

THE EFFECT OF PERCEIVED OPTIMISM ON BODY IMAGE ON INDIAN YOUNG ADULTS

Sonia David

Dept. of Psychology, JAIN (Deemed-to-be-University), Bangalore

Abstract

Purpose: The study aims to understand and determine how individuals' perceived optimism affects body image among young adults.

Methodology: The quantitative study uses an Ex Post Facto Correlational Design conducted on Indian young adults between 18-40 years old. The Body Image Avoidance Questionnaire (BIAQ) and the Positivity Scale were administered to the 508 participants through an online survey format. The quantitative analysis involved descriptive statistics and Pearson's Correlation Coefficient in measuring the association between perceived optimism and body image.

Findings: The study findings imply sufficient evidence to conclude a linear relationship between perceived optimism and body image because the correlation coefficient is significantly different from 0. The body image avoidance is weakly but negatively correlated with perceived optimism amongst the participants.

Study Implications: This study aids and contributes to the repertoire of body image and positive psychology research. It also helps explore individual differences in the orbits of perceived optimism and body image as lockdown procedures helped alleviate the understanding of the complete psychological impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: perceived optimism, body image avoidance, young adults, lockdown, positive psychology

INTRODUCTION

Body image is a vast term that usually refers to an individual's perceptions, feelings, and thoughts on their body. However, four broad elements or characteristics of an individual's body image involve how they see themselves, i.e. perceptual, and how individuals feel about their bodies, i.e. affective. It also involves the thoughts and beliefs that individuals attain about their bodies, i.e. cognitive, and the things they do with their body, i.e. behavioural. The majority of research involves and focuses on the constructs of body dissatisfaction concerning one's body size, weight, shape and other aesthetic attributes (Grogan, 2008). The blow may usually range from mild discomfort to feelings of anguish, disgust and repulsion. Acquiring a positive body image does not only imply being satisfied with their appearance. It also involves a compassionate, positive, and genuine appreciation of their physical body for its capabilities (Tylka, 2011).

POSITIVE BODY IMAGE

The field of positive body image (Vendemia, DeAndrea, & Brathwaite, 2021) emerged from two significant disciplines of study- Psychology and Buddhism. The first being, strength-based specialties within psychology emphasise that hygiene or the preservation of health is just as crucial as pathology for consideration within the theory, research and practice (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015). Secondly, the practice of Buddhism facilitates the resilience and self-compassion needed to process and handle the threats to one's body image and maintain positive, actionable body practices, i.e. self-care, especially in the face of these threats, Webb et al. (2015, pp. 426-437).

When individuals can appreciate, accept, and respect their body compassionately, it can be attributed to attaining a positive body image (Tiggermann et al., (2020, pp. 129-136). However, a positive body image is quite noticeable from a specific defensive factor for a negative body image. Positive body image characteristics involve positivity and vitality, appreciating diverse body shapes and various physical aesthetics. It also involves being mindful of anguish over-eating-related and body image events (Shifren & Anzaldi, 2018), implementing the same while practising rational, positive self-talk and compassionate self-care, as Webb et al. (2015, pp. 130-145) studied. The positive body image is also dexterous, comprehensive and adaptable yet stable. It conserves well-being and usually comprises 'social identities' and 'body acceptance by others' (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015).

People with a positive body image customarily have a higher psychological and physical health level, and more evolved personal development. A positive body image also affects self-acceptance, self-esteem levels, and a

healthy outlook on life and behaviours (Cash, 2004). It is vital to supporting individuals to help ameliorate an individual's health and aid them to maintain a nutritional weight status. Redirecting one's energy away from efforts to assert an impractical thin-ideal for females or a 'brawny' configuration for males toward feeling confident about their bodies (Markey, 2014) helps an individual be more informed than others with an analytical perspective.

PERCEIVED OPTIMISM

Optimism is rooted in philosophy (Domino & Conway, 2001), originating back in the 17th century in the writings of several philosophers such as Rene Descartes and Voltaire. However, there are no globally accepted definitions for dispositional optimism and pessimism, as Chang et al. (1997, pp. 433-440) studied. Research studies have vaguely offered relevant explanations that involve biases in generalised positivity or adverse outcomes. Attributing to the perspective of *Social Cognition*, a third viewpoint maintains that optimism is the repercussion of a mental aberration of danger, in other words, a "bias" for oneself. This bias echoes the individual's confidence that positive occurrences are more likely to occur to him/herself while conflicting events eminently affect others (Conversano, et al., 2010).

Optimism is defined as the amount to which an individual acquires a stable predilection of demonstrating positive assumptions concerning the ramifications of various life events by McIntosh et al. (2004). (Weinstein, 1984) defined this phenomenon as "unrealistic optimism". The optimistic bias is not a personality trait like dispositional optimism (Scheier & Carver, 1985). Still, it is a methodical cognitive distortion of taking into account one's anticipation of experiencing detrimental events. The optimistic bias refers to the consequence of the linked efforts of two elementary means. The first one is analogous to cognitive determinants like the absence of information and the insufficient analytical insight of their cognitive skills (Conversano, et al., 2010). The second component involves a motivational character. It is closely bound to contending one's self-esteem and against negation. Dispositional optimism can be defined as the generalised expectancy for positive outcomes (Panchal, Kumar, & Mukherjee, 2016). Optimism and pessimism emulate assurance versus ambiguity regarding a particular situation and life in general (Carver & Scheier, 2014).

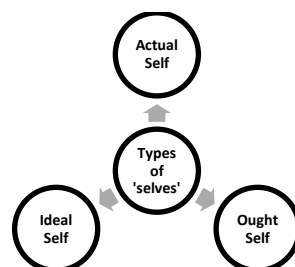
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Although, several research studies have focussed on body image amongst adolescents and women, very few have focussed on young adults, especially in the Indian context. However, perceived optimism has quite a large research gap based on evidence and population. This study also focusses on how the COVID-19 has affected the individual's optimism level and in-turn their body image as well. The need for this study arises from the lack of studies conducted on individual's perceived optimism and how that effects body image in terms of whether individuals avoid or address their feelings. Hence, the study aims to understand how perceived optimism effects the body image of young adults in India during the COVID-19 situation.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

a. Self-Discrepancy Theory: Self-discrepancy theory states that people have beliefs and expectations about their potential and actual selves that do not always equal what they experience (Goffman, 1959). According to this theory (Higgins, 1987), there are three types of 'selves'.

Figure 1 Source: (Higgins, 1987)
Self-Discrepancy Theory (Higgins, 1987)



- i. The **actual self** consists of the attributes that one or someone else believes one possesses.
- ii. The **ideal self** consists of the attributes that one or someone else would like one to possess.
- iii. The **ought self** consists of the attributes one or someone else believes one should possess.

According to the self-discrepancy theory, observing a disparity between one's actual self and one's ideal self (actual-ideal contrast) would evoke dejection-related emotions, such as depression and dissatisfaction, because one's hopes and wishes have been incomplete (Vartanian, 2012). It implies that several individuals tend to be dissatisfied with their bodies because their ideal selves or ideal body image has become unreal.

b. **Learned Optimism Theory:** This theory was initially introduced by (Seligman, 2018). Learned optimism involves establishing the ability to perceive the world from a positive frame of reference. It is often contradicted with learned helplessness. People can become more optimistic by challenging negative self-talk and substituting pessimistic thoughts with positive thoughts (Cherry, 2021).

The majority of research studies on body image has usually focused on girls and women. Very few studies address concerns and issues among males and boys. Recent research studies show that, like females, males' body dissatisfaction develops across adolescence and into the evolution to adulthood, as studied by Bucchianeri et al. (2016, pp. 1-7). The literature involved in this paper includes studies with the variables perceived optimism, body image and a positive body image between the years 2015 to 2021.

Figure 2: Primary Source
Classification of Literature Reviews in the Study



POSITIVE BODY IMAGE

Body Image research has always been correlated with numerous mental disorders. Research studies on body image previously have focused on women, mainly omitting men's physique and body image. Marshall et al. (2020) determined if the motive for body image avoidance and thinness arbitrated the association between disordered eating and internalised weight bias. The internalised weight bias has been related to inadmissible psychological and physical health outcomes. It includes disarranged eating and the mediating function of the urge for body image avoidance and thinness. Since social media has always been an area of research in body image, Tiggermann et al. (2020, pp. 129-136) experimentally examined the impact of body-positive subtitles on Instagram images between 18 to 30 years old. There was a crucial significance of image type, wherein the typically normal images emerged into greater body appreciation and less body dissatisfaction than the thin images. It also designated that for women high on thin-ideal internalisation, body-positive captions on average photos resulted in escalated body appreciation but deteriorated body appreciation when affixed to thin images. The visual symbolism and metaphors of an Instagram post was a more dominant contributor to body image.

A cross-sectional study by Quittkat et al. (2019) also explored various elements of body image in the general German-speaking population and compared gender of various ages. Body dissatisfaction was higher in women than in men. However, it was not affected by age in them, and the importance of appearance was higher in women than in men. Women also reported that they would invest more hours in attaining their stereotypically perfect appearance. For all genders, age was a predictor of the number of years individuals would atone for acquiring their ideal appearance. Although specific studies are inculcating positive body image and body appreciation as the primary variable, a survey by Soulliard et al. (2019, pp. 93-100) examined dissimilarities in positive body image, categorically functionality appreciation and body appreciation. The study also examined positive body image and other sport-related variables, wherein the results indicated a significant association between sport-related variables and positive body image. The results also contributed original findings to the literature on positive body image and potential indications for coaches to empower a culture that focuses on bolstering positive body image.

Swami et al. (2018, pp. 541-552) examined associations amid well-being and positive body image. The study findings showed that once the impact of body mass index (BMI) and age had been regarded, body appreciation significantly anticipated all aspects of well-being. The results also indicated that men had significantly higher scores than women on most body image measures and that BMI was negatively associated with all body image

measures. Similarly, (Keven-Akliman & Eryilmaz, 2017) examined the impact of a body image group-counselling program on adolescent girls concerning positive psychology. The study was conducted on a pre-test, post-test and follow-up test pattern, and the positive body image group-counselling program was administered on the experimental group for ten sessions. The results revealed statistically significant escalation in positive coping strategies and body image in the intervention group.

PERCEIVED OPTIMISM

Although earlier studies have demonstrated and proved people to have an optimistic bias, harmful events and positive events were less likely to occur than persons like themselves (Darvill & Johnson, 1991). Optimism in a conservancy, and its anticipatory effect on the same practice, has been the focal point of important and substantial contemporary attention. Boesten et al. (2021, pp. 100-132) assessed whether a relationship of optimism bias is also present in patients with a history of heart attack, a.k.a. Myocardial infarction and whether it is autonomous of classic cardiovascular disease risk factors. The study found out that similar defensive pattern relationships were noticed for dispositional optimism. Depressive symptoms, rather than dispositional optimism, were individually predictive of all-cause, non-cardiovascular/non-cancer and cardiovascular mortality in older post-myocardial infarction patients. Papworth et al. (2019, pp. 401-414) deduced that optimism is usually a positive trait that can help people approach problems and achieve and set their respective goals. The results indicated unsteady evidence for curtailed dispositional optimism in conservation professionals working in Africa, Europe, and South America.

(Hajek & Hans-Helmut-König, 2017), They also examined whether self-efficacy, optimism, and self-esteem were related to regular health check-ups longitudinally. It also underlined the importance of a relation between screening behaviour and self-esteem, self-efficacy, and optimism longitudinally. Emotional Intelligence research also inculcates the concepts of optimism and pessimism in its domain to help determine how individuals perceive their outlook on life. A study by (Extremara, Duran, & Rey, 2017) investigated the association between dispositional optimism/pessimism, perceived emotional intelligence (PEI), and psychological adjustment. It resulted in PEI and dispositional optimism/pessimism not being enormously oratorical, although related. Adolescents with a heightened consciousness of emotional abilities (mainly high repair and clarity) usually show high life satisfaction and decreased perceived stress.

However, determining the association between well-being and perceived optimism was also examined by Panchal et al. (2016, pp. 1-6), as he explored the correlation between optimism, well-being, resilience and perceived stress among young adults. Optimism had a critical positive association with well-being and resilience. Well-being was significantly positively correlated with resilience. Resilience was also found to be an anticipator of well-being. A non-experimental quantitative study (Cankaya, 2016) on 358 graduate students expanded previous studies on optimism and hope by investigating their roles in student outcomes. Hope and optimism supported healthy functioning and academics more advantageously. High intensity of hope was correlated with a consistent belief in personal competence to accomplish academic tasks, which foretold an escalated overall GPA. High intensity of hope is also regarded as a critical difference in predicting students' self-perceived physical health. Students high in optimism, not hope, reported considerably lesser concerns with their physical health. An Indian research study by (Pancheco & Kamble, 2016) examined the association between stress, optimism, and coping with distress on 500 Goan undergraduate students. The results indicated an arbitrary negative relationship between distress and optimism. Optimism was positively correlated to growth, instrumental social support, and positive reinterpretation (Sapranaviciute, Perminas, & Pauziene, 2012). It was also positively correlated to acceptance, active coping, planning, and suppression of competing activities.

(Darvill & Johnson, 2015) accentuated the critical associations of control with neuroticism and optimism. The results indicated that people with high neuroticism were less optimistic about positive events and more pessimistic about detrimental events. The participants believed that they had less control over optimistic and (to a greater degree) adverse events. However, despite the several psychological research areas in which optimism has been studied, including career planning, only infinitesimal research has been conducted to examine the association between decision-making styles and optimism. Therefore, to emphasise the same, Magnano et al. (2015) examined the function of dispositional optimism correlated to different decision-making styles in adolescents. Optimism was a strong predictor of decision-making styles. The results also indicated significant intervention guidelines to modify surreal expectations concerning their future and helping students acquire strong decision-making skills. Hope by Snyder et al. (1991, pp. 249-269) and optimism (Scheier & Carver, 1985) are two personality traits that are responsible for several positive outcomes (Rand, 2009). However, (Banerjee, 2012) investigated how dispositional optimism influenced the psychological stress-depression relationship. Dispositional optimism significantly influenced individual stress-coping mechanisms. It revealed a moderate mediating impact of dispositional optimism on the stress-depression relationship.

PERCEIVED OPTIMISM WITH BODY IMAGE

Recent research by (Lui, et al., 2021) assessed whether greater dispositional optimism could anticipate an improved health-related quality of life after oesophageal cancer surgery. It indicated that patients with very high dispositional optimism recorded an improved comprehensive emotional function, quality of life, and social function.

Usually, body image research tends to exclude or marginalise older adults or senior citizens. However, (Sardella, et al., 2021) investigated whether context-sensitivity and dispositional optimism assist in establishing prevalent factors such as physical and cognitive factors. An authentic relationship of context-sensitivity and dispositional optimism with feebleness among elderly outpatients. Understanding dispositional optimism with more relevance (Robert, et al., 2020) also assessed how optimism is related to body mass index (BMI), eating disorders (EDs) and eating behaviour. More optimistic participants were not likely to be obese or underweight. Optimism was negatively associated with cognitive restraint, emotional eating and uncontrolled eating. Optimism was correlated with eating behaviour, weight status, and risk of eating disorders in all genders. However, Todorov et al. (2019) examined the extent to which hope regarding psychological stress and body image distress in an unambiguous contrast to self-compassion. The results indicated that the exclusive contribution of hope and self-compassion elucidated psychological distress and body image distress. Also, hope-focused therapy factors may be suitable accessions to the developing array of self-compassion-based psychosocial therapy.

A study by (Mincu & Taşcu, 2015) analysed the life satisfaction predictors in participants who had a presently perceived health problem. The quantitative study results indicated that physician-patient satisfaction and social support and anticipated individual's life satisfaction. Some anticipatory elements also included body satisfaction, couple satisfaction, and optimism. Body image was a prognosticator of the partner's engrossment and open-mindedness within the relationship. Its results in enhanced conversation and improved conflict management, which results in a heightened intensity of couple satisfaction. It provides enhanced levels of life satisfaction. Research studies also primarily focused on women and girls in the domain of body image. A study by (Dalley & Vidal, 2015) determined the anticipation that an assuming judgment about obtaining a feared-fat-self and an expectancy judgment about developing a hoped-for-thin-self would moderate dispositional optimism on a positive body image. The results indicated that only the perceived possibility of obtaining the feared-fat-self moderated dispositional optimism on a positive body image amongst individuals.

NEED OF THE STUDY

The study's primary need is to understand how individuals' perceived optimism affects body image among young adults. Literature reviews can be concluded and conferred that most studies focus on how optimism positively affects body image. It can also be inferred that most research studies focus on adolescents, and very few studies emphasise positive body image effects by dispositional optimism or learned optimism. When individuals force positivity in their respective situations and our lives, they tend to avoid, rather than address, the negative concerns they might have by avoiding situations that might trigger these concerns. This study provides a unique perspective on body positivity and how toxic positivity helps individuals negatively even when they think it is positive peripherally.

RESEARCH GAP IDENTIFICATION

- a. Population Gap: Population Gap implies that the research concerning the inadequately represented population remains under-researched in the evidence-based or prior research. Recent literature has proved a population gap among Indian adults. A repertoire of research studies have been conducted on adolescents, and there is an evident lack of studies on Indian adults.
- b. Evidence Gap implies that prior studies' findings have also significantly portrayed various effects on positive body image (Bailey et al., (2015, pp. 24-34). Perhaps, there is a lack of evidence of research studies focusing on dispositional optimism or learned optimism and its impact on body image
- c. Theoretical Gap implies gaps in the theory of prior research. There is an evident lack of research studies conducted that focus on the theory of Learned Optimism and its effects on various variables. However, this study focuses on examining whether the approach of Learned Optimism is relevant in the gap in the prior research.

AIMS OF THE CURRENT STUDY AND HYPOTHESES

Based on the research gap identification and the literature review conducted in this paper, the study aims to understand and determine how individuals' perceived optimism affects body image among young adults. Due

to the various literature reviews and the studies conducted in the past on optimism and body image, there is sufficient evidence to prove the existence of a relationship between the two variables. However, based on the literature reviews, researchers have hypothesised the following directional hypotheses:

H₁: There is a positive significant relationship between perceived optimism and body image among Indian adults.

H₂: There is a negative significant relationship between perceived optimism and body image among Indian adults.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study is a quantitative study inculcating an Ex-Post Facto Design: Correlational Design. A correlational approach is a psychometric approach where the present study aims to determine whether the perceived optimism affects body image avoidance among Indian young adults. It also evaluates the direction of correlation and magnitude among the two dependent variables. Subsequently, due to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, this study also understands how the pandemic has indirectly affected the participants' perceived optimism and body image avoidance.

Sampling

The probability sampling technique used was convenience sampling, as the study involved participants who were most accessible to the researcher. The method also involved purposive sampling as the survey consists of the researcher selected a sample that is most useful to the purposes of the research in terms of age in the geographical area of India. The participants chosen for this study were 508 Indian adults of both genders between 18-40 years old. The participants' profile is mentioned in Table 1 to have a clearer view.

Table 1
Participants' Profile

Gender	Male	148
	Female	360
Age	18-24	164
	25-30	196
	31-40	148
Marital Status	Single	368
	Married	132
	Other	8
Occupation	Student	208
	Working Professional	280
	Unemployed	20
Working Status	Online Schooling	156
	Working from Home	260
	Studying/Working from Physical Office	92

Source: Primary Source

Tools and Measures

Informed Consent Form:

The informed consent form was a brief introduction of the study's purpose, along with the Terms and Conditions. Since all the participants were adults, the consent form also included Confidentiality terms for ethical considerations.

Demographic Details Sheet:

The demographic details form consisted of general contact information of all the participants such as Name, Age, Gender, E-mail, Phone Number, Marital Status, and Type of Family. The sociodemographic sheet also involved whether or not the participants were students or working professionals and whether they were working/studying from home or working in a physical office space.

Body Image Avoidance Questionnaire (BIAQ)

The Body Image Avoidance Questionnaire (BIAQ) is a self-report measure initially developed by Rosen et al. (1991, pp. 32–37) and modified by (Lydecker, 2015). It assesses behavioural prevention of experiences that could elevate and enhance body image-related dissatisfaction or distress. The questionnaire has 19 items across four behavioural themes which involve clothing, social activities, restraint and grooming/weighing. The clothing aspect implied disguising or covering up the body through clothing choices, and social activities implied avoidance of social situations involving eating or focusing on appearance. However, the aspect of restraint in the questionnaire implied anyform of dietary restriction, and grooming or weighing implied checking behaviours such as scrutinising oneself in the mirror and weighing. All items are scored on a 6-point scale about a frequency of engagement in the behaviour, from never (0) to always (5).

The Positivity Scale

The Positivity Scale (Caprara, et al., 2012) was designed as a short instrument that directly assesses a positive view of oneself, one’s life, and one’s future, as well as one’s confidence in others, Laborde et al., (2016, pp. 9-13). It also measures perceived optimism, the individual’s tendency to see their lives and experiences with a positive orientation. The scale is a five-point Likert scale that assesses perceived optimism through 8 items from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5).

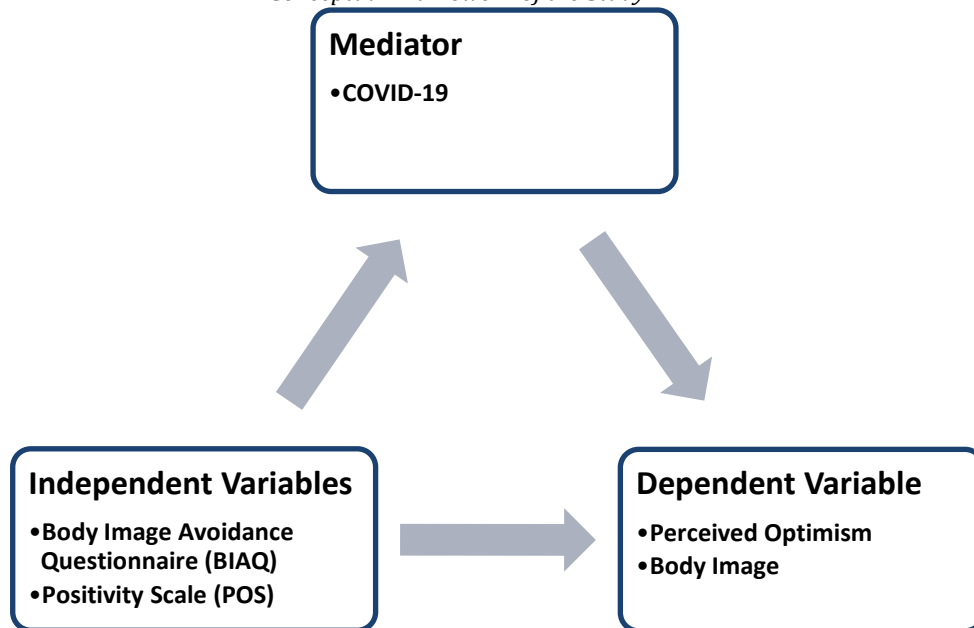
Variables

Independent Variables: Questions in the Body Image Avoidance Questionnaire (BIAQ) and The Positivity Scale (POS)

Dependent Variables: Perceived Optimism, Body Image

Mediating Variable: COVID-19

Figure 3: Primary Source
Conceptual Framework of the Study



Procedure

The study is a correlational study that involved a survey method provided to the participants aged 18 to 40 years of age through an online platform using Google Form. The participants were expected to read the informed consent form and acknowledge that they have understood the same. The participants filled in the demographic details sheet, which consisted of their primary and general information. Afterwards, the participants were required to answer the Body Image Avoidance Questionnaire and the Positivity Scale. After submitting the form, a note from the researchers declaring that their responses will remain confidential and used for research purposes. SPSS v21 was used to analyse the quantitative data.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

High, average and low scores were categorised using the descriptive statistics in each of the four quadrants of the Body Image Avoidance Questionnaire (BIAQ-19) and Positivity Scale (POS-8). The Pearson’s Correlation

Coefficient was used to calculate the strength of a linear association (Oberholzer, 2013) between the mean scores of the Body Image Avoidance Questionnaire and the Positivity Scale. Pearson's product-moment relationship was also conducted to calculate the relationship between the said moderating variables and dependent variables, i.e., participants' Body Image Avoidance and Perceived Optimism.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study's ethical considerations involved the informed consent attained by the participants. The confidentiality of information was explained and broken based on the participants' unhealthy behaviours (self-harm, harm to others). Client Informed Consent Form was also attained to enhance comfort in the counselling sessions and promote honest responses.

STUDY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study consists of 508 participants between 18 to 40 years of age, Indian young adults. The participants were either students or working professionals who were unemployed, attending online classes or schooling, or working from home. This present study aims at understanding how individuals' perceived optimism affects body image avoidance among young adults. The study is a correlational study that involved a survey method provided to the participants.

Analysis of Data:

The qualitative analysis involved using Pearson's Correlation technique to help measure and determine the relationship between two or more quantitative variables.

Table 2

Showing the Pearson's Coefficient Correlation Table for BIAQ and POS scores

		MeanBIAQ	MeanPOS
MeanBIAQ	Pearson Correlation	1	-.153**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	509	509
MeanPOS	Pearson Correlation	-.153**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	509	509

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above table implies that body image avoidance and perceived optimism have a significant linear relationship ($r = -.153$, $p = .001$). The direction of the relationship is weak, but negative implying that body image avoidance and perceived optimism are negatively correlated, meaning that when body image avoidance increases, perceived optimism decreases. The coefficient estimates of perceived optimism ($B = -0.150$, $P < 0.01$) means that the research rejects the first directional hypothesis (H_1), indicating that perceived optimism is statistically significant and therefore conclude that perceived optimism has a significant negative effect on the body image among the Indian Adults. Meanwhile, the regression equation can be written Body Image = 2.47 - 0.15. Perceived Optimism. The regression model suggests that for a 1 unit increase in perceived optimism, body image will decrease or decline by 0.15.

Table 3:

Showing the ANOVA table for BIAQ and POS scores

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	7.250	1	7.250	12.197	.001 ^b
	Residual	301.376	507	.594		
	Total	308.626	508			

- a. Dependent Variable: Mean BIAQ
b. Predictors: (Constant), Mean POS

The regression model in Table 3, $F(1, 507) = 12.197$, $P < 0.01$, means that the study rejects the first directional hypothesis (H_1), which implies that the regression model is statistically significant. Therefore, conclude that there is a significant negative relationship between perceived optimism and body image among Indian adults.

Table 4: Source SPSS v.21

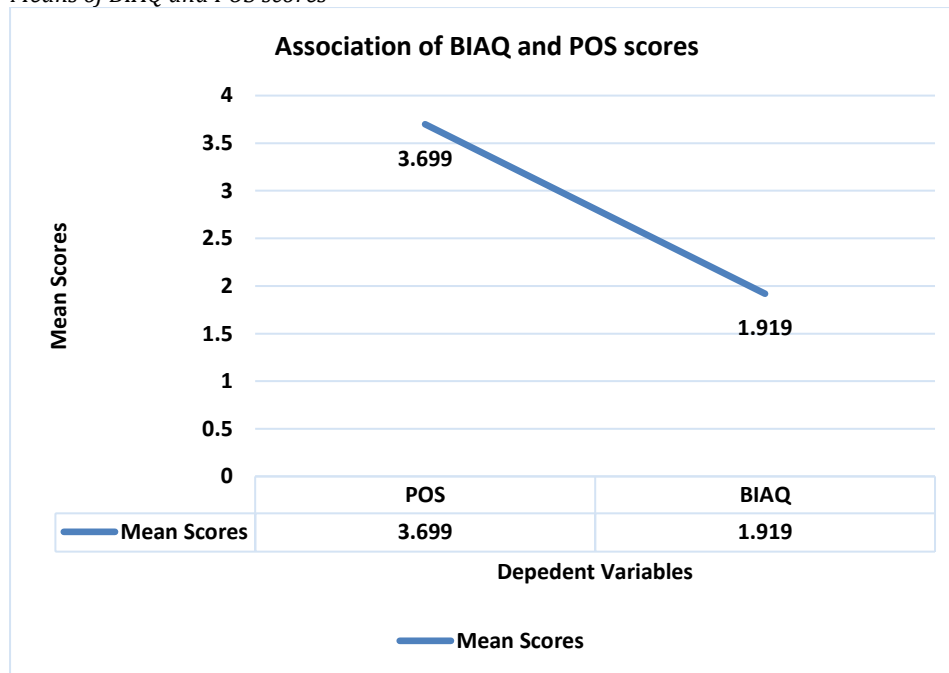
Showing the Descriptive Statistics for BIAQ and POS scores

	N	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Mean BIAQ	509	1.919	.034	.779
Clothing (Mean)	509	2.151	.041	.925
Social Activities (Mean)	509	1.182	.049	1.115
Restrains (Diet) (Mean)	509	1.483	.049	1.122
Grooming and Weighing (Mean)	509	2.641	.045	1.035
Mean POS	509	3.699	.035	.799
Valid N (listwise)	509			

Body Image (M= 1.92, SD = 0.78) implies that, on average, the body image of the Indian adults is about 1.92, with a variability of about 0.78. Clothing (M= 2.15, SD = 0.93) means that, on average, clothing is about 2.15, with variability of about 0.93. Perceived optimism (M=3.70, SD = 0.80) tells us that perceived optimism on average will yield about 3.7 with a variability of about 0.8.

Figure 4 Source: Primary Source and SPSS v.21

Means of BIAQ and POS scores



The mean score of the Body Image Avoidance Questionnaire was 1.919, and the Positivity Scale score was 3.699. According to Figure 4, it is evident that body image avoidance is insubstantial but negatively correlated with perceived optimism amongst the participants. When individuals are optimistic in situations, they do not tend to avoid their negative body image in those situations. The above chart implies that this study proves the (H₂) hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between perceived optimism and body image among Indian adults.

Supporting Evidence:

A few supporting pieces of evidence inculcates how perceived optimism and body image are negatively correlated to one another. However, research studies that evaluate the relationship between positive well-being and positive body image have been used as a circumscribed array of scope in each research construct. Swami et al. (2018, pp. 541-552) studied the relationship between positive body image and well-being. The results indicated that body appreciation had substantially anticipated all aspects of well-being. Other positive body image measures emerged as substantial predictors, but associations were varied across well-being and sex dimensions. Also, BMI was negatively associated with all body image questionnaires. Another study by (Dalley & Vidal, 2013) aimed to determine the prediction that an assumptuous assessment about acquiring a

feared-fat self and a hoped-for-thin-self would moderate dispositional optimism on positive body image. The study disclosed the anticipated possibility of acquiring the feared-fat-self-mediated dispositional optimism on a positive body image. It also implied that optimism is positively related to a positive body image in women, and hoped-for-thin self-expectancy is independent of positive body image and optimism.

Contradicting Evidence

Some contradicting evidence inculcated how optimism has no association with body image avoidance, or the correlation is negative in magnitude. The researcher (Sutin, 2013) examined the coherence between measured and reported height and body weight. It analysed whether pessimists and optimists adulterate their weight/height in ways dependent on their worldviews. The findings reported that body weight is likely to be precise, but biases related to psychological dispositions may augment the association between obesity and disposition. Also, Lemes et al. (2018, pp. 4289-4298) identified variables prevalent to overall well-being (health perception, life satisfaction, optimism and happiness) that differentiated between satisfied teenagers and those dissatisfied with their body image. The variables that augmented most to the differentiation between groups were self-satisfaction (0.644), sex (0.680), level of happiness with health (0.601), and health perception (0.630).

Implications of the Study

The implications of the study involve theoretical and practical implications, respectively. Theoretical implications inculcate the involvement of body image research. An individual's choice of clothes is a means of communication, and this code may not be uniformly known in a community in terms of sociological and psychological perspectives (McCracken & Roth, 2009). It enhances theory development in information processing about how one looks at oneself, social categorisation, and attribution studies. However, another theoretical implication involves contributing to positive psychology research inculcating the involvement of the Framework of Achievement (Phan & Ngu, 2017). It contributes to an analytical explanation of a person's optimal best practice from his/her actual best to conclude a better comprehension of the perceived optimism of an individual. Also, positive psychology interventions are effective and significant in the coming times but understanding the grassroot levels of how individuals perceive optimism, especially during COVID-19. Optimism, an important factor in mental well-being, is still stigmatised in India (Paul & Devi, 2021). Therefore, this study aids and contributes to the repertoire of positive psychology research.

Practical implications involve the inculcation of body image research. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and work from home, grooming or body image has immaculately altered human beings. However, while COVID-19 restrictions may have determined a hiatus from societal presence adversity for those with common dysmorphic concern, appearance-focused behaviours persevered in individuals with heightened dysmorphic concern, Pikoos et al., (2020, pp. 1993-2002). Also, the present switch to remote and online psychological therapies during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown may determine an opportunity to engage clients with body image disorders in treatment, as they are traditionally difficult to immerse in face-to-face therapy (Phillips, 2014). Similarly, eating disorder-related behaviours appear to be specifically inveigled by the changes inferred by the COVID-19 pandemic (Rodgers, et al., 2020). Another implication involves the inculcation of organisations' stakeholders in determining how each individual perceives their body in terms of avoidance or approach. It helps explore individual differences in the orbits of alteration, Williamson et al., (2004, pp. 711-738) in eating, exercise and body image as lockdown procedures repose will be important for understanding the full psychological impact of this pandemic (Robertson, et al., 2021).

LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Although this study focussed on evaluating the relationship between perceived optimism and body image, it was only conducted on 508 respondents. The research could have been more accurate in descriptive statistics and understanding the subdomains of emotional intelligence on a larger population. The sample size was essentially a limitation of this study. Also, since face-to-face data collection works best when observing a participant, the online mode of data collection seemed challenging. The online data collection method excluded observing body language and tone while filling the questions. Simultaneously, a qualitative aspect for the study would have added additional accuracy in evaluating and determining individual differences in the relationship between perceived optimism and body image (Baceviciene & Jankauskiene, 2021). The study could also enhance the accuracy of the cause-and-effect relationship during the COVID-19 if the researchers could have inculcated moderating or mediating variables such as age and gender. Additional aspects that could have been supplemented with moderating or mediating variables lacking in this study are also essentially a limitation.

Studies in positive psychology and the domain of body image are widely researched but continue to have a wider scope for future research and studies. However, more research can be conducted by inculcating a

qualitative data analysis and data collection aspect, like semi-structured interviews, to understand how each person perceives optimism and body image during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study can also include more moderating variables to enhance the accuracy of the cause-effect relationships between the said variables. Studies on body image and perceived optimism in different situations/contexts, cultures, and backgrounds can also be well researched.

CONCLUSION

The study aims to understand and determine how individuals' perceived optimism affects body image among young adults. A quantitative study uses an Ex Post Facto Correlational Design conducted on 508 Indian young adults between 18-40 years old. The Body Image Avoidance Questionnaire (BIAQ) developed by Rosen et al. (1991, pp. 32-37) and modified by (Lydecker, 2015), along with the Positivity Scale (Caprara, et al., 2012), was administered to the participants through an online survey format. The study findings indicated and approved the (H₂) hypothesis, which implies sufficient evidence to conclude a linear negative relationship between perceived optimism and body image. The correlation coefficient is significantly different from 0. The study also involved contradictory and supporting evidence about body image and perceived optimism amongst Indian young adults. Some studies imply how optimism is positively related to positive body image in women, and hoped-for-thin-self-expectancy is unconnected to optimism and a positive body image. Also, studies examined the coherence between measured and reported height and body weight and analysed whether pessimists and optimists adulterate their weight/height in consistent ways with their viewpoint. The theoretical and practical implications were also discussed about body image research and positive psychology research. The limitations and scope for future research involving a qualitative aspect to the study and the inclusion of more mediating or moderating variables would help enhance the accuracy of the results of this study. Therefore, it can be concluded that the scope for future or further research studies in body image and perceived optimism can evaluate the impact of an individuals' culture and background and determine their perception towards body image and optimism amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

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