

# Body's image concerns and its impact on academic achievements

## Abstract

**Introduction:** Someone's self-perception is somebody's very own mental representation or identity or as organized definitive learning about one's self that could manage the social conduct. Young people observed to be occupied with redesigning and figuring their mental self-image. Poor self-perception diminishes self-adequacy and self-regard which cause mutilation in scholarly accomplishment.

**Method:** An observational study was led utilizing online questionnaire, 160 college undergraduates from various health sciences disciplines were included including both male, and female subjects. Effect of mental self-perception on educational accomplishments was examined.

**Results:** Results revealed that, physical appearance or body image did affect academic achievement or scholastic accomplishment. Most of the undergraduate students showed concerns regarding self-image, they get distressed due to physical appearance, further, their physical appearance also interfere in getting education and performing daily tasks. It is also observed that students who are satisfied with their self-image obtained higher grades as compare to their counterparts. Students found to be involve in watching TV as well as reading beauty magazine which also influence their cognitive powers and hence change their self-regard.

**Conclusion:** Understanding of connections between a positive self-perception and academic achievement can influence programs that are offered at college and universities. This study could be useful to academic wellbeing instructors, faculty and student affairs professionals involved in students counseling and motivations. Further research is needed to explore the link between academic success and lack of society's concern regarding idea about beauty in reality.

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## Introduction

An individual's feeling of self-worth can be associated with body shape or image.<sup>1</sup> Self-perception is the mental picture we have of the size, shape and form of our own bodies and additionally of our sentiments about these characteristics and the parts that constitute our bodies.<sup>2</sup> For some students, college is a conundrum between the genuine way of scholarly interest and the draw to fit in with societal desires. These desires can be effective powers as they characterize themselves mentally and physically. This journey for presents numerous issues, especially to adjust with regularly misshaped perspectives of beauty and self-image.<sup>3</sup> It is characterized as the way a man sees or think about his body and how it looks to others.<sup>4</sup> Self-perception is somebody's very own mental representation or is organized explanatory knowledge about one's self that could control the social conduct. Self-image is the way in which we consider our own physical, mental and emotional attributes, the measurement of our ego and social position. Correct self-observation is critical to think about attitudinal capacities and individual behavioral learning.<sup>5</sup> Teenage period is an ideal opportunity to organizing one's self perspective which is determinant for psychological, emotional and physical advancement. Self-image energizes their feeling of qualities to gain behavioral wellbeing and separation. Self-image with respect to physical appearance turns out to be more noticeable during teenage years.<sup>6</sup> University students found to have vital worries about self-perception about body image perceptions because they want to achieve or maintain a healthy weight and appearance.<sup>7</sup> This is due to business advertisers who utilize physical body perception

to sell their products.<sup>8</sup> Sponsors particularly target young people, which expand their awareness of body image. Thus, teenagers' self-perceptions impact their practices. Underprivileged self-perception may bring down self-appraisals, thus negatively influencing academic achievements.<sup>9,10</sup> In any case, little is thought about how students are influenced by the self-image. Accordingly, this study is intended to look at either self-perception influences scholastic accomplishment.

## Methodology

The present study was conducted at Jinnah Sindh Medical University, Karachi, Pakistan in collaboration with the Institute of Health & Business Management, JSMU, Karachi. This is an observational and analytical correlation study type. University students of various health sciences discipline were included with age group 18-30 years. A structured questionnaire was used and filled online. Data was analyzed by using SPSS version 16, and represented as Mean $\pm$  SD as well as Frequencies and Percentages.

## Results

### Baseline characteristics

Table 1 showed the baseline data. There were total 160 participants in this study and out of this 44 were male and 116 were females. Mean age was  $19.97 \pm 2.3$  years, mean BMI was  $22.07 \pm 5.4$ , Average GPA of students was  $3.0 \pm 0.4$ . Average Education was  $12.21 \pm 0.9$ . The duration of watching TV/day was  $3.0 \pm 5.6$  and time spent on social media or internet was average about  $4.3 \pm 6.4$ .

## Impact of self image or physical appearance

**Association between grades obtained and distress caused by physical appearance:** Table 2 showed that those who score higher grad achievers have no distress due to physical appearance where as those who score average grades showed to have mild, moderate or severe levels of distress due to their physical image.

### Appearance

**Association between grades obtained and concern about appearance of any unattractive part of body:** Table 3 showed that those who score higher grades showed 50% have no concern whereas 50% were concern about unattractive parts of body. Those who score B, B- and C grades found to be more concerned about their unattractive body parts.

**Association between grades obtained and interference of physical appearance in getting education:** Table 4 display values that showed relationship between grades obtained and interference due to

appearance in their education career. Those who obtained A and A+ grade, 50% of them showed no effect whereas 50% showed moderate interference in getting education due to any physical appearance whereas those who get lower grades showed lesser interference of physical appearance in getting education.

**Association between grades obtained and depression due to physical appearance:** Table 5 showed that higher graders get never depressed due to their physical appearance whereas those who get other grades have high frequency of depression due to their appearance.

**Association between grades obtained and BMI:** Table 6 showed high graders are overweight whereas other graders are mostly healthy weight.

**Association between grades obtained and influence of media:** Table 7 showed that high achiever student spent only one hour on watching TV whereas other grade achievers spend more time with TV.

**Table 1** Descriptive Statistics

Gender	Male (n)	44
N=160	Female (n)	116
Mean + Std. Deviation		
Age	19.97+ 2.3	
Year of Education	12.21+0.9	
BMI	22.07+ 5.4	
GPA/Percentage	3.0+ 0.4	
No. Hours watch TV/Day	3.0+ 5.6	
No. Hours Internet use/Social Media/Day	4.3+ 6.4	

**Table 2** Association between Grades Obtained and Distress Caused By Physical

How much Distress is Caused by your Physical Appearance?				
No Distress	Mild and not too Disturbing	Moderate and Disturbing, but Manageable	Severe and Very Disturbing	
A and A+	2 (100.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)
A-	3(60.0%)	2 (40.0%)	0(.0%)	0(0.0%)
B	39 (55.7%)	21(30.0%)	6(8.6%)	4(5.7%)
B+	11(45.8%)	10 (41.7%)	3 (12.5%)	0(0.0%)
B-	12(44.4%)	7(25.9%)	6(22.2%)	2(7.4%)
C	11(47.8%)	4(17.4%)	7(30.4%)	1(4.3%)

**Table 3** Association between Grades Obtained and concerned about appearance of any unattractive part of body

Are you Concerned about Appearance of any part of Body which you Consider Unattractive?				
Not at all Concerned	Somewhat concerned	Moderately Concerned	Very Concerned	Extremely Concerned
A and A+	1(50.0%)	0(.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(50.0%)
A-	2(40.0%)	2(40.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(20.0%)
B	20(28.6%)	23(32.9%)	20(28.6%)	4(5.7%)
B+	10(41.7%)	7(29.2%)	3(12.5%)	1(4.2%)
B-	4(14.8%)	11(40.7%)	5(18.5%)	5(18.5%)
C	8(34.8%)	8(34.8%)	2(8.7%)	2(7.4%)
C-	1(14.3%)	5(71.4%)	1(14.3%)	0(0.0%)

**Table 4** Association between Grades Obtained and interference of physical appearance in getting education

How much Interference is cause by your Physical Appearance, with your Education or Ability to Function?			
Never	Occasionally	Moderately Often	Often
A and A+	1(50.0%)	0(.0%)	1(50.0%)
A-	4(80.0%)	1(20.0%)	0(0.0%)
B	48(69.6%)	11(15.9%)	6(8.7%)
B+	18(75.0%)	4(16.7%)	0(0.0%)
B-	18(66.7%)	5(18.5%)	2 (7.4%)

Table Continued...

How much Interference is cause by your Physical Appearance, with your Education or Ability to Function?			
	Never	Occasionally	Moderately Often
C	17(73.9%)	5(21.7%)	1(4.3%)
C-	4(57.1%)	1(14.3%)	1(14.3%)

**Table 5** Association between Grades obtained and depression due to physical appearance

Do you get Depressed/Sad/Angry about your Appearance?		
Grades	Yes	No
A and A+	0 (0%)	2 (100%)
A-	2(40%)	3(60%)
B	19(27.5)	48(69.6)
B+	5(20.8%)	18(75.0)
B-	11(40.7%)	16(59.3%)
C	7(30.4%)	15(65.2%)
C-	1(14.3%)	5(71.4%)

**Table 6** Association between Grades obtained and BMI of subjects

	A and A+	A-	B	B+	B-	C	C-
Healthy Weight	0(0%)	1(20%)	31(44%)	11(46%)	16(59%)	7(30%)	3(43%)
Morbidly Obese	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(1.4%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
Obese	0(0%)	1(20%)	2(2.8%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	2(8.7%)	0(0%)
Over Weight	2(100%)	2(40%)	10(14%)	3(12.5%)	4(14.8%)	6(26%)	3(43%)
Severly Obese	0(0%)	0(0%)	5(7%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(4.3%)	1(14.3%)
Under Weight	0(0%)	1(20%)	22(31%)	10(42%)	7(26%)	7(30%)	0(0%)

**Table 7** Association between Grades obtained and influence of Media

How many hours you watch TV/movies every day?						
	0	1	2	3	4	7
A and A+	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
A-	0%	60%	20%	0%	0%	20%
B	1.40%	51%	36%	10%	1.40%	0%
B+	0%	25%	46%	25%	0%	4.20%
B-	0%	41%	44.40%	7.40%	0%	7.40%
C	0%	70%	22%	9%	0%	0%
C-	0%	43%	29%	14.30%	14.30%	0%

## Discussion

Academic achievement is an important determinant of a good job opportunities, desired earnings, high class social circle and social life and good lifestyle maintenance. Many factors influence the academic performance; self-image is one of the important factors. Importance of perception of self- image in educational process is highlighted by many educationists. When the person is satisfied, he will be happier, confident, motivated, and will have right attitude to succeed. Many studies from western countries showed association between physical appearance and academic results. This study revisited this important topic by collecting the data from students of different health sciences disciplines from Karachi, Pakistan.

Present study showed that most students were concerned with their physical appearance, but high grade achievers showed lesser influence and distress due their body image as compare to lower grade achievers. However, data also showed some students have no concerned with their physical appearance still they get lower grades. Rosenblum had studied the body dis-satisfaction by measuring physical attractiveness, and body mass index in teenagers. Study revealed that over adolescence, girls showed increased, while boys decreased body dissatisfaction.<sup>11</sup>

Present study showed that the high graders are overweight as compare to healthy weight but lower graders. In our study there were only 2 students who are high achiever whereas other grade holders are more in numbers so there is a need to collect data with large number of students. Also, our data showed that high achievers have no effect of physical appearance, so the overweight in our population is not a hindrance for motivated career oriented students.

Our results are comparative with other studies. Literature revealed that overweight and obesity induce psychosocial influences, such as stigmatization from teachers and peers, low self-esteem, higher rates of anxiety disorders, depression and other psychopathologies,<sup>12,13</sup> which in turn responsible to lower the academic achievement of adolescents.<sup>14</sup> A study conducted in Thailand by Mo-Suwan *et al* have depicted that overweight students' grades showed lower GPA than their healthy-weight peers.<sup>15</sup> Pakistani students might be goal oriented rather than influenced by self-perception taken from media. In present study the average students fall in healthy and average weight category but still they score lower because of poor self-perception. So when students are overweight and dissatisfied with body appearance, they try to lose weight,<sup>16</sup> they may try hard to reach their ideal weight. Although they may successfully become healthy weight person, but in the meantime, the time spent on losing weight may be likely to result in poor exam performance.

Media has great influence on self-image of students. Present study showed that high graders spent less time on watching TV and therefore has less influence on their own physical appearance and academic results. Whereas average students found more involve in watching TV and hence, have greater influence of media. The literature suggests that body image perceptions and concerns are important for university students, probably because of the increasing popularity of achieving or maintaining a healthy weight and appearance.<sup>17,18</sup>

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## Conflicts of interest

Author declares there are no conflicts of interest.

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