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## Relationship between self-acceptance and physical appearance anxiety among people with physical disabilities

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to look at the relationship between Self-Acceptance and Physical Appearance Anxiety among people with Physical Disabilities. A sample of 50 was chosen for the study. According to the findings of the study, there is statistically significant negative correlation between Self-Acceptance and Physical Appearance Anxiety. There is significant gender difference in the level of Physical Appearance Anxiety. The present study reveals that there is no significant gender difference in the level of Self-Acceptance.

**Keywords:** Physical disability, self-acceptance, physical appearance anxiety, gender

### Introduction

#### Physical Disability

Disability is a broad term that is defined in both legal and scientific ways and encompasses physical, psychological, intellectual, and socio emotional impairments. (WHO, 2001) [15]. Disability is any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions). There are many types of disabilities such as those that affect a person's vision, thinking, learning, movement, remembering, communicating, hearing, mental health, social relationships. Although people with disabilities sometimes refers to a single population, this is actually a diverse group of people with the wide range of needs. Two people with the same type of disability can be affected in very different ways. Some disabilities may be hidden or not easy to see.

According to WHO, disability has three dimensions.

1. Impairment in a person's body structure or function or mental functioning Example: loss of Limb, loss of vision or memory loss.
2. Activity limitation - difficulty seeing, hearing, walking or problem solving.
3. Participation restriction in normal daily activities such as working, engaging in social and recreational activities, and obtaining Health Care and preventive services.

#### Self-Acceptance

The psychological wellbeing of people with disabilities depends on the extent to which they can accept themselves. Self-Acceptance has an important influence on the lives of people with disabilities. As they acknowledge and accept their disability, they continue to develop higher levels of self-esteem, better coping strategies, higher aspirations, and more motivation to succeed. (Carl, 1995) [18]. An article published by APA highlights the lack of research on people with disabilities, although some progress is made. Hence, in this study an attempt is made to investigate the degree of Self-Acceptance and physical appearance anxiety of people with physical disabilities. Self-Acceptance was described by Ellis (2005) [4], as having a positive regard or attitude towards oneself as a whole. It includes a person's experiences from past lives. The acceptance of all of one's characteristics, whether favourable or unfavourable, is another definition of self-acceptance. It enables a thorough analysis of a person's significant or ineffective characteristics and the acknowledgment of any personality flaws. (Chemberain and Haaga, 2001) [3].

#### Three behaviours that a constitute self-acceptance are

1. Acceptance of the body

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2. Expressing comfort and love for the body, while all aspects of the body are not entirely fulfilled.
3. Self-protection from other peoples' negative judgement. (Tylka, 2011) <sup>[17]</sup>

Ellis (1995) <sup>[4]</sup> believed that the foundation of psychological well-being was the development of an individual's self-acceptance beliefs. Individuals with psychological health issues who practise unconditional self-acceptance come to accept themselves as flawed human beings who occasionally make mistakes. As a result, they are unbothered by their assumptions and interactions with other individuals.

### Physical Appearance Anxiety

Anxiety about one's physical appearance and how others perceive it is referred to as physical appearance anxiety. According to researchers, the majority of people nowadays are evaluated based on their outward appearance, including their height, body weight, face, hair, nose, skin colour, and clothing quality (Jerald C Moneva, 2020) <sup>[7]</sup>.

Because of their anxiety, people who dread being judged negatively for their appearance can change their lives. According to a study, women experienced more concern about their weight than men do. (Vega, Chang and Lopez, 2014) <sup>[14]</sup>. Fear of being negatively judged was positively correlated with the body weight among men and women in the measurement of body mass index (BMI). (Trompeter *et al.*, 2018) <sup>[13]</sup> Negative body looks has a relationship with apprehension, distress, displeasure and timidity (Alijomaa, 2018) <sup>[2]</sup>. Physical appearance anxiety relates to people's worries that they cannot meet society's aesthetic standards and that others will judge them badly because of their looks, leading to anxiety emotions including annoyance, worry, nervousness, and other anxiety emotions. (Harper and Tiggemann, 2008) <sup>[6]</sup>

### Statement of the problem

To study the relationship between self-acceptance and physical appearance anxiety among people with physical disabilities.

### Objectives

The specific objectives of the studies are:

1. To study the level of self-acceptance and physical appearance anxiety of people with physical disabilities
2. To study the relationship between the level of self-acceptance and physical appearance anxiety of people with physical disabilities.

### Hypothesis

**H1:** There is a significant relationship between self-acceptance and physical appearance anxiety among people with physical disabilities.

**H2:** There is a significant gender difference in the level of self-acceptance among the people with physical disability.

**H3:** There is a significant gender difference in the level of Physical Appearance Anxiety among the people with physical disability.

### Method

#### Sample Design

The sample of the present study constituted a total of 50

people with physical disabilities, out of which 30 were male and 20 were females with physical disabilities. The sample belonged to the age group of 18 to 24 years. The researcher used convenience sampling technique for data collection. The participants were assured that all information collected from them would be kept confidential and would be used only for the research purpose. The information was collected within a period of 2 weeks.

### Tools Used

#### Personal Data Sheet

Before answering the questionnaire, the participants were asked to fill the personal details. It included name, age, gender, type of disability, percentage of disability, father's name and occupation, mother's name and occupation, place and order of birth.

#### Self-acceptance scale

It was developed by Burger (1952) <sup>[5]</sup>. He defined self-acceptance, relying on previous work by Scheerer and Rogers. Dr. Berger listed 9 characteristics of the self-accepting person. This formulation led to the development and selection of a final group of 36 items for his self-acceptance scale. This scale is in frequent use today in psychological research and clinical work regarding self-esteem and self-acceptance.

The response is to be obtained on a 5-points response format; completely true, true, mostly true, half true, half false, mostly false, completely false.

To score the scale, first the answers are transferred into the spaces in column A for items 1,3,4,5 etc.

Next in column B, the numerical value of the answers for items 2, 7, 15 19 etc., are revealed.

In column B, an answer of

1. Earns 5 points,
2. Earns 4 points,
3. Earns 3 points,
4. Earns 2 points,
5. Earns 1 point.

To find the final score, the total of columns A and B are added together and recorded in the box marked total score in the scoring key.

The maximum possible score for self-acceptance scale is 180. The maximum possible score for each item is 5 and minimum is 1. High score on self-acceptance scale indicates that the individual is confident and worthy. In addition, he is likely to base his behaviour on internalised values and accept the responsibility for whatever the consequences of his behaviour maybe.

The average score lies between 111 to 150. It is not easy to interpret a normal or average level of self-acceptance because such acceptance varies within the roles in life. this level of self-acceptance describes the way most of the people are, praising themselves one moment, condemning themselves the next.

Low scores on this scale fall between 0 to 110. Low score on this case expresses little self-acceptance. It can be interpreted as reflecting a negative view of the self and a feeling that others have a negative view as well. Scores near 110 may not be a cause for concern. score significantly lower than that, however, should be regarded with much concern.

#### Physical Anxiety Questionnaire

It was developed by psychologist Lawrence good and Chester

Parker to measure how much one is worrying about physical problems. It contains statement about worries, not actual physical problems. Worries can be more stressful than actual physical pain.

The responses are to be obtained in the form of true or false. If one is unsure about an answer, he has to decide if the statement is slightly more true than false or slightly more False than true.

**Scoring**

To score the scale, first count the number of times one has answered true and place that number in the box below. The score for this questionnaire can range from 0 to 24.

The low scores range between 0 to 7. Even if one has certain physical problems, the score suggest that one does not spend much time worrying about them or other bodily concerns.

Average scores range between 8 to 12 and this is the range of scores for the middle one third of the people taking the questionnaire. This score says that one has several areas of

bodily concern.

High scores range between 13 to 24 and it indicates that one is quite concerned about his physical condition and may be showing several bothersome physical symptoms.

**Results and Discussion**

The aim of the present study was to study the level of self-acceptance and Physical Appearance Anxiety and identify the relationship between self-acceptance and Physical Appearance Anxiety among people with physical disabilities. The sample belonged to the age group of 18 to 24 years. Data was collected using Personal Data Sheet, Self-Acceptance Scale and Physical Anxiety Questionnaire. The information collected from the Questionnaires was grouped so as to fulfil the objectives of the study. Data was scored and subjected for the statistical analysis. Correlation-Coefficient, t-test for significance of correlation -coefficient and difference of means were used in the study.

**Table 1:** Mean Score on Self-Acceptance and Physical Appearance Anxiety Scale

Gender	Self-Acceptance		Physical Appearance Anxiety	
	Mean Score	Interpretation	Mean Score	Interpretation
Male	110.80	Average	9.30	Average
Female	109.35	Low	11.85	Average
Total	110.07	Average	10.57	Average

The level of Self -acceptance is assessed using Self-Acceptance Scale. The mean score obtained by male with physical disabilities is 110.07, indicating Average level of Self - Acceptance. Female with physical disabilities have obtained a mean score of 109.35, indicating low level of Self-Acceptance. On the whole, people with physical disabilities have obtained a mean score of 110.07, indicating average level of Self-acceptance.

The level of Physical Appearance Anxiety is assessed using

Physical Anxiety Questionnaire. The mean score obtained by male with physical disabilities is 9.30, indicating Average level of Physical Appearance Anxiety. Female with physical disabilities have obtained a mean score of 11.85, indicating average level of Physical Appearance Anxiety. On the whole, people with physical disabilities have obtained a mean score of 10.57, indicating average level of Physical Appearance Anxiety.

**Table 2:** Relationship between Self-Acceptance and Physical Appearance Anxiety.

Variables	Mean	N	'r' Value
Self-Acceptance	108.51	50	-0.35**
Physical Appearance Anxiety	10.59	50	

Correlation Value on Self-Acceptance and Physical Appearance Anxiety.

In order to test the hypothesis, that there is significant relationship between Self- Acceptance and Physical Appearance Anxiety, the relevant scores obtained from people with physical disabilities were analysed using correlation coefficient and further tested for significance using 't' test.

It is seen from table 2, that the correlation coefficient between

self-acceptance and physical appearance anxiety is negative and is statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). Hence there is a significant negative relationship between Self-Acceptance and Physical Appearance Anxiety. This means that, higher the level of Self-Acceptance, lower the level of Physical Appearance Anxiety in people with Physical Disabilities.

**Table 3:** Gender Differences

Variables	Mean		Standard Deviation		No. of Subjects		t- Value	Interpretati on
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Self-Acceptance	110.80	109.35	14.53	12.47	30	20	0.36	Not Significant
Physical Appearance Anxiety	9.30	11.85	4.56	8.99	30	20	2.08*	Significant $p < 0.05$

't' Value showing gender differences on Self-Acceptance and Physical Appearance Anxiety

To know if the level of Self-Acceptance differs significantly among male and female people with physical disabilities, 't' values were calculated. The obtained 't' value of 0.36 is not significant indicating that, there is no significant gender difference in the level of Self- Acceptance.

Further analysis was done to find out the gender difference in the level of Physical Appearance Anxiety. To verify the

hypothesis that there is a significant gender difference in the level of physical appearance anxiety, 't' value was calculated. The obtained 't' value of 2.8 is significant at 0.05 level, indicating that, there is significant gender difference in the level of physical appearance anxiety.

## Discussion

Hypothesis 1 formulated as “There is a significant relationship between self-acceptance and physical appearance anxiety among people with physical disabilities” is accepted.

The results of this study are consistent with the findings of previous research conducted in this area. Study conducted by Macinnes (2006) [9] showed that self-acceptance scores were significantly lower in those participants who had high levels of anxiety, depression, and psychological ill-health, indicating that self-acceptance scores were associated with the differences in all three psychological scores.

Chamberlain and Haaga (2001) [3] found similar results in relation to the association with the disability. The relationship between the increase in unconditional self-acceptance and the reduction in anxiety also seems to be strongly supported.

Physical disability either congenital or acquired may lead to feelings of inadequacy (Chang and Johnson, 2008) [8].

Hypothesis 2 formulated as “There is a significant gender difference in the level of self-acceptance among the people with physical disability” is not accepted.

Hypothesis 3 formulated as “There is a significant gender difference in the level of Physical Appearance Anxiety among the people with physical disability” is accepted.

The results of this study are consistent with the findings of previous research conducted in this area. Study conducted by Altıntaş & Asci, 2005 [1] show that men have higher social appearance anxiety than women.

## Conclusion

### The main conclusions of the present study are

- The present study confirms the hypothesis that, there is significant relationship between self-acceptance and physical appearance anxiety among people with physical disabilities.
- The present study does not confirm the hypothesis that there is significant gender differences in the level of self-acceptance among people with physical disability.
- The present confirms the hypothesis that, there is significant gender difference in the level of physical appearance anxiety in people with physical disability.

## Limitations

### The following are the major limitations of the current study

- Sample in the age group of 18 to 24 years was very small.
- The distribution of gender was uneven due to unavailability.
- Search terms for physical disability included only selected health conditions, meaning that the search was biased towards these conditions and may have missed papers addressing the theme in other disabling conditions.

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