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Research Paper

Relationship Between Body Image Avoidance and Psychological Well Being (18-30 Years)

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to study the relationship between body image avoidance and psychological well-being among people aged between 18- 30 years. A sample of 100 irrespective of gender was collected. The present study used correlational research design. The researcher had used Non probability purposive sampling technique. Data has been collected using The Body Image Avoidance Questionnaire (Rosen et al. 1991) and the 42-item Psychological Well Being (PWB) Scale also known Ryff's scale of Psychological well-being (Ryff et al., 2007; adapted from Ryff, 1989). Descriptive statistics, Pearson Correlation was used to study the data. The findings indicated that there was significant correlation between body image avoidance and psychological well-being among people aged between 18-30 years. The result of the study concluded that there was a weak negative correlation seen between body image avoidance and psychological well-being thereby rejecting the null hypothesis.

Keywords: Body Image Avoidance, Psychological Well-Being, Correlational Research, Non-Probability Purposive Sampling Technique, Descriptive Statistics, Pearson Correlation, Significant Correlation, Null Hypothesis

Combination of two different words Body and Image gives the term Body image. Body is our physical structure and appearance whereas Image refers to a picture; a picture of body i.e., how we picture our body, how we perceive our physical appearance is Body Image. Body image is a person's "inside view" of their body, which includes their feelings, perceptions, thoughts, and beliefs about their body, which influence how they behave towards it. There are four types of body image that can be noticed in an individual- First is, perceptual body image that is determined by how you SEE your body. This is not always a true representation of how you appear. For example, a person may believe they are overweight when, in fact, they are underweight. Second is, affective body image that is determined by how you FEEL about your body. This refers to how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with your shape, weight, and individual body parts. Third is, cognitive body image that is formed by how you THINK about your body. This can result in an obsession with body shape and weight. Fourth is, behavioural body image that includes the behaviours you engage in as a result of your body image. When a person is unhappy with

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the way he or she looks, they may isolate themselves because they are self-conscious about their appearance.

Body image is subject to a variety of distortions caused by one's parents' attitudes, other early experiences, internal elements such as emotions or moods, and other factors. There is a concept called Body dissatisfaction that can be minor, such as "too bad my nose is so big," or severe, such as "I hate everything about my body." Your mind enlarges the distraction when you start to think that you are flawed. All of this influences how you think and feel about your appearance and about life in general. To avoid body dissatisfaction, people try to avoid such situations that can create consciousness among them about their body or thoughts of body dissatisfaction. This is what is called Body Image Avoidance.

Body image avoidance is the term used to describe an excessive concern with one's appearance that manifests in behaviours like avoiding social gatherings and engaging in cover-up activities (like donning bulky, loose-fitting clothing) to cover up and hide undesirable aspects of the body. Avoidance behaviours appear to play an important role in the maintenance of body image disorders, impeding the rejection of unrealistic beliefs about appearance and the practise of positive coping strategies. Thus, avoiding social situations that emphasise appearance, for example, may contribute to isolation and the feeling of being strange or different. Because of the potentially maladaptive nature of body avoidance behaviours, reducing their frequency is one of the primary goals of body image disorder treatments, particularly from a cognitive-behavioral perspective.

According to APA Dictionary of Psychology, Well-being refers to a state of happiness and contentment, with low levels of distress, overall good physical and mental health and outlook, or good quality of life. Psychological well-being is an important aspect of mental health that includes hedonic (enjoyment, pleasure) and eudaimonic (meaning, fulfilment) happiness, as well as resilience (coping, emotion regulation, healthy problem solving). Understanding the underlying mechanisms associated with this construct and then developing targeted and effective training programmes can help to promote psychological well-being. It is a multifaceted concept that refers to optimal psychological functioning and experience. According to research, people who have higher levels of psychological well-being are more likely to live healthier and longer lives. Additionally, they are more inclined to live in a higher standard of living. A higher level of psychological well-being is also associated with fewer social problems.

For example, studies have found that people who have a high level of psychological wellbeing are less likely to engage in criminal activity or abuse drugs and alcohol. Furthermore, higher earnings and more prosocial behaviour, such as volunteering, are associated with positive psychological well-being.

Individuals who are dissatisfied with their bodies are usually engaged in body image avoiding behaviors. These people are four times more likely to develop an eating disorder. Aside from those body image disorders, we know that poor body image is associated with a number of other mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and suicidality.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research study was conducted to assess physical appearance behaviour avoidance among a group of Moroccan adolescents and identify the associated factors. The information came from a cross-sectional study of 487 adolescents (223 boys and 264 girls), with an average

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age of 14.6 years. In this study, gender, age, body mass index (BMI), and satisfaction with their body weight and height were all taken into account. Two questions were used to assess body satisfaction: "Are you satisfied with your body weight?" and "Are you satisfied with your body height?" The adopted behaviours were evaluated using the Body Image Avoidance Questionnaire (BIAQ). The BIAQ test had a 24.4 average score. The BIAQ test factors "clothing", "grooming and weighing", and "eating restraint" were more noticeable among adolescents. The findings revealed that behavioural avoidance was associated with gender, age, BMI, and body dissatisfaction. Females, the youngest group of adolescents, those who were overweight, and those who were unhappy with their body weight or height had the highest scores. This reflects the fact that adolescents resort to physical appearance behaviour avoidance or control, including practises such as dressing, grooming, and weighing. It is recommended by health professionals to raise awareness among adolescents about the risks of such behaviours on their physical and mental health, to correct the narrow and unrealistic standards of physical appearance, and to encourage healthy behaviours. (Zakaria et al., 2021)

According to one study, internalised weight bias is linked to body image problems and the development of disordered eating. The link between internalised weight bias and body dissatisfaction has proven difficult to break. To create more effective interventions, we must first identify the behavioural targets that account for this strong association. The purpose of this study was to see if body checking and body image avoidance can help to mediate the relationship between weight bias internalisation and body dissatisfaction. A battery of survey measures was administered to 279 female undergraduates (Mage = 20.13, SD = 4.10) in total. Body checking partially mediates the relationship between weight bias internalisation and body dissatisfaction, according to the findings (Z = 7.42, p 0.001). Body image avoidance was also discovered to partially mediate the relationship between internalised weight bias and body dissatisfaction (Z = 70.03, p 0.001). These findings imply that both body checking and body image avoidance may contribute to the link between weight bias internalisation and body dissatisfaction. These findings add to the existing body of knowledge about weight bias internalisation by highlighting two behavioural targets for prevention and intervention efforts. Understanding these relationships has significant implications for reducing internalised weight bias and improving body dissatisfaction. (Bennett et al., 2022)

The effects of the Physical Education (PE) class context on adolescent body avoidance behaviours were investigated in a research paper. A cross-sectional study was conducted. A total of 1792 adolescents completed questionnaires assessing body size dissatisfaction, body image avoidance behaviours, and physical activity levels. Their physical education teachers (n = 81) completed questionnaires about body size dissatisfaction, attitudes towards obesity, and teaching characteristics, such as teaching style, experience, and training.The participants' height and weight were measured. Multilevel methods were used to examine contextual effects, such as the influence of PE teachers and peers. According to the findings Multilevel regression revealed that the stronger the desire for thinness of PE classmates, the more frequent the adolescents' body avoidance behaviours. There was also an inverse relationship between the teachers' teaching experience and academic training and the students' avoidance behaviours. The study concluded that the PE teacher and PE classmates have some influence on some behavioural manifestations of body image problems, even when the effects of the adolescents' individual characteristics are controlled for. However, the influence of this educational context has limited predictive capacity and should be

studied alongside other social contexts – friends and family – in future research. (Carmona et al., 2015)

A research study compared two cultures- US and Korea for studying relationship between Social media use, Body image and Psychological well being. This study investigated the relationships between social media use for information, self-status seeking and socialising, body image, self-esteem, and psychological well-being, as well as some cultural effects that moderated these relationships. 502 Americans and 518 Koreans responded to an online survey. The main findings revealed that (a) social media use for body image information is negatively related to body satisfaction in both the US and Korea, whereas social media use for self-status seeking regarding body image is positively related to body satisfaction only in Korea; and (b) body satisfaction has both direct and indirect positive effects on psychological well-being in both the US and Korea. The implications, as well as future research directions, are discussed. (Lee et al., 2014)

The purpose of this study was to see if higher levels of childhood family connection were associated with greater adult flourishing and if this association held true across levels of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and childhood socioeconomic disadvantage (SED). The Midlife in the United States study collected cross-sectional data from telephone and mailed surveys from two nationally representative cohorts (2004-06 and 2011-14) of English-speaking US adults aged 25 to 74 years. Adult flourishing z scores were derived from Ryff's 42-item Psychological Well-being Scale and childhood family connection quartiles from a 7-item scale assessing parental attention, affection, and communication during childhood. Data were analysed for the 4199 (72.0% of 5834) participants who had complete data. The participants' average age was 53.9 years, and 85.4% were White. After controlling for covariates such as adult chronic disease, ACEs, and childhood and current SED, the mean (95% CI) flourishing z scores increased from the lowest to highest quartiles of family connection: 0.41 (0.49, 0.33), 0.18 (0.25, 0.12), 0.01 (0.07, 0.06), and 0.25 (0.18, 0.32). There was a 0.25 (95% CI, 0.20, 0.29) unit increase in the adjusted flourishing z score for every 1 SD increase in the family connection score. This positive relationship was found across all levels of ACEs and childhood SED. The study concluded that greater childhood family connection was associated with greater flourishing in adults in the United States, regardless of childhood adversity level. Supporting family connections in childhood may have an impact on flourishing decades later, even in the face of early adversity. (Whitaker et al., 2021)

Body dissatisfaction is a strong predictor of disordered eating cognitions and behaviour, but it affects far more people than disordered eating. While several factors appear to influence the relationship between body dissatisfaction and disordered eating, one potential unstudied construct is experiential avoidance of body image (EA). Individuals with high body image EA may be more likely to engage in behaviours aimed at reducing body dissatisfaction and its associated cognitions and emotions, such as disordered eating (i.e., restricting, purging, laxative use, and so on). The Body Image-Acceptance and Action Questionnaire (BIAAQ; Sandoz, Wilson, Merwin, & Kellum, 2013) was recently developed to assess EA of body image, but despite promising preliminary validation data, it is still a relatively new instrument that requires additional validation. The current study consists of a series of crosssectional studies with three objectives: 1) to provide additional validation data for the BI-AAQ, 2) to assess the potential indirect effect of EA on the relationship between body image dissatisfaction and disordered eating cognition and behaviour, and 3) to compare the BI-AAQ to an existing measure of body avoidance. Overall, the results show that the BI-AAQ

is a valid measure of body image EA, and it helps to explain the link between body image dissatisfaction and disordered eating. Additionally, the measure appears to have incremental validity over pre-existing measures. Future research is needed to better understand the role of body image EA and to see if treatments aimed at this construct can help prevent or treat disordered eating. (Timko et al., 2014)

Eating disorders have a significant impact on social interactions. Avoidance of one's own body may lead to avoidance of others. Previous research has found that individuals with eating disorders (ED) prefer longer interaction distances than control participants (CG). We wanted to replicate these findings and see if the interactant's body weight had any effect on the effect. A female sample (n = 21) with mixed ED subtypes and a female CG (n = 28) were recruited. Participants were immersed in a fictitious social environment and engaged in a variety of fictitious social interactions. A virtual person approached until a comfortable distance for interaction was reached. The body weight of the approached virtual people ranged from underweight to obese in five categories. The results show that interpersonal distance varies as a U-shaped function of the avatar's body weight, and that higher levels of body avoidance, which are common in ED patients, magnify this effect. The study discussed its findings in terms of the role of perspective and disgust in providing a useful framework and motivating future research in the domain of body avoidance in social interactions. (Welsch et al., 2020)

The current study's goal is to statistically test the questionnaire in adolescents with eating disorders. The BIAQ was administered to N=127 female adolescents, including n=57 with Anorexia Nervosa, n=24 with Bulimia Nervosa, and n=46 healthy controls. A confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the factor structure assumed for the original English version, which included the higher-order factor "body-related avoidance behaviour" and the four subfactors "clothing", "social activities", "eating restraint", and "grooming and weighing". Except for the "grooming and weighing" scale, all scales demonstrated mostly acceptable internal consistency, test-retest reliability, differential validity, and construct validity. The use of the BIAQ scales "clothing", "social activities", and "eating restraint" in adolescent research and practice can be recommended due to their satisfying psychometric properties. (Steinfeld et al., 2017)

The purpose of this study is to assess college students' PWB and to determine the relationship between age and PWB aspects. This cross-sectional study included 210 college students who were chosen at random. Ryff's PWB scale, a 42-item version, was used to assess PWB, and data were collected through self-administered questionnaires. The scale's internal consistency was estimated, and descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests, and regression analysis were used. The participants' average age was 19.411.69 years, and 61% were male. In this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient for internal consistency of Ryff's PWB scale was 0.814. The mean of PWB was 205.4211.04, and 20 years scored higher in all PWB parameters than 20 years; the differences were statistically significant (t=3.62, P=0.001). Age was found to be a highly significant (P=0.002) predictor of PWB using simple linear regression. The study demonstrated that students aged 20 years or more had better PWB in all dimensions than students aged 20 years-, and it also suggested the need for future research, such as deepening on the conceptual and relationships between age and PWB, and analysing the impact that social changes have on PWB. (Sharma et al., 2022)

This quantitative study was created as part of an international study on young people's autonomy in the transition to adulthood. Its main goals were to investigate the relationship

between psychological well-being and autonomy, as well as potential age differences between the two variables. To that end, Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale and Bernal et al.'s Transition to Adulthood Autonomy Scale (EDATVA) were administered to 1,148 young people aged 16-21 from Madrid, Spain, and Bogotá, Colombia. The findings show that almost all of the Psychological Well-Being Scale dimensions correlate significantly and positively with the EDATVA scale dimensions. On the Psychological Well-Being Scale, moderate correlations were found between self-organization on the EDATVA scale and purpose in life (r = 0.568; p = 0.01) and environmental mastery (r = 0.447; p = 0.01). In turn, the highest correlation (r = 0.382; p = 0.01) was found between autonomy on Ryff's scale and understanding context on the EDATVA scale. The older 18-21 age group also scored higher than the younger 16-17 age group on all dimensions of the EDATVA and the Psychological Well-Being Scale. Earlier studies support the findings of this study, particularly the differences in scores for both scales across age groups. This opens up possibilities for future research into the relationship between psychological well-being and autonomy as independent variables in other populations. (De Juanas Oliva et al., 2020)

METHODOLOGY

Objective of the study

To study the relationship between Body image avoidance and psychological well-being among people aged between 18- 30 years.

Hypothesis

 H_0 : There is no significant relationship between body image avoidance and psychological well-being among people aged between 18-30 years .

Variables

Body Image Avoidance and Psychological Well being

Research Design

The study employed a correlational research design.

Sample

The sample size for the study is 101 (39 Males, 61 Females). The age range was from 18 to 30 yrs. Non probability purposive sampling technique was used for collecting the samples for the study.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The sample was obtained from students, undergraduates, postgraduates and working individuals in the age group of 18 to 30 yrs. The samples were collected from literate people. The sample from outside India was excluded from the study. The study excluded samples from illiterate people. The study excluded the data from all other age groups other than young adults.

Tools for the study

- The Body Image Avoidance Questionnaire (BIAQ)
- The 42-item Psychological Well Being (PWB) Scale

Description of the tool

The Body Image Avoidance Questionnaire (Rosen et al. 1991)

Clothing (disguising or covering up the body through clothing choices), social activities (avoidance of social situations that involve eating or focus on appearance), restraint (dietary restriction), and grooming/weighing are the four behavioural themes covered by the questionnaire (checking behaviours such as scrutinising oneself in the mirror and weighing). All items are scored on a 6-point scale based on the frequency with which they are engaged in the behaviour, ranging from never (0) to always (5). The BIAQ has utility in helping clinicians understand patients' body image anxiety and guiding the development of behavioural exposures in the treatment of eating disorders because it assesses behavioural avoidance across multiple domains.

The 42-item Psychological Well Being (PWB) Scale (Ryff et al., 2007; adapted from Ryff, 1989)

On a 7-point scale, respondents rate how strongly they agree or disagree with 42 statements (1 = strongly agree; 7 = strongly disagree). The PWB Scale is divided into six subscales: Autonomy (e.g., "I am confident in my opinions, even when they are in opposition to the general consensus"); Environmental control/ mastery (for instance, "In general, I feel in control of my living situation") ; Personal Growth (e.g., "I believe it is crucial to have fresh experiences that push your perceptions of the world and yourself."); Positive Relations With Others (e.g., "People would say I'm a giving person who is willing to give of my time to others)"; Purpose in Life (e.g., "Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them"); and Self-acceptance (e.g., "I am happy with how things have turned out when I look back on the story of my life"). Individuals who are dissatisfied with their bodies are usually engaged in body image avoidance behaviours. These people are four times more likely to develop an eating disorder.

Statistical Analysis

The results were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. IBM SPSS- 2.5 was used for data analysis. Among descriptive statistics, mean and standard deviation were used; among the inferential statistics inferential statistics independent sample t-test and Pearson's correlation method was used to test the hypothesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Correlation

H₀: There is no significant relationship between body image avoidance and psychological well-being among people aged between 18-30 years

Tuble I Descriptive statist		5	
Variable	Mean	SD	r
BIA	34.19	12.561	337**
PWB	345.60	52.128	557**
		52.128	

Table 1 Descriptive statistics and correlation of BIA and PWB

N= 101, **p<0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 1 shows that the mean score for Body Image avoidance is 34.19 and Psychological well-being is 345.60. In terms of standard deviation, the score for Body Image avoidance is 12.561 and Psychological well-being is 52.128. To see if there is a significant relationship between the two variables, the scores were subjected to Pearson's correlation coefficient and we can see that there is a significant relationship seen between Body Image avoidance and Psychological well being. There is a negative weak correlation (r = -.337) between BIA and

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PWB. P value is 0.001. Hence the correlation is significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, it can be seen that the null hypothesis is rejected as there is a significant relationship between body image avoidance and psychological well being among people aged between 18-30 years even though the correlation is negatively weak.

CONCLUSION

The research aimed to study the relationship between Body Image Avoidance and Psychological Well-being. It was a correlational research that used Non- probability purposive sampling technique for the collection of data. The results included Descriptive statistics and correlation between BIA and PWB. Therefore it can be concluded that Body image avoidance effects on psychological well-being of young adults (18-30 years of age) as there was a significant relationship (negatively weak correlation) between body image avoidance and psychological well-being. This emphasises the equivalent importance of psychological well-being irrespective of gender. Thus, individuals of all genders must be given equally appropriate care for treatment of their mental health issues regarding effect on psychological well being and body image avoidance due to body image.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to only the age group of young adults. The samples collected were limited to only people who belonged to India. The study was limited to the literate individuals in the age group of young adults and does not include others for data collection.

Suggestions for future Research

A few suggestions for research in future include gathering a large sample as it will increase validity of data and help in arriving at better conclusions. The study can be expanded to other age groups including children, adolescents and older people. The study can be conducted manually to reach out to those who do not have a social media account. Other demographic variables such as socioeconomic status, occupation can enhance the effectiveness of this study.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interests and that there were no competing interests.

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