

Research Paper

I Love All of Me: Understanding the Role of Body Appreciation, Social Safeness, and Self-compassion among Women

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted to understand relationship between Body appreciation, social safeness and self-compassion among women. Data was collected from 209 females residing in urban cities of India within the age range of 18-30 years. A correlational analysis was carried out using SPSS version 26. The analyses showed a significant, positive and moderate relationship between Body Appreciation and Social safeness and Body appreciation and self-compassion. It was also found that a significant, positive and high correlation between self-compassion and social safeness exists.

Keywords: Body Appreciation, Social Safeness, Self-compassion

The role of body image in one's thoughts, emotions and behaviors in daily life is important. One of the first researchers to study experiences of body under a social and psychological framework in 1950s was Paul Schilder. Body image was understood as image of own body formed in their mind. It is the subjective image of body of an individual, regardless how their body truly appears.

Embracing one's body is an important contributor towards well-being of an individual. Body appreciation is defined as one's ability to accept, treat their body with respect, hold positive attitudes towards their body and doesn't accept the societal standards of beauty and attractiveness (Tyla and Wood-Barcalow, 2015). It is viewed as a condition where an individual is involved in the feeling of being one with the body. The concept of body appreciation is fundamentally different from the construct of negative body image because body appreciation includes a lot more than just not having issues with how one looks but also includes positive behaviors like intuitive eating and higher self-esteem (Satinsky et al., 2012).

Social safeness is an outcome of emotional regulation that has a strong potential to lessen the suffering brought on by body dissatisfaction and to enhance positive body image. Social safeness includes experience of social world as warm, safe and soothing. It is associated with experiencing affection, kindness and support.

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The formation of self-compassion - the act of developing a benevolent demeanor and approach towards oneself - is what leads to compassionate behavior in others. To rephrase it differently, having compassion for both one's own well-being and that of others plays an integral role in comprehending how deficiencies concerning social security interrelating with mental health problems. Neff (2003) introduced the theoretical concept of self-compassion into mainstream psychological research by drawing on Buddhist principles. Self-compassion is largely influenced by the experiences of early infancy. Gilbert and Procter (2006) view a sense of belonging and a solid attachment to carers as crucial factors in the growth of self-compassion. A person may use the recollection of being treated with warmth and kindness as a model for how to behave himself or herself in trying circumstances. As a result, the capacity to practice kindness towards oneself may result from having access to others' paradigm of assurance and support.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Body image is a multi-dimensional component which includes perceptions, attitudes and feeling about body size and shape and related behaviors. It is an evolving phenomenon which affects women every day.

According to Homan and Tylka's study (2014), undergraduate women who have a higher sense of appreciation for their bodies are more inclined to routinely engage for strenuous exercises not taking in the regard to their appearance or weight. Additionally, negative beliefs and actions that are harmful to a person's mental and physical well-being, such as inappropriate perfectionist tendencies (Iannantuono & Tylka, 2012), unhealthy dieting practices (Gillen, 2015), nutrition and size-based conversations (Wasylikiw & Butler, 2014), and signs of depression (Gillen, 2015), are inversely correlated with body appreciation. Some studies show that higher levels of appreciation of body act as factors that are protective against the ill effects of mass media and their portrayal of thin women. For example, Halliwell et al (2013) found that females who were high on body appreciation and high on thin-ideal internalization, the reported appearance -discrepancies were seen as less important.

The relations of self-compassion and elements of well-being of psyche has been examined in numerous research. High self-compassion was observed to adversely be connected with rumination tendencies, depressive symptoms, and anxiety in Neff's (2003) ground-breaking study demonstrating that negative mental health symptomatology was less common in people who had a higher level of self-compassion. Self-compassion has also linked to decreased levels of objectified figure consciousness, shame, anxiety of physique in a social context, and physical dissatisfaction (Mosewich et al. 2011).

Albertson et al., (2014) conducted a study that involved meditation training of compassion for self to women. The results imply visible reductions for levels of body discontent and shame related to body and increase in body appreciation. The possible reasons include that self-compassion might have reduced the participant's tendency to demean their bodies by teaching to be kind to self. Kelly et al. (2016) studied level of compassion on a day and how it influences body image and affects among female undergraduates. It was found that treating oneself with self-compassion helped women to maintain healthier body image when they come across threats related to image of their bodies. Similarly, Stephen et al (2016) conducted a study among female college students and found that changes in compassion for self that occurs daily have contributed to changes to perception of body.

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Individuals who perceive their social surroundings as comforting, soothing and secure are likely to deal with obstacles adeptly while being more flexible. The pursuit of slimness in relation to body image can serve as one such strategy designed specifically for safeguarding oneself against these perceived threats; an attempt aimed at preventing rejection based on physical appearance. Similarly, Oliveira et al.'s (2016) study indicated that pleasant memories associated with warmth and safety during early periods are correlated positively with a positive outlook towards one's own physique. According to Wood-Barcalow and co-authors (2010), a correlation exists between observing body positively with significant social connections, including close emotional relationships such as family members, or peers. Pinto et al (2017) conducted a study on women aged between 18 and 50, found that women with higher levels of social safeness, who have current feelings of social connectedness and acceptance tend to have a kinder and more respectful attitude towards their body.

METHODOLOGY

Hypotheses

- **H1:** There will be a positive relationship between Body appreciation and Social Safeness among women
- **H2:** There will be a positive relationship between Body Appreciation and Self-compassion among women
- **H3:** There will be a positive relationship between social safeness and Self-compassion among women

Objectives

The present study sees the relationship between Body Appreciation, Social Safeness and Social compassion among women within the age range of 18-30 years.

Sample

The present study used purposive sampling method to collect data from females within the range of 18-30 years living in the urban areas in India. A total of 209 responses were collected with the help of google forms.

Research design

A correlational research design was used to understand the relationship among Body Appreciation, Social Safeness and Self-compassion among females. A self-report questionnaire with three scales was distributed with the help of google forms. The data of 209 females within the age range of 18-30 years living in the urban cities of India was collected and analyzed.

- **Inclusion criteria:** Individuals who identify as females falling within the 18 to 30 age range residing in India.
- **Exclusion criteria:** Individuals who are below or above 18-30 age range were not included in the study. Participants who failed to complete the questionnaire were also not included in the study.

Statistical analysis

The responses were entered in MS excel 2007 and the Descriptive and correlational analyses was carried out using SPSS version 26. Correlation analysis using Pearson product-moment

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was conducted to understand the relationship among body appreciation, social safeness and self-compassion.

Variables

- **Independent Variables**
 1. Body appreciation
- **Dependent Variables**
 1. Social safeness
 2. Self-compassion

Instruments

Three measures were used in this study:

1. **Body Appreciation Scale:** It is a ten-item scale (BAS-2) that was introduced by Tylka and Wood-Barcalow in 2015 to gauge people's admiration, acceptance, and optimistic outlooks towards their bodies. It measures four specific attributes of an individual's perception regarding his/her physical form: (a) whether or not they have a positive view of themselves; (b) if they embrace every aspect of themselves in spite of flaws like body shape, weight etc.;(c) sustaining wellbeing through healthy practices; and last but certainly not least(d), defending oneself from deception propagated by unreasonable media standards. The tool uses a Likert-based metric that involves five options ranging between 1 indicating never up till 5 indicating always. The results are derived by taking the average of the respondents' ratings for each of the 10 items, which range from 1 to 5. This instrument was chosen because it is the most widely used and thoroughly tested body appreciation scale available, is simple to give and assess, and is brief. The BAS-2 also has high internal consistency dependability (Cronbach's alpha =.97).
2. **Social safeness and Pleasure scale:** It is a 11-item scale developed by Gilbert et al. in 2009. A 5-point Likert scale with a range of 1 indicating nearly never to 5 indicating almost usually is used to score each item. This scale reflects how much a person feels comfortable, secure, and calming in their social environment. For this scale, the Cronbach alpha coefficients ranged from 0.91 to 0.94. Additionally, this scale's convergent validity has been verified (Gilbert et al., 2009).
3. **Self-compassion Scale (SCS):** Constituting the short form of SCS from its long version (Neff, 2003), Rees and colleagues formulated a self-report scale consisting of twelve items. Ranging between 'nearly never' to 'very usually', each item is evaluated on an intricate five-point Likert scale. The polarity represented by two opposing ends constitutes every couplet among six subscales - namely self-kindness/self-judgement, shared humanity/isolation as well as mindfulness/over-identification. Scores indicating stronger pole positions make for more compassionate figures since negative poles are valued inversely. With respect to overall scoring based on Cronbach's alpha score recorded at .87 according to Rees et al.'s records in 2011; beyond that correlation with total scores accounted for between short and long forms marked up at .97 also reigned supreme over their findings.

Procedure

With the help of google forms, a questionnaire was sent to females residing in urban cities of India. The form included an informed consent, a small description of the test, questions about demographic details and three psychological scales. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, with the inclusion criteria of individuals who identify as females falling

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within the 18 to 30 age range residing in India. The forms were distributed through social media platforms (like, WhatsApp, Instagram, LinkedIn) and academic networks in university. Data from 209 females were collected, and responses were entered in MS excel 2007. Descriptive and correlational analyses was carried out using SPSS version 26 to understand the relationship among body appreciation, social safeness and self-compassion.

Data Collection

Participants were recruited online through social media platforms and academic networks in university.

RESULTS

Table No. 1 Descriptive Statistics for variables under study

Variables	N	Mean	Standard deviation
Social Safeness (SS)	209	38.78	8.14
Self-compassion (SC)	209	36.11	7.32
Body Appreciation (BA)	209	48.65	9.26

Table 1 depicts results from descriptive analysis of Body appreciation, social safeness and Self-compassion. The mean score of Body appreciation is 48.6 and a standard deviation of 9.26. The mean score of self-compassion is 36.11 and a standard deviation of 7.32. And for Social safeness, the mean is 28.78 and standard deviation is 8.14.

Table No. 2 Correlation analysis of Body Appreciation, Social safeness and Self-compassion

Variable	BA	SS	SC
Body Appreciation	1		
Social Safeness	0.359**	1	
Self-compassion	0.498**	0.501**	1

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

The findings from correlational analyses showed body appreciation being correlated significantly with social safeness and Self-compassion. It was found that there is a significant positive and moderate correlation between Body Appreciation and Social Safeness. The r-value obtained was 0.359 which is significant at 0.05 level. It was found that there is a significant positive and moderate correlation between Body Appreciation and Self-compassion. The r-value obtained was 0.498 which is significant at 0.05 level. Lastly a significant, positive and high correlation between social safeness and Self-compassion. The r-value obtained was 0.501 which is significant at 0.05 level.

CONCLUSION

The present study was conducted to understand relationship among Body appreciation, social safeness and self-compassion. Data was collected from 209 females residing in urban cities of India within the age range of 18-30 years. The descriptive and correlational analyses was carried out using SPSS version 26. Correlational analyses showed a significant, positive and moderate relationship between Body Appreciation and Social safeness and Body appreciation and self-compassion. It was also found that a significant, positive and high correlation between self-compassion and social safeness exists.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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