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**Social Physique Anxiety and Body Image as Precursors of Social Adjustment Among University Students**

**Dr. Hooria Nadeem1, Dr. Muhammad Ashad Saleem2, Dr. Rana Areez Ahmad Khan3, Rana Zeeshan Ahmad4,**

**1,2,3,4** University of Health Sciences Lahore, Pakistan, Email:**1**[hoorianadeem1695@gmail.com](mailto:hoorianadeem1695@gmail.com), **2**[ashadslm96@gmail.com](mailto:ashadslm96@gmail.com), **3**[areezahmad23@gmail.com](mailto:areezahmad23@gmail.com), **4**[ranazeeshan393@gmail.com](mailto:ranazeeshan393@gmail.com)

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**Abstract**

Existent study focused on exploring social physique anxiety and body image as the precursor of social adjustment among university students. The study was a web based correlational research design, and a purposive convenient sampling method was used in which the Google forms were prepared and online data was collected from different universities of Pakistan. Current study sample comprised (*N* = 324) university students with the representation of boys (*n* = 167) and girls (*n* = 157) respectively. Variables in the current study were operationalized using self-report measures. As Social Physique Anxiety Scale (SPAS; Hart et al., 1989) was administered to measure social physique anxiety, Adolescents Body Image Satisfaction Scale (ABISS; Leone et al., 2014) was used to assess body image and Social Adjustment to College Questionnaire (SACQ; Baker & Siryk, 1989) was used to measured social adjustment among university students. Correlation, linear regression analysis, Analysis of variance and independent sample *t*-test were carried out for analyzing the hypotheses of the present study using SPSS 23V. Findings of the study show that social physique anxiety significantly negatively predicted social adjustment. Moreover, body image significantly positively predicted social adjustment. Furthermore, study also indicates that there were no significant variations in social physique anxiety, body image and social adjustment between girls and boys. Similarly no mean differences were found in other demographics as residence, family system etc. The present study also found the effect of BMI among variables of the study. Over-weight individual have a higher level of social physique anxiety than under-weight and normal weight individuals. Additionally, normal individuals score higher on body image as compared to over-weight and under-weight individuals. All the other demographics have non-significant differences among the study variables.

***Keywords:*** Social Physique Anxiety, Body Image and Social Adjustment.

**Introduction**

Physical appearance and beauty standards increases day to day and to look physically attractive is the foremost aspect of any individual personality in a society (Eagly et al., 1991). The increase in importance is due to idealistic principles set by social media (Stice et al., 2002), and women in this era specifically evaluate their physical looks in reference to the standards that are problematic to attain (Brownell, 1991). Ultimately, they become dissatisfied with their body image (Heinberg, 1996), and much increase in eating disorders (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Emerging adults is the age where individuals are going from college to university students may form their identity and are creating social groups where they have to socialize with many of the people and negotiate their opinions and meet with the challenges of the age. Growing body image issues in the development phase are caused by young adults being sensitive to social pressures and impression management processes. Although family and media definitely influence the formation of body image, adults develop an aesthetic culture with their friends that is supported by rules and expectations and represented well within peer group. These experiences influence and develop individual behaviors and attitudes toward one's own and others' body image (Jones & Crawford, 2006). So, the existent study focused on investigating body image and social physique anxiety as precursors of social adjustment in university students.

**Social Physique Anxiety**

Anxiety is basically a state with directly effects mental health of an individual and it also does affect person’s body leading to disfunctioning in their daily life circumstances (Toussaint et al., 2020). Anxiety disorders are most prevailing disorders that may affect 30 % of the emerging adults and adults (Kessler et al., 2005).

***Origin of Social Physique Anxiety***

Social physique anxiety (SPA) is the fear that a person is being scrutinized or judged based on their looks; it is considered a kind of social anxiety (Hart et al., 1989). Persons with SPA are unable to see themselves as desirable to others. Nervous people are always trying to create a positive impression on everyone in order to gain favorable feedback, and SPA is the outcome of self-presentation anxiety (Goffman, 1959). Therefore, the idea of perfection-seeking connects self-presentation and SPA. The more people strive to project a perfect picture to everyone else, the greater their SPA and also the poorer their body esteem (Hagger & Stevenson, 2010; Kowalski et al., 2001). The origins of SPA can be traced back to impression management and self-presentation theory (Leary, 1992), where people seeks to display them in a socially desirable manner in order to enjoy perceived social benefits (Benzeval et al., 2013; Weiss & Feldman, 2006). Those who are concerned about their ability to project a favorable social impression may avoid circumstances where they fear their capacity to do so may be jeopardized (Brewer et al., 2004). The drive for muscularity and the drive for body ideals are two outcomes that may be crucial in adolescents' SPA experiences (McCreary & Sasse, 2000). These desires reflect the pursuit of cultural and gender explicit body form standards, with males in Western societies preferring a more muscular physique and females preferring a slimmer physique (Martin et al., 2006; McCreary & Sasse, 2000; Smolak & Murnen, 2005). As a result, when boys and girls are concerned that others will judge them poorly because their body falls short of the idealized physique, attitudes and actions connected with a drive to become more powerful or slender may intensify in order to meet this standard (Garner et al., 1983).

***Definitions of Social Physique Anxiety***

Social physique anxiety (SPA), a subtype of social anxiety is referred to as their physique being negatively viewed by others (Hart et al., 1989). Crawford and Eklund (1994) defined social physique anxiety with reference to their physical physique including their body weight, fats, and muscles and over all body shape and proportions. Moreover, SPA is also defined as the negative perceptions about the individual’s body image and over all looks (Cash & Smolak, 2011; Finne et al., 2011). APA considers social physique anxiety to be a psychological disorder with regards to person’s social settings and also states that SPA greatly influences women’s physique especially the obese females (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). As per Sabiston et al. (2014), social physique anxiety feelings are associated to vigorous exercise engagement motives, beliefs, interests, self- and ability assessments, and physical activity engagement or avoidance.

***Adverse Effects of SPA***

Comparable with the socially anxious people, individuals who are greatly experiencing SPA may tend to have positively impression on society and other people as they are apprehensive of being criticized by others (Shenkler & Leary, 1982). Conversely, SPA is a feeling of anxiousness with reference to the person’s physical appearance. People high in SPA often engross in avoiding behaviors where they feel that their body is being stared on and is open to criticisms (Smith, 2004), this type of avoiding behavior is mostly shown when they are in public and feel that everybody is looking on them and evaluating them negatively (Diehl et al., 1998). The physique of person is regarded as the person’s whole body shape, including excess weight, muscle development, as well as body shape (Hart et al., 1989). Because society places such an emphasis on body image and figure, social physique anxiety might hinder people from engaging in physical activity if they are concerned about how others will judge them (Kowalski et al., 2001). Low self-esteem (Davison & McCabe, 2005), fear of unfavorable judgment (Crawford & Eklund, 1994), negative body image, and a higher risk of developing an eating disorder are all linked to social physique anxiety (Aşç, et al., 2006; Grieve et al., 2008).

***Model of SPA***

Leary and Kowalski (1990) present a two-component model of self-presentation. It is suggested by the model that cultural contexts influence people's desire to influence how someone else perceive them. This desire to present a favorable self-image to others is referred to as impression motivation (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Additionally, people have a variety of tools at their disposal to control the imprints of themselves that they project to others, from observable consciousness to non-verbal behaviors, known as impression construction. According to this model, people who are considering working out in settings in which the true appearance is prominent, like gyms or physical training classes, are likely to anticipate that others will judge their appearance. As a result, they are more likely to be driven by the desire to project an image of their body shape that they believe others will find favorable (impression motivation), and they may start engaging in certain behaviors to achieve this, like choosing what to dress up (impression construction). Moreover, those who experience significantly higher rates physique anxiety will probably worry that how they present their bodies in these situations will be viewed negatively or unfavorably by others. Participants were thus driven to prevent such a negative body (impression motivation), and participants take measures to do so by avoiding such contexts, working out in private to change their bodies, or implementing certain impression management techniques like dressing loosely or going to the gym during an off working days when relatively few people are around (Kowalski et al., 2006; Lamarche et al., 2009).

***Social Physique Anxiety and Body Mass Index***

Social physique anxiety is a variable which adversely affects the body image if an individual become greatly dissatisfied with their body when they are being negatively criticized by others. The people are dissatisfied with their body up to a level that the underweight individual also feels an uneven body image and considers himself fat. The major cause of dissatisfaction arises from the sociocultural factors and mass media (Fallon & Hausenblas, 2005). Females higher on SPA are more prone to misjudge their body image, feels dissatisfied and wants to become ideal thin just because of the social media usage. Individuals with higher SPA have more exercising habits and they are more likely to maintain their body weight than they individuals who exhibit low SPA (Asçı & colleagues, 2006). This research concludes that exercising behavior will help a person to have an adorable appearance. In contrast with the research mentioned above, Koca and As¸çı (2006) proposes that high SPA people were more apprehensive of being gazed by many others and due to this they avoid exercising behaviors (Mülazımog˘lu-Ballı & As¸çı, 2004). Frederick and Morrison (1996) revealed mix evidences of both non exercisers and excessive exercisers were found to have high SPA. Almost all of the body image studies have concentrated on individuals' overall satisfaction with specific body components (Mahoney & Finch, 1976). These assessments are often averaged, and a combined value is understood like a body-image index, also known as body-cathexis. Likely, numerous body-image researches have indicated that physical factors such as body weight and height are essential in developing body image (Cash, 2004).

***Gender Differences among SPA***

Many of the studies were conducted which investigated the trend of social physique anxiety among males and females. McLester et al. (2018) investigated social physique anxiety among males and females and conclude that as compared to males, females may experience higher levels of SPA. Additionally, they also found out that men displayed greater levels of body image satisfaction and they are more satisfied their looks and appearances as compared to women. Women not only experiences higher physique anxiety but this may also boost up their behaviors related to body image in contrast with men (Davison & McCabe, 2005). Moreover, Russell (2002) concludes that men also experience high social physique anxiety and they are dissatisfied with body image and also have lower level of self-esteem. The trend of higher social physique anxiety is mostly found by many of the researchers some also resulted in higher SPA in adolescents and young girls and also found that higher SPA individuals are associated with the obsessions of body image and greater weight (As¸çı et al., 2006; Bas et al.¸ 2004; Mack et al., 2006). Females of all eras have regularly been shown to have higher SPA than equivalent aged males (Chu et al., 2008; Kowalski et al., 2001). So, therefore considering all the researches it was found that Girls are more likely than boys to experience problems with their body image. Even so, irrespective of sexual orientation, body-related worries are common among adolescents, whereas these worries may be of different types (Caglar et al., 2010). Since men strive for muscularity, girls are motivated by a desire for a slim figure (Brunet et al., 2010; Helfert & Warschburger, 2011). It is crucial to understand the various effects that body worries might have on the teenagers' way of life.

**Body Image**

Our connection with our bodies has always been difficult. Although our body is an important aspect of our lives, most of us do not come to like it or respect them as they are. We establish beliefs about what is desirable in our culture and what we should view our bodies as a result of the socialization process. This belief system influences how we see and react to our bodies. While our body size and shape are objective measures, our body image is indeed not necessarily as steady or realistic. It is not commonplace for people to have a skewed perception of their bodies, which can result in body image dissatisfaction and jeopardize their psychological well-being. Body image is thought to be a complex and multifaceted construct that includes a behavioral component involving body-related behaviors (e.g. monitoring behaviors), a cognitive aspect involving assessment of body characteristics (e.g. evaluation of one's body height or weight), and a cognitive-affective element that include thought patterns, beliefs, and thoughts toward individual's body (Cash, 2004; Vocks et al., 2018). Psychologists have long been fascinated by the evolution of body image as well as its impact on other elements of people's lives. "The body, in which we are imprisoned like an oyster in its shell," Plato once stated (Plato, 1952). Body image is a multidimensional, flexible, volatile, and fundamentally social construct that is produced by a complex combination of attitudes, sentiments, and values that are anchored in the depictions and stereotypes that social circles embrace and disseminate over time (De Sousa, 2008).

***Definition of Body Image***

Body image was defined by Schilder (1935) as subjective experiences of person’s own body. An individual’s body image, whether satisfied or dissatisfied, can be changed according to the habitat or state in which they find themselves (Krane et al., 2001). Body image is a complicated concept that encompasses experiences and opinions regarding individual's physique (Cash, 2002; Grammas & Schwartz, 2009). Body image relates to a person's physical appearance as well as their sense of how one should perceive them (Grogan, 2006). Body image is a form of many internal factors as in what way a person may look, feel and have belief about him (Nainggolan, 2016). Another definition was put forward by Old and Feldman (2010) as the overall assessment of a person physical look is referred to as body image. Body image research is often conducted in the psychological and emotional sciences (Phillips, 1998) like most studies including adults and clinical samples, such as persons suffering from eating disorders (Mangweth et al., 2001). Humans either, male and female, also have strong urge to be skinny, according to research conducted in the previous ten years, and body image fixation is increasing (Juarez et al., 2012; Tylka et al., 2013). A study discovered that those who are not satisfied with overall image of body are more likely to have body deformity (Kimber et al., 2015). Individuals who negatively considered their body image may experience certain emotions as shame and inferior body image as compared to other people, this body image dissatisfaction may also cause anxiety and depression in individuals (Mashalpourfard, 2018). Many of the elements are involved that may contribute to the body image development as age, culture, sex, media , parents and stages of maturation (Zalilah et al., 2003). Body image relates to a person's physical appearance as well as their sense of how one should perceive them. Individuals' body image is assumed to be influenced by a variety of factors, including gender, personality characteristics, and sociocultural standards. Body image has quite a significant impact on the social activities and interactions, and those who have a bad body image may feel shame, humiliation, and nervousness regarding their physical looks. Dissatisfaction with one's body image is frequent in the public at large (Grogan, 2006).

***Prevalence Rates of Body Image Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction***

A tremendous work is done on body image variables and much of its facets among different age groups like adolescents, emerging adults, and adults. Not only girls, many of the boys also feel anxious about their body image. As body image is more commonly related to body shape, structure and weight, around 61 – 93 % of individual were dissatisfied with their overall body look and also feel anxious related to certain specific areas of the body (Frederick et al., 2016; Liossi, 2003). Moreover, an estimate of 50 % adolescent’s girls and 30 % adolescent’s boys feels dissatisfied with their bodies (Smolak, 2011). 60 percent of adult women’s and 40 percent men remain dissatisfied across their overall life (Kearney-Cooke & Tieger, 2015; Tiggemann, 2004). Apart from dissatisfaction individuals may also experience emotional distress related to body image that may include shame, worry and distress (Cash & Fleming, 2002). Females approximately 62% and males 38% feel themselves chubby from European university (El Ansari et al., 2010). American university students were also not too much satisfied with their body structure (Cash et al., 2004). Male are mostly influenced and tried to have a muscular physique in the same way females are endorsed with the concept of being thin which genuinely influences their emotional and interpersonal experiences and thus effects their quality of life (Grab et al., 2007; Engeln et al., 2013). There is an ultimate and a clear picture of body image society produces an image of perfection for women and men, and people strive to make their bodies conform to that image. There is also the genuine idea of body image, which states that each person's body is unique and that society's ideal body image does not coincide with the actual body image. Inconsistency between society's ideal image of a person’s body and the true body image personalized for each individual can contribute to social physique anxiety and body image dissatisfaction (Koyuncu et al., 2010).

***Societal Standard of Body Image***

Body image expert Thomas F. Cash postulated that there may be two perspectives on human appearance (Cash, 1990). The outside view refers towards how our outward beauty influences our interactions. Appearance, for example, is important in a variety of contexts, including friendship, intimate relationships, and career opportunities. On the other hand is the inside view that refers to as the individual’s personal experience of his or her appearance. Inner view was referred to as body image (Cash, 1990). Advertisements are widely used to convey society's expectations. Print media, such as television advertisements and publications, have long advocated for and promoted an unrealistically thin ideal. For instance, a study of print media shows that adolescent girls would promote their ideal as models in celebrity magazines aimed at teenage girls. Instagram, Pinterest, and Tumblr are examples of new image-based social media. Female viewers are motivated to maintain a consistent bone structure by seeing photographs and athletic peers, which offers the perfect objective of upward subjective norms (O’ Brien et al., 2015).

***Factors Related to* *Body Image***

Rudd and Lennon (2000) identified two factors that contribute to body image: the cognitive and behavioral components. The two factors interact and support the development of a positive body image, i.e:

1. The perceptual or cognitive factor focuses on how individuals describe his or her physiological state, such as size, shape, weight, height or shortness, strength or weakness, and appearance.
2. Attitudinal or behavioral factor refers to person’s satisfaction and dissatisfaction with parts of the body such as the face, eyes, lips, nose, and eyes, as well as the entire body, that also includes physical features, body shape, and physical appearance.

If an individual does not judge his appearance according to his own personal standards, he will undervalue his body. Individual dissatisfaction with one's body can result in a lower self-esteem, depression, social anxiety, and avoidance of social situations. Individual expectations are influenced by their overall satisfaction or disappointment with their physical state, whereas attitudes are influenced by an action taken to realize an individual's physical condition expectations (Rudd & Lennon, 2000).

***Positive and Negative Body Image***

Individuals' perceptions of physical changes have a massive effect on their mental well-being. Individuals who really are stable, realistic, and consistent with their body image's reality will succeed in their personal lives, and they will be able to alter their body image adaptively (Keliat, 2002; Julianti, 2015). Having a sensible view of you and recognizing and appreciating parts of the body will leads to reduce anxiety and boost self-esteem. Body image of an individual can be constructive or destructive. An individual's body image can be either positive or negative.

**Positive Body Image.** A positive body image, also known as a constructive body image, can contribute to an effective and happy life. Furthermore, people who have a healthy body image are conscious of their physical flaws and drawbacks and regard their bodies. People who have a positive body image are happy when they look at themselves in the mirror, realize that their appearance still does not meet the standards set by the media, society, and family, but they are content with their physical appearance. People who have a healthy body image don't want to be thin, tall, or change their appearance to achieve it. Because, the goal of having a positive body image is to be satisfied with the present body, flaws and all its deficiencies.

**Negative or Destructive Body Image**. Meanwhile, destructive body image, also known as negative body image, can result from the surroundings, other people, or prior experience that already have ingrained negative thinking about the individual. Childhood teasing about appearance can have a long-term effect on body image (Thompson, 1996). As a result of their childhood experiences, many individuals have quite a deep dislike for their appearance. Several studies have found that ridicule has a direct impact on adult body conceptions, disordered eating, and overall mental health (Thompson, 1996). Dacey and Kenny (2001) suggest that negative body image perceptions among adolescents might impede the progress of personal and social skills and knowledge to form positive relationships with peers.

A negative resemblance seen between perfect body and social economic standards leads to body dissatisfaction (Smith, 2004). This comparison could be influenced by a few biopsychosocial factors. For instance physiological alterations when an individual reached the age of puberty (Niven et al., 2009), many unattainable ideal body standards that social media displays (Blowers et al., 2003) and Adolescents' engagement in this evaluative process is influenced by the additional demand of social connectedness throughout this developmental stage (Smith, 2004).

***Theoretical Perspectives Related To Body Image***

Many of the theories provide a conceptual framework of body image. here are some theoretical perspectives of body image

**Feminist Perspectives.** Females of all ages have a greatly disturbed body structure because they are experience a greater dissatisfaction with their body image as compared to men (Strigel & Franko, 2002). It has been observed that physique disturbances are more narrowly related to antic thoughts rather than somatic fact. Figure dissatisfaction and disorganized consumption patterns have remained a predominantly problem of teenage and all age women (Schwitzer et al., 1998)

**Self-Schema Theory of Body Image.**Schema is a way of assembling constitution about self, stated by Markus 1977. This theory was applied to body image for the first time by Markus and colleagues. According to this theory it’s an individual inclination of viewing or evaluating their self and their body image as being positive or negative. As the theory states two aspects firstly, schematic individuals are those for whom physical appearance matters the most. On the other hand, people who pay much attention to their physical looks or appearances are termed as aschematic. Prior literature demonstrates that schematic individuals are more prone to having eating disorders because they have distorted body image perceptions.

**Social Comparison Theory.** Some smooth clarification for by what means mass media pictures really derive to influence the practice female sense about their figures is comprised by the social comparison theory. It observes in what ways people assess themselves relative to peer group, collections, and societal classification. Indication for the sound effects of women’s social contrast with media images is abundant (Milkie, 1999).A lot of researches have shown relationship of body dissatisfaction with anxiety and stress. Aramats et al. (2003) reported that dissatisfaction of body due to anxiety leads to depression. Fredaandgamze (2004) also reported that social anxiety is caused by body image dissatisfaction. Izgic et al. (2004) found that those who experienced social anxiety have high body image disturbance. Holsen et al. (2002) found that good quality relationships with parents lead to satisfactory body image while poor relationship associated with lower body satisfaction. Adults who are suffering from eating disorders and obesity also sometime endure by body image distortions. Adults with obesity perceived their own body size smaller than the actual body size, while anorexic and bulimic adults tens to overestimate their body size. Other researchers report contradictory results that individuals with anorexia underestimate their body size and persons who are obese overestimate their whole body image.

***Gender Differences among Body Image***

Previously, studies looked into the effect of age and gender on body factors pertaining towards the cognitive-affective part. Especially, investigation on negative body image has revealed that girls as well as female teenagers are more likely to be dissatisfied with their bodies (Duncan et al., 2006), as well as a age groups of females are mostly dissatisfied with their body image (Mond et al., 2013; Lewis & Cachelin, 2001; Neumark-Sztainer et al., 2006). Although some research findings indicated that the level of body image dissatisfaction fluctuated with age (Baker & Gringart, 2009; Esnaola et al., 2010), some of the researchers also discovered that females' body dissatisfaction continues to remain fairly stable throughout their adult lives (Tiggemann & McCourt, 2013; Lewis & Cachelin, 2001; Fallon et al., 2014 & Tiggemann, 2004). Young girls are more likely than boys to be dissatisfied with their bodies. Teenage girls are somewhat satisfied with their physical appearance and have a more negative body image. This is due to the fact that as a woman enters adolescence, her body fat levels rise, further separating her from her ideal body shapes (Santrock, 2003). In most cases, adolescent girls' dissatisfaction with their bodies or body images reflects a tendency to have a skinnier body image (Markey, 2005). Conversely, a study by Fallon et al. (2014) has not showed any significant gender related difference among male and females regarding body image dissatisfaction. Many of the researches also focused on level of body image and looks thought to decrease as the females become older. In older adults females of age 84 years Tiggemann and Lynch (2001) states that the body look and beauty was lesser than in younger females. Only one study emphasized the significance of appearance in men and discovered that it differed by age group and peaked at 75 years of age and older (Öberg & Tornstam, 1999).

***Body Image and Body Mass Index***

BMI is among the most significant variables influencing one's perception of one's own body. The media modeling on the one hand and societal expectations just from the other can be potent in escalating the impression of body image concerns in obese people because today being slim is among the standards of elegance and physical attractiveness, especially for women. BMI is interpretable, especially in light of gender. Women compare themselves to others more than men do, and even this comparison makes them feel unsatisfied with their bodies when they see images of what is portrayed as the ideal body (McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2001). Despite the fact that this worry in boys, like in girls and young women, makes it harder for any of them to estimate their weight even under normal circumstances, they tend to think they are more obese than they actually are. This miscalculation of body shape and weight will have detrimental effects on one's health (Ter Boght et al., 2006).

***Social Physique Anxiety and Body Image***

It was suggested by the contradictory researches that body image was proved to be a vital variable that demonstrates the relationship between exercising behavior and SPA. This may also conclude that people who does not have a satisfactory body image they may feel fear of being gazed and are anxious to go to the places where they are being judged. Despite the fact that men are more likely than women to experience social physique anxiety, a 2002 study by Russell discovered that men with high levels of this anxiety also have elevated amounts of body image dissatisfaction and reduced levels of self-esteem. Additionally, Atalay and Gencoz (2008) investigated females exercising vital roles in relation with body image satisfaction on social physique anxiety. The major objective of the study was to examine the relationship among the variables among females (*n* = 118) of which 58 of the females exercise regularly. The variables were operationalized using self-report inventories including The Social Physique Anxiety Scale, Eating Attitudes Test, and Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale including their dieting habits. Findings of the study demonstrates that besides controlling irregular eating habits, individuals who are not satisfied with their body structure and also not perform exercise activity may suffer from higher social physique anxiety. So the results concluded that body image is negatively significantly correlated with social physique anxiety as, higher the social physique anxiety a person may experience the more dissatisfied he will be with his body image. Moreover, Swami et al. (2021) investigated the relationship amid social physique anxiety, body image and dating anxiety among heterosexual emerging adults. The study was conducted in order to overcome the limitations by previous studies and participants were emerging adults (*n* = 501) were part of the study. Results were revealed from correlational analysis, hierarchical regression analysis. Finding of the study shows that body image and social physique anxiety were negatively linked with higher dating anxiety. Furthermore, study also explored the relationship of aspect of body image i.e. appearance orientation and dating anxiety was mediated through social physique anxiety. These findings emphasize the significance of designing new approaches to prevent social physique anxiety as well as undesirable body shape perspective in heterosocial dating situations (Swami et al., 2021). Additionally, social physique anxiety was linked to higher body-related concerns in a survey of 56 undergraduate women, half among whom scored in the top third on the SPAS and 50 percent of whom scored in the bottom third on the SPAS. Women who scored highest on the SPAS experienced more anxiety during a physique exam that included an assessment of muscle tone and adiposity. Women with the highest SPAS scores were more anxious during a physique exam, and also had an analysis of muscle tone and fat storage. Women with the highest levels of social physique anxiety are probably more bulky, have quite an elevated body mass index (BMI), and rate their body structure as considerably bigger than women with lower levels of social physique anxiety (Hart et al., 1989). At another place, while examining body image and social physique anxiety among the athletes because previous studies were mostly related to clinical samples (Nugent, 2020). The aim of the study was to find the relationship among the variables like social physique anxiety and body image and general anxiety in athletes and non-athletes. The study was an online cross-sectional survey design including (*n* = 311) university students and data was collected. Social physique anxiety scale (SPAS), generalized anxiety disorder scale (GAD-7), Multidimensional body-self relations questionnaire (MBSRQ), Weight pressure in sports (WPS) were self-reported inventories administered to collect data from the sample. Outcomes of the study indicate that there was a significant negative relationship among social physique anxiety and body image. No significant mean difference was found between WPS, SPAS and other variables (Nugent, 2020).

**Social Adjustment**

The process of balancing desires and challenges in one's environment is known as adjustment, which comes from the Latin word ad-justare (Mesidor & Sly, 2016). Yi et al. (2003) recognized five forms of adjustment issues that students may face these include academic, physical health, financial, vocational and personal/social. Gebhard (2012) also looked into the problems and behaviors of international students. He discovered that students struggled with adjustment in three areas: academics, social interactions, and emotional reactions to their new surroundings. Moreover, Adjustment is defined as the method of recognizing and adopting appropriate modes of behavior in response to changes in the environment (Cater, 1959). Emerging adults' have to move from college to university level where they have to socialize with the group of people. Youths must begin to comprehend other patients as humans who are distinctive from themselves, and they must possess better social adjustment abilities. If young adults can recognize themselves and their own roles in society, they will discover their identity; however, if this is not realized, it can end up causing social anxiety. Residing in a global civilization has its roots in a framework of values and needs, and to live up to one's requirements and value framework, one must make enough adjustments. Many of the person's basic needs cannot be met without adjustment. One will feel alone if they are not properly integrated into society. According to Dhingra and colleagues (2005), one’s adjustment to be in suitable modification with his surrounding, others, and himself through the process of social adjustment. Social adjustment can occur by either changing one's environment or by adapting one's self to it (Campbell's Medical Dictionary, 1996). As a result of excessive globalization in international higher education students, many studies have been conducted worldwide to investigate the adjustment aspects of international college students (Brown & Holloway, 2008; Coles & Swami, 2012; Rienties et al., 2012; Terry et al., 2006). College admissions has been increased in the past few years and students are entering college to obtain a higher degrees with a maximum benefit jobs opportunities and due to this they enhanced their earning capabilities (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). Apart from that socialization is also one of the reasons as young adults have to form social groups and learn to socially adopt the environment and participate in group discussions and negotiate for their opinions and this is their first experience where they socialize without their parental ménage and recognize their identity (Arnett, 2000). The ability of new students to organize this transformation as well as mutually incorporate into the organization is a significant factor in deciding success in the future, as measured by traditional academic markers such as grades (Kuh et al., 2008; Zins et al., 2004). Some of the resources and tools that make socialization easier for students and today’s generation in college or universities may include the use of social media sites among them Facebook is the most important tool that make social connections stronger of students (Hargittai, 2007; Smith et al., 2010). Facebook may help most of the individuals to maintain social relations, learn about others and it can also help in exchanging emotional and social support due to which people feel easier and adjust in their social settings (Ellison et al., 2010). These tools may modify how youngsters interact with one another throughout their university transition. One of the aspect student adjustments is socialization, which is one of the most important activities emerging adults engage in and that anticipates college success and beyond (McEwan, 2011). Social adjustment is defined as the practice by which students integrate into the university community, form social connections, and start negotiating the new found freedom that college life provides (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994). Those students who do not adjust well in college and university environments may are at a probable risk of getting depressed, anxious and isolated (Mounts et al., 2006).

***Social Adjustment and Age***

For adolescents adjustment with family and society simultaneously becomes difficult as, they are developmentally changing. Human beings are the social species. Adolescents' adjustment is influenced by society, which also impact their personality development. Expectations of society, interactions with general public, socialization, and other factors influence adolescents' adjustment to society, which plays a significant role in their lives. Children’s adjusted behaviors to society in order to sustain in their social role, is what we call social adjustment. The timespan seen between ages of 18 and 25 is referred to by Arnett (2000) as emerging adulthood, a crucial developmental stage in which person transition from adolescence to adulthood. During this time, people decide what kind of person they want to be in terms of personal experiences and ethics, love, and livelihood. Trying to move away to college can help with this process because it generally leads to increased autonomy in emerging adults due to changes in residence, work opportunities, and the formation of new social circles (Arnett, 2000). University students are required to adjust to their new lifestyles in a variety of ways, ranging from educational adaptation to personal, psychological, and social adjustments (Hiester et al., 2009).

***Gender Differences in Social Adjustment***

For any student, the transition to university is a crucial stage because its success will likely influence the student's future success (Haggis, 2006; Hultberg et al., 2008). Beginning university is a very personal experience, with certain schoolchildren feeling supported and others trying to claim they were not given the support they required (Leese, 2010). Students' transfer to their new institutions depends on them starting to feel a part of the institution's social culture, meeting and forming relationships, and establishing connections with other students (DeSilva et al., 2011; Rahat & Ilhan, 2016). Because female students' adjustment is primarily determined by the social interactions and friendships at the university (Kenny and Rice, 1995) due to difficulties in trying to form social interactions and unsatisfying feelings females have more difficulty in adjustment as compared to males. Secondary school students' social adjustment with reference to their gender was studied, and the research showed that males are more socially adjusted than female students (Makwana & Kaji, 2014). Likewise, another study showed that male students are better adjusted in social situations than female students (Bimla, 2019). Boys exhibit a greater level of adjustment than girls, according to (Mathew, 2020). As in same way Lalima and Prasad (2019) in a study, revealed that social adjustments of male students are good, while social adjustment scores are unsatisfactory among a few boys. According to these findings, in comparison to female students, male students are capable of adjusting in social circles and gatherings and balance their individual needs with social norms and social demands (Kaur & Sharma, 2022). Roy et al. (2011) found that adjustment is higher across all domains among girls as compared to boys. While contrary to this finding, boys are well adjusted in all environments in relation with the boys (Rahmatullah, 2007; Lama, 2010). Another study by Sharma and Saini (2013) demonstrates that health and social adjustment was higher among girls and they are not satisfied with emotional health and boys are socially well adjusted and they are lower on emotional and health adjustments, but these results are not statistically significant.

***Body Image and Social Adjustment***

Having a different look can have a significant impact on those who are influenced. Many patients with disfigurement and unsatisfied body image may report higher anxiety, social isolation and worse quality of life level (Rumsey et al., 2002). Yet, much of the individuals have reported that they are socially well adapted (Rumsey, 2002). Many of the researchers found that unstructured body image is linked with behavioral adjustment. Intellectualizing problems like disfigurement may put adolescents at risk for behavioral adjustment issues (Moore et al., 2003). Moreover, whether adolescents perceive their physical development as similar to or different from that of their peers has an impact on their social and psychological adjustment, because recognizing this difference may cause them to be offended by rude comments from their classmates, limiting their social activities and lives (De Sousa, 2008). In a study by (Moss, 2005) relationship between objective and subjective disfigurement severity was accessed with psychological adjustment. Clinical patients (*n* = 400) were the part of the study and with different looks and there were two of patients the outpatient group and waiting list group. Participants were administered with Derriford Appearance Scale 24 (DAS24) and perceived appearance severity scale in order to collect data from the patients. Plastic surgeons objectively rated severity in the outpatient group, while patients on the waiting list subjectively rated severity. Regression analysis suggest that higher the perceived disfigurement severity of an individual the worse their social adjustment. Hence, it predicts that body image is negatively associated with social adjustment. Furthermore the findings also show that weak though significant relationship among objective disfigurement and adjustment for normally visible but not for non- normally visible differences in looks and appearances. Moreover, many researchers are on weight related content who suffer from many of the social adjustment issues and suggest that teenager who are not over-weight but have adjustment issues, girls may experience greater social imbalances in accordance with weight related stigmatization as compared to boys. A research was conducted on US boys and girls with age range from 9–15 years including (*n* = 938) adolescents. Adolescents were underweight and overweight/obese. Findings demonstrates that Mother and childhood and adolescence reports of adaptive social functioning at age 15 were also used to estimate a latent social adjustment variable using zBMI growth parameters.. According to the findings, greater awareness of weight-related social adjustment may necessitate expanding the scope of research and intervention efforts to include normal-weight teens, particularly normal-weight girls (Boyer et al., 2021). Another study also scrutinized body image and social adjustment including adolescents (*n* = 21) and those who finished cancer treatment and a healthy comparison group. Participants filled the questionnaires of body image and social adjustment and also interviewed. Cancer patients indicated doing half as many socializing as healthy people. Furthermore, no mean and group differences were found among the study variables. Adolescents who had been off treatment for a longer period of time reported poorer self–worth, more social anxiety, and negative body image perspectives, but have not been regarded as less appealing by observers. Furthermore, a study was conducted in Iran by Tamannaeifar and Mansourinik (2012) with a major of exploring the link amid body image and adjustment are adolescents among both male and female. Participants of the study were male and female students (*n* = 400) on whom Physical self-description questionnaire and Bell adjustment inventory were operationalized in order to collect the data from the sample. Significant findings were revealed by the results of the study and concluded that with more negative body image the adolescents have poorer social adjustment. Hence, it found out that body image is a significant negative predictor of social adjustment.

***Social Physique Anxiety and Social Adjustment***

Social physique anxiety (SPA) is a subtype of social anxiety and promotes psychosocial adjustment among adolescents. The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship of SPA with a number psychosocial and behavior variables in adolescents. A purposive sample of adolescents students (*n* = 3331) were the part of the study and Health Behavior in School-aged Children (HBSC) was administered on the students to collect the data. Findings of the study demonstrate that greater body structure and on diet individuals have positive social physique anxiety and they also have worse health related symptoms. SPA was significantly negatively related to physical activity and poor support system and adjustment problems. Normal weight girls and on diet girls have a higher SPA. Mean differences were not significant among gender. Self-acceptance and seeking appropriate social support are two strategies that can help teenagers cope with the stress of accomplishing a socially acceptable body weight and shape (Calmeiro & Matos, 2018).

**Rationale of Study**

Social physique anxiety may refer to negative self-evaluation of a person with respect to the perspectives of others (Hart et al., 1989). University students now a days pay more focus on their physique because of the social pressure and demeaning comments they listen from others which decreases their self-worth and they try to maintain their physique as per the societal standards, as for girls they want to be thin, slender, have a lean body and standard height and for men they have desire to maintain their muscular physique and want to look physically attractive. Many studies shows that girls and females of all ages were greatly dissatisfied with body image and they try hard to maintain their body image and it is also a dire need of the society to have those individuals who socially adjust in every type of environment and situation. So, the existent study analytically explored social physique anxiety and body image of university students as a precursor of social adjustment. Another major purpose of the study was to find gender differences among the study variables. A pertinent amount of literature is available on the variables namely social physique anxiety, body image and social adjustment. Yet there is a need to explore more about these variables as much of the research work has been done related to western culture. As Pakistan is indigenous culture so, there is a need to conduct study in eastern culture. The results of other culture are not generalizable in Pakistan because Pakistani people have their own life styles and cultural values and also societal and moral values do differ from other cultures. So, the purpose of study is to explore the findings in the context of Pakistani culture. Literature related to body image either positive or negative and greater social physique anxiety is socially adjusted in the environment is not studied and how media, family and friends play the role in that. The literature is very scarce on social adjustment so the purpose of this study is to find out the impact of SPA and body image on social adjustment among university students. Another major purpose was to investigate the current study findings in the university students. Available literature on body image, social physique anxiety and social adjustment was found on adolescents, athletes and clinical samples as cancer patients and eating disorder. Thus, the present study focused on university students, in order to find out the effects of the study variables on university students with age range of 17-29. The current study also focuses on the differences prevailing among the body image and social physique anxiety and how they socially adapt their environment. The most salient goal of the present study is to examine that social physique anxiety and body image as a predictor of social adjustment. Prior researches focuses on social physique anxiety and many health-compromising behaviors as eating disorders (Lanfranchi et al., 2015; Thompson & Chad 2002), smoking (Crocker et al., 2001) and seeking sexual attention (Sabiston et al., 2007). SPA is also linked with many psychological issues like body dissatisfaction and self-esteem (Brunet et al., 2010; Sabiston et al., 2014). Social physique anxiety is also being related to eating disorders among adolescents and also demonstrates an emotional component of body image (Crocker et al., 2003). Social physique anxiety is also linked to physical activities and growth patterns, perception of one’s personality and capability of an individual (Sabiston et al., 2014). Body image concerns are more related to the personality and self-esteem of an individual (Murphy, 2012). The body of studies on differences between men and women in growth patterns and adolescent adjustment examines categorical indicators of weight status (such as normal weight, overweight, and obesity) to determine whether the age at which a person enters a given weight status category or the amount of time they remain in that category predicts adjustment issues (MartinStorey & Crosnoe, 2015; Xie et al., 2013; O’Brien et al., 2007).

**Conceptual Framework of Study**

**Social Physique Anxiety**

**Social Adjustment**

**Body Image**

*Figure 1.* Social physique anxiety and body image as precursor of social adjustment.

**Objectives**

Current study focuses on the below mentioned objectives,

1. To explore that social physique anxiety and body image as a predictor of social adjustment among university student.
2. To find out gender differences in social physique anxiety, body image and social adjustment among university students.

**Hypotheses**

The hypotheses of the present study are,

1. Social physique anxiety would be a significant negative predictor of social adjustment.
2. Negative Body image would be a significant negative predictor of social adjustment and vice versa.
3. Girls would have a higher social physique anxiety than boys.
4. Body image would be more negative among girls as compared to boys.
5. Girls would be less socially adjusted to the environment as compared to boys.

**Operational Definitions**

***Social Physique Anxiety***

Social physique anxiety (SPA) is the fear that a person is being scrutinized or judged based on their looks; it is considered a kind of social anxiety (Hart et al., 1989). In the present study, social physique anxiety was measured as an index of scores obtained from The Social Appearance Anxiety Scale (SAAS; Hart et al., 2008). Higher scores indicted higher social physique anxiety and lower the scores lower will be social physique anxiety.

***Body Image***

Body image is a complicated concept that encompasses experiences and opinions regarding individual's physique (Grammas & Schwartz, 2009). In the present study, body image was measured as an index of scores obtained from the Adolescents Body Image Satisfaction Scale (ABISS; Leone et al., 2014). Higher scores indicted more satisfied with body image and lower the scores indicate greater body dissatisfaction.

***Social Adjustment***

Social adjustment is the procedure by which students integrate into the university community, form social connections, and negotiate the new freedoms granted by university life (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994). In the present study, social adjustment was measured as an index of scores obtained from the Social Adjustment to College Questionnaire (SACQ; Baker & Siryk, 1989). Higher scores indicted higher social adjustment and lower scores indicate poorer social adjustment.

**Method**

**Research Design**

In the present study, web-based survey research design was used. All the data was collected online through Google forms from different universities girls and boys across Pakistan.

**Sample**

In the present research convenient sample (*N*=300) of students from different Universities all-over Pakistan, with almost equal representation of boys and girls were drawn. The age of the participants ranges from 19-29 years. The participants were from different universities across Pakistan.

**Table 1**

*Frequency and Percentage of Participants (N = 324)*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Demographic variables | *N* | *(%)* |
| Gender |  |  |
| Boys | 167 | 51.5 |
| Girls | 157 | 48.5 |
| Age |  |  |
| 17-20 | 112 | 34.6 |
| 21-24 | 181 | 55.9 |
| 25-27 | 31 | 9.6 |
| Exam system |  |  |
| Semester | 255 | 78.7 |
| Annual | 69 | 21.3 |
| Residence |  |  |
| Urban | 227 | 70.1 |
| Rural | 97 | 29.9 |
|  |  | Continued |
| Demographics | *N* | *%* |
| Birth order |  |  |
| First born | 93 | 28.7 |
| Middle child | 147 | 45.4 |
| Last born | 84 | 25.9 |
| BMI (Body Mass Index) |  |  |
| Under weight | 41 | 12.7 |
| Normal | 252 | 77.8 |
| Over weight/obese | 31 | 9.6 |
| Family System |  |  |
| Nuclear | 230 | 71.0 |
| Joint | 94 | 29.0 |

Table 1 shows frequency and percentage of all demographics used in the present study.

**Instruments**

Questionnaire were comprised of 4 main parts: first part cover the demographic information of the participants, second part is related to the social physique anxiety scale, thirdly scale used to access body image was used and the last part deals with the social adjustment scale. English versions of the scales were used for data collection.

***Demographic Data Sheet***

A questionnaire was designed in order to obtain participants personal information including name, age, gender, residence, BMI, number of siblings and birth-order.

***Social Physique Anxiety Scale (SPAS)***

Social physique anxiety scale was used to measure anxiety regarding an individual’s physique or physical outlook. SPAS is a 12 item self-report inventory developed by Hart et al. (1989) and it measures anxiousness level when a person is being observed and evaluated by others. Items are measured on a 5 point likert scale ranging from 1 = not at all characteristic of me to 5 = extremely characteristic of me. Total score on the scale ranges from 12-60, greater scores means higher social physique anxiety and lower the scores lower will be social physique anxiety. Items 1, 2, 5, 8 and 11 are reverse coded. SPAS has shown good and high coefficient alpha values (*α* = .90). In non-clinical samples indicating that the measure is reliable to use. Convergent validity of SPAS has been demonstrated by positive relationship of SPAS with social anxiety, weight and body shape satisfaction (Motl & Conroy, 2000).

***Adolescents Body Image Satisfaction Scale (ABISS)***

The scale was introduced by Leone et al. (2014) and it measures body image satisfaction. The scale basically measures body image of adolescent’s males but in existent study ABISS is used to measure the body image satisfaction of university students. It’s a 16 items questionnaire with a response format of 1 = strongly agree to 4 = strongly disagree. Items 1, 4, 6, 7, 9, 14 and 16 were reverse coded. ABISS comprised three subscales namely body competence, body inadequacy and internal conflict. ABISS and subscales yields satisfactory alpha reliability (α = 0.64 – 0.82).

***Social Adjustment to College Questionnaire (SACQ)***

Social adjustment to college questionnaire was developed by Baker and Siryk (1989), it is an 11 item scale adapted from a 19 item social adjustment subscale of the student adjustment to college questionnaire. The other domains like emotional and academic are not the part of a study. SACQ is a self-report inventory with a 5 point likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. SACQ has a satisfactory internal consistency values (α = 0.87). Items 6 and 11 are reverse coded.

**Procedure**

Firstly, topic of the present study was approved by BOS conducted in Department of Psychology, University of Sargodha. Secondly, authors' permission to use the chosen scales was sought. A questionnaire comprising English version scales was prepared via Google forms. Then, students were approached through Whatsapp and Messenger individually. Goggle forms link were shared via Watsapp and Messenger after requesting them to fill the questionnaire. Convenient sampling was used and for this, Participants were facilitated in case of any query. The estimated time of completion of scales was 15-20 minutes. All of them were assured that the information would remain confidential and only used for research purpose. Respondents were thanked for their participation and time after the data has been collected. Leary and Kowalski (1990) present a two-component model of self-presentation. The model proposes that social contexts motivate people to control how others see them and, wherever possible, people seek to present a positive image of themselves to others, a component termed impression motivation (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). In addition, people also have a number of means available to manage the impressions of themselves that they portray to others and can range from overt self-description to non-verbal behaviours, referred to as impression construction. In the context of this model, people considering exercising in contexts where the physical self is salient such as in gymnasia or group exercise classes are likely to expect that their body will be evaluated by others. They are therefore likely to be motivated to portray an impression of their physique that they perceive others will evaluate as positive (impression motivation) and may engage in certain behaviours to do so such as planning the kinds of attire to wear (impression construction). However, individuals with higher levels of social physique anxiety will likely be concerned that the presentation of their physique in such contexts will be perceived as unfavourable or negative in the eyes of others. They are therefore motivated to avoid such a negative self-presentation (impression motivation) and take action to do so such as avoiding such contexts, exercising in private to change their body, or adopting certain impression management strategies such as wearing loose fitting clothing or attending gymnasia during off-peak hours when fewer people are present (impression construction) (Kowalski, Mack, Crocker, Niefer, & Fleming, 2006; Lamarche, Gammage, & Strong, 2009). Leary and Kowalski (1990) present a two-component model of self-presentation. 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**Results**

The obtained results from the current study were then analyzed via the Statistical Product and Services Solution (SPSS) 22 V. Correlational and regression analysis were carried out to study the relationship among the variables likewise *t*-test and analysis of variance explore for mean differences psychometric properties of measures were computed by descriptive analysis. This chapter represents the findings of the study in tabular form.

**Table 2**

*Descriptive Statistics and Alpha Reliabilities for All the Variables of the Study* (*N* = *324)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Scales | Item | *M* | *SD* | *α* | Range |
| SPAS | 12 | 32.98 | 8.22 | .79 | 12-60 |
| ABISS | 16 | 43.27 | 5.70 | .78 | 16-64 |
| SACQ | 11 | 38.26 | 6.85 | .79 | 11-55 |

*Note.* SPAS = Social physique anxiety scale; ABISS = Adolescents body image satisfaction scale; SACQ = Social adjustment to college questionnaire.

Table 2 results demonstrate a considerably high alpha reliability. Coefficient for social physique anxiety scale is (*α* = .79) for body image scale is (*α* = .78), and for social adjustment is (*α* = .79).

**Table 3**

*Correlation Matrix of Study Variables (N =324)*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Variables | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | Social Physique Anxiety | - |  |  |
| 2 | Body Image | -.65\*\* | - |  |
| 3 | Social Adjustment | -.32\*\* | .42\*\* | - |

*Note*. \*\**p<.*01

Table 3 indicates the correlations among social physique anxiety, body image and social adjustment. It suggested that social physique anxiety significantly negatively correlated with body image (*r* = -.65\*\*, *p* < .01) and social adjustment (*r* = -.32\*\*, *p* < .01). Body image has significant positive correlation with social adjustment (*r* = .42\*\*, *p* < .01).

**Table 4**

*Regression Coefficient of Social Physique Anxiety on Social Adjustment (N = 324)*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Variables | *B* | β | *SE* |
| Constant | 46.99\*\*\* |  | 1.50 |
| SPA | -.26\*\*\* | -.32 | .04 |
| R2 | .10 |  |  |

*Note.* SPA = Social physique anxiety.

\*\*\* *p* < .001

Table 4 shows that social physique anxiety significantly and negatively predicted social adjustment. The R2 value of .10 demonstrates that social physique anxiety explained 10% variance in social adjustment with *F* (1, 322) = 36.14, p < .001. Findings depict that social physique anxiety significantly and negatively predicted social adjustment.

**Table 5**

*Regression Coefficient of Body Image on Social Adjustment (N = 324)*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Variables | *B* | β | *SE* |
| Constant | 16.69\*\*\* |  | 2.66 |
| Body Image | .50\*\*\* | .42 | .06 |
| R2 | .17 |  |  |

\*\*\* *p* < .001

Table 5 shows that body image significantly and positively predicted social adjustment. The R2 value of .17 demonstrates that body image explained 17% variance in social adjustment with *F* (1, 322) = 66.81, p < .001. Findings depict that body image significantly and positively predicted social adjustment.

**Table 6**

*Mean Comparison for Males and Females on Social Physique Anxiety, Body Image and Social Adjustment (N = 324)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Variables | Boys  (*n* = 167) | | Girls  (*n* = 157) | | *t*(322) | *p* | *CI 95%* | | *Cohen’s*  *d* |
| *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *LL* | *UL* |
| SPAS | 32.82 | 7.72 | 33.15 | 8.76 | -.36 | .03 | -2.13 | 1.47 | .04 |
| ABISS | 42.89 | 5.48 | 43.67 | 5.91 | -1.25 | .42 | -2.03 | .45 | .14 |
| SACQ | 38.78 | 6.59 | 37.71 | 7.09 | -1.40 | .07 | -.43 | 2.56 | .16 |

*Note.* SPAS = social physique anxiety scale; ABISS = Adolescents body image satisfaction scale; SACQ = social adjustment to college questionnaire.

Table 6 indicates the mean, standard deviation and *t*-values of boys and girls on social physique anxiety, body image and social adjustment. Results indicate non-significant mean differences on social physique anxiety with [*t* (322) = -.36*, p<*.05], body image with [*t* (322) = -1.25 *p<*.05] and social adjustment with [*t* (322) =1.40, *p<*.05]. Findings indicate that mean differences are not significant among the study variables.

**Table 7**

*Mean Comparison of Family System on Social Physique Anxiety, Body Image and Social Adjustment (N = 324)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Variables | Nuclear  (*n* = 230) | | Joint  (*n* = 94) | | *t*(322) | *p* | *CI 95%* | | *Cohen’s*  *d* |
| *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *LL* | *UL* |
| SPAS | 32.96 | 8.57 | 33.01 | 7.35 | -.04 | .08 | -2.02 | 1.94 | .006 |
| ABISS | 43.33 | 5.84 | 43.10 | 5.33 | .33 | .70 | -1.14 | 1.60 | .04 |
| SACQ | 38.05 | 7.03 | 38.76 | 6.37 | -.87 | .32 | -2.35 | .94 | .11 |

*Note.* SPAS = social physique anxiety scale; ABISS = Adolescents body image satisfaction scale; SACQ = social adjustment to college questionnaire.

Table 7 indicates the mean, standard deviation and *t*-values of family system on social physique anxiety, body image and social adjustment. Results indicate non-significant mean differences on social physique anxiety with [*t* (322) = -.04*, p<*.05], body image with [*t* (322) = .33, *p<*.05] and social adjustment with [*t* (322) = -.87, *p<*.05]. Findings indicate that mean differences are not significant among the study variables.

**Table 8**

*Mean Standard Deviation and One Way Analysis of Variance in Social Physique Anxiety, Body image and social adjustment Across BMI Groups (N = 324)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Variables | Underweight | | Normal | | Overweight | | *F* (2, 321) | η2 | Post-Hoc |
| *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* |
| SPA | 33.36 | 8.87 | 32.02 | 7.15 | 40.25 | 11.53 | 15.08\*\*\* | .08 | 3>2>1 |
| BI | 41.21 | 5.12 | 44.25 | 5.16 | 37.96 | 6.93 | 22.48\*\*\* | .12 | 2>1>3 |
| SA | 36.58 | 6.17 | 38.72 | 6.74 | 36.70 | 8.06 | 2.63 | .02 | 2>3>1 |

*Note.* SPA = social physique anxiety; BI = body image; SA = social adjustment.

Table shows mean, standard deviation and F-values for social physique anxiety, body image and social adjustment across BMI. Result indicated significant mean differences across BMI on social physique anxiety and body image. No significant BMI differences were found among social adjustment of university students. Over-weight individuals have higher levels of social physique anxiety than normal or under-weight individuals. Level of body image was higher among normal weight individuals as compared to under-weight and over-weight individuals.

**Outcome Model of the Study**

***β* = -.32\*\*\***

**Body Image**

**Social Physique Anxiety**

**Social Adjustment**

***β* = .42\*\*\***

Figure 2. Outcome model depicting that social physique anxiety and body image significantly predicted social adjustment.

**Summary of Findings**

The present study focused on investigating that social physique anxiety and body image are precursors of social adjustment among university students. Correlational investigation demonstrated that social physique anxiety was significantly negatively related with body image and social adjustment, while body image significantly positively associated with social adjustment. The results of the regression analysis show that social physique anxiety significantly negatively predicted social adjustment. Moreover, body image significantly positively predicted social adjustment. Moreover, study also indicates that there were no significant variations in social physique anxiety, body image and social adjustment between girls and boys. Similarly no mean differences were found in other demographics as residence, family system etc. The present study found the effect of BMI among variables of the study. Over-weight individual have a higher level of social physique anxiety than under-weight and normal weight individuals. Furthermore, normal individuals score higher on body image as compared to over-weight and under-weight individuals.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sr #** | **Hypotheses** | **Supported** | **Unsupported** |
| 1. | Social physique anxiety would be a significant negative predictor of social adjustment. | supported |  |
| 2 | Negative Body image would be a significant negative predictor of social adjustment and vice versa. |  | Not supported |
| 3 | Girls would have a higher social physique anxiety than boys. |  | Not supported |
| 4 | Body image would be more negative among girls as compared to boys. |  | Not supported |
| 5 | Girls would be less socially adjusted to the environment as compared to boys. |  | Not supported |

Tabular description of summary of findings

**Discussion**

The present study investigates that social physique anxiety and body image are the precursors of social adjustment among university students. The primary purpose of study was to find out that social physique anxiety and body image are predictors of social adjustment among university students. Furthermore, the second aim of the study was to examine gender differences among the existent study variables. The data was collected online from university students (*N* = 324) across all over Pakistan with the representation of boys (*n* = 167) and girls (*n* = 157). Social Physique Anxiety Scale (SPAS; Hart et al., 1989) exhibiting 12 items was administered to measure social physique anxiety, body image was accessed through a self-report inventory named Adolescents Body Image Satisfaction Scale (ABISS; Leone et al., 2014) comprise 16 items and Social Adjustment to college Questionnaire (SACQ; Baker & Siryk, 1989) containing 11 items was used to measure social adjustment among university students. First, reliability analysis was carried out to find out if the scales are reliable. All the scales yielded satisfactory alpha reliabilities. Cronbach alpha values for social physique anxiety scale comes out to be (*α* = .79), for body image it was (*α* = .78) and for social adjustment the reliability value was (*α* = .79) which proves to be satisfactory and good alpha reliabilities (See Table 2). Afterwards correlational analysis was carried out to find out the relationships among the study variables. All the variables of the study were significantly correlated. Social physique anxiety significantly and negatively linked with body image (*r* = -.65\*\*) and with social adjustment (*r* = -.32\*\*) respectively (see Table 3). The present study findings are parallel to the study of Atalay and Gencoz (2008) who examines the exercising role on social physique anxiety and body image among females and concluded that body image is negatively significantly correlated with social physique anxiety as, higher the social physique anxiety a person may experience the more dissatisfied he will be with his body image. Likewise, social physique anxiety was negatively associated with adjustment problems (Calmeiro & Matos, 2018). Moreover, body image is significantly positively linked with social adjustment as the scale used in the present study is of body image satisfaction so, for that students who are satisfied with their body image may have a greater tendency to be adjusted well in social settings. Now moving ahead, explore some information regarding hypothesis testing. Our first hypothesis was that social physique anxiety is a significant negative predictor of social adjustment. So, in the present study findings of regression analysis revealed the same findings as hypothesized i.e social physique anxiety is a significant negative predictor of social adjustment. So, the first hypothesis of the study was accepted by the findings of the current study. Researches related to social physique anxiety and social adjustment is very scarce. So, Calmeiro and Matos (2018) found that social physique anxiety is negatively linked to physical activity and poor support system and adjustment problems. In the same way while studying social physique anxiety in relationship with self-esteem, adjustment problems, Russell (2002) studied these effects of SPA in a racial background among Caucasian males and African- American males. Results of this study are consistent with the present study findings indicating that SPA significantly and negatively predicted Self-esteem and adjustment problems while in African- American males no significant results were generated regarding SPA. (see Table 4). Second hypothesis of the present study was not supported by the findings of the current study which states that negative body image would be a significant predictor of social adjustment. The results of the present study comes out to be contrary as hypothesized, as the findings demonstrates that positive body image is a significant positive predictor of social adjustment (see Table 5). These results are might be due to the fact that the scale used in the present study was body image satisfaction scale and as the students are satisfied with their body image they are then well adjusted in their social situations. Adjustment problems social, emotional, educational prevail in every student life and due to the social pressure the students often have increased social physique anxiety. The results are in line with the study of Williams et al. (2004), explored correlates and predictors of body image and concluded that positive body image may provoke the women’s to cope up more adaptively with the social threats of body image as they are not focused on to have lean body structure as like that displayed in mass media and they are also less affianced in appearance fixing and avoidance. Concluding that people with positive body image are well adjusted in their social and environmental settings as they, are not conscious of being negatively evaluated by others. Furthermore, Third hypothesis was that girls are higher on social physique anxiety than boys. The findings demonstrate non-significant differences among gender on social physique anxiety due to which our hypothesis of the present study was refuted. As social physique anxiety is referred to the evaluation of self as perceived by others. The findings of the present study are opposite to previous existing literature. These opposite findings are because that Pakistan is an indigenous culture and gender is treated as a whole regardless of the being male or female. With a passage of time men and women are becoming parallel in every aspect of life. The study results are consistent with the research conducted on runners examining their social physique anxiety and exercise dependence (Smith et al., 2010). The findings of study also found non-significant mean differences in social physique anxiety scores among men and women (see Table 6). Moreover, fourth hypothesis was that body image would be more negative among girls as compared to boys. This hypothesis was also not supported by the present study results because findings show non-significant gender differences on body image (see Table 6). The study findings are parallel to study by Fallon et al. (2014) has not showed any significant gender related difference among male and females regarding body image dissatisfaction. Similarly, no significant gender differences were found in body image by the study of Wong and Say (2013), it suggest that gender does not aids to cushion against negative body image. Likewise, gender differences in body image became parallel so, there might be no gender differences among male and female (Benuto et al., 2007). Likewise, to study gender differences on social adjustment it was hypothesized that girls would be less socially adjusted as compared to boys. The present study results does not confirm this hypothesis, and these results are in line with the study conducted in Jammu city college students by Chowhan and Sakshi (2019), different domains of adjustment were studied including home, social emotional and educational and the study findings demonstrates that gender differences were not significant among boys and girls college students. Similarly, non-significant gender differences were found in social adjustment among college going students (Singh at al., 2017). Another study by Sharma and Saini (2013) also provides evidence to prove present study results. The findings of the study shows that adjustment related to health and social life gained more importance and the girls are more likely to be socially adjusted and less likely to be emotionally adjusted and boys on contrary are socially well adjusted and they are not well adjusted with their emotional and health adjustments, but these results are not statistically significant (see Table 6). Additionally, the study finds that over-weight individuals have higher social physique anxiety than normal or under-weight individuals. It is because individuals with higher SPA are more apprehensive of being negatively evaluated and they avoid social situations more Koca and As¸çı (2006). People having higher SPA are mostly involved in disordered eating behaviors (Diehl et al., 1998; Ricciardelli & McCabe, 2004) and so it does have a negative impact on their weight. Likewise, mostly normal weight individuals are mostly unsatisfied with their body image. As Ter oght et al. (2006) concluded in their study that there is a greater urge in women to be thin as idealized by media and advertisements and this concern can make it difficult for young girls and women to consider themselves as obese even when they are normal. This may create a difficult situation for the girls to have serious health ailments.

**Conclusions**

The present study focused on investigating that social physique anxiety and body image are precursors of social adjustment among university students. Correlation and regression analysis were carried out to find results of the study, findings show that social physique anxiety significantly negatively predicted social adjustment. Moreover, body image significantly positively predicted social adjustment. Furthermore, study also indicates that there were no significant variations in social physique anxiety, body image and social adjustment between girls and boys. Similarly no mean differences were found in other demographics as residence, family system etc. The present study also found the effect of BMI among variables of the study. Over-weight individual have a higher level of social physique anxiety than under-weight and normal weight individuals. Additionally, normal individuals score higher on body image as compared to over-weight and under-weight individuals. All the other demographics have non-significant differences among the study variables.

**Limitations**

Regardless of the fact that the study was carried out with reliable and valid instruments, the study still has certain limitations. These limitations are discussed below:

1. The sample technique of the study was convenient sampling and web based and the data was collected from different universities of Pakistan consisting of only emerging adults from different universities.
2. The sample was not much diverse and quite a small sample size was used in the study so, the generalizability was applied cautiously as the sample was not representative of the whole population.
3. The present study research design was cross-sectional web based research design.
4. Another limitation of the study that many of the factors as social desirability and cultural context were not controlled and this may make changes in the results as desired.
5. Self-report measures were used which also proves to be a drawback in the current research because the responses of students can cause social desirability.

**Suggestions**

In order to overcome the limitations of the study following suggestions are identified:

1. Future researchers should keep in consideration that for the findings to be generalizable across the whole population large sample should be used.
2. Random sampling technique should be used in future studies and also include late adults and adolescents.
3. Experimental or longitudinal research design should also be used by future researchers to also know about the cause and effect relationship and to also study the impact of different variables and to also control for the effects of extraneous variables.
4. Gender ratio of the subjects should also be controlled in future researches. Gender ratio should be made equal in future.

**Practical Implications**

The existent study was designed to find out the relationship among the study variables including social physique anxiety, body image and social adjustment among university students. The results of the present study contribute to the theoretical knowledge in the area of research. This knowledge may help the researchers and may prove helpful to conduct study like this in future. The results of the study was useful for counselors and psychologist and practitioners as they may guide their clients in order to adjust themselves according to their environments and meet the social standards with their own free will regardless of the apprehension that they are being negatively evaluated by other or their social peers. This will motivate the students to encourage themselves and they become socially well adapted and reduce the risk of having depression anxiety and other related disorders. This study also proves helpful for educational purposes and adds to existing literature.

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