

Correlation of Body Consciousness and Fear of Negative Appearance With Self-Esteem in University Students

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The purpose of this study was to evaluate the correlation between body image consciousness and fear of negative social appearance with self-esteem and confidence, and try to understand the attitudes regarding body image and the factors that lead to fear of negative appearance and low self-esteem.

Study design: A cross-sectional study.

Place and Duration of Study: The study was conducted online and the link to the questionnaire was shared through several social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp. The study was conducted from Apr 2021 to Aug 2021.

Methodology: A cross-sectional study was done through an online survey that was created using google form. It used the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (McKinley & Hyde, 1996), Fear of Negative Appearance evaluation scale (Lundgren, Anderson, & Thompson, 2004), The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965).

Result: A total of 561 responses were received in which 66.2% were female and 33.1% were males. Those responses were analyzed through SPSS Version 22. The results demonstrated a direct proportionality between body image consciousness and a fear of negative social appearance while they demonstrated an inverse proportionality with self-esteem and confidence. It also showed that females have greater tendency for body surveillance, body shaming, fear, anxiety and low self-esteem related to it as compared to males. The Pearson correlation indicated a significant positive correlation between low self-esteem and family financial status.

Conclusions: Body image consciousness and its related fears are found in both male and female university students. Social appearance has psychological effects on students. The low self-esteem is related to negative body appearance. Financial status also affects self-esteem related to body image or to the fear of negative appearance. Females are more conscious about body image than males.

Keywords: Body image, self-esteem, family income, body shame, body surveillance, dissatisfaction.

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INTRODUCTION

In university, body image is very concerned. For women, being beautiful is important for society success. Prior to 1980s, body image was often viewed primarily as a female problem. Recent studies, however, have shown that men may also suffer from body image preoccupations. For example, a condition called muscle dysmorphia has been described; in which muscular men perceive themselves as thin and underdeveloped.¹ This disorder is associated with impaired self-esteem; symptoms of anxiety, mood and eating disorders. In "THE IMAGE AND APPEARANCE OF HUMAN BODY", Schilder (1950) argued that body image is not just a perceptual construct but also a reflection of attitudes and interaction with other. The picture of our own body which we form in our mind, that is to say, the way in which body appears to ourselves.²

Body image has its roots in person's confidence and self-esteem. Psychology of body image is much related to person's thoughts and behavior. Positive attitude has an excellent effect on the person grooming & confidence and body image helps in making positive attitude. Grogan (1999) described body image as "a person's perceptions, thoughts and feelings about his or her body" and as "subjective and open to change through social influence". Recent researches indicate that body image which sometimes called body disturbance can cause anxiety and lower self-esteem. Dissatisfaction with one's body has become "a normative discontent".³ in today's culture and is closely related to a drive for thinness.⁴ Body image dissatisfaction, weight concerns, eating problems, and physical attractiveness have become especially significant issues on college campuses,⁵ with up to 90%

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of college students reporting that they worry about body image

Men appear to be less obsessed with weight and becoming fat; therefore, pathogenic values related to eating and body size is lower among men.⁶ So, it is important to consider sexes while doing research.

Self-esteem is something which is necessary for success in any field.⁷ defined self-esteem as liking and respecting oneself. According to Rosenberg, Schooler, Schoenberg, and Rosenberg, domain-specific self-esteem, or elements of self-esteem related to different self-perceptions, explains behavior.⁸ Indeed, the association between body image dissatisfaction and self-esteem has been well established.⁹

Skinny appearance was not considered as attractive figure until twentieth century. In fact, Kostanski and Gullone found that being female and having low self-esteem was most predictive of body image dissatisfaction for participants with healthy body weight.¹⁰ The pressure to achieve high standards of thinness and attractiveness in a competitive college environment is related to lower self-esteem.¹¹

The word "appearance" means "the way that someone or something looks", "an impression given by someone or something", "an act of performing or participating in a public event", "an act of arriving or becoming visible".¹² Recent work in the areas of body image disturbance and eating disorders has focused on the delineation of risk factors that may lead to the onset and maintenance of these clinical problems. Social concern is an exaggerated fear of a person for being focus of attention, being evaluated negatively by another person or persons and being considered worthless. Fear of negative evaluation of people with high motivation to abstain from receiving approval or consent is high. The existence of medium and high levels of relations between the chronic social anxiety measurement and fear of negative evaluation measurement, reveals that fear of negative evaluation is an important factor in terms of social anxiety.¹³

This study examined the relationships among self-esteem, body image, and family financial status. This study contributes by (a) examining whether sex differences in body image are still pronounced given more recent evidence that men may be experiencing increasing body dissatisfaction, (b) examining students' family financial status in relationship to body image and self-esteem.

General Objectives

To evaluate the correlation between body image and negative social appearance with low self-esteem leading to anxiety related issues in university students.

Specific Objectives

- To determine whether or not students have psychological fears regarding social appearance.
- To determine how often the students are affected by negative appearance.
- To assess fears among students regarding body image and their relation with anxiety.
- To evaluate the effect of family income to the body image and self-esteem.

METHODOLOGY

Participants: Participants were approximately 561 university students from all over the Pakistan including medical as well as non-medical students. The students were from different universities and medical colleges such as AIMC, KE, NUST, AIR University, NMU, RMU, CMH Lahore AND Quetta, AMC Rawalpindi, NUML, GIKI, UVAS, UOS and other universities. Of these we have 66% female and 33.3% males. Among these 41.3% were medical students and 58.7% were non-medical students. Their age falls between 17 and 28 with a mean age of 23.

Procedure: The procedure we adopted was to circulate a questionnaire among university students. For this purpose, we choose goggle document form to collect data from students all over Pakistan and also some abroad colleagues. Students were also informed that their participation is voluntary and it is as an optional survey form and it has nothing to do with their grades. The response collection took 48 hours and almost 90% responses were complete and helpful.

Of 561 responses we considered 487 responses rest of the responses were discarded. The reason of excluding the responses were several such as some responses we got were filled by school going students, some other responses were filled by teenagers below 15 others include above 30 which were not upto our mark because people of such age group are mature enough then university students. Other responses we discarded were not filled completely. The responses we included were completely filled and fit by all aspects into the categories we set for our research.

Sampling: The total number of people from which sample was collected is approximately 600. The error in the sample estimation is less than 5%. The con-

confidence level is 95% and the confidence interval of ± 5 . The z-score is 1.96 and the sample size we calculated is approximately 228.

Instrumentations: Other than the demographic sheet we have set 3 measures to access the study constructs.

The Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (McKinley & Hyde, 1996), Fear of Negative Appearance evaluation Scale (Lundgren, Anderson, & Thompson, 2004), The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965)

The Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBC): The OBCS (McKinley and Hyde 1996) is a measure of aspects of body image "to be looked at". It is a 24-item measurement consisting three 8-item subscales; Body Surveillance refers to constant self-surveillance seeing one's body from the other person point of view (e.g., "I often worry about the whether the clothes I am wearing make me look good"). As for women it is linked to female body as object to male desires. Body Shame is actually criticizing your own appearance, through a judgment or comparison to another person (e.g., "I feel ashamed of myself when I haven't made the effort to look my best"), and Body Control is the assumption that people are responsible for their body posture and can control their weight and appearance with exercise (e.g., "I think a person can look pretty much how they want to if they are willing to work at it"). Each item is rated on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Higher total scores indicate higher level of body surveillance, body shame and body control Per the OBCS scoring instructions, if more than two responses for a subscale are missing, and the subscale is counted as missing. (McKinley n.d.)

McKinley and Hyde (1996) reported Cronbach's alpha internal consistencies

ranging from .76 to .89 for body surveillance, .68 to .76 for body control, and .70 to .84 for body shame and 2-week test-retest reliabilities of 0.79 for body surveillance, .73 for body control, and 0.79 for body shame.

Significant negative correlations were found between the Body Esteem Scales (Franzoi & Shields, 1984) and both body surveillance ($r=-.39$) and body shame ($r=-.51$). When correlated with the Self-Consciousness Scales,

Body surveillance correlated strongly with public self-consciousness ($r=.73$). For this study, the Cronbach's alphas were .77 for body surveillance, .82 for body shame, and .66 for body control.

Fear of Negative Appearance Evaluation Scale: The Fear of Negative Appearance Evaluation Scale (FNAES; Lundgren, Anderson, & Thompson, 2004) predicted that this fear raises body image concerns. In a sample of college females with social anxiety symptoms, fear of negative appearance evaluation significantly and independently accounted for relationship between social anxiety symptoms and eating pathology. It is a short 6 item questionnaire that measures body image, eating attitude and depression. The items are answered on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 'not at all' to 'extremely'. A sample item is, "I am concerned about what other people think of my appearance". The higher score indicates more fear of negative appearance evaluation by others.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale 1965; the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is a widely used self-report instrument for evaluating individual self-esteem, was investigated by using response form via questionnaire. A unidimensional model for graded item was fit the data that constrained 10 items to equal discrimination was contrasted with a model to allow clear discrimination. A 10 items scale that measures global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about self. All items are answered using a 4-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. A sample item is: "I take a positive attitude toward myself." Five items that are negatively worded were recorded so that higher scores reflected more positive self-esteem. Rosenberg (1979) reported test-retest reliabilities ranging from .80 to .85. Convergent validity has been established with high correlation with the Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory and with peer ratings of self-esteem (Demo, 1985). For this study's sample, the Cronbach's alpha was .79.

Parental Factors: Parental factors such as parental nurturance, family financial state and socio-economic state effects a person's personality and self-satisfaction. Researchers have shown that when parents are emotionally warm, affectionate and available and balance these qualities with high expectations and a firm but fair disciplinary style, they create an emotional context in which children and adolescents tend to be more secure, well-adjusted, healthier, and safer than peers raised in other settings (Baumrind 1991).

Specially, parental nurturance is important through out the developmental process and appears to be an especially significant factor in the positive development process and appears to be an especially significant factor in the positive development of young adolescents (Maccoby 2007; Windle *et al.*2010).

Researchers have found positive associations between young adolescents who are satisfied with their bodies and parents who are nurturing and supportive (Crespo *et al.*2010), whereas young adolescents dissatisfied with their bodies are associated with parents who are less nurturing and warm (Bearmen *et al.* 2006).

Family income affects all these factors a lot because a healthy financial support makes the parents less stressful and gives them mental comfort which brings up a peaceful environment. For this a 4 items scale was used ranging from under25, 000, 25,000 to 50,000, 50,000 to 1 Lac and more than 1 Lac. The correlation showing up an analysis that higher family income and financial support gives a positive impact on the person's personality and also the higher self-confidence.

For data analysis, we used the software Statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) version 22. SPSS is the set of software programs that are combined together in a single package. The basic application of this program is to analyze scientific data related with social sciences. It has plenty of significance such as it helps researches to easily understand the demand for a product I the market, and can change their strategy accordingly. It has a lot of advantages such as it is used to convert the format of the data, to understand the relation between dependent & independent variables, ANOVA (Analysis of variance), MANOVA (Multivariate analysis of variance) and T-tests.

The independent variables for our study are age, family income and gender while the independent variables are body consciousness, fear of negative appearance and Rosenberg self-esteem scale. The statistical tests we applied is mean and the standard deviation and the other one is Pearson correlation which indicates a statistically significant linear relationship exists between two continuous variables. It means that there exists a probability value of less than 0.05.

RESULTS

66.2% the sample consists of females and 33.1% consists of males. Among the sample, 24.5% were FSC

or FA students, 34.7% were BA or BSC students, 14.8% were MA or MSC students and 23.9% were others. Among these 58.5% were related to medical profession. As far as the family status is concerned, 9.3% were those whose family income is 25000 RS, 27.2% with 25000 to 50,000 RS, 30.9% with 50,000 to 1 lac RS and 32.6% with more than 1 lac RS family income.

Prior to analyzing the objectives, correlations among three scales (objectified body conscious scale, fear of negative appearance and evaluation scale, Rosenberg scale of self-esteem), gender and family income were examined. Therefore, multivariate procedures were utilized to examine the objectives predicting group differences.

To examine the first objective that students have physiological fear regarding social appearance, objectified body conscious scale is correlated with fear of negative appearance and evaluation scale ($r=.34$, $p<0.01$). The correlation predicted that there is a positive relation between these two variables. The correlation is significant at the level of 0.01. Follow-up analysis of scales show that there are sex differences in four out of five measures of body image including body surveillance, body shame, body control and fear of negative appearance. See table number 1 for descriptive statics). Compared to men, women show more body surveillance, more body shame, more fear regarding their physical appearance and weight.

To examine the dissatisfaction of body image, self-esteem is compared with the body image in both men and women. For men, lower self-esteem is significantly related to high body shame ($r=-1.33$) and body control ($r=-0.003$). For women, lower self-esteem is more related to body image dissatisfaction. Body surveillance ($r=-0.22$), body shame ($r=-0.50$), body control ($r=-0.56$). as shown in Table.

To examine the second and third objectives that students are affected by having negative social appearance and suffer from anxiety, to assess this, objectified body conscious scale is correlated with Rosenberg self-esteem scale ($r=-0.051$). This correlation shows inverse relation between self-esteem and body consciousness. So, the students having negative appearance would suffer from anxiety.

To evaluate the effect of family income on the self-esteem, fear of negative appearance and body consciousness, family income is correlated with these scales.

Correlation of Body Consciousness

When family income is examined, self-esteem is positively related to the income. ($r=0.162$, $p<0.01$). The correlation is significant at 0.01 level.

Table: Mean and standard Across Men and Women

Body Image	Men		Women	
	Mean Deviation	Standard Deviation	Mean Deviation	Standard deviation
Body surveillance	34.79	7.42	35.33	6.92
Body shame	30.03	8.41	28.94	8.00
Body control	34.67	7.54	35.79	6.54
Fear of negative appearance	14.90	5.93	15.11	6.36
Self-esteem	22.19	3.65	22.18	3.03

Fear of negative appearance is negatively related with the family income. ($r=-0.10$) Body consciousness also shows negative relation with the family income. ($r=-0.031$).

Follow-up analysis of family income, there are sex differences of correlation of family income with body image. For men, family income is negatively related to body surveillance ($r=-0.023$), body shame ($r=-0.161$, $p<0.05$) and body control ($r=-0.133$). For women, family income is negatively related to only body shame ($r=-0.018$) and positively related to body surveillance ($r=0.052$) & body control ($r=0.012$)

DISCUSSION

The present study addressed the need for evaluating the factor structure of OBCS, a prominent measure of key construct in body image research and practice. It also suggests that the FNAES may offer a useful measure of construct that could potentially benefit not only risk factor work, but also preventive and early intervention studies. It also addresses the level of self-esteem and its correlation with body image, body surveillance and body control. In the last we addressed the correlation of family income i.e., financial support on all these factors.

As Thompson (1990) noted, body image dissatisfaction is a normative discontent, particularly among university women. As predicted and consistent with several studies,^{14,15} men exhibited more positive body images than did women. Sex differences in acceptable body size may be influenced by societal definitions of appropriate and negative stereotyping of obese figures.¹⁶ Tiggemann and Rothblum have suggested that the prominence given to weight and

physique as resulted in mass dissatisfaction with body shape in the female population.¹⁷

Although it has been long realized that women suffer from body image disorders but the emerging literature and researches show that men also suffer from all these disorders and at a very young age. As this is only "first generation" literature any statement can be tentative. It appears that body image dissatisfaction differs between men and women. Girls however exhibit greater prevalence of body dissatisfaction than boys and tend to choose thinner 'ideal' image for themselves. Nevertheless, men also express dissatisfaction to some extent but the ratio is increasing day by day some choose a thinner ideal image and other prefers to have a heavier one.

However, the research addresses that there was not much difference of these scales among men and women. This study shows that the women show more body surveillance than men and women show more body control than the men because of the greater discrepancy among their present and ideal figures, having greater overall body dissatisfaction. But as far as body shame is concerned our research addresses that the body shame shows greater deviation in men than women. One of the reasons is that the constant exposure to 'ideal' images through television, media, music videos, movies, and magazines seems to add to women's struggle to be perfect and their dissatisfaction with their current bodies. As society moves toward the inclusion and objectification of men in the realm of media, there may also be a realm toward more dissatisfaction and body image disturbance in men.¹⁸ In conclusion, given rapidly increasing scientific interest in body image among boys and growing attention to the subject in the popular media (Hall, 1999).

The research concludes inverse relationship between OBCS and Rosenberg's self-esteem scale that a person having greater self-esteem and confidence will show lesser body dissatisfaction and body consciousness. For women, self-esteem is more related to body image dissatisfaction. Lower self-esteem scores were mirrored by reports of watching their bodies as an onlooker (body surveillance) Problem arises when an 'ideal' figure is set in mind by this media, TV and other such resources adolescents began to idealize such figure and lower their self-esteem level. Moreover, the criticism faced by the society adds to their dissatisfaction level. The higher the level of body image dissatisfaction becomes, the greater decline occurs in

their self-confidence because of seeing one's body from others perspective. These results support Stowers and Durm's (1996) findings that physical self-worth is significantly related to overall self-esteem.⁹

For men, self-esteem is inversely related to body shame and body control but was directly related to body surveillance. Four components of body image were not related to self-esteem. The research interprets that self-esteem is not as intertwined with their body image as it was for women. The men were generally satisfied with their body shape having little discrepancy between their real and ideal bodies. The finding is similar to that of Demarest and Allen's (2000) who reported that men were generally satisfied with their body shape.¹⁹ Indeed, the negative relationship between self-esteem and body shame in this study and reported by Thompson and Altabe (1991) provides support for this change.²⁰

Fear of negative appearance evaluation scale interprets that there are students having greater fear of their negative appearance as set by the society become more anxious which decreases their self-confidence. Research shows that FNAES must have a correlation with self-esteem in which students having greater fear of negative appearance show greater dissatisfaction to their body image. At level of sexual differentiation, women show greater fear of negative appearance because of women being observed and criticized badly about their physique and their appearance creating a sense of social physique anxiety.

However, men show less fear of negative appearance as compared to women and are thus less anxious about their physique because of they not being criticized and observed as women. One of the reasons is that they don't bother about others judging their personality, noticing their personality flaws and the most important they don't give importance to others opinion about their personality thus they never feel anxious about their appearance.

Family income, parent financial support also correlates with the student's self-esteem, fear of negative appearance and body consciousness scale. As body image discrepancy is a salient and problematic issue from childhood to adulthood, understanding the socialization of body image discrepancy is necessary to inform efforts to prevent it. The general levels of social-emotional support afforded by mothers and father adolescents. For men, father nurturance shows negative correlation with body image discrepancy,

suggesting that a positive financial support from fathers might serve as a buffer for boys in developing a discrepancy between their ideal and perceived actual body sizes. For women, financial income was only negatively related to the body shame probably because of the critic comments they have to listen about their body size such as thin and slender for women having low financial support and being realized that their poverty has led to their body shape being so thin. However, it was positively related to body surveillance and body control because of the financial stability and socio-economic status of their families.

Secondly, family income was also positively related to self-esteem. Similar to previous research, mothers and fathers who are nurturing and warm can affect their children level of self-confidence and self-esteem.²¹ A warm financial support from parents helps students to focus on themselves giving them the opportunity to be known and creating a sense of self-worth. These result supports Anna pearce & Steven Hope (2016) findings that adults who have poor family status show lower self-esteem and life satisfaction.²²

Thirdly, family income was negatively related with the fear of negative appearance that is the students having full financial support are not worried about their appearance either they don't bother about their appearance or people don't criticize about their appearance because of their family socio-economic status. On the other hand, financially unstable and students having poor background are already masked by the inferiority-complex and people critic statements make them more confused and anxious about their appearance.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

This study offers some limitations that need to be mentioned. One of the reasons was the age difference and difference of experience among the students who filled this questionnaire, some freshly started graduation and others were those who were in the last year of graduation. The year-round temperature impacts amount and choice of clothing, which may have served as an added pressure for the women to be thin. The most important one is, this was cross-sectional survey design, and causality between fear of negative appearance, body image and self-esteem cannot be determined.

Body image dissatisfaction is undoubtedly becoming a central issue for young men besides women. College personnel working with this population need to consider that, despite the fact that body image dissatisfaction will not likely be the reason a student seeks out counseling, it may be impacting their presenting problem and overall self-concept

or self-esteem.²³ Also, it would be important to determine via, prospective work whether fear of negative appearance evaluation proceeds or follows onset of disturbed body image and whether there are unique interpersonal experiences associated with fear of negative appearance evaluation.

Future work is needed in this regard is the prime need in the creation of helpful student interventions for body image disturbance. Programs should be arranged that focus on higher self-esteem, self-confidence and positive body image. Specifically, Body Surveillance measures habitual body monitoring with a focus on how the body looks rather than how it feels or functions, and Body Shame measures feeling ashamed about falling short of internalized cultural beauty and weight standards. These measures can be used to track change in body surveillance and body shame as a result of prevention or intervention efforts or over the course of therapy. These measures can also be used to promote clients' self-awareness about body surveillance and body shame and to facilitate exploration of these experiences in therapy. These programs must include positive media role spreading messages about healthy body acceptance, education to increase students' awareness of the negative and often subtle influence of the thin ideal by campus-based programs, and peer support programs that encourage students to focus foremost on making healthy choices and give them a confidence and a feeling of self-satisfaction.

CONCLUSIONS

Body image consciousness and its related fears are found in both male and female university students. Social appearance has psychological effects on students. The low self-esteem is related to negative body appearance. Financial status also affects self-esteem related to body image or to the fear of negative appearance. Females are more conscious about body image than males.

Conflict of Interest: None.

Author's Contribution

Following authors have made substantial contributions to the manuscript as under:

NS: Introduction, Result formulation, Analysis & final approval of the version to be published.

AS: Methodology, Discussion, conclusion & final approval of the version to be published.

MQ: Data collection, Analysis data & final approval of the version to be published.

MU: Data collection and selected topic & final approval of the version to be published.

AH: Data collection and selected topic & final approval of the version to be published.

KQ:, AAN: Supervision, Data collection & final approval of the version to be published.

Authors agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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