

Comparative Study

Body Image and Self-Esteem: A Comparative Study Among Men and Women

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ABSTRACT

Body image is how we see our body, our perceptions and attitudes towards our body, and how attractive we think our bodies to be. Body image is influenced by several factors. The purpose of this study is to find if there's any relation between body image, self-esteem, and anxiety, depression and stress. The study was administered on 54 females and 76 males from all over India. The samples were collected by administering a Body Image Questionnaire, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and Anxiety, Depression and Stress Scale (ADSS). It was concluded that there is a significant correlation between body image and self-esteem among the Indian population.

Keywords: *Body Image, Self-Esteem, Anxiety, Depression, Stress*

Body image is how we see our body, our perceptions and attitudes towards our body, and how attractive we think our bodies to be. Body image is influenced by our family, our peers, and mass media.

Research has documented the importance of an individual's physical attractiveness within the culture. Dissatisfaction with one's body constantly becomes manifest in a negatively malformed body image.

Body image disturbance is the disturbance in the way one experiences their body weight and/ or shape, with the overdue influence of body weight and/ or shape on tone-evaluation or patient lack of recognition of the soberness of current low body weight (DSM-5; American Psychiatric Association 2013).

Many factors like one's parents, peers, and media (social media) can influence body image. Media plays a big role in setting unrealistic standards of the "ideal body" which is a hard target to achieve (Mills, J. S., Shannon, A., & Hogue, J., 2017). We all are exposed to these media images which thus have a great influence over them. And because of that we end up comparing their bodies to that of those celebrities and strive to become like them. This in the end makes an impact on their self-esteem as well.

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Body Image and Self-Esteem: A Comparative Study Among Men and Women

As we constantly see those “perfect” bodies on social media, we tend to feel bad or unsatisfied about our bodies or some part of it. It can take a toll on our self-esteem when we get stuck on what we don’t like and are not able to change. Images on social media can set some unrealistic standards for us. It’s important to explain to them how these images are or can be manipulated to look more beautiful than it is in reality. To feel normal or to feel like they fit in, we often tend to seek validation from our peers on social media through likes on their photos.

Depression is one of the most common illnesses around the globe these days, occurring in all age groups. The majority of the people are suffering from depression, low self-esteem, and distorted body image issues. The major triggers for distortion of body image are pro-ana and pro-mia websites. Everyone has easy access to these websites, they see various skinny models flaunting their bodies over social media which makes a great impact on their self-esteem.

Beck (1976, 1973) described a negative assessment of a particular aspect as one of the cognitive symptoms of depression. Beck also suggested that depressed people tend not to feel positive about themselves (Beck, 1976). Thus, “distortion of body image” (Beck, 1973) is included as a cognitive symptom of depression in this cognitive theory of depression (Beck 1976, 1973).

Self-esteem

Self-esteem refers to how much an individual likes himself or herself. Self-esteem is one of the key factors in determining a child’s behavior. Studies have stated that one-third to one-half of adolescents struggle in early adolescence due to low self-esteem (Harter, 1990; Hirsch & DuBois, 1991). Low self-esteem in adolescence and young adulthood is a threat-factor for negative effects in important life areas (Erol & Orth, 2011). Low self-esteem causes various psychological diseases similar to depression, anxiety and education problems, difficulties in dealing with failures, losses, and other lapses. Self-esteem can be defined as a person’s evaluation of the contrast between their self-image and their ideal self (Lawrence, 2000). The study conducted by Mann, Hosman, Schaalma, & De Vries (2004) showed that self-esteem can lead to better health and that poor self-esteem is associated with a wide range of mental disorders. Ross, & Broh, (2000) reported that adolescents who feel good about themselves do better in school than do those who have low self-worth. Self-esteem stabilizes and motivates individuals to form and maintain relationships (Cast, & Burke 2002).

Today, Indians are aware of the harmful consequences of being overweight and obese. Being overweight is associated with so many diseases like hypertension, diabetes mellitus, arthritis, atherosclerosis, coronary heart disease, stroke, and impaired sexual function. Obesity is associated with high mortality and morbidity. Overweight people are teased by their colleagues and they become victims of so many unwanted situations. Thin bodies or slim figure is more accepted than obesity in India. Due to high cultural reforms, Indians are more conscious of their body weight and body image in urban areas.

In a study done by Vitelli, R. in 2013, we can see that exposure to idealized beauty images leads to an increase in body dissatisfaction, lowers self-esteem, and increases depression. Images shown in magazines, on TV, and social media of an “ideal” body regularly can cause negative feelings to surface about one’s body.

Body Image and Self-Esteem: A Comparative Study Among Men and Women

As per an article published by the Canadian Mental Health Association's BC Division in 2015, body image and self-esteem directly influence each other. Individuals don't feel good about themselves if they don't like their bodies.

Reena K. Joseph and Dr. M.C. Abraham did research in 2017 to investigate the self-esteem and coping styles among school-going adolescents in the state of Assam. A sample of 120 students was taken for this study. Results of this study showed that coping strategies of Self-distraction and Religion showed positive correlations with Self-esteem while those of Denial, Substance-use, and Self-blame showed a negative correlation with Self-esteem.

Body image dissatisfaction has a major role to play in causing anxiety and depression symptoms. According to E. Stice (2001), body dissatisfaction is proposed to lead to negative affect, which in previous theories have been focused on as being composed of depression symptoms and lower self-esteem.

METHODOLOGY

Research Problem:

The research problem is to find out what is the role of body image in building self-esteem among males and females.

Purpose of the Research:

1. To study the effect of body image on self-esteem.
2. To study the effect of body image on Anxiety, Depression and Stress.
3. To find a correlational analysis between body image, self-esteem, and anxiety, depression and stress among the Indian population.
4. To study the effect of body image among male population in relation to self-esteem.
5. To study the effect of body image among the female population in relation to self-esteem.
6. To study the effect of body image among male population in relation to anxiety, depression and stress.
7. To study the effect of body image among the female population in relation to anxiety, depression and stress.

Hypotheses

- There will be no effect of Body Image on Self-Esteem.
- There will be no effect of Body Image on Anxiety, Depression and Stress among the Indian population.
- There will be no significant difference that exists between male and female with regard to body image.
- There will be no significant difference that exists between male and female with regard to self-esteem.
- There will be no significant difference that exists between male and female with regard to anxiety, depression and stress.

Variables

- The independent variable is Body Image.
- The dependent variables are Self-Esteem, Anxiety, Depression and Stress.

Body Image and Self-Esteem: A Comparative Study Among Men and Women

Sample Size: Purposive sampling was used by administering a questionnaire. The study was administered on 130 people (76 males and 54 females) from all over India. The samples were collected by administering a Body Image Questionnaire, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and Anxiety, Depression and Stress Scale (ADSS). Data was collected online via Google forms.

Tools:

The following tools will be used in this study:

- **Demographic Information Sheet:** Demographic information sheet will be prepared to collect various information about the sample which will include: Name, Age, and Gender.
- **Body Image Questionnaire:** Body Image Questionnaire created by Bruchon-Schweitzer and Marilou, is a measure of general body satisfaction. It consists of 19 bipolar items of opposite meanings where participants need to rate the frequency of their body feelings on all the dimensions listed. The instrument demonstrates good internal consistency and test-retest reliability.
- **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale:** It is a 10-item scale that measures global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. The scale is believed to be unidimensional. All items are answered using a 4-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. It is a widely used self-report instrument for evaluating individuals' self-esteem.
- **Anxiety, Depression and Stress Scale (ADSS):** This scale was developed by Pallavi Bhatnagar and her colleagues. It was published through National Psychological Corporation, Agra, India. This test measures the anxiety, depression, and stress of an individual. Originally, a scale of 63 items was developed but out of those 63, only 48 items were retained in selection. The test comprises a 48 items questionnaire which comprises 19 items in the Anxiety Subscale, 15 items in Depression Subscale, and 14 items in the Stress Subscale.

Statistical Techniques

Descriptive and Inferential statistics will be used. The main statistical tests which were used were Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and T-Test. However, some other statistical measures were used to validate the results.

The techniques used include

1. Calculation of the Mean
2. Calculation of Median
3. Calculation of Standard Deviation
4. Pie chart

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

For this project, the Body Image Questionnaire, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and Anxiety, Depression and Stress Scale (ADSS) were administered on 76 males and 54 females all over India.

The data was calculated on the basis of the scores of the Body Image Questionnaire, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and Anxiety, Depression and Stress Scale (ADSS).

Body Image and Self-Esteem: A Comparative Study Among Men and Women

The data was translated on a MS Excel Sheet and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and T-Test were analysed. Mean and Standard deviation was calculated to substantiate the data. The data was further diagrammatically depicted through tables and charts.

Descriptive Data

For Age:

AGE

130 responses

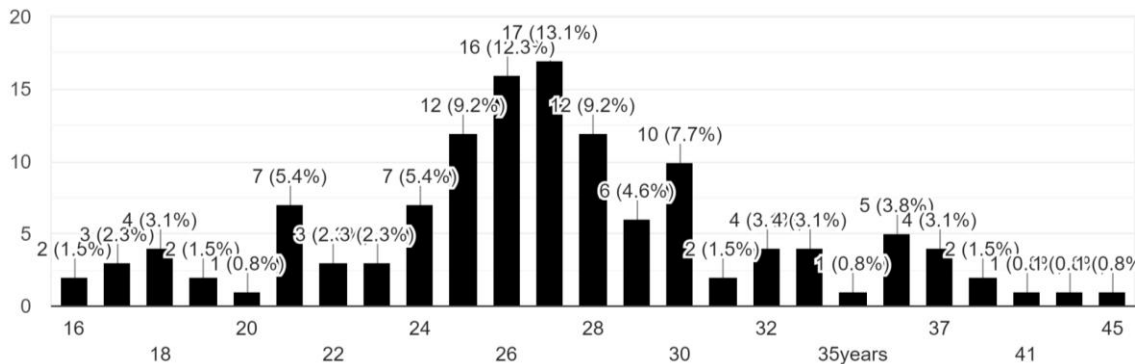


Figure 1: Bar chart depicting range of Age

For Gender:

GENDER

130 responses

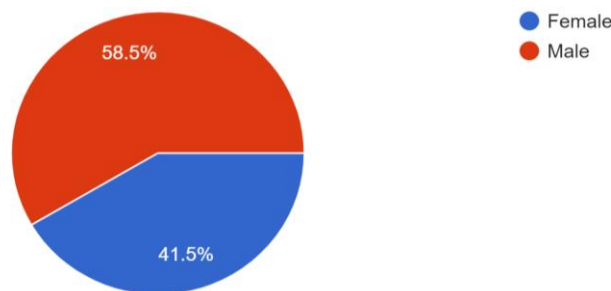


Figure 2: Pie chart depicting both Genders

Table: The following table correlation between all the variables involved in the study.

Correlations					
Variable	Body_Image_Total	RSES_Total	Anxiety_total	Depression_total	Stress_total
Body_Image_Total	1	.599	-.489	-.522	-.517
RSES_Total		1	-.469	-.582	-.507
Anxiety_total			1	.799	.807
Depression_total				1	.832
Stress_total					1

Table: Showing T-Test Analysis

Variable	t	P value
Body_Image_Total	1.7986	0.07446
RSES_Total	-0.1477	0.8828
Anxiety_total	-2.0062	0.04746
Depression_total	-2.2332	0.02751
Stress_total	-3.5172	0.0006291

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The current study was carried out to study body image among the Indian population. In this section, the results of the study will be discussed in detail with the interpretation of the researcher and with related studies which support or contradict the findings of this research work.

Relationship Between Body Image and Self Esteem

Hypothesis: There will be no effect of Body Image on Self Esteem

Table: Relationship between Body Image and Self Esteem among the Indian population

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Body Image	130	67.95	10.4
Self Esteem	130	28.72	4.72

Variable	Self Esteem
Body Image	0.599

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Mean Score of Body Image and Self Esteem are given in the above table. The data reveals that the mean of Body Image score was 67.95 and the average score of Self Esteem was 28.72.

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the Body Image and Self Esteem and the results are displayed in the above table. It can be seen that the correlation coefficient (r) between Body Image and Self Esteem equals 0.599, indicating a positive relationship, and p-value < 0.01 indicates that the correlation is statistically significant, hence, the hypothesis is rejected.

Overall, there is a positive correlation between Body Image and Self Esteem. And there is sufficient evidence at the 0.01 significance level to conclude there is a positive linear relationship between the two.

Relationship Between Body Image and Anxiety

Hypothesis: There will be no effect of Body Image on Anxiety

Table: Relationship between Body Image and Anxiety among adolescents

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Body Image	100	67.79	11.4
Anxiety	100	6.17	4.61

Variable	Anxiety
Body Image	-0.544

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Mean Scores of Body Image and Anxiety are given in the above table. The data reveals that the mean of Body Image score was 67.79 and the average score of Anxiety was 6.71.

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the Body Image and Anxiety and the results are displayed in the above table.

Body Image and Self-Esteem: A Comparative Study Among Men and Women

It can be seen that the correlation coefficient (r) between Body Image and Anxiety equals -0.544, indicating a negative relationship, and p -value < 0.01 indicates that the correlation is statistically significant, hence, the hypothesis is rejected.

Overall, there is a negative correlation between Body Image and Anxiety. And there is sufficient evidence at the 0.01 significance level to conclude there is a negative linear relationship between the two.

Relationship Between Body Image and Depression

Hypothesis: There will be no effect of Body Image on Depression

Table: Relationship between Body Image and Depression among adolescents

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Body Image	100	67.79	11.4
Depression	100	4.55	3.81

Variable	Depression
Body Image	-0.664

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Mean Scores of Body Image and Depression are given in the above table. The data reveals that the mean score for Body Image was 67.79 and the average score for Depression was 4.55.

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the Body Image and Depression and the results are displayed in the above table.

It can be seen that the correlation coefficient (r) between Body Image and Depression equals -0.664, indicating a negative relationship, and p -value < 0.01 indicates that the correlation is statistically significant, hence, the hypothesis is rejected.

Overall, there is a negative correlation between Body Image and Depression. And there is sufficient evidence at the 0.01 significance level to conclude there is a negative linear relationship between the two.

Relationship Between Body Image and Stress

Hypothesis: There will be no effect of Body Image on Stress

Table: Relationship between Body Image and Stress among adolescents

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Body Image	100	67.79	11.4
Stress	100	5.6	3.86

Variable	Stress
Body Image	-0.578

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Mean Scores of Body Image and Stress are given in the above table. The data reveals that the mean score for Body Image was 67.79 and the average score of Stress was 5.6.

Body Image and Self-Esteem: A Comparative Study Among Men and Women

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the Body Image and Stress and the results are displayed in the above table.

It can be seen that the correlation coefficient (r) between Body Image and Stress equals -0.578 , indicating a moderate negative relationship, and p -value < 0.01 indicates that the correlation is statistically significant, hence, the hypothesis is rejected.

Overall, there is a moderate negative correlation between Body Image and Stress. And there is sufficient evidence at the 0.01 significance level to conclude there is a negative linear relationship between the two.

Gender vs Body Image

Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference that exists between male and female with regard to body image.

Table: Mean Score of Male and Female population with regard to Body Image

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t
Body Image	Male	76	69.27	11.4	1.7986
	Female	54	66.09	8.78	

The Table above shows the difference between Male and Female in Body Image. The results indicate that there is a slight significant difference between Male and Female population in Body Image ($t = 1.7986$, $p > 0.05$), where in Male population reported slightly higher level of in Body Image ($M = 69.27$, $SD = 11.4$) when compared to Female population ($M = 66.09$, $SD = 8.78$).

The average of Male population is assumed to be equal to the average of Female population. In other words, the difference between the sample average of Male and Female is not big enough to be statistically significant. Hence the hypothesis stating 'There will be no significant difference exists between male and female with regard to body image' is not rejected.

Gender vs Self-Esteem

Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference that exists between male and female with regard to self-esteem.

Table: Mean Score of Male and Female population with regard to Self-Esteem

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t
Self-Esteem	Male	76	28.671	4.69	-0.1477
	Female	54	28.796	4.81	

The Table above shows the difference between Male and Female in Self-Esteem. The results indicate that there is no significant difference between Male and Female population in Self-Esteem ($t = -0.1477$, $p > 0.05$), whereas Male population reported almost the same level of Self-Esteem ($M = 28.671$, $SD = 4.69$) when compared to Female population ($M = 28.796$, $SD = 4.81$).

The average of Male population is assumed to be equal to the average of Female population. In other words, the difference between the sample average of Male and Female is not big

Body Image and Self-Esteem: A Comparative Study Among Men and Women

enough to be statistically significant. Hence the hypothesis stating ‘There will be no significant difference exists between male and female with regard to self-esteem’ is not rejected.

Gender vs Anxiety

Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference that exists between male and female with regard to anxiety.

Table: Mean Score of Male and Female population with regard to Anxiety

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t
Anxiety	Male	76	13.86	12.03	-2.0062
	Female	54	6.667	5.106	

The Table above shows the difference between Male and Female in Anxiety. The results indicate that there is a significant difference between Male and Female population in Anxiety ($t = -2.0062$, $p > 0.05$), where in Male population reported slightly higher level of Anxiety ($M = 13.86$, $SD = 12.03$) when compared to Female population ($M = 6.667$, $SD = 5.106$).

The average of the Male population is considered to be not equal to the average of the Female population. In other words, the difference between the sample average of Male and Female is big enough to be statistically significant. Hence the hypothesis stating ‘There will be no significant difference exists between male and female with regard to anxiety’ is rejected.

Gender vs Depression

Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference that exists between male and female with regard to depression.

Table: Mean Score of Male and Female population with regard to Depression

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t
Depression	Male	76	4.065	4.34	-2.2332
	Female	54	5.814	4.442	

The Table above shows the difference between Male and Female in Depression. The results indicate that there is a significant difference between Male and Female population in Depression ($t = -2.2332$, $p > 0.05$), where in Female population reported slightly higher level of Depression ($M = 5.814$, $SD = 4.442$) when compared to Male population ($M = 4.065$, $SD = 4.34$).

The average of Male population is considered to be not equal to the average of Female population. In other words, the difference between the sample average of Male and Female is big enough to be statistically significant. Hence the hypothesis stating ‘There will be no significant difference exists between male and female with regard to depression’ is rejected as there is a significant difference in Depression scores between Male and Female populations.

Gender vs Stress

Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference that exists between male and female with regard to stress.

Table: Mean Score of Male and Female population with regard to Stress

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t
Stress	Male	76	4.802	4.118	-3.5172
	Female	54	7.407	4.191	

The Table above shows the difference between Male and Female in Stress. The results indicate that there is a significant difference between Male and Female populations in Stress ($t = -3.5172, p > 0.05$), whereas Female population reported a higher level of Stress ($M = 7.407, SD = 4.191$) when compared to the Male population ($M = 4.804, SD = 4.118$).

The average Male's population is considered to be not equal to the average of Female population. In other words, the difference between the sample average of Male and Females is big enough to be statistically significant. Hence the hypothesis stating 'There will be no significant difference exists between male and female with regard to stress' is rejected as there is an extremely significant difference in Stress scores between Male and Female populations.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study was conceptualized to find the correlation between Body Image and Self Esteem among the Indian population. By finding the relationship between body image, self-esteem, anxiety, depression, and stress in the Indian population and the factors causing them.

It may be concluded that there is a significant negative correlation between body image and self-esteem among the Indian population. Body image is moderately related to self-esteem among the Indian population.

The findings of the present study paved the way to frame the following implications:

1. It is found that there is a significant correlation between body image and self-esteem in the Indian population. There is a positive correlation between the two variables. Hence when body image increases, self-esteem increases as well.
2. Results of the present study also reported a significant but inverse relationship between body image with anxiety. There is a moderate negative correlation between the two variables. Hence when body image increases, anxiety decreases.
3. Another important result of the present study also reported a significant but inverse relationship between body image with depression. There is a moderate negative correlation between the two variables. Hence when body image increases, depression decreases.
4. One of the important findings of the present study also reported a significant but inverse relationship between body image with stress. There is a moderate negative correlation between the two variables. Hence when body image increases, stress decreases.
5. We can also see a significant but inverse relationship of self-esteem with anxiety, depression, and stress which is negative. Hence there is an inverse relationship between the two.

Body Image and Self-Esteem: A Comparative Study Among Men and Women

6. We also found there is no statistically significant difference between the two genders with regard to body image. It was found that the Male population experiences almost the same levels of body image as the Female population.
7. We also found there is no statistically significant difference between the two genders with regard to self-esteem. It was found that the Male population experiences the same levels of self-esteem as the Female population.
8. We also found there is a statistically significant difference between the two genders with regard to anxiety. It was found that the Female population experiences slightly higher levels of anxiety than the Male population.
9. We also found there is a statistically significant difference between the two genders with regard to depression. It was found that the Female population experiences slightly higher levels of depression than the Male population.
10. We also found there is a statistically significant difference between the two genders with regard to stress. It was found that the Female population experiences higher levels of stress than the male population.

In conclusion, we found that the female population experiences lower levels of body image and self-esteem and higher levels of anxiety, depression, and stress when compared to the male population of India.

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Body Image and Self-Esteem: A Comparative Study Among Men and Women

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Conflict of Interest

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