



*Research Paper*

**A CORRELATIONAL STUDY ON BODY IMAGE AND SELF ESTEEM  
AMONG EMPLOYEES OF MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS**

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**Abstract**

Numerous meticulous studies have been conducted on body image perception and self-esteem. This is due to fact that we give a great deal of importance to how we appear to ourselves and more importantly to others, what they think and say about us. The relation between body image and self-esteem was on continuous research but the employee milieu was not much discussed. The present study aims to find relation between body image and self-esteem and to find the gender difference in the perception of body image and self-esteem among the employees working at Multinational Corporation. The participants of the study were the employees working at various MNCs in Thiruvananthapuram. The data was collected using Perceived Body Image Scale Part-I and Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale and it was analysed using correlation test and t test. The results show that there exists correlation between body image and self-esteem, also there is significant difference in the perception of body image among male and female employees. The study notably showed relation between body image and self-esteem..

Key words: Body image, Self-esteem, Multinational Corporation, employees.

**INTRODUCTION**

Body image refers to the multifaceted psychological experience of embodiment, especially but not exclusively on one's physical appearances. Body image encompasses one's body related self-perceptions and attitudes which includes thoughts, beliefs, feelings and behaviors. A great amount of study has been conducted on body image perception and self-esteem. This is due to fact that we give a great deal of importance to how we appear to ourselves and more importantly to others, what they think and say

about us. Our external appearance influences us at every point of our life. This influence irrespective of gender affects how we carry ourselves, our self-esteem and confidence etc. Women especially have been the Centre of target of this influence. Some idealized standards have been set for women that they look thin to be more [1] and men have also been undergoing cultural changes urging men to conform to thin and muscular ideal has been intensified since late 1970s and men are becoming more dissatisfied with their bodies or want to increase their muscle tone etc. A recent survey showed that fully 41 % of men (and 55% of women) were dissatisfied with their weight, while 44% of men (and 63% of women) were afraid of becoming fat. It has also been suggested that certain male subcultures that emphasize slimness and weight loss may promote body dissatisfaction, and thus put men at increased risk for eating disorders Before the twentieth century, Girls did not organize their thinking around their bodies; but today they are worrying about the contour of their body because they believe it is the ultimate expression of themselves [2].

In recent years, clinical psychology and psychiatry have dominated the study of body image, particularly investigations and applications pertaining to eating disorders among young women and men. Indeed, this popular area of research has served as an important catalyst for body image research in other areas. Movies and magazines began to influence a

woman 's body image by creating a visual for women to model their appearance leading them

to worry about the way, they –looked. Women began to use their appearance through clothing, body image, and make up top express their inner convictions, pride, affiliations,

identities, insecurities, and other weaknesses [3] Similarly, men too are bombarded by media pressure.

The 21st century is marking a great advancement in almost all areas, especially the media had caused people to have self-doubt. From youth to old age, irrespective of gender, have become target of powerful, insistent messages from the mass media provoking self-doubt. Some of the messages are subtle, for example, the use of near-

perfect models as exemplars for ordinary women and men, automatic losers by comparison. Some of the messages are as blatant. Insecurity sells, but so does hope. The other side of the media's negative message is a seemingly positive one: salvation through diets, clever "makeovers," fashion, exercise, and the startling possibility of actual physical change. The power of media, the changing lifestyles and relationships often cause much trouble to people, especially to adolescents and young adults, particularly the working class.

The influence of body image or the ideal body is a delicate issue which requires immediate attention as dissatisfaction with one 's body is often seen as a correlate of eating disorders. This has been demonstrated by the high prevalence of eating disorders in groups in which there is an increased emphasis on maintaining a thin, ideal body. These may even end up where people take up dangerous measures which might destroy their life itself. One important means by which physical self-perceptions are enhanced is through exercise involvement. Indeed, physical self-perceptions have consistently been related to exercise from adolescence onwards.

However, this mediating property of physical self-worth has not been examined in employee populations. Only a few studies are conducted on Asians especially on Indians, whom try to adopt western culture and within India the least worked upon states are Kerala in factors relating to body image and self-esteem. The most affected by these trends are the employees at Multinational Corporation; since they need to be updated well according to international standards for their job needs and the general public often try to adopt the culture of employees working at Multinational Corporation. They prove to be model for working class people.

The study was conducted in order to find the relation between body image and self-esteem and to find the gender difference in their perception among the employees of a Multinational Corporation.

## II. AIMS AND OBJECTIEVES

\*To study the relation between body image and self-esteem.

\*To study the difference in perception of body image in female and male employees at MNC

\*To study the difference in self-esteem in female and male employees at MNC.

### III. METHODOLOGY

**III.a Study Design** : Correlational study

#### III.b Sampling Technique

The sampling technique used was convenience sampling. It is a type of non-probability sampling that involves the sample being drawn from that part of the population that is close to hand. That is, a sample population selected because it is readily available and convenient, as researchers is drawing on relationships or networks to which they have easy access. The researcher used such a sample cannot scientifically generalize about the total

population from this sample because it would not be representative enough. For example, if

the interviewer was to conduct such a survey at a shopping centre early in the morning on a

given day, the people that he/she could interview would be limited to those given there at that

given time, which would not represent the views of other members of society in such an area,

if the survey was to be conducted at different times of day and several times per week. This

type of sampling is most useful for pilot testing. Credibility of a researcher's results by convenience sampling will depend on convincing the reader that the sample chosen equates

to a large degree of the population from which they are drawn [5].

### III. c Participants

The sample for body image and self-esteem was selected from people working at various Multinational Corporation in Trivandrum and taken from mostly middle and upper economic classes. The total sample size for this study is 120; 60 young adult males and 60 young adult female.

TYPE OF THE SAMPLE	SAMPLE SIZE	AGE GROUP
Male young adult	60	20-30
Female young adult	60	20-30

### III. d Inclusion Criteria

- ☑ Both males and females of ages that ranges between 20 to 30 years.
- ☑ Those who are working at MNC.
- ☑ Can read, write and speak English language.

### III. e Exclusion Criteria

- ☑ Those having any congenital, developmental, psychiatric illness or neurotic tendencies.
- ☑ Those who are under medications for any illness.

Instruments used for the study

The tools used for the study were Perceived body image scale part-II and Rosenberg Self esteem Scale to measure the perception of body image and to measure self-esteem respectively among employees working at Multinational Corporation. Perceived Body Image Scale Part-II (PBI-II). The questionnaire consists of 21 questions, covering the various domains of body image perception, each have 4 responses Always, Sometimes,

Rarely and Never. It is designed as a self-reporting measure and the individual were free to select his/her choice from within the four options according to his/her self-appraisal.

### **III. f .Reliability**

The tool is found to possess good internal consistency (Cronbach Alpha (Boys) =.79; N=244;

(Girls) =.84; N=198).

### **III. g Validity**

Items of the perceived body image scale are formulated after a thorough survey of literature

regarding various aspects of body image. Each item is written keeping in mind specific factors and conditions that have been identified as influencing self-perception of body image factors.

### **III. h Scoring**

There are total of 21 items. It was scored as a Likert scale. There were four choices (Always,

Sometimes, Rarely and Never) for each item and it was given a score of 4, 3, 2, and 1

respectively. Total score was calculated by summing up the obtained values of all items in the

scale. The total scale score ranges from 21 to 84. Interpretation of the total score is: higher

the score, lower the perception of body image, i.e. the scoring is interpreted in reverse order.

The cut off value is 42. Scores above 42 are interpreted as high self-perception of body image

and score below 42 are interpreted as a low self-perception of body image.

The Rosenberg self-esteem scale [6]

Rosenberg Self-Esteem is the most widely used measure of self-esteem and it has received

more psychometric analysis and empirical validation than any other self-esteem measure. The

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is a self-report global self-esteem. It is 10 item scales that ask

individuals to rate themselves using 4 categories (strongly agree to strongly disagree). The 10 items can be answered on a four points or five point scales. In the present study a four point scale is used.

The scale generally has high reliability: test-retest correlations are typically in the range of

.82 to .88, and Cronbach's alpha for various and samples are in the range of .77 to .88.

Studies have demonstrated both a unidimensional and a two-factor (self-confidence and self

deprecating) structure to the scale. Rosenberg (1965) [6,7] demonstrated that his scale was a

Guttman scale by obtaining high enough reproducibility (.92) and scalability coefficients (.72).

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is closely connected with the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory and is reported to have good construct validity and convergent validity.

Scoring

The questionnaires were administered to 120 subjects of which 60 were male and 60 female

young adults. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is made up of 10 faces-valid items, 5 positively worded and 5 negatively worded. Positive items - 1, 2, 4, 6, 7; strongly agree = 3, agree = 2, disagree = 1, and strongly agree = 0. Negative items (which are noted with the asterisks) - 3, 5, 8, 9, 10; Strongly agree = 0, agree = 1, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree =

3. The scale ranges from 0-30, with 30 indicating the highest score possible.

### **III. i PROCEDURE**

A brief preview of method and procedure adopted for the present study is given below. The

present study aims to understand the relationship between body image, self-esteem and physical activity.

The participants were employees from various Multinational Corporation in Thiruvananthapuram. They were first given informed consent briefly explaining the purpose of the study and the confidentiality maintained about personal information and the

results and asking their consent for participation in the study . Personal

data sheet was provided . The perception of body image of the

participants were assessed using Perceived body image scale part-II. The questionnaires were

administered to 120 subjects of whom 60 were male and 60 female young adults. There are

total of 21 items. It was scored as a Likert scale. There were four choices (Always,

Sometimes, Rarely and Never) for each item and it was given a score of 4, 3, 2, and 1



respectively. Total score was calculated by summing up the obtained values of all items in the

scale. The total scale score ranges from 21 to 84. Interpretation of the total score is: higher

the score, lower the perception of body image, i.e. the scoring is interpreted in reverse order.

The cut off value is 42. Scores above 42 are interpreted as high self-perception of body image

and score below 42 are interpreted as a low self-perception of body image. Secondly, the self

esteem of the same participants was assessed using Rosenberg's self-esteem scale. The

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is made up of 10 faces-valid items, 5 positively worded and 5

negatively worded. Positive items - 1, 2, 4, 6, 7; strongly agree = 3, agree = 2, disagree = 1,

and strongly agree = 0. Negative items (which are noted with the asterisks) - 3, 5, 8, 9, 10;

Strongly agree = 0, agree = 1, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 3. The scale ranges from

0-30, with 30 indicating the highest score possible.

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

The data analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version

22.0. Student 's t-test was used to find the differences between male and female employees.

### **III. JETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The purpose and methods of the study were explained to participants both orally and via a

written information sheet. They were asked to complete a form indicating their willingness to

take part in the study and their understanding that they could withdraw at any time. The

anonymity was maintained as it was not necessary that the participants reveal their name and

confidentiality was maintained about the personal details and the results obtained.

#### **IV RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviation, were calculated for body image and self-esteem. Independent t-tests were used to compare groups. The alpha was set at .05 for all statistical analyses of the Perceived Body Image Scale Part-II and Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale. The demographic information was collected regarding age, gender, days physically activity and Occupation. Around 120 participants were included. The study measures the correlation between perceived body image and self-esteem and the difference among male and female employees working at MNC in perception of body image and self- esteem. The main hypotheses tested were:

- 1) There is relationship between perceived body image and self-esteem.
  
- 2) There is a difference in the perception of body image of female and male employees at MNC.
  
- 3) There is a difference in the self-esteem of body image of female and male employees at MNC.

The first objective was that is positive correlation between body image perception and self- esteem MNC employees. According to this the increase or

decrease in one variable will have similar effect in the other variable under consideration. Here, we mean if a person has high perception about their body image the person will have high self-esteem. The result obtained after statistical analysis is represented in table.

Table 1 *Relation between body image and self-esteem*

		Body image	Self-Esteem
Body image	Pearson Correlation	1	-.263**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	120	120
Self-Esteem	Pearson Correlation	-.263**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	120	120

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

The hypothesis was tested using Pearson 's correlation. The null hypothesis was that there is no correlation between the perception of body image and self-esteem of MNC employees.

The calculated Pearson's correlation coefficient is -.263 and is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), which means that there is a relation between the perception of body image and self- esteem of MNC employees. It is negative correlation since the result obtained for perceived body image is in reverse order. The high score in perceived body image scale means that the person has a low perception about his/her body image. The negative correlation thus

means that if a person scores low in self-esteem, the person scores high in perception of body image which in result the person has low perception about his/her body image. Thus the hypothesis is found to be true.

Body image and Self-esteem are interrelated issues that affect people throughout their life span. We give a great deal of importance to how we appear to ourselves and more importantly to others, what they think and say about us. Our external appearance influences us at every point of our life. This influence irrespective of gender affects how we carry ourselves, our self-esteem and confidence etc.

This is consistent with the studies done by Rosenberg (1965). Self-esteem is a positive or negative attitude toward the self. Rosenberg believes high self-esteem means the individual respects herself and low self-esteem implies self-rejection, self-dissatisfaction, and the self- picture are disagreeable (Rosenberg, 1965).

The second objective was that there is a difference in the perception of body image and self- esteem of female and male among employees working at MNC. This arises due to the fact that women are generally dissatisfied with their physical appearance. This dissatisfaction can come from parents, schools, peers, and even the media. This has been happening over the past 30 years and is not surprising since the media has depicted thinner and thinner women . The media plays a significant role in how women view their bodies. Thin women are associated as healthy individuals with good looks, desirability, and happy relationships. Our bodies are represented as personal billboards providing others with first impressions. As women try to meet this unrealistic expectation of thinness, eating disorders can impact women who are trying to reach unrealistic goals. Over 90% of severe eating disorder cases are currently diagnosed among adolescent and young adult white females . Women who are dissatisfied with their bodies often reflect a poor body image resulting in low self-esteem.

The result obtained after statistical analysis is represented in Table 1.

Table 2 Mean, standard deviation, degrees of freedom and t value of scores

Body image	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	d.f	t value
	Female	60	47.25	10.484	118	.005*
Male	60	41.58	11.325	117.305	.005*	

\*Significant at .05 level (two tailed)

It may be seen from the mean score presented in the table 2 that there is difference in the perception of body image among male and female MNC employees. In order to find out whether these differences are statistically significant, t test was done on the data and the results obtained are shown in the same table as t value.

It can be seen from the analysis that there exists a significant difference in the perception of body image among male and female MNC employees. The calculated t value is .005 and the critical value/table value for t is .05 (two-tailed) 1% significance level. Since the calculated value for t is less than the critical value, the hypothesis is accepted.

As presented in the table 2 the mean score of female employees are 47.25 and that of male employees are 41.58. Interpretation of the total score is: higher the score, lower the perception of body image, i.e. the scoring is interpreted in reverse order. The cut off value is 42. Scores above 42 are interpreted as high self-perception of body image and score below 42 are interpreted as a low self-

perception of body image. Since the female employees scored above the cut off value it can be interpreted they are having low perception of body image. While male employees have score below the cut off value meaning they are having high self- perception of body image than the female employees. This again can be interpreted as men being more satisfied with their body image than females.

This is consistent with several studies (Silberstein, Striegel-Moore, Timko, & Rodin, 1988; Cash, Winstead & Janda, 1986)[8, 9], men displayed a more positive body images than did women. Sex differences in acceptable body size may be influenced by societal definitions of appropriate and attractive shapes for men and women. There has been criticism generally of society for its emphasis on slender female physique and negative stereotyping.

The third objective was that there is a significant difference in self-esteem among male and female employees working at MNC. Self-esteem, regarded as the critical global indicator of the self-system (Marsh, 1997), serves a pivotal function in employees lives, due to its close association with mental health and emotional adjustment. Specifically, low levels of self- esteem are often implicated in mental illness, such as depression (American Psychiatric Association, 1994), and are associated with poor health behaviours (Torres & Fernandez, 1995). In contrast, high levels of self-esteem are associated with several positive traits, such as independence, leadership and adaptability (Wylie, 1989). Research evidence also suggests that self-esteem moderates the relationship between stress and illness (Rector & Roger, 1996). There is also research evidence suggesting that self-esteem is significantly related to job performance. According to Judge, Erez and Bono (1998), self-esteem is linked to job performance because employees with positive views of themselves are more motivated to perform well in their jobs.

The result obtained after statistical analysis is represented in Table 1.

Table 3 Means, standard deviation, degrees of freedom and t value of scores

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	d.f	t value
Self-Esteem	Female	60	22.13	4.288	118	.899
	Male	60	22.03	4.326	117.991	.899

It may be seen from the mean score presented in the table 3 that there is no much difference in the self-esteem among male and female MNC employees. In order to find out whether the findings are statistically significant, t test was done on the data and the results obtained are shown in the same table as t value.

It can be seen from the analysis that there is no significant difference in the self-esteem among male and female MNC employees. The calculated t value is .899 and the critical value/table value for t is .05 (two- tailed) 1% significance level. Since the calculated value for t is more than the critical value, the hypothesis is rejected.

This is inconsistent with the study conducted by Furnham, Badmin, & Sneade (2002) [10] the hypothesis that those who are dissatisfied with their bodies have lower self-esteem, regardless of the direction of body image dissatisfaction, was supported; they found that body image dissatisfaction is more closely related to low self-esteem for girls than for boys. This result confirms research on the relationship between body satisfaction and self-esteem showing that female body image satisfaction is highly correlated with self-esteem (Lerner et al., 1973). However, it does not replicate the findings of Silberstein et al. (1988) who found that there was no relationship between female body dissatisfaction and self-esteem, which Silberstein et al. reasoned was because of the normative discontent mechanism described earlier.

This may be due to the fact that here the participants are MNC employees which may boost their self-esteem. Females are overcoming occupational and social barriers. Recent entry of females almost in all areas of occupations suggests that females may be viewed as having equal abilities needed for successful performance thus increasing their self-esteem. Thus, unfavourable stereotypes of others can have a negative impact on women, regardless of their self-esteem. In addition, occupational barriers to females' success are decreasing.

## V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The literature on body image and self-esteem remains limited, despite a surge of recent interest in this area. In the current study was set out to examine the relation between body image and self-esteem and the gender difference of the two variables among 120 employees working at MNC in Thiruvananthapuram. The data was collected after giving informed consent. The participants were provided with personal data sheet and the tools used for the study i.e. Perceived Body Image Scale Part-II and The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. The statistical analysis was done using SPSS version, 22.0. The techniques used for the purpose were correlation test and t-test. Major finding of the study was the existence of a relation between body image and self-esteem. Also it was seen that there existed a gender difference in the perception of body image, female employees are seen to have lower perception about their body image than men. These findings reinforce the speculations of many theorists that today's women are under increased societal and media pressures to meet an ever more unrealistic body ideal. This study adds further evidence to the growing literature on the pervasiveness of concerns and dissatisfaction that individuals experience with regard to their weight and appearance. A significant percentage of the men and women sample were engaged in frequent attempts to alter their weight or size in pursuit of cultural ideals. Given these findings, it is possible that a large segment of the "healthy" young adult population may be at risk for the development of an eating disorder. Educational programs should be directed at informing women and men about the typical patterns and pervasiveness of body distortion. Confrontation of sociocultural norms is



critically needed. Finally, these findings clearly indicate that issues related to body image can no longer be considered only women's issues; sociocultural expectations with regard to appearance affect men as well as women.

### **V.a Major Findings Of The Study**

The major findings of the study are that there exists a relation between perception of body image and self-esteem. Another important finding of the study was that there is a significant difference in the perception of body image among male and female employees working at MNC. But it was seen that there is no significant difference in the self-esteem of male and female employees.

### **V.b Implications Of Study**

Implications of this study as with many in this area, are far reaching. In an ideal world, the media should vary the size and the attractiveness of the models they employ, to represent the diversity of shapes and sizes irrespective of their gender. However, this is unlikely to happen, especially considering the widespread belief among advertisers that thinness sells“ (Halliwell & Dittmar, 2004). In June 2000, the U.K. government held a body image summit to discuss the need for policies preventing the use of ultrathin models as media images, but there remains little sign of any policy changes forthcoming in the near future. Instead, it may be more fruitful to focus on giving adolescents tools to deconstruct the sociocultural influences they encounter.

Psycho-educational interventions in school and colleges could focus on presenting and reinforcing a critical stance toward beauty standards, in order to prevent or at least reduce high levels of internalization and social comparison. Educational interventions to address body image and self-esteem encourage adolescents to develop a positive self-image and promote overall psychological health, healthy eating, and regular physical activity.

Recently the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) announced that

India will finally have its own size chart by 2021. After 14 countries successfully completing national sizing surveys, India will be among countries like USA, Canada, Mexico and US to have its own standardized size chart. The project is still in its initial stage, women are already hoping that it will help break stereotypes around ideal body shape and structure (Times of India, March 5, 2018). This may help in breaking stereotypes regarding body image.

Social media and contemporary digital technologies are the playing field of today's youth, places where lessons are learned, attitudes are formed, and body image concerns can be cultivated and metastasized into convictions. Research, guided by the model presented in this paper, is needed to illuminate the processes and effects of social media on adolescent girls and young adult women. Theoretically-based studies can offer insights into the subtle, striking effects that new media exert on young adult women, while also generating strategies to help women and men of a variety of ethnic groups adopt healthier attitudes toward their bodies. The insights of researchers in the media and body image arenas should be harnessed to generate new empirical studies.

### **V.c Limitations Of The Study**

As it included working class people mostly falling in middle class background the study may not be applied to other class of people i.e. non-working class and people from lower middle class background. Also it can't be completely generalised over MNC employees as the data was collected from only a particular class of MNC employees in a specific district. The sample size also can be considered as one of the limitation of the study.

Another limitation is that it was unable to calculate an objective measure of adiposity for the participants. Previous research has shown that adiposity levels can prospectively predict the development of body dissatisfaction among middle-class U.S. adolescent girls, an effect apparently separate from

the sociocultural pathway of pressure to be thin“ (Stice & Whitenton, 2002). Nevertheless, we should reiterate that an estimated 47% of variance in body satisfaction in the current study was directly attributable to individual differences in the use of media models as social comparison targets without considering participants' adiposity levels.

#### **V. d Scope For Further Research**

The study is confined to MNC population. Similar studies can be conducted among other populations as well like adolescents' etc. physical activity can be measure along with body image and self-esteem as it is one of the determining factors in the perception of body image. Studies can be done in comparing physically active males and females to those who are not active. A greater comparison can be made between the two groups. This allows for data at each end of the spectrum. The study can also be carried out between all age groups. This would focus on body image problems that could occur as the females and males gets older and may not have the resources they once had while in college. Develop, test, and validate a self-esteem instrument that relates to physical activity to use with females and males who are physically active and who are not physically active. Every available measure was used to find a more recent self-esteem scale yet none was found. Physical activity is a specialized discipline and must have its own survey to measure self-esteem with physical activity. The sociocultural pressures that may affect body image concerns and the resulting body change strategies among males warrant further investigation as men are experiencing growing levels of body image dissatisfaction, we may witness undesirable public health effects from this trend. Future research should examine primary school children, to determine at what age children become aware of sociocultural beauty ideals and to examine the mechanisms that moderate their impact. By extending or adapting the model presented here to even younger samples, it may be possible to provide a basis for theoretically informed educational programs that target girls before puberty and help prevent the decline in body

image and self-esteem that currently is so typical of their middle adolescence.

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