Clothing Preference and Psychological elements (Narcissistic Personality and Body Esteem Among College Students.

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Abstract

Background: Clothing preference is prominent area in clothing researches. clothing preference or choices highly associated with psychological elements (Dewayanti, & Andhini, 2023) such as personality, body-esteem (Shekhar, et al., 2019), Self-sexualization (Johnson, & Yu, 2023) etc.

Objective: To investigate the association of Clothing Preference with Narcissistic Personality, and Body Esteem. Importantly in general and difference in correlations between Narcissistic Personality & Body Esteem, Clothing Preference & Body Esteem, and Narcissistic Personality & Clothing Preference for gender.

Method: A sample of 200 was selected (100 boys and 100 girls). The convenience sampling technique was used to select the sample. The present research adopted correlation Research Design. Data collection tools and tests were Demographic Information Sheet developed by researchs, Clothing Preference Scale (Chandel & Sharma, 2021), Body-Esteem-Revised (Frost et al., 2018), Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Raskin and Hall, 1979).

Results: The relationship between Clothing Preference, Body Esteem and Narcissistic Personality is not simple and direct. Findings revealed that correlations between these aforesaid variables were positive and significant. Moreover, the striking findings were the relationship between Body Esteem and Clothing Preference becomes very powerful in case of males only the correlation rose up to .873 from .222 however this was not in the case of females.

Keywords: Clothing Preference, Body Esteem, and Narcissistic Personality

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Introduction:

The history of fashion is vast and diverse, reflecting the political, social, and cultural currents of various eras and places. Clothing has been used as a social status indicator, a symbol of a person's affinity with a religion, and as a form of self-expression. Fast fashion and internet shopping have made it easier to buy attractive apparel. The history of fashion preferences reveals the interplay between societal norms, personal expression, and fashion. Clothing Preferences are a complex component of self-expression that takes into account cultural influences, social trends, and societal impacts, enabling people to express their identities, fashion choices, and inventiveness visually. In general Clothing Preferences refers to an individual's particular preferences and inclinations about the clothing they wear. It is an essential component of self-expression and significantly influences one's identity, culture, and fashion sense.

The 20th century saw the emergence of clothing as a form of self-expression, with subcultures and fashion fads influencing personal style (Steele, 2010). A wide range of elements, such as psychological aspect like personality (Shekhar, et al., 2019), personal preferences, current fashion trends, comfort, functionality, cultural influences, personal beliefs, social event (Becattini, et al., 2023) etc. influences the preference of choice of clothing. The history of fashion preferences itself displays the intricate interplay between societal, personal, and fashion components. Many people use their choice of clothing as a way to express their personality, values, and social standing, in addition to being purely utilitarian.

In a nutshell, personal preferences in clothes are a complex component of human expression that takes into account cultural influences, social trends, societal impacts, and psychological factors. The way one dresses is a complex aspect of one's identity that reflects personal preference as well as cultural influences, societal conventions, and a number of other elements. Following are some specific observations about preferred attire. Clothing preference is influenced by Self-expression, Cultural Influences, Social, Environmental Factors, Comfort and Functionality, Historical Evolution, Gender and Identity, Subcultures and Fashion Movements, and Psychological and Emotional Elements (Mair, 2018).

In context of Clothing Preference and psychological factors, in the present study an attempt was made to investigate the association of Clothing Preference with Narcissistic Personality, and Body Esteem in relation to gender.

Objectives

The objectives framed for the present study were

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1.   To study the gender difference in the relationship between

    a)   Clothing Preference & Narcissistic Personality

    b)   Clothing Preference and Body Esteem

    c)   Narcissistic Personality & Body Esteem

2.   To study the difference in the following correlation for gender–

    a)   Narcissistic Personality & Body Esteem

    b)   Clothing Preference and Body Esteem.

    c)   Narcissistic Personality & Clothing Preference

Research Method

A sample of 200 was selected (100 boys and 100 girls). The convenience sampling technique was used to select the sample.

Inclusion criteria:

In a study on clothing preference about Narcissistic Personality and Body Esteem, the inclusion criteria would depend on the specific research question and goals of the study. However, here are some possible examples of inclusion criteria that were used in such a study:

- Age: Participants may be required to be over a certain age, such as 18 or 21, to ensure that they have the legal capacity to consent to participate in the study.
- Gender: The study may be limited to participants of a certain gender, or may include both men and women.
- Narcissistic Personality: Participants may be required to score above a certain threshold on a standardized Narcissistic Personality measure, such as the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI).
- Body Esteem: Participants may be required to score above or below a certain threshold on a standardized Body Esteem measure, such as the Body Esteem Scale (BES).
- Clothing Preference: Participants may be required to have a certain level of interest in fashion or clothing, or may be required to bring in pictures of their favorite outfits or clothing styles.

Exclusion criteria:

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Exclusion criteria refer to the factors that would disqualify individuals from participating in a research study or program. In a study on Clothing Preference in relation to Narcissistic Personality and Body Esteem, some possible exclusion criteria could include:

- Mental health conditions: Individuals with certain mental health conditions, such as severe depression or anxiety, may be excluded from the study to ensure that their mental health is not negatively impacted by the study.
- Substance abuse: Individuals with a history of substance abuse may be excluded to ensure that their substance use does not interfere with the study or program.
- Cognitive impairment: Individuals with significant cognitive impairment may be excluded to ensure that they are able to understand and participate in the study or program.
- Medical conditions: Individuals with certain medical conditions, such as severe allergies or chronic pain, may be excluded to ensure their safety during the study or program.
- Inability to read or understand the consent form: Individuals who cannot read or understand the consent form may be excluded to ensure that they are fully informed about the study or program and able to give informed consent.

Research Type:

The present research is a correlation study.

Tests and Tools:

Demographic Information Sheet: Demographic information includes age, gender, residential background, educational status, type of family, number of siblings, social class, and information regarding parents' education and occupation were obtained on a separate sheet.

Clothing Preference Scale (Chandel & Sharma, 2021): This 21-item questionnaire was developed and standardized by the researcher during the course of this research. The scale is comprised of four major dimensions i.e., Appearance, Experimenting, Identity, and Media. Each item on the CPS has 5 options ranging from 5 = Always, 4 = Many times, 3 = Sometimes, 2 = Rarely, and 1 = Never. The scoring is simply adding up the individual scores of respective dimensions. The score of each item contributes to only one factor total. The reliability of the scale was reported. 87. The inter-factorial validity of the scale was reported to be ranging from .66 to .81

Body-Esteem-Revised (Frost et al., 2018): The measurement of the Body-Esteem was done with the help of Body-Esteem-Revised scale developed by Frost et al. (2018). The scale constitutes two common dimensions viz. Sexual Attractiveness and Physical condition for males and females, while one dimension (Upper Body Strength/ Weight Concern) is created separately for both genders. The scoring was based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly negative feelings to strongly positive feelings. The scoring was done by adding all

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the responses. The reliability of the scale was reported in the range of .81 to .87.and the validity was found from .86 to .90.

Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI): The NPI was developed by Raskin and Hall (1979) for the measurement of narcissism as a personality trait in social psychological research. It is based on the definition of Narcissistic Personality disorder found in the DSM-III, but is not a diagnostic tool for NPD and instead measures subclinical or normal expressions of narcissism. The NPI-16 has been shown to have meaningful face, discriminate, internal and predicative validity. Reliability and Validity: $\alpha = .72$; mean inter-item correlation= .13; loadings on the first unrotated factor ranged from .13 to .66 with the first factor capturing 19.9 percent of variance; correlated with the NPI-40 at $r = .90$ ($p < .001$)

Research Procedure

The procedure of Clothing Preference in relation to Narcissistic Personality and Body Esteem could involve the following steps:

Recruitment of participants: Participants should be recruited from a diverse population to ensure a representative sample. Individuals who score high on measures of Narcissistic Personality and/or low on measures of Body Esteem should be included.

Administration of measures: Participants should complete measures of Narcissistic Personality and Body Esteem. These measures could include the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) and the Body Esteem Scale (BES). In **Clothing Preference assessment** Participants were asked to select clothing items that they prefer to wear in different scenarios, such as casual, formal, and athletic settings. They were also asked to rate the extent to which they feel confident and attractive in each outfit.

Based on test, tool and assessment the data for Clothing Preference and Narcissistic Personality and Body Esteem were collected. Data was analyzed under both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) by using version 18.0 (Windows, 2010).

Ethical Consideration:

- The informed consent was taken from participants.

- The participants were assured that personal information would be kept confidential.

Result

In the present study, the variables in the analysis dataset included (Gender) and various psychological aspects namely Clothing Preference, Narcissistic Personality, and Body Esteem of the sample. The obtained data for these studied variables was dealt with inferential analysis by employing SPSS (Version 22). The Results are described below—

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Result Table 4.1: Summary of Partial Correlation Analysis between Clothing Preference & Narcissistic Personality; Clothing Preference & Body Esteem; and Body Esteem & Narcissistic Personality

Correlation	r (n=200)	Gender	Control variable	Partial r	p
Clothing Preference & Narcissistic Personality		Female	Body Esteem	0.196	.005**
	.280*				
		Male		-.078	.442
Clothing Preference & Body Esteem		Female	Narcissistic Personality	.172	.089
	.222*				
		Male		.873**	.001**
Body Esteem & Narcissistic Personality		Female	Clothing Preference	.285	.001**
	.350*				
		Male		.280	.001**

a. Correlation between Clothing Preference (CP) and Narcissistic Personality (NP)

The Partial correlation between Clothing Preference (CP) and Narcissistic Personality (NP) was analyzed, while controlling for Body Esteem (BE). Correlation Coefficient for male (p CPNP.BE (97) = -.078, n = 200, p < .001) is analyzed to be negative, and for female ((p CPNP.BE (97) = .196, n = 200, p < .001) it is found to be positive in direction. While analyzing strength

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of correlation for male it is observed to be low and for females it is indicating moderate. This result indicates an increase in NP significantly related to lesser CP for male. However, for females it revealed an increase in NP significantly related to higher CP. Hence, ***Hypothesis 1a*** is accepted for females, and rejected for male groups.

b. Correlation between Clothing Preference (CP) and Body Esteem (BE)

The Partial correlation between Clothing Preference (CP) and Body Esteem (BE) was analyzed, while controlling for Narcissistic Personality (CP). Correlation Coefficient for male ($p_{CPBE.NP}$ (97) = .873, n = 200, p < .001) and female ($p_{CPBE.NP}$ (97) = .172, n = 200, p < .001) was found to be high, and moderate in strength respectively, while controlling for NP. This indicates that for male with an increase in CP significantly and highly related to BE for male, however moderate for females. Hence, ***Hypothesis 1b*** is rejected for both Female group, and male group.

c. Correlation between Body Esteem (BE) and Narcissistic Personality (NP)

The Partial correlation between Body Esteem (BE) and Narcissistic Personality (NP) was analyzed, while controlling for Clothing Preference (CP). Correlation Coefficient for male ($p_{BENP.CP}$ (97) = .280, n = 200, p < .001) and female ($p_{BENP.CP}$ (97) = .285, n = 200, p < .001) was found to be moderate, controlling for experience. This indicates that an increase in NP is significantly related to high BE for both male and females. Hence, ***Hypothesis 1c*** is accepted for both female and male groups.

Result Table 4.2: Summary of significant Difference of correlations between two groups (Male & Female)

Variable	Gender	z	N	$t(\sigma D_Z)$/CR
NP & CP	F	0.1985	100	0.85
	M	-0.0781	100	
CP & BE	F	0.173	100	8.312*
	M	1.345	100	
BE & NP	F	0.293	100	0.428
	M	0.287	100	

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a) ***Narcissistic Personality & Clothing Preference:*** The z scores corresponding to the relationship between NP & CP for male and female groups are found to be less than + 1.96. The finding revealed that correlation between NP & CP for Male (r= -0.07) and Female (r=0.19) are not statistically significantly different. Hence, the ***Hypothesis 2a*** is rejected.

b) ***Clothing Preference and Body Esteem:*** The t scores corresponding to relationship between CP & BE, for male and female groups are found to be less than + 1.96. The finding revealed that correlation between CP & BE for Male (r=1.34) and female (r=0.17) are statistically significantly different. Hence, the ***Hypothesis 2b*** is accepted.

c) ***Narcissistic Personality & Body Esteem:*** Result Table 4.7 reflects the t test for difference between correlations of two groups. The t scores corresponding to relationship between BE & NP for male and female groups are found to be less than + 1.96. The finding revealed that correlation between BE & NP for Male (r=0.28) and Female (r=0.29) are not statistically significantly different. Hence, the ***Hypothesis 2c*** is rejected.

Discussion

The objective of the present investigation is to find out the association of Clothing Preference with Narcissistic Personality, and Body Esteem. Importantly in general and difference in correlations between Narcissistic Personality & Body Esteem, Clothing Preference & Body Esteem, and Narcissistic Personality & Clothing Preference for gender. **Correlation between Clothing Preference & Narcissistic Personality:** This result indicates with increase in NP significantly related to lesser the CP for male. However for female it revealed increase in NP significantly related to higher the CP. Narcissists, who seek keenly to self-enhance, strive to positively distinguish themselves. Narcissism is characterized in part by an acute concern for one's appearance (Vazire, et al., 2008). Consistently, Lee, Gregg, & Park, (2013) conducted study in same context and revealed that narcissism, but not self-esteem, predicted dispositions to purchase products for the purpose of promoting personal uniqueness. Further the study revealed that narcissism predicted greater interest in exclusive, customizable, and personalizable products. Additionally, the study addressed that participants higher in narcissism regarded their prized possessions as less likely to be owned by others. Overall the findings illustrate the impact of narcissism on consumer preferences and support an agentic interpretation of narcissistic self-enhancement. Likewise, (Vazire, et al., 2008) investigated that snap judgments of narcissism based on full-body photographs are at least as accurate as snap judgments of any of the big five personality traits. Narcissists are more likely to wear expensive, flashy clothing, have an organized, neat appearance requiring a lot of preparation, and (in females) wear makeup and show cleavage. Furthermore, observers' judgments correlate with the presence of these cues, suggesting that they are drawing on the correct information when making their judgments. Finally, observers' judgments are associated with three of the four facets of narcissism and capture the unique constellation of personality traits typical of narcissists (i.e., high extraversion and low agreeableness). To summarize, these

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findings suggest that physical appearance reflects narcissistic personality, preoccupation with good looks, and desire to be the center of attention, and serves as a vehicle with which to promote their status.

Correlation between Clothing Preference & Body Esteem: The present study highlighted that for male with increase in CP significantly and highly related to BE for male, however moderate for female. Recently there has been a sufficient amount of literature regarding how clothing size affects the self- esteem of each gender in a variety of ways. The result further found to be reflected in study of Jain, (2022). According to researchers, the impact of a person's dress habits on one's sense of self-image has long been researched. The new study's objective was to build on earlier findings while investigating the mostly unknown topic of one's daily Clothing Preferences and how they relate to themselves. The minimalist sartorial approach encourages the building of a minimalist closet, conscious buying, and sustainable clothing businesses. Only the clothes we love, need, and wear are included in a minimalist wardrobe. Making the best use of our essentials is key, as is avoiding hasty fashion trends. It enables us to simplify our lives while having a smaller negative impact on the environment. We have more freedom to choose what we like to wear when we choose minimalist clothing. The association between aspects of clothing proximity to self and self- esteem was also investigated in this study. The study showed a positive correlation, that is, a proportionality between the mentioned style of clothing and the individual's self- esteem levels, hence proving the fact that the type of clothing affects how an individual feels about themselves. In line with aforementioned, Mahoney, Cailin (2022) conducted literature review to explore how standard clothing sizes affect the self-esteem of each gender, men and women, differently. The findings suggest a Eurocentric ideal that women are held to more of a thin ideal, while men are held to more of a muscular ideal. Additionally, when both women and men did not meet their expected ideals, it caused their self- esteem to become diminished. Overall, women cared more about the clothing size itself than men, but men's self-esteem were still deeply affected by the clothing that they either chose or chose not to wear. The review first begins with an introduction section. Next, there are two broader sections describing the importance of self-esteem and the relationship between clothing size and self- esteem. Then, there are two sections describing the effects of standard clothing sizes on both men and women. Finally, there is one section that compares the effects of both men and women, together. This review concludes with a short overview of the literature, propositions for future research, and implications of the findings that were discovered.

Correlation between Narcissistic Personality & Body Esteem: The present finding revealed that an increase in NP significantly related to high BE for both male and female. In relation to the present finding an empirical study by Ansari, & Azhar, (2022) was carried out to investigate significant predictors of selfie-posting behavior. A web-based survey was conducted on social media users geographically located in Lucknow (India). The study confirmed that self-esteem and narcissism are significant predictors of selfie-posting behavior. However, exhibitionism is not a significant predictor of selfie-posting behavior. Moreover, self– esteem is also a significant predictor of narcissism. The findings of the present study underline that Facebook percent was a top platform for groupies selfie posting;

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similarly, WhatsApp percent was noted as the top platform for individual selfie posting. Likewise, Körner, and Schütz, (2023) Also highlighted that expected power – the perceived capacity to influence others – to be an antecedent of positive body image because power is closely linked to self-esteem, which in turn is Linked to body image. Appling a cross-sectional experimental study, the study reported more body satisfaction, and estimated themselves to be taller than participants assigned to a low-power group. Self-esteem mediated all the effects. Altogether, power affects body image directly but also indirectly through elevated self-esteem. Implications refer to clinical prevention and intervention programs.

Correlation Difference for Gender: Correlation difference for gender aspect the finding revealed that Correlation between BE & NP, and between NP & CP for Males (r=0.28) and for females (r=0.29) are not found to be statistically significant different. However, correlation between CP & BE, for Males and Females, is found to be statistically significantly different.

In the nutshell, the present finding revealed that the relationship between Clothing Preference, Body Esteem and Narcissistic Personality is not simple and direct. Through all the obtained correlations between three variables were positive and significant. Higher the Body Esteem needs stronger the Narcissistic Personality the Clothing Preference will be high. However, if we control Narcissistic Personality and second times Body Esteem the relationship with Clothing Preference drastically changes that through if we also control the gender variable. The striking findings were the relationship between Body Esteem and Clothing Preference becomes very powerful in case of males only the correlation rose up to .873 from .222 however this was not in the case of females.

The finding is substantiated in the literature on Self-sexualization. Self-sexualization is an emerging area of research relevant to clothing researchers as evaluations of sexual appeal often related to Clothing Preferences (Johnson, & Yu, 2023). Likewise, Smolak, Murnen, & Myers, (2014) examined gender similarities and differences in how women and men conceptualize self-sexualization. In a qualitative study, we first established the existence of self-sexualization among women, although we were unable to document a similar construct among men. These findings raise the possibility that self-sexualization is neither as meaningful nor as pervasive for men. In sum, the study concluded that it is highly gendered activity that is largely confined to women and offers a measure for women that may promote further research.

Literature is further substantiated to present findings such as Kwon (1991) found a correlation between self-awareness, mood, and the selection of clothing among the youth population. The findings of the study revealed that the selection of clothes among female respondents had a positive correlation with self-awareness and perceived moods when associated with male counterparts. In similar context, Shim et al., (1991) reported a significant comparison was seen among male respondents in fashion inventiveness, fashion opinion leadership, self-confidence in clothing (clothing behavior), store visits, shopping interests, and catalog shopping attitudes, satisfaction with ready-to-wear and product variety/quality (shopping behavior), and sports lifestyle activity, annual wardrobe expenditure (individual

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characteristics). Additionally, in an investigation, Hwang (1993) discovered a correlation between physical health, self- esteem, demographic dimensions, body-cathexis, and clothing attitude among genders.

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