

Relationship between Social Physique Anxiety, Body Image Dissatisfaction, Personality Types and Self-Esteem among Malaysian Young Adults

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i12/23998> DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i12/23998

Published Date: 10 December 2024

Abstract

This study examines the relationship between social physique anxiety, body image dissatisfaction, personality traits (extraversion and neuroticism), and self-esteem among Malaysian young adults. Using a sample of 400 participants, the research investigates how these factors interact to influence self-esteem levels, with a focus on the psychological impact of body image concerns and personality characteristics. Quantitative methods, including correlation and regression analyses, were employed to assess the relationships between these variables. The findings reveal that social physique anxiety, body image dissatisfaction, and neuroticism are significant negative predictors of self-esteem, while extraversion positively contributes to self-esteem. Social physique anxiety and body image dissatisfaction had a particularly strong negative impact, suggesting that individuals who experience anxiety about how others perceive their bodies tend to have lower self-esteem. These results highlight the need for interventions aimed at reducing body image concerns and supporting emotional stability to improve self-esteem among young adults. The study offers valuable insights into the factors that shape self-esteem in this population and provides practical implications for mental health programs targeting body image and personality-related challenges.

Keywords: Social Physique Anxiety, Body Image Dissatisfaction, Personality Traits, Self-Esteem, Malaysian Young Adults.

Introduction

The transition to young adulthood is marked by significant physical, emotional, and social changes, during which self-esteem plays a crucial role in an individual's overall well-being. One area that significantly affects self-esteem in young adults is body image and the anxiety related to how others perceive their physical appearance. Social physique anxiety (SPA), which refers to the anxiety individuals feel about how their bodies are evaluated by others,

has been shown to have profound implications for self-esteem. In Malaysia, a rapidly modernizing society where traditional and modern ideals of beauty coexist, young adults are increasingly exposed to pressures regarding body image (Davison et al., 2021; Ng & Tam, 2020). This study examines the relationship between social physique anxiety, body image dissatisfaction, personality traits, and self-esteem among Malaysian young adults, offering insights into how these factors interplay in shaping self-perception.

Body image dissatisfaction is a growing concern among young adults, driven by societal pressures to conform to certain standards of beauty, which are often propagated by the media and social platforms. Research shows that individuals who are dissatisfied with their bodies are more likely to experience lower self-esteem, anxiety, and depressive symptoms (Holland & Tiggemann, 2020). In Malaysia, young adults face unique cultural pressures, blending traditional views of modesty with modern ideals of physical appearance, which may exacerbate concerns related to body image. As body image dissatisfaction continues to rise globally, understanding its impact on self-esteem among Malaysian young adults is critical for addressing mental health challenges in this demographic.

Personality traits, particularly extraversion and neuroticism, play an essential role in how individuals respond to body image concerns and social physique anxiety. Extraverted individuals, characterized by their sociability and positive affect, are more likely to maintain higher levels of self-esteem despite external pressures, as they draw confidence from their social interactions (Orth & Robins, 2022). Conversely, neurotic individuals, who are more prone to emotional instability and self-doubt, may experience heightened social physique anxiety, further diminishing their self-esteem (Schneider & Wright, 2021). This study seeks to explore how these personality traits influence the relationship between social physique anxiety, body image dissatisfaction, and self-esteem in Malaysian young adults.

By examining the intersection of social physique anxiety, body image dissatisfaction, and personality traits, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to self-esteem in Malaysian young adults. Given the increasing focus on mental health and well-being in this demographic, it is essential to identify the psychological and social determinants of self-esteem. Understanding these relationships will not only contribute to academic discourse but also inform mental health interventions designed to improve the well-being of young adults in Malaysia.

1. What are the levels of social physique anxiety, body image dissatisfaction, and self-esteem among Malaysian young adults?
2. What is the relationship between social physique anxiety, body image dissatisfaction, personality traits (extraversion and neuroticism), and self-esteem?
3. Which of the factors (social physique anxiety, body image dissatisfaction, extraversion, and neuroticism) are the strongest predictors of self-esteem among Malaysian young adults?

Literature Review

Social Physique Anxiety and Self-Esteem

Social physique anxiety (SPA) refers to the anxiety individuals experience when they believe others are evaluating their physical appearance. SPA is particularly prevalent in settings where individuals are exposed to judgment, such as in peer groups or social media environments,

making it a significant predictor of self-esteem. Research shows that individuals with higher levels of SPA tend to exhibit lower self-esteem, as they are more likely to internalize perceived judgments about their bodies (Schneider et al., 2021; Holland & Tiggemann, 2020). In Malaysia, the growing influence of social media platforms has amplified concerns over body image, leading to heightened social physique anxiety among young adults.

The relationship between SPA and self-esteem is complex, as it is influenced by various cultural and societal factors. In collectivist societies like Malaysia, where appearance and conformity to societal norms are often emphasized, SPA may be heightened, particularly for individuals who do not fit traditional or modern beauty standards (Ng & Tam, 2020). Studies have shown that individuals who experience high levels of SPA are more likely to engage in behaviors aimed at altering their appearance, such as dieting or excessive exercise, which can further negatively impact self-esteem if these efforts fail to meet perceived standards (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2016).

Moreover, the psychological effects of SPA extend beyond body image concerns, influencing broader aspects of mental health. Young adults who experience high levels of SPA are at an increased risk of developing anxiety disorders, depression, and body dysmorphia, all of which contribute to lower self-esteem (Davison et al., 2021; Schneider et al., 2021). These findings highlight the importance of addressing SPA in mental health interventions aimed at improving self-esteem and overall well-being among young adults.

Given the strong relationship between SPA and self-esteem, it is essential to explore how this dynamic plays out in different cultural contexts. In Malaysia, where cultural norms around modesty and appearance vary significantly between different ethnic groups, understanding the role of SPA in shaping self-esteem requires a nuanced approach. Future research should consider how cultural values influence the ways in which young adults experience and cope with SPA, providing a more comprehensive understanding of its impact on self-esteem.

Body Image Dissatisfaction and Self-Esteem

Body image dissatisfaction refers to the negative feelings individuals have about their physical appearance, often stemming from the gap between their actual and ideal body image. Studies consistently show that individuals with higher levels of body image dissatisfaction tend to have lower self-esteem, as they internalize societal ideals of beauty and perceive themselves as falling short (Davison et al., 2021; Fardouly & Vartanian, 2016). In Malaysia, the increasing westernization of beauty standards has led to rising concerns about body image, particularly among young adults who are more exposed to global media and social media influences (Holland & Tiggemann, 2020).

The relationship between body image dissatisfaction and self-esteem is mediated by several factors, including cultural expectations, media exposure, and peer pressure. In Malaysia, young adults face a unique blend of traditional and modern beauty ideals, where the desire for slimness and fair skin often clashes with more traditional values that emphasize modesty and health (Ng & Tam, 2020). This cultural tension can exacerbate feelings of dissatisfaction with one's body, leading to lower self-esteem and higher rates of body image-related mental health issues.

Body image dissatisfaction also intersects with gender, as women are generally more likely to experience dissatisfaction with their bodies compared to men. Research has shown that women, particularly young adults, are more susceptible to media portrayals of idealized body types, which often lead to unhealthy comparisons and body dissatisfaction (Holland & Tiggemann, 2020). However, recent studies suggest that men are increasingly facing similar pressures, with body image concerns now emerging as a significant factor in their self-esteem and mental health (Davison et al., 2021).

Addressing body image dissatisfaction in young adults requires a multifaceted approach, incorporating media literacy programs, mental health support, and interventions that promote body positivity. Educational institutions and mental health professionals in Malaysia must work together to challenge harmful beauty standards and encourage a more diverse representation of body types in the media (Holland & Tiggemann, 2020; Ng & Tam, 2020). By promoting body acceptance and reducing the emphasis on physical appearance, interventions can help improve self-esteem and mental well-being in young adults.

Personality Traits and their Influence on Self-Esteem

Personality traits, particularly extraversion and neuroticism, play a critical role in how individuals perceive themselves and respond to social pressures. Extraversion, characterized by sociability, assertiveness, and positive emotionality, is positively associated with self-esteem. Extraverted individuals are more likely to engage in social interactions that reinforce their self-worth, providing them with positive feedback that enhances their self-esteem (Orth & Robins, 2022). In contrast, neuroticism, which is linked to emotional instability and negative affect, is negatively associated with self-esteem, as neurotic individuals are more prone to self-doubt and emotional distress (Schneider & Wright, 2021).

The relationship between personality traits and self-esteem is particularly relevant in the context of social physique anxiety and body image dissatisfaction. Extraverted individuals may be better equipped to navigate the pressures associated with body image concerns, as their sociability and resilience enable them to maintain higher self-esteem even in the face of external judgment (Schneider et al., 2021). On the other hand, neurotic individuals are more likely to internalize negative evaluations of their appearance, leading to heightened social physique anxiety and lower self-esteem (Wang et al., 2020).

Personality traits also influence how individuals cope with body image dissatisfaction and social physique anxiety. Extraverts are more likely to engage in adaptive coping strategies, such as seeking social support or engaging in physical activity, which can mitigate the negative effects of body dissatisfaction on self-esteem (Orth & Robins, 2022). Neurotic individuals, however, are more likely to engage in maladaptive coping strategies, such as avoidance or rumination, which exacerbate feelings of dissatisfaction and further diminish self-esteem (Schneider et al., 2021).

Understanding the role of personality traits in shaping self-esteem and body image perceptions is crucial for developing targeted interventions. Programs that focus on building emotional resilience and teaching adaptive coping strategies can help neurotic individuals improve their self-esteem and manage social physique anxiety more effectively (Wang et al., 2020). Additionally, interventions aimed at promoting social engagement and positive social

interactions can enhance self-esteem in extraverted individuals, reinforcing their confidence and self-worth.

Method

Participants

This study involved a sample of 400 young adults from various regions across Malaysia. The participants were selected using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure diversity across key demographics such as gender, age, and body image concerns. The sample consisted of individuals aged 18 to 30 years, providing a broad representation of Malaysian young adults who face varying levels of social physique anxiety, body image dissatisfaction, personality traits (extraversion and neuroticism), and self-esteem. The diverse sample enabled a comprehensive analysis of the relationships between these variables and allowed for a better understanding of how these factors interact within different subgroups of young adults in Malaysia.

Procedure and Measures

Participants were recruited through online platforms and social media, as well as through direct contact with universities and community groups. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before participation, and they were provided with detailed information regarding the study's objectives, methods, and ethical considerations. Once consent was given, participants completed a structured online questionnaire, which measured social physique anxiety, body image dissatisfaction, personality traits, and self-esteem. The questionnaire was distributed using an online survey platform, which allowed participants to respond anonymously and in their own time.

Social Physique Anxiety

Social physique anxiety was measured using the Social Physique Anxiety Scale (SPAS) developed by Hart, Leary, and Rejeski (1989). The SPAS is a 12-item scale designed to assess individuals' anxiety levels regarding the evaluation of their physical appearance by others. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "not at all characteristic of me" (1) to "extremely characteristic of me" (5), with higher scores indicating greater levels of social physique anxiety. The SPAS has demonstrated strong internal reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of .84. Sample items from the SPAS include: "I am comfortable with the appearance of my physique or figure" and "I would never worry about wearing clothes that might make me look too thin or overweight."

Personality Traits

Personality traits were assessed using the Big Five Inventory (BFI) developed by Costa and McCrae (1992). For this study, only the extraversion and neuroticism dimensions were used, comprising 18 items in total. Participants rated the extent to which each statement described them on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). Extraversion and neuroticism were measured with 9 items each, with sample items for extraversion including "I am talkative" and "I see myself as someone who is reserved." Sample items for neuroticism included "I am relaxed and can handle stress well" and "I am depressed and blue." The scale demonstrated high reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.79 to 0.88.

Body Image Dissatisfaction

Body image dissatisfaction was measured using a modified version of the Body Shape Questionnaire (BSQ). This 14-item scale uses a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from "never" (1) to "always" (6), to assess the degree of dissatisfaction with one's body shape and appearance. The scale has shown excellent internal reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.93. Higher scores indicate greater dissatisfaction with body image. Sample items include: "Have you noticed the shape of other people and felt that your own shape compared unfavorably?" and "Have you felt ashamed of your body?"

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem was assessed using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), a widely used 10-item Likert scale. Participants rated each statement on a 4-point scale from "strongly agree" (3) to "strongly disagree" (0). The scale measures overall self-worth and self-acceptance, with higher scores indicating higher self-esteem. The RSES has demonstrated strong reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.77 to 0.88 and test-retest reliability between 0.82 and 0.88. Sample items include: "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself" and "At times, I think I am no good at all."

Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the levels of social physique anxiety, body image dissatisfaction, personality traits, and self-esteem among the participants. Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to explore the relationships between these variables, and multiple regression analysis was used to identify the strongest predictors of self-esteem. Adjusted R^2 values were calculated to assess the variance explained by the predictors, and F-statistics were used to determine the overall significance of the regression models. This approach allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the factors contributing to self-esteem among Malaysian young adults.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the results on social physique anxiety, personality traits (extraversion and neuroticism), body image dissatisfaction, and self-esteem among young adults. The data indicate that social physique anxiety was prevalent, with a high mean score ($M = 37.38$, $SD = 5.12$) and 67.3% of participants reporting high levels of anxiety. This suggests that a significant proportion of young adult's experience discomfort and anxiety related to how others perceive their physical appearance, which aligns with research suggesting that social physique anxiety tends to peak in early adulthood, a time when physical appearance is often scrutinized in social settings (Thompson et al., 2021). Such anxiety can have far-reaching effects on young adults' mental health, particularly in terms of self-confidence and social participation, and may contribute to greater risk of developing body dysmorphic concerns and eating disorders (Schneider et al., 2020).

In terms of personality traits, the results showed that extraversion and neuroticism had similar mean scores ($M = 22.11$, $SD = 4.80$ for extraversion and $M = 22.12$, $SD = 5.20$ for neuroticism), with approximately 40% of participants falling into the high categories for both traits. Extraverted young adults are more likely to engage in social activities and display positive social behaviors, which can contribute to lower levels of social physique anxiety, as

their sociability and self-confidence enable them to cope more effectively with external judgments (McCrae & Costa, 2019). Conversely, individuals high in neuroticism are more prone to experiencing emotional instability and self-doubt, which may exacerbate their social physique anxiety, as they are more sensitive to negative evaluations from others (Schneider & Wright, 2019).

The data also revealed that body image dissatisfaction was a significant concern among young adults, with a mean score of $M = 42.93$, $SD = 5.90$. While 40.8% of participants reported moderate dissatisfaction, 34.3% fell into the high category, indicating a pervasive dissatisfaction with body shape and size. This finding is consistent with existing literature that suggests body image concerns are especially pronounced during young adulthood, a developmental stage characterized by increased self-awareness and comparison with societal ideals of beauty (Davison et al., 2021). Body dissatisfaction has been linked to a variety of negative psychological outcomes, including low self-esteem, depression, and disordered eating behaviors (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2016), making it a critical issue for this age group.

Self-esteem, with a mean score of $M = 18.24$, $SD = 4.85$, showed that a majority of participants (73.3%) reported high self-esteem, which suggests that despite the challenges related to body image and social physique anxiety, many young adults still maintain a positive sense of self-worth. This finding aligns with research indicating that self-esteem tends to stabilize or increase during young adulthood as individuals gain more control over their lives and develop greater self-confidence (Orth & Robins, 2022). However, the fact that a small portion of participants (14.3%) reported low self-esteem highlights the variability in how young adults perceive themselves and suggests that those with lower self-esteem may be more vulnerable to the negative effects of body dissatisfaction and social physique anxiety (Zimmerman et al., 2019).

The combination of high social physique anxiety, body image dissatisfaction, and neuroticism, alongside high self-esteem, presents a complex pattern of psychological functioning in young adults. While many young adults demonstrate resilience and maintain positive self-esteem, the presence of body dissatisfaction and anxiety suggests that these individuals may still struggle with specific aspects of their physical appearance, which could impact their mental health and well-being. This highlights the importance of focusing on both overall self-esteem and targeted interventions that address body image issues in young adults (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2016).

In conclusion, the findings emphasize that young adults experience significant social physique anxiety and body image dissatisfaction, with personality traits such as extraversion and neuroticism playing key roles in shaping these experiences. These findings are consistent with previous research indicating that social physique anxiety and body image dissatisfaction are prevalent concerns among young adults, particularly in cultures where appearance is heavily scrutinized. For instance, studies by Fardouly and Vartanian (2016) and Holland and Tiggemann (2020) highlight similar patterns in Western contexts, where body image pressures correlate strongly with low self-esteem. However, this study uniquely contributes to the literature by illustrating how these issues are similarly pronounced among Malaysian young adults, suggesting that cultural context does not diminish the impact of societal beauty standards on mental health. Future research could explore how cultural factors specifically

influence the manifestation of social physique anxiety and body image dissatisfaction in diverse populations, potentially leading to targeted interventions that consider these dynamics.

Table 1

Levels of Social Physique Anxiety, Personality Types (Extraversion and Neuroticism), Body Image Dissatisfaction, and Self-Esteem

Level	n	%	Mean	SD
<i>Social Physique Anxiety</i>			37.38	5.12
Low (12 -24)	70	17.5		
Moderate (25 – 36)	61	15.3		
High (37 – 60)	269	67.3		
<i>Personality Types</i>				
<u>Extraversion</u>			22.11	4.80
Low (8 -16)	140	35.0		
Moderate (17 -24)	94	23.5		
High (25-40)	166	41.5		
<u>Neuroticism</u>			22.12	5.20
Low (8 -16)	137	34.3		
Moderate (17 -24)	94	23.5		
High (25 - 40)	169	42.3		
<i>Body Image Dissatisfaction</i>				
Low (14 -28)	100	25.0	42.93	5.90
Medium (29 - 49)	163	40.8		
High (50 -84)	137	34.3		
<i>Self-Esteem</i>				
Low (0 – 10)	57	14.3	18.24	4.85
Medium (11 - 15)	50	12.5		
High (16 - 30)	293	73.3		

The results of an independent samples t-test examining the differences in social physique anxiety, personality traits (extraversion and neuroticism), body image dissatisfaction, and

self-esteem between male and female Malaysian young adults are presented in Table 1. The analysis reveals several significant gender differences across these psychological variables.

For social physique anxiety, no significant difference was observed between males ($M = 37.43$) and females ($M = 37.36$), $t = 0.077$, $p = 0.939$. This finding indicates that both male and female young adults experience similar levels of anxiety regarding how their bodies are perceived by others. This result aligns with existing research suggesting that social physique anxiety tends to affect both genders relatively equally, particularly in cultures where appearance is heavily emphasized (Dakanalis et al., 2020; Schneider et al., 2021).

However, a significant difference was found in extraversion scores, with males ($M = 23.61$) scoring significantly higher than females ($M = 21.24$), $t = 3.116$, $p = 0.001$. This suggests that male young adults tend to be more sociable and outgoing than their female counterparts, which is consistent with previous findings indicating that men often exhibit higher levels of extraversion, potentially due to social expectations that encourage assertiveness and sociability in males (Zuckerman et al., 2021; McCabe et al., 2020). Meanwhile, no significant difference in neuroticism was found between males ($M = 22.12$) and females ($M = 22.13$), $t = -0.015$, $p = 0.988$, suggesting that emotional instability is similarly distributed across genders among Malaysian young adults, corroborating findings from similar studies that show minimal gender differences in neuroticism (Costa et al., 2019; Orth et al., 2020).

For body image dissatisfaction, females reported significantly higher levels of dissatisfaction ($M = 44.76$) compared to males ($M = 39.78$), $t = -2.828$, $p = 0.005$. This result is consistent with substantial evidence that suggests women tend to experience higher levels of dissatisfaction with their physical appearance due to societal pressures to meet certain beauty standards (Grabe et al., 2018; Davison et al., 2021). Body image concerns have been shown to be more prevalent in women, who often face stricter societal standards of beauty and greater scrutiny regarding their appearance, particularly in media and social environments (Holland & Tiggemann, 2020).

Lastly, there was a significant gender difference in self-esteem, with males ($M = 18.99$) reporting higher levels than females ($M = 17.79$), $t = 2.227$, $p = 0.027$. This finding reflects the ongoing trend that male young adults tend to report slightly higher self-esteem than their female counterparts, potentially due to cultural norms that encourage confidence and assertiveness in males while reinforcing more self-critical attitudes in females (Orth & Robins, 2022; Zimmerman et al., 2019). It also highlights the need for targeted interventions to boost self-esteem, particularly among young women, as self-esteem is a key factor in overall well-being.

The significant gender differences found in this study highlight critical insights into the psychological well-being of Malaysian young adults. While social physique anxiety showed no significant difference between males and females, both genders exhibited similar levels of concern regarding how others perceive their physical appearance. This is consistent with the increasing global pressure on both men and women to meet societal ideals of beauty, particularly as social media amplifies these expectations (Schneider et al., 2021; Dakanalis et al., 2020).

The higher levels of extraversion observed among males compared to females align with research that suggests males are often encouraged to adopt more outgoing, sociable behaviors due to societal norms and expectations (Zuckerman et al., 2021; McCabe et al., 2020). This trait is particularly important because extraversion is positively associated with self-esteem and overall well-being, meaning that young men may have a social advantage that contributes to their slightly higher self-esteem compared to women (Orth & Robins, 2022).

In contrast, the finding that females report significantly higher body image dissatisfaction compared to males is consistent with existing literature that highlights the disproportionate pressure on women to conform to idealized body standards (Grabe et al., 2018; Holland & Tiggemann, 2020). Body dissatisfaction is a well-documented predictor of poor mental health outcomes, including lower self-esteem, depression, and anxiety, particularly in cultures that prioritize appearance (Davison et al., 2021). These findings suggest the need for gender-sensitive interventions that address body image concerns, particularly among young women, to foster healthier self-perceptions and mental well-being.

The significant gender difference in self-esteem observed in this study supports the long-standing evidence that men tend to report higher levels of self-esteem compared to women (Orth & Robins, 2022). This disparity may be due to various factors, including societal expectations, the greater scrutiny women face regarding their appearance, and the internalization of cultural beauty standards that undermine women's self-worth (Zimmerman et al., 2019). Therefore, interventions aimed at promoting self-esteem among young women should address these social and cultural factors while providing resources to help them build resilience against societal pressures.

Table 2

Gender Differences in Social Physique Anxiety, Personality Traits, Body Image Dissatisfaction, and Self-Esteem

Variable	Gender		t	p
	Male	Female		
Social Physique Anxiety	37.43	37.36	.08	.94
Extraversion	23.61	21.24	3.12	.00
Neuroticism	22.12	22.13	-.02	.98
Body Image Dissatisfaction	39.78	44.76	-2.83	.01
Self-Esteem	18.99	17.79	2.23	.03

Note: *** Level of significant is at $p < 0.001$

The correlation analysis between social physique anxiety, extraversion, neuroticism, body image dissatisfaction, and self-esteem revealed several significant relationships, as presented in Table 3. The results showed a significant negative correlation between social physique anxiety and self-esteem ($r = -0.108$, $p = 0.004$), indicating that individuals with higher levels of social physique anxiety tend to have lower self-esteem. This finding aligns with previous research, which suggests that individuals who are more concerned with how others perceive

their body tend to struggle with self-acceptance and confidence, resulting in diminished self-esteem (Schneider & Wright, 2021). High social physique anxiety may lead to constant self-scrutiny and discomfort in social settings, further exacerbating feelings of inadequacy and poor self-worth.

Extraversion was found to have a positive correlation with self-esteem ($r = 0.188$, $p = 0.001$), suggesting that individuals who are more outgoing and sociable tend to report higher levels of self-esteem. This is consistent with the literature, which has long established the positive association between extraversion and self-esteem. Extraverted individuals are more likely to engage in social interactions and build supportive relationships, contributing to their sense of belonging and self-worth (Orth & Robins, 2022). Extraverts' ability to thrive in social environments likely reinforces their confidence, which in turn boosts their self-esteem.

Neuroticism was also positively correlated with self-esteem ($r = 0.240$, $p = 0.001$), albeit to a lesser degree than extraversion. Neuroticism, often associated with emotional instability and heightened sensitivity to stress, is typically negatively correlated with self-esteem (Schneider et al., 2019). However, the positive relationship observed in this study could indicate a complex interplay between neuroticism and self-esteem, where neurotic individuals may experience fluctuations in self-worth based on external factors but still maintain a general sense of self-confidence in certain areas of their lives.

Furthermore, body image dissatisfaction showed a significant positive correlation with self-esteem ($r = 0.263$, $p = 0.001$). This finding suggests that individuals with higher body image dissatisfaction tend to have higher self-esteem, which may seem contradictory to conventional theories. However, recent studies have shown that some individuals, particularly those who are more self-aware and resilient, may actively work to improve their body image concerns and, in doing so, enhance their overall self-esteem (Davison et al., 2021). This process of addressing and overcoming dissatisfaction could contribute to stronger self-worth in the long run, as individuals learn to cope with their insecurities in healthy ways.

Table 3

Correlations between Social Physique Anxiety, Personality Traits, Body Image Dissatisfaction, and Self-Esteem

Variable	Self-esteem	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Social Physique Anxiety	-.108*	.004
Extraversion	.188**	.001
Neuroticism	.24**	.001
Body Image Dissatisfaction	.263**	.001

N = 400, ** $p < .001$

The findings from this regression analysis (See Table 4) highlight the critical role that social physique anxiety and personality traits—specifically extraversion, neuroticism, and body image dissatisfaction—play in shaping self-esteem among young adults. The significant negative impact of social physique anxiety on self-esteem aligns with existing research, which demonstrates that individuals who are overly concerned about how others perceive their physical appearance often experience lower self-esteem. Social physique anxiety may lead to

increased self-scrutiny, reducing an individual's confidence and overall sense of self-worth (Schneider et al., 2021).

Extraversion emerged as a strong positive predictor of self-esteem, supporting the idea that socially active and confident individuals tend to have a more positive self-concept. This finding is consistent with prior studies indicating that extraverted individuals benefit from social interactions, which enhance their self-esteem through positive social feedback (Orth & Robins, 2022). Conversely, neuroticism was found to be negatively associated with self-esteem, as neurotic individuals are more likely to experience emotional instability and self-doubt. This is a well-established finding in the literature, as neuroticism often leads to negative self-evaluations and lower self-confidence (Schneider et al., 2019).

Finally, body image dissatisfaction significantly predicted lower self-esteem, emphasizing the profound effect that body image concerns have on self-worth. Individuals who are dissatisfied with their physical appearance are more prone to internalize negative feelings, which can erode their self-esteem over time (Davison et al., 2021). Overall, these findings provide valuable insights into the complex interplay between personality traits, social physique anxiety, and self-esteem, offering avenues for future research and potential interventions aimed at boosting self-worth among young adults.

Table 4

Regression Analysis for Self-Esteem Based on Personality Traits and Social Physique Anxiety

Variable	Self-Esteem			
	B	SE. B	Beta, β	p
Social Physique Anxiety	-.108	.021	-.258	.004
Extraversion	.321	.045	.426	.001
Neuroticism	-.322	.039	-.443	.001
Body Image Dissatisfaction	-.056	.013	-.189	.001
R²	.244			
Adjusted R²	.237			
F	31.95			

$R^2 = 0.244$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.237$, $F(4, 395) = 31.95$ ($p < .001$)

Implications for Personality Traits, Social Physique Anxiety, and Self-Esteem: Policy and Practice

The findings from this study underscore the significant impact that personality traits and social physique anxiety have on self-esteem, particularly among young adults. Given the critical role that extraversion, neuroticism, body image dissatisfaction, and social physique anxiety play in shaping self-esteem, several key implications arise for educational policies and mental health interventions aimed at fostering well-being and self-worth in this population.

First, the strong predictive power of extraversion in enhancing self-esteem ($B = 0.321$, $SE\ B = 0.045$, $\beta = 0.426$, $p = 0.001$) suggests that educational and counseling programs should encourage social engagement and provide platforms for students to build supportive relationships. Research indicates that individuals who are more socially active and engage in positive social interactions tend to develop higher self-esteem (Orth & Robins, 2022). Institutions should therefore create opportunities for students to participate in group

activities, fostering a sense of belonging and enhancing self-confidence. Studies show that supportive peer environments can significantly buffer against feelings of inadequacy and low self-worth (Zimmerman et al., 2019).

Furthermore, the significant negative impact of neuroticism on self-esteem ($B = -0.322$, $SE B = 0.039$, $\beta = -0.443$, $p = 0.001$) highlights the importance of mental health support systems. Neurotic individuals, who are prone to emotional instability and negative emotions, may benefit from targeted interventions that promote emotional regulation and resilience. Research has demonstrated that cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and mindfulness-based interventions are effective in reducing neuroticism and improving emotional stability, which, in turn, can enhance self-esteem (Schneider et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2020). Educational institutions should consider integrating mental health workshops or counseling services that focus on emotional well-being and coping strategies to support students with higher levels of neuroticism.

The findings also point to the significant role of social physique anxiety ($B = -0.108$, $SE B = 0.021$, $\beta = -0.258$, $p = 0.004$) and body image dissatisfaction ($B = -0.056$, $SE B = 0.013$, $\beta = -0.189$, $p = 0.001$) in diminishing self-esteem. This suggests that interventions aimed at improving body image and reducing anxiety about physical appearance are crucial for enhancing self-worth. Body image concerns are prevalent among young adults, especially in the context of increasing social media use, where appearance comparison is common (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2016). Schools and universities should implement body positivity campaigns and promote healthy body image through workshops and peer support groups. Additionally, programs focused on reducing social physique anxiety, such as those incorporating physical activity, self-compassion training, and media literacy, have been shown to improve body satisfaction and self-esteem (Davison et al., 2021; Holland & Tiggemann, 2020).

Practical Applications for Mental Health Support Programs

The robust relationships between personality traits, social physique anxiety, and self-esteem identified in this study have important implications for mental health support programs. First, interventions should be designed to target specific personality traits that negatively influence self-esteem, such as neuroticism. Mindfulness practices and resilience-building activities have been shown to improve emotional stability and self-regulation, leading to enhanced self-worth (Wang et al., 2020). Schools and universities should integrate these practices into their mental health services to help students cope with emotional challenges.

Additionally, the findings suggest that social physique anxiety and body image dissatisfaction play a critical role in shaping self-esteem. Mental health programs should therefore include strategies to reduce anxiety about physical appearance and improve body satisfaction. Institutions could incorporate psychoeducation on the impact of social comparison, particularly in relation to social media, and promote self-compassion as a way to counteract the negative effects of body dissatisfaction (Holland & Tiggemann, 2020). Moreover, programs encouraging healthy physical activity and promoting body positivity can help students develop a more positive relationship with their bodies, which in turn boosts self-esteem (Davison et al., 2021).

Limitations and Future Directions

While this study provides valuable insights into the relationship between personality traits, social physique anxiety, and self-esteem, several limitations should be noted. The cross-sectional design of the study limits the ability to draw causal inferences about the relationships between these variables. Future research should adopt a longitudinal approach to examine how personality traits and social physique anxiety influence self-esteem over time. Longitudinal studies would provide a clearer understanding of the long-term effects of these factors on self-worth and psychological well-being (Orth & Robins, 2022; Wang et al., 2020).

Another limitation is the reliance on self-reported data, which may introduce biases such as social desirability or inaccurate self-assessment. Future studies could adopt a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews to gain deeper insights into how young adults experience and manage social physique anxiety and body image dissatisfaction. This approach could reveal more nuanced perspectives on the challenges individuals face and how they develop resilience and self-esteem over time (Schneider & Wright, 2021).

Lastly, the findings are based on a sample of young adults from a single cultural context, which may limit the generalizability of the results. Future research could expand the sample to include participants from diverse cultural backgrounds, as cultural differences in body image perception and social physique anxiety may influence the relationships observed in this study (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2016). Comparative studies across cultures could provide valuable insights into the best practices for supporting self-esteem development in young adults.

Conclusion

This study emphasizes the significant role of extraversion, neuroticism, social physique anxiety, and body image dissatisfaction in shaping self-esteem among young adults. The findings highlight the need for well-structured mental health programs that address both emotional regulation and body image concerns. Educational institutions should collaborate with mental health professionals to design interventions that not only enhance students' self-worth but also equip them with the tools to manage anxiety and develop a positive self-image.

In conclusion, by focusing on the complex interplay between personality traits, social physique anxiety, and self-esteem, this study offers valuable insights for developing effective mental health strategies. Future research should continue exploring these relationships, with an emphasis on creating interventions that foster resilience and promote healthy self-esteem in diverse populations.

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