

外 国 語 要 旨

学位論文題目 : The relationship between drive for thinness and thin-ideal internalization among young children
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Recently, it has been reported that a number of young children express the desire for thinness. The drive for thinness at an early age is considered to be harmful to physical and mental health throughout lifespan. Idealizing thinness is conjectured to underlie the drive for thinness, as many young children have indicated that they strive towards being thin. This study aimed to investigate the mechanism underlying the drive for thinness among young children, focusing on the thin-ideal internalization that thinness connotes both goodness and attractiveness in our society. Four studies were performed in line with the sociocultural theory model of body image to examine the process of thin-ideal internalization and the relationships between thin-ideal internalization and drive for thinness among young children.

Chapter 1 presents the introduction of this doctoral dissertation.

Chapter 2 reviews previous studies that investigated the drive for thinness and weight-loss behaviors among young children in Japan and clarified the physical and mental health risks brought on by being too thin. Next, a few examples of prevention intervention programs for dangerous weight loss behaviors in the Western world are introduced. It is evident that empirical studies are needed to inform effective intervention programs in Japan.

In Chapter 3, the theory of body image development is introduced as a theoretical framework for research into the drive for thinness. Previous studies on the sociocultural theory model of body image, which addresses thin-ideal internalization in facilitating an understanding of body image development, are reviewed. It was concluded that mothers and the media are very important factors in the drive for thinness among young children. It became clear that most of the previous studies did not examine the thin-ideal internalization.

In Chapter 4, the purpose of this study is presented, demonstrating the hypothesized model. The model regards thin-ideal internalization as a mediator between the thin-ideal and the drive for thinness, following the sociocultural theory of body image. The purpose of this study was to explore how young children would internalize the thin-ideal. This hypothesized model considered mothers and the media as sociocultural factors and included mothers' and children's thin-ideal internalization.

The four studies in Chapter 5 (Study 1–4) aimed to investigate how adolescents would internalize the thin-ideal. Studies 1 and 2 were designed to examine mothers' influence on their children's thin-ideal internalization, focusing on their role in the formation of their children's values. Study 3 was designed to explore moderation factors in the relationships between mothers' and children's thin-ideal internalization. Study 4 was intended to investigate how the media, such as magazines and TV programs, would facilitate adolescents' thin-ideal internalization.

Study 1 was conducted with 373 upper-grade elementary school children and their mothers and investigated

the relationships between mothers' thin-ideal internalization and children's drive for thinness. It was found that among girls, mothers' thin-ideal internalization was related to their children's drive for thinness through the former's attitudes and behaviors concerning their children's body shape and weight. Study 2 investigated the relationships between mothers' and children's thin-ideal internalization in 284 junior high school students and their mothers. Consistent with the findings in Study 1, among girls, mothers' thin-ideal internalization was related to that of their children through the former's attitudes and behaviors concerning their children's body shape and weight. These results suggest that mothers facilitate thin-ideal internalization among their daughters.

Study 3 was designed to examine the moderating effects of puberty and the quality of the mother-child relationship on the relationships between mothers' and their children's thin-ideal internalization. This study was conducted with 173 upper-grade elementary school girls and their mothers. The results indicated that whereas horizontal relationships between mothers and daughters affected the relationships between mothers and girls' thin-ideal internalization, puberty did not.

Study 4 investigated the media's influence on thin-ideal internalization in adolescents, based on findings that TV programs and magazines target this age group, including through messages about the thin-ideal. This study was conducted with 339 upper-elementary school boys and girls, who completed a questionnaire assessing their thin-ideal internalization and media use. It was found that TV viewing time was related to thin-ideal internalization among girls, but not boys.

In Chapter 6, the research findings from Chapter 5 are discussed, followed by arguments regarding this study's contribution toward the body of knowledge about drive for thinness from the perspective of the sociocultural theory of body image. Finally, sociocultural factors concerning the drive for thinness, especially regarding the fact that the connotation of the thin-ideal varies across situations, are discussed.