

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN IDEAL PERCEPTION AND PERCEIVED PREFERENCES OF BODY IMAGE

A

Thesis submitted

in the partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS
IN
PSYCHOLOGY
(COUNSELING)**



Submitted By:
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UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF

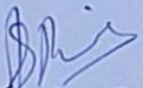
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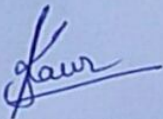
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CERTIFICATE

This is certify that the thesis entitled "**Gender Differences in Ideal Perception and Perceived Preferences of Body Image**" being submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the award of degree of **Master of Arts in Psychology**, submitted in **the Schools of Humanities and Social Science, Thapar University, Patiala** confide work carried out under the supervision of **Dr.(Mrs) Surinder Kaur**, visiting professor, School of Humanities and Social Science, Thapar University, Thapar University, Patiala and that no part of this project has been submitted for the award of any degree.


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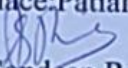
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CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

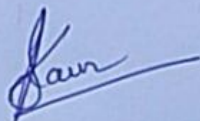
I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis entitled, "**Gender Differences in Ideal Perception and Perceived Preferences of Body Image**" in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of degree of **Master of Arts in Psychology**, submitted in the **School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Thapar University, Patiala** is an authentic record of my own work carried out under the supervision and guidance of **Dr.(Mrs) Surinder Kaur**, Visiting professor, School of Humanities and Social Science, Thapar University, Patiala and referred other researcher's work which are duly listed in the reference section.

The matter embodied in the thesis has not formed the basis for the reward of any other degree of this or any other university.

Date: 18th May, 2018

Place: Patiala

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This is to certify that the above declaration made by the student concerned is correct and true to best of my knowledge.



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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted on 196 males and females to find out the ideal perception of the oneself and the preferences of the opposite gender towards their body image. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data obtained. The study found that females were more accurate in judging the opposite gender's preferences for the female's body image at both the younger age (20-29) and even at the elder age (30-40) when compared to the males who showed much of un-surety towards the female's preference for the male body figure.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Physical appearance is taken into concern on a very serious note. Nowadays attractive and unattractive body images are the topic which so commonly discussed. Attractiveness and unattractiveness have a very huge impact on society as well as on the individual in multiple contexts. Society perceives attractive individuals as intellectually high and also reports that attractive individual has multiple abilities to deal with society in a better manner. They are also considered to be active and healthy people. Their activeness represents that they are very smarter to deal with every situation. It is also said that having good body image leads to be having a positive attitude towards self which makes the person a happy living being. They are found to have high self-esteem but on the other hand people having dissatisfaction with their body image and who are not attractive are found to have multiple problems like anxiety, eating disorder, binge eating, insecure to deal in society, feels shy to come in front, sometimes withdrawn and self-conscious about themselves. In some of the jobs also attractive people get preference over their counterparts.

Thorndike (1920) talked about body images and introduced the concept of 'HALO EFFECT'. This halo effect defines that people who are having attractive personality are called to be having a high intellectual level. With the development of smart technology and impact of mass media the obsession with better body image has risen. For example usual perception of female's ideal body image is to be thin and for the male, ideal image is to be muscular. Dissatisfaction with the body image may cause several problems like anxiety, performing excessive exercises, eating disorders, escape from public places, and mood disorders. Spotlight (2011) collected the data in Ireland on the basis of body image perception and

presented the report that out of total population 61% of adults and 22% of the children were found to be obese. He represented that in such cases it is difficult to the person to perceive his/her ideal body image positively who becomes obese at the very early stage of the life. Not attaining the ideal image further leads to having a negative body image perception; they start feeling dissatisfied with their body image. Dissatisfaction attitude gives rise to distorted thinking pattern.

Scholars have found that mass media is playing a vital role in the perception and preference of the ideal body image. It tries to represents which kind of person is preferred by the opposite gender. Swami & others (2011) found that media has an impact on society about the beauty of the body because it shows the ideal images and these images are from the celebrity culture, which today's generation idealizes. Hence the importance of media in affecting the society's behavior and their thought pattern towards their own body image and also towards the preference of body image of others. Many surveys have been done on ideal body image and it is found that people are unable to find their ideal body image and women are high on this rate. Females happen to skip the meal, take medicine, and perform excessive exercises to avoid getting obese and on the other hand, males try to use protein supplements. They also perform excessive exercises to get idealized body image. Due to the rise of the ideal body image preferences the increase of eating disorders is seen. Eating disorder is found more in female dancers, models, students as compared to other females of the same age group as per a study by Thornton (1997). He found that women are idealized with a thin figure and if not been able maintain this they get low on their self-esteem and become self-conscious physically, have anxiety regarding their looks.

Garner (1980) reported differences in the view of males and females and how they look at body images. According to Furnham (1997), males considered the female as unhealthy who

are underweight and overweight. Females who are underweight are considered as less sexy and unattractive, and females who are overweight are considered that they will have problem with reproduction.

Rozin (1985) stated that females get dissatisfaction towards their own body image due to the distorted preference of males giving rise to eating disorder. Females perceive themselves as overweight even when they are normal or are underweight (Khor, 2009). Their distorted thinking about body image is leading to rising of eating disorder.

In the opinion of Feingold (1998) dissatisfaction trend is increasing in the women towards their own body image. Mohamad (2014) reported that the school counselors can help the adolescent to have a positive body image. His research work at school of Lebanese found female adolescent scoring high on dissatisfaction with their body image. This is the reason that the females were more likely to involve in dieting, weight loss, eating disorder. Female adolescent also reported that in any public place they start comparing themselves with female body figure of others. They also reported that females get the pressure from society, family, peers to have a thinner body image due to which they engage in weight loss. Males were also found dissatisfied with their body images 44% of boys were engaged in weight gain and 59.4% females engaged in weight loss.

Harrison & Pope (2000) from three different demographic areas i.e. Austria, Paris and Boston found that males were having misperception towards their own body image and towards the actual preference of the male body image by females. The males think that females prefer high muscularity level in the male body and this distorted thinking of males puts them to develop the disorder of muscle (dysmorphic disorder) and eating disorder as well as anabolic steroid abuse.

Various other factors such as cultural, social, interpersonal experience, physical characteristics, personality attributes, appearance schematic processing, internal dialogues,

body image emotions and self-regulatory strategic behavior were studied by Mckinley (1999). The study explains from the feminist theory that society is having some standards about the body image and if the female is able to meet those standards of the society then the female is satisfied with her body image.

RESEARCH GAP

Most of the studies conducted are concentrating on the self-body image of the individuals but not very clear whether the others also feel the same about them. The present study is taken to compare the ideal perception and preferred perception of the opposite gender towards each other's body images. Objectives of the study are discussed in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

James (2015) conducted a study on the perception of ideal male and ideal female's body shapes. Male's perception towards the female preference for male's body shape was accurately predicted but females were not able to clarify the preferences of males towards their body shape. The study was conducted using the interactive sessions on the computer program based on same and opposite sex.

The research in three places, Austria, Paris and Boston on the real preferences of women towards the male body shape and their perception of the males towards the preference of females for the male body shape (Harrison, 2000). The author found that males overestimate the female preference that they prefer male should have a body with 27lb, 12 kg more muscles than they have but women's actual preference was a very ordinary look of male body shape.

The study by Yearul (2009) on the relationship between perceived body image and recorded body mass index among Kuwaiti female university students found, that female's perceived body image and their ideal images were having a major discrepancy. Females with overweight and underweight both were having dissatisfaction with their body image. They perceive themselves as overweight and in consequence, they have eating disorders.

Renata (2012), investigated perception of body image among Aboriginal and non-aboriginal Australian women and found that Aboriginal Australian women were obese but predicted themselves to be correct and other group of non-aboriginal Australian women were dissatisfied with their body image and were unable to predict themselves correctly. Naana (2009), surveyed on male and female of Ghanaian to find the ideal image of opposite gender. He found that females were highly dissatisfied with their body image. Females of Ghanaian

college have a schemas about unhealthy as obese for both the genders but on males part he found that they considers underweight as unhealthy. He also found that according to scientific research mass media plays an important role in the body image disturbance and also in rise of eating disorder. Females' dissatisfaction with their body image lead to their indulgence in negative body image, eating disorder, and concern for health behavior and feeling of shame, anxiety, negative thoughts due to their distorted body image.

Berk (1997), suggested that self-esteem changes the person's behavior. Mohammad (2014), pointed out those female students of the Lebanese were high on body dissatisfaction than males. According to the report, females considered themselves as heavier even though they were underweight and were high on binge eating. Female also perceive that thinner body image looks attractive to males and on part of males they wants to gain the weight.

Maggie (2010), found that male and females both are dissatisfied with their body image. Males wanted to have heavy muscles and females reported that their reason for distorted body image is standards of the society.

Media also plays a great role in rising of eating disorders in a very early stage of life of an individual. It also plays a role in the disturbance of the body image perception and the preference (Brenda 1999). The ideal image representing media and individuals own body shape is different due to which 60% of school female students and 80% of university female students are indulging in the weight loss.

Cash (2002), defines that word body dissatisfaction by taking two terms; body image investment and body image evaluation. Body image investment means what is the perception of an individual about his own body and body image evaluation means, how much an individual is satisfied with own body image. Cash & Pruzinky reported that concept of the body image is rising along with negative effect on self-esteem and adjustment problems.

Thomas (2002) in his study found that concept of the body image is affecting the quality of the life experience in multiple ways. Dissatisfaction with body image is creating dissatisfaction among individuals, also giving rise to the eating disorders, emotional state of the mind and also relationship disturbances with same and opposite genders. Understanding body image historically and at the contemporary perspective was introduced by Paul Schilder (1990), Fisher(1990) and Fruzinsky (2002). Lind (2002), explained socio expectancy theory and its role in body image preference and perception. It states that cultural values affect the behavior of an individual towards others and also to the self perception. Whereas David (2002) reported that parents behavior leads to their children to experience undifferentiated and intermingled with their parent's image.

Nita (2002) discusses the causes why females are higher on dissatisfaction with their body image than males because males' dissatisfaction is thought to be linked to mind and females' is connected to body, so males do not analyze their body more than females do.

The adolescence is the age where boys and girls both go into bodily changes. Girls during the puberty in early adolescent gets increase in weight which creates negative body image and puts them into the need of maintaining the body shape for which girls start having eating disorders (Micheal,2002).

Tiggemann (2002) gave importance to the media's vital role in the life of the individual. He estimated 83% of females are reading fashion magazine which provides them new trends that how they should look and what should be their ideal image by which they get indulge into losing the weight by various activities like binge eating, skipping the meal, excess of exercise. Media represents that female should be young, thin and lean on other hand males should be having heavy muscles, which is affecting the generation at high cost.

Women who want to be thin are low on self – esteem and resulted to have high self consciousness, phobic, anxiety, and body dissatisfaction (Thornton, 1997), eating disorder

anorexia nervosa is founded more common in female dancers, models students related to other female of their similar age group (Garner, 1980). Underweight female is considered to be less sexy and attractive and overweight is considered to be having reproductive problem (Furnham, 1997). Female's dissatisfaction towards their own body figure is due to male's distortion preference, which leads them to indulge in dieting, rises the eating disorder (Rozin, 1985). Females perceive themselves as normal or overweight even when they are underweight, which is putting them into eating disorders or dieting (Khor, 2009). American black males were more attracted towards the heavier females. The males reported that females who are heavier are more likely to have maturity (Cunningham, 1995).

Females want to have thin body figure and this dissatisfaction attitude with their body image is due socio-culture and psychological factors (Wong, 2013). Female ideal perception of being thin is leading them to have eating disorder and over exercise (Furnham, 2002). According to males, females who are medium build are more attractive, sexy and healthy. Not only body figure is perceived but waist to hip ratio is also taken into concern by males (Singh, 1993).

Female are dissatisfied with their figure because of having thin ideal figure. It is also found that due to dissatisfaction with body figure the female have mood disorders as well as eating disorders (Leora Pinhas, 1998).

Physical attractiveness correlates are produced by expectance effect. It was also seen that women who are maintained are hit on by men, means that females who are maintained are preferred by the males. And he also found that females who are physically attractive are meant to be more social than other females (Feingold, 1992). Males are more satisfied with their body images than females. He also found that it has been strongest trend seen in increasing the women dissatisfaction towards their own body image (Feingold, 1998). Beauty is consider or indicated to have a good effect on society (Eagly, 1991).

The present study was taken up to compare the choice of ideal perception of body image by males and females and the choice of preference of the same by the opposite gender.

CHAPTER 3: MOTIVATION, OBJECTIVES, RATIONALE, HYPOTHESES AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

3.1 Motivation of the study

The purpose of the current study was to explore the perception and preference of the body shapes on opposite gender. We all well know that gender is very important variable for any study to conduct. The study was conducted to find the males' and females' satisfaction level for their own body perception.

Many scholars have done study on the ideal body image perception and preference of the opposite gender. the current study focused on two different phase 1- female body figure perception and preference of opposite gender.2 is on male body perception and preference of the opposite gender.

3.2 Objectives of the present research Harrison (2000), develop

The study had four major objectives.

1. To find out the ideal perception of males and females towards the male's body shape.
2. To find out the ideal perception of males and females towards the female's body shape.
3. To find out the age differences in the preference of male's body shape among the females.
4. To find out the age differences in the preference of male's body shape among the males.

3.3 Rationale and hypotheses of the study

The study was conducted in two phases. In the 1st phase, the ideal perception of female figures by males and females was tested. In the 2nd phase, ideal perception of male figures by females and males was tested. Hypotheses formulated for the study are following:

H₁ The male perceive that female should be medium built.

Singh (2003) reported that according to males the female who is medium build is considered as sexy, attractive, and healthy.

H₂ The female perceive that males prefer females to be thin built

Females want to have thin body figure and this dissatisfaction attitude with their body image is due socio-culture and psychological factors (Wong, 2013)

H₃ The females prefer medium built male

Harrison (2000), develop the research on three countries Austria, Paris and Boston to know the real preference of women towards the male body shape and the perception of the males towards the preference of females for the male body shape. He found that male overestimate the female preference

H₄ The male perceive that female prefer heavily muscular built males

Harrison & Pope (2000) from three different demographic areas i.e. Austria, Paris and Boston found that males were having misperception towards their own body image and towards the actual preference of the male body image by females. The males think that females prefer high muscularity level in the male body

H₅ Age determines the choice of preference among the males and females of the opposite gender

Micheal (2002), defines that adolescent is the period where boys and girls both goes into lots of changes. Girls during the puberty in early adolescent gets increase in weight which creates negative body image and putts them into the need of maintaining the body shape

The current study focuses on the ideal image perception and preference of the opposite gender. We all know that ideal image is trending majorly in today's era; everyone has their ideal preferences for their own body shape. Similarly opposite gender have different types of perception for body image towards each other. The current study attempts to understand the ideal perception and preference of the body image of the opposite gender and self.

CHAPTER 4

METHOD

4.1 Sample

Total 196 subjects participated in this research, 98 males and 98 females divided into two age groups; 20 to 29 and 30-40 years, 49 participants in each group. The participant took part in this research after signing the consent letter that they are willing to participate in the study. Each subject further provided background information about the self like their name, class, age and gender that was enquired from them on the demographic variables. The subjects were informed in detail about the research study.

4.2 Design

Independent variable of the study was age and gender. The dependent variable was the perception of body image both at ideal and preferences level.

4.3 Tools Used

- (i) Psychological test consisted of two different set of pictures. The first set was restricted to 7 female figures. The body shape featured from very slim to obese category (Appendix C).
- (ii) The second set was restricted to 7 male figures. The body shape from very slim to heavy muscular (1,2,3 towards lean 4th one being average built 5,6,7, being towards the muscular body (Appendix D).

4.4 Procedure

The pictures in the set were randomly arranged to control the bias effect. Thus the pictures were not sequentially arranged according to their body shape. (Refer Appendix C and Appendix D for scoring)

In the first phase females and the males were shown first set of female figures consisting of 7 figures. The females were asked to choose a female figure which they thought males would prefer. The males were instructed to find a female figure which they thought interested them or they preferred the most.

Similarly, they were exposed to a set of male figures. Females were instructed to give their choice of the preference of the male figure that they would like to choose and they liked the most. The males were instructed to choose a male body figure which they felt that females would prefer of their body shape.

4.5 Statistic analysis

In the present study, descriptive statistic was computed to see the differences of the opposite gender for the ideal perception and preference of the body image.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

The data obtained on the subjects were scored and analyzed using the descriptive statistics. The results of the study are discussed below taking into consideration each hypothesis separately.

Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis of the study was “The male perceive that female should be a medium built”. To test the hypothesis male subjects were shown a set of female figures. They were instructed to choose a female figure which they preferred the maximum out of the seven figures. 45% of the males preferred figure 2 in the picture. This figure is categorized as medium built. Only 20 % of the subjects preferred skinny (thin) figure of the females, 17 % selected slightly obese. 15% agreed for figure lean. Percentage of responses varied on the choice of figure they like. The hypothesis seems to be accepted. None selected figure 4 that comes under the categorization of lean built and figure 7 that was heavily built. Table 1 and figure 1 describes the results. Further to get the hypothesis confirmed a group of females were shown a set of the female figure and were asked which figure of the females, males would prefer (ideal perception of the female figure). 62% of the females also showed ideal perception to be the figure 2. Thus the hypothesis gets accepted and confirmed (refer table No. 2 and figure No.2.)

Table1. Percentage of the male preference towards female figure

Figure No	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	1	2.5	2.5	2.5
2	18	45.0	45.0	47.5
3	6	15.0	15.0	62.5
5	8	20.0	20.0	82.5
6	7	17.5	17.5	100.0
total	40	100.0	100.0	

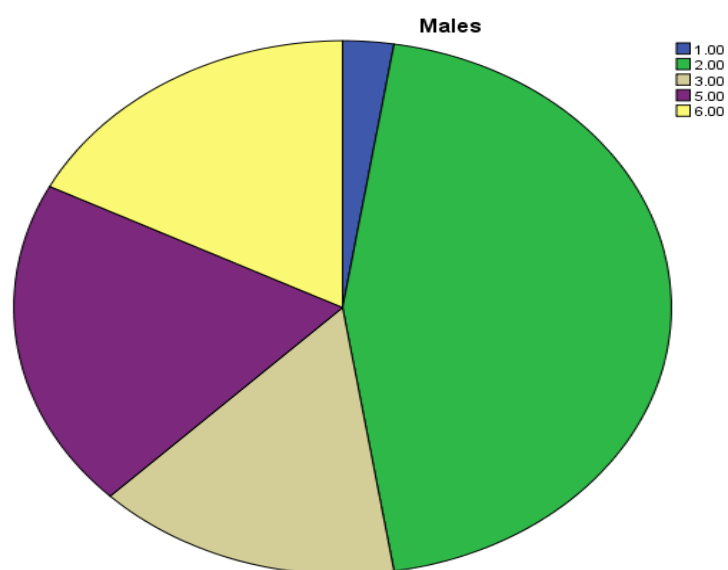


Figure1. Pie Chart of the percentage of the male preference towards female figure

Hypothesis 2

The 2nd hypothesis is that “The females perceive males prefer thin built females”. To verify the hypothesis 49 females were showed set of 7 female figures the body shape lying from thin built to very obese. Descriptive statistics’ was used to analyze the data obtained. The results of the study revealed rejection of the hypothesis as 62.5 % of the female group responded to figure 2 categorized which is medium built.. Not much variation was seen in the responses of the females in showing their preferences for female figures by the males which they thought will be preferred by the males. Table No.-2 and Fig No.2 projects the results. Males’ preferred perception also helps to reject the hypothesis (refer Table No.1).

Table 2. Percentage of the female perception towards male preference of female figure

Figure No.	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	7	17.5	17.5	17.5
2	25	62.5	62.5	80.0
3	4	10.0	10.0	90.0
6	4	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

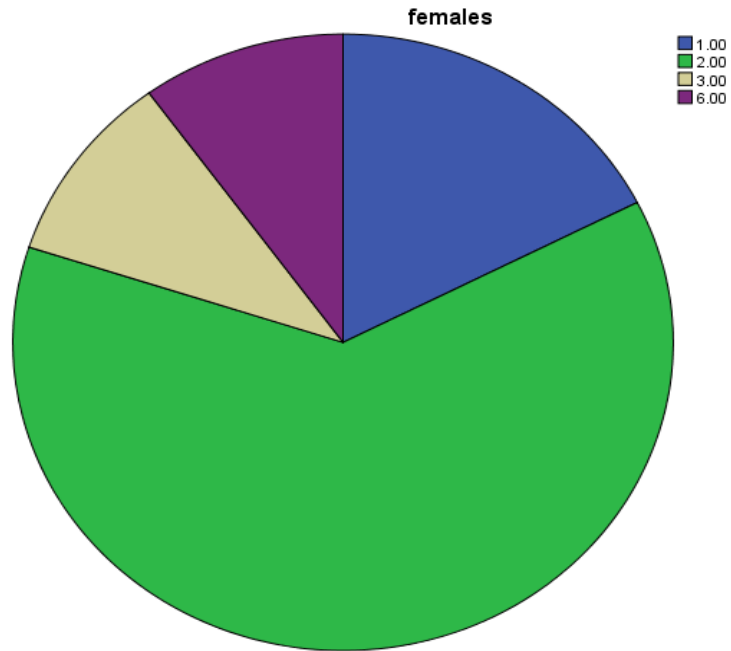


Figure 2. Pie Chart of the percentage of the female perception towards male preference of female figure

Second Phase of the study where ideal perception of the Males and preferences of females of the male figures is tested

Hypothesis 3

“The females prefer medium built male” was the third hypothesis. A group of females in the age of 20-29 years were shown a set of male figures arranged randomly not in sequence according to their muscularity. Responses given by the females were analyzed using the descriptive statistics. 38.8% of the females preferred figure 4 of males in the sequence that is supposed to be categorized as muscular 21% of females choose figure no.3 categorized as

slightly muscular built and only 13% females chose figure 5 that is a skinny figure. There was quite a bit of variations in the responses of the females. The hypothesis is nearly accepted as responses revolve around muscular figures ranging from average to muscular. Percentages of the responses could be seen in Table 3. There is 18 % agreement showed by males to the 38.8 % of females for figure 4 of muscular built.

Table 3. Percentage of the females’ responses on ideal preference of male body shape

Figure No	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	7	7.1	7.1	7.1
2	5	5.1	5.1	12.2
3	21	21.4	21.4	33.7
4	38	38.8	38.8	72.4
5	13	13.3	13.3	85.7
6	10	10.2	10.2	95.9
7	4	4.1	4.1	100.0
Total	98	100.0	100.0	

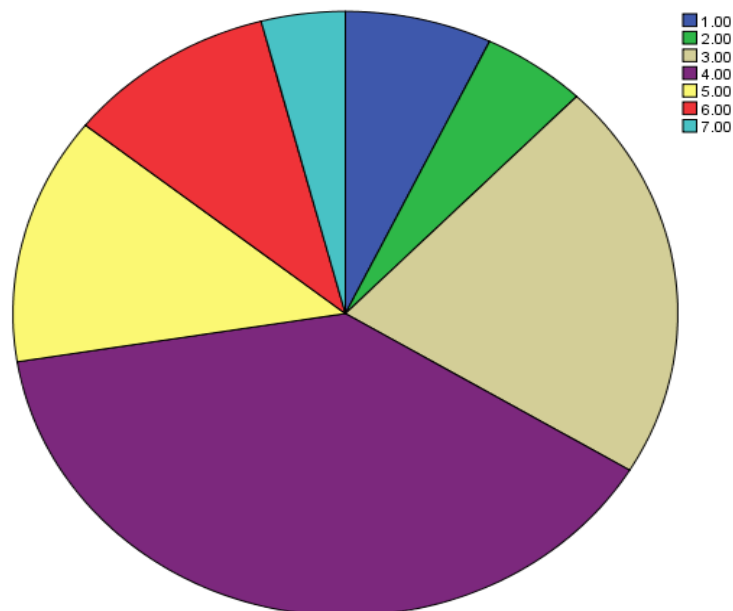


Figure 3. Pie Chart of the percentage of the females’ responses on ideal preference of male body

Hypothesis 4

“The males perceive that female prefer heavily muscular built males”. Pictures of male figures were shown to groups of males. The hypothesis is not accepted. Descriptive analysis reveals that only 23% of males have respondents to fig. 3 that is categorized under slightly muscular, 18% have selected figure 2, & 4 falling into the category of very skinny, and muscular built. Refer table no. 4

Table 4. Percentage of male’s perception towards female preference about male body shape.

Figure No	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	13	13.3	13.3	13.3
2	18	18.4	18.4	31.6
3	23	23.5	23.5	55.1
4	18	18.4	18.4	73.5
5	6	6.1	6.1	79.6
6	7	7.1	7.1	86.7
7	13	13.3	13.3	100.0
Total	98	100.0	100.0	

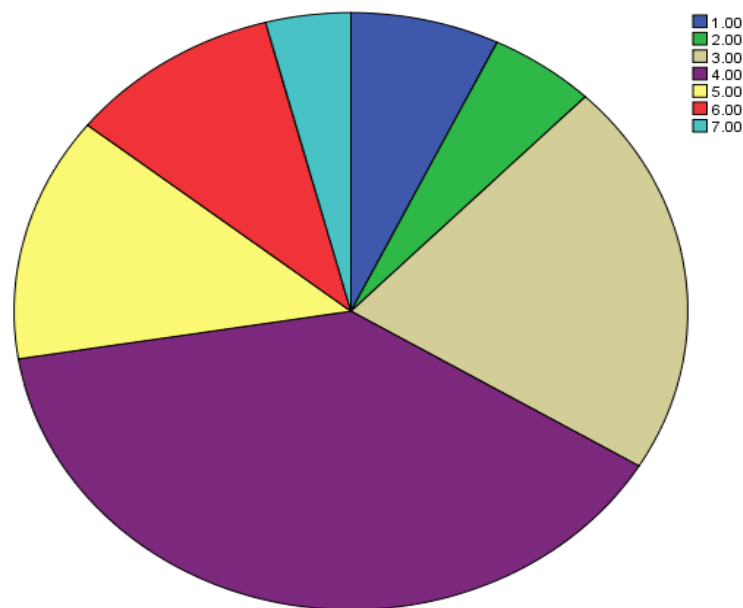


Figure 4. Pie Chart of the percentage of male perception towards female preference about male body shape.

Hypothesis 5

Age determines the choice of preference among the males and females of the opposite gender. To verify the hypothesis, both the groups of subjects were divided into further two groups based on their ages respectively. Group1 consisted of 20 to 29 years and group 2 belonging 30 to 40 years. The table below discusses the ideal perception of each gender and preference by the other gender. There were no differences in the preferences of the females towards the male figures. The females in the age group 20 to 29 years choose figure 4 as their preference (Table 5, Fig.5) female belonging to age group 30 to 40 also choose 4 the muscular built.

Table 5. Percentage of responses by females in the age range of 20 to 29 towards male figure

Figure No	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	2	4.1	4.1	4.1
3	11	22.4	22.4	26.5
4	15	30.6	30.6	57.1
5	9	18.4	18.4	75.5
6	8	16.3	16.3	91.8
7	4	8.2	8.2	100.0
Total	49	100.0	100.0	

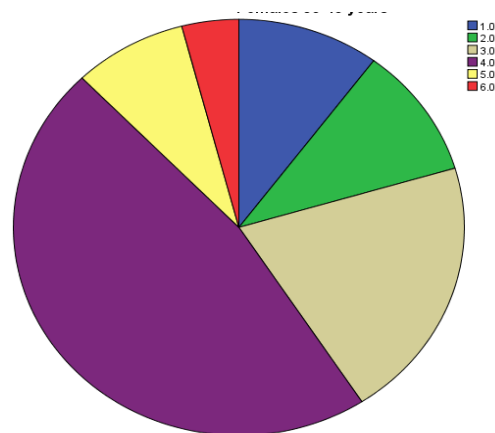


Figure 5. Pie Chart of percentage of responses by females in the age range of 20 to 29

Table 6. Percentage of responses of female age ranging 30 to 40 years towards male figure

Figure No	frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	5	10.2	10.2	10.2
2	5	10.2	10.2	20.4
3	10	20.4	20.4	40.8
4	23	46.9	46.9	87.8
5	4	8.2	8.2	95.9
6	2	4.1	4.1	100.0
Total	49	100.0	100.0	

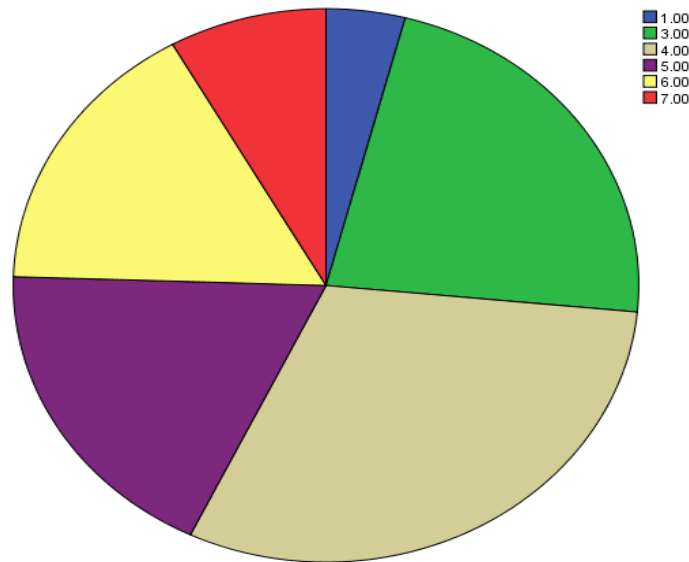


Figure 6. Pie chart of percentage of responses of female age ranging 30 to 40 years

The impact of age was seen on the choices of the figures in the males for their ideal perception of the preference by the opposite gender. 18 % of the males belonging to 20 to 29

years of age were unsure that which male body females would prefer as they rated three different pictures equally, which they found could be preferred by the females. But 28.6 % of the males belonging to the age of 30-40 years choose figure 3 (slightly muscular) and 18.% 4 muscular built. Results could be seen in Table No.7 & 8.

Table 7. Percentage of responses by males in the age range of 20 to 29 years

Figure No	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.00	6	12.2	12.2	12.2
2.00	9	18.4	18.4	30.6
3.00	9	18.4	18.4	49.0
4.00	9	18.4	18.4	67.3
5.00	5	10.2	10.2	77.6
6.00	6	12.2	12.2	89.8
7.00	5	10.2	10.2	100.0
Total	49	100.0	100.0	

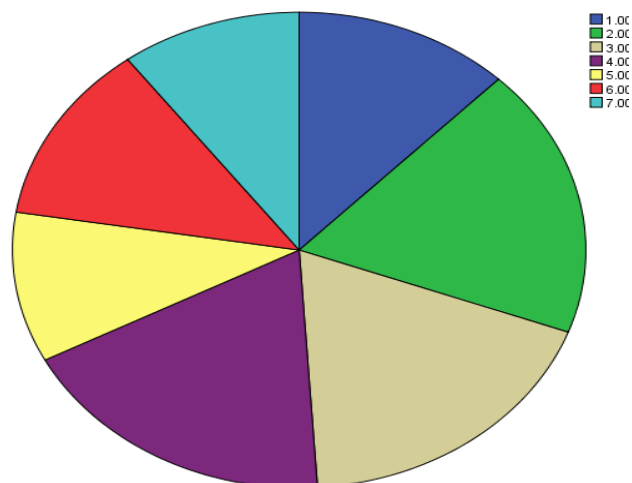


Figure 7 Pie Chart of percentage of responses by males in the age range of 20 to 29 years

Table 8. Percentage of responses by Females in the age range of 30 to 40

Figure No	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.00	7	14.3	14.3	14.3
2.00	9	18.4	18.4	32.7
3.00	14	28.6	28.6	61.2
4.00	9	18.4	18.4	79.6
5.00	1	2.0	2.0	81.6
6.00	1	2.0	2.0	83.7
7.00	8	16.3	16.3	100.0
Total	49	100.0	100.0	

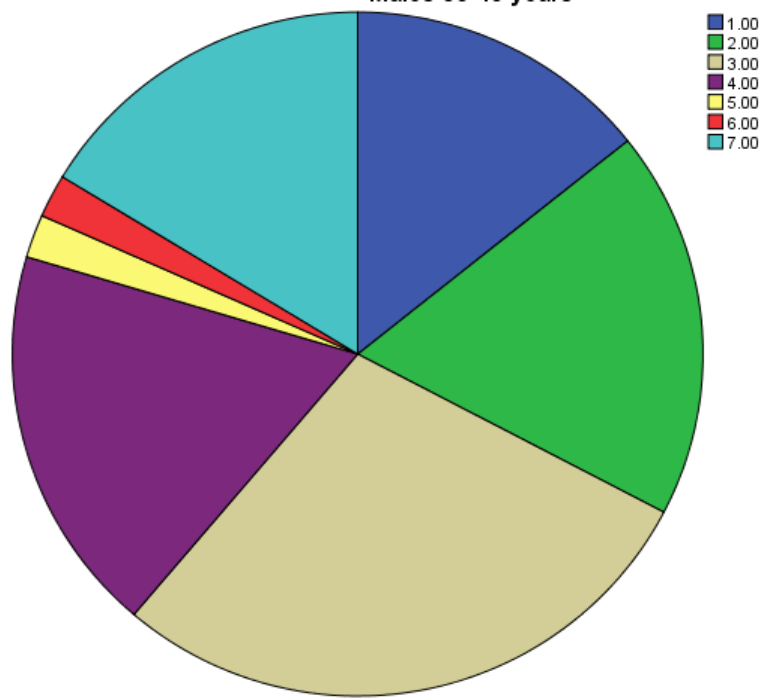


Figure 8. Pie Chart of the percentage of responses by Females in the age range of 30 to 40

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

Body image plays quite a significant importance in maintaining the social relationship. There are number of cases found in the clinical group of patients who have to go through many sessions of therapy for their excessive concern for the body image. Many of them suffering from neurotic disorders and others having low self concept and insecurity feeling arising due to the low acceptance of their own body. Genders as social being have a strong need of affiliation. This need is fulfilled when one feels that he/she is meeting the norms of the society and is accepted by the society. The society plays a vital role in the demand for the perfect body figure because it has set some biased perceptions for the different types of the body shapes. From the age of adolescents both the genders get conscious about their body shape and set the ideal perception and preference towards the opposite gender. Taking this into concern the present study tries to find out how satisfied one gender feels about the type of own fig the opposite gender prefers.

The present study was conducted on the perception and the preference of the ideal body image by the opposite gender. The hypothesis that male perceive that female should be medium built. Both male female responded in positive to the hypothesis as 45 % of the men and 62 % of females responded to medium built female figure. The second hypothesis of the study female perceive that males prefer females to be thin built was not accepted. The findings are in line with Furnham (1997) who found that men likes the female to be medium built because of the reason that men considers the lean and obese female are unhealthy. Medium build females are considered as sexy, attractive, health (Singh, 2003).

The other hypothesis purposed was the females prefer medium built male and the male perceive that female prefer heavily muscular built males. The findings of the study found that 38.8% of the females preferred muscular (figure 4) 21% of females choose (figure no.3) categorized as slightly muscular built. Males perception about females choice was not found to be right. Males were under the perception that females would prefer heavily built males. The findings were not in line with Harrison & Pope,(2000) findings. The second question discussed in the study was whether age changes the preference of males and females of the opposite gender. Age had no effect on the female subjects. They preferred muscular shape of the males(figure 4).

Age impact was seen on the men. However there responses was more varied in the younger group and gets stabilized across age for their preference. But there was quite a bit of un-surety about their perception.

6.2 Conclusion

The current study explored that the ideal image perception and preference for the body figure is playing a major role at different age groups in males. The study helped to understand that females are very obsessed with their own body perception and think a lot about opposite gender preference for their body figure that what type of female body figure males would prefer.

On other hand males are also found having dissatisfaction for their ideal image perception and preference of the opposite gender. The male perceive that females would prefer a heavily build muscular male body shape but in real females prefer a medium built male.

6.3 Limitations

The study can be conducted in various areas rather than in one area. More variables can be taken to know clearly about the male preference about female body figure. Similarly, more variables can be taken for males to understand the female preference for the male body shape. More statistic analysis can be used to verify the results. The different geographical area has different perception and preference for the body image so it can be conducted in different geographical areas. Sample size can be extended for the best results

6.4 Future Research

By the finding and the limitations of the present study further study can be conducted on the ideal body image perception and preferences of opposite gender. As we all well know that ideal body image is very much trending these days and which is affecting the almost major part of the population in multiple context. It is affecting an individual at very early stage of the adolescent period. Because it is the period where one gets conscious about what is wrong and what is right for the society. It is also been seen that media is playing the major role in making the ideal perception and preference of the body image for one's own self as well as for opposite gender.

So, it is very necessary to find out the more reasons for the ideal body image and also to explore the consequences for having the ideal images perception and preferences so that every individual get aware of the merits and demerits of having the ideal body image and the perception of it.

Finally, the present study was not having much sample and not used much of the statistic analysis which couldn't get the best result but in future it can be taken into concern and study

can be conducted. And also will take more variables which are taken into concern for having the ideal body image perception and preferences.

6.5 Implications

Every individual is having ideal body perception and preference for oneself as well as for opposite gender. The ideal body image perception and preference are affected by various factors like society norms, mass media, family expectation peer relationship and this ideal body image is further affecting an individual in multiple contexts like rise of eating disorder, anxiety, depression, mood disorder.

This current study tried to explore the ideal body image perception and preference of the body image by oneself and by opposite gender. It helps to find out the causes of anxiety related to body image perception.

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APPENDIX A

CONSENT CUM INFORMATION FORM FOR “MALE” PARTICIPANTANTS

You are requested to kindly participate in this research being carried out at School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala. Information provided by you will be kept confidential.

UNDERTAKING

I _____ (Name) give my consent to use my survey data anonymously for the research project being undertaken at Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala.

SIGNATURE

APPENDIX B

CONSENT CUM INFORMATION FORM FOR “FEMALE” PARTICIPANTANTS

You are requested to kindly participate in this research being carried out at School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala. Information provided by you will be kept confidential.

UNDERTAKING

I _____ (Name) give my consent to use my survey data anonymously for the research project being undertaken at Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala.

SIGNATURE

APPENDIX C

Chart 1

Randomly arranged different male body shapes from very lean to heavily muscular.



Instruction to females

You will be shown a picture of 7 male figures marked as A, B, C, D, E, F, G. Your task is to choose one of the figures that you prefer and like the most.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
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Instruction to males

You will be shown a picture of 7 male figures marked as A, B, C, D, E, F, G. Your task is to choose one of the figures that you prefer and females would choose

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Sequentially arranged Male Body Shapes

Figure Numbers	Category of body Types
2	Very skinny
5	Skinny
1	Lean
6	Medium Muscular built
3	Slightly Muscular
4	Muscular built
7	Heavily Muscular built

APPENDIX D

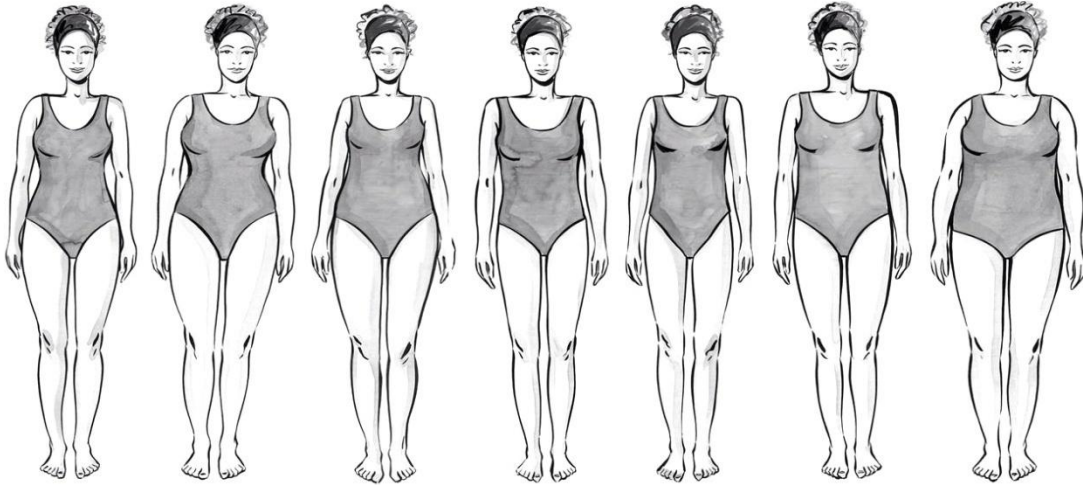


Figure. The Randomly arranged different types of female figures.

Instruction to females

You will be shown a picture of 7 female figures marked as A, B, C, D, E, F, G. Your task is to choose one of the ideal figure that you think males would prefer the most

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Instruction to males

You will be shown a picture of 7 female figures marked as A, B, C, D, E, F, G. Your task is to choose one of the figures that you prefer and like the most.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Sequentially arranged Female figures

Figure No	Category of Body Types
5	Very skinny
1	Skinny
4	Lean
2	Medium Built
3	Slightly obese
6	Obese
7	Very obese
