

## Body Image with Reference to Self-Consciousness and Fear on Negative Evaluation in Adolescence

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### ABSTRACT

Pre-adolescence and adolescence is characterised as the onset of puberty. Puberty includes physical bodily changes in boys and girls- height, skin, weight, hair growth, voice, glands and reproductive organs. This is a very challenging and confusing time for teenagers to understand and cope up with changes they face. It includes biological, psychological, social and emotional ups and downs. Development and structure of various factors in individual lead to negative body image, self-consciousness and fear of negative evaluation along with mental health problems and physiological dysfunctions. The prevalence of body image concern or dissatisfaction was 60.4%, for females it was 65% and for males it was 54.5%. Aline to this view the study explored the relationship of body image with reference to self-consciousness and fear of negative evaluation in adolescence. It also examined the gender differences for the same on sample of 220 participants, 110 boys and 110 girls respectively. The results indicated positive relationship of body image with self-consciousness and fear of negative evaluation among adolescents. There was a significant gender difference in fear of negative evaluation. Findings also implied that there was no significant gender difference in self-consciousness. The present research will help in understanding level of body image issues, fear of evaluation, and social anxiety in an individual. To fully understand the factors leading to level of disturbances teenagers face, we can be carry forward the study. It will help in making better treatment and intervention plans which will help in building confidence and reduce self-hatred feeling faced by teenagers at the time of maturation.

**Keywords:** *Body Image, Self-Consciousness, Negative Evaluation, Adolescence*

Pre-adolescence and adolescence is characterised as the onset of puberty. Puberty includes physical bodily changes in boys and girls- height, skin, weight, hair growth, voice, glands and reproductive organs. This is a very challenging and confusing time for teenagers to understand and cope up with changes they face. It includes biological, psychological, social and emotional ups and downs. Erik Erikson, one of the famous psychologist discussed this stage of life as “identity vs. role confusion”. At this stage, adolescents start forming views about themselves and socio-cultural ideals. As a teenager they try to form unique identity and at the same time find a place to fit in the society.

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The transition between childhood and adulthood is often described as a time of stress and turbulence for children. It is to be noted that although every adolescent goes through these changes, the interpretation and impact of these changes are very much dependent on the context in which adolescents develop i.e. the nature and nurture (Steinberg, 2011). Phases of development are seen in different areas- physical, cognitive, social and emotional domain.

Adolescents are depicted stereotypically as frustrated souls, subject to hormonal storms, who rebel against and fight with their parents, engages in dangerous risk-taking behaviour, and fall in and out of love. The above stages are universal- found in all primates and cultures in development of adolescence. Researchers have divided this stage of life into three phases-

- Early Adolescence (from 11 or 12 to 14 years, rapid pubertal changes).
- Middle Adolescence (from 14 to 16 years, pubertal changes are almost complete).
- Late Adolescence (from 16 to 20 years, person achieves full adult appearance and faces more complete assumption of adult roles).

### ***Body Image***

Many researchers show that an individual's body image, physical appearance, health, illness, self-esteem etc are vital to the integration of his or his overall identity or self-worth. The way teenagers feel about their body is connected to the way they feel about themselves. It has a major impact on the psychological functioning of an individual. If they have a positive body image, they are likely to be well-adjusted and maintain good relationships, whereas if an individual has negative approach towards his or her body then they are more prone to feel inferior and show symptoms of depression, anxiety, eating disorders, substance use and so on.

Body image is what an individual think and feel about his/her physical self or body. It includes how a person pictures himself/herself in the mind or in the mirror. The body image can be positive or negative. According to Jillian Croll, Body Image is a dynamic perception of one's body- how it looks, feels and moves. It is shaped by emotions, perception, physical sensations and is not static, but can change in relation to mood, physical experience and environment. The prevalence of body image concern or dissatisfaction was 60.4%, for females it was 65% and for males it was 54.5% (Petroski, E.L. & Pelegrini, A. (2012).

### ***Self-Consciousness***

One of the major factors contributing to negative body image is self-consciousness. Self-consciousness is different from self-awareness, self-concept, self-image and self-perception. It is known as the preoccupation with oneself, which is the awareness that one exists as a human-being. Self-awareness and self-consciousness are used interchangeably. An unpleasant feeling of self-consciousness is experienced when an individual feels he/she is being watched or observed by others, the feeling "everyone is looking at them". Some people are habitually self-conscious than others.

Excessively conscious about one's appearance or manner can be a problem for an individual. It is often associated with embarrassment and shyness due to what an individual feel about his/her body and due to what he/she perceive they actually looks like which leads to lack of pride and low self-esteem whereas positive self-consciousness affects the development of identity.

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### ***Fear of Negative Evaluation***

Fear of negative evaluation (FNE) is defined as “apprehension about others” evaluation. Distress over their negative evaluation and expectations that others would evaluate him/her negatively (Watson & Friend, 1969).

Fear of negative evaluation is linked to certain personality traits or dimensions like anxiousness, submissive and social avoidance. People who have high level of fear of negative evaluation are concerned with seeking social approval or avoiding disapproval by others and also avoid situation where he/she feel they will be evaluated.

People with high FNE often have thoughts like, how and why they are being judged or perceived in a negative manner. Fear of negative evaluation is mostly linked to social anxiety which directly affects their choices, behaviour and real self. Development and structure of various factors in individual lead to negative body image, self-consciousness and fear of negative evaluation along with mental health problems.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Many empirical studies have been conducted on various factors leading to body image problems, causes and consequences. The study on the psychology of body image done with correlational method focused on individual psychological factors, family and parental problems, socio-economic status, media related issues, body weight, and genetic factors as some of the most important factors as the antecedents of the dynamism of the body image perception (Tiwari, G.K. & Dubey, S.K., 2015).

Bailey & Gammage, (2017) explored to understand the conceptual gaps in body image and found that general population has the stereotypical views about body image of an individual, self-perception of positive or negative body image and disturbances in psychological functioning like lower self-esteem and social anxiety with limited knowledge about body image concerns. Multiple mediator fashions recognized frame image discrepancy and look evaluation as mediating the affiliation between character (neuroticism, extraversion, and conscientiousness) and intellectual health. Story, French, Et.al. (1995) addressed the ethnic and socio-economic dieting behaviour differences and perception of body image in adolescents which showed that people with higher socio-economic status were more satisfied with their dietary behaviour and body image of those from lower socio-economic background.

Looking at the growing and fascinating work in this area Cash, (2004) explored the historical background which was evolving in intriguing directions, to recognize the “body image” or “body schema” with help of clinical attempts in understanding psychopathological problems like phantom limb or brain damage, focused and considered the present view of an individual towards body image which showed more awareness and investigations related to eating disorders and psychological dysfunction and lastly attempting to recognize future perspective for “body image” and disturbed intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships, physiological and psychological trouble, assessments to assess the level of dissatisfaction towards body appearance and orientation. Body image disturbances, appearance concerns and orientation towards your own body are one the major factors leading to various disorder like depression, anxiety, eating disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder etc. and psychological dysfunction. A study was conducted by Stice, E., Hayward, C., et.al (2000) which indicated that eating disturbances and body image predicts onset of depression in female adolescents and results showed presence of dietary restraints, depressive symptoms and bulimic symptoms were

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present in female adolescents because of body dissatisfaction. Research findings suggest that thin-ideal internalization is a common risk factor for body-image and eating disturbances including dieting and negative affect (Thompson, J.K., & Stice, E., 2001). Research investigated illusory self-location and associated phenomenological aspects in a lying body position that facilitates clinically observed abnormal self-location. The result indicated that the self is located, where touch is seen. This led to either lowering or elevation of self-localization, and out-of-body experiences (Lenggenhager, B., Mouthon, M., et.al. 2008).

A study was examined by Jameca, W. F. & Neville, H.A. (2000) on self-consciousness, skin colour satisfaction and body mass of African American women studying in college. Results suggested that the poor satisfaction with body mass and skin colour was associated with more negative, internal outlooks of one's body image whereas greater satisfaction resulted in positive viewpoint towards own body image. Researchers have analysed that there is a significant negative correlation between body-image and self-consciousness and likewise between body image and social anxiety. Private and public self was similar for both male and female (Theron, W.H., Nel, E.M., et.al., 1991).

Similar researches related to self-consciousness during physical intimacy in women have also been conducted on males and positive correlation was seen in sexual activity and anxiety to be more muscular and strong, whereas negative correlation was seen for physical attractiveness and self-esteem (McDonagh, L.K., Morrison, T.G., et.al., 2009). Dixit, S., Agarwal, G.G., et.al. (2011) explored self-consciousness in adolescent girls in relation to body image and found that higher percentage of girls had a drive and inspiration to be thin who actual had a thin body structure. Girls were conscious about the way they look and were not satisfied with their body-image and were mostly from urban domicile.

Psychological distress, negative or poor body-image leads to fear of negative evaluation in an individual. Natasa, R. & Glavak, R. (2003) looked at the association between Fear of Negative Evaluation and Self-Concept with Social Perception among Adolescents. The aim of the study was to assess the factors of self-concept and social perception to predict the causes of fear of negative evaluation. L.D., Drew, A.A., & Joel, T.K. (2004) conducted a study on fear of negative appearance evaluation as a risk factor of eating disorders. Analysis explained the significant relation among physique social anxiety, body weight, eating habits and fear of negative evaluation leading to negative body-image and eating disorders, body shape dysphoria, dietary restraint, and trait anxiety.

A cross-sectional study presented positive association among body image dissatisfaction, fear of negative evaluation and social anxiety. The study tried to build a bridge by exploring the role of negative evaluation in social anxiety and body image (Pawijit, Y, Likhitsuwan, W et.al., 2017). Worry with genuine or envisioned imperfection in physical appearance can turn into a noteworthy distraction in adolescents and young adults. High fear of negative evaluation leads to significant increase in anxiety and stress level of an individual and significant decrease in performance level (Mesango, C., Harvey, J.T., et.al 2012). Chen, V. & Drummond, P.D. (2007) studied effect of negative evaluation on somatic symptoms and negative affect in social situations. Results indicated presence of physiological symptoms like blushing, trembling, sweating, high palpitation with high fear of negative evaluation in participants through recording the skin conductance, heart rate while singing song.

## METHODOLOGY

The aim of the study is to study body image with reference to self-consciousness and fear of negative evaluation in adolescents.

### Objectives

1. To study body image with reference to self-consciousness in adolescents.
2. To study body image with reference to fear of negative evaluation in adolescents.
3. To identify the gender difference in fear of negative evaluation and self-consciousness.

### Hypotheses

- H<sub>1</sub>: There will be a significant relationship between body image and self-consciousness.  
 H<sub>2</sub>: There will be a significant relationship between body image and fear of negative evaluation.  
 H<sub>3</sub>: There will be a significant gender difference in fear of negative evaluation.  
 H<sub>4</sub>: There will be a significant gender difference in self-consciousness.

### Sample

The total no. of participants was 220, both boys (110) and girls (110) from the age group of 16-20 years (late adolescence). The data was collected from different school/s and college/s of Delhi NCR from Indian population.

### Description of the tools employed

S.no	Name of the tool	Author & Year	Reliability	Validity
1.	The Multidimensional Body-Self Relation Questionnaire	Thomas F. Cash, 2000	*	-
2.	Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale- Revised	Carleton & Asmundson, 2007	.73**	-
3.	Self-Consciousness Scale- Revised	Scheier, 1985	.70 .84 .79	.69

\*test retest reliability, different reliability values for each of 7 subscales

\*\*internal consistency

**The Multidimensional Body-Self Relation Questionnaire** is given by Thomas F. Cash in 2000. It is self-report inventory consisting of 69 items, it aims to measure self-attitudinal aspects of body image. Self-attitudinal aspects include cognitive, behavioural and evaluative components. MBSRQ has two dispositional dimensions- evaluation and orientation, each of these with somatic domains of appearance, fitness and health/illness. It includes 7 subscales:

1. Appearance evaluation
2. Appearance orientation
3. Fitness evaluation
4. Fitness orientation
5. Health evaluation
6. Health orientation
7. Illness orientation

**Fear of negative evaluation scale- Revised** is given by Carleton & Asmundson in 2007. BFNV-R is a revised version of brief fear of negative evaluation scale (1983). It is a 12 item self-report measure. BFNV-R shows excellent internal consistency and highly correlates with BFNV.

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**Self-Consciousness scale-Revised** was given by Scheier in 1985. It is self-report measure consisting of 22 items. SCS-R has three dimensions:

1. Private self-consciousness
2. Public self-consciousness
3. Social anxiety

This scale is applicable for general population and can be used with adolescents and adults.

### *Procedure of data collection*

Permission was obtained from the head of the institution of school/s and college/s before distributing the questionnaire. Before distributing the questionnaire, rapport was formed with the participants to make them feel less anxious and proper instructions were introduced. The participants were encouraged to fill the questionnaire with honesty and there is no right and wrong answer, also it was informed that it will remain strictly confidential and participating the study is not mandatory. Participants were not told about the purpose of the study before the administration. After the test was complete, they were told about the purpose and also a small workshop was conducted to make them aware about body image and psychological functioning.

## ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

**Table 1: Mean and Std. Deviation of the sample on Body Image and Self-Consciousness**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
MBSRQ	128.43	50.684	220
SCS-R	37.66	11.681	220

It shows mean of both boys (110) and girls (110) of the two dimensions, i.e. body image and self-consciousness. It also shows the standard deviation for the same.

**Table 2: Showing correlation of Body Image and Self-consciousness**

Variable	R	Sig.	N
Body Image	.404**	.000	2 20
Self-Consciousness			

\*\*correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table shows correlation of body image and self-consciousness in boys and girls both. Pearson's correlation table showed that it has *significant correlation* at 0.01 level.

**Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of the sample on Body image and fear of negative evaluation.**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
MBSRQ	218.43	50.684	220
FNV-R	34.28	9.577	220

It shows mean of both boys (110) and girls (110) of the two dimensions, i.e. body image and fear of negative evaluation.

It also shows the standard deviation for the same.

**Table 4: Showing correlation of body image and fear of negative evaluation**

Variable	R	Sig.	N
Body Image	.300**	.000	220
Fear of Negative evaluation			

\*\*correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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Table shows correlation of body image and fear of negative evaluation in boys and girls both. Pearson's correlation table showed that it has *significant correlation* at 0.01 level.

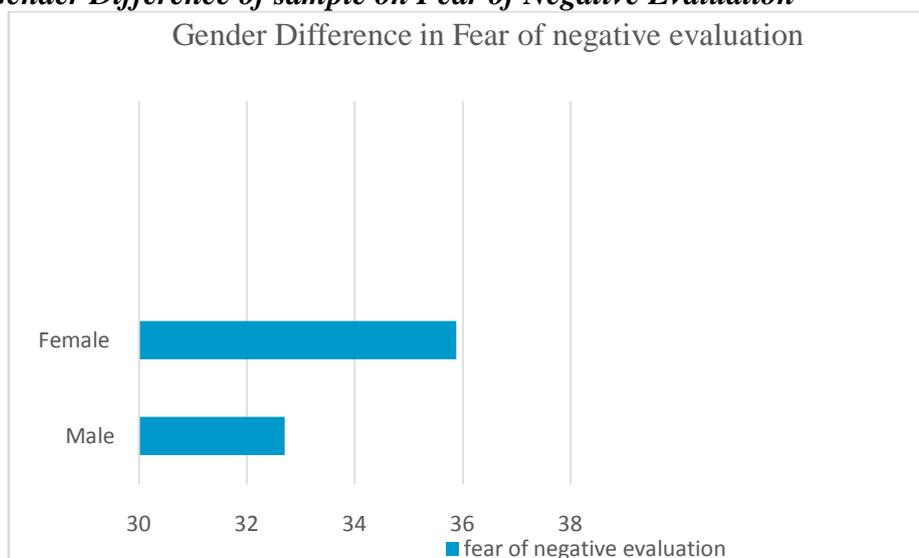
**Table 5: Mean and t value of the sample on Fear of Negative Evaluation**

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	Sig.
FNV-R	Male	110	32.69	9.757	.930	-2.496	.013*
	Female	110	35.87	9.162	.874		

\*significant difference at 0.05 level.

It shows mean of both boys (110) and girls (110) on the dimensions, i.e. fear of negative evaluation. It also shows the standard deviation and std. error mean for the same. The t value is -2.496 and significance is .013 which means *that it has a significant difference* at 0.05 level.

**Table 6: Gender Difference of sample on Fear of Negative Evaluation**



The graph shows gender difference on the dimension, fear of negative evaluation.

Mean of fear of negative evaluation in boys is 32.69 and for girls the mean is 35.87 which indicates that girls have higher fear of negative evaluation than boys.

**Table 7: Mean and t value of the sample on self-consciousness**

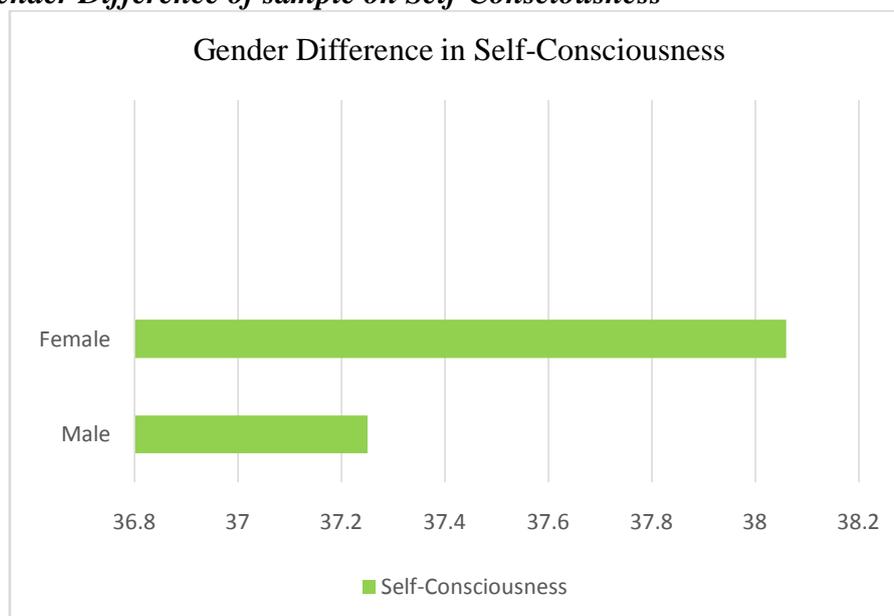
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	Sig.
SCS-R	Male	110	37.25	11.969	1.141	-.513	.609
	Female	110	38.06	11.427	1.090		

It shows mean of both boys (110) and girls (110) on the dimension, self-consciousness. It also shows the standard deviation and std. error mean for the same.

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The t value is  $-.513$  and significance is  $.609$  which means that there is *no significant gender difference in self-consciousness* at 0.05 and 0.01 level.

**Table 8: Gender Difference of sample on Self-Consciousness**



The graph shows gender difference on the dimension, self-consciousness.

Mean of self-consciousness in boys is  $37.25$  and for girls the mean is  $38.06$  which indicates that there is a very little difference between boys and girls.

## DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study was to focus on body image with reference to self-consciousness and fear of negative evaluation in adolescents. Many researchers show that an individual's body image, physical appearance, health, illness, self-esteem etc are vital to the integration of his or his overall identity or self-worth. The way teenagers feel about their body is connected to the way they feel about themselves. It has a major impact on the psychological and physiological functioning of an individual. Our negative evaluation and orientation towards our body image can lead to mental health problems, psychopathological issues like depression, anxiety, eating disorders, body dysmorphic disorders; it can lead to poor understanding of self, emotional instability and problems in moral and cognitive development of an individual.

The objective of the study was to see the relationship between body image and psychological aspects like fear of negative evaluation and self-consciousness. Also, to see the gender differences in these aspects.

Hypotheses 1 of the present study was accepted as there is a significant correlation of body image and self-consciousness among adolescents (refer to table 1 and 2) Adolescents thought process leads to an individual likely to experience highly dynamic perceptions of body image. Body image is strongly influenced by self-esteem, self-evaluation, self-consciousness and self-concept more than the external evaluation by others. The stereotypical attitude of slim and lean female images and strong and muscular male images is common to all western societies which has led to body image concerns to become widespread among adolescents.

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Dixit, S., Agarwal, G.G., et.al. (2011) explored self-consciousness in adolescent girls in relation to body image and found that higher percentage of girls had a drive and inspiration to be thin who actual had a thin body structure. Girls were conscious about the way they look and were not satisfied with their body-image and were mostly from urban domicile. Jameca, W. F. & Neville, H.A. (2000) conducted a study on self-consciousness, skin colour satisfaction and body mass of African American women studying in college. Results suggested that the poor satisfaction with body mass and skin colour was associated with more negative, internal outlooks of one's body image whereas greater satisfaction resulted in positive viewpoint towards own body image. Public and private self-consciousness were examined in early adolescents with internalising difficulties by Bowker, J.C. & Rubin, K.H., (2009). Results designated stronger relationship between public self-consciousness and internalising difficulties whereas private self-consciousness may be a stronger risk factor in early adolescents.

Hypotheses 2 of the study was accepted as there is a Significant correlation of body image and fear of negative evaluation (refer to table 3 and 4). People with high degrees of Fear of Negative Evaluation are overly concerned with how and why they are being judged or perceived by other people. People with social anxiety tend to have more negative attitude of their own self affect and bodily symptoms and appearance than those without social anxiety (Edelmann & Baker, 2002). Many empirical studies show that people with high public self-consciousness and social anxiety interestingly show bodily symptoms and negative thought pattern during and after social situation or event which leads to FNE.

Chen, V. & Drummond, P.D. (2007) studied effect of negative evaluation on somatic symptoms and negative affect in social situations. Results indicated presence of physiological symptoms like blushing, trembling, sweating, high palpitation with high fear of negative evaluation in participants through recording the skin conductance, heart rate while singing song.

Hypotheses 3 was accepted as there is a significant gender difference in fear of negative evaluation (refer to table 5 and 6). The way how an individual perceive things is very different for both males and females. The way of accepting criticisms, opinions, suggestions etc. is different for both. Hartman, 2010 conducted a study which showed that girls had high level of fear of negative evaluation compared to boys during the time of athletic performance. The results showed that they are more conscious of how they will look and others will judge them because of which they skip performance which require high level of competencies.

A study was conducted by Ridgers, N.D. (2007) on fear of negative evaluation during physical education. The results show that girls had high fear of negative evaluation compared to boys. Children having high fear of negative evaluation engaged in variety of behaviour to avoid evaluation. Paula Vagos (2014) studied fear of negative evaluation in adolescents and results showed positive relationship with social anxiety and avoidance. Gender differences were also found.

Hypotheses 4 was rejected as there is no significant gender difference in self-consciousness (refer to table 7 and 8). Self-consciousness can be private or public self-consciousness or social anxiety. One major factor contributing to negative body image is self-consciousness. Self-consciousness is different from self-awareness, self-image, self-perception and self-concept.

## **Body Image with Reference to Self-Consciousness and Fear on Negative Evaluation in Adolescence**

Researches related to self-consciousness during physical intimacy in women and men have also been conducted and positive correlation was seen in sexual activity and anxiety to be more muscular and strong and fair and pretty looking, whereas negative correlation was seen for physical attractiveness and self-esteem (McDonagh, L.K., Morrison, T.G., et.al., 2009). Researchers have analysed that there is a significant negative correlation between body-image and self-consciousness and likewise between body image and social anxiety. Private and public self was similar for both male and female (Theron, W.H., Nel, E.M., et.al., 1991).

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

The aim of the present study was to study body image with reference to self-consciousness and fear of negative evaluation. Hypotheses for this study were accepted and results showed a significant correlation of body image with self-consciousness and fear of negative evaluation. A significant gender difference was seen in fear of negative evaluation and self-consciousness.

Despite the work done in the present study, there are many limitations that future researches or studies should look up at. Understanding issues faced by adolescents in body image can help in both, better treatment plan and outcome. Adolescents having negative body image should be compared with psychiatric controlled group of anxiety, body dysmorphic or eating disorders which have negative body image as a major concern.

### **FUTURE IMPLICATIONS**

1. Future researches will help in making better treatment and intervention plans to build confidence and reduce self-hatred feeling faced by teenagers at the time of maturation and youth population as whole.
2. Interventions focusing on insight can be developed rather than just changing eating habits and adding physical exercise to daily routine as the solution to the problem.
3. Fewer studies have been done on Indian population, this research will help in understanding level of body image issues, fear of evaluation, and social anxiety in an individual.
4. To fully understand the factors leading to level of disturbances teenagers face, we can carry forward the study.
5. Coping strategies can be studied in relation to results of the present study i.e. how individual with fear of negative evaluation and self-consciousness towards body image cope with environment and situations.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors carefully declare this paper to bear not conflict of interests

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