

Report of the Short Term Scientific Mission, COST Action IS1210.

Titled: "Appearance Matters: Tackling the Psychical and Psychosocial Consequences of Dissatisfaction with Appearance".

Gothenburg, Sweden, 8-14 May 2014

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Host: Prof. Ann Friséén, Department of Psychology, University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

Thanks

My deep gratitude to the Management Committee of the COST IS1210 and to the COST Administrative Secretariat for making my mission a possibility through the funding to allow me to carry out this Short Term Scientific Mission in Sweden.

Specially, I would like to thank Professor Ann Friséén for her help throughout the processing of my application for the STSM and for her hospitality during my stay. The STSM was a very interesting and useful experience, and an important opportunity to develop research collaborations.

Rational to my STSM

During the last years I have carried out various research studies regarding social, emotional and behavioral aspects in children and adolescent focusing on their feelings of loneliness, depressive mood, social skills, self esteem, and well being related to face to face bullying and cyberbullying.

Over the last decade, the internet technology had created a revolution in adolescents' lives. Along with its benefits, we are witnessing the emergence of a new type of aggression that becomes common among children and adolescents – cyber bullying. This type of bullying is characterized by an over-time repetitive behavior through the use of computers and cell phones, sending insulting messages and hurtful pictures (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). Various studies had examined cyberbullying characteristics in relation to behavioral and socio-emotional aspects (e.x., Smith, et al., 2008), but few studies examined the relationships of cyberbullying with body image (Friséén, Berne, & Lunde, 2013) and with social emotional aspects.

The Specific objectives of my STSM

1. To discuss the research findings conducted in Israel regarding the relationships between cyberbullying and body image.
2. To examine the findings of studies conducted by Prof. Frisén on these aspects.
3. The STSM is an opportunity to discuss and plan potential research collaborations between the two countries, and to examine the cyberbullying and body image measures with additional measures as different psychological aspects (such as self esteem, anxiety, social support) and their correlation to cyberbullying participants (perpetrators, victims and by-standers) among children and adolescents.
4. As an outcome of our comparison study, we can propose a model which will help us to understand the possible relationships between cyberbullying and student's aspects (e.g., academic, personal, social, emotional), and to suggest an intervention program to enhance students, teachers, and parents awareness and coping with the phenomena.
5. We intend to publish our results in international peer review journal, and to present them at different conferences.

Description of the work carried-out during the STSM and the main results obtained

1. We discussed about the research study conducted in Sweden, cybervictimization and body esteem, and regarding the experiences of Swedish children and adolescents.
2. I have presented to the students the Israeli Weight Limitation Law No. D/2057/18 regarding the modeling industry advertisement, approved by the Israeli Parliament on the 19.3.2012, and applied from 1.1.2013 (see below the summary of the presentation).
3. We compared the results of the Israeli pilot study regarding the ninth grade students (14-16 years old) with the Swedish sample (see below the summary of the Israeli pilot study).
4. I have discussed the future study design with the Ph.D student, regarding creating focused groups with adolescents' students on appearance and body perception.
5. I attend Prof. Frisen presentation on appearance, and another presentation of a doctoral student on cyberbullying. I also presented a research study which was

done in Israel with the cooperation of Dr. Dorit Olenik-Shemesh, from The Open University of Israel.

Summary of my presentation regarding the Israeli Weight Limitation Law

The Weight Limitation Law regarding advertisement passed after the third approval (meeting of professional committee) in the Israeli Parliament on the 19.3.2012.

The law is applied from 1.1.2013

The Law main points: (a) A person shall not display any advertisement or advertising which is intended for the model sub - weight, or a model seems to be in sub-weight. (b) A person shall not display any advertisement or advertising for the public image of a person, using graphics editing, including computer software, in order to decrease or shrinking the peripheral body, unless the advertising will state and clarify the use of special graphic editing.

Each model need to present a valid certificate. This valid certificate will be used to determine if the model is/is not in sub- weight, which is a body mass index (BMI) lower than 18.5

A valid certificate is a medical certificate showing the BMI during the last six months the period prior to the date of the contract.

Prohibition of presenting a model in sub - weight (lower than 18.5): "A person will not employ, present, make a contract for modeling, including Modeling Photography and Modeling track, or to represent the brand, unless the model will present a valid certificate indicating that is not in the sub – weight".

Rational of this Law:

- Eating disorders kill more than 30 youth per year.
- Statistics and the Research Center of the Israeli Parliament found that each year about 1,500 children and teenagers in Israel are diagnosed with eating disorders.
- Recovery rate from eating disorders is low: about 35% of the anorexia and 45% among the youth with bulimia.

This Law is designed to reduce the consequences of exposure to advertising extremely slim models (sub-weight).

To avoid developing eating disorders.

Dangerous imitation (of the models) by the children and adolescents.

Weight limit law prevents the modeling industry advertisements encouraging anorexia.

Israeli pilot study- preliminary results

During my stay I was particularly interested in cross-cultural body image research. Thus, the aim of the mutual study is to examine students perceptions of their body esteem (e.x., their appearance, weight, attribution), related with being bullying online, as well as examining their ways of coping with cyberbullying, within different school settings (elementary, middle school, high school), and with gender differences.

The pilot study recently conducted in Israel focused on body image related to cyber victimization, social-emotional aspects (social support, self efficacy, subjective well being) with Dr. Dorit Olenik-Shemesh at the Open University of Israel.

The study examined 204 adolescents with the age range of 14, 15 and 16. Correlations and t-tests analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between body esteem with various measures. Students completed during 1 hour class lesson five different questionnaires. **Body esteem** scale (23 items, $\alpha = .92$), which includes 3 sub-scales: appearance ($\alpha = .92$), weight ($\alpha = .91$) and attribution ($\alpha = .51$).

Results: T-test analyses for gender differences revealed that the mean score of the entire body esteem scale was higher for boys ($M = 2.59$, $SD = .81$) compared to girls report ($M = 2.15$, $SD = .79$), $t_{(200)} = -3.94$, $p = .001$, $d = .55$. Thus, boys reported a significantly higher positive rate of body esteem compared to girls ($p < .001$). In addition, boys were significantly more satisfied with their appearance ($M = 2.64$, $SD = .92$) compared to the girls report ($M = 2.23$, $SD = .85$), $t_{(200)} = -3.32$, $p = .001$, $d = .42$.

The same pattern was obtain for weight sub-scale: boys were significantly more satisfied with their weight ($M = 2.76$, $SD = .91$) than girls ($M = 2.09$, $SD = 1.09$), $t_{(200)} = -4.76$, $p = .001$, $d = .67$. No differences were obtained for attribution sub-scale.

Regarding age comparison (14, 15 and 16 years old). Results show significant one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) on age and the body esteem scale, $F_{(2, 200)} = 2.54$, $p = .04$. A closer examination shows that students of 14 years old reported higher body esteem scores than 15 and 16 years old students, $t_{(200)} = -1.9$, $p = .03$. No significant differences emerge between the 15 and 16 years old students.

I've discussed the results with Prof. Ann Frisen, and compared the results with previous results of the Swedish sample.

Practical results

The results of the meeting are:

I. A comparison study

1. The Israeli team will compare the results of the 9th grades students in Sweden with the results of the students in Israel.
2. The Israeli team will conducted a research study by examining a sample of students in the 6th and 4th grades, with the same measures of the Swedish study. The data will be analyzed and compared by the two countries.
3. The Israeli team will to create a focus group of 15 years old adolescents, regarding body esteem and related aspects, in order to understand their perception, needs, and coping with. We shall compare our results with the Swedish focused groups' results.

II. Assimilation

1. Publication. Publishing papers in peer reviewed journals.
2. Participating and presenting our findings in various conferences.
3. Sharing the appearance matters and cyberbullying phenomena with other colleagues in our countries and abroad.

Confirmation by the host institute of the successful execution of the mission

I hereby confirm the above mentioned presentation of Tali Heiman's STSM here in Gothenburg.

I declare that Tali Heiman stayed at Gothenburg University, Sweden during 8-14 May 2014 and participated to all the above described activities.

Signed (Host):*Ann Frisé*n..... Date: 22 May 2014.....

Name (HOST): Ann Frisé

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