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A comparative study on objectified body image and self- efficacy among young adult and middle aged women from urban area

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Abstract
The present study is a comparative study on objectified body image and self-efficacy between young adult and middle aged woman. The age range of young adult women were 20-27 years and the age range of middle aged woman were 34-48 years. The participants of the study were (n=200) 100 young adult women and 100 middle aged women, selected from the urban area by using purposive sampling method. The Body Consciousness Scale, and Generalized Self efficacy Scale were administered on the sample for collecting data. The results were obtained by using descriptive statistics and regression analysis.

Keywords: Women, objectified body image, self-efficacy, young adult women, middle aged women

Introduction
Based on the objectification hypothesis, it may be argued that contemporary society has a negative perception of the female physique. The present hypothesis posits that the process of external sexual objectification has the potential to detrimentally impact the mental well-being of women, therefore increasing the probability of their engagement in self-objectification. According to Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) [7]. In contemporary society, the representation of women as sexual objects is pervasive across several platforms. The phenomenon of objectifying women's bodies is widespread, including many forms of media such as television advertisements and social media platforms. Based on the theoretical framework, it may be argued that Western civilization has had a significant impact on women, leading them to internalize certain social norms about physical attractiveness and beauty. Furthermore, a study conducted by Schaefer *et al*. (2018) [16] revealed that body shame had a role as a mediator in the relationship between eating pathology and body surveillance. Young women, specifically, face societal expectations to conform to a certain body image, since it has been widely accepted as the epitome of attractiveness. Due to this specific factor, there has been an increase in the incidence of eating disorders among females. Consistent findings have emerged from worldwide research examining gender inequalities in body image. In many studies conducted in Canada (Morry & Staska, 2001) [12] and the United States (Noll & Fredrickson, 1998) [9], it was shown that women exhibited higher levels of concern over their physical appearance as compared to males. The issue of body image has gained increased prominence among women across all age groups. Forbes *et al*. (2005) [8] established a correlation between middle-aged women who internalize the slender ideal and a heightened level of body dissatisfaction. The existing body of research presents divergent findings about the significance of physical appearance for women in the middle-aged and older demographic. Several studies have examined the relationship between women's attractiveness and aging. Tiggemann (2004) [22] suggests that women's attractiveness decreases as they get older. However, McLean, Paxton, and Wertheim (2010) [13] argue that women's investment in their physical appearance remains consistent regardless of their age. The cultural dimension of aging has significant relevance in shaping the body image of adult women. The presence of a Thin-ideal norm in Western society has been noted, whereby the notions of "thin" and "ideal" have been associated with youthfulness and attractiveness. The presence of Western influence is also evident in our culture.

Unrealistic beauty standards have emerged as a result of the pervasive influence of social media and the process of Westernization. The aesthetic perception of physiological changes related to the aging process is often characterized by a lack of appreciation for their beauty or elegance. Due to this rationale, some ladies have conveyed their apprehension about the process of aging. The phrase "Fat Talk," which was introduced by Nichter and Vuckovic, encompasses conversations that overtly or subtly endorse the societal ideal of thinness. Research has shown a correlation between the phenomenon known as "fat talk" and the experience of body dissatisfaction (Sharpe, Naumann, Treasure & Schmidt, 2013) [17]. Feminist theorists argue that the feminine body is socially produced as an object that is meant to be seen (Spitzack, 1990) [18]. As a result of this societal construct, women acquire the tendency to see their bodies from an external perspective. Individuals who identify as women and girls, who internalize the notion that physical attractiveness should be prioritized above other qualities, and who consistently engage in self-monitoring behaviors to assess their bodies in relation to societal standards, are described as experiencing objectified body awareness. One facet of appearance-control beliefs (ACB) pertains to women's perceptions of their capacity to regulate their physical appearance, body proportions, and weight. The current research aimed to assess the correlation between body dissatisfaction and self-efficacy in a sample of young adult and middle-aged women.

The concept of body image has a significant influence on individuals' self-evaluation. In the context of this research, self-assessment is operationally defined as an individual's subjective judgment of their own self, including both general self-efficacy and self-esteem. Body image has an impact on self-efficacy, which is a particular kind of self-assessment. The concept of self-efficacy was first introduced by Bandura (1977) [1] and is characterized as an individual's conviction in their capacity to effectively plan and carry out the necessary actions to handle future problems. Self-efficacy pertains to an individual's capacity to achieve certain sorts of performance (D'Amico & Cardaci, 2003) [5]. Another study posited that individuals assess their self-efficacy via four primary sources, namely enactive experiences, vicarious knowledge, verbal persuasion, and physiological responses. Self-efficacy is a resilient and adaptable concept that serves to elucidate both intricate and distinct actions (Lent, Brown, & Larkin, 1984) [10]. Self-efficacy, a psychological construct, is the belief in one's ability to successfully execute certain tasks or achieve desired outcomes. Some other study posited that self-efficacy pertains to task-specific evaluations of an individual's perceived capability to successfully execute a certain activity. However, the term has also been used to include broader evaluations, as noted by Madux, Norton, and Stoltenberg (1986) [14] and Schunk (1989) [19]. These comprehensive evaluations may incorporate a student's overall aptitude for learning. The significance of high self-efficacy lies in the many benefits that individuals with elevated levels of self-efficacy tend to possess in comparison to those with lower levels of self-efficacy. According to some other studies those with high levels of self-efficacy tend to exhibit better health, higher levels of achievement, and more effectiveness compared to individuals with low self-efficacy. Individuals with high self-efficacy are inclined to allocate more effort towards achieving a certain objective (Lent, Brown, & Larkin, 1984) [10]. Furthermore, self-efficacy is a versatile construct that aids in comprehending both intricate and distinct actions. Another study posited that self-efficacy is associated with task-specific evaluations of an individual's capability to execute a particular activity. However, throughout time, the term has also been used to include broader evaluations (Madux, Norton, & Stoltenberg, 1986; Schunk, 1989) [14, 19]. These comprehensive evaluations may incorporate a student's overall aptitude for learning. The significance of high self-efficacy lies in the many benefits that individuals with elevated levels of self-efficacy tend to possess in comparison to those with lower levels of self-efficacy. According some other study, those with high levels of self-efficacy tend to exhibit better health, more achievement, and higher levels of effectiveness compared to individuals with low self-efficacy those with high self-efficacy have a tendency to allocate more effort towards achieving a certain objective and demonstrate increased perseverance when confronted with challenges and unpleasant encounters, in comparison to those with low self-efficacy (Lent *et al*., 1984; Bandura, 1977) [1, 10]. The construct of body image is associated with several self-assessments, and general self-efficacy is one of them. Just as body image has an impact on self-efficacy, it also serves as a predictor of self-esteem. According to Blascovich and Tomaka (1991) [3], self-esteem pertains to an individual's perception of their own value or worth, including the degree to which they hold themselves in high regard, approve of themselves, enjoy their qualities, and have a positive self-regard. In the context of women, self-esteem is shown to include cognitive and emotional reactions, and is significantly impacted by social comparison (Bong & Clark, 1999) [2].

Self-efficacy affects how people feel and how they react. Individuals with low self-efficacy frequently have feelings of anxiety, helplessness, sadness and severe de-oppression. High levels of self-efficacy allow for better decision-making, task implementation, information pro-Yun-Chen Chang *et al*., 2022 [4], conducted a study on self-efficacy and body image among women with breast cancer. 67 women took part in this study. Scales that were used are general self-efficacy scale and body image scale. The findings showed that internet based mind fullness stress reduction can improve body image and self-efficacy.

Donatella Di Corrado, 2021 [6], conducted a study on the influence of self-efficacy on body image. 300 females took part in this study. The age range were 15-24 years. The measument included the body dissatisfaction subscale from the eating disorder inventory, and the general self-efficacy scale. The results revealed a strong positive correlation between self-efficacy and body image.

Yiyi Ouyang *et al*., 2020 [15] conducted a study on body image and self-efficacy among college students. 1000 college students took part in this study. The measurements that were used are The Body image scale by Cash *et al* (1990) and the self-efficacy scale by Wang *et al.* (2001). The result showed that the Body image was positively correlated with self-efficacy.

Nilgun Vurgun, 2015 [23], conducted a study on effects of aerobic exercises on body image and self-efficacy on middle aged woman 45 women took part in this study. Measurements that were used are Body image satisfaction questionnaire. The self-efficacy scale. The results revealed

that regular aerobic exercise had a positive effect on body image and self-efficacy.

Morteza Tarkhan *et al*., 2013 [21], conducted a study on the relationship between self- efficacy and body image. A total number of 240 women took part in it. The scales that were used are self-efficacy scale for social situations by Gaudiano and Herbert, 2003 and body image test by Fischer, 1970. The regression analysis showed that there was a significant positive relationship between the social self- efficacy and body image.

Objectives

1. To study the effect of objectified body image on self-efficacy among young adults.
2. To study the effect of objectified body image on self-efficacy among middle aged women.

Methodology

The aim of the study is to find out the effect of objectified body image on self-efficacy among women.

Site and Population

The sample consists of 200 women (100 young adults and 100 middle aged) was selected through purposive sampling. The age range for young adults was 21- 28 years and for the middle aged woman the age range was 34-49 years.

Tools and Scale

1. Measurement of generalized self-efficacy scale

The generalized self-efficacy scale (GSES) is a ten item scale, which has been translated by Mary Wegner from the original German version by Schwarzer and Jerusalem in 1992. It assesses the strength of an individual's belief in his or her own ability to respond to novel or difficult situations and to deal with any associated obstacles or setbacks. The reliability is between .76 and .90 for scoring there are four choices of response from "not at all true "which scores 1 to" exactly true" which scores 4.

2. Objectified Body Consciousness Scale

The Objectified body consciousness scale was developed by McKinley and Hyde (1996), it Measures the degree to which individuals feel shame about their bodies when they perceive themselves as not meeting cultural body ideals. It is a self-report measure of body consciousness. The reliability of the scale is 0.75. The scale has 24 items the options ranging from "Strongly disagree" score 1, to "Strongly agree" score 7.

Results

From the necessary calculations it was found that the mean of objectified body image in case of middle aged women is higher (92.8700) than young adult women. it was also found that mean of self-efficacy in case of young adult women is higher (28.7700) than middle aged women pearson's correlation between objectified body image and self-efficacy in case of middle aged women was found to be 0.091 and in case of young adult women it was 0.127.

Discussions and Conclusion

From table 1 it is depicted that the mean of objectified body image in case of young adult women is 84.2400, SD is 14.37810 and df is 198 the p value was significant on the level of 0.001.which means that the chances of null hypothesis getting rejected are 99%. On the other hand the mean of objectified body image in case middle aged women was 92.8700, SD 20.46611, t was -3.450 and df was 177.581 here the p value was also significant on the level of 0.001 so the chance of null hypothesis getting rejected is 99%. Here the mean of middle aged women in case of objectified body image is higher than young adult women. Since the age range for middle aged women were 34-49 years, they are closer to menopause. Menopause is a tangible age marker. Women tend to gain weight and fat mass (Lovejoy *et al*., 2008) [11] during this phase, which in turn can make them feel self-conscious about their body. Hence the null hypothesis has been rejected. From table 2 it can be seen that the mean of self-efficacy in case of young adult women was 28.7700, SD was 5.23171, t was 2.948 and df was 198. The p value was significant on the level of 0.004 which means that there is 96% chance of null hypothesis being rejected. The mean of middle aged women in case of self-efficacy was 25.5500, SD 9.58890, t 2.948 and df was 153.143 the p value was significant on the level of 0.004 which means that there is 96% chance of null hypothesis being rejected. Here the mean of self-efficacy in case of young adult women was higher than middle aged women. It can be said that age and self-efficacy has a negative correlation (Salthours *et al*., 1996) [20] thus the null hypothesis has been rejected. From table 3 it can be seen that the pearson's correlation was 0.91 and significance was at 0.370 thus it can be said that the null hypothesis has been accepted. No correlation was found between objectified body image and self-efficacy in terms of middle aged women. From the table 4 it can be seen that the pearson's correlation for objectified body image and self-efficacy in case of young adult women was 0.127 and p value was significant at 0.207 which indicated no correlation between the variables. Hence null hypothesis has been accepted.

1. Objectified body image was found to be higher in case of middle aged women
2. The self-efficacy was found to be higher in young adult women
3. No correlation was found between self-efficacy and objectified body image in case of middle aged women
4. No correlation was found between self-efficacy and objectified body image in case of young adult women

Contribution

1. This study can provide a guiding path for future researches
2. This study can contribute to the counseling psychology
3. The study can contribute to social psychology.

Conflicts of interest

No conflict of interest.

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Appendixes

Table 1: Objectified body image

Group	Mean	SD	T	Df	Significance
Young adult women	84.2400	14.37810	-3.450	198	0.001
Middle aged women	92.8700	20.46611	-3.450	177.581	0.001

Table 2: Self- efficacy

Group	Mean	SD	T	Df	Significance
Young adult	28.7700	5.23171	2.948	198	0.004
Middle aged	25.5500	9.58890	2.948	153.143	0.004

Table 3: Objectified body image and self- efficacy for middle aged women

	Objectified body image of middle aged women	**Self – efficacy of middle aged women**
OBI of middle aged women		
Pearson's Correlation	1	0.91
Significance		0.370
N	100	100
Self-efficacy of middle aged women		
Peason's correlation	0.091	1
Significance	0.370	
N	100	100

Table 4: Objectified body image and self - efficacy for young Adult women

	Objectified body image of young adult women	**Self –efficacy of young adult women**
OBI of young adult women		
Pearson's correlation	1	0.127
Significance		0.207
N	100	100
Self-efficacy of young adult women		
Pearson's correlation	0.127	1
Significance	0.207	
N	100	100