Navigating the Complexities of Body Image in Young Adults and Their Self-Acceptance

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Abstract

Body image encompasses individuals' perceptions and beliefs regarding their own physical appearance. It is shaped by personal and cultural factors and can manifest in either a positive or negative manner. Satisfaction with body image is associated with interpersonal success, happiness, healthier lifestyle, enhanced performance, and improved self-esteem. Dissatisfaction with body image stems from the gap between an individual's perceived and ideal physique. Factors such as media representations, social influences, and appearance-related ideal-type of teasing contribute to the development of negative body image, which can adversely affect both mental and physical health. The psychological construct of body image represents the underlying mental representation individuals possess regarding their bodies, shaping self-perception and their physical appearance. Individual perspectives on body image are expected to vary based on culture, race, age, education, profession, or social network; however, research reveals gender as the most significant factor. This paper presents the findings of primary research conducted with two dozen of young adults, who were interviewed regarding their satisfaction with their current body image and the underlying influencing factors. Body image satisfaction was found to be influenced by self-assessment of the body, health status, impression management, and other social factors. Participants' diverse perspectives underscore the complex interaction among social feedback and societal norms in shaping individual perceptions of beauty and attractiveness.

Key words*: Body image satisfaction, cultural standards, ideal body-type, self-perception, young adult*

Introduction

Body image refers to individuals' beliefs about their own physique. It encompasses the perceptions, thoughts, and emotions regarding one's body. It is made based on other's perception as well. Sentiments on body image may manifest as either positive, negative, or a blend of both. At times, body image is shaped by personal and socio-cultural influences. Individuals who harbor positive feelings towards their body typically experience heightened levels of physical and psychological well-being, alongside improved personal development. But who make negative remarks about their body

feel mostly discounted. The amalgamation of positive and negative thought gives rise to the definition of "body image" as the "internal" realization of one's external appearance.

Satisfaction with body image has been correlated with success in interpersonal relationships and overall happiness, healthier dietary choices, enhanced physical performance, and increased sexual gratification (Huang, et al., 2007). While dissatisfaction is frequently associated with concerns regarding excess weight, although an individual need not conform to conventional definitions, such as being categorized as 'overweight' by the body mass index, to experience body dissatisfaction (Cole, 2012).

When individuals possess a positive body image, this is closely tied to their self-esteem and sense of self-worth. In contrast, a negative body image often leads to a sense of dissatisfaction. Numerous factors contribute to contemporary dissatisfaction with body image; media portrayals significantly exacerbate negative perceptions, while the surrounding environment, peers, personal experiences, and familial influences also play a role. Additionally, factors such as age, gender, personality traits, larger body size, and experiences of appearance-related teasing adversely affect individuals with low self-esteem or those grappling with depression. Negative body image is associated not only with cognitive perceptions but also with obesity and eating disorders, which detrimentally impact individual physical and psychological health.

Body Image and the Existing Literature

The concept of body image was first articulated in 1935 by the Austrian psychiatrist Paul Schilder, who posited that the mental representation individuals hold of their bodies informs how they perceive their physical form. According to him, one's mental body image is formed through sensory input, concepts, and emotions that are often largely unconscious (Sachdeva, 2012). Body image constitutes self-assessment influenced by the alignment between one's expectations of their physical self and the perceived evaluations of others. Attaining this balance is exceedingly challenging due to the disparity between persons' actual physique and their idealized figure.

More than other stage of their life, individuals during adolescence encounter critical developmental phases that influence their overall bodily development and the emergence of primary and secondary sexual characteristics, leading to varied challenges. Some individuals may struggle with issues related to height and weight, while others may contend with the effects of acne, scarring, and overall appearance all of which significantly impact their self-satisfaction. This period can pose considerable difficulty in reconciling their actual body image with their idealized standards of appearance.

Body image is gendered

We can observe the marked difference between male and female body image if we look from the gender perspective. In light of representations of muscularity among television models and successful actors, males are increasingly preoccupied with attaining muscular body and height. However, females also grapple with the challenge of conforming to their envisioned physiques, often altering their physical and psychological states to align with prevailing trends. Distinguishing between normative and ideal body sizes can lead to dissatisfaction. A study in the United States of America (USA) revealed that nearly half of women expressed dissatisfaction with their weight, shape, and the structural appearance of different body parts. By the time they reach middle school, 20% to 50% of

USA adolescents report feeling overweight, with 20% to 40% of girls perceiving themselves as obese, despite many being within a normal weight range (Eisenberg, et al., 2006).

Besides, patriarchal ideologies and gender roles compel women to conform to specific appearance standards. The portrayal of the 'ideal' male physique in media has similarly exacerbated body image issues among Nepalese people, with insufficient attention being paid to male body image. Women face not only the pressures of socially constructed beauty standards but also the repercussions of dialogues that contribute to pathological conditions such as low self-esteem and anorexia. Issues such as muscle dysmorphic disorder or bigorexia in men are frequently overlooked. The perception of ideal body standards among men is increasingly prominent, which is not seriously scrutinized by the society. Boys aspire to embody the archetypal male by cultivating physiques akin to models. A significant number of teenage boy exhibit reluctance to attend family gatherings and hesitantly refrain from posting personal images on social media, particularly those emphasizing muscular builds.

Modernization and commercialism perpetuate images of scantily clad males in advertisements, films, music magazine covers, and billboards, thereby reinforcing the expectation for men to be muscular. Just as women face cultural pressures to maintain a slim appearance, men experience varying degrees of similar pressure, evidenced by the rising numbers of men frequenting gyms in Kathmandu to attain the perceived ideal physique. A study conducted by British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in 2015 indicated that one in ten men at gyms across the UK is believed to suffer from body dysmorphia. Similarly, a study in 2016 found that American men are as likely as women to feel dissatisfied with their physical appearance. While discussions predominantly center on female body image issues, emerging standards for male beauty and the quest to meet them have indeed adversely impacted men. The media infrequently showcases plus-size men or women, predominantly using thin or muscular characters for comedic effect (Tamang, 2018).

It is widely that women frequently express dissatisfaction with their abdomen, waist, buttocks, and thighs and seek to diminish fat in these areas or reshape their lower bodies, irrespective of their actual weight. Consequently, it has been established that the perception of being overweight is more closely associated with psychological issues than with actual overweight status (Cole, 2012).

In this media age, studies have investigated the association between social media usage and body image. Research focusing on adolescent females has revealed that users exhibit greater concerns regarding body image compared to non-users. Furthermore, it was discovered that increased time spent on social media is correlated with elevated levels of body dissatisfaction. Factors such as the drive for thinness, internalization of the thin ideal, body surveillance, self-objectification, and dieting are prevalent among pre-teen girls through to undergraduate students. A comparable trend has also been observed among men (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2016).

In Nepal, following the traditional greeting of Namaste, individuals often remark on whether someone has gained or lost weight by saying 'you are gaining weight' or 'how skinny have you been', etc. Frequently, individuals with body image concerns are teased and ridiculed due to their size, assigned derogatory nicknames, and persistently reminded of their overweight status. Such attitudes and behaviors are passed down through generations and have, in various ways, become ingrained in the particular culture. Feedback regarding body image can manifest in two ways; those who perceive themselves as having an acceptable body image, and those who believe they do not meet the standards but compare favorably in terms of weight. Notwithstanding this, both men and women, who feel that they possess an appropriate body size tend to enjoy higher self-esteem globally. Conversely, those

who perceive themselves as outside the realm of appropriate body size often experience diminishing self-esteem and self-confidence at various life stages, leading to a compromised quality of life.

Body image during life stages

People take situations differently in their different stages of life. What they feel as good during childhood or adolescence may not be the same good during adulthood or old age. Given that adolescence is a tumultuous period, even a minor comment about one's body during this sensitive phase can have a profound impact on adolescents. Typically, men are seen frequenting gyms, while women tend to engage in yoga. The benefits of maintaining an appropriate body and participating in physical activities such as workouts and yoga include enhanced flexibility and the ability to exercise and burn calories effectively, and a reduced risk of non-communicable diseases such as heart disease, hypertension, and diabetes. This health benefit has gained significant prominence, necessitating open discourse on normalizing body image perceptions. Conversations can be facilitated within family settings, during community events, or in educational environments to foster a shift in attitudes towards diverse body images and eradicate the stigma associated with non-ideal body types. Emphasizing self-love and acceptance can empower individuals to cultivate greater confidence in themselves (Nepali, 2021).

Because body image encompasses the subjective perception of one's physical appearance, the basic requirement for preserving the desired bodily form is supposed to being engaging in fitness activities and yoga. Research indicates that individuals who consider themselves to be overweight are more inclined to participate in fitness routines than those who do not perceive themselves as such. This finding suggests that body image serves as a motivating factor for exercise in certain individuals, while in others, it has been identified as an impediment to physical activity (Hart, 1989). According to him, a negative body image may encompass social physique anxiety, characterized by feelings of unease in the presence of actual or imagined unfavorable assessments of one's physical appearance. He further says that an individual experiencing social physique anxiety is less inclined to place themselves in scenarios where their body may be subject to negative evaluation. Those who harbor a negative body image and suffer heightened anxiety are less likely to engage in physical exercise. Conversely, an individual with a toned or fit physique is more likely to select a public space for workouts compared to those troubled by social physique anxiety, where fewer mirrors or other exercisers are present.

Ideal versus actual body is also gendered

Body dissatisfaction is contingent on beliefs regarding both the actual and ideal body image. These two aspects of body image differ primarily in how one's self-perception and body size relate to one another. This is grounded in the definition of body dissatisfaction as a negative attitude towards one's own body, stemming from the perceived disparity between one's actual and ideal body image. While studying two distinct groups, one group needs to be instructed to respond from the perspective of believing itself to be thin, and the other group needs to respond from the perspective of believing itself to be overweight. Heider (2018) anticipated that the scores for actual-IRAP and Ideal-IRAP would fluctuate according to self-reported body dissatisfaction. As expected, the findings indicated that the belief in being thin was more pronounced among participants with low body dissatisfaction compared to those with high body dissatisfaction. These observations affirm the validity of the IRAP as a tool for

measuring specific body-related beliefs. Researchers identified a significant interaction concerning the type of target body dissatisfaction. Notably, the explicit affirmation of the belief in being thin was more pronounced among participants experiencing low body dissatisfaction than among those with high body dissatisfaction (Heider, 2018).

The preponderance of scholarly articles, with a few exceptions, suggests that males exhibit a more favorable disposition toward their physiques compared to females. Notable gender discrepancies were observed. It was discovered that women manifested greater discontent with their bodies and engaged in dieting behaviors more frequently than men. Owing to sociocultural pressures, a desire for slenderness and a fear of obesity are evident to a modest extent among most women residing in Western societies. A study involving 144 women categorized into three distinct age groups college-aged, middle-aged, and older women utilized the Body Esteem Scale, Eating Attitudes Test, and Life Satisfaction Index A to investigate the correlation between body image and well-being in adult females. It was found that three facets of body esteem sexual appeal, weight apprehension, and physical condition were prevalent. There were no notable differences in body satisfaction levels among women of varying ages, but body image plays a crucial role in overall happiness in women (Stokes & Frederick, 2003).

Exploring the available literature produced by researchers and scholars reveals a wide range of factors contributing to body image satisfaction or dissatisfaction. With this in mind, the primary objective of this research paper is to gain insights into the consequences of body image dissatisfaction and delve into the root causes among young adults in Nepal.

Methodology

This paper aims to describe the body image perceptions of young adults and assess whether they are satisfied. A total of 24 participants, including 12 females and 12 males, aged between 18 and 35, took part in the research. They came from diverse professional backgrounds, educational levels, and locations within the Kathmandu Valley. Some were students, while others were educators, medical professionals, or entrepreneurs. All participants were in good physical and mental health and provided verbal consent for the interviews in Nepali.

The researcher conducted structured in-depth interviews based on a set framework, focusing on how body appearance affects young adults. Participants were chosen for their heightened concern about body image compared to peers. The researcher contacted potential participants to ask for their involvement. The interviews were semi-structured and conducted face-to-face. The researcher followed guidelines, asking about body image from various angles to capture what influences the perception of an ideal body. A framework of 20 questions was created and adjusted based on participant feedback. Participants were recruited using a convenience-based cluster sampling method. The rationale for selecting convenient sampling was to ensure that the researcher could gather the necessary level of accurate information from the sampled respondents in a manner that was highly familiar during the interview process. At the start of each session, the researcher explained the interview's purpose and their role in gathering information.

Interviews averaged about 40 minutes and were audiotaped and supplemented by handwritten notes. The recordings were transcribed, with pseudonyms used to protect participant anonymity. No fixed sample size was set as experts suggest that grounded theory studies don't require it, and data collection stopped when redundancy was reached. The data was analyzed thematically after being transcribed

and translated into English. The analysis involved coding the data, using Excel for organization, and comparing findings to develop core concepts. The interview guide included open-ended questions to encourage expressive responses. The analysis process included ongoing comparisons and incorporated participants' quotes to highlight their voices in the findings, aligning with grounded theory methodology.

Result and Discussion

The influence of body image on young adults is represented by five overarching themes and few other subordinate themes. The first concentrates on the actual perceived attribute that characterizes one's bodily structure and the aspiration to alter it. The second elucidates the social influence, which shapes individual quest for physical perfection. The third emphasizes the components that contribute to self-satisfaction and the processes of evaluation for self-acceptance. The fourth theme pertains to physical health, signifying instances where individuals engage in self-harm or harbor insecurities regarding their current appearance. The final theme delineates an impression management in which individual's desired presentation and the efforts that are made to attain an aesthetically pleasing physique.

Theme 1: Perceived body structure

The perceived physical form encapsulates the aspiration for an optimal corporeal appearance. Each individual possesses a distinct viewpoint on self, pertaining to dimensions, stature, mass, and overall build, while also emphasizing specific characteristics such as the eyes, hair, and nose. Body image can be delineated in two dimensions: the physical, which corresponds with the actual body image, and the psychological, which relates to the ideal body image. When the actual body image closely corresponds with the ideal body image, self-acceptance is more readily attained. Conversely, when discrepancies arise, there emerges a desire to transform one's body image into the ideal state. In such instances, despite receiving positive reinforcement from others, there persists a tendency to modify body image, either in particular areas or in totality.

For young adults, body image encompasses their contemplations, attitudes, and perceptions concerning their physical appearance. It mirrors their acceptance of their actual form in relation to their ideal physique, and the resultant effect on their well-being. An additional defining trait is the oscillation between affirmative and negative sentiments, particularly when contemplating the notion that "everyone possesses beauty and handsomeness in their unique way; thus, comparison and judgment of others are unjustified" (MR6). Feedback from MR6 indicates that the current body is embraced. Another respondent articulated contentment by stating, "I routinely examine myself in the mirror and realize, 'I am the one'" (MR8). The subsequent respondent expressed, "The physical forms of celebrities consistently motivate me to develop a similar physique through committed workouts" (MR5). The response from MR5 diverges slightly from MR6 and MR8 in that MR5 was influenced by attractive celebrities and was eager to enhance his present body structure.

A contrasting viewpoint was presented by another respondent, who stated, "I inflict harm upon myself by modifying my nose and engaging in prolonged fasting to diminish weight" (MR11). This exemplifies a clear dissatisfaction with his own body structure. Another male respondent expressed a different perspective regarding his body. He remarked, "While beauty is significant, it should not be excessively prioritized" (MR12). It appears that MR12 is more adaptable; he also envisions an ideal body but adopts a more accommodating approach to managing his physical form, which should not inflict further harm.

Another male respondent (MR4) expressed considerable dissatisfaction with his posterior physique, which was characterized by persistent adiposity, while a female participant (FR4) conveyed contentment with her corpulent figure. The assertion that women exhibit greater concern regarding their bodily appearance does not universally apply to all females. The subsequent woman (FR5) remarked, "Following weight gain, the buildup of adipose tissue in the lower back leads to discontent." A similar perspective on body image was articulated by another woman, who stated, "Since my adolescence, I have regarded my nose as overly prominent and my skeletal structure as substantial, distinguishing me from my peers" (FR6). Males were also observed to possess diminished satisfaction with their physique. One man asserted, "The lockdown period lasting 1-2 years resulted in considerable weight gain, culminating in a corpulent body" (MR10). A comparable sentiment was echoed by another man, who remarked, "After residing in dormitories and establishing new relationships, I seek to modify my weight, height, body shape, and complexion" (MR9).

Upon reviewing the feedback from various men and women, it can be concluded that both genders exhibit dissatisfaction with their current physiques; however, the level of contentment appears to be greater among men than among women.

Theme 2: Social influence

Social influence delineates the extent to which an individual relies on external reactions and feedback regarding their body. Individuals form their self-perception based on feedback received from family, friends, and peers. Comments made on social media, particularly regarding celebrities' body structures, also significantly shape self-perception. Constant feedback from others about one's appearance can either gratify or detract from one's body image, eliciting various reactions concerning features such as nose size, skin tone, height, weight, scars, moles, and body composition.

Many people consistently rely on external feedback, often seeking to discern how others perceive their body shape and outward attractiveness. Receiving comments influences our self-perception through the lens of others' viewpoints. Some individuals believe they possess appealing looks and a commendable physique, yet they still aspire to enhance their body figure to achieve a more alluring appearance.

Due to their body composition, many individuals harbor doubts about their attractiveness stemming from factors such as height, weight, clothing choices, skin tone, hair, blemishes, and scars. There exists a pervasive hope for positive feedback regarding one's physical form. Cultural and societal influences can significantly impact one's body image; individuals raised within specific cultures have established norms regarding attire, appearance, and skin color. However, upon integrating into diverse societies, individuals may experience a shift in perception relating to their self-image. Certain individuals experience discomfort due to differences in skin color, which may subject them to teasing by others.

Continued remarks from friends and family regarding specific body parts foster feelings of dissatisfaction and a desire for change to elicit positive reinforcement. For instance, the desire to alter one's nose due to constant comments from a parent or the realization of appearing older than peers because of prominent bone structure can contribute to self-consciousness. Additionally, individuals facing physical challenges, such as bone-related impairments, may yearn for modifications to their body.

Experiencing day-to-day limitations due to health woes can hinder individuals from accomplishing their aspirations, further deepening their sense of dissatisfaction. Self-appraisal encompasses an individual's approach to self-reflection, self-acceptance, and assessment from varied perspectives. Those proficient in self-appraisal typically exhibit elevated self-esteem, enabling them to accept their appearance as it genuinely is.

Here are several reflections shared by three young adults regarding their body image:

"I consider myself an individual with elevated self-esteem and remain impervious to physical appearance." (FR1). "I am satisfied with my physique, as demonstrated by my self-esteem level, since perfection is a fallacy and beauty is omnipresent." (MR2). "Frequently gazing at my reflection serves as a reminder of my weight, which triggers anxiety, leading to overeating and consequent weight accumulation." (MR9). FR1's perspective suggests she is largely unhindered by social factors, whereas MR2 articulated a relative opinion on beauty, asserting that nothing is entirely flawless. In contrast, MR9's body image indicates that he appears unaffected by societal pressures, focusing solely on his weight that falls short of his expectations. These three instances indicate that individuals with high self-esteem can embrace their identity, whereas those with low self-esteem endure continual distress.

Other respondents conveyed distinct insights.

FR2 remarked, "Beginning a fitness regimen encourages me to compare myself with celebrities rather than specific individuals, in pursuit of an ideal physique." While FR4 asserted, "During the ages of 16 to 20, I endured mockery for possessing a slender chest, which led to considerable dissatisfaction." FR10 mentioned, "Owing to my mother's frequent remarks about my appearance, particularly concerning my prominent nose, I felt dissatisfaction and contemplated surgical intervention to alter it." FR7 articulated her discontent by stating, "When individuals offer feedback suggesting that my body appears unattractive, it negatively impacts my self-esteem and fosters dissatisfaction."

The aforementioned cases imply that receiving feedback from family, friends, and the public, as well as engaging in comparisons with media figures, instigates dissatisfaction through social appraisal, media influence, and societal responses.

Theme 3: Self-appraisal

Individuals possess distinctive approaches to assessing their physique. Respondents articulated their body image in markedly diverse manners. FR12 remarked, "Individuals unceasingly comment on my eyes, hair, skin, and lean form, which formerly made me feel inadequate; however, I have now embraced self-acceptance." MR4 noted, "I aspire to attain a more fit and healthier body due to hereditary heart disease concerns, yet I have ultimately come to terms with myself." FR8 expressed, "During my school years, peers taunted me by labeling me as 'black. ' I am indeed black; however, their terminology causes significant discomfort, compelling me to accept my skin tone. " FR9 articulated a vastly different perspective, stating, "I embrace my identity because God created me as such; therefore, I disregard the opinions of others." Furthermore, FR11 possessed a unique perspective on her body image, asserting, "When an individual suffers from low self-esteem, there exists a constant apprehension of receiving adverse comments about oneself. "

Individuals who hold self-worth engage in more accurate self-appraisal. Upon achieving self-acceptance, a person's self-esteem is enhanced, promoting greater confidence and the capacity to

receive both affirmative and critical feedback. A female respondent, FR12, previously encountered negative comments regarding her body parts and felt disheartened, but upon starting to accept her physique, she experienced a sense of relief. MR4 also gradually came to terms with his unfit body. FR8 was once concerned about having dark skin during her school years, yet upon embracing her skin color, she no longer felt anxiety. FR9 cited divine creation for her form and ceased to worry about others' negative comments. Likewise, FR11 exuded substantial confidence when she stated that the optimal approach to mitigate negative remarks from others is not to heed their voices but to accept one's own physique.

In light of the various observations regarding body image articulated by different respondents in this study, it can be concluded that the most effective means of attaining happiness is through the acceptance of reality. All respondents who previously held negative body images began to feel content and at ease once they commenced the journey of accepting their bodies in their own right.

Theme 4: Physical problems

Not all individuals experience physical problems. However, certain physical issues can sometimes lead individuals to experience difficulty and develop a negative perception of their body image. Some responses gathered during the interview included the following:

"I have a skin condition that manifests as white scars and dandruff. I experience feelings of annoyance." (FR10) "During my adolescence, I aspired to play football; however, my knee did not permit it." (MR10) "During festivals and other events, I often feel insecure about the condition of my facial skin, particularly after consuming oily foods." The presence of numerous pimples causes me to feel shy. (MR3) Physical weakness renders me challenging and insecure. (MR4)

Based on the analysis of the responses, I can conclude that individuals generally accept their bodies; however, when faced with illness or other physical issues, they may adopt a negative perception of their bodies. Respondents shared a similar type of realization. The presence of physical problems in individuals is likely to result in dissatisfaction, which may subsequently lead to psychological and other mental stresses.

Theme 5: Impression management

Impression management encompasses various strategies for favorably presenting oneself in the perception of others. It involves a mechanism through which individuals influence the perceptions of those around them. Factors such as physical allure and stylish attire amplify this influence. It is acknowledged that there exist particular body metrics for both sexes; when a female investigates about desirable body proportions, she generally seeks either a voluptuous or slender figure, complemented by attributes such as enchanting eyes, a radiant smile, fashionable wardrobe, aesthetic charm, and a generous spirit, all of which contribute to a comprehensive sense of beauty. In contrast, for men, characteristics such as stature, muscularity, defined abdominal muscles, attire, polite demeanor, and a kind disposition define attractiveness.

All individuals aspire to present themselves as appealing and create favorable perceptions among others. Most people recognize their authentic selves within their present circumstances, yet they often desire change or seek to modify their body composition to achieve a more commendable aesthetic, frequently participating in activities such as gym training, yoga, or dietary modifications. To construct impressive images, many individuals express a desire to alter certain features of their bodies that

compromise their self-assurance, including scars, moles, nasal shape, hair, abdominal fat, acne, skin tone, and leanness.

Let us reconsider how diverse respondents articulated distinct viewpoints regarding the impact of impression management on their body image. MR1 remarked, "Everyone assigns considerable significance to beauty, personality, and fashion in the establishment of authentic beauty; priorities typically emphasize external appearance." FR2 echoed similar sentiments, asserting, "Impressions derived from physical appearance often hold more weight than those originating from inner beauty." The third female respondent (FR3) commented, "Attributes such as height and hair resembling that of Hrithik Roshan contribute to his handsomeness."

Upon reviewing the responses, it becomes evident that each individual possesses a unique perspective in forming impressions; people interpret attractiveness differently, prompting them to engage in physical exercise and fitness regimens. Other responses included: "Body composition does not impede one's ability to appear stylish, provided the clothing is suitable and enhances one's appearance." (MR1) The second female respondent stated, "A voluptuous figure, notable height, and long hair augment a woman's beauty." MR3 recounted, "During my teenage years, I often inflicted harm upon myself, such as attempts to reduce the size of my nose or excessively dieting to achieve a perceived normal physique." MR6 noted, "An individual's selected fashion reflects their desired self-presentation." FR6 shared, "My body size has resulted in my declining numerous social invitations, as I find it challenging to confront others." FR7 expressed, "Boys are regarded as attractive based on physical characteristics that draw attention, such as height, muscularity, and stylish hair." FR8 stated, "Societal standards assess male and female physiques differently; individuals frequently refrain from social engagements due to concerns regarding their appearance."

Table 1: Factors Influencing Body Image Satisfaction

Respondent's Code	Physical Body Structure	Social Influence	Self-appraisal	Physical Problem	Impression Management
MR1, FR2, MR3, FR3, MR6, FR6, MR7, FR8					+
MR3, MR4, MR10, FR10				+	
FR8, FR9, FR11, FR12, MR4			+		
FR1, MR2, FR2, FR4, FR7, MR9, FR10		+			
MR4, FR4, MR5, MR6, MR8, MR9, FR9, MR10, MR11, MR12	+				

Note: MR = Male Respondent, FR = Female Respondent, + indicates influenced by

Source: Fieldwork 2024.

It appears that the societal aspect of humanity drives certain individuals, whether deliberately or inadvertently, to inflict harm upon themselves in their pursuit of allure. Within the defined context, body image is intrinsically linked to various concepts, including an individual's self-assessment of their physical appearance and their aspiration to modify their physique through approaches such as fitness and dieting. Social factors consistently influence our self-perception; we frequently depend on

external evaluative cues and strive to replicate the physiques of prominent personalities. The aspiration to be viewed positively by others compels us to seek an ideal bodily form. Individuals confronting diverse health challenges may discover that their bodies deviate from societal standards, which can negatively impact their self-image.

The perceptions of family, friends, siblings, and media commentary play a crucial role in shaping an individual's self-identity and acceptance. A strong sense of self-acceptance may empower an individual to more effectively navigate feedback from their social networks. Subsequently, the way an individual integrates their identity can leave lasting impressions on others, and this process of impression management promotes self-assessment or self-evaluation.

Responses from social circles can influence individuals to view themselves as either competent or incompetent in making a positive impression. Conversely, when an individual believes they have created a favorable impression, they may expect to receive affirmative feedback. Health issues may hinder a person's capacity to maintain their ideal body shape, with reactions from their social groups shaped by their perceived contentment or discontentment. Furthermore, societal reactions can affect the perception of one's physical form, irrespective of its health status, fostering insecurities regarding physical attributes such as complexion, hair, eyes, and nose.

Conclusion

The prevalence of body image dissatisfaction continues to rise globally. Many individuals become increasingly aware of themselves, aspiring to enhance their appearance and create positive impressions based on physical attributes. The desire to present oneself optimally can foster heightened consciousness about body image, impacting individuals positively or negatively. The perception of body image impacts individuals similarly to how they perceive the external environment, encompassing sensations such as discomfort and gratification. When an individual places significant emphasis on their body image, it may lead to alterations in behavior and physical state. The adolescent phase presents particular challenges in reconciling one's idealized body with their actual physique, often resulting in persistent dissatisfaction. The self-assessment of body image is shaped by the alignment between one's expectations for their physical self and their perceived self, as evidenced by our findings, which illustrate that self-perception is largely influenced by social feedback and the comments of others. Female individuals have historically grappled with dissatisfaction regarding specific body parts. The manner in which one receives feedback from others significantly impacts their self-esteem.

In conclusion, body image significantly affects young adults' self-perception and well-being, with themes of perceived structure, social influence, self-appraisal, physical concerns, and impression management highlighting the complexity of body dissatisfaction. Individuals' unique perspectives shape their body image experiences, driving them to seek self-acceptance amidst societal pressures.

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