life satisfaction, which indicates a general trend of satisfaction with their position in society.

For people in this group, the feeling of acceptability as a sexual partner is accompanied by anxiety about their perception of unattractiveness in a sexual context, which can manifest itself in refusal to have sex or, for example, sex only under certain conditions (without taking off clothes, without light, using psychoactive substances, etc.). Because of this, we can talk about dissatisfaction with the quality, frequency, and intensity of sexual intercourse, their role in it, and the role of their partner. They are always unable to control the quality and quantity of food, which is manifested in inconsistent healthy eating, disorganization in the choice of food, a tendency to stifle emotions or refuse to eat as a punishment, or inability to manage their own time.

They are very meticulous about weight control, which is a characteristic sign of attention to their own body, its parameters and changes. The desire to perform actions that may draw attention to one's appearance is at an average level for most respondents, which may indicate situational. They will be more likely to avoid actions and situations that may draw attention to the appearance of a significant number of people, such as refusing to make public appearances, take group photos, etc. Demonstrate a general tendency to strive for personal hygiene and maintain a neat appearance. Due to the negative impact of body image perceptions, members of this group may refuse new social contacts, favorable job offers, etc. due to feelings of inferiority associated with negative perceptions and ideas about body image.

However, despite the high demands on their body image, they show an average level of happiness, which indicates the existence of certain conditions and individual requirements for happiness, the belief that they deserve to be happy.

For the group of individuals with a **low** level of physical perfectionism, they demonstrate a high level of self-esteem and have a positive attitude "I am a good enough person". Representatives of this group are satisfied with their appearance and assess the degree of influence of their body image on their quality of life as very weakly positive. This may mean that, for the most part, their quality of life is not related to their body image. They live a fulfilling life based on other values, but their view of the impact of body image on quality of life is positive, which can be justified by their satisfaction with their appearance and a generally positive view of themselves.

These respondents are characterized by a feeling of comfort and self-confidence (without any significant worries about their own appearance). They feel comfortable in any new environment, new company, which indicates the absence of significant resistance to the assigned gender. They demonstrate self-confidence, a certain amount of relaxation, confidence and a clear awareness of their own value, and no worries about how new people evaluate their appearance. Communication in a close circle of friends is based on trusting relationships, on accepting each other as they are, with all the advantages and disadvantages, which indicates the creation of maximum physical and psychological comfort when interacting with friends, the absence of a significant impact of real or imaginary shortcomings on communication with them.

The analysis of everyday emotions showed that body image has little influence in everyday life. Emotions such as joy, sadness, and anger are mostly not related to perceptions of their own appearance, as they can be situational. In general, they demonstrate satisfaction with life and social status and status "here and now". Due to the positive attitude and perception of body image, for people in this group, the image of their own body is not an obstacle to establishing sexual relations, and sometimes even acts as an advantage when choosing a sexual partner. They report satisfaction with existing sexual relationships and partners. The respondents indicate that they try to control their body weight and pay attention to a healthy lifestyle to ensure good health and physical endurance and maintain physical fitness. Representatives of the group do not avoid publicity; on the contrary, they are characterized by a desire for self-demonstration, self-presentation, and evaluation by others. They feel happy and satisfied.

**Conclusion.** Body image refers to a person's perceptions and feelings about their own body and is influenced by internal factors and external factors. Body image disorders can occur when societal values emphasize physical appearance and fitness, leading to distorted perceptions of the body. This disorder is often manifested through appearance management behaviors aimed at improving perceived body imperfections. It is an integral part of self-esteem and can have a significant impact on overall well-being. Body image disorders are associated with various forms of psychopathology, including depression, anxiety, disordered eating, body dysmorphia, and post-traumatic stress symptoms .

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