Self Esteem and Social Appearance Anxiety Among Young Adults During Covid-19 Outbreak

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Abstract: Self-esteem is one's total appraisal of oneself, whether positive or negative (Srivastava & Agarwal, 2013). According to Hart et al., (2008), Social appearance anxiety is “The fear that one will be negatively evaluated because of one's appearance”. The purpose of the study was to assess the relationship between self-esteem and social appearance anxiety among young adults during COVID-19 and the variables of the study included Self-esteem as independent variable and social appearance anxiety as dependent variable. The population sample included a total of 202 participants of which 58 males and 144 females. The participants of the study belong to the age range of 18 to 25 years. The study was administered using two tools to measure the variables. For the first variable self-esteem Rosenberg self-esteem scale was used and for measuring social appearance anxiety – social appearance anxiety scale was used. For data analysis non parametric test i.e., to determine gender differences between the variable Mann Whitney u test was used and for determining the relationship utilized spearman rank correlation was used. The study was conducted using SPSS software 23.0. The results of the study indicated that there is statistically significant negative correlation between self-esteem and social appearance anxiety and no significant gender difference in self-esteem and social appearance anxiety among young adults during COVID-19.

Index Terms - Self-esteem, Social appearance anxiety, young adults, COVID-19

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Self Esteem

Self-esteem is described as one's total appraisal of oneself, whether positive or negative. Self-esteem is as a person's perception of self-worth. It expresses a person's worth about himself or herself to be capable and worthy of existence. Today, the self-esteem construct is widely acknowledged as a significant determinant of learning outcomes. (Leary, 2005). Self-esteem is a socio-psychological construct that evaluates a person's attitudes and self-worth perceptions. Study by Srivastava and Agrawal discovered that males had higher self-esteem than the females and females exhibited average self-esteem (Srivastava & Agarwal, 2013).

The importance of self-esteem in later adolescence is critical because it sets the stage for the long-term growth and maintenance of a positive sense of self. An individual's self-esteem is shaped by a negative or positive assessment of “self” or by a judgement made about his or her “self.” Individuals with low self-esteem have a reduced feeling of self-respect and they act more quietly and timidly when they believe their thoughts will not be accepted (Sarçam, 2011). Evidence suggests that therapies that promote self-esteem result in positive psychological outcomes. The positive effects of self-esteem programs are explained by the fact that these interventions alter people’s opinions of their worth to society. Self-esteem programs always include elements aimed at enhancing social skills and interpersonal problem solving, enhance physical appearance, and increasing self-control. (Leary, 1999).

1.2 Social Appearance Anxiety

Social appearance anxiety is the fear of negative assessment of one’s appearance. Anxiety is a generalised fear that we hear without knowing what it means, such as grief, anguish, fear, a sense of failure, incompetence, or judgement (Unlu et al., 2001). Because anxiety is a distressing disorder that interrupts interpersonal interactions and has a detrimental impact on a person's entire life (Kashdan, 2007).

The worry of being judged poorly is referred to as fear of negative evaluation. When an individual communicates with another person, the individual will use his or her image, speech, and behaviours to influence the other person. When a person becomes opposed to others, however, the other side becomes fixated on his or her own views, causing concern. His or her attitude acts in the face of the individual or the individual due to the anxiety one is experiencing. This causes the person to be self-conscious about his or her social appearance (Sevindi, 2020).
1.3 Young Adults

Young adulthood is a developmental stage between the ages of 18 to 25 that is distinguished by major transitions. (Gupta et al., 2008). Mental health issues have an adverse effect on India's youth's productivity and skills. In young adults, self-esteem is a critical component of mental health, especially when social support is scarce. One-third of the youth lacked understanding and had negative perceptions toward people with mental illnesses, and one-fifth planned to or already had discriminated against someone with mental illness (Gaitha et al., 2020). This study aims to focus on the relationship between social appearance anxiety and self-esteem among young adults during pandemic (COVID 19).

1.4 Need for study

Many research studies are conducted on self-esteem and social appearance anxiety in the western countries. There is limited research based in India. During the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of young adults is amplified as there were increased rates of reported mental health. Through this study the relationship between self-esteem and social appearance anxiety of Indian young adults during the COVID19 pandemic is explored. The findings of this research may help young adults understand their thought process and the utilization of coping strategies and bring about a change in the way adapt with their distress and the way it reflects in their self-esteem.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Population and Sample

In this study the sample was chosen from a population of young adults. The researcher selected the sample of adults from the age group of 18 to 25yrs. The sample was 200 adults from Karnataka. Purposive Sampling technique was used for the present study. The data was collected self-assessment questionnaires for self-esteem and social appearance anxiety using Rosenberg Self Esteem scale and Social Appearance Anxiety Scale respectively. It is a non-probability sampling technique in which the samples have traits that are rare to find. In the research purposive sampling technique was used due to lack of time, economical constrains. The consent form and questionnaire were filled through google form.

2.2 Data and Sources of Data

The data collected from the samples was entered into the excel sheet. For the further analysis the data was categorized and then the application Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS version) was used. The data entered in the excel sheet was analyzed in SPSS table. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used. Descriptive statistics like mean and standard deviation. Inferential statistics like Spearman rank correlation and Mann-Whitney U test were used.

2.3 Theoretical framework

The study used a correlation research design. The Spearman rank correlation is a non-parametric survey that measures how strongly and in what direction two variables correlate when characterized by an ordinal scale.

2.4 Statistical tools and econometric models

Correlation and Mann Whitney u test were the statistical analysis used in this research.

The Spearman rank correlation is a non-parametric survey that measures how strongly and in what direction two variables correlate when characterized by an ordinal scale.

Mann-Whitney U test compares the difference in a dependent variable between two independent groups. It is used to determine if the distribution of the dependent variable is the similar for the two groups and therefore from the same population.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Overview

The current study pays an attempt to find whether there is any significant relationship between self-esteem and social appearance anxiety among young adults during the COVID-19 outbreak. The data obtained were analyzed using mean, median and mode of descriptive statistics and Spearman rank correlation, and the obtained results are discussed in the following sessions.

3.2 Results

Table 3.1: Descriptive statistics Of Self Esteem and Social Appearance Anxiety among young adults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self Esteem</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>28.00</td>
<td>4.818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Appearance Anxiety</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>32.84</td>
<td>15.373</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Table 3.1 shows the descriptive statistics A total sample of 202 young adults were surveyed, out of which 71.3% females (N= 144) and 28.7% males (N=58) participated. Among the young adults in the sample, 38.6% is 25-year-olds (N=78), 16.3% is 24-year-olds(N=33), 12.4% is 23-year-olds(N=25), 7.9% were 22years old(N=16),9.4% were 21-year-olds(N=19),4.5% were 20-year-olds(N=9),5% were 19-year-olds (N=10) and 5.9% were 18-year-olds(N=12). The mean value of self-esteem is 28 and for Social Appearance Anxiety is 32.84 and the Standard deviation of Self Esteem is 32.84 and of Social Appearance Anxiety is 15.37.

The study sample consists of 42 young adults with low self-esteem among out of which male 21% (n=9) and female 78% (n=33),151 young adults with normal range of self-esteem among which male 30.4% (n=46) and females 69.5% (n=105) and 9 young adults with high self-esteem among which male 33%(n=3) and female 66% (n=6).
The study sample consists of 137 young adults with low social appearance anxiety among which male (n=40) 29% and female70% (n=96), 49 young adults with normal range of social appearance anxiety among which male 28% (n=14) and females 71.4%(n=35) and 17 young adults with high social appearance anxiety among which male (n=4)23.5% and female (n=13) 76.4%.

### Table 3.2: Spearman rank correlation between Self Esteem and Social Appearance Anxiety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self Esteem and Social Appearance</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>-0.549**</td>
<td>0.001***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The table 3.2 Table 3 shows the correlation study conducted between two variable self-esteem and social appearance anxiety among young adults during COVID-19 using spearman rank correlation. According to the table correlation obtained for 202 sample between self-esteem and social appearance anxiety is -0.549, which is not significant at 0.001 level. This data indicates that there is a week negative correlation between the self-esteem and social appearance anxiety among young adults during COVID 19. Hence, the null hypothesis “There is no significant relationship self-esteem and social appearance anxiety among young adults during COVID-19” is rejected.

### Table 3.3: Mann Whitney U test conducted between two variable self-esteem and social appearance anxiety among young adults during COVID-19.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>U</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self esteem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>101.96</td>
<td>4149.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>101.32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social appearance anxiety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>95.21</td>
<td>3811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>104.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table 3.3 shows the mean rank and u score of self-esteem and social appearance anxiety among young adult male and female participants during COVID 19. There was no significant difference between the scores of self-esteem among male (mean rank = 101.96) and female (mean rank = 101.32) and (U=4149). There was no significant difference between scores of males (mean rank = 95.21) and females (mean rank = 104.03) and (U=3811), which is not significant at 0.001 level. Hence, we accept the hypothesis “There is no significant gender difference in self-esteem and social appearance anxiety among young adults during COVID-19”.

### 3.3 Discussion

In the current study, it looks into the correlation between self-esteem and social appearance anxiety in young adults during COVID 19. The results revealed a correlation between self-esteem and social appearance anxiety is -0.549, which is significant at 0.001 level. This data indicates that there is a weak negative correlation between the self-esteem and social appearance anxiety among young adults during COVID 19.

The sample revealed that 137 young adults had low social appearance anxiety among which male (n=40) and female (n=96), 49 young adults with normal range of social appearance anxiety among which male (n=14) and females (n=35) and 17 young adults with high social appearance anxiety among which male (n=4) and female (n=13). Current study also revealed that 42 young adults with low self-esteem among which male (n=9) and female (n=33), 151 young adults with normal range of self-esteem among which male (n=46) and females (n=105) and 9 young adults with high self-esteem among which male (n=3) and female (n=6). Self-esteem seems to have an effect on social appearance anxiety on both male and female population.

This study looks into the relationship between self-esteem and social appearance anxiety in young adults. According to the current study's statistical findings, there is a moderate negative correlation between social appearance anxiety and self-esteem among young adults aged 18 to 25. The current study's findings are consistent with a prior study that found a substantial link between self-esteem and social anxiety (Antonietti, Camerini & Marciano, 2020)

In a study that was aimed to investigate the relationships among self-esteem and social appearance anxiety in adolescents. The results revealed change in the self-esteem scores of every 24 out of 100 girls, every 19 out of 100 boys, and 22% of the total group can be explained by social appearance anxiety scores. Therefore, for both genders, the results revealed a significant negative association between self-esteem and social appearance anxiety (Sahin et al., 2014).

These findings imply that teenagers who have low self-esteem may have higher levels of social appearance anxiety, or inversely. Low self-esteem and high trait-anxiety, appear to be key risk factors for the development of depression and anxiety. (Hettema, 2008). The findings supported the notion that higher levels of self-esteem and lower levels of trait anxiety act as a barrier against anxiety and depression (Rosenberg et al., 1995).

Another study conducted result has indicated that the intensity of depression, according to the research, has a negative impact on social anxiety and self-esteem and that economic concerns tend to increase social appearance anxiety, and self-esteem and social appearance anxiety are connected. (Özcan et al., 2013).

The finding of the study results indicated that there is there is statistically significant negative correlation between self-esteem and social appearance anxiety the null hypothesis H01, “There is no significant relationship between self-esteem and social appearance anxiety among young adults during COVID-19” is rejected. The result indicates there is a negative relationship between self-esteem and social appearance anxiety among young adults i.e., that young adult who are having high social appearance anxiety may experience low self-esteem. Mann Whitney u test was conducted, to assess the gender difference in self-esteem and social appearance anxiety in young adults during COVID -19 and the results indicated no significant gender
difference thus we accept the null hypothesis H02 - “There is no significant gender difference in self-esteem and social appearance anxiety during COVID-19”.

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REFERENCES


