

## BODY IMAGE SATISFACTION AND SOCIAL ANXIETY AMONG FEMALE STUDENTS AT TERTIARY LEVEL

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### **Abstract**

Body image satisfaction is one of the socio-psychological issues that disturbs the overall well-being and mental health of individuals. The main objective of the current study is to examine the relationship between body image satisfaction and social anxiety among female students at the tertiary level. Different socio-demographic factors that affect body image satisfaction. The target population of this study was undergraduate female students from the University of Gujrat. The quantitative research method was used. The sample of 217 students was drawn using a proportionate random sampling technique. Data was collected using the self-structured questionnaire with a 0.8 alpha value. Results indicated that there is a strong negative correlation between body image satisfaction and social anxiety. ( $r = -.860^{**}$ ,  $n = 217$ ,  $p = .000$ ). The  $\beta$  value (-.860) illustrates body image as a predictor of social anxiety. The findings of the current study revealed a strong negative correlation between body image satisfaction and social anxiety among female students at the tertiary level. Based on these findings, it is crucial to have a special focus on this issue.

**Keywords:** Body Image Satisfaction, socio-demographic, body image, Social Anxiety.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Body image defines an individual's perception, feelings, and beliefs about physical appearance. Factors such as; societal beauty standards, personal experiences, and media representations (Grogan, 2021). The perceptual component of body image refers to perceiving our size, structure, figure, weight, height, features, and behaviors (Gleeson, 2006). Social anxiety

*is the fear of being evaluated and judged negatively in social situations by other people which leads to feelings of inferiority, embarrassment, humiliation, self-consciousness, and depression (SAI,2024).*

*Research depicts that body image dissatisfaction can lead to increased social anxiety, impacting academic performance and social interactions (Cash & Pruzinsky, 2002; Stice & Shaw, 2002). Study shows that the prevalence of anxiety is found generally in women. Females are more dissatisfied as compared to males. Teenage girls are more or less satisfied with their body condition and have more negative body images (Ratnasari, Pratiwi, Wildannisa, 2021).*

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

*Body image satisfaction influences psychological health (Frederick, Lever et al., 2007; Ridolfi & Crowther, 2013; Gillespie et al., 2015; Gillen & Markey, 2019). People's thoughts about positive body image also influence their overall well-being (Cash & Fleming, 2002). Research indicated that females are more vulnerable about their physical features, and physical appearance is strongly associated with body image satisfaction. Body image is a crucial factor in affecting people's mental health BMI affects body image satisfaction (Melnyk et al., 2004; Rudiger et al., 2007; Çatikkaş, 2011).*

*A study showed that body image satisfaction and psychological well-being have a positive association, and men have body satisfaction as compared to women (Dotse & Asumeng, 2015). Body dissatisfaction was a vital predictor of depression and self-esteem in many countries (Nishina et al., 2006). People get to know what is a desirable ideal body and try to attain that body ideal which causes body dissatisfaction (Yamamiya et al., 2005). Body Image dissatisfaction can compel a person to be away from society (Tylka, 2011). Biased perceptions about body appearance lead to body dissatisfaction (Carroll & Spangler, 2001; Spangler, 2002).*

*Social anxiety is defined as a usual type of phobia (Kessler et al., 2005). It's commonly known by symptoms such as constant distress, terror of any situation, event, or performing in front of others (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). People with this disorder may fear being judged and assessed by others (Alden & Taylor, 2010). It influences many aspects of life such as connections, and academic life (Alden & Taylor, 2004; Aderka et al., 2012). Furthermore, these individuals report inadequate life excellence (Alonso et al., 2004).*

*Studies revealed that social anxiety is an essential part of typical human life, fear of being embarrassed raises attention to social connections, hinders unfitting behavior, and inspires to perform better. Shy people with social anxiety*

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*tend to have trouble in making conversations and they try to prevent their gazes. Rates of avoidant personality disorder in social anxiety patients are almost 84% high. Avoidant personality is perhaps an extreme form of social anxiety (Schneier et al., 2002).*

*A study by Luqman and Dixit (2017) revealed that there is an association between body image and mental psychological discomfort. Moreover, Holsen et al. (2012) found that better relations with peers, family, or friends are linked with more body satisfaction. People who feel forced to attain beauty standards have more dissatisfaction regarding body than those who do not feel forced (Cafri et al., 2005). An increase in body image distress increases social anxiety (Vannucci, 2018).*

*Body image satisfaction is important for mental and psychological health. Pawijit (2019), there is a strong association between body image dissatisfaction, fear of negative judgment, and social anxiety. Girls tend to report more negative body image (Davison & McCabe, 2006). Dixit and Luqman (2017) depicted that there exists an association between body perception, social phobia, and psychological health. Most of the females have negative body image and because of that, they have social anxiety related to their appearance (Christina & Zehra 2023).*

*Body image satisfaction and social anxiety of female students have a negative and strong relationship (Tarkhan et al., 2013). Body image dissatisfaction is common among adolescents (Dion et al., 2015). This dissatisfaction can cause increased risks for eating disorders, and depression (Field et al., 2014).*

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **SAMPLE**

*The main purpose of this study is to find the relationship between body image satisfaction and social anxiety among female students at the tertiary level, the current study used the proportionate random sampling technique to draw the sample. The sample size was 217 female students from the University of Gujrat.*

#### **MEASURES**

*In this research, the researcher developed a questionnaire for cultural relevancy and used it as a tool for data collection to measure the responses. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach Alpha's value which usually ranges between 0.8 to 1.0. In the present study Cronbach's alpha reliability for BIS was good ( $\alpha = 0.832$ ), and for SA was ( $\alpha = .742$ ) acceptable internal consistency.*

**ETHICAL CONSIDERATION OF RESEARCH**

*The ethics of the research were highly considered in research work. Before starting the data collection, the students were asked for their approval to participate in the study. The participants were also introduced to the research topics and informed them that the data would be kept confidential.*

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

*The current study analyzed the collected data using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-24). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data. Frequency and percentage were used to analyze the demographic variables. The relationship between body image satisfaction and social anxiety was explored using Spearman's correlation coefficient. Linear regression analysis was used to observe the predictive social anxiety on body image satisfaction.*

**TABLE 1  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
<b>BISST</b>	217	53.00	141.00	84.9539	13.13173
<b>SAST</b>	217	53.00	122.00	93.9677	10.85612

**TABLE 2**

***Correlation Coefficient Between Body Image Satisfaction and Social Anxiety***

<b>Variables</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Body Image Satisfaction</b>	1	
<b>Social Anxiety</b>	-.860**	1

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

*According to the finding shown in table 2 ( $r = -.860^{**}$ ), there is a statistically strong negative correlation between body image satisfaction and social anxiety. This indicates that as body image satisfaction decreases, social anxiety significantly increases among the participants.*

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**TABLE 3**  
**COEFFICIENT OF LINEAR REGRESSION WITH BODY IMAGE SATISFACTION (BISST) AS PREDICTOR OF SOCIAL ANXIETY (SAST) AMONG FEMALE STUDENTS**

Variables	B	S.E	R <sup>2</sup>	F	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	95% CI	
						LB	UB
<b>Constant</b>	154.343	2.476	.739	608.786	.739	149.474	159.212
<b>BISST</b>	-0.711	0.029				-0.768	-0.654

*Note: BISST = Body Image Satisfaction Scale, SAST = Social Anxiety Scale.*

*Table 3. The result depicts that Body Image Satisfaction (BISST) significantly predicts Social Anxiety (SAST), explaining 73.9% of the variance. The BISST coefficient indicates a strong negative relationship with social anxiety levels.*

**DISCUSSION**

*The objective of the present study is to explore the relationship between body image satisfaction and social anxiety. The study reports low body image dissatisfaction among female students.*

*In this study, most of the respondents were aged between 20-22 years. The majority of the respondents (57.6%) belong to urban areas. The study reveals that 35.9% of female students are satisfied with their bodies, and don't have extreme eating disorders or behaviors. Kelly et al., (2005) study depicted the same results, that females who have high body image satisfaction are less likely to do diet and weight control.*

*The study also shows that female students are satisfied with their body appearance. This finding is supported by previous studies, including Hong's (2006) study on body image satisfaction and Ratnasari, Pratiwi, & Wildannisa's (2021) study on body image satisfaction.*

*Moreover, the results of the current study show an overall negative relationship between body image satisfaction and social anxiety among female students. The results are also comparable to the findings of (Ratnasari et al., 2021; Faradicha, & Permanasari, 2024) where there was a negative relationship between body image satisfaction and social anxiety.*

*Additionally, the study declared that female respondents have less social anxiety because of their positive image satisfaction. Female students are less likely to feel embarrassment, fear, discomfort, irritation, or anxiousness. This result is supported by the study of Faradicha et al.'s (2024) that declares positive body image helps to avoid anxious feelings and social anxiety, females who are more confident of their appearance and body can interact with others without the fear of negative judgments by others.*

*The statistical results of Pearson correlation analysis have shown a strong negative correlation between body image satisfaction and social anxiety. ( $r = -.860^{**}$ ,  $n = 217$ ,  $p = .000$ ). similar findings that indicates social anxiety is negatively correlated with body image. Increased positive body image is associated with decreased social interaction anxiety (Luqman & Dixit, 2017; Ratnasari et al., 2021; Thomas, 2020).*

*The outcomes of regression analysis represent a significant relationship between body image satisfaction and social anxiety. The significant value of .000 is less than alpha (0.05) showing a statistically significant relationship. The  $\beta$  value (-.860) illustrates a negative relationship between body image satisfaction and social anxiety. Hence, similar results were shown in the study (Tarkhan et al., 2013).*

#### **STRENGTHS OF THE STUDY**

*One strength of this study is its quantitative design, which allows for an objective analysis of the correlation between body image satisfaction and social anxiety. By using Pearson correlation and linear regression analysis, the study provides robust evidence supporting body image dissatisfaction as a predictor of social anxiety. Additionally, the study's use of a structured questionnaire ensures consistency in data collection, while random sampling enhances the validity of the results by reducing selection bias. Finally, the study's focus on female university students provides valuable insights into a specific demographic group that is at increased risk of body image concerns and social anxiety, contributing to the literature on mental health in young adults.*

#### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

*Some limitations of the result should be mentioned. The sample was limited to female students of only two departments which may decrease the generalizability of the results. The researcher only studies body image satisfaction and social anxiety among university students and ignores the rest of the females.*

#### **FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS**

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*Further research on a larger sample from different departments, universities, and cultural backgrounds should enhance the generalizability. Longitudinal research and Qualitative research could provide a deeper understanding of body image satisfaction and social anxiety among female students. Future research should also explore variables like; self-esteem, depression, coping mechanisms, and the role of media.*

### **CONCLUSION**

*The study found the negative influence of body image satisfaction and social anxiety among female students at the tertiary level. The results highlight the need for body image interventions to decrease social anxiety and help promote the psychological well-being of female students. Further, this study will help the new generation and help them to cope with anxiety.*



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