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## A CORRELATIONAL STUDY OF BODY-IMAGE AND SELF-ESTEEM AMONG ADULTS WHO USE ONLINE DATING APPS

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### Abstract

Apps and websites that facilitate online dating are rapidly becoming increasingly common ways to meet potential partners. Online dating, despite (Mlaz, 2020) having some great qualities, has been shown to have a negative impact on how people regard themselves. Because online dating is predominately (Enguix & Ardevol, 2012) based on visually observable characteristics, users are commonly objectified as a result of their participation in the activity. This may result in unfavourable effects in terms of body dissatisfaction. On the other hand, the outcomes of prior research studies investigating this link have produced conflicting findings. The present study aimed to correlate body image and self-esteem among those adults who uses online dating apps. Data from 100 participants were gathered using purposive and snowball sampling technique. Rosenberg's self-esteem and Body Uneasiness Test has been used to measure the variables. The findings depicted that there is a significant correlation between body image and self-esteem among those who use online dating apps and body image significantly predicts self-esteem. In addition, society as a whole can relax its judgement of persons who use online dating more regularly, who it incorrectly assumes are trying to make up for shortcomings in their offline lives.

**Key words:** Body image, Self-esteem, online-dating,

## Introduction

Over the course of the past few years, there has been a significant shift towards the establishment of romantic connections through the use of the internet by a growing number of individuals. According to Blackhart, Fitzpatrick, and Williamson (2014), the emergence of online dating apps was made possible by advancements in mobile technology. These apps are now ingrained in the culture of contemporary dating. People now have the opportunity to meet a wide range of people from different parts of the world thanks to the proliferation of online dating applications. It is possible to discover a potential date at any time by using a mobile phone to browse an online dating app and looking for someone to go out with.

The vast majority of dating apps function in the following way: users begin by creating a profile by uploading images and providing a brief description of themselves. When other people view the profile, they will then have the opportunity to "like" or "dislike" it. When two users of a dating app "match," the programme allows them to immediately begin exchanging texts with one another. When looking at the figures, which showed that 219,69 million people around the world used online dating in the year 2019, it is clear that the popularity of these apps is visible.

The word "online dating" refers to the process of meeting potential romantic partners through the use of online dating websites, whether for a one-night stand or for a committed relationship. The process of online dating begins with users creating self-descriptive profiles, which are then used to match users with databases containing profiles of other potential dates. There are several different ways that users can be matched with potential mates through various online dating sites. Self-selection websites, such as Match.com, give users the ability to find potential companions on their own by utilising keyword searches to look for attributes of a spouse that they are looking for. Web services that use a system of selection, such as eHarmony.com, employ mathematical algorithms to find potential companions that are a good match for each user. Users on hybrid websites, like as OkCupid.com are presented with "suggested matches" generated by compatibility algorithms, but they are also given the opportunity to choose their own romantic interests.

In India, more than thirty percent of married couples initially connected through an online dating service. The amount of online dating services that are open to the general public and available in the developed regions of the world has grown at an alarmingly quick rate in recent years. As a direct consequence of this, the likelihood of successfully meeting prospective partners online has been progressively growing as a direct result of the growth of computerised technology, the internet, and smartphone technology. A significant section of the population that possesses access to technology that make it possible to engage in online dating has utilised or is now engaging in

the practise of utilising online dating services. Many people think of internet dating as an ordinary part of their life, and the concept of online dating is now viewed as one that is universally accepted across all modern cultures. People have been able to locate and maintain love relationships ever since the introduction of mediated communication instruments such as the telegraph, the telephone, and other forms of mediated communication. Over the course of the last decade, people have gained access to additional types of mediated communication,

which has resulted in a shift in the opportunities for people to create relationships with one another.

It is common knowledge that online dating has significantly altered the method in which people of all ages can find romantic partners (Smith, 2016). Tinder is one of the most frequently used online dating services, with users in over 190 countries and over 50 million people registered on the platform (Tinder, 2019). Tinder is a smartphone application. Tinder's capacity to help its users make "new connections that otherwise might never have been possible" is one of the company's primary selling points (Tinder, 2019). In spite of a long history in which it was seen as stigmatising and a possible technique to compensate for real-life shortcomings (Gatter & Hodkinson, 2016), online dating has nearly become mainstream in recent years. This is the case even though it was once seen as such. According to Fullwood and Atrill-Smith (2018), one possible explanation for the meteoric rise in popularity of online dating is the fact that it makes it simple to contact a huge number of prospective partners while requiring the user to make only a little time commitment. Users start the process by providing basic information about themselves, such as their age and location. They are then given images of other users, for whom a swipe to the right signifies a "like" and a swipe to the left signals a "reject" (Gatter & Hodkins, 2016). According to Olivera-La Roa, Arango Tobon, and Ingram (2019), the beauty of a person as determined by their profile photo may be the single most important factor in determining whether they receive messages from potential dates. Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that many people try to look their best online in the pursuit of a romantic companion in the real world. According to Fullwood and Atrill Smith (2018), the act of presenting oneself online in a manner that is idealised may be comparable to the way in which singles prepare for a night out in the real world by primping and preening. According to Fullwood and Atrill-Smith (2018), an individual's self-esteem, which can be described as their appraisal of their own worth or value, is the primary factor in determining how they present themselves to the outside world. Although one's level of self-esteem is a crucial factor in the choice of a partner when dating offline, the role it plays in online dating is not as well understood. Because of this, this essay investigates how having an online romantic relationship impacts one's self-assurance as well as their perception of their body.

It is possible that the mechanisms that drive the operation of dating apps encourage users to present themselves in a more desirable light. Because it enables users to explore a gallery of images until a good dating candidate captures one's attention, the profile picture is frequently the most influential aspect in determining whether or not a user is contacted on a dating website. In other words, the profile picture is often the most important component in determining whether or not a user is contacted. Therefore, one's level of physical attraction to another person is a factor that can play a role in determining whether or not they will meet a potential dating partner online. According to research conducted by Fiore, Taylor, Mendelsohn, and Hearst (2008), the evidence reveals that the level of physical attractiveness displayed in the profile photo is the most important factor in determining the popularity of an online dating profile. When compared to photos of less beautiful people, photographs of attractive people are more likely to be seen as demonstrating good characteristics such as warmth, sensitivity, sociability, and success in life. The 'physical attractiveness stereotype' asserts that an individual's perceived moral integrity is connected with their level of outward beauty. This shows that those who are thought physically beautiful are more likely to be viewed by others as holding desired personality qualities. Those who are deemed

physically appealing are more likely to be viewed as having desirable personality attributes. When people have a predisposition to construct idealised images of themselves online, it is evident that this tendency raises the general probability of other users seeing idealised images. This is something that has become very clear.

Numerous earlier research has indicated a positive association between exposure to the media and concerns about one's body image. This is due to the fact that media sources often display idealised pictures of men and women that represent currently ruling specific beauty ideals, such as muscularity in men or thinness in women. Body image concerns have been found to be positively correlated with media exposure. Therefore, users of online dating services are just as susceptible to their own prejudices as those who rely on more traditional forms of mass media. This is the case because online dating services are a sort of mass media.

Due to the lack of social presence and social cues, early studies on online interaction indicated that communication inside standard online communication platforms impedes the creation of interpersonal ties. However, other studies cast doubt on this original concept and suggested that a lack of social cues can facilitate the development of interpersonal bonds. The findings of Walther and coworkers (1992) corroborated this viewpoint. According to Walther's theory of social information processing (1992), when people are in social settings, they extrapolate information about other people from the information they receive. He advanced the concept of interpersonal communication with his idea of "hyperpersonal" interaction. Due to the limited and perhaps delayed nature of social cues within social media, users may be more likely to develop strong feelings of affinity for one another than they would have if they had met in person. According to Walther, people are more likely to have positive assumptions about someone when they have few details about them to go on.

People have greater freedom and options when it comes to how they present themselves on online dating sites because there are less social indicators to consider. For instance, by selecting only the most flattering photos to share, users might present a more idealised picture of themselves. Users of computer-monitored communication also tend to have idealised views of their communication partners because of the ease with which they can edit and reedit their own communications in order to present the best possible versions of themselves. The desire to gain greater romantic interest often leads people to embellish their appearance.

The proliferation of and demand for online dating services appears to be on an upward trend as a direct result of a number of different variables. When compared to doing so in real-life circumstances, the notion that approaching potential mates requires minimum effort online may be a factor that is influential. Because of this, internet dating is appealing to a large number of people, particularly those who might experience inhibitions or anxiety during face-to-face interactions with prospective romantic partners. One more element that could be at play is that certain dating platforms give its users the impression that the risk of being rejected is lower than it would be through more traditional forms of meeting people in real life. As a result, portraying online dating as a secure area for some individuals to explore their dating talents and available options when it comes to the selection of intimate partners is quite important. Nevertheless, Couch and Liamputtong (2008) and Wiederhold (2015) found that the level of rejection experienced by users of different dating services varies greatly (Couch & Liamputtong, 2008). A third element

that may be of interest is the abundance of potential dates that are readily available on dating apps (Fullwood & Attrill-Smith, 2018) like Tinder, as well as the option to pick and select between certain characteristics and preferences. Tinder gives users the ability to "swipe" individuals in either a "like" or "dislike" direction, giving them the impression that they have a variety of dating possibilities to choose from. This is particularly appealing to users who may be battling notions of not being in a well saturated dating environment, particularly among older users or sexuality-based minorities. This is particularly attractive to users who may be battling thoughts of not being in a well saturated dating environment (Fiore, et.al, 2008). A fourth and final element may be to the fact that online dating has also given its users the luxury of setting requirements such as age, location, and gender, which enables more selectivity when picking potential partners. This may be related to the fact that online dating has also provided its users with the ability to specify these requirements. There are probably other motivations to use online dating services, in addition to the possible benefits. The present study discusses concepts such as self-esteem and body image while keeping in mind the specific issues that are presented by online dating.

### **Self- Esteem**

Self-esteem, refers to a person's general evaluation of their own worth. It's a characteristic that describes a person's inclination towards consistency and perseverance. It can entail a wide range of self-perceptions, such as how one rates his or her own physical appearance, knowledge, emotions, and actions.

### **The Importance of Believing in Oneself as a Valuable Asset**

In today's society, teenage girls who are feminine face unique challenges that have the potential to undermine their sense of self-confidence. The obstacles that women faced in prior generations are considerably different from these modern ones. The elements that have an effect on the sense of self-worth that young women have vary with time. Pipher (1994) investigates how changes in society have an effect on individuals' sense of identity, and she comes to the conclusion that "Girls are much more oppressed." They have been thrust into a culture that is more dangerous, more sexualized, and more inundated with media. They have a lot of problems that need to be solved. As a result of the increasingly dangerous environment, the safety of girls is decreasing. At an early age, girls are influenced in a variety of ways by society and the people in their immediate environment, and one of these ways is the formation of an awareness of the gender roles that are expected of them. According to Berk (2007), the average age at which children learn whether they are boys or girls is between the ages of two and six. Children start to develop a more stable understanding of their gender identity between the ages of eight and eleven, which corresponds to the middle years of childhood. They can exhibit 'feminine' or 'masculine' features, depending on how you look at it. It is common knowledge that in traditional cultures, masculine traits are accorded a higher level of value than female traits. The women have finally accepted the reality that the standards of femininity that are upheld by society are not the same as their own. Because of this, a significant number of women struggle with low self-esteem. A lack of confidence may have a severe impact on a young woman's life. As girls approach adolescence, they frequently experience a "free-fall in self-esteem from which some will never recover," as Orenstein (1994) points out. According to the findings of researchers Rigby and Waite (2006), low levels of self esteem are one of the greatest predictors of future emotional and behavioural problems. Girls who aren't confident in themselves frequently have an exaggerated opinion of how they appear to others. However, research conducted by Stallard et al. (2008) has

demonstrated that there are unquestionably negative effects on people's well-being in general. The study of self-esteem places a large emphasis on this aspect for the reason that the way a person looks is a big factor in deciding the self-worth of many young women. If a young lady is uncomfortable with how she appears physically, it can be detrimental to her sense of self-worth. Young women regularly face a number of challenges, many of which need them to overcome hurdles. Because of this, it is quite necessary to put a stop to them. All young women need to be aware of the potential dangers to their sense of self-worth so that they can take the necessary precautions to protect it. They have to be well-versed in the methods they can use to defend themselves against anything that would cause them to question their sense of identity, and they need to be aware of those methods. If young women have access to the aforementioned tools and preventative practices, they will be in a better position to resist the negative effects that poor self-esteem can have on their lives during childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. According to McVey et al. (2003), universal preventive interventions have the potential to reduce or perhaps get rid of future problems that may need to be addressed.

### **Body Image**

It is commonly considered that a body is the primary means by which she may convey her identity to the outside world and the medium through which her identity is represented. Girls did not centre their thought processes on their bodies before to the twentieth century. However, today's young women are preoccupied with the shape of their bodies because they believe that this is the highest form of expression that is available to them. (Mellor, Fuller-Tyszkiewicz, Cabe & Ricciardelli, 2010) describes how just a few centuries ago, women dressed themselves in corsets as a symbol of having external control over their bodies. Today, the way in which we relate to our bodies is the best indicator of how much further we still need to travel and of the degree to which our age has shifted the emphasis inside. (Edut, 2000). Not just how we treat our bodies, but also the function that our bodies play in our lives, pervades our very being and helps to decide the path that our lives will take. At this crossroads, the social pressure to embrace the dictum of a thin woman and body build man is picking up steam and gaining strength. The cultural shift that happened over the course of the last century that resulted in the adoration of thinness in females is frequently seen as the product of a historical development. There have been significant shifts over the course of many years in the Western industrialised cultures' conceptions of what constitutes a beautiful and healthy body shape and size, as well as changes in the physical characteristics of people's bodies.

The transition from the voluptuous figures that were favoured in the Middle Ages to the transition to the twentieth century, when the slender body types are desired by fashion magazines in the society today may be linked back to the cultural shift that occurred in the ideal body type over time. To comprehend the contemporary viewpoints on body image, one must first have an understanding of the lengthy and illustrious history of the body image construct. The single most useful historical review of body image was written by Seymour Fisher. In this study, Fisher claims that the roots of body image research concentrated on neuropathological forms of body experience, with very minimal consideration given to psychological aspects. Fisher's review is the single most instructive historical review of body image. Research on "body image" in its early stages was predominately focused on investigating the so-called "body schema," which was a theorised brain process that centrally regulated changes in body posture and movement. In later years, Paul Schilder, who had received his education as a neurologist,

was the one who was responsible for expanding the scope of the research of body image beyond the confines of the field of neuropathology. Schluder advocated for a bio-psycho-social approach to the topic of body image and emphasised how important it is to investigate the neurological, psychological, and socio cultural aspects that are involved.

### **The Perception of One's Own Body**

Understanding human behaviour from a sociocultural viewpoint emphasises the impact of shared cultural norms on personal choices and actions. It includes many different schools of thought, all of which agree that an individual's cultural values play a significant role in determining how they are seen by others and how they see themselves. For instance, if people in a culture place a premium on physical appearance, they will do the same in themselves.

If the maxims are representative of cultural norms, then people will internalise the message that physical appearance is irrelevant when making evaluations of themselves and others. Two or even three dimensions might be used to dissect the body-image construct. The first factor is an individual's perception of their own appearance. The second is subjective, and it has to do with how someone feels about how they seem. This aspirational last part refers to how a person 'wants' to seem. At any one instant, all three dimensions might be different. Body image is defined as "multidimensional self-attitudes towards one's body" (Cash & Pruzinsky, 1990) and places special emphasis on physical attractiveness. Furthermore, the body image construct is made up of at least two separate modalities, namely perceptual (size estimations) and attitudinal (bodily feelings and thoughts) (Cash, 1989). Due to the multifaceted nature of body image, which involves biological, psychological, and social aspects, many different definitions have been proposed.

There are a number of personal and societal factors that influence how we feel about our bodies. Various socialisation agencies, including families, peers, and schools, contribute to the transmission of body image trends. The social construction of one's physique is heavily influenced by one's gender. From a gendered sociocultural vantage point, the cognitive (concerns about one's body, one's diet, or one's life circumstances), affective (one's feelings about oneself and one's sexuality), and behavioural (one's actual sexual relations and behaviours) processes that are commonplace in society generate and affect the formation of a positive or negative body image.

### **Considerations of society and culture in relation to body image**

Young women's bodies are reflected in many different places, including their families, schools, friends, and the media. These mirrors will reflect back to a woman exactly what it is that she values the most in terms of having information about her own body. Parents, and especially mothers, have a significant impact on the way their daughters feel about their bodies. At school, our physical selves are on show for both teachers and fellow students. The people in a woman's social circle are extremely important to her overall health. The perceptions that other girls have about a girl's body can strongly influence how that girl feels about herself. When this occurs, the media uses women's bodies as a means of promoting "an ideal image." Parents have a significant impact on the way their daughter looks physically. It's possible that a girl's mother and father will have an equal amount of influence on how she views her own body. It is essential for a child to have a close contact with his or her mother throughout

the adolescent years. According to Blumenberg (1997), by the middle of the nineteenth century, women had lost their relevance in the economic sphere and had begun spending a greater portion of their time either in school or working. Because she believes that her mother and she have been through the same experiences, a girl looks to her mother for guidance regarding how she ought to feel about her body. The beliefs and behaviours that mothers hold towards their own bodies have a significant impact on the daughters they raise.

Women should learn about their bodies at the same school that serves as a cultural symbol of how they are seen. The school was built on a bedrock of optimism, a place where kids grow and flourish academically. While adults may not be aware of these cultural spaces, it is precisely there that girls and young women share their fears, hopes, and experiences. The way women's bodies are treated in these areas is indicative of societal norms. In order to boost their social standing, self-esteem, and overall acceptance, many young women choose to flaunt their bodies in the school environment. Schools are a direct reflection of what society values with regards to a woman's body, and they mirror the media's portrayal of what we should look like and emphasise.

Similar to how body pleasure is influenced by cultural factors, differences in body experience may be found across national borders and among racial and ethnic groups. A woman's cultural identity forms in relation to her race and ethnicity. Thus, differences in how white and black women are expected to see their bodies point to the cultural nature of the problem.

### **Online dating and Self-esteem**

When compared to more traditional forms of dating, research appears that using an online dating service provides its customers with a greater number of benefits and more good emotions. According to a number of studies, the rapidity with which judgements can be made on dating applications like Tinder gives users the impression of experiencing instant pleasure. One other illustration of this is the possibility that the user would experience sensations of beauty or see one's own levels of attractiveness as being higher as a result of positive outcomes such as getting matched with more folks on the dating services that are being utilised. Researchers have showed an increased interest in the ways in which particular online dating platforms may alter how individuals regard themselves in recent years due to the tremendous expansion of the online dating scene in recent years. The concepts of one's level of self-esteem and one's sentiments of self-worth have been investigated in greater depth.

According to Rosenberg (1965), the phrase "self-esteem" is quite wide and can be broken down into a number of different definitions. When someone has a high level of self-esteem, they have a positive attitude towards themselves, and when they have a low level of self-esteem, they have a negative attitude towards themselves. This is one definition of self-esteem. According to Rosenberg and Rosenberg (1965), one of the functions that self-esteem fulfils is to make it possible to conduct an emotional evaluation of oneself. According to Sonstroem and Morgan's (1989) research, a favourable self-assessment is supposed to leave the person doing the assessing feeling good, whereas a negative evaluation leaves them feeling horrible. According to Sonstroem and Morgan (1989), a person's level of self-esteem is just as significant in determining their overall sense of well-being as

their quality of life. When discussing the users of online dating services and the question of whether or not an individual's opinion of themselves can be changed, the topic of self-esteem can be discussed in a variety of different circumstances. To answer the question "how," one study revealed that people with lower levels of self-esteem had a tendency to exhibit a "self" that was less in accordance with how they genuinely regarded themselves. It was discovered that the subjects included aspects and characteristics in their self-portraits that they regarded as having the potential to be appealing to an outsider observer. In a similar vein, they would try to omit characteristics that they regarded as unfavourable in an effort to maximise the likelihood of them being accepted. In addition, there is a lack of further research in how the motive for usage of online dating sites relates to their levels of self-esteem, and whether there is a major variation in self-esteem levels between different groups of motivation, which is something that might be researched further.

### **Online dating and Body image**

One's self-perception of their physical attractiveness can be significantly altered by the highly curated nature of online dating profile photographs. This might put an individual under stress to present a certain image, which in turn can cause body dissatisfaction and low self-esteem. Researchers have shown that those who regularly use mobile dating apps are more likely to be unhappy with their physical appearance. This is especially true for women, who often feel more pressure to meet idealised portrayals of beauty. Men experience similar but less severe pressure to conform to ideal body types.

The anonymity of the internet might also encourage people to be more open and honest about themselves in their dating profiles. In some ways, it's liberating to show your true self in unfiltered images, but in others, it can make you feel exposed and insecure.

Keep in mind that every single person has self-image issues and that online dating profiles frequently exaggerate the positive. Focus on the good things about yourself and what makes you special if you're having trouble accepting your physical appearance. Prioritising your own ease and well-being over meeting the standards of others is essential.

## Review of literature

The researcher did an exhausted Review of Literature after reviewing articles and studies in different Journals and Books and few studies are being discussed below:-

Labes (2020)- research indicates that self-objectification and the internalisation of societal beauty standards each play a role in mediating the association between the frequency of online dating and body image problems. The bootstrapping method was utilised in order to do the analysis on both of the mediations. There was found to be no correlation between the amount of time spent online dating and worries about one's physical appearance. On the other hand, it was discovered that self

objectification serves as a mediator for this connection, albeit in the context of a mediation that is merely indirect. The prior conclusion that internalisation predicts body image issues holds true, despite the fact that the internalisation of societal beauty standards does not act as a mediator in the relationship. According to the findings of this study, using online dating sites may lead to concerns about one's body image, which can be a significant risk to one's mental and physical health.

Malz (2020)- examine the connection that exists between the amount of time spent using online dating services and levels of self-esteem, with the goal of determining whether or not concerns about one's physical appearance moderate this connection. A study with a cross-sectional design was carried out to investigate the frequency with which users engaged in online dating, as well as their levels of self-esteem and the potential moderating role played by worries regarding their body image. The questionnaire used for data collection was completed by a participant pool with a total of (N = 264) people, the majority of whom were female (65%) and German (72%). The survey consisted of questions on demographics, questions regarding the frequency of using online dating, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and the Subscale "Body Image Concerns" of the Body Uneasiness Test (BUT). The investigation showed that concerns about one's body image have a negative correlation with one's degree of self-esteem. The findings of this study reveal, on the other hand, that the frequency of using online dating sites is not associated to levels of self-esteem and/or concerns regarding one's body image. The fact that the correlation was not significant, but the effect sizes for the relationship were different on different levels of body image—showing a quite large effect size for people who score high on body image concerns—suggest that the frequency-time spent on online dating platforms does not predict levels of self-esteem. As a result, people who use online dating more frequently can be less concerned that it might negatively affect their self-esteem.

Strubel & Petrie (2017)- the primary impacts of Tinder use, as well as the interaction between gender and Tinder use, were investigated in regard to body image concerns, internalisation processes, and levels of self-esteem among men and women. An online survey was used to collect data from Tinder users (men = 31, women = 69) and non-users (men = 203, women = 844) who all answered questions anonymously. Tinder users, regardless of gender, reported considerably lower levels of happiness with their face and body using a series of ANCOVAs, with BMI and age serving as factors. Tinder users also reported significantly higher levels of internalisation, appearance comparisons, and body shame and surveillance than non-users. Tinder users, particularly men, scored much worse on the self-esteem scale than either male or female non-users did. Our findings indicate that Tinder is a modern medium for beauty demands, and its use is related with a

variety of negative attitudes about body and self, as well as increases in individuals' likely to internalise appearance ideals and make comparisons to others. Our findings also imply that Tinder is connected with a variety of negative perceptions about body and self.

Rodgers & Melioli (2016) analysing the connection between using the internet and social media and having concerns about one's body image and eating, and providing a summary of the most important findings. This study investigates the connection between concerns about one's body image and eating habits and the use of the internet. The results of our search brought up 67 studies. According to the findings, there is content connected to appearance that may be found on the internet and in social media. This content may include content that promotes extreme body shapes or behaviours. The findings of qualitative, correlational, and experimental studies all point to a connection between using the Internet and having negative feelings about one's body image and one's eating habits. The recognised studies were founded on three primary theoretical frameworks: sociocultural theory, objectification theory, and social identity theory. Other, less significant theoretical frameworks were also used in the research; however, these were not as prevalent. There is a correlation between the usage of the internet, and more specifically, appearance-focused social media, and increased anxiety about one's body image and eating habits.

Langret(2021)- examine if the frequency with which users access online dating applications may accurately predict their well-being, with low frequency access supposed to be linked with high well-being and high frequency access believed to be related with low well-being. As a result of increased self-objectification, body image concerns, and decreased self-esteem following high frequency usage, it is anticipated that these distinct impacts will occur. These effects are expected to be caused by increased self-objectification, body image concerns, and decreased self-esteem following high frequency usage. An online survey was distributed to participants (N= 178) who self-identified as users of online dating applications and requested that they complete measures in secret. It was found, using a series of regression and mediation analyses, that the amount of time spent engaging in online dating was connected with a person's level of happiness. However, it was discovered that the selected mediators of body satisfaction, self-esteem, self-objectification, and body image concern did not significantly mediate the link between frequency of use and users' well-being. This study can be perceived as groundwork for future research because it tests the proposed theoretical frameworks while examining potential additional mediators. Even though the

link between frequent usage and well-being could not be explained by the chosen mediators, this study can still be considered groundwork for future research. The integration of warning indicators against excessively frequent use together with advice to take a break or interact with current matches is an idea that has been floated as a possible improvement for online dating service providers. Because internet dating has resulted in a reorganisation of the dating world, additional research is required to evaluate the potential good and negative effects that online dating may have on the well-being of its users.

Blackhart, Fitzpatrick & Williamson (2014)- examine the association between the usage of online dating sites and behaviours associated with online dating and many dispositional characteristics, such as the Big Five personality traits, self-esteem, rejection sensitivity, and attachment patterns. The only dispositional feature that was found to be predictive of the usage of online dating sites was a person's sensitivity to rejection. Individuals

with a higher level of rejection sensitivity are more likely to utilise online dating sites than those with a lower level of rejection sensitivity. In addition, we discovered that individuals who scored higher on the rejection sensitivity scale, individuals who scored lower on the conscientiousness scale, and men reported being more inclined to participate in potentially risky behaviours associated to meeting an online dating partner in person.

Kim, Kwon & Lee (2009)- examines the self-esteem, participation in romantic relationships, and sociability of users of online dating services, which are the three primary consumer traits that underpin the usage of online dating services. These factors were found to have a substantial interaction effect with one another in all three ways. When it comes to persons who are heavily involved in romantic relationships, those with higher levels of self-esteem are more likely to utilise online dating services than those with lower levels of self-esteem, regardless of whether or not they are sociable. On the other hand, when people are less involved in romantic relationships, they display the opposite pattern of behaviour from those who are more sociable. In other words, those who have poor self-esteem are more likely to utilise online dating services than people who have high self-esteem, even when it comes to situations in which romantic connections are not a priority. Fiore, et.al (2008)- studied how people assess attractiveness in online dating profiles, which provide their first exposure to a potential partner. online dating profiles provide users with their first exposure to potential partners. Participants gave overall profiles and individual components of profiles ratings based on a variety of characteristics, including how attractive, extraverted, genuine, and trustworthy they looked to be. The attractiveness and other qualities of the photograph were the strongest predictors of whole profile attractiveness, but they were not alone: the free-text component also played an important role in predicting overall attractiveness. Previous research in the psychology of attraction would suggest that this would be the case. The beauty evaluations of photographs and free-text components could also be predicted by a large number of other characteristics, albeit in very different ways depending on whether the subject was a man or a woman. On the other hand, the fixed-choice components of a profile had no bearing on the subject's attractiveness.

Faelsing (2020)- studied the effect of using online dating applications, the frequency of using online dating applications, the type of online dating application, and the relationship between frequency and type of these factors was investigated in relation to self-esteem. A cross-sectional online survey was completed by 229 individuals in total, with the participants being classified as either users of online dating applications or non-users. No statistically significant differences were found between people who used the service and those who did not, regardless of the frequency of use, the kind of usage, or the interaction between frequency and type, according to both simple and multiple regression models. The studies that were carried out shed light on the basic relevance of using online dating applications in the dating life of the 21st century, and as a result, the necessity for further research in this area.

Baas & Roos (2022)- examine whether or not poor self-esteem acts as a moderator in the relationship between mental health and the sensitivity to being rejected in the context of using the internet. There was a total of 166 people who took part in the poll that was conducted online, and their average age was 23.4. The Adult Rejection Sensitivity questionnaire, the Mental Health Short Continuum Scale, and the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale were the three self-reported questionnaires that were utilised as part of this research project as its primary data

collection instruments. To begin, the findings demonstrated that the sensitivity to rejection is unrelated to the psychological health of individuals who use online dating apps. The second finding was that sensitivity to rejection was found to have a strong positive correlation with one's own sense of self-worth. Last but not least, the findings suggested that a low sense of self-esteem does not act as a moderating factor in the connection between rejection sensitivity and mental well-being. It was indicated that persons who are highly sensitive to rejection can benefit from using online dating because it is not related with worse mental wellbeing, but it is associated with higher levels of self-esteem.

Holtzhausen, et al (2020)- determine whether adult users of swipe-based data applications (SBDAs) report higher levels of psychological distress, anxiety, and depression, as well as poorer levels of self-esteem, compared to persons who do not use SBDAs. 437 people participated in the online survey that was designed to be cross-sectional. The Kessler Psychological Distress Scale, the Generalised Anxiety Disorder-2 scale, the Patient Health Questionnaire-2, and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale were some of the scales that were used to evaluate the participants' mental health. In order to assess the odds ratios of having a mental health issue, logistic regressions were utilised. An analysis of variance with repeated measurements and an apriorist model were utilised in this study. This allowed for the consideration of all four mental health scores collectively inside a single analysis. The apriori model took into account the user's position as well as their age and gender. Thirty percent were active SBDA users at the time of the survey. The majority of users and former users had in-person encounters with other individuals, with 26.1% (60/230) having met more than 5 persons and only 22.6% (52/230) having never planned a meeting with another individual. A little less than forty percent (39.1%; 90/230) of those polled reported having previously been in a committed relationship with someone they'd met on an SBDA. A greater number of participants who used SBDA stated that it had a favourable impact on their sense of self-worth (40.4%; 93/230) as opposed to a negative impact (28.7%; 66/230). In the multivariable logistic regression models, using SBDA was substantially linked with having psychological distress (odds ratio = 2.51; 95% confidence interval [CI]: 1.32–4.77);  $p = 0.001$ ; and depression (odds ratio = 1.91; 95% confidence interval [CI]: 1.04–3.52);  $p = 0.037$ ; this was after correcting for age, gender, and sexual orientation. When all four MH scores were considered together, there was a statistically significant difference ( $p = 0.037$ ) between being a user and a non-user of the SDBA. SDBA users had considerably higher mean ratings for distress ( $p = 0.001$ ), anxiety ( $p = 0.015$ ), and depression ( $p = 0.005$ ) than non-users did. There was a significant correlation between increased frequency of use and longer duration of use, both of which were linked with greater psychological distress and depression ( $p = 0.05$ ). Users of SBDAs report increased levels of sadness, anxiety, and distress compared to people who do not use the programmes, even though SBDA use is quite prevalent.

## Methodology

### Objective

To find out the relationship between self-esteem and body image issues among adults who date online.

### Hypothesis

H1- There is a significant relationship between self-esteem and body image among adults who date online.

H2- Body image significantly predicts self-esteem among adults who uses online dating apps.

### Research design

The investigation of the present research is based on cross-sectional-and co-relational research design. The study is an empirical type study which is quantitative in nature.

### Operational Definitions

- Self-esteem- self-esteem is one's positive or negative attitude toward oneself and one's evaluation of one's own thoughts and feelings overall in relation to oneself. (Rosenberg,1965) in this research, self-esteem is measured by using Rosenberg's self-esteem scale. A higher score indicates higher self-esteem in the person.
- Body image- According to APA, body image is the mental picture one forms of one's body, including its physical characteristics (body percept) and one's attitudes toward these characteristics (body concept). (APA dictionary of psychology)

### Sample

The data for the study was collected from 60 participants from different states of India. The sample was collected through purposive and snowball sampling. The age range of the present study was 18-25 years.

### Selection criteria for the sample

#### *Inclusion criteria*

- Participant should use online dating apps.
- Participant should be 18 years and less than 25 years.
- Participant should be the resident of India.
- Participant should be able to read and write English language.
- Participant should have knowledge of using Internet.

#### *Exclusion criteria*

- Participant should not have any kind of mental health disorder.
- Participant who does not have knowledge of using internet.
- Participant who is above 25 years of age and less than 18 years of age.

**Tools used-** The following tools were used in this study were: -

**Rosenberg's Self-Esteem-** it was given by Morris Rosenberg in 1965. It is a global tool for assessing self-esteem. It is a self-report measure of self-esteem consisting of 10 items on a likert scale of a four-point scale where 4 means strongly agree and 1 means strongly disagree. The statements are about self-acceptance and self-worth. Out of the 10, 5 are negatively worded items which are reverse scored and 5 are positively worded items which are scored directly. The score can range from 0-30, here higher scores reflect high self-esteem. The Cronbach's alpha for various samples range between .77 and .88 (Rosenberg, 1986). The test-retest correlations range between .82 & .88 thus, highly reliable. It also showed good convergent validity.

**Online dating usage-** The other component of the research involved gathering more precise information from the participants regarding their activities when dating online. This portion consisted of five questions in which respondents were asked about the applications utilised, the frequency with which they were utilised, and the reasons for engaging in online dating. Take, for instance: Which website or mobile app do you use, or have you used? How frequently do you utilise dating applications or websites that are available online? How frequently do you utilise dating apps or websites that you find online each day?

**Body Image-** The "body image concerns" subscale of the "Body Uneasiness Test (BUT)" ("Cuzzolaro, Vetrone, Marano, & Garfinkel, 2006") was used to quantify this mediator variable. The internal consistency reliability for the body image concerns subscale in this sample was  $=.917$ . Nine statements like "I like those clothes which hide my body" and "I would do anything to change some parts of my body" make up the subscale. Each participant rated each statement on a six-point Likert-scale, from 0 (never) to 5 (always), where 0 meant never and 5 meant always. The scale runs from 10 to 50, with higher numbers indicating more severe body image issues.

## Procedure

The questionnaires was made and compiled. The participants were contacted via phone after brief those about the study and consent were taken, the participants were also be ensured about the confidentiality and that will be used only for research purpose. And then the links were forwarded to them and ask them to notify the researcher once they submit the form and requested to forward the same to their friends as well. Researcher duly thank all the participants for being a part of this research and for their co-operation.

**Statistical Analysis-** To analyse the relationship between self-esteem and body image among adults who use online dating apps, Pearson correlation was employed using IBM SPSS version 26.0.

## Ethical considerations:

- The researcher personally approached each participant to explain the study and requested his or her participation.
- All participants were informed that participation in the study was voluntary and they were free to withdraw.
- Participants had the opportunity to ask questions regarding their participation and had additional opportunities to ask questions during the time of filling form.

## Result

The purpose of this study was correlate pertaining to their self-esteem and body image among those adults who use online dating apps and in doing so the following tools have been used Rosenberg Self-Esteem, Body Uneasiness test.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive and correlation between Body image and Self-esteem are given below*

1. Body image 101 12.98 12.76 —

2. Self-esteem 101 7.42 6.99 .532\*\* —

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

The Pearson's correlation between body image and self-esteem came out to be  $r=0.532$  (significant at 0.01 level), which means if self-image increases perception regarding body-image also increase among those who use online dating apps. Therefore, H1 has been supported.

**Table 2**

*Regression between how effectively body image predicts self-esteem are discussed below*

Predictor	Effect	Estimate	SS	95% CI	p	LL	UL
Self-esteem a	3.448	48.331	12.905	14.57	.046		
Body-image b	1164.8	.004	.462				

*Impact of body image on self-esteem has been show below*

*Note.* total  $N = 1,100$ . CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit, a=dependent variable, b= constant(predictor)

According to table 2, Body image significantly predicts self-esteem scores,  $b= .233$ ,  $t = 2.01$ ,  $p < .01$ , Body image also explains a significant proportion of variance in self-esteem scores,  $R^2 = .040$ ,  $F(1,100) = 4.066$ ,  $p = .046$ . H2 which stated that body image significantly predicts the self-esteem has been supported.

## Discussion

The purpose of the study is to correlate the body image and self-esteem among those who use online dating apps. To measure these variables Rosenberg Self-Esteem, Body Uneasiness test were used and to see the relationship between body image and self-esteem, Pearson bivariate correlation and linear regression has been used.

H1 which stated there will be a significant relationship between body image and self-esteem among those who use online dating apps has been supported, the finding revealed the significant positive correlation between these two variables and it contradicts with the findings of explored to determine if there is a significant difference in the level of dissatisfaction with one's body between those who use online dating and those who do not, and if there is a correlation between this level of dissatisfaction and more frequent usage of online dating. In addition, it was hypothesised that gender and the social motivation to utilise online dating would function as moderators of the association between the usage of online dating and discontent with one's body. An overall sample of 229 people, both users and non-users of online dating (with 79 men and 150 women participating), responded to questions in an online survey regarding their demographics, their experience with online dating, and their level of body dissatisfaction. There was found to be no association between the use of online dating apps and dissatisfaction with either one's face or body. "Traditional online communication platforms, according to early studies (Fiore, Taylor, Mendelsohn, & Hearst, 2008), inhibit the development of interpersonal ties because of the lack of social presence and social cues. However, other studies cast doubt on this original concept and suggested that a lack of social cues can actually facilitate the development of interpersonal bonds. The work done by Walther and coworkers in 1992 backed up this theory. According to Walther's Social Information Processing hypothesis (1992), when people are in social settings, they extrapolate information about other people from the information they receive. He advanced the concept of interpersonal communication with his idea of "hyperpersonal" interaction. Due to the limited and perhaps delayed nature of social cues within social media, users may be more likely to develop strong feelings of affinity for one another than they would have if they had met in person. According to Walther, people are more likely to have positive assumptions about someone when they have few details about them to go on."

People have greater freedom and options when it comes to how they present themselves on online dating sites because there are less social indicators to consider. By selecting only the most flattering photos of themselves, individuals can create a more polished online profile (Fullwood & Attrill Smith, 2018).

Users of computer-monitored communication are more likely to have idealised views of their communication partner because of the ease with which they can edit and reedit their own communications in order to present the best possible version of themselves (Gentile, 2013). The desire to gain greater romantic interest often leads people to embellish their appearance.

H2 which stated that body image significantly predicts self-esteem those who uses online dating apps. The findings supported the hypothesis. Marsh and Shavelson (1985) and Swann (1987) these studies indicate the complex nature of self-esteem. Both of these studies were conducted in the 1980s. On the one hand, there is something known as general self-esteem, and on the other hand, there is something known as local self-esteem. To elaborate, this simply indicates that people have perspectives on both the whole thing (referred to as global

self-esteem) and its component pieces (referred to as specific self-esteem) (Rosenberg, Schooler, Schoenbach, & Rosenberg, 1995). When one takes into account this information in light of the findings of the current investigation,

it is likely that a person has a positive view of themselves.

As a whole, yet have a distinct viewpoint regarding a more specific aspect of who they are, such as their outward appearance, for example. These two parts of one's self-worth are separate from one another and each contribute in their own unique way indistinguishable (Rosenberg, Schooler, Schoenbach, & Rosenberg, 1995) As a result, it's possible that online dating has an effect on a person's feeling of self-esteem in only certain elements of that person's life.

It was also made abundantly obvious that it is not sufficient to merely think about how high or low the typical level of self-esteem is for an individual. It is essential to pay attention not only to how individuals behave, but also to the things that they do on a daily basis in order to acquire and keep a healthy level of self-esteem. A person's condition of self-esteem can have substantial implications for their level of motivation due to the fact that gains in self-esteem feel good and reductions in self-esteem feel awful. According to Crocker and Wolfe (2001), people look for affirmation of their strengths in areas that are particularly relevant to them. As a result, individuals look for affirmation of their strengths. Rosenberg, Schooler, Schoenbach, and Rosenberg (1995) found that people's beliefs of the activities that must be completed in order to obtain a sense of worth and value differ significantly from one another. Because the factors that raise or lower a person's self esteem are unique to that person, it is possible that those who find online dating to be personally relevant are the only ones whose self-esteem is impacted by it. Some individuals might base their self-assurance on external factors, such as their academic achievements, their physical attractiveness, their level of popularity in the dating app scene, and other similar factors. Because "self-esteem is only influenced by successes and failures within specific domains that add to personal self-worth (Crocker & Park, 2004)", it follows that the frequency with which a person uses dating applications or websites does not have an effect on their level of self-esteem.

### **Limitation and recommendation for future research**

However, there were some caveats attached to the findings of this study that need to be taken into consideration for any future research.

To begin, in view of the objections that have been levelled against the idea of self-esteem, it has been suggested that in the future, researchers widen the scope of their investigations to include more than just measurements of mean self-esteem. Because the idea of self-esteem encompasses so many facets and holds such a profound and individual significance for each individual, questions that define which domains are meaningful for participants to pursue self-esteem from should be included in the study. For a future study that aims to identify whether or not a particular domain is associated to levels of self-esteem, it is essential to determine whether or not a particular domain has personal meaning to the participants.

This would make it easier to draw conclusions that are more well-grounded and well-funded while also limiting the number of possible solutions.

Because the data were only gathered at a particular point in time, it is not possible to draw any conclusions about the relationship between the two (Levin, 2006). As a consequence of this, we are unable to arrive at any definitive conclusions based on these results. Consequently, these factors must to be taken into consideration in subsequent research.

As a consequence of this, the findings of the current study cannot be used to exclude any alternative feasible hypotheses or to determine the order in which causes and effects occurred. A prospective inquiry that is designed to be longitudinal may, at some point in the future, give light on the development of the relationship.

One further thing to keep in mind is that the questionnaire that was used to collect the data was extremely objective and gave the participant very little room for their own personal interpretation. In subsequent research, there may be a place for information collection techniques that are more nebulous and circuitous. Quantifying aspects such as how frequently participants utilised the service and how they felt about themselves (in terms of self-esteem and body uncomfot) could be accomplished through the use of an online dating diary or interview study. This would pave the door for further in-depth studies to be conducted on the effects of online dating on users' feeling of self-worth from the point of view of users of the service. As a result, it has been proposed that future research make use of methodologies that are more indirect. A potential flaw in the survey is that it asks respondents how frequently they engage in online dating rather than probing them about their behaviour while they are doing so; this may be interpreted as a strength. When it comes to using online dating services, certain users may be more likely than others to actively participate in particular forms of social interaction activities. For example, some users devote a greater portion of their time to looking through the profiles of their friends than they do to looking through images, making comments on posts, or even sending messages. The user's patterns of social interaction play a role in determining the possibility that they will be shown idealised photographs of other people and that they would engage in self-critical comparisons. According to Kim and Chock (2015), this shows that the activities themselves may be more strongly associated to issues of body image and self-esteem than the exposure duration alone. Specifically, this suggests that the activities may be more strongly linked to issues of body image and self-esteem.

Therefore, in order to develop findings that are useful and backed by evidence, future study should take into account the activities that customers of online dating services participate in.

## **Conclusion**

The current research does contribute to the broader body of knowledge concerning body image and self-esteem in online dating contexts. However, there are significant limitations to the study. The answers to the research objective can be found in the conclusions of the current study, which also indicates there is a significant positive relationship between body image and self-esteem in those adults who use online dating apps and, when regression analysis is used for the analytic purpose, body image plays a crucial role as a predictor of self-esteem.

The findings of our research can be used to gain a better understanding of the pressures that young people are under by virtue of the pervasiveness of issues pertaining to one's body image in the culture of today. Because of this, we place a strong emphasis on the fact that our study can be applied in both remedial and preventative

forms of education.

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