

## Weight Consciousness Influencing Body Image Avoidance and Self-Esteem Among Male and Female Young Adults

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### ABSTRACT

This research paper accentuates the increasing prevalence and determinants of weight consciousness leading to disturbances in eating and body image which are prominent behavioural characteristics seen among young adults. The present study is aimed to assess the relationships between body image avoidance and self-esteem and to understand how these factors interact with each other. The Body Image Avoidance Questionnaire (BIAQ) was designed by authors James C. Rosen, Debra Srebnik, Elaine Saltzberg, and Sally Wendt and consists of 19 items. The Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale was developed by Morris and contains 10 items. It was administered to 140 young female and male adults, among them 70 were females and 70 were males. The Independent Sample t-test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation were computed for the statistical analysis of the data. Findings indicated that there is no significant relationship between body image avoidance among young females and male adults. There is no significant relationship between self-esteem among young females and male adults. The correlation between body image avoidance and self-esteem among young females and male adults indicates that there is a prominent negative correlation between body image and self-esteem.

**Keywords:** *Body Image Avoidance, Self-Esteem, Young adults*

The image of our body is how an individual becomes conscious and interprets our physical self. It encloses how an individual possesses a particular mental perception of one's physical attributes as well as how we look at ourselves when we look into a mirror. The assessment of one's physical assets specifically with regard to how you believe others may see you is another way to phrase it. It has a consequential impact on one's sense of worth. Bullying and criticism from others are prominent causes of a low sense of body image. The extent to which one values your distinctiveness is the extent of self-esteem one would possess. Only if you consider yourself having a healthy body image, you would most likely be confident in your physical appearance and would be aware of how to take care of yourself. Accordingly, one would be able to respond well to maintaining a healthy body. Similarly, self-esteem makes references to how one would view themselves as an individual, and so since it has to do with how a person regards themselves and the ample amount of importance, one gives to being alive and well. Self-esteem can consider a wide variety of aspects of life in general. Individuals who have gained elevated self-esteem frequently have

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Received: November 20, 2023; Revision Received: December 27, 2023; Accepted: December 31, 2023

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a realistic assessment of their own weaknesses and strengths, enabling them to achieve the clarity of thought required for success in areas such as occupational, educational, and interpersonal relationships. Thus, individuals with positive self-esteem, tend to generally think favourably about their physique. Recognizing their unique features and strengths that make them think better about their own selves, outside of their weights and looks, as well as rejecting pressure to pursue the myth of the "ideal" body that you see in advertising and social networks are all part of having a body image.

The human body is so diverse in its shape, size, colour or even skin texture that there is no exact concept of what is right, healthy or ideal and recognizing that everyone is beautiful, fit, and strong, and feel secure and at ease with the way that their body naturally looks is the right way to go, as it is critical to keep in mind the fact that everybody is different. The ideas, feelings, and behaviours produced by individuals are significantly influenced by their self-esteem and body image. Individuals may indeed never be satisfied with their bodies because they can't seem to accept themselves when they are constantly being compared to someone else. There typically exists a beauty standard (different in each part of the world) due to our society's obsession with social media, unnatural body trends and photo-shopped images. Thus, it leads to the majority of people holding a negative opinion of themselves. People are more likely to feel self-assured and content with their life if they enjoy their bodies regardless of any disparities. Acceptance is key as being at ease with your appearance, eating healthy to satisfy your body's demands, and realizing that appearance has nothing to do with worth or ability are some of the most important aspects of having a positive body image. Individuals are more likely to feel more capable and energized when they have a good and healthy perception of their bodies. We must therefore respect ourselves and maintain reasonable expectations, which raises our self-esteem. Body image can affect anyone, nonetheless of sex, age, or other characteristics. In some circumstances, having a poor body image might lead to people developing some mental health issues like depression. Additionally, a person could engage in dangerous weight loss practices needed surgery (including plastic surgery, Botox and fillers), or inappropriate hormone mainly used for bulking up. "Fat talk," or talking about how "fat" you are, refers to dialogues that are derogatory of the body. Making disparaging remarks or bodily comparisons to another individual is another example of fat talk.

These discussions may trigger further unfavourable emotions, a depressed mood, or unfavourable eating habits. One's body image might have an impact on the quality of life and sexual health. According to some studies, having a higher level of body satisfaction is associated with having more satisfying sexual experiences, especially for women. Contrarily, issues with body image can cause self-consciousness, which can have a detrimental impact on sexual experiences and reactions. As it does in the early days of childhood, there are many different elements that contribute to body image in adulthood. These factors are related to how much one has pre-existing concepts about the "perfect" body types and how inclined one is to judge others by their outward looks. Some particular factors linked with the amount of preconception of what exactly the perfect body image constitutes have well been internalized, as well as how these appearances have been compared with one another.

One such factor associated is the greater attributes of body standards and an increase in body discontent seen in both women and men who have been subjected to stereotyped pictures of body shapes in the media. The influences that arise from various social networking

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platforms, shape our idea of the ideal body type. People who often endure teasing or bullying from childhood well into adulthood have seen a devastating level of body dissatisfaction as well as unnecessary controlling of food consumption to reduce weight. While this connection is much more prevalent in children and teenagers. Thus, we are more likely, tempted to express our ideas about such content with peers, friends or partners which can result in a negative effect towards our body image. One slightly disturbing event that has led to the causal mentioning of body weight and shape is the 'fat-talk', which gives rise to unhealthy comparisons and concerns causing a negative effect towards that individual's social life or even their struggles in their workplace environment.

Now when individuals transition from adulthood to parenthood, it comes with substantial changes, specifically in women as they undergo major bodily changes that can affect them mentally and physically. As they get through each stage of pregnancy, they are more persuaded to compare their belly and their swollen body to their body previous to pregnancy. In such a way they are also likely to have ideations leading up to going back to their pre-pregnancy body shapes following delivery. Studies have found a correlation between elevated body image disturbances, depressive symptoms and postpartum weight during pregnancy and motherhood. Another such factor would be the thoughts consisting of weight concerns and body image distress among people with obesity or those that are overweight. Due to the constant shaming and stigma around such obese individuals that do not have the appropriate societal stereotypes of weight and shape, and their appearance being out of the norm of what is expected, that being an hourglass figure with a small waist-to-hip proportion in women and in men with broad shoulders and a small waist as well, they become target victims. As such individuals who are overweight encounter both direct and indirect forms of prejudice, such as verbal abuse whenever they are out in public and inhospitable environments where people tend to lash out at them, commenting on them while walking past them.

Individuals have made claims that this stigma has made them feel emotionally distressed, made them withdraw from society, and prevented them from engaging in activities such as interpersonal relationships and social events such as parties that might otherwise expose them to such discrimination. Nowadays the industry of fashion or beauty also lay down a considerable number of unhealthy prospects towards idolizing unnatural body types as well as promoting products and brands that serve limited ranges of body exclusivity, meaning it does not include all of the diverse body shapes that exist all around the world whether it being fat, thin, short, tall, limbless, disabled or even individuals with dwarfism.

Although very few studies exist especially focusing on the body image and weight concerns among transgender individuals who have transitioned, are transitioning or are yet to transition, can also be seen coming across as having body image struggles and conflicts, since each of their journeys is different. Here individuals may encounter distress because of the difference noticed in their gender identity and biological sex which affects their confidence and might lead to other mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. Thus, whatever category an individual may be, pessimistic thoughts and feelings bring upon detrimental influence on one's physical and mental health subsequently affecting a series of other impairments in important areas of functioning through life.

Body image is defined as one's attitude toward one's own body, specifically its size, shape, and aesthetics (Cash, 1990). Body image is a multidimensional construct that refers to a

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person's perceptions and attitudes about their own body and appearance, including feelings, thoughts, and behaviours (Cash TF, 2004). Personality and physical attributes, as well as interpersonal characteristics and cultural socialisation, all play a significant role in how invested an individual is in their body image and how they evaluate it, according to this cognitive-behavioural model of body image. The correlation between weight status and body image is complicated. According to Schwartz and Brownell (2004), obesity may affect body image through psychological distress, which has an impact on individual well-being. As previously stated, while body image is a subjective psychological occurrence, it is also heavily influenced by social experiences. Commonly seen among adolescents and young adults who are constantly exposed to fault-finding comparisons by other peers, towards whom they idolise or perceive as their perfect body type to be. Historically, it has been suggested that body image disturbances were considered a women-oriented problem despite current studies showing a toll on the male counterpart having an increasing equivalence in terms of the prevalence and determinants of body image avoidance issues and concerns, with a bigger ratio of said males chasing an ideal body type that diverges fundamentally from their present body shape. (Murray, Rieger, Karlov, & Touyz, 2013).

Although research has presented us with evidence that women are most likely to suffer from negative distortion in body image and dissatisfaction due to their gravitation towards unrealistic beauty standards and idolising thinness over embracing their natural body. Further, the effects of negative body image or dissatisfaction have shown an array of psychological and physical impacts showing detrimental weight control, smoking habits, stress-induced behaviours, and decreased physical enterprise, to say the least. There are numerous reasons to suspect that adult women's body image differs from and may be more complex than that of younger women. Adult women face a plethora of factors that influence their body image in addition to those discussed in the body image literature for young adult women and adolescents. For example, ageing-related physiological changes cause the female body to deviate from the thin-young-ideal, which is the societal norm of female beauty standards in many countries. Furthermore, life priorities and psychological characteristics alternate by age factors. The changes to an extent and the consequences adult women experience may affect their body image differently throughout their lives. Body image issues serve as an essential risk factor in the development of eating disorders and other harmful behaviours (Stapleton, McIntyre, and Bannatyne, 2014). Among these are avoidance behaviours, which generally refer to a variety of actions taken to avoid receiving information about one's body type, weight, or size.

These practices often include not weighing oneself, avoiding mirror glancing while wearing loose-fit apparel, and avoiding events or situations where dressing fancy or putting on revealing clothes may be necessary, such as the beach or the gym. These actions may significantly contribute to the emergence of abnormal eating patterns and the maintenance of distorted body image (Fairburn, Cooper, & Shafran, 2003). Body image avoidance is a significant behavioural revelation of body image disturbance, which encompasses cognitive, affective, and behavioural manifestations of body dissatisfaction.

Several studies have shown a link between disordered eating, negative attitudes and body image avoidance toward shape and body weight.

Body image disturbance is viewed as a complex construct with components that include perception, attitude, and action (Banfield & McCabe, 2002). The relative inaccuracy with

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which people judge their entire body's or different body sections' shapes is known as the perceptual component. Dissatisfaction with one's body's size or shape constitutes the attitude component (Gardner, 2001). According to Rosen, Srebnik, Saltzberg, and Wendt (1991), the behavioural aspect of body anxiety includes dispositions to avoid circumstances that make people self-conscious about their looks and body checking, which is the act of observing one's own body to learn about its size, shape, or weight. The fear of fat is an expression used to accumulate how individuals fall into the pathological fear of fatness as it has been associated with the cognitive-affective constituents of our body image (Milos et al., 2017). The fear or hatred of obese bodies is the one that surrounds the idea such as weight stigma and bias, as we tend to visualise people with higher body weight as lazy, unintelligent, or repellent. Although the accurate causes are unknown, factors such as environmental, genetics and traumatic experiences could be benign issues for such manipulated behavioural processes. On the other hand, obesity, often known as being overweight, is the condition of having too much body fat. It is linked to a higher risk of developing several mental illnesses. However, since genuine body shape can occasionally be misperceived as being overweight or obese it may not be always enough to drive someone to sustain weight management efforts.

Being overweight or the term obesity could be seen as being of normal weight. Therefore, maintaining a good weight and, ultimately, high quality of life may depend on having a positive self-perception of one's physique. Weight management may be impacted by an individual having negative thinking patterns about their body image, which is the self-perception of weight, body shape, or Body Mass Index. If when the actual self-visualized body shape is very different from the desired body type, then weight management commences.

Sexual objectification experiences by both men and women, appearance demands by certain standards and messages that are mediated by culture, media, and families are examples of maladaptive environmental and interpersonal factors that have been linked to abnormal eating patterns and low body image (Tylka & Kroon Van Diest, 2015). Theoretically, preventative factors could interfere with or disrupt a variety of body image-related factors linked to eating disorders, such as internalisation of the thin ideal, self-objectification, impaired interoceptive awareness, body or appearance comparisons, body dissatisfaction, and the drive for thinness. In terms of the addictive use of social media wherein individuals spend most of their time visiting any particular site or app, principally through the use of smartphones which provides them with numerous functionalities of sending and receiving information as well as making a direct call.

In day-to-day life, it is often observed that teenagers are most likely to spend much of their time scrolling on the internet, and so for this cause, there have been many reports suggesting problematic internet use. (e.g., Shapira et al., 2000). Among these, it has also been noted that relying heavily on the internet not only leads to troublesome internet usage but also a variety of other mental illness issues such as anxiety or depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, sleep disturbances along with other sleep disorders. (Dalbudak et al., 2013). Studies have also implied a link shared between the relationship between body perception as well as internet usage. The operation of media has been found to be correlated with other body issues such as body image avoidance or a preoccupation with being overweight.

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Embarking on the adult journey, that is the transition from adolescence to adulthood, those who are being labelled 'emerging adults', living by beginning their independent lives, jumping on the bandwagon to getting a higher education or employment opportunities, moving in with their significant other are also at risk to weight gain. Dietary pattern changes such as skipping breakfast, eating outside of the home and increased social activities do contribute to lifestyle changes which are among the reasons for weight gain in 18-25 years old. Although they have agreeable attitudes toward dietary advice, this is not always reflected in their actions (Mullaney, Corish, & Loxley, 2008).

The effects of childhood sexual abuse have in a way also suggested an increased risk of developing symptoms closely related to some eating disorders such as bulimia nervosa and anorexia nervosa. (Kristin K. Schaaf, Thomas R. McCanne, 1994). Oppenheimer, Howells, Palmer, and Chaloner (1985) postulated that sexual abuse causes women to be appalled with their femininity and that this disgust gives rise to abnormal concerns with body shape and size. As children get older they are most likely to create an image of themselves, with their capabilities and shortcomings as well as how other people evaluate them. Possessing lower self-esteem and confidence can originate from negative body impressions. The media also plays a crucial role in moulding young children's body image. As well as the prolonged exposure to the 'perfect' body types might reaffirm young people's concerns about their physical attributes and body mass. According to research, idealised body shapes promote unhealthy use of substance abuse such as steroids, protein supplements, plastic surgery and other eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa. (Hogan & Strasburger, 2008). Unlike the perceptual and attitudinal aspects of body image disturbances, the behaviour component had a dearth of assessment tools to gauge body avoidance (such as the Body Image Avoidance Questionnaire, Physical Appearance Behavior Avoidance Test), body checking, or both the literature review indicated that the BIAQ is "the most prevalent" of them.

### ***Need and Significance***

As stated in this study lower body image issues do impact one's outlook on their body leading to having negative thoughts about how they look and how others think they look. This study intends to have a basic understanding of the relationship between avoidance of one's body image due to weight consciousness and lower self-esteem. Furthermore, this study promisingly might help increase awareness to give importance to body image issues and mental health in young adults.

Despite the fact that numerous studies have been conducted globally in this specific area the need of this study is to help identify how self-esteem affects body image disturbances regardless of gender in young adults. To give us readers a direct idea of how one could displace negative thoughts along with the urge to compare body sizes and be more confident about themselves. Thereby conducting research on this specific topic from this particular country makes it all the while useful in understanding the issues faced by young adults.

### ***Aim***

To find out the significant difference between body image avoidance and self-esteem among young female and male adults.

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### *Objective*

- To find out the significant difference in body image avoidance among young female and male adults.
- To find out the significant difference in self-esteem among young female and male adults.
- To find out the significant difference between body image avoidance and self-esteem among young female and male adults.

### *Definition of Key Terms*

- **Body Image Avoidance:** Excessive concern with one's appearance manifests in behaviour, as shown by avoidance of social events and the use of cover-up techniques (such as donning bulky, loose-fitting clothing) to cover up and conceal undesirable physical features.
- **Self-Esteem:** It is how individuals see and regard themselves as a measure of their self-esteem. It is founded on our perceptions of ourselves, which can be challenging to alter.
- **Young adults:** It is a period (aged 18-25) when a person has reached full physical development and maturity and begins to experience biological, cognitive, social, personality, and other changes related to ageing.

### *Hypothesis*

- There will be no significant difference in body image avoidance among male and female young adults.
- There will be no significant between in self-esteem among male and female young adults.
- There will be no significant relationship between body image avoidance and self-esteem among male and female young adults.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

A literature review is an examination of academic sources on a particular subject. It gives you a broad overview of the state of the field, enabling you to spot theories, approaches, and gaps in the literature that you may then use to inform your paper, thesis, or dissertation topic. In order to provide a comprehensive picture of the state of knowledge on the topic, literature review does more than simply describe the sources; it also analyses, synthesises, and critically assesses them.

Miandoab. N.Z, Kamalifard. M, Mirghafourvand. M (2022) conducted a study on the “Relationship of Self-Esteem with Body Image and Attitudes Toward Motherhood and Pregnancy”. A sample size of 228 women from Tabriz, Iran was collected using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Scale of Attitudes Toward Motherhood and Pregnancy, and Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire. The result shows that there is a direct association between body image and self-esteem and the perspectives on motherhood. These findings support the recommendation of mental health treatment to boost the self-esteem of pregnant women.

Zakaria. R, Amor. H, Baali. (2022) has conducted research on the subject matter of “A Body Image Perceptions and Avoidance Behaviours Among a Moroccan Group of Adolescents”. A sample size of 487 adolescents males and females was collected using Stunkard's Figure

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Rating Scale and the Body Image Avoidance Questionnaire (BIAQ). The results showed both males and females exhibited substantial association with body dissatisfaction and weight status. The following factors were positively correlated with avoidance behaviours: gender, age, weight status, and body dissatisfaction. Indeed, females with high BMI z-scores and people trying to reduce weight frequently reported engaging in avoidance behaviours.

Singh. S and Gadiraju. P (2020) conducted a study on the “Prevalence and Correlates of Body Dissatisfaction and Disordered Eating Patterns in Indian Youth: The Role of Media”. A sample size of 262 men and women aged 18 to 25 was collected using Body Shape Questionnaire (BSQ-8C), Appearance Questionnaire (SATAQ-3) and Eating Attitudes Test (EAT-26). The results revealed that pressure from sources other than the media has a larger role in Indian youth's body dissatisfaction and disordered eating than cognitively accepting the beauty standards. Recent data show that body image issues are pervasive and are likely to grow in India.

Asimakopoulou. E, Zavrides. H and Askitis. T (2020) conducted a study on “Plastic Surgery on Body Image, Body Satisfaction and Self-Esteem”. A sample size of 128 cosmetic surgery patients was collected using questionnaires developed by the authors and consisted of measures of body image, body satisfaction and self-esteem. The results showcased that only 7.3% of the participants were highly satisfied with their body image before treatment, this number increased to 38.6% after treatment. The study offers an indication of improvement in self-confidence and contentment with their physical appearance following aesthetic surgery.

Shahi. V and Kohli. N (2019) has conducted a study on the “Role of Body Mass Index (BMI) and Gender in Body Image among Indian Students”. A sample size of 383 college and university students were collected using the Multidimensional body-self relations questionnaire-appearance scales and The Figure Rating Scale (FRS). The findings showed that male students were more satisfied with their physique, while female students were given higher ratings for their appearance. While female students were encouraged to be slender, male students were encouraged to be muscular. In comparison to the underweight and overweight groups, those with a normal body mass index had more positive perceptions of their bodies, regardless of gender.

Ganesan. S, Ravishankar. S.L, and Ramalingam. S (2018) has conducted a study on “Are Body Image Issues Affecting Our Adolescents? A Cross-sectional Study among College Going Adolescent Girls”. A sample size of 1200 college girls from Coimbatore was assessed using the Stunkard silhouettes Figure Rating Scale (FRS), Rosenberg Self- Esteem Scale and depression was measured using Center of Epidemiological studies (CES). The findings demonstrated that despair, societal pressure, and a higher body mass index were all strongly associated with body image dissatisfaction. It is concluded that body image dissatisfaction is no longer a modern construct and has a significant negative impact on adolescent girls in India.

Ahadzadeh. A, Rafik-Galea. S. et.al (2018) has conducted research on the “Relationship between body mass index, body image, and fear of negative evaluation: Moderating role of self-esteem”. A sample size of 318 Malaysian young adults was assessed using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and Body Influence Assessment Inventory (BIAI). The results revealed that body mass index was adversely correlated with body image, but that there was



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no association with the apprehension of criticism. While a negative link between body mass index with fear of unfavourable assessment was significant only among people with low self-esteem, a positive correlation of the same was stronger among those with lower self-esteem.

Gaddad. P, Pemde. H.K, Basu. S, Dhankar. M and Rajendran. S (2018) has conducted a study on the “Relationship of physical activity with body image, self-esteem sedentary lifestyle, body mass index and eating attitude in adolescents”. A sample size of 191 boys and girls aged 13 to 18 was collected and assessed using the PA questionnaire for adolescents Score, Body Shape Questionnaire-34 Score, Rosenberg self-esteem Score, adolescent sedentary activity questionnaire score, eating attitude test (EAT-26) and BMI Z-score. The results revealed that the majority of adolescents with average weight and who was underweight had adequate self-esteem and body images despite having limited physical activity and so eating and sedentary behaviour were substantially correlated.

Kingori. C. A (2018) conducted a study on “Effects of Body Image on Self-Esteem Among Young Adults”. A sample size of 290 university students aged 18 to 25 was collected. The questionnaire for body image was tailored by the researcher to obtain the target population's data, which was young adults, and also used the Rosenberg Self- Esteem Scale. The results show there is a positive correlation between self-esteem among body size, complexion and fashion. Furthermore, there is a decreased quantity of self- esteem and body image disturbances in females than in males.

Bibiloni. M, Coll. J.L, Pich, J. et al. (2017) conducted a study on “Body Image Satisfaction and Weight Concerns Among a Mediterranean Adult Population”. A random sample size of 1081 population of both young (18 to 35 years old) and middle- aged persons (36 to 55 years old) was collected using Stunkard's Figure Rating Scale along with questions pertaining to weight concerns, current dieting as well as Socioeconomic and lifestyle factors in addition to being anthropometrically measured. Despite the majority of the subjects reporting body image dissatisfaction, merely half of them expressed fears about their body weight status, with women being more preoccupied with their current state of weight gain.

Nagar. I and Virk. R (2017) conducted a study on the “The Struggle Between the Real and Ideal: Impact of Acute Media Exposure on Body Image of Young Indian Women”. A sample size of 60 young adults aged 18 to 25 was collected using The Figure Rating Scale (Stunkard, Sørensen, & Schlusinger, 1983), ideal Body Stereotype Scale–Revised (Stice, 2001) and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965). The study's conclusions suggest that young urban Indian women, like their counterparts in Europe and North America, experience body dissatisfaction and low self-esteem when exposed to Western thin-ideal pictures.

Duchesne AP, Dion J, Lalande D, Bégin C, Émond C, Lalande G, McDuff P (2017) has conducted a study on “Body dissatisfaction and psychological distress in adolescents: Is self-esteem a mediator?”. A sample size of 409 adolescents aged 14 to 18 was collected using Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the Contour Drawing Rating Scale, the Multidimensional Anxiety Scale for Children, and the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale. The study suggests substantial results for both depression and anxiety, confirming that having a poor opinion of one's physical image lowers self-esteem, which in turn heightens psychological discomfort.

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Kumari. P (2015) conducted a study on “Body Image Eating Disorders Health Consciousness and Well-Being Across Age and Gender”. A sample size of 450 participants, boys and girls, from the age group of 12 to 25 years, was collected. The study used the following standardised tools to measure the variables under study, including questions pertaining to body image, eating disorders, health consciousness, and well-being. The result showcased that the female individuals exhibited greater attitude control, body surveillance as well as body image consciousness than the male subjects.

Jose. J (2015) conducted a study on “Perception of Body Image, Social Physique, Self Esteem and Body Fat Between Exercise and Non-Exercise Adolescent Girls”. A sample size of 1115 children aged 13 to 15 was collected from 12 different districts in Kerala. The study used The Social Physique Anxiety Scale (SPAS), The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965), the Body-Image Questionnaire and the Body Fat Measurement. The results show that compared to non-exercising girls, those who exercised showed higher body image satisfaction, self-esteem, and low levels of social anxiety about their bodies.

Abamara. N and Solomon. A (2014) has conducted a study on the “Relationship between Body Image and Self-Esteem among Female Undergraduate Students of Behavioural Sciences”. A sample size of 400 females from Enugu State University of Science and Technology was evaluated using the Body Image Questionnaire and Index of Self- Esteem. The results show that a person's perception of their body image was correlated with their level of self-esteem. This indicates that low self-esteem is strongly connected with a distorted body image and that there was an inverse relationship between self- esteem and body image.

Stapleton. P, McIntyre. T and Bannatyne. A (2014) conducted a study on “Body Image Avoidance, Body Dissatisfaction, and Eating Pathology: Is There a Difference Between Male Gym Users and Non-Gym Users”. A sample size of 180 male gym and non-gym users aged 18 to 65 years of age was collected using the Body Image Avoidance Questionnaire (BIAQ) and the Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire-Version 6 (EDE-Q). The results revealed a contrast between the gym and non-gym users who appear to engage themselves in single and recurring objective binge episodes and excessive activity more consistently. Gym users also displayed evidence of more restriction, self- inflicted purging and laxative abuse.

Rekha. S.V and Maran. K (2012) conducted a study on “Advertisement Pressure and Its Impact on Body Dissatisfaction and Body Image Perception of Women in India”. A sample size of 915 females above 12 years of age was collected using questions on the respondent's attitudes regarding commercials, the pressure they felt, and how satisfied they were with their physical appearance along with the body dissatisfaction scale developed by Stunkard and Sorenson. It was discovered that women idealised a slimmer body type exaggerating their current body sizes. This finding demonstrates the relationship between the pressure of advertisements and their effect on body dissatisfaction.

Drouin. B (2010) conducted a study on “The Effect of Acute Exercise Type on Body Image Attitudes”. A sample size of 40 undergraduate and postgraduate females was gathered using the Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire (PAR-Q), Body Image States Scale (BISS), State Social Physique Anxiety Scale (SPAS-S; K), Multidimensional Body Image Self Relations Questionnaire (MBSRQ) and Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE). The finding

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shows that with no changes in the appearance attitude, individuals who engaged in yoga and exercise sessions showed relatively increased body satisfaction while exhibiting a decline in social physique anxiety.

Priya. D, Prasanna. K, Sucharitha. S and Vaz. N (2010) conducted a study on “Body Image Perception and Attempts to Change Weight among Female Medical Students at Mangalore”. A sample size of 147 students was collected using a questionnaire pertaining to the impressions of appearance, body image satisfaction, diet as well as the level of physical activity, and any attempts they had made to lose weight. The results revealed that the majority of them judged the weight and image appropriately. Females who were underweight sought to gain weight, while females who were overweight preferred to lose weight.

Latha. S, Hedge. S, Bhat, et.al (2006) conducted a study on “Body Image, Self-Esteem and Depression in Female Adolescent College Students”. A sample size of 124 female college students aged 16 to 21 was collected using the Body Shape Questionnaire, Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale and General Health Questionnaire. The findings suggest that subjects who receive psychoeducation about healthy weight ranges, dietary guidelines, and exercise regimens would be able to develop a realistic, favourable picture of their weight in order to prevent despair and low self-esteem.

Foster. G.D, Wadden. T.A, Vogt. R.A. (1997) conducted a study on “Body Image In Obese Women Before, During, And After Weight Loss Treatment”. A sample size of 60 women of different races, on varying phases of weight loss treatment, was assessed using the Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. The results conclude that the participants revealed remarkable improvement after the loss of weight showcasing an elevated level of self-esteem and body image.

Byram. V, Wagner. H. L, & Waller. G (1995) conducted a study on “Sexual Abuse and Body Image Distortion”. A sample size of 100 female undergraduates was accumulated using Body Perception Index (BPI) along with the Sexual Events Questionnaire and Eating Attitudes Test (EAT). The results showcase that, while some form of molestation was endured, there was no correlation between the claimed existence of abuse and worsening body image distortion. However, there is a connection between the age of abuse and body image, eliciting a degree of eating psychopathology.

Dixit S, Agarwal G, Singh J, Kant S, Singh N. A (2011) has conducted a study on “Consciousness of Adolescent Girls About Their Body Image”. A sample size of 586 adolescent girls aged 10-19 years in both rural and urban areas from Lucknow district was evaluated using a pre-designed questionnaire used to gather data on expected and actual body sizes. The researchers came to the conclusion that many adolescent girls studying in Uttar Pradesh, India, expressed concerns wishing to lose weight, even among those who think of themselves as having a very slender "body image."

Mellor. D et al., (2010) conducted a study on “Body Image and Self-Esteem Across Age and Gender: A Short-Term Longitudinal Study”. A sample size of 150 men and 239 women aged between 20 and 86 years was collected using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Body Image and Body Change Inventory (McCabe and Ricciardelli 2004) and The Body Image Dissatisfaction Scale. The result shows that men placed more value on their appearance than

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women, and also reported having high levels of body dissatisfaction, despite the fact that women were more dissatisfied with their bodies than men.

Davison T.E, McCabe M.P (2006) has conducted a study on “Adolescent Body Image and Psychosocial Functioning”. The sample size collected was 245 boys and 173 girls from Grades 8 and 9. Measures of physical attractiveness, body satisfaction, body image behaviours, appearance comparison anxiety, social physique anxiety, self-esteem, depression, anxiety, and relationships with partners were completed by respondents. The relationship between body image and self-esteem was the same for boys and girls, despite the fact that girls tended to report having a more negative body image than did boys.

### **METHOD**

The research method is a term used to describe how one has gone about conducting a certain scientific study. Each research method is a standardized and acceptable practice. Method and data collection are the tools to obtain the raw materials for hypothesis testing. The guiding principle of method selection is that it must be detailed enough for other researchers to read it and be able to replicate the study (American Psychological Association 1994).

The research method followed for the present investigation is discussed in detail in this chapter. Basically, it comprises the selection of sample, method of data collection, statistical tool, statistical analysis, exclusion and inclusion criteria etc.

#### ***Sample***

The present study consisted of 140 young adults from India. Among them 70 were females and 70 were males with ages ranging from 18 to 25. The random sampling method was used.

#### ***Inclusion and exclusion criteria for females.***

##### **Inclusion criteria**

- Females belonging to the age of 18 to 25.
- Females residing in India.
- Females currently doing their UG or PG.

##### **Exclusion Criteria**

- Females above the age of 25 or below the age of 18.
- Females who are out of India.
- Females who have not been diagnosed with an eating disorder.

#### ***Inclusion and exclusion criteria for males.***

##### **Inclusion criteria**

- Males belonging to the age of 18 to 25.
- Males residing in India.
- Males currently doing their UG or PG.

##### **Exclusion Criteria**

- Males above the age of 25 or below the age of 18.
- Males who are out of India.
- Males who have not been diagnosed with an eating disorder.

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### *Measures*

Only self-report questionnaires through the use of google forms were used in the current study. The Body Image Avoidance Questionnaire (BIAQ) and Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale were used in this study. A Personal Data Sheet was also used, to gather information on relevant socio-demographic characteristics of the participants.

### **Personal Data Sheet**

This was prepared by the researcher to obtain the socio-demographic profile of the respondents.

#### **1. Body Image Avoidance Questionnaire (BIAQ)**

The Body Image Avoidance Questionnaire (BIAQ) was developed by the authors James C. Rosen, Debra Srebnik, Elaine Saltzberg, and Sally Wendt and is a self-report scale, which consists of a 19-item instrument designed to measure behavioural tendencies that often accompany body-image disturbance. The scale is presented in the English language. The respondents answered these statements indicated as 'Always', 'Usually', 'Often', 'Sometimes', 'Rarely' and 'Never'.

**Scoring:** The BIAQ is scored by simply totalling the scores on the individual, 6-point items, providing a potential range of scores from 0 to 94. Although the BIAQ comprises four factors derived through factor analysis (clothing, social activities, eating at restaurants, and grooming and weight), these factors are not scored separately.

**Reliability and Validity:** The BIAQ has excellent internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of .89, and is very stable with a two-week, test-retest reliability coefficient of .87. The BIAQ has fair to good concurrent validity with a low but significant correlation of .22 with body size estimation, a correlation of .78 with the Body Shape Questionnaire, and correlations of .68 and .63 with the Shape Concern and Weight Concern scales respectively. The BIAQ has good known-groups validity, significantly distinguishing between clinical (bulimia nervosa) and nonclinical populations. Finally, the BIAQ has been shown to be sensitive to changes in clients with body-image disturbance.

#### **2. Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale**

The Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale was developed by Morris Rosenberg a widely used self-report instrument for evaluating individual self-esteem and is a 10-item scale that measures global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. The scale is written in the English language. The scale is believed to be uni-dimensional. All items are answered using a 4-point Likert scale format ranging from 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'.

**Scoring:** Items 2, 5, 6, 8, and 9 are reverse-scored. Give "Strongly Disagree" 1 point, "Disagree" 2 points, "Agree" 3 points, and "Strongly Agree" 4 points. Sum scores for all ten items. Keep scores on a continuous scale. Higher scores indicate higher self-esteem.

**Reliability and Validity:** The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale presented high ratings in reliability areas; internal consistency was 0.77, minimum Coefficient of Reproducibility was at least 0.90. Test- retest correlations are between 0.82 to 0.88, and Cronbach's alpha was between 0.77 to 0.88.

### *Procedure*

Data was collected through the medium of google forms by sharing the link through an online platform. The participants were requested to respond sincerely. Participation in this study is absolutely voluntary and they were free to withdraw from the survey at any point in

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time. They were also informed that the information that they provided is kept confidential and will only be used for academic purposes.

The study also poses no risk to its participants. Instructions for responding to the statements were given in the form in clear detail and the participants were asked to read them thoroughly before answering the questions.

### *Statistical Analysis*

The statistical techniques selected were based on the objectives and hypotheses formulated.

The statistical techniques used are as follows.

**The Independent sample 't' test** is a parametric test used for judging the significance of the mean or judging the significance of differences between the means of two samples. It is the ratio of static to its standard error.

The statistical significance of t is dependent upon its size and the number of degrees of freedom, or the number of observations minus the number of dependent restrictions on the sample. A common use of t is in the determination of the significance of differences between two means.

The 't' test was used to compare differences between Females and Males on Body Image Avoidance and Self-Esteem.

**Pearson Product Moment Correlation** was calculated to find out the relationship between the two study variables. The correlation coefficient is a measure of the linear association between two variables. Usually, Karl Pearson's correlation is used.

Values of the correlation coefficient are always between -1 and +1. A correlation coefficient of +1 indicates that two variables are perfectly related in a positive linear sense, and a correlation coefficient of 0 indicates that there is no linear relationship between the two variables.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter provides the results of the analysis of the data, along with the discussion of the result. The obtained data were consolidated, coded, and analysed using different statistical methods such as independent sample t-tests and product-moment correlation analysis. The results obtained are reported and discussed below.

*Table 4.1 The major analysis consists of an independent sample t-test and product-moment correlation.*

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t	Sig
Self-Esteem	Male	69	28.6957	4.31245	138	0.325	0.746
	Female	71	28.4648	4.08772	137.074	0.325	0.746

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Table 4.1 indicates the mean, standard deviation, t-value and level of significance among male and female young adults in self-esteem. The mean value among males is 28.6957 and among females is 28.4648. The standard deviation of self-esteem among males is 4.31245 and females are 4,08772. The t-value score is 0.325.

From the table, on the basis of the mean score, it is seen that there is no difference between the mean scores, which may be due to the fact that their levels of self-worth have increased as young adults in this generation are seemingly becoming more independent in their personal and social decisions. Thus, there is no significant difference in self-esteem between male and female young adults. Therefore, the null hypothesis stands are accepted.

**Table 4.2 The major analysis consists of an independent sample t-test and product-moment correlation.**

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t	Sig
Body Image	Male	69	35.5362	12.64281	138	1.396	0.165
Avoidance	Female	71	32.5915	12.32370	137.594	1.395	0.165

Table 4.2 indicates the mean, standard deviation, t-value and level of significance among male and female young adults in body image avoidance. The mean value among males is 35.5362 and among females is 32.5915. The standard deviation in males is found to be 12.64281 and among females is 12.32370. The t-value score is 1.396 and 1.395 in males and females respectively.

From the table, on the basis of the mean score, it is seen that there is no difference between the mean score, as this may be due to the fact that body image disturbances are equally suffered by both genders rather than one alone. Thus, it is seen that there is no significant difference in body image avoidance between male and female young adults. Therefore, the null hypothesis stands are accepted.

**Table 4.3: Correlation between variables self-esteem and body dissatisfaction**

	Self-Esteem	Body dissatisfaction
Self-Esteem	1	-.430
Body Image Avoidance	-.430	1

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

Table 4.3 indicates the product-moment correlation between study variables. It depicted that body image avoidance and self-esteem have a negative correlation with the significance of (1.96). So, the hypothesis which states that there will be no significant difference between body image avoidance and self-esteem is accepted.

Several studies show that body image avoidance and self-esteem are very much related variables. O'Dea, J. A. (2012) states that individuals who possess poor or pessimistic images of their bodies more conceivably initiate strict and unhealthy diets as well become more vulnerable to eating disorders. An individual's body image is highly determined by those elements surrounding their self-esteem, pressure and assistance of their family and friends, advertisement or other media content subjecting their bodily ideologies to a negative proposition. However, owning positive or high self-esteem indefinitely leads to a secure sense of one's own value and does indeed help younger adults be more content with their

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physique. Therefore, body image and self-esteem have a strong correlation such that individuals with lower levels of self-esteem are highly likely to report dissatisfaction with their body shape or figure, despite gender or age.

Body image avoidance in relation to that self-esteem is an under-explored field in psychology that needs more understanding through the help of such research. Due to individual differences, one's body shape or figure is truly diverse as it is a reminder that each of our bodies is distinctive. Nonetheless, many factors come into terms with a person's body differences such as their routine lifestyle, age, gender, bone structure, nutritional patterns, muscle composition, other genetic elements, and so on. Another component of such factors includes societal pressure to obtain an unrealistic beauty standard, internalised stereotypes against masculinity and femininity, trending culture or media influences such as advertisement and social media, past experiences such as bullying or teasing from peers as well as forceful parental impacts convincing that person to become a better version of themselves.

Avoidance of one's body image is referred to as any behaviour or attitude that leads to hiding or covering up one's body parts. Some of those actions include individuals trying to wear loosely fit clothing, only eating low-calorie fruits and vegetables, restricting themselves from the amount of food they eat, stop socialising and going to events altogether, weighing themselves inconsistently or looking in the mirror countless amounts of times. An individual who has lower body confidence than normal undoubtedly has lower self-esteem regardless of gender.

Self-esteem is a positive attitude one holds about oneself and this directly influences an individual's choice and judgement as well as a tempting feeling to compare themselves with other people on how they dress, what they eat, how lean or slim or physically fit that person is. An individual with an increased sense of self-esteem frequently has a constructive and optimistic view of their body image. Compared to those who present themselves with a decreased sense of self-esteem, they are likely to indulge in avoidance of one's body image or possess a pessimistic attitude about their physique.

The results show a negative correlation between the two variables: body image avoidance and self-esteem. Thus, from what we can acknowledge is that when self-esteem increases body image concerns decrease, on the contrary when self-esteem decreases body image concerns increases despite gender or age.

The study's results will improve the body of knowledge in this field and help the researcher better comprehend this complex relationship between body image avoidance and self-esteem. The study's findings will also be used to develop tactics to raise awareness among family, friends, and other young adults about the need for them to assume responsibility for instilling a healthier way of life, boosting their self-esteem, and providing appropriate measures to identify and challenge negative thoughts about one's own self. The researcher is quite optimistic and confident that this study will aid many young adults in improving themselves and moving forward both physically and intellectually.



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### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

There are numerous studies that state the relationship between body image avoidance and self-esteem associated with the selected population of young female and male adults. The present study was conducted to find out the relationship between body image avoidance and self-esteem among the above-mentioned population.

The sample for the present study consisted of 140 young adults (70 males and 70 females) from different places of India. The sample population was between 18-25 years of age. The Body Image Avoidance Questionnaire (BIAQ) and Rosenberg's self-esteem scale were used in this study. The collected data were analysed using an appropriate statistical technique such as t-test and Pearson correlation coefficient.

#### *Tenability of Hypotheses*

HYPOTHESES	TENABILITY
There will be no significant difference between Body Image Avoidance among male and female young adults.	Accepted
There will be no significant difference between Self- Esteem among male and female young adults.	Accepted
There will be no significant relationship between Body Image Avoidance and Self-Esteem among male and female young adults.	Accepted

### CONCLUSION

In this study, we find that there exists a certain correlation between self-esteem and body image avoidance with weight consciousness in female and male young adults. The result reveals that there is no significant relationship between self-esteem among male and female young adults and no significant relationship between body image avoidance in male and female young adults. It also reveals that there is no significant relationship between body image avoidance and self-esteem among young male and female adults. So, we conclude that there is a negative correlation between self-esteem and body image avoidance among female and male young adults.

#### *Implication of the Study*

Studies serve as the future generations building foundations. Body image disturbance is a huge issue seen all around the world, regardless of gender, age or societal upbringing. It can reckon the peace of mind of that particular individual on how they look at their own body. This study is relevant in the current scenario where lower levels of self-esteem affect how one perceives their body image. A promising but challenging area for future study all the more reveals that lower self-esteem levels are seen in both female and male young adults. The study also discloses that males are shown to have slightly higher body image avoidance than female young adults. So, self-esteem and body image avoidance have a significant relationship in both female and male young adults.

Thereby, bringing significant amounts of awareness towards this problem may help millions of individuals to not fall into the rabbit hole of self-criticizing behaviours which in turn leads to lower self-confidence among themselves. Familial support as well as understanding that their body size or shape is not all that matters and that it simply is their abilities, ambition, passion and determination to pursue their talents or dreams would also go a long way in the process of bringing their self-worth up.

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Accepting your body, taking care of one's health and seeing oneself in a positive light are those that should be given more priority. The findings of this study can be used as preliminary information for future research.

### *Limitation*

Despite all attempts to carry out the study scientifically and systematically, the study had some inherent limitations.

- The study only consists of 140 samples i.e., 70 females and 70 males respectively. Hence considering a bigger sample size would allow to pursue a wider scope for a generalised result.
- The data was obtained from Indian citizens residing in India and therefore cannot be considered as universal.
- The data only incorporates a limited age range of 18 to 25 years. Consequently, the result does not stretch to a more diverse age group.
- The study could have implemented more variables, not restraining itself from examining the significant relationship between self-esteem and body image avoidance.

### *Future Suggestions*

- The sample size could have been larger for the generalization of the result.
- Future studies can be conducted in populations from different geographical areas.
- Future studies can be conducted in different categories of age groups.
- Future studies can be conducted in a different culture such as rural or urban regions.
- Future studies should examine more factors influencing self-esteem and body image avoidance.

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### ***Acknowledgment***

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

### ***Conflict of Interest***

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

***How to cite this article:*** Krishnandhu, R. (2023). Weight Consciousness Influencing Body Image Avoidance and Self-Esteem Among Male and Female Young Adults. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 11(4), 2928-2948. DIP:18.01.277.20231104, DOI:10.25215/1104.277