

A Study on People's Perspective on Body Positivity

Suriyashasti Tv¹, Dr. S Thirumal²

Abstract: This study advocates the importance of body positivity, self-appreciation, and self-confidence. Many people worry and feel insecure about their appearances. The questionnaire was circulated among respondents and its distinguished results were obtained as some are comfortable in their own skin while some others don't. This research study also states the importance of self-confidence and also about Constructive Criticism. Many people feel that their appearance can get in the way of accepting themselves and in enjoying their lives. Finally, it is said that inner beauty is true beauty. Being compassionate and kind towards fellow human beings is the ultimate beauty.

Keywords: Body confidence, Societal pressure, Acceptance, Healthy, Self-worth.

INTRODUCTION

According to Dr. Albers "Body positivity is a social movement that advocates for the acceptance of all bodies, regardless of size, shape, skin tone, gender or physical abilities" This movement challenges the unrealistic beauty standards and ideas imposed by the society. The core idea is that beauty standards constructed by society should not determine someone's self-worth or value. Body positivity focuses on the appreciation of the functionality of a healthy human body, instead of its physiological appearance. Body positivity talks about accepting yourself the way you are. Embracing your imperfections and creating a welfare society where no one feels insecure about their looks. The judgments about a person's physical appearance inherently rate and value the desirability of a person, it effectively increases or reduces a person's power in society. The movement mainly aims to build a positive body image and improve the self-confidence of people.

We live in a society that puts a lot of emphasis on the way we look, and our identity is often, at least on some

level, tied up with how we look. The media's preferred images of women are airbrushed, pubescent stick insects that do not reflect the rich and beautiful diversity of women that exist in the world. The result of this wide gulf between glossy magazine portrayals and everyday reality is that many women are left feeling dissatisfied and longing to look different. We are inherently social creatures- we want to fit in, to be accepted, to have others appreciate and value us- and we unconsciously or consciously compare ourselves and others to these unrealistic images of what's "attractive". Some believe they're not attractive enough or good enough to make the most of the opportunities that come their way. As we are growing up, we deal with the hurts life throws at us in different ways. What's considered beautiful varies across time and culture but what's not changed is the true beauty that radiates from within: the lighthearted joy and energy of youthful beauty, the depth and breadth of mature beauty, and the many different types in between.

Is an oak more beautiful than an apple tree? Perhaps for some, but for most they are both beautiful in their way, and an oak pretending to be an apple tree just doesn't make sense- much better to discover which type of tree you are and allow yourself to grow and blossom.

The perception of an individual about their body can widely influence their mental health and as well their overall well-being, especially among teenagers. Poor body image or body dissatisfaction can lead to physical and mental health problems including depression, body image disturbance, body dysmorphic disorder, etc.

Many of us find it difficult to truly accept ourselves and we are very quick to criticize ourselves, we reject the compliments that we may get for our looks. Some people get motivated and work to prove that they can

¹ B.Com.LL.B (Hons) School of Excellence in Law, The Tamil Nadu Dr. Ambedkar Law University, Chennai -113 suriyashasti.1074@gmail.com

² Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, School of Excellence in Law, The Tamil Nadu Dr. Ambedkar Law University, Chennai - 113. drthirumal20@gmail.com

do it despite their criticisms and others will just accept the condemnation and limit themselves because of it. It takes a lot of courage, determination, and wisdom to be able to take on board what comes up and to deal with who the real we are accordingly. The reason why this takes a lot of courage, determination, and wisdom is that we overcome our negative emotional change. To be able to face and accept oneself is truly courageous.

Confidence is one of those things which only a fortunate few have. True confidence is an enviable quality; for anyone who has ever felt insecure, fearful, or uncomfortable about their body. When a person is comfortable in their skin, they can replace fear, anxiety, and feelings of low self-esteem with strength, clarity, confidence, and a sense of curiosity and excitement about life in general.

Some people reject themselves just because they don't fit in the so-called "PERFECT" but people should have an Optimistic view and accept themselves. First of all, it is important to understand that "No person is 100% perfect" and everyone is beautifully flawed as quoted "beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder". When someone doesn't like their appearance and is inferior about their looks, they never know how their antagonistic, defensive behavior hurts their chances of success. Normal people desire: Self-enhancement is the desire to be seen positively by yourself and by others, and self-verification is the desire to be perceived accurately by others.

Being upset with one's looks would only lead to setbacks and challenges. It could simply make a person feel disappointed, or despondent. But if the same person takes the optimist view and loves their real self then such a person can attempt new things and it can give them the confidence, they had dominated. They can become a more enjoyable person to be around and feel better about themselves. They can fulfill their potential and discover their purpose in life. They'll also be able to make a positive difference in the lives of others.

Firstly, one must be grateful for what they have right now. In our daily life, we come across numerous people who are physically or mentally challenged due to various reasons. To have a healthy body and a rational mind is itself a blessing. Rather complaining or feeling insecure about the body is not fine. This feeling of being grateful will make a person feel food and make them see how beautiful their life is.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- Cash TF (2004) conducted a study on Body image: past, present, and future. He explained the goals and justification in regard to the background and prospects of the study of human appearance and body image. Clinical psychology and psychiatry are the two main fields that has been focused primarily in this research, with specific emphasis on studies and interventions related to food eating disorders in young women. The study used the measures with college students, and it reported normative results and satisfactory internal reliabilities throughout seven completed studies. Sex differences were looked at and discovered for the majority of the measures, as predicted. Body image evaluation was the topic of discussion. Common conceptual, methodological, and psychometric errors were noted, and helpful advice on how to avoid them was provided.
- Grogan S (2016) researched on Body Image: understanding body dissatisfaction in men, women, and children. He discussed on the profound shifts in cultural perceptions of men's and women's bodies. A keen analysis on how men and women construct and comprehend their bodies in the twenty-first century was produced by including data from focus groups and interviews with men, women, and children where they talked their experiences with body image and body dissatisfaction. This study looked at appearance shame and appearance investment, two dimensions of body image, and possibly dangerous behaviors. In addition, he combined the research from the disciplines of general studies, psychology, sociology, and fashion.
- Neumark-Sztainer D. et.al (2006) researched on Does body satisfaction matter? Longitudinal associations for five-year between health behaviors and body satisfaction in adolescent males and females. Project EAT-II tracked 2516 teenagers representing a sample that were diverse in race and socioeconomic status. It was discovered that, generally speaking, lesser body satisfaction predicts the usage of behaviors which could put teenagers at risk for obesity and worse overall health rather than acting as a stimulus for engaging in beneficial weight management behaviors.

- Tiggemann M (2004) conducted a study on Body image across the adult life span: stability and change. Reviewing empirical studies on the body image of adults older than the average college student was the aim of this study. Over the course of an adult's life, there are noticeable changes in look, particularly for women, which raises the expectation of corresponding changes in body image. According to the review, women's body dissatisfaction remained fairly steady throughout their adult lives—that is, until they were quite old. However, as women aged, the significance of their weight, looks, and body shape reduced, highlighting a crucial difference between the relevance of the body and its evaluation.
- Oberg P. et.al (1999) conducted a study on Body images among men and women of different ages. The present paper reports an empirical study that focuses on body image for men and women of different ages. The exterior territories, or surfaces, of the body have become symbols of the self in late modernity. Four hypotheses, derived from social gerontological theories, are developed and tested against data: the female beauty hypothesis, the double marginality hypothesis, the aging mask hypothesis, and the ageless self-hypothesis. The survey, undertaken by 2,002 Swedes, reveals a response pattern with basically positive body images that, for women, is increasingly positive with age. The results are, thus, in sharp contrast to the gerontophobic messages from consumer culture as well as contrary to some gerontological theories.

RESEARCH GAP

Body positivity is one of the most spoken topics of recent years. This topic was selected for the reason that everyone should accept their body reality and not worry about the real self they are. This research study is conducted through google forms and was circulated among people of different age groups. People from Chennai and Coimbatore were the respondents. From a school student to a Ph. D scholar and from a housewife to a working woman the respondents were diversified. This study, it is also investigated how age as a major factor affects body dissatisfaction, the importance of appearance, and body appreciation. The true perception of everyone about their body image was analyzed through the questionnaire and it made

them respond to questions that they would have never asked themselves. The respondents were made to know that confidence is the real substance to achieve goals in life rather than complaining about how others look at them.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The Problem is the mythically perceived ideal body for men and women, which remains a bizarre societal standard to fit in. The problem that is discussed in this research is how people are not confident in their skin for who they are. People lack self-confidence because of this reason and are not able to explore the opportunities that are in their way. The reasons for this problem to be addressed at the earliest is that school and college students who are the future of the country are the most affected group because of these standards. Despite being talented and skillful they lack the confidence to go ahead and take up the opportunities only because they doubt themselves and are insecure about their looks. They fear on being looked down upon by others. It is essential to bring it to everybody's vision to be comfortable with their body and to be grateful to have a healthy body.

OBJECTIVES

1. To know and analyze people's perspective on body positivity.
2. To know whether people are comfortable in their own skin and have optimistic outlook on their body.

METHODOLOGY

The data that is used in this research includes both primary and secondary data. Predominantly it includes primary data which was collected by circulating questionnaires through google forms. During the course of this research, the researcher got to interact with many people who helped in devising the method that was used in this research. By the telephonic method, researcher collected the responses of some older persons who were unable to record their responses through google forms. For secondary data, researcher referred to the works of previous researchers which was helpful in understanding that Body Positivity is a serious problem that has to be brought to the notice of the mainstream society who are the ones that have a great influence over the issue.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Socio-Economic Variables

Table-1: Gender			
S. No	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Male	29	58%
2.	Female	20	40%
3.	Other	1	2%
	Total	50	100%
Table-2: Age			
S. No	Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage
1.	Below 18	2	4%
2.	18-25	30	60%
3.	26-45	15	30%
4.	Above 45	3	6%
	Total	50	100%
Table-3: Educational Qualification			
S. No	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	School	6	12%
2.	UG	23	46%
3.	PG	10	20%
4.	Ph.D. or Specialisation	10	20%
5.	Others	1	2%
	Total	50	100%
Table-4: Occupation			
S. No	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Private	15	30%
2.	Public	8	16%
3.	Business	13	26%
4.	Unemployed	10	20%
5.	Other	4	8%
	Total	50	100%
Table-5: Salary			
S. No	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Below 2,00,000	24	48%
2.	2,00,000- 4,00,000	9	18%
3.	4,00,000- 7,50,000	9	18%
4.	Above 7,50,000	8	16%
	Total	50	100%
Table-6: Marital Status			
S. No	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Married	33	66%
2.	Unmarried	17	34%
	Total	50	100%

Source: Primary data

Out of 50 total respondents there are 29 male respondents (58%), 20 female respondents (40%) and one other gender respondent. Majorly, 30 respondents (60%) were from the age group of 18-25, 2 respondents (4%) were below 18, 15 respondents (30%) were from the age group of 26-45 and 3

respondents (6%) were above 45 years. Out of 50 respondents mostly, the respondents had UG educational qualifications amounting to 46% that is 23 respondents. 10 respondents (20%) had PG qualifications and another 10 respondents had Ph.D. or Specialization qualifications. 6 respondents (12%) had

only school qualification and 1 respondent opted others option. From the total respondents, 15 respondents (30%) were in Private occupation, 8 respondents (16%) were in public occupation, 13 respondents (26%) were engaged in business and 10 respondents (20%) were unemployed and 4 respondents (8%) chose other option. 24 respondents (48%) opted that they earn below 2,00,000. 9

respondents (18%) opted that they earn between 2,00,000 – 4,00,000. Another 9 respondents also opted that they earn between 4,00,000 – 7,50,000. The remaining 8 respondents (16%) opted that they earn above 7,50,000. Out of the total respondents, 33 respondents (66%) were married and 17 respondents (34%) were unmarried.

Public Responses

Table-7		
Rating from 1-10, 1 being the least and 10 being the most. State how comfortable do you feel in your own skin.		
Scale	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1-4	1	2%
5-7	15	30%
8-10	34	68%
Total	50	100%

Table-8		
State if you have ever been body shamed or bullied by your friends or relatives or by anybody else.		
Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	23	46%
May be	11	22%
No	16	32%
Total	50	100%

Table-9		
When you look in the mirror, you have a positive or negative outlook on your body.		
Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Positive	25	50%
Neutral	7	14%
Negative	18	36%
Total	50	100%

Table-10		
Do you take into account the way other people look at you.		
Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes, a lot	6	12%
A little	28	56%
Not really	10	20%
Not at all	6	12%
Total	50	100%

Table-11		
If you could modify your body, would you like to modify. (i.e lose weight, gain muscle, change the size/ shape of specific body parts)		
Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	24	48%
May be	15	30%
No	11	12%
Total	50	100%

Table-12		
----------	--	--

Is your appearance really important in evaluating your self-worth.		
Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	15	30%
May be	11	22%
No	24	48%
Total	50	100%
Table-13		
State if you have ever avoided activities, people, or situations because you are self-conscious about your body.		
Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	13	26%
May be	12	24%
No	25	50%
Total	50	100%
Table-14		
State if you have ever spent a lot of money, time, or effort attempting to "fix" your appearance, flaws, or trying to look "perfect"		
Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	12	24%
May be	11	22%
No	27	54%
Total	50	100%
Table-15		
Mention if you find yourself seeking reassurance from others about your appearance or dismissing compliments you receive about your appearance.		
Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	11	22%
May be	14	28%
No	25	50%
Total	50	100%
Table-16		
Mention if Media (television, movies, magazines, music videos) ever negatively influenced how you feel about yourself.		
Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	14	28%
May be	12	24%
No	24	48%
Total	50	100%
Table-17		
State if you ever felt pressured to fit into a culturally "ideal" look (thin and delicate for females, strong and muscular for males)		
Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	14	28%
May be	9	18%
No	27	54%
Total	50	100%
Table-18		

Mention if your self-esteem influences your mood (For example, your mood may be worse on days you do not feel attractive or good about your looks.		
Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	19	38%
May be	15	30%
No	16	32%
Total	50	100%

Table-19

State if you ever felt like you needed to take a break from social media to reflect on your body image without any influence.		
Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	13	26%
May be	7	14%
No	30	60%
Total	50	100%

Table-20

If media as a whole has a strong influence over you, Mention them.		
Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Newspapers/ Magazines	3	6%
Social media (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook)	29	58%
Books	5	10%
Television/ Film	7	14%
YouTube	6	12%
Total	50	100%

Table-21

Do you believe "appearances are deceptive"		
Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	27	54%
May be	7	14%
No	16	32%
Total	50	100%

Table-22

State if ever your feelings about your appearance get in the way of accepting yourself or enjoying your life.		
Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	19	38%
May be	13	26%
No	18	36%
Total	50	100%

Source: Primary data

Nearly, 30 percent of the total respondents have responded that they are 9/10 times comfortable in their own skin. This is a positive note as more than 50 percent of respondents are comfortable in their own skin and have given an 8-10 out of 10. Totally, 23 (46%) respondents have said that they have been body shamed in their lives. 11 (22%) respondents have said

maybe they might have been body shamed. And 16 (32%) respondents said that they have never been body shamed by anyone. 25 respondents (50%) have said that they have a positive outlook when they look at themselves in the mirror, which is a positive note. 18 respondents (36%) have opted for neutral and 7 respondents (14%) have said that they have a

negative outlook. So, more than 50% that is 28 respondents have said that little they take into account how other people look at them, 6 respondents (12%) care a lot, 10 respondents (20%) don't care really and 6 respondents (12%) don't care at all.

Shockingly, a little less than 50% of 24 respondents of the total respondents desire to modify their bodies. 15 respondents (30%) opted maybe this option and 11 respondents (22%) don't want to modify their bodies. 15 respondents (30%) have said that their appearance is really important in how they evaluate their self-worth. 11 respondents (22%) opted for maybe and 24 respondents (48%) have said that it doesn't at all matter. 13 respondents (26%) have opted yes, 12 respondents (24%) have opted maybe and 50 percent of respondents that is 25 of them clearly said NO. 12 respondents (24%) have spent a lot of time and money on fixing their appearance flaws, 11 respondents (22%) opted for maybe and more than 50% of 27 respondents have said that they have not spent so much money on such things. 11 respondents (22%) have said that they seek reassurance and decline compliments, 14 respondents (28) have said that maybe they will, and 25 respondents (50%) have said no they don't seek assurance or dismiss compliments they receive for their looks.

14 respondents (28%) have been negatively influenced by media, 12 respondents (24%) may have been influenced and 24 respondents stated that they have never been influenced negatively by media. 27 respondents (54%) have said that they've been under any such pressure, 9 respondents said that maybe and 14 respondents have said that they have felt pressurized to fit in societal standards. 19 respondents (38%) have opted that their self-esteem does influence their mood. 15 (30%) respondents have opted that it may be and 16 respondents (32%) said it doesn't 30 respondents (60%) haven't felt a need for taking any breaks. 7 respondents (14%) have opted for maybe and 13 respondents (26%) have felt the need for a break. Social media has the strongest influence on the respondents up to 58% which amounts to 29 respondents, 5 respondents were influenced by books, 7 respondents were influenced by television/ film, 6 respondents were influenced by YouTube and 3 respondents have been influenced by newspapers/ magazines. It's a positive sign as 27 respondents (54%) feel appearances are deceptive. 7 respondents (14%) opted for maybe and 16 respondents (32%) said

No. 19(38%) respondents have said yes, 13(26%) respondents have maybe been and 18(36%) respondents have said that their feelings about their appearance don't get in the way of accepting themselves or enjoying their life.

FINDINGS

- From the results, it is found that many people have a positive outlook on their appearances but still lack confidence a little.
- Most people also don't spend too much money trying to fit into the standards. But most people think their self-esteem is valued by their appearance or looks.
- Media definitely has a strong influence on the minds of people and not most of them have been negatively influenced and wanted to take a break from social media. Also, not most people seek reassurance from others for their looks and they don't mostly reject compliments given for their looks. Most of the respondents have also felt that Appearances are Deceptive and don't go by looks.

LIMITATIONS

The main limitation of this research would be subjectivity. This research relied on response data from only 50 respondents. This study was conducted only within Tamil Nadu hence its conclusions may not be universally accepted. In addition to this, the study was performed with limited time and financial resources.

CONCLUSION

Everything on this planet earth is beautiful it just takes the right eyes to see them. It's all about the perspective of how you look at things. There are more serious obstacles in life that everyone got to face to achieve milestones in life, but if we keep sitting in a corner whining about our looks then nothing is going to stop for us, and the world will move on as usual. This beautiful body is a blessing. Love yourself and be grateful for this body and take care of this body. Be confident in your appearance and there is absolutely nothing that you got to feel insecure about. Have an optimistic approach towards life and enjoy every single day of your life. People

forget what you wear, and what you looked like but won't ever forget how you made them feel. Be compassionate with others and make others happy. Spread love and be happy.

WEBLIOGRAPHY:

- www.wikipedia.com
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/>
- www.surveymonkey.com

REFERENCE

JOURNALS:

- [1] Cash TF Research on the topic of Body image: past, present, and future Volume 1, Issue 1, January 2004, Pages 1-5
- [2] Neumark-Sztainer D. et.al Research on Does body satisfaction matter? Five-year longitudinal associations between body satisfaction and health behaviors in adolescent females and males Volume 39, Issue 2, September 2006, Pages 244-251
- [3] Tiggemann M. Research on Body image across the adult life span: stability and change: Volume 1, Issue 1, January 2004, Pages 29-41
- [4] Oberg P. et.al Research on Body images among men and women of different ages Volume 19, Issue 5, October 1999, Pages 629-644
- [5] Rohde P. et. Al Research on Development and predictive effects of eating disorder risk factors during adolescence: implications for prevention efforts. Volume 48(2), March 2015, Pages 187-198
- [6] Dunkley DM. et.al Research on Childhood maltreatment, depressive symptoms, and body dissatisfaction in patients with binge eating disorder: The mediating role of self-criticism Volume 43(3), April 2010, Pages 274-281
- [7] Garner DM. The 1997 body image survey results. Volume 30(1), January 1997, Pages 30-44
- [8] Avalos L, Et al Research on the body appreciation scale: development and psychometric evaluation. 7th edition Cited by 1121, June 2005, Pages 285-297.

BOOKS:

- Harsh Kumar's Personality Development, Goodwill House Publishers 2019
- Tal Ben Shahar's The Pursuit of Perfect, McGraw Hill Publishers 2009
- Seven Suphi's More than men and Make-up, Wiley India Edition 2007