The Effect of Pregnancy Times on Women's Social Performance

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Abstract

This research was done to evaluate the effects of pregnancy times (1 or 2 times) on 8 months pregnant women's social function. Mental image of body can be a predictor of some behaviors and effects on social performance. Therefore, this study has used comparison of mental image from pregnant women’s body that had their first pregnancy with those who had their second pregnancy in order to compare the changes in 8 months pregnant women’s social performance. Statistical population is 35 seventh-eighth pregnant women coming to social security clinics and sample size is 30 ones who have have been selected in sample random sampling method. Littleton Body Image Concern Inventory has been used in this study as the research tool and SPSS program (version 22) and Sample Independent Test is used to analyze the data. The results showed that pregnancy condition of 7- 8 months in the first pregnancy is more effective on social performance and reduces it. It can be concluded that it is needed to take training for meeting pregnancy condition of 7- 8 months so that the pregnant women come along better with their physical condition and pregnancy effects less on their social performance.

Keywords: Pregnant Women, Mental Image of Body, Social Performance.
**Introduction**

Social performance is one of the most important parts of a person’s life in society. Women’s social performance is affected by more factors than men that one of these factors can be pregnancy. During pregnancy, women experience significant changes in their body shape and weight that led to a major change in their mental image of body (Lederman 1984, Moore 1987 and Strange 1985). Researches show that assessment of body is activated in women due to the changes happen in body during the pregnancy (Cash 1996). These assessments cause the ideal attitudes and ideas of body come up. Coming up this ideal, the difference between how women perceive their appearance and ideals of appearance is highlighted. During pregnancy, women consider themselves not beautiful due to the proposed Western ideals of body shape that states thin women are beautiful (Franzoi and Herzog 1987). In fact, Goodwin reports a major decline in satisfaction with body image during pregnancy (Goodwin et al. 2000). A negative mental image of body can led to behaviors such as taking diet, suffer hunger or have laxatives to empty gut. So negative mental image of body due to such behaviors can led to concerns such as low baby weight at the birth, early birth, kid’s delayed growth and in some cases, fatal death. Concern about intake weight during pregnancy brings feelings like depression, low self-esteem and eating disorders. According to these reports, researches on behaviors associated with positive mental image of body during pregnancy are very important for the researchers and health physicians (Boscaglia et al.2003). Couturier states that self-concept, age, former sports, current sports and frequency of pregnancy have an effect on prediction of mental energy focusing on the assessment of mental image of body. It shows that women’s satisfaction about their bodies during pregnancy is an important predictor of her self-concept (Katrier 1987).

**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF RESEARCH**

According to the proposed researches the body is very important to women. In order to keep their body in the ideal shape as the society has defined it or they think so, they spend a lot of effort to have optimal mental image of their body and go on the activity in society with high self-esteem.it seems that women’s mental image change with anything causes to destroy the definition of ideal body shape and make them depressed. Pregnancy is a factor that changes the body shape. Brouner’s findings show that the diseases have caused less control over body, inadequacy feeling of body, insecurity and negative mental image (Latifnejad Roudsari et al. 2011). Pregnancy is not a disease although it can be like a disease. It shows the symptoms that apparently change the shape of body and also the interactions that occur within the body can be interpreted like a disease. By the way, inappropriate change in lower part of body influences on women’s dissatisfaction of body. Now the question is: does the pregnancy impact on mental image of body in pregnant women and as a result, on their social performance?

**Body Image Variable:** prozinsky and Cash (1990) believe that body image is interpreted as findings, thoughts, feelings about the body and body experiences. This variable is measured using Littleton and et al (2005) Body Image Concern Inventory (BICI) that Mohammadi and Sajadinejad have assessed it. This inventory includes 19 questions and check person’s dissatisfaction and concern about the appearance. Every question is graded in a scale of 1 to 5 (5 Likert scale). All questions are graded directly and total score of inventory changes from 19 to 95 that higher score indicates a high level of dissatisfaction with body image or
appearance. The reliability of inventory is evaluated using internal consistency and Cronbach’s alpha coefficient obtained 93%. Littleton and et al (2005) have examined the factor structure of inventory. The results show two important and significant factors that the first factor is composed of 12 articles including person’s dissatisfaction and shame of her body and checking and hiding of perceived flaws. The second factor with seven articles indicates the interference extent of concern about appearance in person’s social performance. Concern about appearance interference in person’s social performance occurs when the appearance is such important to her that influences on her social performance and relationships and causes some problems. For example, a woman who is dissatisfied with her pregnant appear, does not like to participate in social activities. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of first and second factors has been respectively reported 0.92 and 0.76 and correlation coefficient of two factors have been reported 0.69 (Movahed et al. 2011).

In this study, the structure provided for mental image of body variable in Littleton et al (2005) study, is used. The conceptual model is presented as figure 1.

METHOD
Aim of this study is applied and method of data collection is survey that can provide the possibility of access to generalized results of entire population through representative sample study.
Statistical population is 35 seventh-eighth pregnant women coming to social security clinics and sample size is 30 ones who have been selected in sample random sampling method. At the end, after distributing and collecting the inventories, it was revealed that 30 distributed inventories were completed and 2 inventories were back.
Littleton Body Image Concern Inventory has been used in this study as the research tool that content validity of that was confirmed by professors of university. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was used to measure the reliability of research that for this study $\alpha = 0.859$ with 30 units.
The method of collecting data is in the way that the research unites were given a sample of a BICI questionnaire. Finally, after completing the questionnaires, they were gratitude and a short interview was conducted and some questions were asked about the presence in the community and shame of appearance which were mentioned in the questionnaire. Sample Independent Test was used to analyze the data and statistical tool SPSS program (version 22) was used to perform these tests.

FINDINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variable</th>
<th>Dividing</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-26</td>
<td></td>
<td>46.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-30</td>
<td></td>
<td>26.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-37</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Diploma</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td></td>
<td>23.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s Degree</td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Have a Job</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Working</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeper</td>
<td></td>
<td>96.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pregnancy Times</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First time</td>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Independent sample test is used to investigate the hypothesis of research. Statistical hypothesis of this test is as follows:

$H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$  \hspace{1cm} Mental image of body in first and second pregnancy
$H_1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2$  \hspace{1cm} mental image of body in first and second pregnancy

The results of test are as follows in table 2. As it can be seen in table 2, significant level of social performance is less than 0.05. Therefore, hypothesis $H_0$ is related to rejected aspect and it can be said that the times of pregnancy (1 and 2) has a significant effect on social performance. Also, according to the means of these two groups, the effect of pregnancy times on social performance in the group with first time pregnancy is higher than group with second time pregnancy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect/Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Low level of mean difference</th>
<th>High level of mean difference</th>
<th>T statistics</th>
<th>Freedom degree</th>
<th>Significance level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Performance Aspect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>First pregnancy</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>47.11</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>5.64</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second pregnancy</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

As mentioned before, one of the researcher’s hypotheses is that the mental image of body is a significant predictor of women’s behavior, so that there is a positive or negative relationship between right and wrong behavior with the mental image. In this study it was tried to study the women’s mental image of appearance during 8 months and its relationship with their performance in society. The results of study indicate that there is kind of concern about the shape of body during 8 months pregnancy among the women. This concern affects on their cover and social performance.
In this kind of research, culture is very important, because the various cultures are different in terms of coverage and looking at women. For example, in Iran, wearing CHADOR (cover) for being in society is considered common and in answer to the questions is not a concern for the research unit; a woman who has cover, answer easily to the question 4 mentioned that she has no problem to present in society or to answer to question 13, she does not need to buy any special cloths because the CHADOR covers different part of her body. Some women have stated that they have used CHADOR during pregnancy, although it has not been their common cover.

Women's mental image of body during pregnancy is different based on the kind of country culture view to her, no matter she accepts that or not. Appearance of pregnancy can reduces women's self-confidence if in the society being slim has been defined as the beauty factor. Society culture is one the main limitations of this study that has caused the different answers in west researches and even the researches done in different parts of the world.

Totally, this research showed that pregnant women try to cover some special parts of their body during the pregnancy when presenting in the society, this research especially showed that the social performance of women who experience their first pregnancy has been more influenced than women who experience their second pregnancy. It shows that the mental image of body can be influenced by some factors such as experience, age, and some other ones and effect on different issues such as social performance and diet.

What this research can suggest as application is development and designing of some trainings about men and women's mental image of 8 month pregnant women. These trainings can include the mental image of body at normal and health time. it also can be useful to optimize men and women's attitude about women's pregnancy condition.
References

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