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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

**GENDER DIFFERENCES IN BODY SELF-RELATION AMONG YOUNG ADULTS IN INDIA**

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**Abstract**

Body self-relation is a multidimensional construct defined by persons' perceptions of and attitudes about their body. Body image does not simply reflect the biological enrichment of the individual or the feedback received from the significant others. The way you perceive about your body is your cognitive body image. This can lead to excessive concern with body shape and weight. Behaviors in which you relate as a result of your body image encompass your behavioral body image. A study based on the gender differences in body relation relating to young adults rating the comparison in perception of both male and female data. Hundred participants of both male and female took part in answering the by Multidimensional body self-relations questionnaire (MBSRQ-AS). Results demonstrated by Mann Whitney U test revealed that there is significant difference between male and female young adults in their relation to body self,  $p < 0.05$ , (2-tailed) in appearance orientation. There is no statistical  $\text{sig.} > 0.05$  differences in the other dimensions. Therefore, this study rejects the null hypothesis in (dimension) appearance orientation and accepts the null hypothesis (dimensions) in appearance evaluation, body area satisfaction, overweight preoccupation and self-classified weight.

**Keywords:** body self-relation; gender differences

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**Introduction**

Body image is a multidimensional construct defined by individuals' perceptions of and attitudes about their body. The notion of body image is used in a wide array of disciplines, including psychology, medicine, psychiatry, psychoanalysis, philosophy, cultural and feminist

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studies; the media also often uses the term. Across these disciplines and media there is no agreeable definition, but body image may be expressed as how people view themselves in the mirror, or in their minds. It incorporates the memories, experiences, assumptions, and comparisons of one's own appearance, and overall attitudes towards one's height, shape, and weight. An individual's impression of their body is also perceived to be a product of ideals cultivated by various social and cultural ideals. The way you feel about your body is your affective body image. This associates to the amount of satisfaction or dissatisfaction you feel about your shape, weight and individual body parts. This gendered social context shapes among women a self-critical orientation toward their physical appearance that is demonstrated in certain comparison tendencies associated with negative body esteem. Women are more likely than men to take part in upward social comparisons, perceiving other same-sex persons as being more attractive, having better physical qualities than theirs. Men instead are less affected by rigid physical appearance norms and have the tendency to resort to downward social comparisons, a more self-hopeful strategy that enhances self-esteem. The same gender differences were noticed as regards temporal comparisons: when projecting the future, men usually envision possible self-improvement; women, on the other hand have more pessimistic expectations about achieving the desired appearance.

## **Literature Review**

Kurtz, R. M. (1969). Sex differences and discrepancies in body attitudes. The outcomes indicate that women not only like their bodies better than men but also have a more clearly differentiated idea of what they like and dislike about their bodies. Men on the other hand judge their bodies as more potent and more active than women.

Locksley et al., (1980). Sex stereotypes and social judgment. Research in the psychology of projection has demonstrated that people often

neglect prior probabilities when making predictions about people, especially when they have individuating information about the person that is subjectively diagnostic of the criterion.

Linda A. Jackson, Linda A. (1987) Gender, Gender Role, and Physical Appearance, Results indicated that women considered all components of appearance except height to be more overriding than did men and were more interested in changing their appearance than were men. Masculine women considered themselves as “too large” but were more satisfied with their facial appearance than were traditional (feminine) women. Few physical attributes distinguished among the malegender-role groups.

Linda A. Jackson, Linda A (1988). Sullivan & Ronald Rostker. The importance of the masculine element of gender role was reflected in the favorable body-image ratings of androgynous and masculine females in all domains (i.e., physical appearance, physical fitness, and physical health), and in the unfavorable ratings of feminine males in the physical fitnessdomain.

Lisa et al., (1988) Behavioral and psychological implications of body dissatisfaction: Do men and women differ? Although overall body esteem was correlated with self-esteem for both men and women, measures of weight dissatisfaction were not associated with self-esteem for women. Women reported exercising for weight control more than men, and exercising for weight control was associated withderegulated eating.

## **Research Gap**

When comparing the findings, this study shows a significant difference in appearance orientation between male and femaleyoung adults. This shows similar results with the other study findings; Gender role and physical appearance conducted byLinda A. Jackson, Linda, A (1987) has found women considered all components of appearance except height to be more important; Lisa R. Silberstein Ruth (1988) highlights women reported exercising for weight controlmore than men.

## Research and method

### The proposal hypothesis

**H1** - There is no significant difference in the dimension of appearance evaluation between male and female sample.

**H2** - There is no significant difference in the dimension of appearance orientation between male and female sample.

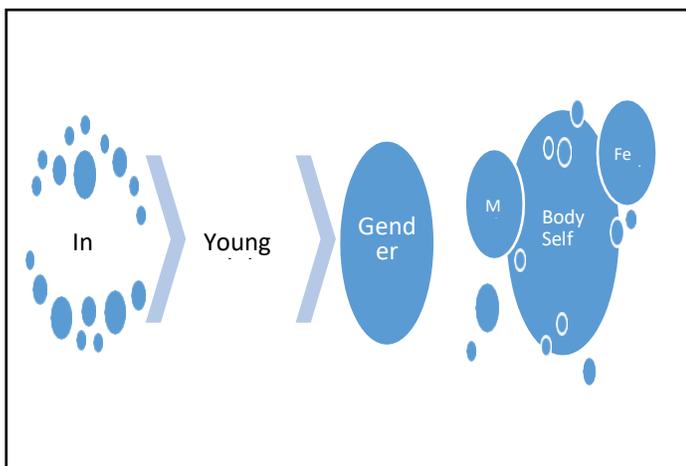
**H3** - There is no significant difference in the dimension of body area satisfaction between male and female sample.

**H4** - There is no significant difference in the dimension of overweight preoccupation between male and female sample.

**H5**- There is no significant difference in the dimension of self-classified weight between male and female sample.

### The proposal conceptual frame work

Figure 1 shows the proposed conceptual framework where gender difference is the independent variable and the body self- relation is the dependent variable



**Figure 1:** The Proposed Conceptual Framework

## Procedure and Data Collection

The purpose of this study is to measure whether or not there is significant difference in dimensions of body self-relation between male and female young adults in India. The scale is given to young adults' age ranging from 18-25; random sampling technique is used to collect the samples of 100 young adults (male & female) residing in India. Variables were measured with The MBSRQ-Appearance Scales (MBSRQ-AS) is a 34-item measure that consists of subscales. The 12- page MBSRQ manual provides information about its scientific development, its subscales and their interpretation, scoring formulae, gender-specific norms, and reliability data. Collection of data and assessment were performed within the stipulated time. The demographic profile of respondents, measured using a nominal or ordinal scale.

## Data Analysis and Results

Independent analysis was conducted on gender differences in body self-relation among young adults to determine if there is any significant difference between male and female young adults in their body self-relation. The main variables of this study are gender and body self-relation.

The table1 shows the tests of normality of Gender Differences in body self-relation among young adults. A Normality Test is used to determine whether the sample data has been drawn from a normally distributed population. The Shapiro- Wilk Normality Test published by Samuel Sanford Shapiro and Martin Wilk (1965) is used in this study. Results from normality test demonstrate that the data tested is not normally distributed.

**Table. 1**

Tests of Normality							
	Gender	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Appearance evaluation	Male	0.105	50	0.200*	0.964	50	<b>0.128</b>
	Female	0.112	50	0.155	0.977	50	<b>0.435</b>
Appearance orientation	Male	0.066	50	0.200*	0.968	50	<b>0.183</b>
	Female	0.116	50	0.089	0.977	50	<b>0.445</b>
Body area satisfaction	Male	0.099	50	0.200*	0.965	50	<b>0.142</b>
	Female	0.093	50	0.200*	0.979	50	<b>0.502</b>
Overweight preoccupation	Male	0.164	50	0.002	0.903	50	<b>0.001</b>
	Female	0.118	50	0.080	0.948	50	<b>0.028</b>
Self-classified weight	Male	0.207	50	0.000	0.941	50	<b>0.014</b>
	Female	0.125	50	0.048	0.951	50	<b>0.039</b>
*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.							
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction							

Note: df=Degree of Freedom, Sig. = Significant Value

**Table 1 shows the Tests of Normality of Gender Differences in Body self-relation among young adults**

The table 2 shows the gender variable, number of samples, mean rank and the sum of ranks tested by Mann Whitney’s U Test invented (Frank Wilcoxon, 1945). Female young adults show higher mean ranks than male young adults in presence of high ‘n’ value.

Table 3 Investigation was conducted on Gender Differences in body self-relation among Young Adults to determine if there is any significant difference between male and female young adults in their body self-relation. The table explains Mann-Whitney U value of the dimensions measured.

**Table 2 shows the Ranks of Gender Differences in body self-relation among young adults by Mann Whitney’s U test**

Ranks				
	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Appearance Evaluation	Male	50	50.34	<b>2517.00</b>
	Female	50	50.66	<b>2533.00</b>
	Total	100		
Appearance Orientation	Male	50	40.78	<b>2039.00</b>
	Female	50	60.22	<b>3011.00</b>
	Total	100		
Body Area Satisfaction	Male	50	51.69	<b>2584.50</b>
	Female	50	49.31	<b>2465.50</b>
	Total	100		
Overweight Preoccupation	Male	50	45.49	<b>2274.50</b>
	Female	50	55.51	<b>2775.50</b>
	Total	100		
Self-Classified Weight	Male	50	46.38	<b>2319.00</b>
	Female	50	54.62	<b>2731.00</b>
	Total	100		

Note: N= Number of Data

**Table 3 shows the Mann Whitney’s U Test Statistics of Gender Differences in body self-relation among young adults**

Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>					
Variable	Appearance Evaluation	Appearance Orientation	Body Area Satisfaction	Overweight Preoccupation	Self-Classified Weight
Mann-Whitney U	1242.000	764.000	1190.500	999.500	<b>1044.000</b>
Wilcoxon W	2517.000	2039.000	2465.500	2274.500	<b>2319.000</b>
Z	-0.055	-3.356	-0.411	-1.736	<b>-1.444</b>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.956	0.001	0.681	0.083	<b>0.149</b>
a. Grouping Variable: Gender					

Note: Z=Number of Standard Deviations from the Mean

Investigation was conducted on Gender Differences in body self-relation among Young Adults to determine if there is any significant difference between male and female young adults in their body self-relation. The table explains Mann-Whitney U value of the dimensions measured.

## **Discussion**

In this research paper, detailed study has been made to identify the gender differences in body self-relation between male and female samples. The main objective of the study is to find the body self-relation with gender difference between male and female young adults. For this purpose, a random sampling method was employed to collect responses from 100 young adults residing in India.

The data thus collected were arranged into tabular form for data analysis. In this study, body self-relation is considered as dependent variable and gender as independent variable. The data was analyzed by using statistical tool like mean and standard deviation. In addition, test for normality and Mann Whitney U test has been made appropriately.

Among the total respondents, female sample ranks high in body self-relation when compared to male sample. It is proved by using test for normality and Mann Whitney U test. From the result, it shows that null hypothesis has been rejected in the (dimension) appearance orientation and accepted in (dimensions) appearance evaluation, body area satisfaction, overweightpreoccupation and self- classified weight.

The p-value of appearance evaluation (0.956), body area satisfaction (0.681), overweight preoccupation (0.083) and self- classified weight (0.149) shows there is no significant difference between male and female. Whereas, the p-value of appearance orientation (0.001) shows there is significant difference between male and female in their body self-relation

Based on the results of this study, it appears that body self-concern are prevalent among young adults. Sample who scored lesser in body self-relation satisfaction may tend to develop depression,

social anxiety and severe dieting practices. In case of client with altered nutritional intake commonly seen in eating disorders, the clinical psychologists should focus on client attitude with perception and belief related to body self-relation. This study helps to recognize adaptive and ineffective body self-pattern among client. Also helps in planning intervention, which determines the impact of cultured, societal and psychological attitudes contributing to a disturbed body image. The psychologist and client can plan effective interventions that lead to more effective coping strategies thereby promoting positive change in the client's view of body image. The identification of positive body self-relation patterns leads to development of more positive schema which build strength to overcome depression and social anxiety.

When compared the findings, this study shows significant difference in appearance orientation between male and female young adults. This shows similar result with other study findings; Gender role and physical appearance conducted by Linda

A. Jackson, Linda, A (1987) has found women considered all components of appearance except height to be more important; Lisa R. Silberstein Ruth (1988) highlights women reported exercising for weight control more than men.

This study based on the gender differences in body relation relating to young adults rating the comparison in perception of both male and female data. Hundred participants of both male and female took part in answering the by Multidimensional body self-relations questionnaire (MBSRQ-AS). The study indicates the significant difference in Appearance orientation between male and female young adults. It highlights the body self-relation and gender difference in sample population. This sample has been taken among young adults in India. From this study, it concludes that female sample has higher body self- relation when compared with male sample. This study rejects the null hypothesis in (dimension) appearance orientation and accepts the null hypothesis in (dimensions) appearance evaluation, body area satisfaction, overweight preoccupation and self-classified weight.

Further studies will be strengthened by including potential influencers such as lifestyle, media habits

and social relationships. Cross Cultural design followed with various ethnic and cultural groups in different geographical locale to determine cause and effect of body self-relation. A wide range of study could be done with different population size, age factor and gender relations.

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