The Effect of Virtual Learning on Student Long Term Self-Esteem

Garfield , Sarah (School: Palm Beach Central High School)

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a paradigm shift in the reliance on video-conferencing technology, However, video-conferencing technology has a hidden effect on body and self-esteem issues through the use of live cameras, which can lead to insecurity and a distorted self-perception, or "Zoom Dysmorphia." Since video-conferencing technology has strongly impacted education, and there is limited research on the effect of conferencing technology on school-aged children, high school students are a key population. It was hypothesized that students with their cameras on would have lower self-esteem scores. After collecting consent forms, 339 high school students across Palm Beach County were given a survey with questions from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and the Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire (MBSRQ-AS), either randomly selected to turn their camera on or off on a controlled Meet. Personal information like gender, age, and whether they were in-person/online for the 2020-2021 school year was also collected. The data was run through a two-way MANOVA with single ANOVA tests on each independent variable and LSD post hoc tests. There were significant differences in the ON/OFF groups on the Rosenberg and Overweight Preoccupation Scale. Male and female students also had significant differences on the Rosenberg, Appearance Evaluation, Appearance Orientation, Body Areas Satisfaction, and Overweight Occupation Scales. The results support that cameras and gender have an impact on overall self-esteem and body image. The results can be used to target vulnerable populations and to reconfigure how video-technology can be used in the future.

Awards Won:

Fourth Award of $500

American Psychological Association: Third Award of $500