

Association Between Public Self-Consciousness, Psychological Wellbeing and Physical Health Among University Students in Sialkot

SALBIA ABBAS¹, FAJAR NASEER², FIZZA AQEEL³, MAHNOOR ZAHID⁴, MAMOONA ABID⁵, FARAH ASHIQ⁶

¹⁻⁶Department of Psychology, Govt. College Women University Sialkot

Correspondence to: *Salbia Abbas*

ABSTRACT

Objective: The goal of this study was to find the relationship among public self-consciousness, physical health and psychological well-being among university students in Sialkot.

Methods: Data was collected from 200 university students belong to different universities of Sialkot through survey method.

Results: Results revealed that there is negative relationship of public self-consciousness with physical health and psychological well-being.

Conclusion: Public appearance self-consciousness is a reality that has affected every single person across the world but its effects vary in every person due to individual differences. So, self-consciousness about public appearance is highly but negatively correlated to physical health. There is also a negative correlation between public appearance self-consciousness and psychological well-being. It greatly affects female population worldwide than males.

Keywords: Public self-consciousness, physical health, psychological well-being, university students

INTRODUCTION

Now-a-days, people are aware about self-consciousness. There is people's thriving need that they are socially accepted and concerned about how others perceive them. We are living in the age of trends where people competes others and have heightened sense of public self-consciousness. Public self-consciousness is important but constant worry about it puts some strain on psychological and physical health. The tendency to consistently focus on oneself is referred to as self-consciousness. Self-consciousness has two types; private self-consciousness and public self-consciousness. Private self-consciousness tends to focus on oneself from a personal perspective, focusing on aspects of one's self that are not immediately apparent to others, such as: your own thoughts and feelings. Public self-consciousness tends to focus on oneself from the perceived perspective of the real or imagined other, and on the aspects of the self that others can observe, e.g. aspects of one's appearance and behavior (Self-Consciousness, Private vs. Public | Encyclopedia.com, n.d.).

Those who study self-consciousness claimed that, it is human nature that sometimes focuses on oneself and sometimes on others. We can think of our thoughts, feelings, actions, or the thoughts, feelings, actions of others. The degree to which we focus and reflect on ourselves is believed to indicate our self-consciousness (Davis, 2022). People are not only conscious about the world around them but also about themselves such as their activities, their bodies as well as their mental lives (Smith, 2020).

Several studies have shown that people with public self-consciousness tend to use fashion and makeup more often to influence how others perceive them. They are also more specific about the impression they leave on others. In addition, they are more likely to conform to the opinions of the group and the expectations of others. Finally, they use self-consciousness strategies to be able to get a more favorable response from others. Public self-consciousness does not always lead to social anxiety, but can contribute to it. We can be afraid of others if we always think about how others see us and think that they are not looking at us well. High public self-consciousness can also make us sensitive to rejection. Feelings of self-consciousness tend to peak in early adolescence. At this point, public self-consciousness is associated with shyness, nervousness, and poor social skills (Davis, 2022).

Self-consciousness is different from self-awareness. As self-consciousness is considered to be more enduring personality traits which we bring us in many situations while self-awareness is ability to think about oneself. For example, regardless of the situation, we may think more or less about ourselves-our experience and how others see us. When we feel conscious, we may experience emotions. In fact, there are various emotions directed at oneself. Here are some emotions involved in consciousness but not limited and these are shame, guilt, pride, embarrassment, jealousy and

empathy. The ideals we have for ourselves can be based on reality or completely in our mind. It doesn't matter from where these ideals come, what matters is how we compare to this ideal (Davis, 2022).

Self-consciousness may be blessing and curse for self-conscious people. While self-conscious emotions aren't always fun to experience, they help drive our behavior in important ways. They can motivate us to do more, behave in befriending ways, and adopt kind behaviors. Collectively, they help us to achieve important social goals. We can overcome self-consciousness by following some tips. First, we should build self-trust. When we are self-conscious, we are constantly questioning ourselves - our thoughts, feelings, and actions. We have to learn to trust ourselves - only we know who we are and it is totally up to us to decide how we want to live our lives. But it requires self-trust. Start it with honest to yourself. It can be difficult to trust yourself if you make decisions that are not of your interest. So be honest with yourself about who you really are and what you really want, don't bother what others like and whether they accept or not.

Public self-consciousness can affect the overall functioning of the individual. It disturbs the normal functioning of life, causing poor psychological well-being. Psychological well-being is an individual overall well-being. It is a subjective condition which covers emotional, cognitive and behavioral aspects and overall functioning of individual. Most of the time, psychological wellbeing and happiness are used interchangeably (Bradburn, 1969). According to Alejandro, psychological wellbeing is the presence of positive emotions and healthy relationships with environment as well. Mental health is related to psychological well-being. Illnesses impact psychological well-being in many ways. When mental functioning of individual deteriorates, it negatively affects the psychological well-being.

Currently in psychological literature, Subjective wellbeing is the dominant concept for wellbeing. It is multifaceted construct which covers affective (how one's felt and act) as well is cognitive (how one's process events) aspects. If person have high SWB his life satisfaction as also high and vice versa because it is associated to many productive effects for physical and mental as well as boost interpersonal relationships and communication skills. The other is objective wellbeing which is related to society rather than individual and indicates self-actualization. It's also played a role in one's mental and physical health. (Alejandro Adler, 2017)

Psychological Wellbeing has three components according to Alejandro in GNH Index. These components include spirituality, emotional balance and the last is evaluative satisfaction. Spirituality is first component and includes mediation practices whereas emotional balance is second component and refers to emotional intelligence outcomes and positive emotions.

In psychological literature, there are two approaches that are used to define wellbeing; hedonic approach and eudemonics approach. Hedonic approach deals wellbeing as attainment of happiness, pleasure, relief and positive emotions by avoiding pain and other problems in life. This approach defines well-being in terms of subjective well-being (Diener, 2000). It is associated with subjective experiences which involve both cognitive and affective component. When an individual doing well in his life and he is satisfied with life, he experiences happiness which affects his wellbeing positively (Carruthers & Hood, 2004). It is shown in the psychological research that genetics determine 50% of individual's happiness. 10% are come from the things that are out of the control and 40% happiness comes from the circumstances that are under our control. On other hand, eudemonics approach deals wellbeing in terms of realization of self and experiences meaningful and purposeful life (Keyes et al., 2002; Ryan and Deci, 2001). This approach defines well-being as challenge to strive and desire to achieve full potential and personal growth. It is linked with Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs which has self-actualization as a highest level of need.

Carol Ryff developed a theory called six-factor model of psychological well-being. In this model, he highlighted six factors that influence psychological well-being. These factors include positive relationships with others, autonomy, personal growth, environmental mastery, purpose in life and self-acceptance (Ryff, 1989). Ryff scale of measurement is used to measure the correlation between psychological well-being and these six factors. The results of this scale interpret that high score in this scale shown that respondent has a number of effective and affectionate relationships; individual is independent and free to take decisions, he is accepting himself and has high self-esteem. He has abilities to take opportunities in life and has skills to manage problems in life. He is motivated to achieve his full potential, he is aware of the fact that life has some meaning and he is striving to achieve this purpose of life.

Consistent public self-consciousness and constantly thinking about physical appearance affect the individuals' physical and mental wellbeing and leads to the deterioration of health. Fretting about how person looks in public or how they are evaluated by others results in physical appearance anxiety. Physical appearance anxiety negatively affects persons' social relations (Moneva, Genorga, & Solon, 2020). Some adolescents feel loneliness and cut off their social interactions due to the fear that their body image and appearance are negatively evaluated (Amil&Bozgeyikli, 2015).

METHODS

A sample of 200 university students was collected from different universities in Sialkot. The sample consisted of 100 males and 100 females with the age range of 18 – 26 years. They belonged to lower, middle and upper socioeconomic status. They were all pursuing their education and their minimum level of education was intermediate. In order to assess the relationship among public self-consciousness, physical health and psychological well-being, a correlational study design through survey method was used in this study. A comparative study was also used to inspect the gender differences in order to determine the effect of public self-consciousness on physical health and psychological wellbeing.

Inclusion and Exclusion criteria

- Individuals between the age ranges of 18 to 26 were included and age below 18 and above 26 were excluded.
- Both male and female were included.
- Individuals belonged to upper, middle and lower socioeconomic status were included.
- Individuals with intermediate level of education were included and below or above this level were excluded.
- Those who have any physical disability were excluded.

RESULTS

In current research data of 200 university students was collected. In order to interpret the data descriptive statistics, Pearson product coefficient correlation method were applied through statistical package for social sciences (SPSS, 25). Percentages, means and standard deviations of demographic variables and characteristics were calculated by using descriptive statistics. Further, in order to determine whether male or female have high level of public self-consciousness, independent sample t-test was also applied. The standard deviation indicates the average actual distance of the scores from the mean .the PWB for males has 168.1 of Means and 18.8 of SD.While SCSR for males has 34.4 of Means and 9.2 of SD and PH for males has 2021.6 of Means and 422.2 of SD. The females PWB has 167.2 of Means and 20.8 of SD., SCSR = 41.6 of Means and 10.8 of SD and females for PH = 1900.2 of Means and 390.9 of SD.

Table 1: Summary of Socio demographic and Clinical Characteristics of the Entire Sample

Variables	f	%
Age group of participant	96	48.0
18-20	84	42.0
21-23	20	10.0
24-26		
Gender	100	50.0
Male	100	50.0
Female		
Socio economic status	8	4.0
Lower middle class	120	60.0
Middle class	69	34.5
Upper middle class	3	1.5
Elite class		
Habitat	81	40.5
Rural	119	59.5
Urban		
No. of sibling	1	5
0	5	25
1	24	12.0
2	45	22.5
3	49	24.5
4	42	21.5
5	20	10.0
6	10	5.0
7	2	1.0
8	2	1.0
9		
10		
Birth order	62	31.0
First born	84	42.0
Middle born	54	27.0
Last born		
Inhibited Eating	67	33.5
Yes	133	66.5
No		
BF consciousness	143	71.5
Yes	57	28.5
No		
Eating type	63	31.5
Restricted	11	5.5
Binge/purging	126	63.0
No		
Exercise span	65	32.5
30 min a day	29	14.5
1h a day	7	3.5
2h a day	90	45.0
Any other	9	4.5
None		

The number of counts in each cell holds 2 or more sub categories of frequencies of three age groups from 18 to 26 , in category no 1 (18-20) there are 96 (48.0%) males and females fall , in the second category no 2 (21-23)there are 84 (42.0%) , and in the last category no 3 (24-26) there are 20 (10%) males and females falls. In the gender ,100 (50%) males and 100 (50%) females participated .In socio economic status there were 8(4%)

lower middle class , 120 (60%) in middle class, 69(34.5%) falls in upper middle class and only 3(1.5%) in elite class. In the Habitat rural were 81(40.5%) ,urban 119(59.5%).

In the No. of sibling there are 10 ranges from 0 to 10...0=1(5%) ,1=5(2.5%) , 2=24(12.0%) , 3=45(22.5%) , 4=49(24.5%) ,5=42(21.0%) ,6=20(10%) ,7=10 95.05) , 8=2(1.0%) ,9=2(1.0%) and 10=0 (0%). In the Birth order .first born =62(31.0%)falls, second born=84(42.0%) and in the last born =54 (27.0%). Inhibited eating ; yes=67(33.5%), No=133(66.5%).BF consciousness ; yes =143(17.5%) , while No=57(28.5%) Eating Types in the restricted =63(31.5%) , Binge/purging=11(5.5%)and in No=126(63.0%).

Table 2: Descriptive statistics and Pearson Coefficient Correlation Analysis of study variables

Variables	M	1	2	3
PWB	167.7		.088	.378
SCSR	38.0			.322
PH	1961.5			

*p= .214, p < 0.01**N=200

From above table it can be concluded that there is significant relationship between psychological well-being and SCSR and among physical health .Further analysis indicates that Mean value of all three subscales Psychological well-being ,SCSR and in Physical health are 167.7, 38.0 and 1961.5 respectively with public self consciousness reported the most well influenced factor in physical health ,and psychological well-being .

Table 3: Pearson Product Coefficient Correlation Analysis of study groups (N males=50&N females 50)

Gender	1	2	3
Male PWB	102	4266	
PH			
Female PWB	703	366	
SCSR	168		
PH			

p> 0.05 , p< 0.01

The null hypothesis state that there correlation or any linear relationship among public self -consciousness , psychological well-being , physical health and alternative hypothesis state that there is a correlation among public self-consciousness , psychological well-being and physical health. Using the default 5% the p value or sig value 0.421 and 0.00 which is less than ,then we reject null hypothesis and conclude that there is a linear correlation .

Table 4: Levene's Test for Equal Variance of self -consciousness

Variables	T	Df	P	M	SD
Self-Consciousness	4.689	191.4	.000	6.75	1.43

The calculated test statistics for self- consciousness holds at t= -4.689 ,Respectively at 191.4 of degrees of freedom , p value is 0.000 which is greater than the default level of significance $\alpha=0,05$, this implied that we don't reject the null hypothesis and conclude that data provided no sufficient information to reject H0

Table 5: Descriptive statistics of study population: males and females

Gender	M	SD	
Male	PWB	168.1	18.8
	SCSR	34.4	9.2
	PH	2021.6	422.2
Female	PWB	167.2	20.8
	SCSR	41.6	10.8
	PH	1922.2	390.0

Note: N for females =100 , N for males=100

The standards deviation indicates the average actual distance of the scores from the Mean. The PWB for males has 168.1 of Means and 18,8 of SD . While SCSR for males has 34.4 of Means and 9.2 of SD and PH for males has 2021.6 of Means

and 422.2 of SD . The females PWB has 167.2 of Means and 20.8 of SD, SCSR =41.6 of Means and 10.8 of SD and females for PH = 1900.2 of Means and 390.9 of SD.

DISCUSSION

This section critically evaluates the significant features of the study regarding to the impact of public appearance Self-Consciousness on physical and psychological well-being among university students and also give detailed explanation of different attitudes, responses and effects across both genders i.e., males and females. According to the Kant's theory of self-consciousness, all senses must be associated to a single self. He argued that we are affected by ourselves but we are unable to sense ourselves. Through the detailed observation from theoretical perspective, this study will be very helpful for other researchers that how public appearance self-consciousness related to physical as well as psychological well-being.

Initial hypothesis-2 highlight that there is negative association between public appearance self-consciousness and physical health and it has also been explained and approved through findings. The reason behind this is quite evident and we have observed in our surroundings that in this modern era every single person is highly concerned with his appearance and also greatly influence that how others perceived him or her as a person and how he or she represents himself or herself in a public. It affects overall health physical as well as mental. Findings showed that Physical health is more affected than psychological wellbeing. When they compared their selves with other, they perceived themselves as apparently unfit for the situation. Body image dissatisfaction and fear of weight because anxiety is increasing in today's generation as well as they become more concerned about their physique and less concerned about their physical health. Furthermore, hypothesis-5 highlighted that there would be negative relationship between public self-consciousness and psychological-wellbeing. As long as the public self-consciousness is a basic emotion but it would be problematic when distorted thoughts controlled over one's mind. These distorted thoughts i.e. I'm obese than others or I'm unable to face many people caused ph

ysical health issues such as tiredness, sleep problems, odd eating patterns etc.

In the last approved hypothesis-8 that showed that public self-consciousness is more in females than males. In western countries this trend is same as in Asian countries but relatively less. Males are also conscious about appearance and engaged in many activities to modify their appearance but this ratio is more prevailing in females. It also includes social factor because society is more judgmental towards females than males. Females are bound to meet these social standards. But for males there are other standards and they are bound to meet them. This is why, across the world public appearance self-consciousness is more in females than males.

Conflict of Interest: None

Funding Source: None

REFERENCES

1. Amil, O., &Bozgeyikli, H. (2015). Investigating the relationship between the social appearance anxiety and loneliness of turkish university youth. *Journal of Studies in Social Sciences*, 11(1), 71–91.
2. Daniel, J.B., Runsey, N., and Harcourt, D. (2012). *Appearance and Exercise*.The Oxford handbook of the psychology of appearance, 295-305.
3. Fairburn, C. G., Shafran, R. and Cooper, Z. (1999).A cognitive behavioral therapy of anorexia nervosa.*Behavioral research and therapy*, 37(1), 1-13.10.1016/0022-3999(84)90083-7.
4. George,B&Stathopoulou,Anastasia,(2021). "The Price Of Social Desire and Public Self Consciousness in Luxury Consumption" ,*Journal Of Buisness Research ,Elsevier*.123.463-475.(10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.10.034).

5. Grift, T.C., et. al. (2016). Body satisfaction and physical appearance in gender dysphoria. *Archives of sexual behavior*, 45(3), 575-585. doi:10.1007/s10508-015-0614-1.
6. Heidar, F.k. (2021). "The Impairment Of Body Image of the Students of Agri Ibrahim Cecen University Faculty Of Sports Science and the Effect of the Anxiety of Caught Corona Disease on their Nutrition Habits", *Shanlax International Journal Of Education*, 9, 52-58
7. Kim Rounsefell, S. G. (2019). Social media, body image and food choices in healthy young adults: A mixed methods systematic review. *Wiley-Blackwell Online Open*. doi:10.1111/1747-0080.12581
8. L P MacNeill, L. A. (2017). The role of personality in body image dissatisfaction and disordered eating: discrepancies between men and women. *National Library for Medicine*. doi:10.1186/s40337-017-0177-8
9. Mehmet Avci, C. K. (2018). Gender Differences in Perception of Body, Expressions of Body Image and Body Image Coping Strategies among Turkish Adolescents. *International Journal of Curriculum and Instruction* 10(2), 30-44. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1207211.pdf>
10. Mohiyeddini, C&bauer, S. (2013). "Public Self –Consciousness moderates link between displacement behavior and experience of stress in women", *The International Journal on the Biology of Stress*, 16 (4). 384-393. doi:10.3109/10253890.2012.755171.
11. Moneva, J.C., Genorga, J.G., and Solon, E.M. (2020). Physical Appearance Anxiety and Social Relations. *International Journal of Social Science*, 8(1) 10.5296/ijssr.v8i1.16564.
12. M.Zakhoura, C. H. (2021). Differences in the Associations between Body Dissatisfaction and Eating Outcomes by Gender? A Lebanese Population Study. *ScienceDirect*, 134 -144. Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S039876202100050X>
13. Nadia Bevan, K. S.-Y.-H. (2021). The Relationship between Weight Stigma, Physical Appearance Concerns, and Enjoyment and Tendency to Avoid Physical Activity and Sport. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. doi: 10.3390/ijerph18199957
14. OzcanDogan, P. B. (2018). Body Image in Adolescents and Its Relationship to Socio-Cultural Factors. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice*, 561–577. doi: <https://doi.org/10.12738/estp.2018.3.0569>
15. Pan, J. (2022, January). The Influence of Social Media on Women's Objectified Body Consciousness and Body Dissatisfaction. In 2021 International Conference on Social Development and Media Communication (SDMC 2021), (pp. 330-333). Atlantis Press.
16. POP, (2016). " Self Esteem and Body Image Perception in a Sample of University Students ", *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 31-44.
17. Ryckman, R.M., Robbins, M.A., Thornton, B., Kaczor, L.M. and Gavton, S.L. (1991). Public self-consciousness and Physique stereotyping. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 17(4), 400-405. doi:10.1177/0146167291174007.
18. Self-consciousness: Definition, examples, & tips to overcome it. The Berkeley Well-Being Institute. (n.d.). <https://www.berkeleywellbeing.com/self-consciousness.html>.
19. Self-Consciousness, Private Vs. Public | Encyclopedia.com. (n.d.). <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/applied-and-social-sciences-magazines/self-consciousness-private-vs-public>.
20. Smith, C. (2016). Social Anxiety and Public Self Consciousness as Predictors of Appearance Accuracy. *Psi Chi Journal of Undergraduate Research*, 12(2). 39-45.
21. Smith, J. (2020, May 12). Self-consciousness. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/self-consciousness>.
22. Turner, R.G., Gililand, L., and Klein, H.M. (1981). Self-consciousness, evaluation of physical characteristics and physical attractiveness. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 15(2), 182-190. doi:10.1016/0092-6566(81)90017-9.
23. Zhou, X., & Krishnan, A. (2019). What predicts exercise maintenance and well-being? Examining the influence of health-related psychographic factors and social media communication. *Health communication*, 34(6), 589-597.