

# Perceptual Behaviour And Purchase Intention Of Women About Personal Appearance – Evidence From India

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## ABSTRACT

Many of the models shown in advertising may be utilised to make false comparisons among themselves. The results of social comparison theory show that the more comparisons people make, the more unhappiness they have with their own appearance. There seems to be a gender difference in how men and women compare themselves to media images. According to studies, males are less likely than women to make upward comparisons with media models. For the person making the comparison, these comparisons nearly invariably result in negative feelings and self-evaluations. Behavioral intention for looking like a model and the pressure through advertisement on the respondents are considered as factors that makes the women to improve their personal appearances. Silhouette scale is used to measure the body dissatisfaction of the respondents. Visiting Gym and exercising are considered as important body investment practices. Respondents doing exercise regularly are having better behavioral intention and they also feel the pressure of advertisements.

**Key words:** Advertisement, intention, personal appearance, JEL Classification - M37, O15, Z33,I12, Z13.

## INTRODUCTION

As a consequence of their inability to achieve the ideal of beauty, many women and girls over the world, especially in underdeveloped nations, face emotions of shame and failure. The commodification of women is unquestionably a significant contributor to the high incidence of sexual assault and physical violence against women in virtually all societies around the world. As a consequence of these advertisements, men's cognitive processes have been transformed. According to studies, the utopian beauty ideal that exists in men's brains only exists in advertising and not in the real world. This worldview is harmful to women, and marketers and the media bear sole responsibility for this attitude. The social comparison theory and the cultivation theory are two key concepts related to

the potential impact of media images and messages on people's perceptions of their physical appearance and self-perception. Individuals build their personal identities by establishing parallels between themselves and people who are seen to be similar to them, according to social comparison theory. According to the theory, people make comparisons with people they regard to be ideal or desirable, and then compare their own accomplishments and talents to those of those people. Many of the models shown in advertising may be utilised to make false comparisons among themselves. The results of social comparison theory show that the more comparisons people make, the more unhappiness they have with their own appearance. There seems to be a gender difference in how men and women compare themselves to media images. According to

studies, males are less likely than women to make upward comparisons with media models. For the person making the comparison, these comparisons nearly invariably result in negative feelings and self-evaluations. The cultivation hypothesis, which is the second explanation that may be used to explain the effects of advertisements on physical appearance disruption, is a long-standing notion. POTTER, W.J. (1993) proposed that the media has a substantial influence on people's perceptions of their social settings. As a consequence, people who spend a lot of time engaging with media pictures are more likely to be influenced by how the media depicts social reality, according to cultivation theory. Over time, stereotypical pictures nurture ideas, assumptions, and common conceptions of society truths and norms, and continuous exposure to stereotyped images may have a dramatic influence on a person's perception of reality, standards of behaviour, judgements, attitudes, thoughts, and behaviour. As a result, people who are frequently exposed to photos of models and celebrities with flawless physical appearances may develop distorted ideas about what constitutes a normal and acceptable physical appearance for themselves.

### **PERCEPTION OF WOMEN APPEARANCE**

Many different streams of research published by many different authors revealed a variety of alternate explanations for consumption based on psychological factors, each with its own set of results. One such stream is concerned with the individual's contact with the environment, which has an impact on consumption. The self-concept is seen to be an important factor in determining people's buying behaviour in general. In general, there seems to be a correlation between perceived self-image and consumption behaviour. Consumption of specific brands, commodities, and services is thought to be linked to various aspects of one's self-perception.

The main three theoretical factors are:

1. Self-Evaluation 2. Self-Awareness 3. Products Persuasibility

Festinger's social comparison theory is an important school of thought in the field of self-concept formation (1954). Because there is no

objective standard to which they can measure themselves, people develop a sense of self and form self-perceptions through comparing themselves to others. The important persons do not have to be friends or family members; alternatively, they may be idealised media pictures that one sees on a daily basis. Many idealised media images, particularly those promoted by advertising, are exposed to one, and many of these images reflect an unrealistic standard to which partners are held. The self is regarded and appraised badly as a result of these associates, who are generally upward in character. Receiving negative criticism has been suggested as an incentive to grow and improve oneself in order to better suit the proclaimed ideal. It is feasible to explain the prevalence of eating disorders, which are relatively common in western culture, by using an example of this process. Comparisons to the idealised body shown in the media lead to unfavourable appraisals of one's own body, which may act as a motivation to improve one's body in order to conform to the idealised body portrayed in the media. Many people develop a fixation with dieting as a result, which can manifest as anorexia nervosa or bulimia.

Individual differences in sensitivity to the social comparison process are to be expected, and it is reasonable to anticipate some variance. In general, one's self-perception According to Moore, C., and Oosthuizen, M. P. (1997), differences in body-concept, specifically the perception of one's own physical beauty, may be to blame for differences in consumption, particularly for a product that has the benefit of increasing one's physical attractiveness. The quantity of published research on self idea reveals a broad variety of criteria that have been used to develop and evaluate the self. From a conceptual approach, many of these components may be thought of as expressing two aspects of the self, namely self-evaluation and self-awareness.

Self-evaluation is concerned with a person's perceived worth, which is both an antecedent and an outcome of the social comparison process (covered further below). People may have a poor self-perception when they make upward comparisons with idealised

media depictions. Furthermore, when someone has a poor self-perception, they may attribute the source of an upward comparison to themselves. It's a circle that never ends.

Self-awareness is the recognition of oneself as a social object. This is a sort of self-consciousness in which a person tries to manage how he or she appears in the eyes of others.

People's persuasibility differences were identified as another crucial area of investigation during the study. Each person's susceptibility to persuasion from many sources, including commercials, differs. People are persuaded to buy and consume many things as a consequence of persuasion, whether from relevant folks or via commercials and ads. The art of persuasion is important to the marketing process. Persuasibility is linked to self-concept qualities, according to a large body of data. It's reasonable to believe that differences in persuasibility explain some of the differences in personal care product use among cultures.

## OBJECTIVES

- To study the demographic and social economic profile of the respondents in Chennai city.
- To study the respondents' perception towards the figure men would find women attractive.
- To assess fitness of women against their behavioural intention and advertisement pressure.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Xue Yang (2021)** analyzed that consumers may be motivated to become more active on social commerce platforms by spiritual benefits such as membership ranks and badges, as well as monetary rewards such as discounts and credits. The results show that social commerce structures, trust, and online behavioural advertising all have a positive influence on respondents' purchase intentions. Furthermore, social commerce structures have a positive effect on the trust factor. It is also indisputable that excellent social commerce frameworks would minimise customers' perceptions of risk while

making online purchases. Perceived risk has no statistically significant effect on buying intent. Trust has a negative influence on perceived risk.

**McComb & Mills (2020)**, in his purpose of this comprehensive study is to see whether media waiver is effective in protecting women's body image and feelings following exposure to thin-ideal media. After a thorough search of the PsycINFO, MEDLINE, and PubMed databases, a total of fifteen trials were included in this analysis. According to the findings, the effect of the disclaimer did not reduce, but rather increased, women's dissatisfaction after being exposed to thin-ideal advertising.

**Ansari et al (2020)** with across all digital media, the rapid growth of advertising campaigns, as well as the availability of promotional material for socially aware items, can be seen. We want to find out how economic rewards, social role and image, value corruption, and product knowledge affect views toward advertising of socially sensitive items via this study. Product Information and Corruption.

**Jasmine et al. (2017)**, It should be highlighted that in women's ordinary lives, rather than on the internet, beauty comparisons take place face to face. This is a significant conclusion given that the great bulk of research in the literature has focused on comparisons utilising traditional forms of media. They warned that social media beauty comparisons, especially if made by peers, might be particularly damaging to young women's emotional and physical well-being. Given the prevalence of social media usage among young women, it is critical to limit the frequency with which harmful social media comparisons are made in women's daily lives.

**Amy Slater and Marka Tiggemann (2015)** looked at Media exposure, extracurricular activities, and remarks about one's physical appearance are three possible predictors of female teenage self-objectification (both positive and negative). The findings support the theory that media exposure and unfavourable remarks about one's appearance play a role in the development of self-objectification in female adolescence. The findings imply that positive

appearance-related utterances (compliments) are just as likely, if not more probable, than negative appearance-related remarks to cause self-objectification. Practical ideas for avoiding the development of self-objectification and the negative repercussions that might come from this development are included among the results.

**Tiggemann & Zaccardo (2015)** examining When the frequency and impact of appearance comparisons are compared in a variety of situations, it may be possible to determine when such comparisons have the most negative consequences.

**Mitra et al. (2014)**, According to study, women continue to face significantly greater pressure than males in terms of their physical beauty and body image. It's very important for newsreaders and broadcasters to show themselves properly. Many of our respondents believed that female newsreaders were chosen only on the basis of their attractiveness, which they said was unfair.

## METHODOLOGY

Respondents (women) who were above the age of 18 at the time of participation were excluded from the study. Each of the research participants filled out a questionnaire that included questions about their demographics as well as other factors pertinent to the study. The information is gathered via a questionnaire that was written in both English and Spanish (English and Tamil). The respondent's attitude toward commercials, the amount of pressure they felt, and their degree of happiness with their body image and self-image were all investigated. The city of Chennai was selected as the sample location since it is India's fourth-largest metropolis. For the objectives of this study, convenience sampling

was adopted due to the ambiguous character of the population. For this survey, a total of 120 female respondents from Chennai were gathered. SPSS version 21 was used to analyse the information obtained. Descriptive statistics were utilised in combination with independent samples to determine the perceived degree of dissatisfaction with one's physique. In terms of behavioural intention and advertising pressure, the t-test was employed to see whether there was a statistically significant difference between those who frequented the gym and those who exercised frequently.

## Hypotheses

Ho – There is no significant difference between respondents with intentions to look like models.  
 H1 - There is significant difference between respondents with intentions to look like models.  
 Ho –There is no significant difference between respondents who do exercise regularly and who do not with respect to Advertisement pressure.  
 H1 - There is significant difference between respondents who do exercise regularly and who do not with respect to Advertisement pressure.

## ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

### Personal and Socio Economic Profile of the Respondents

Women (respondents) in Chennai were selected for the study. People taste and preferences changes and so as their demographic factors like age, qualification, income etc. The respondents has recorded their personal details such as age, marital status, number of children, education, occupation, monthly income (personal and family) and the same is present in the Table 1.1 and Table 1.2.

**Table 1.1 Personal Profile of the respondents**

Variables	Classification	Number of respondents	Percentage
Age (in years)	13-19	16	13.33
	20-27	35	29.16
	28-34	19	15.83
	35-44	24	20
	45-54	14	11.66
	55 and above	12	10
Marital status	Married	65	54.16

	Unmarried	42	35
	Widow	13	10.83
<b>Number of Children</b>	Yes	72	60
	No	48	40
<b>Education</b>	SSLC	13	10.83
	HSC	36	30
	Diploma	11	9.16
	Graduate	41	34.16
	Professional	10	8.33

Tables 1.1 shows that 13.33% of the respondents are in the age group of 13-19 years, 29.16% of the respondents are between 20-27 years, It is observed that nearly one fourth of the women respondents (29.06%) are in the age group of 20-27 years.

Above table also explores the marital status of the respondents. 54.16 % of them are married, 35% of the respondents are unmarried and 10.83 % of them are widow. It is observed that most of the women respondents (54.16%) were married.

Above table also exhibits the women respondents' statement about their number of children. 60% of the respondents having children and the remaining 40% of the respondents are yet to be blessed with kids.

Respondents' educational qualification is also displayed in the Table 1.1. It is revealed from the 34.16 % of the respondents are graduates, 8.33% of the respondents are professionals, It is observed that majority of the respondents (34.16%) are graduates.

**Table 1.2 Socio economic profile of the respondents**

Variables	Classification	Number of respondents	Percentage
<b>Occupation</b>	Employed	35	29.16
	Self Employed	13	10.83
	Homemaker	51	42.5
	Student	21	17.5
<b>Personal Income per month (in Rs.)</b>	< 15,000	15	12.5
	15,001 - 25,000	20	16.66
	25,001 - 35,000	36	30
	35,001 - 45,000	26	21.66
	45,001 - 55,000	10	8.33
	55,000 - 65,000	06	5
	Above 65,000	07	5.83
<b>Family Income Per month (in Rs.)</b>	< 15,000	08	6.66
	15,001 - 30,000	11	9.16
	30,001 - 45,000	18	15
	45,001 - 60,000	16	13.33
	60,001 - 75,000	30	25
	75,000 - 90,000	14	11.66
	Above 90,000	23	19.16

Table 1.2 classified the respondents based on their occupation. 42.5% of the respondents are homemaker, 29.16% of them are employed,

17.5% of the respondents are student, and 10.83% of the respondents are self-employed. It is

observed that most of the selected respondents (42.5%) are homemaker.

The above table classified the respondents based on their personal income per month. 12.5% of the respondents earning less than Rs.15,000 per month another 16.66% of them are earning Rs.15,001-25,000 as monthly income, 30% are earning Rs.25,001-35,000, 21.66% of the respondents are earning between 35,001-45,000 per month, 8.33% of the respondents earn 45,001-55,000 5% of them said they earn between Rs.55,000-65,000 and 5.83% of the respondents earn above Rs.65,000 per month.

Table 1.2 depicts the respondents' family income per month. 6.66% of the respondents earning

Rs.<15,000 as their family total income, 9.16% of them are earning Rs.15,001-30,000, 15% are earning Rs.30,001-45,000, 13.33% of the respondents are earning 45,001-60,000. 25% of the respondents said that they earn Rs. 60,001-75,000, 11.66% of the respondents said that they earn between Rs.75, 000-90,000 and 19.16% of the respondents said that they earn above Rs.90,000`

Silhouette scale is used to measure the body dissatisfaction of the respondents. The table below presents the mean scores of present, ideal body image, figure most women want to look like and the respondents' perception towards the figure men would find women attractive using contour drawings.

**Table 2 Descriptive statistics of Silhouette scale variables**

Silhouette Scale Variables	Mean	SD
Present figure	4.50	1.475
Figure you most want to look like (ideal figure)	3.42	0.991
Figure most women want to look like (Attractive figure –Women)	2.93	0.890
Figure men find women most attractive (Attractive figure – Men)	3.17	0.916

Mean present figure scores (4.5) on silhouette scale were significantly higher than the ideal scores (3.4) and the attractive figure for both men (3.2) and women (2.9) intimating that the women are overestimating their present body size and idealize a thinner image. Moreover the mean scores of ideal figure, attractive figure – both men and women are anorexic (Small body size).

Visiting Gym is one of the important body investment practices. Independent samples t-tests were applied to compare the means and to analyze the significant difference on the behavioural intentions, Advertisement Pressure between respondents visiting gym.

**Table 3.1 t-test for analyzing the significant difference between respondents visiting gym with respect to Behavioral intentions and Advertisement pressure**

Variables	Visiting Gym	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Behavioural intentions	Yes	2.91	1.119	<b>6.182**</b>	<b>&lt; .001</b>
	No	2.36	1.041		
Advertisement pressure	Yes	3.19	1.136	<b>1.665</b>	<b>.096</b>
	No	3.04	1.091		

\*\* Significant at 1% level

The results reveal that, the average behavioural intention of respondents visiting Gym (2.92) is higher than the respondents who have not been to gym (2.36). The difference is also statistically significant at 1% level ( $t= 6.182, p < .001$ ). It can be inferred that there is significant difference

between respondents with intentions to look like models. The respondents visiting gym has more intention to look like models. It is also found that the average pressure caused by advertisements on respondents who had been to gym (3.19) is higher than the respondents who have not been to gym

(3.04), however the difference is not statistically significant ( $t = 1.665$ ,  $p = .096$ ).

Exercise is one of the important and common of the body investment practices

followed by the respondents. Independent samples t-tests were applied to compare means on the behavioral intentions, pressure caused by advertisements between respondents based on their exercising habit.

**Table 3.2 t-test for analyzing significant difference between exercising respondents and Behavioral intentions and Advertisement pressure**

Variables	Exercising Habit	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Behavioural intentions	Yes	2.71	1.066	<b>5.586**</b>	<.001
	No	2.31	1.056		
Advertisement pressure	Yes	3.25	1.074	<b>4.111**</b>	<.001
	No	2.95	1.101		

The results in the table 3 reveal that, the average behavioral intention of respondents exercising every day (2.72) is higher than the respondents who do not (2.32). The difference is statistically significant ( $t = 4.11$ ,  $p < .001$ ) at 1% level. There exists significant difference between respondents who do exercise regularly and who do not with respect to Advertisement pressure at 1% level ( $t = 5.586$ ,  $p < .001$ ). It is observed that the respondents doing exercise regularly are feeling more pressure through advertisements.

## CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this research was to see whether differences in personality traits may explain disparities in personal care product utilisation. After evaluating a number of various research streams that had been published, a conceptual model was created. Individual difference variables were used to conceptualise and assess the important aspects of the self, and the importance of using individual difference variables to conceptualise and assess the important aspects of the self was emphasised. The study looked at ideas on social comparison, eating disorders, the impact of idealised media portrayals on shaping one's self-concept, cosmetic surgery data, and persuasion, among other things. Social psychology, cosmetics consumption, women's studies, media studies, psychology of self-concept literature, consumer research, and marketing are among the fields represented by this group of scholars. Three key components were recognised based on the

review: self-evaluation, self-awareness, and persuasibility. These dimensions were thought to be linked to food consumption. Many personality characteristics could be identified using these conceptual domains, and factor analysis confirmed that the projected structure matched the underlying theoretical dimensions. Visiting the gym and participating in physical activity are two of the most important ways to invest in your body. Women have a tendency to exaggerate their existing body size and fantasise about becoming thinner. Those who participate in regular physical exercise have more positive behavioural intentions and are more susceptible to commercial pressure.

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