

Impact of Personality Traits on Body Image Satisfaction of University Students

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Abstract: This study aimed to assess the impact of personality traits on body image satisfaction among university students in Sri Lanka. The study employed a correlational research design and collected data from a sample of 198 Sri Lankan university students selected through convenience sampling. Data was collected using the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI) and the Body Image Satisfaction Questionnaire (BISQ). Statistical analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23. The study hypothesized that personality traits have a significant impact on the body image satisfaction of university students. Pearson correlation and regression analyses were conducted to examine the associations between variables. Results indicated significant positive correlations between body image satisfaction and agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability. Regression analysis further confirmed these findings, revealing that these personality traits collectively explained a substantial portion of the variance in body image satisfaction. The findings underscore the influence of personality on body image perceptions and highlight the potential for targeted interventions to enhance body image and well-being among university students.

Keywords: Body Image satisfaction, Big Five Personality Traits, University Students

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Body image significantly impacts young adults' psychological well-being, self-esteem, and overall life satisfaction [37]. University students are particularly susceptible to societal pressures and unrealistic beauty standards, with significant rates of body dissatisfaction [22]. Sociocultural elements, such as media, peer influence, and social media, lead to unfavorable body perceptions by promoting unrealistic beauty standards [24]. As a result, body image dissatisfaction is connected with negative psychological effects such as anxiety and depression [17]. Given the ubiquity of the phenomenon and its negative consequences, identifying its causes, including personality factors, is critical for devising tailored interventions to promote positive self-perception among university students.

1.2 Problem Statement

Body image dissatisfaction is a common and widespread problem among university students, affecting their psychological well-being, self-esteem, and overall standard of life [22]. Habitual social media use and exposure to image-related information can have a considerable impact on body image views, particularly among those aged 18 to 30 [26]. Studies have shown high rates of body dissatisfaction ranging from 59.8% to 82.9% among university students across a variety of disciplines [29].

Body image dissatisfaction can have serious consequences. Individuals dissatisfied with their bodies are more likely to develop eating disorders, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, and engage in unhealthy weight control behaviors, which can lead to irregular eating habits, decreased physical activity, and general deterioration of physical and mental health [19, 33, 36].

This dissatisfaction is frequently aggravated by the widespread impact of conventional beauty standards and the pressure to adhere to idealized body images, particularly through media exposure and social comparison [8, 21].

While previous research has established a correlation between personality qualities and body image satisfaction in other groups, this relationship has received less attention among Sri Lankan university students. Past research has consistently demonstrated that personality traits such as neuroticism, conscientiousness, and extraversion play a significant role in influencing individuals' body image perceptions, with neuroticism being

associated with increased anxiety and insecurity over appearance, as well as reduced positive regard for one's own body, while conscientiousness and extraversion may have varying impacts on body image satisfaction and dissatisfaction. [1,13]. However, the precise connection between these characteristics and body image satisfaction in the Sri Lankan university context remains largely unexplored. This study intended to contribute to the limited body of information in this area by exploring the association between personality qualities and body image satisfaction among Sri Lankan university students. It will provide a guide towards the development of culturally appropriate interventions.

1.3 Objectives

The main objective of the study was to assess the impact of personality traits on the body image satisfaction of university students.

1.4 Significance

The research study on the impact of personality traits on body image satisfaction among university students is profoundly significant. It offers the opportunity to develop tailored interventions to promote positive body image and mental well-being among students by understanding how specific traits influence body image perceptions. Conducting this research within the Sri Lankan context provides culturally relevant insights, empowering students to embrace their unique selves and cultivate self-acceptance. Additionally, the study contributes to early detection and prevention efforts by identifying factors that influence body image satisfaction, bridging a crucial gap in current literature through its focus on Sri Lankan university students. This expands our comprehension of the intricate interplay between personality traits and body image satisfaction within this distinct cultural setting.

1.5 Scope

The study focused on examining the relationship between personality traits and body image satisfaction among university students in Sri Lanka. It utilized the validated standard questionnaires to measure the variables of personality traits and body image satisfaction. The study aimed to thoroughly understand how the Big Five personality traits affect body image satisfaction. This was accomplished by administering quantitative surveys to a representative sample of students. Data analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23.

1.6 Limitations

The study's reliance on convenience sampling and self-report measures introduces potential biases and limitations, impacting the generalizability and validity of the findings. The cross-sectional design hinders the establishment of causal relationships, and the focus only on universities in Sri Lanka may limit the applicability of the results to other populations. Acknowledging these limitations is crucial for accurately interpreting the study's findings and contextualizing their implications within the broader research landscape.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Body Image Satisfaction

Body image satisfaction is a multifaceted concept influenced by various internal and external factors that impact psychological distress, quality of life, and relationship satisfaction, as well as unhealthy weight control practices and dieting behaviors [10, 15, 16, 34]. The Tripartite Influence Model [28] and Social Comparison Theory explain how media and social comparisons shape body image perceptions. It plays a crucial role in university students' mental health, influencing self-esteem, medication adherence, and coping methods, while lowering depression risk and promoting healthy body image development [4, 5, 27].

2.2 Factors Influencing Body Image Satisfaction

Several variables impact body image satisfaction, including societal, psychological, and environmental considerations. Dissatisfaction is impacted by society's beauty standards, media, and individual views of body size and shape [22]. Body image impressions and dissatisfaction are influenced by cultural and demographic characteristics such as gender, age, social media influence, and peer comparisons [12, 24]. Personality traits such as extraversion, neuroticism, openness, conscientiousness, and agreeableness play a significant role in shaping individuals' self-perception and body image satisfaction. Research has shown that these characteristics influence self-efficacy, self-esteem, and self-consciousness, affecting beliefs about abilities, worth, and attractiveness [18]. Disparities between self-perception and others' views can impact self-esteem and relationship satisfaction, highlighting the importance of understanding how personality traits interact with body image perceptions [3].

2.3 Role of Personal Characteristics in Shaping Body Perception

Personal factors, especially personality traits, have a substantial impact on how people see their bodies. Personality traits such as harm avoidance and self-directedness among individuals with obesity have been associated with body image dissatisfaction and low self-esteem [31]. Personality factors also influence exercise habits and motivation, which affects body image perception [14]. Additionally, traits like conscientiousness and extraversion may motivate individuals to participate in physical activities, positively impacting their body image perception [30].

2.4 Personality Traits

Personality traits are enduring patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that characterize an individual's unique way of interacting with the world. The Big Five personality traits, also known as the Five Factor Model, categorize personality traits into five broad dimensions: conscientiousness, extraversion, emotional stability (or neuroticism), openness to experience, and agreeableness [6]. These traits offer a comprehensive overview of an individual's personality and are associated with various aspects of behavior, cognition, and emotion. Understanding these personality traits can provide insights into how individuals perceive and interact with their environment, make decisions, and form relationships. The Big Five model offers a structured approach to assess and analyze personality traits, benefiting various fields such as psychology, management, and social sciences [7].

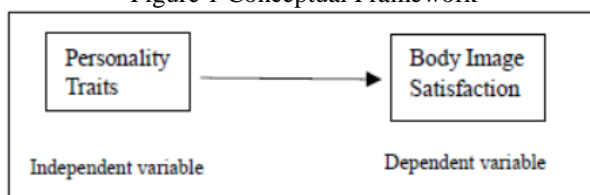
2.5 Impact of Personality Traits on Satisfaction

Personal traits influence a variety of pleasure areas, including life, career, and body image satisfaction. Neuroticism is a strong predictor of lower life satisfaction and body image satisfaction, whereas extraversion and conscientiousness are associated with higher levels of satisfaction [32].

3. Methodology

3.1 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework



Source: Prepared by the authors themselves

3.2 Operationalization of Variables

Personality Traits - Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI)

The Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI) is a widely utilized tool that is based on a personality framework and assesses five dimensions: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, and Openness to Experiences [9, 23]. Research indicates that the validity of the TIPI-J, which comprises only 10 items, is comparable to that of longer measures in Japan [20]. In its initial assessment, the TIPI was found to be a suitable substitute for more extensive FFM instruments, demonstrating acceptable validity, reliability, and external correlations [35]. The TIPI, rooted in the Big-Five framework, has been successfully tested and validated among university undergraduates [11].

Body Image Satisfaction - Body Image Satisfaction Questionnaire (BISQ)

The Body Image Satisfaction Questionnaire (BISQ), an 18-item questionnaire, was used to assess body image perception and satisfaction [38]. The BISQ has been widely used and proved reliable in several groups, including individuals with obesity, breast cancer survivors, and those with eating disorders [25]. The BISQ has demonstrated reliability and validity in measuring body image satisfaction, making it a suitable tool for evaluating body image perceptions among university students [2].

3.3 Research Design

The research used a quantitative approach with a correlational research design to study the impact of personality factors on body image satisfaction among university students. By objectively measuring and analyzing data and examining the relationships between personality traits and body image satisfaction, the study

provided statistical verification and a comprehensive understanding of these associations without manipulating any variables.

3.4 Population And Sample

This research aims to examine how personality traits affect body image satisfaction in Sri Lankan university students. The study involved 198 participants who were selected using convenience sampling. The study explored how individual personality traits influence perceptions of body image satisfaction within this particular population.

3.5 Data Collection Technique

The study involved gathering data through the use of two standardized questionnaires: the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI) and the Body Image Satisfaction Questionnaire (BISQ). To reach a diverse group of Sri Lankan university students, a Google form was distributed through a variety of electronic and social media platforms, including Viber, WhatsApp, and Telegram. This method allowed for the direct collection of primary data from participants, ensuring a well-rounded and inclusive sample for the research on personality traits and satisfaction with body image.

3.6 Reliability Analysis

The internal consistency of the Likert scale items within each variable was assessed using reliability analysis, specifically Cronbach's alpha. The Body Image Satisfaction questionnaire (BISQ), which has 18 items, demonstrated a satisfactory level of reliability with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.715. Similarly, the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI), comprising 10 items, showed good internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.726. These results affirm the reliability of the measures used to evaluate body image satisfaction and personality traits in the study's participants.

Table 1 Cronbach's alpha values of the variables

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha Value	No of items
Body Image Satisfaction (BISQ)	0.715	18
Personality Traits (TIPI)	0.726	10

Source: Prepared by the authors themselves

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 2 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentages
Gender	Male	102	51.5
	Female	96	48.5
Year of Study	Year 1	28	14.1
	Year 2	87	43.9
	Year 3	43	21.7
	Year 4	40	20.2

Source: Prepared by the authors themselves.

Information in Table 2 displays the participant demographics and distribution by academic year. The survey included 198 university students, with 102 males (51.5%) and 96 females (48.5%). Academic year distribution was as follows: Year 1 (28 students, 14.1%), Year 2 (87 students, 43.9%), Year 3 (43 students, 21.7%), and Year 4 (40 students, 20.2%).

4.2 Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Body Image Satisfaction	57.26	6.136	-0.13	-0.193
Extraversion	8.82	1.657	0.806	0.056
Agreeableness	11.56	2.404	-1.199	2.073
Conscientiousness	11.66	2.525	-0.887	0.01
Emotional Stability	10.88	2.312	-0.446	-0.502

Openness to Experiences	9.17	2.275	0.059	0.053
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Source: Prepared by the authors themselves.

The sample included 198 university students. Body image satisfaction varied from 47 to 66 ($M = 57.26$, $SD = 6.136$), showing moderate variability. The traits of personality had diverse distributions: extraversion had a positively skewed distribution ($M = 8.82$, $SD = 1.657$), indicating that most students had lower levels of extraversion, reflecting introverted inclinations. The distributions for agreeableness and conscientiousness were negatively skewed ($M = 11.56$, $SD = 2.404$; $M = 11.66$, $SD = 2.525$, respectively), indicating that students had high levels of cooperation, empathy, and organizational abilities. Emotional stability and openness to experiences had near-normal distributions ($M = 10.88$, $SD = 2.312$; $M = 9.17$, $SD = 2.275$), indicating moderate variability in these traits within the sample.

4.3 Data Analysis Relevant to the Study's Objectives

Table 4 Correlation Weights

Independent Variables	Body Image Satisfaction	
Extraversion	Pearson Correlation	.082
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.248
	N	198
Agreeableness	Pearson Correlation	.482
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
	N	198
Conscientiousness	Pearson Correlation	.484
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
	N	198
Emotional Stability	Pearson Correlation	.463
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
	N	198
Openness to Experiences	Pearson Correlation	.105
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.140
	N	198

Source: Prepared by the authors themselves

As per Table 4 correlation analysis revealed varying relationships between body image satisfaction and personality traits. Significant positive correlations were found between body image satisfaction and agreeableness ($r = .482$, $p < .001$), conscientiousness ($r = .484$, $p < .001$), and emotional stability ($r = .463$, $p < .001$). These results indicate that students who are more agreeable, conscientious, and emotionally stable are likely to feel better about their bodies. This could be because these traits promote positive self-regulation, realistic self-assessment, and effective coping mechanisms, all of which contribute to a healthier body image.

Conversely, no significant correlations were observed between body image satisfaction and extraversion ($r = .082$, $p = .248$) or openness to experiences ($r = .105$, $p = .140$), indicating that being more outgoing or open to new experiences does not necessarily predict higher body image satisfaction among these students. This might be because these traits are more related to social behaviors and curiosity, which do not necessarily affect how one perceives their body.

Given the lack of significant correlation between body image satisfaction and extraversion or openness to experiences, subsequent regression analysis focused on the predictive power of agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability on body image satisfaction.

As shown in Table 5 below regression analysis revealed that agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability significantly predicted body image satisfaction among university students ($F(3, 194) = 28.058$, $p < .001$, Adjusted $R^2 = .292$). This suggests a positive association between higher levels of agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability, and greater body image satisfaction among the student sample. The adjusted R-squared value of 0.292 indicates that agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability collectively explain approximately 29.2% of the variation observed in body image satisfaction among the study participants. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of these traits in shaping perceptions of body image satisfaction among university students ($F(3, 194) = 28.058$, $p < .001$).

Table 5 Hypotheses Results

Hypothesis	B	t	p-value	Results
Agreeableness significantly influences body image satisfaction	.511	2.281	.024	Accepted
Conscientiousness significantly influences body image satisfaction	.584	2.921	.004	Accepted
Emotional Stability significantly influences body image satisfaction	.514	2.369	.019	Accepted
Adjusted R Square	.292			
F (3, 194)	28.058			
Sig.	<.001 ^b			

Source: Prepared by the authors themselves

5. Conclusion

The primary objective of this study was to examine the impact of personality traits on body image satisfaction among university students. Using the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI) and the Body Image Satisfaction Questionnaire (BISQ), the study applied correlation and regression analyses to understand these connections. The results of the Pearson correlation analysis showed strong positive links between body image satisfaction and agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability. These findings were reinforced by the regression analysis, which demonstrated that these three personality traits together accounted for a significant part of the variation in body image satisfaction (Adjusted $R^2 = .292$). This indicates that these characteristics are linked to a more favorable perception of one's own body and collectively play a role in fostering a positive body image.

The outcomes emphasize the impact of personality factors on body image perceptions among university students. Interventions aimed at cultivating agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability may prove advantageous in fostering positive body image and overall well-being. Nevertheless, the limited correlations between extraversion and openness to experiences and body image satisfaction suggest that these traits may have a restrained influence on body image perceptions. This suggests that being more outgoing, sociable, or open to new experiences does not necessarily correlate with how satisfied individuals are with their body image.

Future studies could investigate the underlying mechanisms that link personality characteristics with body image satisfaction, such as the function of cognitive assessments, self-esteem, and social comparisons. Longitudinal studies ought to additionally examine the durability of these connections over time and whether personality therapies can alter body image outcomes. Researchers can design more tailored and effective interventions to promote good body image and mental health in young people by better understanding the complex interplay between personality and body image.

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