

Abstract

Facial appearance dissatisfaction has significant negative impact on adolescents' self-esteem and psychological well-being. Recent research indicated that facial appearance dissatisfaction can be broken down into two components: (1) the cognitive content (facial appearance dissatisfaction thoughts) and (2) the habitual mental processes (negative facial appearance thinking habit). The present study examined the effects of both of these components of facial appearance dissatisfaction on self-esteem and depressed mood among Chinese adolescents in Hong Kong. Participants, 989 adolescents (508 males and 481 females) aged 12 to 19, completed measures assessing facial appearance dissatisfaction, negative facial appearance thinking habit, fear of negative evaluation, self-esteem and depressed mood. Results revealed that negative facial appearance thinking habit accounted for variance in low self-esteem and depressive symptoms over and above facial appearance dissatisfaction in both genders. Negative facial appearance thinking habit had both direct and indirect (mediated through self-esteem) impact on depressive symptoms. Facial appearance dissatisfaction only had indirect effect (mediated through self-esteem) on depressive symptoms. Findings also indicated that the direct effect of negative facial appearance thinking habit on depressive symptoms was significantly weaker in females with lower fear of negative evaluation. Overall, results suggest that the negative facial appearance thinking habit has additional influence on one's psychological adjustment

over the cognitive content of such thoughts. Implications for intervention strategies for habitual facial appearance thinking, such as mindfulness-based approaches, are discussed.