

The Role of Social Beliefs in Body Image Research: A Cross-Cultural Examination of Australian and Hong Kong Chinese College Women

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Personal control beliefs have been extensively studied in body image research; however, research on social beliefs is limited. In the current study, the authors examined how individuals' cynical beliefs about the social world, that is, social cynicism, linked to body esteem and moderated the relationship between body esteem and self-esteem. A total of 205 female college students were recruited from Australia and Hong Kong. The results showed that social cynicism was negatively associated with two out of three body esteem factors, namely, appearance and weight (but not attribution esteem). In addition, social cynicism significantly moderated the impact of weight esteem on self-esteem. In other words, among socially cynical women, weight dissatisfaction does not largely influence their general self-image because they are less likely to internalize the

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social norms and expectations attached to thinness. Cultural differences in body esteem level were also observed and discussed. Clinical applications of the present findings and future research directions are suggested.

Keywords: social beliefs, social cynicism, body image, body esteem

體型意識研究中社會信念的角色——澳洲與香港女大學生的跨文化研究

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摘要

過去，體型意識的研究中多專注於個人控制信念，而缺乏有關社會信念的研究。是次研究，我們測試個人憤世觀，即憤世嫉俗 (social cynicism)，與身體自尊 (body-esteem) 的關係，以及如何在身體自尊和自尊的關係中作調節效果。250名來自澳洲及香港的女大學生被邀請進行研究。結果顯示，憤世嫉俗與其中兩項身體自尊因子——外表及體重有顯著負相關。另外，在體重自尊與自尊的關係中，憤世嫉俗有顯著的調節效果。換句話說，憤世嫉俗的女大學生對體重的不滿程度不會在自我形象上產生強烈影響，因為她們較少將瘦削體型的社會規範與期望內化。我們也觀察到身體自尊程度的文化差異，並會在文章中作討論。這些研究結果在臨床的應用，以及未來的研究方向也會被討論。

關鍵字：社會信念、憤世嫉俗、體型意識、身體自尊