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Exploring the role of social comparison in the process of making judgment about others and judgment about self

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Introduction: The strong emphasis of society on beauty and attraction may be an important contributing factor to the desire of females to perfect their face. The media today may exert a negative influence on self-perception, particularly amongst individuals who are highly self-conscious of their facial appearance. The impact of the presence of malocclusion can be observed in the judgments made by other individuals. It is possible that the same psychological process underlies the impact of the media and the judgments people make about each other.

Objective: This study will compare the social judgments made by participants who are high on social comparison (High SocComp) against those that are low on social comparison (Low SocComp).

Method: This is a mixed design: a controlled randomized cross over trial followed by a cross sectional study. The independent variable in response to media images and the dependent variable is the social ratings. A total of 250 females will be recruited for the study from the NHS (N=150) and non NHS (N=90). Participants will be asked to answer a group of demographic, psychological and orthodontic questions. The first experiment will be conducted based on Minhas & Newton's (2005) study where participants will randomly be allocated to a specific order of a condition. Measures of facial satisfaction will be collected after viewing stereotypically beautiful images of houses and of faces. A repeated measure design will be used adopting a washout period (4-6 weeks). In the second part of the experiment participants will make judgments about the personal characteristics of a female showing severe crowding. The social judgments made by individuals high on social comparison and low on social comparison to the media images will be compared.

Results: There was no statistical significance detected pertaining to social judgments between participants low on social comparison (Low SocComp) and to individuals high on social comparison group (High SocComp); SC ($t(47)=1.04$, $p=0.30$), IA ($t(47)=1.12$, $p=0.27$) PA ($t(47)=0.21$, $p=0.83$). Further analysis suggested sample size may have caused the lack of significant result. Therefore, further investigation is needed.

Biography

Ghada Al-Kharboush is currently a third year PhD student at the Unit of Social and Behavioral sciences department at Kings College London. She is working close with Professor Tim Newton who is renowned for his work with patients that have dental phobia. She has obtained her Masters degree in Orthodontics in 2011 from King Saud University. Also, she has been an employee at Riyadh Military hospital since 2006. Her goal is to analyze orthodontic patient's expectations and motives in order to present to them the best option for treatment.

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