



SELF OBJECTIFICATION AND LEVEL OF ANXIETY IN INDIAN FEMALES

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ABSTRACT

Self-objectification is a concept where people, more so women tend to regard and judge their bodies as that of an outsider. In the modern society, women are under intense pressure to look like they do because of unrealistic beauty standards that are influenced by the media, culture and social norms. This usually has adverse psychological consequences, and one of these aspects is anxiety.

The aim of the current research was to investigate the connections between self-objectification and anxiety in the group of female Indian people in the age range of 18-30. The quantitative research design was applied, and data were collected with the help of an online questionnaire with Google Forms. The sample comprised of female respondents who volunteered to take part and fit the criteria of the study. Measurement was conducted by the use of the Indian Self-Objectification Scale for Girls (ISOS-G) and Sinha Anxiety Scale (SAS).

The statistical analysis showed a very weak positive correlation between self-objectification and anxiety which did not show any statistical significance. These results indicate that the level of self-objectification in young women may not necessarily be a good indicator of the anxiety. The paper reveals the significance of comprehending the psychological well-being within the cultural and social context and the necessity to facilitate the positive body image.

INTRODUCTION

Self-Objectification

The issues of body image and physical appearance have gained momentum in the world in the recent years. Females especially are usually evaluated using their physical appearance and not their skills or character. Unrealistic standards of beauty are always being reinforced with the fast development of media, globalization, and, of course, social media, such as Instagram.

A theory of objectification, whose theorist is Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) states that women in such settings start perceiving a view of an observer. They begin to treat their bodies as objects to be viewed and criticized rather than perceiving them as a part of themselves.

This leads to:

Constant body monitoring

Comparison with others

Overemphasis on appearance

The independent variable in the study turns out to be self-objectification.

Self-Objectification Dimensions.

Observer Validation

Trying to be accepted on the basis of looks.

Reliance on the opinion of others.

Self-Shaming

Being ashamed or guilty of not matching the beauty expectations.

Negative self-comparisons

Appearance Correction

Checking, dieting, or grooming frequently.

Efforts to “fix” appearance

Psychological predictors of Morbidity.

Causes nervousness, self deprecation and discomfort.

All these factors form a chain of emotional instability and lack of security.

Anxiety

Anxiety is one of the psychological disorders that are defined with:

Excessive worry

Nervousness

Restlessness

Physical symptoms such as accelerated heart rate.

Although mild anxiety is normal, too much anxiety may have adverse consequences on the functioning of a person on a daily basis.

Anxiety is the dependent variable in this study because it could be affected by self-objectification.

The women tend to be more anxious because of:

Social expectations

Appearance pressure

Comparison culture

Connection of Self-Objectification to Anxiety.

When people always measure themselves in terms of looks:

Fear of judgment increases

Social comparison is increased.



Emotional stress builds

This can cause increased levels of anxiety. Nevertheless, the significance of this relationship in Indian females is the primary subject of the given study.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Self-Objectification Studies

The studies indicate that self-objectification depends on:

- Media exposure
- Cultural expectations
- Social comparison

Key findings include:

The increase in self-objectification results in a decrease in self-esteem.

It is associated with eating problems and dissatisfactions with body.

Social media heightens surveillance on the body.

Self-objectification is enhanced by public harassment.

Some studies also found:

Self-objectification influences the relationships and social perception.

It can affect such tendencies as cosmetic surgery and dieting.

Anxiety Studies

The studies of anxiety point out:

It is among the most prevalent mental conditions.

Anxiety is more among women than men.

These are biological, psychological, and social causes.

Important insights:

Intimacy of the brain areas such as the amygdala is involved.

Both nature and nurture have their role.

CBT and medication are some of the treatments.

Lifestyle factors like:

- Sleep
- Exercise
- Stress

Also affect the level of anxiety.

RESEARCH GAP

There are a number of gaps in the research studies despite the proposed wide research:

The majority of the studies use western population.

Inadequate studies in Indian culture.

Compared to depression, anxiety is not well researched.

There is little literature on young adult females (18-30 years).

The contemporary use of social media has not been fully exploited.

This paper tries to address these gaps.

RATIONALE

Young women are constantly exposed to:

Impractical beauty ideals.

Social comparison

Pressure to look perfect

This can lead to:

Self-objectification

Emotional distress

Anxiety

In India, however, this relationship may be affected by the cultural values and social norms in a different way. The study is therefore significant to get the psychological impression in the Indian set-up.

METHODOLOGY

Objectives

To investigate the correlation between self-objectification and anxiety.

Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis (H₀):

Self-objectification and anxiety have no major correlation.

Variables

Independent Variable: Self-objectification.

Dependent Variable: Anxiety

Sample

60 female participants

Age: 18-25 years

Location: Lucknow

Inclusion Criteria

Females aged 18-30

Capable of processing the questionnaire.

Gave consent

Exclusion Criteria

Males

Age below 18 or above 30

Incomplete responses

Tools Used

Indian Self-Objectification Scale (ISOS-G).

24 items

5-point Likert scale

Measures attitude to appearance.

Sinha Anxiety Scale (SAS)

Measures anxiety levels

Yes/No format

Widely used in India

Procedure

Information obtained through Google Forms.

Consent taken

Questionnaire was distributed via WhatsApp and e-mail.

Data cleaned and analyzed



Research Design

Quantitative

Correlational

Cross-sectional

Statistical Analysis

Means and standard deviations obtained.

Pearson correlation used

Significance level: $p < 0.05$

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

Descriptive Statistics

Self-objectification: Moderate and stable.

Anxiety: Highly varied

Correlation Results

$R = 0.061$ (there is a very weak positive correlation)

$P = 0.644$ (not significant)

Interpretation

None of the meaningful relationships identified.

The effect of changes in self-objectification on anxiety is not significant.

DISCUSSION

The research did not show an important association between self-objectification and anxiety.

Possible reasons:

Other factors may contribute to anxiety:

Academic stress

Family pressure

Personality

Small sample size ($N = 60$)

Inequalities in the distribution of anxiety scores.

Indian society differences in culture.

Although theory shows a relation, the relationship was not found in this study.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that:

There is moderate levels of self-objectification.

Anxiety levels vary widely

No meaningful correlation between them.

This suggests:

The two variables can work independently.

Anxiety may be more of a factor of other factors.

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