GENDER DISPARITIES IN SELF-ESTEEM AND OBJECTIFIED BODY CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG YOUNG ADULTS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The quest for self-worth in a world obsessed with appearance: This research delves into the connection between Self-Esteem and Objectified Body Consciousness in young adults, focussing on gender disparities. Using a comparative and correlational approach with 120 participants, the study reveals subtle yet notable distinctions in how self-worth and body image are perceived based on gender. Notably, women tend to express slightly lower self-worth and higher levels of objectified body consciousness compared to men, although these differences do not reach statistical significance. These insights deepen our grasp of how gender influences body image perceptions and emphasize the need to address societal pressures while nurturing positive self-esteem in young adults, regardless of gender. Nevertheless, the study acknowledges its limitations, including sample size and potential biases in self-reporting, pointing towards future research opportunities with broader participant groups and longitudinal studies. This work aims to contribute to ongoing conversations about promoting positive self-esteem and healthy body image in young adults, irrespective of gender identity.

Keywords: Objectified Body Consciousness, Self-Esteem, Gender Differences, Social Media Influence, Body Image, Young Adults

I. INTRODUCTION

In Today's image-saturated world, the emphasis on physical appearance has reached an unprecedented level, which especially affects the younger population. Any exposure to idealized body standards on various media platforms overwhelms young adults with the perception of the *"perfect body"*- a construct often defined by culturally prescribed norms of physical attractiveness, symmetry, and muscularity or thinness (Harrison, 2008). The idealization of body standards, perpetuated through advertising, entertainment media, and social influencers, creates a formidable influence on individuals' self-perception and body image. This incessant portrayal of the idealized body image cultivates unrealistic expectations, fosters a sense of inadequacy and dissatisfaction with one's own body, and significantly shapes self-perception, contributing to the formation of body image and self-esteem among young adults. This dissertation aims to thoroughly examine how self-esteem and objectified body consciousness are linked among young adults, with a specific focus on understanding gender differences.

Research shows that constant exposure to idealized body images can lead to feeling dissatisfied with one's body, having a negative self-perception, and psychological distress. The culture of comparing oneself, especially on social media, makes these challenges even more difficult by promoting unrealistic beauty standards and encouraging constant self-evaluation.

By comparing the experiences of males and females, this study aims to uncover how external factors shape self-perception and self-confidence. Understanding these influences is crucial for developing strategies to help young adults cultivate positive body image and bolster self-esteem today.

Self-esteem constitutes a fundamental pillar of an individual's psychological well-being and overall mental health **(Branden, 1969)**. It denotes how individuals perceive themselves and their value within the world, encompassing sentiments of self-worth, self-acceptance, self-confidence, and self-respect **(Rogers, 1961)**. The significance of self-esteem transcends into various domains of a

person's life, influencing their relationships, academic or professional accomplishments, emotional resilience, and overall sense of contentment.

The concept of self-esteem carries a rich historical lineage, tracing back to ancient philosophers like Aristotle and Confucius and extending to modern psychological trailblazers such as William James, Carl Rogers, Morris Rosenberg, Nathaniel Branden, and Abraham Maslow. These luminaries laid the groundwork for comprehending self-worth and self-acceptance, paving the way for self-esteem to emerge as a pivotal component of psychological well-being in the 20th century. Their contributions continue to shape contemporary research and theories surrounding self-esteem.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) is an invaluable tool for assessing self-esteem in individuals **(Rosenberg, 1965).** It is essential to note that self-esteem is not a homogeneous concept but rather a multifaceted construct influenced by a myriad of factors. According to Rosenberg, self-esteem is intricately linked to an individual's perception of self-worth and self-acceptance. Individuals with elevated self-esteem typically exhibit a positive self-view and confidence in their capabilities, displaying traits such as self-assuredness and resilience when confronted with challenges.

This dissertation investigates self-esteem dynamics in young adults, particularly focusing on potential gender differences and the influence of societal pressures. Several key theoretical frameworks inform this exploration.

- *Social Identity Theory* **(Tajfel & Turner, 1979)** examines how individuals' self-concept is shaped by their group affiliations. In our study, we will analyse how social identities related to gender and societal norms contribute to disparities in self-esteem and objectified body consciousness between males and females.

- *Self-discrepancy theory* **(Higgins,1987),** aids in understanding the role of inconsistencies between actual, ideal, and ought selves in influencing self-esteem and body image perceptions. By scrutinizing these discrepancies, we aim to uncover potential factors contributing to objectified body consciousness and self-esteem challenges among young adults.

- *Self-efficacy theory* **(Bandura, A 1977)** guides our research approach by emphasizing individuals' beliefs in their capabilities to navigate societal pressures and uphold positive self-perceptions. We will investigate how self-efficacy beliefs impact self-esteem and objectified body consciousness, particularly concerning media influences and societal expectations.

The evolution of Self-Esteem research highlights its dynamic nature. Self-esteem is no longer regarded solely as a static trait; rather, it is seen as a fluid and context-dependent aspect of individuals' lives. Contemporary trends explore:

- *Cultural Influences:* Recent studies have shifted focus towards exploring cultural variations in self-esteem beliefs and practices. This line of inquiry seeks to understand how cultural norms and values contribute to shaping individuals' self-perceptions.
- *Social Media Impact:* Research is delving into the influence of exposure to idealized images and social comparisons on social media platforms **(Frederick & Tylka, 2016).** This exploration extends to how such exposure affects individuals' body image, self-confidence, and overall self-esteem **(Stice et al., 2019).**

Objectified Body Consciousness (OBC) is a psychological concept that delves into how individuals perceive their bodies from an external perspective, akin an object to be evaluated by others **(McKinley & Hyde, 1996).** This perspective contrasts sharply with an internalized concept of self. This viewpoint underscores the significant impact of societal norms and objectification on shaping individuals' self-perception and body image.

The genesis of Objectified Body Consciousness (OBC) can be traced back to feminist perspectives and psychological inquiries focused on understanding the repercussions of societal beauty ideals on individuals' self-perception. A seminal work in this domain is Objectification Theory, proposed by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997), This theory emphasizes how objectification reduces individuals, particularly women, to mere objects of desire, leading to feelings of body dissatisfaction and self-objectification.

The conceptualization and measurement of Objectified Body Consciousness as a quantifiable construct evolved through the contributions of notable psychologists such as Barbara L. Fredrickson, Tomi-Ann Roberts, and Susan Harter. These scholars built upon Objectification Theory by developing the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale. This scale offers a structured framework to assess individuals' experiences of self-objectification, body surveillance, body shame, and beliefs regarding appearance control.

Individual's Body Perception are deeply ingrained in social and cultural environments. Gender roles, cultural backgrounds, and societal standards all have a significant impact on how Objectified Body Consciousness experiences are shaped.

Research consistently demonstrates that females tend to experience elevated levels of self-objectification, body surveillance, and body shame as compared to males **(McKinley & Hyde, 1996; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997)**, primarily due to prevailing societal beauty standards.

Diverse cultural contexts harbour distinct beauty ideals that profoundly influence individual's perceptions of their bodies. For instance, cultures that prioritize thinness may engender heightened body dissatisfaction, particularly among females **(Fredrickson & Roberts, 1990).**

Intersectionality theory emphasizes how various intersecting social identities, encompassing race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation, contribute to nuanced experiences of Objectified Body Consciousness **(Crenshaw, 1989; Collins, 2004).** For example, research suggests that women of colour may experience a unique combination of pressures related to race, gender, and body image ideals **(Moradi et al., 2006).**

Empirical studies have demonstrated the substantial influence of cultural factors on body image perceptions and self-objectification **Moradi and Huang (2008**). Furthermore, the pervasive influence of media portrayals and societal pressures serves as significant contributors to the variations in OBC observed across diverse cultural milieus **(Tiggemann & Lynch, 2001).**

Objectified Body Consciousness (OBC) is a critical framework for understanding how people in our modern age navigate the central issues of body image, self-objectification, and social ideals of beauty **(Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).** Recent research and societal changes underscore the continued importance of OBCs, especially given the pervasive influence of social media **(Tiggemann & Slater, 2014).** However, the digital age has triggered concerns about body dissatisfaction and self-contradiction, particularly among young people. While they may appear more focused on their bodies, research suggests a complex relationship. Studies by **Halliwell & Dittmar (2006)** point to a potential increase in attachment to a specific body aesthetic, namely thinness. This focus, however, can coexist with self-contradiction, as young people navigate the pressure to present a curated online image while also engaging in behaviours that might not necessarily align with that image **(Perloff, 2014).** This complex dynamic contributes to a culture of increased body surveillance, where constant monitoring and comparison with others online become the norm.

The emergence and engagement of the body-positive movement is a notable departure from traditional beauty standards **(Swami et al., 2018)**, which calls for deeper exploration of OBC-related issues such as body shame and perceptions of appearance management **(Calogero et al., 2010)**. In addition, intersectional research has shed valuable light on how factors such as race, ethnicity, gender identity, and sexual orientation intersect with people's OBC experiences **(Moradi & Huang, 2008),** highlighting different perspectives on body image.

Objectified Body Consciousness comprises Three Primary Components**:**

- *Body Surveillance*: which involves monitoring oneself continuously from an external perspective, guided by cultural norms and the desire to avoid negative judgments. Imagine constantly checking your reflection or outfit, worried about how others perceive you.

- *Body shame:* This constant evaluation often leads to feelings of shame and dissatisfaction with one's body. For example, he compares himself to societal beauty standards and feels that he could not meet those standards.

- *Appearance Control beliefs*: High OBCs believe they can control their looks by trying hard and following societal norms. For example, managing your appearance through diet, exercise, etc.

These components are interconnected and contribute to the cycle of self-objectification and body dissatisfaction.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Jiaqing, Xu & Alivi, Mumtaz & Mustafa, Ezaleila & Dharejo, Nasrullah. (2023). The study's objective was to investigate how female body image and social media usage correlate, particularly in terms of their influence on overall well-being and mental health. It aimed to fill a research gap by conducting a thorough analysis focusing on female well-being. The results highlighted a notable link between social media use and adverse effects on mental health, underscoring the importance of awareness campaigns to foster healthier body image perceptions and manage potential negative outcomes related to social media engagement.

Körner, R., & Schütz, A. (2023). The aim was to investigate the relationship between power (perceived capacity to influence others) and positive body image, mediated by self-esteem. In a cross-sectional study (N = 318), power was found to be positively associated with body appreciation and satisfaction with appearance, partially mediated by self-esteem. In an experimental study (N = 114), participants in a high-power group showed higher body appreciation, greater body satisfaction, and perceived themselves as taller compared to a low-power group, with self-esteem mediating these effects. The findings suggest that power influences body image directly and indirectly through increased self-esteem, with implications for clinical prevention and intervention programs.

Dwivedi, M., Sharma, S., Vajpeyi, L. and Chaturvedi, S. (2022). The objective is to evaluate the Objective Body Awareness Scale's self-objectification of three hundred adolescent girls and its influence on academic performance in Uttar Pradesh. Research results such as Dwivedi et al. (2022) show that higher levels of self-objectification, focusing on body control and appearance control, are associated with lower academic performance in adolescent girls. This highlights the importance of interventions that promote intrinsic rather than extrinsic characteristics, preferably through counselling and mindfulness approaches.

Boursier, V., & Gioia, F. (2022) The aim of the study was to investigate how body-objectification impacts male body esteem, focusing on the predictive role of exercise/diet habits, body-objectification features, and social media-related practices. Findings showed that body shame had a negative impact on all body esteem dimensions in males, emphasizing the need for attention to this aspect of objectified body consciousness (OBC). Conversely, appearance control-related dimensions had a positive influence on body esteem. These results suggest that media pressure and internalized beauty ideals affect men's body image and self-esteem, aligning with the objectification theory.

Waqar, L., Mazhar, A. F., Rafique, M., & Rehman, M. (2022). The aim of the study was to examine how social application use and appearance-related consciousness impact Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD) symptoms and self-esteem in females aged 17-35 years. Results showed that both factors were positively associated with BDD symptoms but negatively correlated with self-esteem. This suggests that excessive use of social apps and heightened appearance awareness may contribute to body dissatisfaction and lower self-esteem among

Sandhu, T., & Sandhu, S. (2021). The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of self-objectification on the objective body awareness of 15-19-year-old adolescent females in Punjab. The research focuses on beliefs about body control, body shame and appearance control, emphasizing the influence of media on the psyche of young people. The results show that media images negatively affect the body perception of adolescents, highlighting the need for interventions to improve their body experience. Foster a critical approach to female beauty standards, psych pedagogical programs are recommended in schools and colleges to reduce internal and social comparison among young girl's young adult females.

Veldhuis, J., Alleva, J. M., Bij de Vaate, A. J. D. (N.), Keijer, M., & Konijn, E. A. (2020). The aim of this study was to examine how body image, self-objectification, and self-esteem relate to selfie behaviours among young women. The results indicated that higher body appreciation was linked to greater engagement in selective and intentional posting of selfies. Additionally, self-objectification was associated with increased involvement in various selfie behaviours. The study highlights the potential role of body image as both an outcome and a precursor to engagement in selfie activities on social networking sites.

Tiggemann, M., & Barbato, I. (2018). The study aimed to investigate the impact of appearance-related comments on women's body image on Instagram. Participants viewed attractive images paired with comments, either appearance-related or place-related. Exposure to appearance comments resulted in higher body dissatisfaction compared to place comments. While state self-objectification showed no significant effect, trait self-objectification predicted increased body dissatisfaction across conditions. The study concluded that comments on Instagram play a crucial role in influencing body image perceptions.

Ahadzadeh, A. S., Rafik-Galea, S., Alavi, M., & Amini, M. (2018). The aim of this research was to investigate the relationship between body mass index (BMI) as an independent variable and body image and fear of negative evaluation as dependent variables, while also exploring the moderating effect of self-esteem on these relationships. A sample of 318 Malaysian young adults participated in a self-administered survey covering demographic characteristics, body image, fear of negative evaluation, and self-esteem. The study used partial least squares structural equation modelling to analyse the data and test the research hypotheses. The results indicated a negative correlation between BMI and body image, with no significant correlation found with fear of negative evaluation. Additionally, the negative correlation between BMI and body image was more pronounced among individuals with lower self-esteem. Interestingly, a positive association between BMI and fear of negative evaluation was observed only among those with low self-esteem.

Frederick, D. A., Daniels, E. A., Bates, M. E., & Tylka, T. L. (2017) The study aimed to investigate the impact of thin-ideal media, including bikini and fashion models, on women's body satisfaction. Two groups of women were exposed to these images or control conditions, and their responses were collected regarding how the images affected their body image. The results showed that many women reported feeling worse about various aspects of their bodies after seeing fashion or bikini models, while control images had minimal negative effects. These findings suggest that thin-ideal media can have a significant immediate impact on women's body image perceptions.

Rai, S., & Sachdeva, G. (2017). The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between women's self-objectification and self-esteem, considering factors like body shame, body image anxiety, and societal influences. The study involved collegiate girls aged 19-23 and aimed to understand how they perceive themselves physically and their level of body consciousness. The results showed a significant negative correlation between self-objectification and self-esteem, with external factors like societal beauty standards and constant comparisons contributing to heightened self-objectification and body image concerns among young women.

Brown, D. J., & Zeigler-Hill, V. (2017). It discusses the evolution of the concept of self-esteem in psychology, particularly highlighting the shift from behaviourist perspectives to cognitive approaches. The aim appears to be understanding how self-esteem influences individuals' self-views, evaluations, affective experiences, and their orientation towards the external world based on their cultural worldview. The results suggest that individuals with positive self-views tend to prefer positive evaluations, and self-esteem is tied to meeting cultural standards, providing a sense of meaning and value to one's life.

Jan, M., Soomro, S. A., & Ahmad, N. (2017). The purpose of the study was to find out the relationship between the use of social media, especially Facebook, and the self-esteem of students. The study revealed that most participants participated in upward social comparisons on Facebook, which was associated with lower levels of self-esteem. People's self-esteem scores were negatively correlated with their time spent on Facebook, suggesting that using the social media platform more often led to lower self-confidence sequences.

Karazsia, B. T., Murnen, S. K., & Tylka, T. L. (2017). The study aimed to investigate changes in body dissatisfaction over time across different genders and dimensions (thinness-oriented and muscularity-oriented dissatisfaction), considering the influence of sociocultural factors. The study found that girls and women consistently scored higher than boys and men in thinness-oriented dissatisfaction, with a gradual decrease in scores over time for girls and women. Boys and men scored higher than girls and women in muscularity-oriented dissatisfaction, with no significant changes over time. These results suggest that sociocultural shifts may be affecting body dissatisfaction trends, particularly in relation to thinness-related pressures for girls and women.

Fredrickson, B. L., & Roberts, T. (2016). The aim of Fredrickson and Roberts' (2016) review paper on Objectification Theory is to provide a comprehensive understanding of women's lived experiences and mental health risks within the framework of Objectification Theory. Results from the review include: 1. Identification of the objectification of women as a pervasive societal issue. 2. Exploration of how objectification contributes to negative psychological outcomes such as body shame, disordered eating, and mental health disorders. 3. Analysis of the role of media, culture, and interpersonal interactions in perpetuating objectification

and its impact on women's self-perception and well-being. 4. Discussion of potential interventions and strategies to counteract the harmful effects of objectification on women's mental health and promote positive body image and self-esteem.

Orth, U., & Robins, R. W. (2014) reviewed recent longitudinal studies examining the development of self-esteem and its impact on important life outcomes. The aim was to study the development of self-esteem in various stages of life and its stability over time. Their research revealed three main findings: First, self-esteem rises from adolescence to middle age, peaks around age 50-60, and then declines rapidly in old age. Second, self-esteem is a relatively stable trait, with individuals maintaining high or low levels over decades. Success in various areas of life, such as relationships, work, and health, is linked to high self-esteem. These findings underscore the social importance of understanding the development of self-esteem and its real-world consequences.

Amy Noser and Virgil Zeigler-Hill (2013) conducted a survey of 465 female college students to determine the role of objective body awareness in mediating the relationship between appearance-based self-esteem and low self–esteem. Their study found that body surveillance and body shame significantly mediated the relationship between appearance-related self-esteem and low appearance-related self-esteem. Their discussion highlights how appearance-based self-esteem can increase body awareness and contribute to decreasing apparent self-esteem.

Tiggemann and Miller (2010; 2013) conducted studies that link the reduced interest in body shape among teenage girls to the examination of key developmental periods on social media platforms. One review by **McLean et al. (2015)** investigated social media use among 107th-grade students and young women in the North and found that those who shared more online photos, including selfies, and utilized Photoshop more frequently, tended to perceive their appearance more negatively and exhibited more evident eating issues.

Calogero, R. M., & Jost, J. T. (2011). The aim of this research was to investigate the impact of incidental exposure to sexist cues on self-objectification variables. The results showed that exposure to benevolent and complementary forms of sexism increased state self-objectification, self-surveillance, and body shame among women but not men. This effect was specific to self-objectification and was not due to a general increase in self-focus. Additionally, women exposed to benevolent sexism showed greater future behaviours related to appearance management, mediated by self-surveillance and body shame. However, the need to avoid closure seemed to provide some protection against self-objectification in the context of sexist ideology among women.

Tylka, T. L., & Sabik, N. J. (2010) The aim of this study was to explore the relationship between sexual objectification, body shame, self-esteem, and disordered eating among college women. The results showed that appearance feedback predicted body surveillance, comparison, self-esteem, and disordered eating. Body surveillance, comparison, and self-esteem predicted body shame. Additionally, body comparison moderated the link between body surveillance and disordered eating, with women who frequently compared their bodies reporting higher levels of disordered eating.

John, D. H., & Ebbeck, V. (2008) The study aimed to explore how objectified body consciousness (OBC) relates to physical self-conceptions and physical activity in U.S. undergraduate women (n=231) and men (n=163). Results showed that women reported higher OBC body surveillance and body shame than men, with no significant gender difference in OBC appearance control beliefs. The relationships between OBC variables and physical self-concept variables differed significantly between women and men, accounting for 48% of shared variance in women and 29% in men. However, the study found no significant link between OBC and reported physical activity levels.

Grossbard, J. R., Lee, C. M., Neighbours, C., & Larimer, M. E. (2008) Body dissatisfaction, particularly among females but also observed in males, is linked to low self-esteem, depression, and eating disorders. This study investigated how gender influences the connection between contingent self-esteem and body image concerns, such as weight and muscularity. The research involved 359 first-year U.S. undergraduate students (59.1% female) who reported heavy drinking behaviours. Results from hierarchical multiple regression analysis showed that females reported higher levels of contingent self-esteem and greater concerns about weight, while males expressed a stronger desire for muscularity. The association between contingent self-esteem and weight concerns was more pronounced in females, while males with higher contingent self-esteem showed a greater drive for muscularity.

Strelan, P., & Hargreaves, D. (2005) This study examined the link between self-objectification and objectification of others, focusing on women. University students and their friends were surveyed regarding self-objectification and objectification tendencies. Results showed higher self-objectification in women than men, negatively impacting women's body satisfaction. Both genders tended to objectify women more, indicating societal bias. Women's objectification of other women was similar to their objectification of men. The study highlighted a positive correlation between self-objectification and objectification of others, especially among women, suggesting a cycle of objectification impacting women.

Lowery, S. E., Kurpius, S. E. R., Befort, C., Blanks, E. H., Sollenberger, S., Nicpon, M. F., & Huser, L. (2005) This study set out to explore the connections between self-esteem, body image, and health-related behaviours among 267 female and 156 male first-year college students across 23 classrooms. The results revealed consistent patterns linking self-esteem, body image dissatisfaction, and health-related behaviours. Specifically, women showed a more negative body image compared to men, even among regular exercisers. Additionally, positive physical fitness and health-related behaviours were associated with higher self-esteem and improved body image in both the genders.

Mann, M., Hosman, C. M., Schaalma, H. P., & de Vries, N. K. (2004). The research aimed to highlight the importance of self-esteem as a factor influencing mental and social well-being, emphasizing its role as both a protective and risk factor in health outcomes. The paper presented evidence showing that higher self-esteem is associated with better health and social behaviour, while

lower self-esteem is linked to a range of mental disorders and social problems, underscoring the significance of understanding and promoting self-esteem for improved mental and physical health outcomes.

McKinley, N. M. (1998) This study aimed to investigate whether feminist theory, specifically Objectified Body Consciousness (OBC), could explain gender differences in body esteem among 327 undergraduate mostly European American women and men. The study found distinct dimensions of Objectified Body Consciousness (OBC) with acceptable reliabilities for men. Relationships between body surveillance, body shame, and body esteem were stronger in women compared to men. Women exhibited higher levels of body surveillance, body shame, and actual/ideal weight discrepancy, along with lower body esteem, compared to men. Multiple regression analysis indicated that gender differences in body esteem became non-significant when OBC was considered, supporting feminist theory regarding women's body experience.

Baumeister, R. F., Smart, L., & Boden, J. M. (1996). The research aimed to underscore self-esteem's role in mental and social well-being, addressing its impact on aspirations, personal goals, and social interactions, while also highlighting its importance as both a protective factor and a non-specific risk factor in physical and mental health, including internalizing (e.g., depression, anxiety) and externalizing (e.g., violence, substance abuse) problems. The paper presented findings supporting the positive influence of higher self-esteem on health and social behaviour, contrasting with the negative consequences associated with poor self-esteem, such as a range of mental disorders and social issues, including internalizing problems and externalizing issues. It argued for a holistic approach to understanding self-esteem's development, outcomes, and promotion, advocating for self-esteem as a fundamental element in mental health promotion efforts.

III. METHODOLOGY

Statement of Problem

Today, social media platforms like Instagram heavily emphasize 'perfect' bodies, potentially contributing to self-objectification, body dissatisfaction (which can lead to depression, anxiety, and eating disorders), and negative self-esteem among young adults (aged 18-25). Research has mainly concentrated on self-objectification in women, but it is unclear how prevalent this phenomenon is among men in social media. Different expectations and influences from society and the media can have varying effects on the self-esteem and body image of men and women when it comes to the impact of social media. This study will employ a survey design to explore these relationships and identify gender disparities. By understanding these dynamics, we can develop targeted interventions to promote positive body image and self-esteem in young adults.

Objectives:

- To investigate the relationship between young adults' self-esteem and self-objectified bodily consciousness (OBC) in the 18–25 age range.
- Examine how the relationship between OBC and self-esteem differs between young men and women.
- Explore the influence of media exposure, cultural norms, and societal beauty standards on the development of OBC and self-esteem.

Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: There will be a difference in self-esteem between young adult males and females, with females expected to report lower self-esteem than males.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a difference in Objectified Body Consciousness between young adult males and females, with females expected to demonstrate higher levels of objectified body consciousness compared to Males.

Hypothesis 3: A negative correlation exists between self-esteem and objectified body consciousness, suggesting that higher levels of objectified body consciousness will be associated with lower self-esteem scores.

Variables

-Independent Variable: Gender

-Dependent Variable: Self Esteem and Objectified Body Consciousness

Operational Definition of the Variables

-Self-Esteem: Self-esteem refers to an individual's overall evaluation of their worth and value as a person.

-Objectified Body Consciousness: Objectified body consciousness is defined as the extent to which individuals internalize societal ideals of physical appearance and perceive themselves as objects to be evaluated based on appearance (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

-Gender: Gender refers to the social and cultural categorization of individuals based on their biological sex, including male, female, and non-binary identities.

Assessment Tools: The study employed two widely recognized self-report measures:

-Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale developed by Morris Rosenberg in 1965, is a simple yet effective tool (Rosenburg, 1965). This 10-item questionnaire aims to evaluate one's overall self-worth and acceptance. Participants respond to statements like "I feel good about myself" using a Likert scale, indicating their level of agreement from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." By tallying the scores, the scale offers insight into an individual's self-esteem, with higher scores suggesting a stronger sense of self-worth.

-Objectified Body Consciousness (OBCS) was developed in 1997 by Fredrickson and Roberts (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). It consists of 24-items, this assessment comprises three components: Body Shame, Body Surveillance, and Control Beliefs. Participants express their agreement with statements like "I feel ashamed of my body" and "I often worry about how I look to others" using a Likert-type scale. By aggregating responses within each category, the OBCS provides a nuanced understanding of individuals' perceptions and concerns regarding their bodies, particularly regarding self-objectification and body image issues.

Sample

-Sample Size: 120 participants with 60 men and 60 women.

-Sampling Technique: Participants were selected using convenience sampling.

Inclusion Criteria:

-Participants within the age range of 18 to 25 years.

- Indian Population

- Both males and females are included to allow for gender-based comparisons and analysis.

- Proficiency in English or a specified regional language is required for accurate understanding and response during data collection.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Participants outside the age range of 18 to 25 years are excluded.

- Non-Indian citizens are excluded to ensure cultural relevance and consistency among participants.

- Individuals with non-binary gender identities or identities outside the male/female binary excluded to maintain clarity in gender-based comparisons.

- Participants lacking proficiency in English Language.

Procedure: My study utilized the Rosenburg Self-Esteem Scale and the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale to explore self-esteem and objectified body consciousness, alongside a fundamental demographic questionnaire capturing age, gender, locality, and socioeconomic status. The demographic questionnaire was instrumental in understanding the participants backgrounds and contexts. The study involved collecting responses from a sample of 120 young adults, emphasizing descriptive and distributional analysis alongside correlational exploration using statistical tools like SPSS. Specifically, the study examined the roles of gender, and age in shaping self-esteem and objectified body consciousness perceptions among the participants. Data were collected through both offline methods and online surveys using Google Forms.

IV. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

Table 1. Showing descriptive Statistics for Objectified Body Consciousness and Self-Esteem for the whole sample (N=120)

	N	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Objectified Body Consciousness	120	92.38	12.38	0.019	-0.053
Self-Esteem		28.71	4.89	-0.264	0.548

Table 2. Showing Descriptive Statistics and Independent Sample t-test for Self-Esteem Based on Gender.

		N	Mean	SD	t	df	Significance
Self-Esteem	MALE	60	29.40	5.19			
					1.556	118	0.122
	FEMALE	60	28.02	4.51			

Table 3. Showing Descriptive Statistics and Independent Sample T-Test for Objectified Body Consciousness Based on Gender.

		N	Mean	SD	t	df	Significance
Objectified Body Consciousness	MALE	60	91.78	12.97			
					-0.529	118	0.598
	FEMALE	60	92.98	11.84			

Table 4. Showing correlation between Objectified Body Consciousness and Self-esteem

	Correlation (r)	Significance
Objectified Body Consciousness		
	-.241**	p<0.01
Self-Esteem		

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

V. INTERPRETATION

Table 2 indicates, Males had a mean self-esteem score of 29.40 (SD = 5.19), while females had an average score of 28.02 (SD = 4.51). This indicates that females report slightly lower levels of self-esteem as compared to males. Moreover, t-test analysis results show that this difference was not statistically significant (df = 118, t = 1.556, p = 0.122). Thus, Hypothesis is rejected.

Table 3 shows, Males had a mean score of 91.78 (SD = 12.97), while females have a mean score of 92.98 (SD = 11.84). This suggests that females report slightly higher levels of objectified body consciousness compared to males. However, the results of the independent sample t-test indicate that this difference is not statistically significant (df = 118, t = -0.529, p = 0.598). Thus, Hypothesis two is rejected.

Table 4 shows, The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) between objectified body consciousness and self-esteem among N=120 participants. The negative correlation (r = -.241, p < 0.01) indicates a weak relationship, suggesting that higher levels of objectified body consciousness are associated with lower self-esteem scores. However, caution should be exercised in inferring causality based solely on correlation data. Thus, Hypothesis three is accepted.

VI. DISCUSSION

The study aimed to investigate self-esteem and objectified body consciousness among young adults, comparing the difference between males and females. The hypothesis proposed expected differences in self-esteem, objectified body consciousness, and a negative correlation between the two variables. Contrary to popular beliefs and some prior research, the findings were not statistically significant, this departure from the expected trend prompts a revaluation of traditional gender stereotypes regarding self-esteem and suggests a more nuanced understanding of individual variability within gender groups.

Similarly, our analysis of objectified body consciousness, which reflects how much someone focuses on their appearance from an external perspective, revealed subtle differences. While women tended to score slightly higher, this difference again did not reach statistical significance. This challenges the assumption that body image concerns are solely a female issue. It highlights the importance of considering other factors influencing body consciousness, such as societal expectations, media portrayals, and individual psychology.

There was a weak negative correlation found between objectified body consciousness and self-esteem. This suggests that people who place greater emphasis on how they appear to others tend to have slightly lower self-esteem. It is important to remember, nevertheless, that correlation does not imply causality. It is challenging to tell with certainty what causes others. Nonetheless, this finding underscores the interconnectedness of body image and self-evaluation, suggesting the need for a comprehensive approach to understanding psychological well-being.

Our results are consistent with other studies showing subtle differences between genders in young people' perceptions of their bodies and their self-esteem. However, observed discrepancies suggest the influence of contextual factors like cultural norms, social environments, and individual experiences. These inconsistencies underscore the need for context-specific research and acknowledging the diverse narratives within each gender group.

The significance of these findings transcends theoretical discussions. They emphasize the importance of individualized interventions that address the variability in self-esteem and body consciousness, moving beyond broad gender stereotypes. Future research efforts could benefit from longitudinal designs, qualitative methodologies, and interdisciplinary collaborations to comprehensively unravel the complexities of body image perceptions and their impact on psychological well-being.

Several limitations constrain the generalizability of this study's findings. First, the convenience sampling method introduces a bias, potentially underrepresenting the diversity of socioeconomic backgrounds. The sample is comprised of upper-middle-class students from Amity University, limiting its applicability to broader populations or individuals with different socioeconomic experiences. External factors, such as evolving societal attitudes towards body image over time, also warrant consideration. While the study acknowledges that body image concerns affect both genders, the focus on a specific demographic might overlook variations in experiences shaped by diverse societal norms and expectations. In conclusion, by highlighting the limitations of generalized assumptions and the significance of context-specific research, this study contributes to the growing conversation on gender, self-esteem, and body consciousness. These findings emphasize the necessity for scholars and professionals to take a more inclusive and nuanced approach when addressing the psychological wellbeing of young people. This includes taking into consideration factors like socioeconomic status and the impact of diverse cultural norms and expectations on one's perception of one's body image and self-esteem.

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