



# The role of body image perception in shaping self-esteem among Adolescents

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**ABSTRACT :** Adolescence is a crucial stage of development where self-concept and identity formation take center stage. Among the various factors influencing self-esteem, body image perception plays a significant role. This study examines the relationship between body image perception and self-esteem among adolescents, exploring how perceptions of physical appearance impact their confidence and overall self-worth.

A sample of 120 adolescents (60 males and 60 females) was assessed using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) and the Body Self-Image Questionnaire (BSIQ). Contrary to common assumptions, the findings revealed no significant correlation between body image perception and self-esteem. This suggests that while body image concerns exist, self-esteem is shaped by broader psychological and social factors such as cultural expectations, peer relationships, and emotional resilience.

Gender differences were observed, with females expressing greater concern about social validation and body dissatisfaction, while males placed more emphasis on appearance and grooming. However, these variations did not significantly alter overall self-esteem levels.

The results highlight the complexity of self-esteem development, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach that goes beyond body image concerns. Interventions aimed at improving adolescent well-being should consider multiple influencing factors, including media exposure, familial support, and societal norms. Future research should further investigate these external influences to provide a more comprehensive understanding of adolescent self-esteem formation.

**KEY WORD :** Body image, Self-esteem, Adolescent

## INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a transformative period of life marked by rapid physical, emotional, and psychological changes, during which individuals become increasingly aware of their own bodies and appearances. Body image perception, defined as the way individuals perceive, think, and feel about their bodies, plays a pivotal role in shaping an adolescent's self-esteem, mental health, and overall development. This self-perception is influenced by various factors, including biological changes, societal expectations, cultural norms, and media portrayals.

As adolescents navigate the challenges of growing up, they often face heightened pressures to conform to societal standards of beauty and body ideals. The onset of puberty introduces changes such as height growth, weight redistribution, and the development of secondary sexual characteristics, which can make adolescents more self-conscious about their appearance. Coupled with external influences like social media and peer pressure, these changes can lead to a preoccupation with body image.

Body image perception is a multifaceted construct that includes cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions. It is not limited to how individuals see their physical features but also involves their attitudes and feelings toward those features. A positive body image reflects self-acceptance and appreciation of one's physical attributes, fostering confidence and resilience. Conversely, a negative body image may result in dissatisfaction, low self-worth, and mental health challenges such as depression, anxiety, or eating disorders.

Body image perception and self-esteem are intricately connected, with each significantly influencing the other and shaping an individual's overall self-concept. Body image refers to how individuals view, think, and feel about their physical appearance, which is often shaped by societal standards, cultural expectations, and personal experiences. Self-esteem, on the other hand, reflects an individual's sense of self-worth and confidence in their abilities and value. When individuals have a positive body image, they are more likely to feel good about themselves, which enhances their self-esteem. They approach life with greater confidence, fostering healthier relationships and achieving personal goals. Conversely, a negative body image can damage self-esteem, leading to feelings of inadequacy, self-doubt, and even mental health challenges such as anxiety and depression. This strong connection between body image and self-esteem emphasizes the need to address both together, as they are fundamental to personal growth, resilience, and overall mental and emotional well-being. By cultivating a positive body image and fostering healthy self-esteem, individuals can lead happier, more balanced lives and navigate the world with greater confidence and self-assurance.

Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to negative body image due to their developmental stage, where peer validation and social acceptance become critical. Media often exacerbates this issue by presenting unrealistic and often unattainable standards of beauty, leading many adolescents to engage in comparisons that negatively impact their self-perception. Furthermore, cultural and familial attitudes towards body size and shape significantly contribute to shaping an adolescent's body image.

Understanding body image perception is crucial because it directly impacts self-esteem, particularly during adolescence, a critical period for identity formation. An adolescent's emotional well-being, physical health, social relationships, and academic performance are deeply influenced by how they perceive their body. A positive body image fosters a sense of self-acceptance and confidence, thereby strengthening self-esteem. Conversely, a negative body image can lead to diminished self-worth, feelings of inadequacy, and mental health challenges such as anxiety and depression. By implementing positive interventions during this developmental stage, we can promote a healthy self-image, bolster self-esteem, and equip adolescents with the tools to navigate the complexities of their growth journey. Since body image is a significant aspect of adolescent identity, addressing its challenges is essential for fostering holistic development and ensuring their emotional, social, and psychological well-being.

## NEED OF STUDY

The role of body image perception in shaping self-esteem among adolescents is an important area of study because of the significant impact these factors have on their overall well-being and development. Adolescence is a critical phase of life when young people are trying to understand themselves and their place in the world. During this stage, they are particularly sensitive to how they look and how others perceive them. This sensitivity often influences their self-esteem, which is their sense of self-worth and confidence. How adolescents feel about their bodies can shape their emotions, relationships, school performance, and future goals. Understanding this connection between body image and self-esteem is crucial to helping adolescents grow into confident and healthy adults.

The main purpose of this study is to explore how an adolescent's perception of their body affects their self-esteem. This research seeks to understand how positive or negative feelings about one's body can influence a person's confidence and overall mental health. Positive body image helps adolescents feel good about themselves, which

builds their self-esteem and allows them to face challenges with confidence. On the other hand, negative body image can lead to low self-esteem, making them feel insecure, withdrawn, and even vulnerable to mental health issues like anxiety and depression. By studying this topic, we can identify the factors that influence these perceptions and find ways to promote a positive body image.

The study also focuses on the risk" associated with poor body image and its effect on self-esteem. Adolescents with a negative view of their bodies are more likely to experience mental health problems, including feelings of worthlessness, sadness, and social isolation. They may also engage in harmful behaviors, such as excessive dieting, unhealthy eating habits, or even self-harm, as they try to cope with their insecurities. These risks highlight the importance of addressing body image issues during adolescence, as failing to do so can have long-term consequences on their mental and physical health.

This research is significant because it can help in creating strategies to support adolescents during this sensitive stage of life. By understanding the connection between body image and self-esteem, schools, parents, and mental health professionals can work together to design programs that encourage positive self-perceptions. For example, educational workshops can teach adolescents to value themselves beyond their physical appearance, focusing instead on their abilities, strengths, and inner qualities. Support groups and counseling can help those struggling with low self-esteem to overcome their challenges and build a more positive outlook on life.

The study also contributes to broader discussions about societal pressures and media influence on body image. Adolescents are often exposed to unrealistic beauty standards through social media, advertisements, and peer comparisons. By examining how these external factors affect their self-esteem, the research can inform campaigns and initiatives aimed at promoting body positivity and self-acceptance. These efforts can lead to a healthier, more supportive environment for adolescents, where they feel valued and accepted for who they are.

Studying the role of body image perception in shaping self-esteem among adolescents is vital for their emotional, social, and psychological well-being. The insights gained from this research can guide interventions to prevent the risks associated with negative body image and low self-esteem. This study is not just about understanding the challenges adolescents face but also about empowering them to navigate this critical phase of life with confidence, resilience, and a positive sense of self. By addressing these issues, we can help adolescents build a strong foundation for a healthier and more fulfilling future.

### **3.1 POPULATION AND SAMPLE**

The population for this study consists of adolescents aged 10 to 19 years from various schools and colleges .The study focuses on examining the relationship between body image perception and self-esteem among adolescents. A sample of 120 participants was selected using systematic random sampling, ensuring an equal representation of 60 males and 60 females. The selection criteria included students who were interested in participating, with diverse cultural, social, and economic backgrounds. Participants who were below 10 or above 19 years of age, had cognitive impairments, or provided incomplete responses were excluded from the study. Data collection was conducted with prior Institutional permission, and participants were given clear instructions before filling out the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) and Body Self-Image Questionnaire (BSIQ-SF).

### **3.2 DATA AND SOURCE OF DATA**

The present study uses primary data collected from 120 adolescent participants (60 males and 60 females) from schools and colleges .The data collection process involved administering structured questionnaires, including the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) and the Body Self-Image Questionnaire – Short Form (BSIQ-SF).

Before data collection, permission was obtained from the respective institutions, and informed consent was taken from participants. The questionnaires were distributed in a classroom setting with clear instructions to ensure accurate responses. Participants were assured of confidentiality and encouraged to provide honest responses.

### 3.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The present study examines the relationship between body image perception and self-esteem among adolescents, drawing from Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Theory (1965) and Cash's Cognitive-Behavioral Theory of Body Image (1990). According to Rosenberg's theory, self-esteem is an individual's overall evaluation of their worth, influenced by personal experiences, self-perception, and social interactions. Adolescents with high self-esteem tend to have a more positive and accepting view of their body, whereas those with low self-esteem may develop negative perceptions of their appearance. Cash's Cognitive-Behavioral Theory of Body Image further explains that body image is shaped by cognitive, emotional, and behavioral factors. Social norms, media exposure, and personal experiences play a crucial role in shaping an individual's perception of their body. Adolescents who internalize unrealistic beauty standards may experience body dissatisfaction, which can negatively impact their self-esteem.

In this study, body image perception is considered the independent variable, while self-esteem is the dependent variable. Control variables such as gender, age, and social influence are also taken into account to better understand the relationship between these factors. The study employs Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient to analyze the strength of the association between body image perception and self-esteem, while an independent samples t-test is used to explore potential gender differences. This theoretical framework provides a foundation for understanding how adolescents' self-worth is influenced by their perception of their bodies and the societal pressures surrounding appearance.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology section outlines the plan and process through which the study is conducted. It includes details about the population, sample selection, data sources, and analytical framework.

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### 3.5 STATISTICAL TOOLS AND ECONOMETRIC MODELS

To analyze the relationship between body image perception and self-esteem among adolescents, various statistical tools and econometric models are employed. Pearson's correlation coefficient is used to measure the association between the two variables, while an independent samples t-test examines gender differences in body image perception and self-esteem. Additionally, linear regression analysis is applied to determine the predictive influence of body image perception on self-esteem. All data is processed and analyzed using SPSS to ensure statistical accuracy and validity.

#### 3.6 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Descriptive statistics have been applied to summarize the data using measures such as mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values. These statistics provide insights into the distribution and central tendencies of body image perception and self-esteem scores. Additionally, normality tests, including the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and Shapiro-Wilk test, assess whether the data follows a normal distribution, ensuring suitability for further parametric analysis.

### 4 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results and analysis section of this study explores the relationship between body image perception and self-esteem among adolescents. Adolescence is a critical period of development where body image plays a significant role in shaping one's self-concept and overall psychological well-being. The findings highlight patterns in how adolescents perceive their physical appearance and how these perceptions influence their self-esteem levels. A total of 120 adolescent participants were included in the study, with an equal distribution of 60 females and 60 males. To assess self-esteem and body image perception, two standardized scales were used: The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) to measure self-esteem and the Body Self-Image Questionnaire to evaluate body image perception. Through statistical analysis and interpretation, this section examines the correlation between body image satisfaction and self-worth, identifying key trends and differences based on gender, peer influence, and societal standards. The results provide insights into the extent to which body image perception affects adolescents' confidence, social interactions, and emotional stability. By analyzing these patterns, the study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of adolescent mental health and well-being.

**TABLE 4.1**

Karl Pearson Correlation (Self-Esteem & Body Image Perception Subscales)

Body image perception subscale	r-value	p-value
Overall Appearance Evaluation (OAE)	0.094	0.308
Health-Fitness Influence (HFI)	- 0.033	0.723
Investment In Ideals (II)	0.077	0.403

Health-Fitness Evaluation (HFE)	- 0.076	0.409
Attention To Grooming (AG )	0.028	0.761
High Dissatisfaction (HG)	- 0.029	0.751
Fatness Evaluation (FE)	0.109	0.235
Negative Effect (NE)	- 0. 05	0.588
Social Dependence (SD)	0.059	0.52

Table 3.1 shows the Pearson correlation analysis between self-esteem and body image perception subscales shows weak and non-significant relationships across all the subscales. The correlation values (r-values) range from -0.076 to 0.109, indicating only minimal associations. Additionally, none of the p-values indicate statistical significance, as all values are above 0.05. Among the subscales, “Fatness Evaluation” (FE) has the highest positive correlation ( $r = 0.109$ ,  $p = 0.235$ ), while “Health-Fitness Influence” (HFI) shows the lowest correlation ( $r = -0.033$ ,  $p = 0.723$ ). The negative correlations observed in some subscales, such as “Health-Fitness Evaluation” (HFE) ( $r = -0.076$ ,  $p = 0.409$ ) and “Negative Effect” (NE) ( $r = -0.05$ ,  $p = 0.588$ ), suggest that higher self-esteem might be weakly linked to lower concern about health-related body image aspects, though the lack of significance means this cannot be confirmed. Overall, these findings indicate that there is no substantial link between self-esteem and the various dimensions of body image perception within the sample.

The results suggest that self-esteem does not have a strong or significant association with body image perception subscales, which is contrary to several existing studies that have found moderate correlations between self-esteem and body image concerns. One possible reason for this lack of significance could be the influence of other psychological or social factors that mediate the relationship between self-esteem and body image perception. Factors such as personality traits, cultural differences, and individual experiences might play a more dominant role in shaping how a person perceives their body image, rather than self-esteem alone. Additionally, the weak correlations might indicate that self-esteem is influenced by broader aspects of life, such as academic achievements, social relationships, and emotional stability, rather than just body image-related perceptions. This suggests that while body image can affect a person’s confidence and self-perception, it may not always have a direct or strong impact on their overall self-esteem.

Another important consideration is the sample characteristics, which might have affected the findings. If the participants come from diverse backgrounds with varying levels of body image concerns, self-esteem influences may differ accordingly. Cultural and societal norms regarding beauty standards, fitness ideals, and grooming habits may also contribute to how individuals perceive their bodies, which may not always align with their self-esteem levels. Additionally, external influences such as media exposure and peer comparisons could shape body image perception separately from self-esteem, leading to weaker correlations. Future research should explore additional factors such as body satisfaction, self-objectification, and social comparison tendencies to better understand the complexities of self-esteem and body image perception. Conducting studies with larger, more targeted samples and incorporating qualitative insights may also provide a deeper understanding of these relationships.

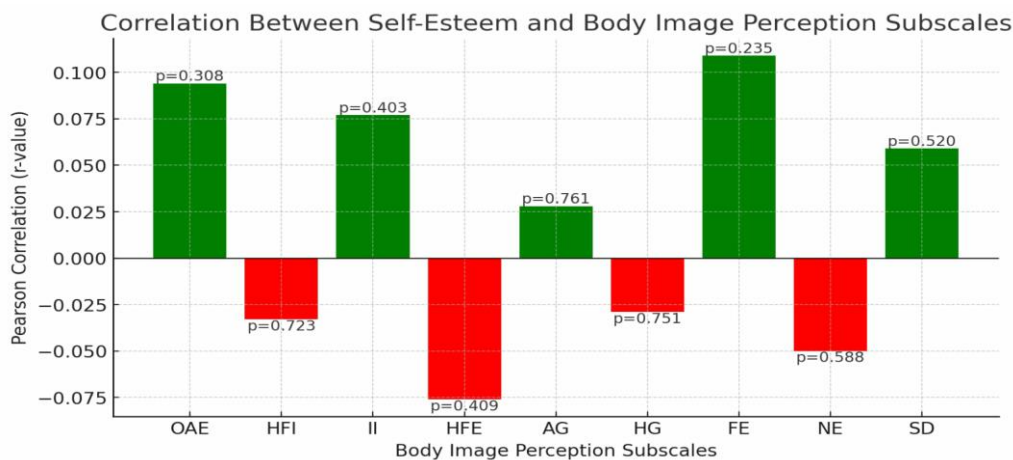


Figure 1 shows correlation between self esteem and body image perception subscales.

**TABLE 4.2**

Based on gender difference

Variable	N	Mean (Male)	SD (Male)	t-value (Male)	r-value
RSE TOTAL	60	14.983	3.165	- 0.841	0.402
Overall Appearance Evaluation (OAE)	60	11.583	2.493	1.336	0.184
Health-Fitness Influence (HFI)	60	8.8	2.648	- 0.335	0.738
Investment In Ideals (II)	60	8.583	2.54	0.746	0.457
Health-Fitness Evaluation (HFE)	60	8.317	2.759	0.659	0.511
Attention To Grooming (AG )	60	8.833	2.713	1.391	0.167
High Dissatisfaction (HD)	60	7.85	3.193	0.755	0.452
Fatness Evaluation (FE)	60	6.333	2.529	0.064	0.949
Negative Effect (NE)	60	6.967	2.681	1.337	0.184
Social Dependence (SD)	60	7.7	2.794	- 1.193	0.235

**TABLE 4.3**

Based on gender difference

Variable	N	Mean (Female)	SD (Female)	t-value (Female)	p-value
RSE TOTAL	60	15.4	2.172	- 0.841	0.402
Overall Appearance Evaluation (OAE)	60	10.95	2.696	1.336	0.184
Health-Fitness Influence (HFI)	60	8.983	3.306	- 0.335	0.738
Investment In Ideals (II)	60	8.217	2.835	0.746	0.457
Health-Fitness Evaluation (HFE)	60	7.967	3.053	0.659	0.511
Attention To Grooming (AG )	60	8.183	2.397	1.391	0.167
High Dissatisfaction (HD)	60	7.367	3.795	0.755	0.452
Fatness Evaluation (FE)	60	6.3	3.121	0.064	0.949
Negative Effect (NE)	60	6.217	3.42	1.337	0.184
Social Dependence (SD)	60	8.383	3.445	- 1.193	0.235

The Results reveal slight gender differences in self-esteem and body image perception, though none are statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ). Females scored higher in self-esteem (RSE Total) , social dependence (SD), and health-fitness influence (HFI), indicating a stronger focus on social validation and fitness. Males had higher scores in overall appearance evaluation (OAE), attention to grooming (AG), and investment in ideals (II), reflecting a greater emphasis on physical appearance and grooming. Both genders showed similar health-fitness evaluation (HFE) scores. Negative perceptions like fatness evaluation (FE) and negative effect (NE) were slightly more pronounced in females, suggesting a tendency toward higher body dissatisfaction. Males and females displayed comparable scores in high dissatisfaction (HD), showing that concerns about body image exist across genders. However, since none of the differences reached statistical significance, it suggests that body image perception patterns do not differ considerably

The results indicate both similarities and subtle differences in body image perception between males and females. While females in this study have slightly higher self-esteem (RSE Total) than males, they rate their overall appearance (OAE) slightly lower. This aligns with research indicating that females often face higher societal pressures regarding beauty standards. However, the lack of significant p-values suggests that these gender differences are not strong and could be influenced by other factors such as cultural expectations or individual personality differences.

Males in this sample seem to have a slightly stronger concern for grooming (AG) than females, which may reflect increasing societal emphasis on male self-care and appearance. However, the p-value (0.167) indicates that this difference is not statistically significant. Similarly, females score slightly higher in Health-Fitness Influence (HFI) and Investment in Ideals (II), suggesting they are somewhat more influenced by fitness trends and idealized body standards, but these findings also lack statistical significance.

In terms of negative body image aspects, females show slightly higher Negative Effect (NE) and Social Dependence (SD) scores than males, supporting previous findings that women may be more affected by external validation and body dissatisfaction. However, none of the negative body image subscale differences reached statistical significance

(all  $p$ -values  $> 0.05$ ), indicating that both genders experience similar levels of dissatisfaction, though possibly influenced by different factors.

The overall weak  $p$ -values suggest that self-esteem and body image perception are not significantly different across genders in this sample. This highlights the need for further research to explore external influences such as social media, peer pressure, and cultural norms, which may have a greater impact on body image perception than gender alone. Future studies could also investigate psychological resilience and coping strategies that help individuals maintain a positive self-image despite societal pressures.

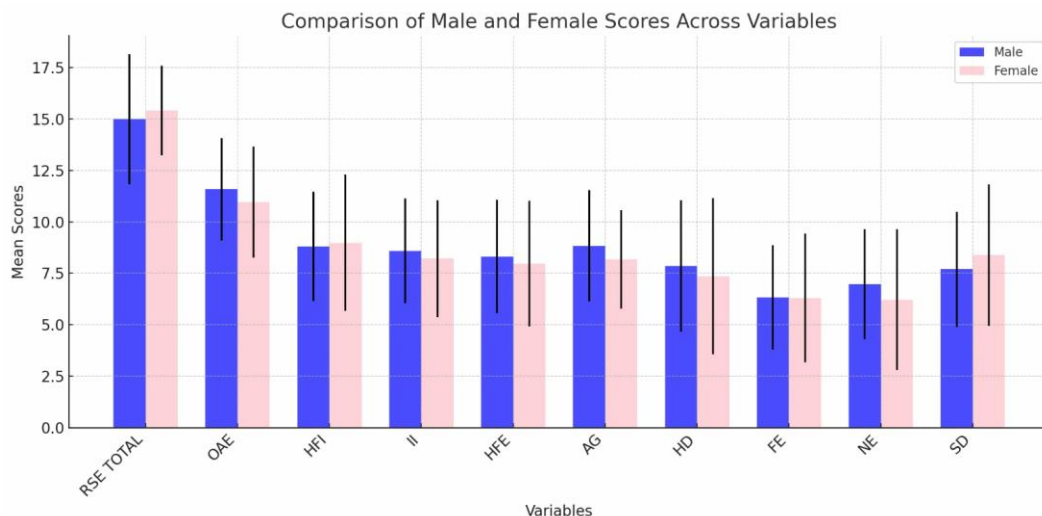


Figure 2 shows mean value of rse total and body image perception subscales among male and females

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