

A STUDY ON SELF BODY IMAGE AND SELF ESTEEM

Dr. Ambrien Ahmed

Professor

Galgotias University, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India

Lata Qweera

Postgraduate Student

Galgotias University, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India

Abstract

Media and societal influences can play a major role in influencing one's awareness of components of psychological well-being such as body image and self-esteem. The significance of self-body image and self-esteem is found in its significant impact on people's mental, emotional, and physical health. Positive body image increases confidence and self-esteem, while negative body image is associated with poor well-being. This study aims to investigate aspects of body image and self-esteem. This study explores how people in Uttarakhand and Delhi, NCR, between the age of 18 and 40, view their bodies and assess their value. Through purposive sampling, 100 participants, who varied in terms of age, socioeconomic status, and cultural background, were selected. Body Self-Image Questionnaire and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale were used to measure body image and self-esteem. The analysis revealed a wide range of scores on both measures, reflecting diverse perceptions of body image and self-worth among participants. Surprisingly, the result shows no significant correlation between body image and self-esteem. This suggests that factors beyond body image, such as personality traits and social support, may influence individuals' self-esteem.

Keywords: Body image, Self esteem, Adolescents, Adults

Introduction

Body image is a multifaceted construct that encompasses an individual's perceptions, thoughts, and emotions about their physical appearance. When body image becomes a source of excessive concern or is misperceived, it can lead to dissatisfaction, unhealthy eating behaviors, nutritional imbalances, and even mental health issues like depression and anxiety. In the context of young girls in India, body image has been relatively underexplored. It is shaped by various factors, including societal expectations, personal experiences, and cultural norms. Body image is closely linked to self-esteem, which refers to an individual's overall sense of self-worth and confidence.

Cash (2017) describes body image as a multidimensional construct that includes perceptual, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects. It reflects an individual's attitudes, beliefs, and experiences regarding their own body, as well as their ideal or desired appearance. This concept involves not just how one perceives their body but also their feelings, thoughts, and actions in relation to it, all of which are influenced by personal and societal factors. The importance of body image lies in its strong connection to a person's mental health and overall well-being.

Self-esteem is the subjective evaluation of one's competence, value, and worth as a person. It is influenced by a range of factors such as skills, achievements, personality traits, and social comparisons. Self-esteem significantly affects a person's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, and can

either be positive or negative. High self-esteem tends to be associated with confidence, resilience, and optimism, while low self-esteem often leads to self-doubt, anxiety, and depression. Nathaniel Branden (1994) defines self-esteem as the belief in one's ability to manage life's challenges and the sense of being deserving of happiness. This concept not only involves positive self-perception but also manifests in one's emotions, behaviors, and attitudes towards both oneself and others. High self-esteem generally leads to greater feelings of capability and success in life, whereas low self-esteem can foster insecurity and doubt.

In Australia, the number of elderly persons is increasing, and a study was done with an aging world population. Although there is a connection between body image and self-esteem, it has not been fully investigated in respect to older persons. The findings demonstrated that, with variations according to age and gender, body image had a major impact on self-esteem in older persons. Women typically adapt to aging by developing coping mechanisms, but men experience greater negative effects, particularly with relation to bodily functions. Comprehending these processes can enhance the quality of life and body image of older persons. Oktan & Sahin's study (2010) emphasizes how crucial realistic body image appreciation is for adolescent girls' self-esteem. It showed an inverse relationship between self-esteem and body image satisfaction, implying that elevated self-esteem is linked to greater body image pleasure. Female adolescents who have a negative body image typically have lower self-esteem, those who have a

positive body image typically have better self-esteem.

Another study reveals that 21.6% of first-year medical students had low self-esteem and 16.8% had body image dissatisfaction. Furthermore, a moderately positive connection was found between body image satisfaction and self-esteem, suggesting that higher levels of body image satisfaction were connected with higher levels of self-esteem (Virk & Singh, 2020; Ali, Ramnani, & Desai, 2022; Cash & Fleming, 2002). Swami & Furnham (2008) found that neuroticism, in particular, significantly affected body image concerns, which in turn impacted self-esteem. This highlights the importance of considering personality differences when exploring the relationship between body image and self-esteem. Harter (1993) looked at self-esteem fluctuations during different developmental stages. She discovered that self-esteem varies considerably during adolescence due to significant social and developmental changes. However, self-esteem tends to stabilize in adulthood as individuals develop a more consistent self-concept and better coping mechanisms. Further, Crocker & Wolfe (2001) found that cultural norms and values significantly shape self-esteem, suggesting that the relationship between body image and self-esteem can differ across cultural settings. It emphasizes the importance of considering cultural factors in studies of self-esteem and body image. Understanding these constructs and their interplay is crucial for mental health and well-being, as negative body image can lead to mental health issues like depression, anxiety, and eating disorders (Grabe, Ward, & Hyde, 2008). Body image and self-esteem are critical components of mental health and overall well-being, particularly among adolescents and young adults. With the increasing societal emphasis on physical appearance and the proliferation of media portrayals of idealized bodies, concerns about body image have become more prevalent. Given the pervasive influence of media and societal standards, this study aims to provide insights into how body image and self-esteem affect individuals differently and contribute to a range of psychological issues, including low self-esteem and well-being.

Objectives:

1. To study the self-body image among selected population.
2. To assess the level of self-esteem in the selected population.
3. To analyze the relationship between self body image and self esteem in the selected population.

Methodology:

Participants:

A sample of 100 participants, aged 18-40 years, was included in this study. The sample was drawn from Uttarakhand and Delhi, NCR, aiming to include a variety of socio-economic backgrounds and cultural contexts within these regions. To select participants, purposive sampling was employed, a method that involves selecting individuals who meet certain criteria relevant to the research. This approach was used to ensure a diverse range of participants within the specified age group.

Inclusion Criteria-

1. Participants aged 18-40 years.
2. Residents of Uttarakhand or Delhi, NCR.
3. Willing to participate in an online survey.
4. Proficient in reading and understanding English, as the questionnaires were provided in English.

Exclusion Criteria-

1. Individuals younger than 18 or older than 40.
2. Non-residents of Uttarakhand or Delhi, NCR.
3. Those unable to understand or complete the survey in English.
4. Participants who did not give informed consent.

Data Collection:

Online data collection was done. Google Forms was used to administer the questions because it is an easily navigable and accessible platform for participants. Emails and messaging applications were used to extend invitations to participate in the study, along with brief explanations of its goals and instructions for filling out the forms.

Tools Used

To gather data, two well-established questionnaires were utilized:

1. Body Self Image Questionnaire - Short Form (BSIQ-SF): Dr. Thomas Cash produced this questionnaire; the short form was later modified for brevity after the original version was created in 2000. 34 items total on a Likert scale from 1 (never) to 5 (always) make up this quiz. It gauges several aspects of body image, such as concerns about body weight, appearance orientation, judgment of one's look, and contentment with one's physical areas. Higher scores correspond to a more favorable body image. Each subscale's total score is calculated by adding the individual's values. Good internal consistency has been shown by the BSIQ-SF, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients for its subscales generally above 0.80. Furthermore, connections with other well-established measures of body image and associated dimensions have demonstrated its good construct validity.

2. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES): Dr. Morris Rosenberg created this scale in 1965. It has ten items with Likert ratings ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). This scale evaluates both positive and negative sentiments about oneself in order to determine overall self-esteem. Better total scores, which range from 10 to 40, are indicative of better levels of self-esteem. The scores for each item are added together. Reverse scoring is used for items 2, 5, 6, 8, and 9 in order to account for response biases. Typically, the RSES has a Cronbach's alpha between 0.77 and 0.88, indicating its good dependability. Numerous studies have validated the scale, which is frequently used in social and psychological research. It has proven to have excellent contemporaneous and predictive validity, and it correlates strongly with other measures of psychological health and self-esteem.

Result and Interpretation

The data in the present study have been analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, along with the Pearson correlation coefficient to examine the relationships between variables.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Self Body Image and Self Esteem

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Self-Body Image	75.82	12.52
Self Esteem	24.47	1.96

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for Self-body Image and Self-esteem. The mean score for Self-body image is 75.82 with a standard deviation of 12.53, indicating that, on average, participants have moderately positive perceptions of their body image. Similarly, the mean score for self-esteem is 24.47 with a standard deviation of 1.96. This indicates that participants generally exhibit a moderate level of self-esteem. These findings align with previous studies. Research by McKinley & Hyde (1996) emphasized that body image plays a crucial role in the overall development of self-worth, particularly during adolescence and early adulthood.

Table 2: Correlation between Self Body Image and Self Esteem

Variables	Self Esteem
Self-Body Image	-.145

Table 2 presents the results of the correlation analysis, which was conducted to examine the relationship between self-body image and self-esteem. Despite the moderately positive mean scores for both self-body image and self-esteem, the

correlation analysis revealed a weak and non-significant negative correlation between self-body image and self-esteem ($r = -0.145, p = 0.149$). This suggests that, within this sample, there is no meaningful relationship between an individual's body image and their self-esteem. In other words, changes in how participants perceive their body image do not appear to be associated with corresponding changes in their self-esteem. These findings contrast with much of the existing literature, which often identifies a significant relationship between body image and self-esteem. For example, studies by Mendelson, Mendelson, and White (2001) suggest that negative body image is typically associated with lower self-esteem, particularly in adolescent populations. Similarly, a meta-analysis conducted by Grabe, Hyde, and Lindberg (2007) found a consistent correlation between body dissatisfaction and reduced self-esteem across different age groups and cultures. However, the lack of a significant correlation in this study may be due to the specific cultural context, individual differences, or sample characteristics. It is possible that factors such as resilience, social support, or differing cultural ideals of beauty may buffer the relationship between body image and self-esteem in this sample. Previous research by Markus and Kitayama (1991) has highlighted that in collectivist cultures, external factors such as familial and social relationships may have a stronger influence on self-esteem than individual factors like body image. These findings suggest that additional research is needed to explore the potential moderating factors that may influence the relationship between body image and self-esteem in specific cultural contexts.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research should target specific developmental stages by narrowing the age range, allowing for a more detailed understanding of how body image and self-esteem interact at different life phases. Also including moderating variables such as personality traits, coping strategies, and social support would provide a more nuanced view of these relationships. Examining cultural contexts through comparative studies or qualitative methods can illuminate how cultural norms influence body image and self-esteem. Improved measurement tools that account for modern societal influences, like social media, should be considered. Expanding research to include diverse populations will enhance generalizability, while intervention studies can identify effective strategies for improving body image and self-esteem.

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