



EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT AND BODY IMAGE SATISFACTION IN YOUNG ADULTS

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Abstract : This study aimed to investigate the relationship between perceived social support and body image satisfaction among young adults. A sample of 100 young adults aged 18 to 26 was recruited using purposive sampling technique. Participants completed an online survey including the: Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) and Body-Esteem scale of Adolescents and Adults (BESAA). The results indicate a significant positive correlation between perceived social support and body image satisfaction, suggesting that individuals who feel more support from their social circles tend to have higher levels of body image satisfaction. The study also found that males tend to perceive higher levels of social support compared to females, which may contribute to their body image satisfaction. Furthermore, the correlation between body esteem and being an adult was found to be positive but not significant, indicating that there is no strong association between body esteem and being an adult. The findings support the hypotheses that higher levels of social support are positively correlated with body image satisfaction and that males perceive higher levels of social support than females. The results have implications for the development of interventions aimed at promoting positive body image and improving mental health outcomes in young adults.

Keywords: Perceived Social Support, Body Image Satisfaction, Young Adults, Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), Body-Esteem Scale of Adolescents and Adults (BESAA), Positive Correlation, Males, Females, Body Esteem.

INTRODUCTION

Perceived Social Support

Perceived Social Support (PSS) is a multifaceted concept that has garnered significant attention in recent years due to its profound impact on an individual's overall well-being. PSS refers to the subjective experience of receiving support from others, which can be emotional, practical, or informational in nature. This concept is distinct from actual social support, which is the objective provision of assistance. PSS is influenced by an individual's perception of the support they receive, which can be shaped by various factors such as their social network, cultural background, and personal experiences.

Definition

PSS is defined as the availability of people who make one feel cared about, valued, and loved. It encompasses the emotional, practical, and informational assistance an individual perceives they receive from others. This support can come from various sources, including family, friends, colleagues, or community members. PSS is not solely dependent on the actual provision of support but rather on the individual's subjective experience and perception of that support.

Importance

- **Mental Health:** Higher levels of PSS have been associated with reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety, as well as improved overall mental well-being. Studies have shown that individuals with higher PSS tend to have better mental health outcomes, including lower symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- **Physical Health:** PSS has been linked to better physical health outcomes, including lower blood pressure and a reduced risk of chronic diseases. Research has shown that individuals with higher PSS tend to have better physical health, including lower blood pressure and a reduced risk of chronic diseases.
- **Resilience:** PSS can serve as a buffer against stress and adversity, enabling individuals to cope more effectively with challenging situations. This is particularly important for individuals who have experienced trauma or adversity, as PSS can help them manage stress and maintain their overall well-being.

- **Social Integration:** PSS can foster a sense of belonging and social integration, which is critical for overall well-being. This is because social support is a fundamental human need, and individuals who feel supported by others tend to have better mental and physical health outcomes.

Meaning

PSS is a critical component of an individual's social network, providing a sense of security, comfort, and belonging. It is the perception of having a reliable network of people who care about and support them. This perception can have a profound impact on an individual's mental and physical health, as well as their overall well-being.

Types of Social Support

- **Emotional Support:** This type of support involves emotional comfort, empathy, and understanding from others. Emotional support can be particularly important for individuals who are experiencing stress, anxiety, or other emotional challenges.
- **Appraisal Support:** This type of support involves confidence building and encouragement from others. Appraisal support can be particularly important for individuals who are facing challenges or setbacks, as it can help them maintain their self-esteem and confidence.
- **Informational Support:** This type of support involves providing information, advice, or guidance from others. Informational support can be particularly important for individuals who are facing challenges or making important decisions, as it can help them make informed choices.
- **Instrumental Support:** This type of support involves tangible assistance, such as help with daily tasks or financial support. Instrumental support can be particularly important for individuals who are facing practical challenges, such as managing daily tasks or financial difficulties.

Benefits of Social Support

- **Improved Ability to Cope with Stress:** PSS can help individuals manage stress more effectively by providing emotional support and a sense of security. This is particularly important for individuals who are experiencing stress or anxiety, as PSS can help them manage their symptoms and maintain their overall well-being.
- **Enhanced Self-Esteem:** PSS can enhance self-esteem by providing positive reinforcement and encouragement from others. This is particularly important for individuals who are facing challenges or setbacks, as PSS can help them maintain their self-esteem and confidence.
- **Increased Lifespan:** Studies have shown that individuals with higher PSS tend to have a longer lifespan. This is likely due to the fact that PSS can help individuals manage stress and maintain their overall well-being, which can have a positive impact on their physical health.
- **Improved Health Outcomes:** PSS has been linked to better health outcomes, including lower blood pressure and a reduced risk of chronic diseases. This is likely due to the fact that PSS can help individuals manage stress and maintain their overall well-being, which can have a positive impact on their physical health.

Body Image Satisfaction

Body image satisfaction is a multifaceted concept that has garnered significant attention in recent years due to its profound impact on an individual's overall well-being. Body image satisfaction refers to an individual's perception of their own physical appearance and is a critical component of their self-esteem and self-worth. It is the subjective experience of feeling satisfied with one's body, which can be influenced by various factors such as cultural norms, social media, and personal experiences.

Definition

Body image satisfaction is defined as the degree to which an individual is pleased with their physical appearance, including their body shape, size, and overall appearance. It encompasses the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects of an individual's relationship with their body, including their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors related to their body image.

Importance

Body image satisfaction is crucial for an individual's mental and physical health, as it can have a profound impact on their self-esteem, body satisfaction, and overall well-being. Research has shown that body image satisfaction is linked to various positive outcomes, including improved mental health, reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety, and enhanced self-esteem.

Meaning

Body image satisfaction is a complex and multifaceted concept that encompasses various aspects of an individual's relationship with their body. It is a critical component of their self-esteem and self-worth, and can have a profound impact on their mental and physical health. Body image satisfaction is influenced by various factors, including cultural norms, social media, and personal experiences, and can be shaped by an individual's perceptions of their body and their feelings about their body.

Types of Body Image Satisfaction

Body image satisfaction can be categorized into several types, including:

- **Positive Body Image Satisfaction:** This type of body image satisfaction is characterized by a positive perception of one's body, including feelings of self-acceptance, self-esteem, and self-worth.
- **Negative Body Image Satisfaction:** This type of body image satisfaction is characterized by a negative perception of one's body, including feelings of self-dissatisfaction, self-criticism, and self-blame.

- **Neutral Body Image Satisfaction:** This type of body image satisfaction is characterized by a neutral perception of one's body, including feelings of indifference or ambivalence towards one's body.

Benefits of Body Image Satisfaction

- **Improved Mental Health:** Body image satisfaction is linked to improved mental health outcomes, including reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- **Enhanced Self-Esteem:** Body image satisfaction is linked to enhanced self-esteem and self-worth.
- **Improved Body Satisfaction:** Body image satisfaction is linked to improved body satisfaction and overall well-being.

II. NEED OF THE STUDY

Young adults frequently experience body image dissatisfaction, which can have a negative impact on their mental health, self-esteem, and overall well-being. By investigating the connection between perceived social support and body image satisfaction, it can help identify the risk factors and develop effective interventions to support young adults. This research can also contribute to the creation of efficient preventative and treatment strategies that enhance young adults' body image satisfaction and overall mental health outcomes. This study was designed to make a significant contribution to the existing body of knowledge on the relationship between perceived social support and body image satisfaction among young adults.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 AIM

To investigate the relationship between perceived social support and body image satisfaction among young adults

3.2 OBJECTIVE

- Investigate if there's a connection between perceived social support and body image satisfaction.
- Explore if this relationship differs between genders.

3.3 HYPOTHESIS

Hypothesis 1: People who feel more support from their social circles will have higher levels of body image satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: Higher levels of social support are perceived by males than females, which may contribute to their body image satisfaction.

3.4 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The study employed a convenience and purposive sampling technique to recruit participants from the target population of young adults aged 18 to 26 years. Convenience sampling was chosen for its practicality and accessibility, allowing researchers to select participants based on their availability and willingness to participate. This method facilitated the recruitment process and ensured a sufficient sample size within the specified age range. Additionally, purposive sampling was utilized to ensure that participants represented a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences, enhancing the generalizability of the study findings. By intentionally selecting participants who met the specific criteria of being young adults within the designated age range, the researchers were able to gather relevant data pertinent to the study objectives. Overall, the combination of convenience and purposive sampling techniques enabled the researchers to effectively recruit participants who met the study's criteria and contributed valuable insights to the research topic.

3.5 SAMPLE

The sample of this study comprised of 100 participants aged from 18-26 mostly from Kerala and also some from various places across India, with a balanced representation of males (n=50) and females (n=50). The subjects were asked to answer questions based on the social support they receive from their family, friends and also on their body image satisfaction.

3.6 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Mean, Standard Deviation, Pearson's Correlation Coefficient, Group test and Independent sample T test.

3.7 DESCRIPTION OF TOOLS

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS)

The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) was developed by Zimet et al. (1988). It is a 12-item measure of perceived social support from three sources: Significant Others (SO), Family (FA), and Friends (FR). Each item is rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (very strongly disagree) to 7 (very strongly agree). The scale is widely used and has been found to have good psychometric properties, including high internal consistency and test-retest reliability.

Body Esteem Scale for Adolescents and Adults (BESAA)

The Body-Esteem Scale for Adolescents and Adults (BESAA) was developed by Beverly K. Mendelson, Donna R. White, and Morton J. Mendelson. It is a 23-item scale. The scale measures three aspects of body esteem.

BE-Appearance: General feelings about one's appearance (10 items, e.g., "I worry about the way I look")

BE-Weight: Satisfaction with weight (8 items, e.g., "I really like what I weigh")

BE-Attribution: Evaluations of one's body and appearance attributed to others (5 items, e.g., "People my own age like my looks")

Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 0 (never) to 4 (always). Subscale scores are calculated by averaging the item scores, with higher scores indicating greater body esteem.

3.8 STATISTICAL TOOLS

The data organization and calculation of correlation coefficients were executed using SPSS, a widely recognized statistical software package. With SPSS, the collected data on participants' personality traits and music genre preferences were efficiently organized and analyzed. The software's capabilities facilitated the computation of both Pearson and Spearman correlation coefficients. This utilization of SPSS streamlined the statistical analysis process, ensuring accurate and systematic exploration of the relationships under investigation. Microsoft Excel was also used in the preliminary stages of data gathering and organization, and Microsoft Word was used for organizing all the information into this document.

IV. PROCEDURE

There was total 100 respondents out of which 50 were Females and 50 Males, survey was conducted in online mode and Questionnaire were circulated through Google forms via social media to examine the relationship between Perceived Social Support and Body Image Satisfaction in Young Adults. The participants were also informed that their scores would be recorded for the sole purpose of the study. Proper scoring was done so that there was no discrepancy in the scores that could lead to insignificant results. Any doubt pertaining to the meaning of the statements in the questionnaire was also cleared. Participants were assured of Confidentiality regarding the information given by them and were asked to give honest response.

V. ETHICAL ISSUES

1. This research work has been done in accordance with all ethical norms and care has been taken to follow principles.
2. The data has been collected with due consent from every individual who has participated in the study.
3. All participants have been informed priorly about the purpose of this research.
4. All data has been kept confidential and it will be made sure that it is not misused.
5. It will also be made sure that the personal details are not revealed to anyone or missed for any purpose.
6. Standard tools have been used for data collection.

VI. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- **Sample Size:** The sample size of 100 participants may be considered small for a study of this nature. A larger sample size would have provided more robust and generalizable results.
- **Self-Reported Data:** The study relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to biases and inaccuracies. Future studies could consider using objective measures of body image satisfaction and perceived social support.
- **Limited Generalizability:** The study was conducted among a specific population of young adults, and the findings may not be generalizable to other age groups or populations.
- **Lack of Control Group:** The study did not include a control group, which would have allowed for a more comprehensive comparison of the effects of perceived social support on body image satisfaction.
- **Limited Measurement Tools:** The study used a limited number of measurement tools, which may not have captured the full range of variables related to body image satisfaction and perceived social support.

VII. RESULTS

Table 1: Correlation between Perceived Social Support and Body Image Satisfaction in Young Adults

Correlations			BODY ESTEEM	PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT	Adults
Spearman's rho	BODY ESTEEM	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.199*	.079
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.047	.434
		N	100	100	100
	PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT	Correlation Coefficient	.199*	1.000	-.046
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.047	.	.646
		N	100	100	100
	Adults	Correlation Coefficient	.079	-.046	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.434	.646	.
		N	100	100	100

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 1 depicts the Pearson correlation between Perceived Social Support and Body Image Satisfaction among 100 young adult participants. Since $p = -0.47 < 0.05$ indicates weak, but there is a significant Positive Correlation between Body Esteem and Perceived Social Support. As Perceived Social Support increases Body Esteem also tend to increase.

The correlation between body esteem and being an adult is positive but not significant ($r = .079$, $p = .434$). This suggests that there is no strong association between body esteem and being an adult.

This proves the hypothesis stating “People who feel more support from their social circles will have higher levels of Body Image Satisfaction”

Table 2: Group Statistics between body esteem and body image satisfaction

Group Statistics					
	Adults	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
BODY ESTEEM	Male	50	44.86	7.500	1.061
	Female	50	46.20	8.008	1.132
PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT	Male	50	63.28	12.130	1.715
	Female	50	61.66	14.557	2.059

Body Esteem:

- Males have a lower mean Body Esteem score (44.86) compared to females (46.20).
- The standard deviation for males (7.500) is slightly lower than for females (8.008), indicating that the scores for males are

more concentrated around the mean.



Perceived Social Support:

- Males have a higher mean Perceived Social Support score (63.28) compared to females (61.66).
- The standard deviation for males (12.130) is slightly lower than for females (14.557), indicating that the scores for males are more concentrated around the mean.

These results suggest that:

- Males tend to have lower Body Esteem scores compared to females.
- Males tend to perceive higher levels of social support compared to females.

Table 3: Independent sample t test

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
BODY ESTEEM	Equal variances assumed	.344	.559	-.864	98	.390	-1.340	1.552	-4.419	1.739
	Equal variances not assumed			-.864	97.582	.390	-1.340	1.552	-4.419	1.739
PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT	Equal variances assumed	1.820	.180	.605	98	.547	1.620	2.680	-3.698	6.938
	Equal variances not assumed			.605	94.912	.547	1.620	2.680	-3.700	6.940

BODY ESTEEM:

The Levene's test for equality of variances assumes equal variances and does not reject the null hypothesis (p-value = 0.344). The t-test for equality of means also does not reject the null hypothesis (p-value = 0.390). The mean difference is -1.340, and the 95% confidence interval is between -4.419 and 1.739.

PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT:

The Levene's test for equality of variances assumes equal variances and does not reject the null hypothesis (p-value = 0.180). The t-test for equality of means does not reject the null hypothesis (p-value = 0.547). The mean difference is 1.620, and the 95% confidence interval is between -3.698 and 6.938.

The results indicate that there is no significant difference in the means of "BODY ESTEEM" and "PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT" between the two groups.

VIII. DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between perceived social support and body image satisfaction among 100 young adult participants. Tools used are Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), Body Esteem Scale for Adolescents and Adults (BESAA) and is conducted through online mode.

The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between perceived social support and body image satisfaction, indicating that as perceived social support increases, body image satisfaction also tends to increase.

Social support can provide individuals with a sense of belonging, validation, and acceptance, which can help mitigate the negative effects of societal beauty standards and media pressure on body image. This is particularly important for young adults, who are often exposed to unrealistic beauty standards and may struggle with body image issues.

The group statistics results suggest that males tend to have lower body esteem scores compared to females, while males tend to perceive higher levels of social support compared to females. It is possible that societal expectations and gender norms play a role in shaping body image and perceived social support among young adults.

The t-test results indicate that there is no significant difference in the means of "BODY ESTEEM" and "PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT" between the two groups. This suggests that while there is a significant positive correlation between perceived social support and body image satisfaction, the magnitude of this relationship may not differ significantly between males and females. There may be other factors, such as individual differences, cultural influences, or specific life experiences, that could moderate the relationship between perceived social support and body image satisfaction.

The findings of this study have significant implications for the development of interventions aimed at promoting positive body image and mental health in young adults. By emphasizing the importance of perceived social support, these interventions can focus on building strong social networks and fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance among young adults. This can be achieved through various strategies, such as group therapy, social support groups, and online support networks. Additionally, interventions should consider gender-specific approaches to address the unique challenges and needs of males and females in relation to body image and social support.

IX. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the present study aimed to investigate the relationship between perceived social support and body image satisfaction among 100 young adult participants. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between perceived social support and body image satisfaction, indicating that higher levels of social support are associated with better body image satisfaction. The findings have significant implications for the development of interventions aimed at promoting positive body image and mental health in young adults. By emphasizing the importance of perceived social support, these interventions can focus on building strong social networks and fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance among young adults. This can be achieved through various strategies, such as group therapy, social support groups, and online support networks. Overall, the study highlights the importance of perceived social support in promoting positive body image and mental health in young adults. By recognizing the role of social support in shaping body image and mental health, we can develop more effective interventions to support the well-being of young adults.

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