

Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Among Indians and Non- Residents of India

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to investigate the Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance among Indians and Non- Residents of India (NRIs). Data was collected using Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire 3. The quantitative research design used a simple random sampling method and the total sample size is 200 of which 49 were NRI males, 51 NRI females and 48 Indian females, 52 Indian males. Independent sample T test statistics was used to analyze the data and shows that there is no significant difference between the Indians and NRIs in respect to sociocultural attitudes. The study concluded that there is no significant sociocultural attitudes towards appearance among Indians and NRIs.

Keywords: *Sociocultural, Indians, Non-Residents of India, Appearance, Attitudes*

An individual's attitude towards appearance with respect to specific culture influences his/her emotional or psychological wellbeing, self-perception, and their social interaction. Each and every society inside India and even outside India (Non-Resident Indians, NRIs) have different values, beliefs and beauty standards that shape an individual's identity. The dynamics of cultural norms is changing and shifting because of which socio-cultural attitudes towards appearance have become more complex and diversified. While agreeing to this statement for NRI people who find it difficult to live by staying true to their Indian values and adapting to western culture. The interactions between the Indian values and western culture results in very unique socio-cultural attitudes towards appearance, body image, and beauty ideals which differs from the various counterparts in India, where the cultural standards are evolved through local traditions, media, and historical contexts.

The Sociocultural Context of Appearance in India

In India over many generations the traditional ideals have been passed down that influence an individual's view about beauty and body image. The traditional ideals here refer to the historical, religious and cultural factors. India has a history of colonial history where people believed and spread the idea that fair skin means higher social status which automatically leads to more privilege. Because of this itself individuals started following the caste system in India which leads to even more discrimination among the people born, walking and living

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in the same country. As the time passed unknowingly these standards have been immersed in the culture present right now that has developed over the years. These ideals have been immersed in present culture through the film industry producing films and advertisements that often portrays characters who embody these beauty standards.

Beauty ideals when compared from many years before to now have evolved due to exposure to western media and globalization. But even with evolution some standards still influence people. For example, many people still prefer to have fair skin because of which many skin lightening beauty creams are launched by marketers and it is very much fast selling, mostly in the Indian society. Excluding people with darker skin tone that leads to discrimination based on skin colour is because the preference of fair skin colour is very deep rooted in people's mind. Even body being slim and having a particular body shape is very much idealized mostly among women. Because of these standards that are very much popular body image issues arises and many people become dissatisfied with their bodies. Many people get influenced by media like advertisements or film actors who promote following a strict diet like eating only one meal a day and that has helped them reduce their weight, or aggressively working out in the gym to reduce weight or gain weight for the people who are very lean. This brings about a drastic physical change in an individual's body and appearance which sometimes is positive and sometimes negative like over eating or eating disorders. These positive and negative effects can be different to different people depending on the body type of an individual. Negative effects can lead to many psychological problems like depression and anxiety.

Socio-cultural pressures related to appearance is magnified by the hierarchical nature of Indian society. During social events, weddings and communal gatherings extended families and peers critical expectations and judgements related to physical appearance like "you are aware right that you need to reduce weight", "you know using beauty creams can lighten your complexion", "you need to dress up nicely and look good", "you should eat something and gain weight and look healthy", leaves a great impact on the individual that disturbs their mental health. Due to which the individuals start to do the needful like excessive weight control, indulge in unhealthy eating habits to gain weight and use cosmetic products excessively to hide their dark complexion and avoid these critical comments. Some social standards are set in a way that "perfect physical appearance and "looking good" is linked to an individual's social worth or status, especially for women. When individuals internalize these standards, it results in low self- esteem and body dissatisfaction.

Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) And Their Sociocultural Attitudes

Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), who live outside of India but still try to maintain strong ties with their homeland and also maintain strong complex relationship with beauty standards. NRIs are influenced by both the beauty standards of their home country and the country and in which they reside, this is also known as dual cultural identity. Because individuals are trapped between following their traditional Indian beauty norms and navigating more diverse, westernized standards, westernized media and social environments present their new host country creates an internal conflict in an individual.

In Western societies beauty ideals often prioritize attributes such as facial features, skin tones, toned physiques, tall stature, body type and overall youth full appearance. For NRIs having to adapt to these conflicting beauty standards could be challenging as they may be able to feel the pressure to conform to their family's expectation in their hometown and the

contradictory societal beauty standards of their host country. These competing pressures could lead the individuals to feel of self-doubt, confusion and body dissatisfaction.

The Role of Media in Shaping Sociocultural Attitudes

Both, in India and among the NRIs, the media plays an important role in shaping sociocultural attitudes towards appearance. Mainly the film industry, advertisements and television shows contribute to the continuance of the beauty standards. Since flawless features, fair skin and slim body is spoken highly of people have started to believe that these traits are important for social success. The influence of social media platforms such as “Instagram”, “Facebook”, “Snapchat” and “TikTok” portray tailored images of “perfect” bodies that the individuals feel the pressure to meet.

NRIs go through feelings of alienation or inadequacy, specifically if the media representations of beauty do not reflect their own beauty features. Because of social media NRIs may feel the need to tailor their online presence to match with both their cultural identity and the expectations of the global audience. This balancing act could lead the individual to increased pressure to look a certain way and can create feelings of body dissatisfaction, especially if individuals feel that they do not live up to the unattainable standards set by influencers and celebrities on social media.

Consumer Psychology and Appearance

Socio-cultural attitudes toward appearance have a direct effect on consumer behaviour, mainly in the fashion and beauty industries. Beauty standards mostly rule the consumer demand for skin treatments, products for weight loss, cosmetic products and fashion items that are designed to change or enhance an individual's appearance. In India people wish to meet the desired beauty standards for which they choose from varieties of options like cosmetic surgeries, supplements for weight loss and fairness creams which presently is growing in the market.

Consumer behaviour for NRIs is determined by traditional Indian values and beliefs on appearance and the westernized influence of consumer culture that prioritizes using high end beauty products, fitness and grooming.

The persistent bombardment of advertisements that promote beauty-enhancing products can conserve the idea that beauty is something that can be bought which will lead to people giving more importance to their external appearance.

Psychological Implications of Sociocultural Attitudes

The internalization of sociocultural attitudes towards appearance has been associated with a variety of psychological outcomes like, low self-esteem, body dissatisfaction, depression, anxiety and eating disorders like anorexia and bulimia. In Indian society individuals, especially women, begin to view themselves primarily as objects to be looked at rather than as a whole person with intrinsic worth because of the importance of appearance. This is also known as self-objectification.

For NRIs the experience of living between two cultures could encourage a unique resilience, where some individuals learn to develop a more flexible inclusive sense of beauty. But the NRIs face the challenge of navigating these multiple beauty standards which lead them to experience social anxiety, identity confusion and difficulties in forming authentic

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relationships because of the pressure to conform to multiple, often contradictory, appearance ideals.

METHODOLOGY

Objectives:

1. To study the socio-cultural attitudes towards appearance among adults living in India.
2. To study the socio-cultural attitudes towards appearance of Non- Residents of India (NRIs) among adults.
3. To compare the socio-cultural attitudes towards appearance of people living in India and the Non- Residents of India (NRIs) among adults.
4. To compare the sociocultural attitudes towards appearance of people living in India and the Non-Residents of India among adults, based on Religion (NRI- Hindu and Muslims, Indian- Hindu and Muslims).
5. To compare the difference between Internalization general, Internalization athlete, Pressure and Information of socio-cultural attitudes towards appearance of people living in India and the Non-Residents of India (NRIs) among adults.

Hypothesis:

- **H0-** There is no significant difference between socio-cultural attitudes towards appearance of people living in India and the Non- Residents of India (NRIs) among adults.
- **H1-** There is no significant difference between socio-cultural attitudes towards appearance of people living in India and the Non- Residents of India (NRIs) among adults, based on Religion (NRI-Hindu and Muslims, India- Hindu and Muslims.)
- **H2-** There is no significant difference between Internalization general, Internalization athlete, Pressure and Information of socio-cultural attitudes towards appearance of people living in India and the Non-Residents of India (NRIs) among adults.

Research Design:

- The present study falls under quantitative t- test research design on socio-cultural attitudes towards appearance of people living in India and the Non- Residents of India (NRIs) among adults.

Sampling Technique:

- In this study sample selection is by simple random sampling techniques.
- Sample for the study is consisting of 300 Adults of which 150 Indian residents and 150 Non Residents of India.

Tools used:

Independent variable:

Measures socio-cultural attitudes towards appearance (Thompson et al. 2004)

Dependent variable:

Among adults of Indian residents and Non-Residents of India (NRIs).

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Description of the Tool:

- The Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire-3 (SATAQ-3) is a 30-item self-report survey that measures how people endorse Western beauty standards in the media. It's used to assess the influence of media on body image and eating disorders.
- The tool measures: a. Information (how people perceive the importance of media messages about beauty.) b. Pressures (how people feel pressured to conform to media ideals.) c. Internalization - general (how people internalize the thin ideal.) d. Internalization - athlete (how people internalize the athletic ideal.)
- Respondents rate each item on a 5-point scale from 1 (definitely disagree) to 5 (definitely agree) Higher scores indicate greater endorsement of media ideals.

Procedure

The questionnaire paper copies contained 30 questions and completion of the easy survey took a maximum of 10-15 minutes. The responses were collected from family, friends and people visiting the library. The responses consisted of 100 Indians and 100 NRIs of age 24 and above. The participants filled out the form actively. The data collected were analysed using inferential statistics. Using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences- SPSS, the data obtained was analysed and the relationship between Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance among Indians and NRIs was seen.

Statistical Analysis:

The collected data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics of t-test methods and also used the independent sample t-test method with the use of SPSS Statistics 20. In order to present summarized information about the variables and highlight the relationship between the variables and give explanations for the relationship and draw conclusion based on exploration.

Inclusion Criteria:

- People 24 years and above of age Genders of both male and female
- People living in India and Indians living abroad (NRI)

Exclusion Criteria:

People below the age of 24 People who are not Indians.

RESULTS

Table 1 indicates the t-test: Two Sample Assuming Equal Variances for Socio- Cultural Attitudes towards Appearance among Indians and Non- Residents of India (NRIs)

Group Statistics					
	POPULATION	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
NRI and Indian Scores	NRI	100	80.51	16.0715	1.60715
	INDIAN	100	81.78	18.4996	1.84996

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Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
NRI and Indian Scores	Equal variances assumed	0.525	0.469	-0.518	198	0.605	-1.27	2.45056	-6.1026	3.56256

The t-value is -0.518. The p -value is $>.00001$. The result is not significant at $p <.01$.

The statistics that were used was an independent sample t-test to compare the scores of NRI and Indian population groups. Levene's test for equality of variances revealed that the assumption of equal variances was met $F=0.525$. The t-test for equality of means indicated that there was no significant difference between the NRI group ($M=80.51$, $SD=16.07$) and the Indian group ($M=81.78$, $SD=18.50$), $t=0.52$, $P=0.605$. The mean difference was -1.27 (95%CI: -6.10 to 3.56). Thus, the findings suggest that the NRI and the Indian groups do not differ significantly in their scores and hold relatively similar views on sociocultural attitudes towards appearance. Factors like shared cultural values, influence of Indian media across both populations and globalization of beauty norms are the reasons for the significant lack of difference. While still living abroad they have not forgot about their traditions and cultures that they learned while living in India. This could be the reason for not much difference between Indian residents and Non- Residents of India.

Table 2 indicates the t-test: Two Sample Assuming Equal Variances for Internalization – General among Indians and Non Residents of India (NRIs)

Group Statistics					
	POPULATION	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
INTERNALIZATION-GENERAL INDIAN AND NRI SCORES	INTERNALIZATION GENERAL INDIAN	100	23.11	7.04516	0.70452
	INTERNALIZATION GENERAL NRI	100	21.44	6.42332	0.64233

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
INDIAN AND NRI SCORES	Equal variances assumed	1.051	0.307	1.752	198	0.081	1.67	0.95338	-0.21008	3.55008

The t-value is 1.752. The p -value is $>.00001$. The result is not significant at $p <.01$.

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An independent-samples t-test was administered to compare the scores of the subscale Internalization-General between the NRI and Indian groups. Levene's test for equality of variances pointed out that the assumption of equal variances was met, $F=1.051$. The t-test for equality of means indicated that there was no significant difference between the NRI group ($M=21.44$, $SD=6.42$) and the Indian group ($M=23.11$, $SD=7.05$), $t=1.752$, $P=0.081$. The mean difference was 1.67 (95% CI: -0.21 to 3.55). Thus, these findings suggest that the NRI and Indian groups do not differ significantly in their levels of internalization of sociocultural beauty norms. Which means that that both the Indian residents and NRIs social beauty norms are similar to an extent which points out that media exposure and the cultural norms may shape the body image perceptions in both groups. NRIs are trying to balance influences from both Indian and Western culture. Even though the mean score for internalization was little higher among Indians, the difference was not statistically significant.

Table 3 indicates the t-test: Two Sample Assuming Equal Variances for Internalization – Athlete among Indians and Non- Residents of India (NRIs)

Group Statistics										
POPULATION		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean					
INTERNALIZATION-ATHELETE NRI AND INDIAN SCORES	INTERNALIZATION ATHELETE NRI	100	13.5700	4.55772	.45577					
	INTERNALIZATION ATHELETE INDIAN	100	14.2200	4.62226	.46223					

Independent Samples Test											
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper	
NRI AND INDIAN SCORES	Equal variances assumed	.004	.949	-1.001	198	.318	-.65000	.64914	-1.93011	.63011	

The t-value is 1.752. The p-value is $>.00001$. The result is not significant at $p <.01$.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the scores of the subscale Internalization-Athlete between NRI and Indian groups. Levene's test for equality of variances pointed out that the assumption of equal variances was met, $F=0.004$. The t-test for equality of means indicated that there was no significant difference between the NRI group ($M=13.57$, $SD=4.56$) and the Indian group ($M=14.22$, $SD=4.62$), $t=-1.001$, $P=0.318$. The mean difference was -0.65 (95% CI: -1.93 to 0.63). Thus, these findings suggest that the NRI and Indian groups do not differ significantly in their levels of internalization of athlete related sociocultural beauty norms. The similar scores between Indians and NRIs show that both the groups internalize same set of societal expectations related to physical appearance in connection with athleticism. This result might reflect the globalization of body standards related to athleticism, such as physical fitness standard, low body fat and lean muscle often presented in both Indian and Western media. These standards are widely promoted across global platforms and are commonly associated with athletes, contributing to the convergence of internalization levels across different cultural groups. The results portray that even with the possible cultural differences, the global prevalence of athletic beauty standards may result in similar levels of internalization.

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Furthermore, this finding implies that the influence of Western media on NRIs does not lead to significant differences in internalization when compared to their Indian counterparts. This suggests that, despite the possible cultural differences, the global prevalence of athletic beauty ideals may result in similar levels of internalization.

Table 4 indicates the t-test: Two Sample Assuming Equal Variances For Pressures among Indians and Non- Residents of India (NRIs)

Group Statistics										
POPULATION		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean					
PRESSURE NRI AND INDIAN SCORES	PRESSURE NRI	100	16.8200	5.50001	.55000					
	PRESSURE INDIAN	100	16.9000	5.68091	.56809					

Independent Samples Test											
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper	
NRI AND INDIAN SCORES	Equal variances assumed	.209	.648	-.101	198	.920	-.08000	.79071	-1.63930	1.47930	

The t-value is -0.101. The p-value is >.00001. The result is not significant at $p < .01$.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the scores of the subscale Pressure between the NRI and Indian groups. Levene's test for equality of variances indicated that the assumption of equal variances was met, $F = 0.209$. The t-test for equality of means revealed that there was no significant difference between the NRI group ($M = 16.82$, $SD = 5.50$) and the Indian group ($M = 16.90$, $SD = 5.68$), $t = -0.101$, $P = 0.920$. The mean difference was -0.08 (95% CI: -1.64 to 1.48). Thus, these results suggest that the NRI and Indian groups do not differ significantly in their perceived sociocultural pressure regarding appearance. Now when both the groups have reported similar levels of pressure, the results suggests that Indians and NRIs experience comparable societal expectations regarding appearance, even with their potential cultural and environmental differences. One of the possible explanation for these results is the globalization of beauty standard, particularly through advertisements, and entertainment industries, which influence body image perceptions across different cultural settings. Considering that both groups are exposed to similar platforms, they may internalize the same beauty standards, leading to comparable levels of perceived pressure. Also, this finding suggests that relocation to a different country (as in the case of NRIs) does not necessarily change one's experience of societal pressure regarding appearance. This could stipulate that family, community expectations, and traditional beauty norms persist regardless of geographical location, contributing to a uniform perception of sociocultural pressure.

Table 5 indicates the t-test: Two Sample Assuming Equal Variances For Information among Indians and Non- Residents of India (NRIs)

Group Statistics					
POPULATION		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
INFORMATION NRI AND INDIANS SCORES	INFORMATION NRI	100	28.6800	5.58295	.55829
	INFORMATION INDIAN	100	27.5500	6.40608	.64061

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the	
									Lower	Upper
NRI AND INDIANS SCORES	Equal variances assumed	.703	.403	1.330	198	.185	1.13000	.84975	-.54572	2.80572

The t-value is 1.330. The p-value is >.00001. The result is not significant at $p < .01$.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the scores of the subscale Information between the NRI and Indian groups. Levene’s test for equality of variances indicated that the assumption of equal variances was met, $F=0.703$. The t-test for equality of means revealed that there was no significant difference between the NRI group ($M=28.68$, $SD=5.58$) and the Indian group ($M=27.55$, $SD=6.41$), $t=1.330$, $P=0.185$. The mean difference was 1.13 (95% CI: -0.55 to 2.81). Thus, these results suggest that the NRI and Indian groups do not differ significantly in their levels of exposure to sociocultural information related to appearance. One of the possible explanations for these results is the global accessibility of media and beauty standards. With the rise of digital advertising, and international beauty trends, individuals across different geographical locations are exposed to similar beauty ideals, regardless of whether they reside in abroad or India. This global media exposure may explain why NRIs and Indians do not significantly differ in their reported levels of information regarding appearance.

Moreover, it is possible that both Indian and NRI communities emphasize appearance-related values through family expectations, cultural norms and peer influences. The transnational nature of beauty standards—especially those portrayed in Bollywood, Western fashion, and global influencers—could contribute to the lack of a significant difference in sociocultural appearance information between the two groups.

Although the mean Information score for NRIs (28.68) was slightly higher than that for Indians (27.55), the difference was not statistically significant ($p=0.185$), meaning that this observed variation is likely due to chance rather than a true difference between the populations.

Table 6 indicates the t-test: Two Sample Assuming Equal Variances for Hindu and Muslim demographic variables among Indians.

Group Statistics										
POPULATION		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean					
DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLE-RELIGION INDIAN MUSLIM AND HINDU SCORES	RELIGION INDIAN MUSLIM	44	73.6818	16.02726	2.41620					
	RELIGION INDIAN HINDU	56	88.1429	17.93060	2.39608					

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
MUSLIM AND HINDU SCORES	Equal variances assumed	.003	.960	-4.193	98	0.00**	-14.46104	3.44923	-21.30593	-7.61615

The t-value is -4.193. *The p-value is <.00001. The result is significant at p <.01.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the scores of sociocultural attitudes toward appearance between Indian Muslims and Indian Hindus. Levene’s test for equality of variances indicated that the assumption of equal variances was met, F=0.003 which shows that the variance in scores between the two religious groups was almost equal. The t-test for equality of means revealed a statistically significant difference between Indian Muslims (M=73.68, SD=16.03) and Indian Hindus (M=88.14, SD=17), t=-4.193, P<0.001.

The mean difference was -14.46 (95% CI: -21.31 to -7.62), indicating that Indian Hindus scored significantly higher than Indian Muslims on this measure of sociocultural attitudes toward appearance. The findings indicate that Indian Hindus report a significantly stronger acceptance of sociocultural appearance standards than Indian Muslims. This difference could be attributed to variations in religious, cultural and societal norms regarding beauty standards and appearance. Hinduism, has historically been associated with stronger media representation, Bollywood influence, and traditional beauty ideals that are widely promoted in Indian society. Hindu rituals, cultural practices, and festivals often emphasize aesthetic presentation, ornamentation, and grooming, which could contribute to higher internalization of beauty standards. Whereas, Islamic teachings and cultural practices often emphasize modesty in presentation and dress. For example, Muslim women, may be encouraged to prioritize inner values over external appearance. As a result, Indian Muslims may internalize sociocultural beauty ideals to a lesser degree than their Hindu counterparts. Indian Hindus, may consume more conventional Indian media, which heavily promotes Westernized and Bollywood-inspired beauty standards. In contrast, Indian Muslims might have different sources of media exposure, including religiously influenced content that places less emphasis on external appearance.

Table 7 indicates the t-test: Two Sample Assuming Equal Variances for Hindu and Muslim demographic variables among Non- Residents of India (NRIs).

Group Statistics										
POPULATION		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean					
DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLE-RELIGION NRI MUSLIM AND HINDU SCORES	RELIGION NRI MUSLIM	55	77.4364	15.85556	2.13796					
	RELIGION NRI HINDU	45	84.2667	15.69655	2.33990					

Independent Samples Test											
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper	
MUSLIM AND HINDU SCORES	Equal variances assumed	.000	.999	-2.153	98	0.033**	-6.83030	3.17278	-13.12658	-.53403	

The t-value is -2.153. *The p-value is <.00005. The result is significant at p <.05.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the scores of sociocultural attitudes toward appearance between NRI Muslims and NRI Hindus. Levene’s test for equality of variances indicated that the assumption of equal variances was met, F= 0.000, which shows that the variance in scores between the two religious groups was almost equal. The t-test for equality of means revealed a statistically significant difference between NRI Muslims (M = 77.44, SD = 15.86) and NRI Hindus (M = 84.27, SD = 15.70), t = -2.153, P = 0.034. The mean difference was -6.83 (95% CI: -13.13 to -0.53), indicating that NRI Hindus scored significantly higher than NRI Muslims on this measure of sociocultural attitudes toward appearance. This result suggests that NRI Hindus internalize socio cultural beauty standards to a greater extent than NRI Muslims. Hindu cultural spaces may emphasize appearance ideals more noticeable, which influences the attitudes toward body image and beauty. Islamic teachings often emphasize modesty in dressing and appearance, which could reduce the pressure to conform to mainstream beauty ideals. In contrast, Hindu traditions and media representations may place greater importance on aesthetic appearance.

DISCUSSION

This study attempted to investigate the Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance among Indians and Non- Residents of India (NRIs). The sociocultural attitudes towards appearance refers to the internalization of beauty ideals and physical appearance comparisons. Internalization takes place when an individual accepts the societal beauty standards and adopts behaviour to attain that standard. The study found no significant difference between the two groups, indicating both the groups hold relatively similar views on sociocultural attitudes towards appearance. Ahmadpanah et al. (2019) investigated the relationship between sociocultural Attitudes towards Appearance, Self-Esteem and Symptoms of Body-

Dysmorphic Disorders and found that Among young Iranian adults, sociocultural attitudes towards appearances and BDD scores, as rated by experts', were related, while SE was not. The shared variance between symptoms of BDD and sociocultural attitudes towards appearance was low, suggesting that other factors such as mating and career concerns together with social feedback might be more important in explaining symptoms of body dysmorphic disorders. Wang et al. (2022) examined the mediating effect of negative appearance evaluation on the relationship between eating attitudes and sociocultural attitudes toward appearance and found that negative appearance evaluation fully mediates the relationship between eating attitudes and sociocultural attitudes toward appearance. An individual's attitude toward eating affects negative body perceptions and thus their perception of their own body shape. Their exploration of the specific effects of eating attitudes on body perception provides a psychological basis for guidance and developing interventions regarding attitudes toward the body. Lai et al. (2013) investigated the associations of sociocultural attitudes towards appearance with body dissatisfaction and eating behaviors and found that Hong Kong adolescents, particularly girls exhibited a remarked level of body dissatisfaction, external, emotional, restrained and disordered eating behaviors. Hierarchical regression analyses indicated that age, sex and BMI were the most common contributing factors to individual eating styles. Baceviciene and Jankauskiene (2021) examined the Changes in sociocultural attitudes towards appearance, body image, eating attitudes and behaviours, physical activity, and quality of life in students before and during COVID-19 lockdown and found that the majority of students cope with lockdown-related situation well. However, based on the Tripartite influence model, one can speculate that a drastic increase in the internalization of stereotyped thin/low body fat ideals might trigger body image concerns and increase disordered eating after the lockdown. Specific interventions helping students to decrease internalization of stereotyped body ideals, to promote positive body image and physical activity may be beneficial during and after the COVID-19-related lockdown. Griffiths et al. (2000) investigated the relationship between restrained eating and sociocultural attitudes to appearance and general dissatisfaction and found that differences in psychopathology between dieting disordered and non-dieting disordered populations, and suggested that females who practice dietary restraint were aware of and internalize concepts about thinness and beauty. Furthermore, the findings suggested that it is not just exposure to these ideals but the acceptance of them that leads to restrained eating. Mickūnienė et al. (2018) investigated the relationship between the sociocultural attitudes towards appearance and the lifestyle and self-esteem of adolescents and found that the sociocultural attitudes towards appearance of adolescents are related to a more harmful lifestyle and lower self-esteem. Therefore, health literacy of adolescents has to be increased by teaching proper attitudes towards their bodies, appropriate diet, and exercising. Pokrajac-Bulian and Ambrosi-Randić (2007) investigated the relationship between sociocultural attitudes towards appearance and body dissatisfaction among adolescent girls in Croatia and found that the girls with high scores on the internalization and awareness scales were the most dissatisfied with their bodies. The present study suggests that the awareness and adoption of the thin body ideal and high body dissatisfaction are a part of the process of globalization, which is now present in most cultures and nations. Czepczor- Bernat et al. (2017) investigated the relationship between an ideal body stereotype internalization and sociocultural attitudes towards appearance: a preliminary cross-national comparison between Czech, Polish and American women and found that: Societal and cultural influences on body image are present among Polish, Czech and American women. They considerably determine their efforts in pursuit of an ideal body shape.

Summary

The present study aimed to investigate the sociocultural attitudes towards appearance among Indians and Non- Residents of India (NRIs). The study included a sample of 200 adults including both male and female. The study was conducted with informed consent from the participants. The participants also ensured and informed that the information stays confidential. The data for the study was collected using Sociocultural Attitudes towards Appearance Questionnaire 3, third version (SATAQ 3). The collected data is depicted using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. The data were collected and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 20 using Independent Samples T test.

CONCLUSION

The study shows with the data collected and analyzed, there is no significant difference between sociocultural attitudes towards appearance among Indians and Non-Residents of India (NRIs). Therefore, the study accepts the null hypothesis (H₀- there is no significant relationship between Sociocultural Attitudes towards Appearance among Indians and Non-Residents of India.)

Limitation

- Respondents who are literate are only involved in this study excluding the illiterate respondents from the population.
- A larger population size could have been used.

Future scope

For future studies in this area, it is recommended to use the latest version of the questionnaire with dimensions of social media. The expansion of the study with any other two populations. A few ideas for future research might include the investigating sociocultural attitudes with factors like, body image, eating disorder, self-esteem and any specific population.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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