

**BODY IMAGE, INTIMACY AND RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION
AMONG MARRIED INDIVIDUALS**

Dissertation submitted to Kerala University

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of

M. Sc. Counselling Psychology

By

Surya Gayathri

(Reg. No:60421115025)

Under the guidance of

Mr. Johns P. John

Assistant professor in Counselling Psychology



Department of Counselling Psychology

Loyola College of Social Sciences

Sreekariyam, Thiruvananthapuram

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CERTIFICATE



This is to certify that the Dissertation entitled “**Body image, intimacy and relationship satisfaction among married individuals**” is an authentic work carried out by Surya Gayathri, Reg. No. 60421115025 under the guidance of Mr. Johns P. John during the fourth semester of M.Sc. Counselling Psychology programme in the academic year 2021- 2023.

Ms. Jesline Maria Mamen

Mr. Johns P. John

Head of the Department

Assistant Professor

Department of Counselling Psychology

Department of Counselling Psychology

Loyola College of Social Sciences.

Loyola College of Social Sciences.

Thiruvananthapuram.

Thiruvananthapuram.

Submitted for the examination held on

DECLARATION

I, Surya Gayathri , do hereby declare that the dissertation titled “**Body image, intimacy and relationship satisfaction among married individuals** , submitted to the Department of Counselling Psychology, Loyola College of Social Sciences, Sreekariyam, under the supervision of Mr. Johns P. John , Assistant professor of the Department of Counselling Psychology, for the award of the degree of Master’s in Science of Counselling Psychology, is a bonafide work carried out by me and no part thereof has been submitted for the award of any other degree in any University.

Sreekariyam

Name: Surya Gayathri

Date:

Reg. No. 60421115025

M.Sc. Counselling Psychology

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ABSTRACT

The American Psychological Association (APA) defines body image as “the mental picture one forms of one’s body as a whole, including its physical characteristics and one’s attitudes toward these characteristics. Intimacy is an important part of human relationships. It includes deep emotional, physical, and emotional relationships between partners and is essential to creating and maintaining a healthy, fulfilling relationship. While intimacy it is an important part of a romantic relationship and can lead to an entire relationship. Relationship satisfaction is the subjective evaluation of one’s relationship. Relationship satisfaction is not a property of a relationship; it is a subjective experience and opinion. As such, members of the same couple may differ in how satisfied. The present study examines the effect of body image on the intimacy in relationships and relationship satisfaction. The data has been collected through online mode, by google forms to 71 participants irrespective of gender. To assess body image satisfaction and attitudes towards one's own body BESAA -Body-Esteem scale for adolescents and adults (1994) was used, PAIR inventory- The Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships (1981) was used to assess the degree of intimacy in a relationship across a variety of different domains and RAS- Relationship Assessment Scale(1980) was used to assess satisfaction in relationship. The Karl Pearson correlation was used here to assess the correlation between body image, intimacy in relationships and relationship satisfaction. The results of correlation suggested that, there is no correlation between body image and intimacy. There is a significant correlation between body image and relationship satisfaction, the correlation coefficient was found to be $r = .241^*$ and the correlation is significant at 0.043 significance level. There is a significant correlation between intimacy and relationship satisfaction, the correlation coefficient was found to be $r = .758^{**}$ and the correlation is significant at 0.000 level.

Keywords: Body image, Intimacy, Relationship satisfaction

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Body image is a multidimensional construct that includes self-perceptions of one's physical appearance and attitudes about the body (Cash, 2012). It has long been known as a salient issue for young people, particularly during adolescence and puberty. These issues regarding body image affect people throughout the life span, from childhood to old age. Body image concerns are associated with overall poor self-concept in early adolescents, including poor physical, social, and academic self-concepts as well as low overall self-esteem. Aside from these concerns, body image is also an issue that can be seen among intimate partners. People with poor body image are more likely to experience problems with their partner and may develop anxiety and doubts about their relationship. Body image plays an important part in weight control, eating behaviour and mental health.

According to Jessica Cortez, RD, a dietician in Denton, Texas, who specialises in eating conditions and body image, "Body image is the way we view ourselves physically — the way we internally and externally talk about ourselves predicated on how we look, the reflection we see in the glass."

According to Cash and Grogan, the tone-perception of one's physical tone and any passions and studies that affect from that print are constantly used as delineations of body image. Negative body image or body image problems apply to any of these areas of disturbance.

A study of psychologist Sarah Grogan offers another explanation on body image. According to Grogan, one's private perception of their physical appearance, including their studies, heartstrings, and conduct linked to their bodies, constitutes their body image.

She emphasises that societal morals and prospects regarding aesthetics and beauty shape body image as a socially created phenomenon. She also adds that a variety of rudiments, analogous as media exposure, peer pressure, and particular exploits, can have an impact on one's body image. Grogan has done considerable disquisition on the relationship between body image and a range of health issues, analogous as eating conditions, physical exertion, and internal health. Along with a person's studies, beliefs, and stations regarding their body, body image is a vital element of their identity. The generality of culture is narrated from a variety of aspects, analogous to society and experience. People's overall health, including their physical and emotional health and connections, may be impacted by their exploits of body image.

Over the past several decades, body image has gained prominence as disquisition content, especially in the fields of psychology, sociology and culture. The popularity of social media and the internet has also grown as a result of the fresh chances these platforms give stoners to compare their appearance to others' and to be understood by a larger cult. Marketing body images that can impact how people perceive and value their own body image has been linked to marketing, fashion branding and creation. It has been shown that advertisements with slim bodies, in shape and "perfect" can have an impact on one's body image and foster undesirable ideas and stations about how they look.

Many physical and internal health problems, such as eating disorders, melancholia, anxiety and lack of consideration, can be caused by negative body image. It may also affect a person's connections, especially those that were previously established. Relationship issues, reduced connections and general dissatisfaction with life can affect having a bad body image. Again, having a healthy body image is tied to health, tone and social success. It's vital that one understands the causes of excellent health as well as styles for promoting it among individualities. Cognitive behavioural remedies, antidotes based on contemplation, and

physical remedies are just some of the suggested approaches. People can improve their overall health and nurture positive stations about their body by understanding the goods of body image about their physical, internal, and interpersonal health. It's vital for decision-makers in the fields of education, medicine, and policy to take body image into account when promoting internal health. People may suffer from a variety of various body image problems. Typical illustrations include Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD) is a health condition in which a person obsesses over a perceived physical fault or defect that may or may not be apparent to others. People with BDD constantly on bachelorette themselves or engage in new behaviours to try to cover up or fix the perceived mistake. Anorexia Nervosa is an eating disorder characterized by extreme fear of weight gain and deformed body image. Anorexic people can limit their food intake, be physically overworked, or use various weight loss strategies. Bulimia Nervosa is another eating disorder in which a person binge eats food and also may engage in purifying behaviours such as gagging or laxative use. Bulimia is mainly represented by a disfigured body image.

Body image dissatisfaction is a catch-all phrase for expressing unfavourable thoughts or feelings about one's body, which may or may not be related to a particular disease or disease. Dissatisfaction with one's body image may be influenced by society or cultural ideals of beauty, one's own life experiences, and other elements.

Despite having a muscular body, a person with muscle dysmorphia, commonly referred to as "bigorexia," becomes obsessed with the belief that they lack muscle. This may lead to additional behaviours such as the use of steroids or excessive exercise.

'Obesophobia' is the term used to describe unfavourable attitudes or beliefs regarding overweight or obese persons. Discrimination, bias, and other undesirable effects may result from this. It's crucial to remember that problems with body image can be complicated and

may be caused by a variety of elements, including heredity, environment, and personal experiences.

Beside from these concerns, body image is also an issue that may see among intimate partners. People with poor body image are more likely to experience problems with their partner and may develop anxiety and doubts about their relationship. More recently, researchers have examined the impact of body image in intimacy, acknowledging the importance of physical appearance and attraction in intimate partnerships.

Intimacy an interpersonal state of extreme emotional closeness such that each party's personal space can be entered by any of the other parties without causing discomfort to that person. Intimacy characterizes close, familiar, and usually affectionate or loving personal relationships and requires the parties to have a detailed knowledge or deep understanding of each other (American Psychological Association ,2023).

Intimacy is a significant part of human relations. It involves deep emotional, physical and emotional relationships between partners and is essential to the creation and maintenance of a healthy and rewarding relationship. Whereas intimacy can take many forms, it is an important part of a romantic relationship and can lead to a whole relationship.

Research has consistently shown that intimacy contributes to the development of individual well-being, according to Van den Broucke, Vandereycken and Vertommen (1995), close relationships such as those between husbands and wives are the cornerstones of interpersonal behaviour, which not only provide the social context in which individual lives develop, but also influences the well-being of these individuals”.

Intimacy in relationships is a sensitive topic which has attracted a great deal of interest in psychology. Robert J. Sternberg gave a description of intimacy in relationships; Intimacy can

be described as the emotional component of love, encompassing feelings of closeness, connection, and warmth towards a romantic partner, according to Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love. Intimacy is an essential part of happy, fulfilling relationships and can be communicated through physical contact, verbal exchange, and emotional support.

Another definition of intimacy in relationships was given by psychologist Harry Reis. According to Reis, intimacy involves "feelings of emotional closeness and connectedness with another person and involves sharing one's innermost thoughts and feelings with that person." Reis emphasize the importance of mutual self-disclosure in the development of intimacy, as well as the role of emotional support and responsiveness in fostering feelings of closeness between partners. This definition underlines the dynamic nature of intimacy in relationships, and the importance of continues communication and emotional connection in maintaining close and satisfying partnerships. When partners feel connected and connected, they can be more effective in the relationship and support each other in the face of life's challenges.

A crucial component of interpersonal interactions is intimacy. It involves intense emotional, physical connections between partners and it is crucial in establishing and preserving a happy and healthy relationship.

Relationships basically demand the ability to be honest and frank with a partner about your most intimate thoughts and feelings. It requires dedication to listen and understand each other's intense emotions. Relationships can work more effectively, and partners can support each other in difficult times if they feel close and connected.

Another crucial component in a relationship is physical contact with one another, such as kissing, embracing, and having sexual relations. Physical contact can be an important way for partners to express their love and affection for each other, reduce stress, and foster closeness

and connection. However, it is essential to keep in mind that an affective relationship is just as important as the physical relationship, which is simply one of the interactions in the relationship. To be able to establish a thick relationship, partners must be willing to dedicate each other's time that is required, dedication, and energy. It means having meaningful conversations and investing quality time together as well as being open and honest about how they feel.

First of all, intimacy is an essential element of an intimate relationship and is necessary to establish a lasting connection to your meaningful other. Individuals can establish deep connections and maintain them for long period of time by valuing both physical and emotional intimacy while being prepared to invest significant time and effort into their relationship.

Certain other studies show that having an enjoyable intimate relationship is strongly linked to psychological health. It has been found that married individuals are better psychologically adjusted than unmarried individuals (Prager, 1995). Also, people in intimate relationships have a low rate of mental illness (Moss & Schwebel, 1995 ;Prager), and have fewer stress-related symptoms when faced with stressful situations (Prager). Furthermore, people without intimate relationships tend to be more vulnerable to feelings of depression and loneliness (Prager,1995)

Here are some examples of different types of intimacy in a relationship:

Emotional intimacy can take many different forms, including communicating sensitive thoughts and feelings, extending support to one another during trying times, and having comprehensive and meaningful discussions. As an instance, two individuals might feel a stronger emotional connection by discussing their future objectives and aspirations or by voicing their issues or worries about something in particular.

Physical intimacy , the concept of "physical intimacy" can encompass a variety of acts, including kissing each other, holding hands, hugging, and sexual intercourse. For example, sharing a passionate kiss before leaving for work in the morning or snuggling on the couch while watching a movie could make a couple feel physically associated.

Intellectual intimacy is the trading of thoughts, conversing about topics of interest, and holding delightful interactions with a companion. In this case, discussing a shared passion or activity could aid both parties establish intellectual compatibility.

Spiritual proximity includes assisting one another in their spiritual or religious pursuits as well as sharing one's beliefs and principles with a partner. A couple might establish a spiritual connection, for instance, by attending church or a temple together or by sharing an everyday meditation or prayer regimen.

Engaging new or exciting moments with a partner, such as touring an unknown place or taking on an unfamiliar pursuit is an important aspect of experiencing closeness. Examples of this include attending a culinary class together as well as going on a leisurely stroll or camping trip altogether could assist a couple connect on a more experiential dimension.

It's extremely important to bear in mind that each marriage experiences intimacy in distinct ways, so what one couple finds to have been essential and personal may not have the same significance for others. The idea is to strive together to establish an intimacy that feels rewarding and valuable for each of you by being completely forthcoming with your partner about your wants and wishes.

Researchers have examined the impact of body image in relationship satisfaction as well as in intimacy among partners. In this study, we refer to a person's overall evaluation of their relationship satisfaction.

Romantic relationships such as marriage have the potential to provide a lifelong companionship, love, support, stable sexual fulfilment, and commitment needs. Yet a high proportion of couples may experience an erosion of these positive qualities over time and, for some their relationship satisfaction erodes to a point to where the relationship is terminated. Relationship dissatisfaction is widely viewed as the final common pathway that could lead to relationship breakdown. When intimate relationships like marriage go wrong, the impact could be high. Marital distress, separation, and divorce are associated with dissatisfaction in relationship.

Relationship satisfaction among married individuals can vary widely based on a range of factors. Some of the factors that can influence the level of relationship satisfaction in a marriage are, effective communication, the way couples handle conflicts can impact their satisfaction, couples who share similar values, their life goals and aspirations often experience higher relationship satisfaction and these commonalities provide a sense of unity and purpose, Spending quality time together helps maintain the connection between partners and engaging in shared activities and making time for each other's interests can contribute to relationship satisfaction. A supportive and encouraging partner helps individuals thrive within the marriage. Feeling understood and supported contributes to overall satisfaction. Trust and transparency among couple their Intimacy and affection and sexual satisfaction will influence level of satisfaction Allowing each other a personal space for maintaining individuality within the marriage is important. Couples who respect each other's need for independence often experience higher levels of satisfaction. A fulfilling sexual relationship is often associated with relationship satisfaction. Open communication about desires and concerns in this area can contribute to a healthy sexual connection.

According to Theodore the structure of satisfaction differs for men and women, according to multidimensional assessments. Men's marital satisfaction is typically influenced

by one aspect of overall marital happiness (e.g., lack of regret over marrying, the amount of disagreement with their spouses on affection and sex). Contrarily, it seems that women's marital satisfaction is only two dimensional. The first aspect, as with males, is general marital satisfaction, and the second dimension focuses on how the couple interacts with others, including appropriate behaviour around friends and relatives (Theodore, 2021).

Theodore says that the pattern of change in marital satisfaction, and stability demonstrates that satisfaction is at its maximum before marriage and in the first few years of marriage, then drops. Both men and women experience this decline, although it seems to level off after a while. Despite this decline, couples who remain together frequently continue to report being in a happy marriage (Theodore, 2021).

According to Buhler high relationship satisfaction is specifically defined by favourable views and feelings toward the relationship partner, which frequently suggests that people believe their partner satisfies their requirements. According to research, having a romantic connection can affect your health and subjective well-being, two of the most significant life outcomes. First off, those who are happy in their relationship are happier in their lives overall. Compared to the domain of romantic relationships, people's overall happiness is far less influenced by their level of satisfaction in other life domains, such as jobs and friendships. Second, those in satisfying relationships tend to be healthier and live longer than those in unstable ones. Consequently, comprehending the normal trajectory of relationship satisfaction may help in the development of successful interventions meant to enhance well-being and health (Buhler et.al, 2021).

Social exchange theory by Thibault and Kelley proposed the social exchange theory which stipulates that one motivation to stay in a romantic relationship, and a large factor in its

development, is the result of a cost-benefit analysis that people perform, either consciously or unconsciously (Goulder, 2020).

Goulder assumes that people try to maximise the rewards they obtain from a relationship and minimise the costs (Goulder, 2020).

In any relationship, people receive benefits (such as their partner's attention, sex, gifts, and a boost to their self-esteem) and pay costs (paying money for gifts, compromising on how to spend their time or stress). In relationships, there is also a chance cost because the time spent with a partner who does not become a long-term partner could have been spent with a different partner who has greater long-term prospects (Goulder, 2020).

The subjective judgement of each person determines the relative importance of each expense and gain. For instance, while some individuals may desire to spend as much time as possible with their partners at the beginning of a relationship and view this time as a reward of the relationship, others may value their independence and view extended periods spent together as more of necessary investment to keep the other person happy (Goulder, 2020).

Equity Theory is an extension of Social Exchange Theory but this theory argues that rather than simply trying to maximise rewards/minimise losses, couples will experience satisfaction in their relationship if there is an equal ratio of rewards to losses between both the partners: i.e., there is equity/fairness. If one partner is benefiting from more profit (benefits-costs) than the other, then both partners are likely to feel unsatisfied. If one partner's reward loss ratio is far greater than their partner's they may experience guilt or shame (they are giving nothing and getting lots in return). If one partner's reward: loss ratio is far lower than their partners they may experience anger or resentment (they are giving a lot and getting little in return). A partner who feels that they are receiving less profit in an unequal relationship they may respond by either striving to make the partnership more equitable or by altering

their evaluation of benefits and costs to justify the relationship's continuation (Goulder, 2020).

Three important topics that are receiving increasing attention in the field of psychology are interpersonal intimacy, relationship satisfaction, and body image. A person's sense of body image refers to their beliefs and mindset about how they physically appear, and these convictions can have a significant impact on their sense of self-worth and fundamental mental health. Romantic relationship satisfaction is a person's assessment of their partner's sentiments of attraction and the attractiveness of their relationship on the inside. Relationship intimacy refers to the closeness of the partners on a physical and emotional level. It is a crucial component in love relationships.

The relationship between intimacy in relationships, relationship satisfaction, and body image has been examined in a number of research. According to numerous study findings, having a negative body image is associated with lower levels of satisfaction and intimacy in romantic relationships. For example, people who are unhappy with their physical appearance may develop negative attitudes that influence many aspects of their lives, including their romantic relationships. People becoming less willing to contact sexually or physically with one another could be the cause of a drop in proximity in a romantic relationship.

Contrary to other research, having a positive body image has been linked to higher levels of life satisfaction and romantic connection. People who have positive body image perceptions may have higher levels of self-esteem and sense greater comfort.

The current study was to determine whether body image, intimacy in relationships, and overall relationship satisfaction are related in any way.

Statement of the problem

The present study aims to investigate the influence of body image on intimacy and relationship satisfaction among married individuals. Specifically, it seeks to explore how individual body image concerns, including body dissatisfaction and self-perceived attractiveness, influence the levels of intimacy experienced within the relationship and the overall satisfaction with the marital bond. Additionally, the study will examine potential gender differences in the effects of body image on intimacy and relationship satisfaction. By addressing these research questions, the study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the psychological and emotional dynamics involved in the interplay between body image and marital well-being, and provide insights for the development of interventions and support strategies to promote healthier body image perceptions and enhance relationship quality among married individuals. So, the research problem of this study is to find out the influence of one's body image in intimacy and relationship satisfaction among married couple . Hence the study is stated as “Role of body image in intimacy and relationship satisfaction among married individuals”

Need and significance

Body image concerns can significantly impact an individual's psychological well-being, and this, in turn, affects their intimate relationships. Understanding the role of body image in intimacy and relationship satisfaction can help identify the psychological factors that contribute to marital happiness or distress, leading to improved overall well-being for individuals and couples, researchers can identify ways to promote healthy communication and emotional connection between partners, fostering stronger and more fulfilling relationships.

Understanding the role of body image in relationship satisfaction can provide valuable insights into the dynamics of marital relationships, enabling the development of interventions and strategies to improve relationship quality and foster long-term stability, also will provide insights into the dynamics of marital sexuality, helping couples address and overcome obstacles that may hinder their sexual satisfaction.

Thus, this study can guide the creation of effective interventions to support couples in cultivating positive body image and promoting overall relationship satisfaction.

In summary, this study has broader social and cultural implications through studying about role of body image in terms of a relationship is essential for understanding the psychological, emotional, and sexual aspects of marital life. It can guide interventions, support systems, and educational resources to enhance relationship well-being, foster positive body image perceptions, and promote healthier and more satisfying relationships.

Operational definition

Body image : Image about one's own body appearance and body structure.

Intimacy : Intimacy is the deepest form of a relation between two people.

Relationship satisfaction : It is the overall satisfaction of a couple in their relationship.

Objectives

- To find out the relationship between Body Image and Intimacy among Married individuals.
- To find out the relationship between Body Image and relationship satisfaction among Married individuals.

- To find out the relationship between Intimacy and Relationship satisfaction among Married individuals
- To provide recommendations and interventions that can help married individuals improve body image perceptions, enhance intimacy, and promote overall relationship satisfaction.

Hypotheses

- There will be no relationship between Body Image and Intimacy among Married individuals.
- There will be no relationship between Body Image and Relationship Satisfaction among Married individuals.
- There will be no relationship between Intimacy and Relationship Satisfaction among Married individuals

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A collective body of works done by earlier scientists is technically called literature. In fact, working with the literature is an essential part of the research process which generates the idea, that helps in developing significant questions and is regarded as instrumental in the process of research designs (A.K Singh. , 1986).

2.1 Theoretical review

The session gives a brief idea regarding the theories and definitions of body image, intimacy and relationship satisfaction.

2.1.1 Body image

“Body image” can be loosely defined as the mental representation of our bodies that we hold in our minds. Originally, it was believed that body image is a mirror image of what objectively exists in the world, but certain pathologies could interfere with this perceptual process. (Roosen & Mills, 2014)

Self-discrepancy theory

Self-Discrepancy Theory, proposed by E. Tory Higgins in 1987, is a psychological theory that explores the relationship between self-concept and emotional experiences. This theory suggests that individuals experience negative emotions when there is a discrepancy between their actual self, their ideal self, and their ought self.

The theory focuses on three types of self:

1. Actual Self: This represents how individuals currently perceive themselves and their attributes. It is based on their real attributes, characteristics, and behaviours.

2. Ideal Self: The ideal self refers to the version of oneself that an individual aspires to be. It is shaped by personal goals, aspirations, and desires. The ideal self encompasses the qualities and characteristics that a person hopes to attain in the future.

3. Ought Self: The ought self represents the person an individual believes they should be based on external expectations, social norms, and responsibilities. It encompasses the qualities and behaviours that one feels obligated to demonstrate to meet societal or personal standards.

The theory suggests that the emotional state of an individual is influenced by the perceived discrepancies between these three selves. When the actual self-aligns closely with the ideal self and the ought self, individuals experience positive emotions such as happiness and contentment. However, when there are significant gaps between these selves, negative emotions such as sadness, anxiety, and guilt can arise.

The theory also proposes two types of discrepancies:

1. Actual-Ideal Discrepancy: This occurs when an individual perceives a gap between their current self and their ideal self. The larger this gap, the more likely they are to experience feelings of disappointment, frustration, and sadness.

2. Actual-Ought Discrepancy: This arises when there is a difference between the individual's current self and their perceived ought self. When this gap is significant, feelings of guilt, obligation, and anxiety may result.

The emotional experiences associated with these discrepancies can motivate individuals to take actions aimed at reducing the gaps between their selves. For example, if a person experiences distress due to an actual-ideal discrepancy, they might engage in behaviours to bridge the gap and move closer to their desired self.

Self-Discrepancy Theory has been applied to various domains, including body image, relationships, and achievement motivation.

The relevance of Self Discrepancy Theory to body image is largely based on the fact that there are cultural norms that espouse particular standards of attractiveness. In many cultures, the standards prescribed include a thin body for women and a lean and muscular body for men. Importantly, these standards are unrealistic for the vast majority of the population to achieve without the use of extreme measures (such as self-starvation, cosmetic surgery, or steroids). Thus, when comparing one's actual self with the ideal promoted by society, it is highly likely that the individual will fall short of the standard, resulting in a body-related self-discrepancy. Furthermore, given that, on average, the population is getting heavier, the discrepancy between the societal standards and what is a reality for most people is becoming larger. These body-related self-discrepancies can, in turn, have emotional, psychological, and behavioural consequences for the individual.

Social comparison theory

Social Comparison Theory, introduced by psychologist Leon Festinger in 1954, explores how individuals evaluate themselves by comparing their abilities, qualities, and attributes with those of others. The theory highlights the role of comparison processes in shaping self-concept, self-esteem, and emotional responses. Social Comparison Theory suggests that people engage in social comparisons to gain information about their own abilities, to reduce uncertainty, and to enhance their self-evaluation.

Key Concepts and Principles of Social Comparison Theory:

1. Upward Social Comparison : This occurs when individuals compare themselves to others who are perceived as superior or more successful. Upward comparisons can serve as motivation to improve oneself, set higher goals, and strive for personal growth. However,

they can also lead to feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt if the comparison standard seems unattainable.

2. Downward Social Comparison : Downward comparisons involve comparing oneself to others who are perceived as less fortunate or less skilled. These comparisons can boost self-esteem and alleviate distress by highlighting one's own strengths and advantages. Downward comparisons may be used as a coping mechanism during challenging times.

3. Lateral (Horizontal) Social Comparison : Lateral comparisons involve comparing oneself to others who are similar in attributes and abilities. These comparisons can provide a sense of validation and affirmation of one's standing within a group. They play a role in maintaining social identity and belonging.

4. Assimilation and Contrast Effects : Social comparisons can lead to either assimilation or contrast effects. Assimilation occurs when individuals perceive themselves as similar to the person they are comparing themselves to. Contrast occurs when individuals perceive themselves as different from the person they are comparing themselves to. The direction of the effect depends on the context and the attributes being compared.

5. Temporal and Situational Factors : Social comparisons can vary based on the timing of the comparison and the situation in which it occurs. People might engage in different types of comparisons depending on their current emotional state, goals, and circumstances.

6. Motivational Underpinnings : Social Comparison Theory suggests that individuals are motivated to achieve an accurate self-concept and to maintain or enhance self-esteem. People tend to engage in social comparisons when they are uncertain about their abilities or when they encounter situations that impact their self-concept.

Application of Social Comparison Theory:

Social Comparison Theory has been widely applied across various fields, including psychology, social sciences, and marketing. In psychology, it has been used to explain body image dissatisfaction, self-esteem fluctuations, and the impact of media exposure on self-perception. This theory suggests that individuals often compare themselves to others to evaluate their own attributes. In the context of body image, upward social comparisons (comparing oneself to those perceived as more attractive) might lead to negative body image and, consequently, impact intimacy and relationship satisfaction.

2.1.2 Intimacy

By Gilbert Intimacy refers to the depth of exchange, both verbally and/or non-verbally, between two persons, which implies a deep form of acceptance of the other as well as a commitment to the relationship." If relationship satisfaction is highly associated with intimacy, then self-disclosure may also have a curvilinear relationship with intimacy, or "intimacy may be a very special instance of self-disclosure." Whatever the concomitant variables, Gilbert poses several interesting conceptual links to intimacy; namely that reciprocity of disclosures is an insufficient explanation of intimacy; that acceptance and commitment of the person making the disclosure, as well as self-esteem and ability to resolve conflict, may exert significant influence on the level of intimacy. (Gilbert, 1976)

The triangular theory of love proposed by Robert.J.Sternberg (1986) holds that love can be understood in terms of three components that together can be viewed as forming the vertices of a triangle. These three components are intimacy (the top vertex of the triangle), passion (the left-hand vertex of the triangle), and decision/commitment (the right-hand vertex of the triangle). (The assignment of components to vertices is arbitrary.) Each of these three terms can be used in many different ways, so it is important at the outset to clarify their meanings in the context of the present theory.

The intimacy component refers to feelings of closeness, connectedness, and bondedness in loving relationships. It thus includes within its purview those feelings that give rise, essentially, to the experience of warmth in a loving relationship. The passion component refers to the drives that lead to romance, physical attraction, sexual consummation, and related phenomena in loving relationships. The passion component thus includes within its purview those sources of motivational and other forms of arousal that lead to the experience of passion in a loving relationship. The decision/commitment component refers to, in the short term, the decision that one loves someone else, and in the long term, the commitment to maintain that love. The decision/commitment component thus includes within its purview the cognitive elements that are involved in decision making about the existence of and potential long-term commitment to a loving relationship.

In general, the intimacy component might be viewed as largely, but not exclusively, deriving from emotional investment in the relationship; the passion component as deriving largely, although not exclusively, from motivational involvement in the relationship; and the decision/commitment component as deriving largely, although not exclusively, from cognitive decision in and commitment to the relationship. From one point of view, the intimacy component might be viewed as a "warm" one, the passion component as a "hot" one, and the decision/commitment component as a "cold" one. The experience of love can be partitioned in a number of ways, and so it is important to note at the outset that the present partitioning into intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment is not the only one possible, nor is it even valid for all possible purposes. Nevertheless, the argument will be made that the proposed partitioning is particularly useful for understanding the elements of love, and how they function in close relationships. Although love, like other psychological phenomena, can be partitioned into various kinds of components, it is important not to lose sight of the whole in the analysis of its parts. Love is a complex whole that appears to derive in part from

genetically transmitted instincts and drives but probably in larger part from socially learned role modelling that, through observation, comes to be denned as love. To a large extent, then, love is prototypically organized (Rosch, 1978), such that certain feelings, drives, thoughts, and behaviours appear as more highly characteristic of love as it is socially denned, whereas others appear as less characteristic.² Indeed, one way to study love would be through the examination of people's conceptions or implicit theories of love (Barnes & Sternberg, 1986, are currently involved in such an investigation). Such an investigation capitalizes on principles of descriptive psychology in order to provide a framework for love related phenomena (Davis & Roberts, 1985; Ossorio, 1985). A theory of love, therefore, can help one understand the range and composition of the phenomenon of love.

2.1.3 Relationship satisfaction

Satisfaction in close relationships is defined as the subjective attitude (satisfaction) and affective experience (happiness) in the evaluation of one's relationship. The majority of the extant research on these subjects concentrates on the correlates and predictors of marital partner satisfaction. Less fulfilled partnerships are more likely to end, hence the subjective impression of satisfaction is a crucial relationship quality indicator with implications for the relationship's lifespan (Theodore, 2021).

Social exchange theory

Psychologists Thibault and Kelley proposed the social exchange theory which stipulates that one motivation to stay in a romantic relationship, and a large factor in its development, is the result of a cost-benefit analysis that people perform, either consciously or unconsciously (Goulder, 2020).

Thibaut and Kelley assume that people try to maximise the rewards they obtain from a relationship and minimise the costs (Goulder, 2020).

In a relationship, people receive benefits (such as their partner's attention, sex, gifts, and a boost to their self-esteem) and pay costs (paying money for gifts, compromising on how to spend their time or stress). In relationships, there is also a chance cost because the time spent with a partner who does not become a long-term partner could have been spent with a different partner who has greater long-term prospects (Goulder, 2020).

The subjective judgment of each person determines the relative importance of each expense and gain. For instance, while some individuals may desire to spend as much time as possible with their partners at the beginning of a relationship and view this time as a reward of the relationship, others may value their independence and view extended periods spent together as more of necessary investment to keep the other person happy (Goulder, 2020).

Equity theory

Equity Theory is an extension of Social Exchange Theory but argues that rather than simply trying to maximise rewards/minimise losses, couples will experience satisfaction in their relationship if there is an equal ratio of rewards to losses between both the partners: i.e., there is equity/fairness (Goulder, 2020).

If one partner is benefiting from more profit (benefits-costs) than the other, then both partners are likely to feel unsatisfied. If one partner's reward: loss ratio is far greater than their partner's they may experience guilt or shame (they are giving nothing and getting lots in return). If one partner's reward: loss ratio is far lower than their partners they may experience anger or resentment (they are giving a lot and getting little in return).

A partner who feels they are receiving less profit in an unequal relationship may respond by either striving to make the partnership more equitable or by altering their evaluation of benefits and costs to justify the relationship's continuation (Goulder, 2020)

2.2. Empirical Review

The following reviews explore the research conducted on the field of imposter syndrome and relationship satisfaction and whether there exists any relationship between them.

2.2.1 Studies related to body image

Boyes, A. D., et al.(2007) conducted research on “ male and female body image and dieting in the context of intimate relationships ”. This study investigated unhealthy dieting (e.g., skipping meals, vomiting), healthy dieting (e.g., reducing calories, reducing or eliminating snacks), and body satisfaction in intimate relationships in 57 predominantly unmarried couples, who were recruited in a college setting. The results suggest that psychological processes in intimate relationships are linked with dieting and body satisfaction but that these links are different for men and for women.

Mehdi Ghezselflo, et al. (2013) conducted a study named “ Comparison of Body Image and Self Esteem Among Married Individuals with Sexual Dissatisfaction and Normal Married Individuals in Tehran” was to compare body image and self-esteem among married individuals with sexual dissatisfaction and normal married individuals. The design of this study was causal-comparative. Study conducted among married individuals with sexual dissatisfaction who have referred to Homa and Mehr clinics and Oil hospital in Tehran during 2010. Sample size was taken as married individuals with sexual dissatisfaction were 100 (male and female), and for the normal married individuals were 100 (male and female) accessible sampling is used Measurement tools were Multidimensional body-self relation

questioner (MBSRQ) , Rosenberg's self-esteem questionnaire and Jeffrey Larson's sexual satisfaction questionnaire. Results of T- test indicated that normal group has higher self-esteem and body image than the group with sexual dissatisfaction. Final result of study is that that negative body image and low self -esteem among individuals with sexual dissatisfaction affect sexual function.

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Azra Shaheen, et al. (2016) conducted a study named “ Association between Body Image and Marital Satisfaction in Married Adults ” in order to determine the association between body image and marital satisfaction in married adults. The study was carried out in Karachi, Pakistan, over a period of three months, research design used was correlation/ Cross-sectional. A total sample of 200 married adults (100 males and 100 females) was selected purposively for the study. The age range of the target group was 22 to 40 years (mean age 34

years; $SD=5.13$) with minimum of 2 years and maximum of 20 years of marriage. Entire sample had middle socioeconomic status and their education level was from graduation and above. The subject completed the Demographic Information, Multidimensional Body Self-Relations Questionnaire (MBSRQ) and Kansas marital satisfaction scale. According to the correlational analysis significant correlation was found between body image and marital satisfaction among married adults and analysis of different variables of body image showed that fitness evaluation and body area satisfaction were positively correlated with marital satisfaction while appearance evaluation and subjective weight were negatively correlated. Study has concluded on result that body image is an important predictor in marital satisfaction.

Laus, et al. (2018) Conducted a study on “Body image and the role of romantic relationships”. This study examined whether self-evaluative and motivational investment in appearance, overweight preoccupation, and body satisfaction differ between men and women who were involved (or not) in a romantic relationship. Moreover, this study investigated the associations between relationship experiences (relationship type, relationship length, commitment, passion, and intimacy) and body image. 423 men and 505 women completed an online survey. Results demonstrated that the importance given to appearance was lower among uninvolved (“single”) participants; overweight preoccupation did not differ between men and women who were involved or not in a romantic relationship; and that single men and women were more dissatisfied with their overall appearance than adults who were romantically involved but not currently cohabitating. For men and women, romantic involvement plays a pivotal role in promoting and maintaining a less negative body image. The type of relationship and its functioning are also important aspects related to body image.

F Van den Brink and colleagues (2018). Previous research, which mostly focused on one person's opinions rather than those of both partners, revealed significant connections between

body image, sexual pleasure, and perceived quality of romantic relationships. The current study used a dyadic strategy to analyse these relationships in romantic partnerships in order to take into consideration the interdependency of romantic partners. An online survey evaluating body image, sexual pleasure, and reported relationship quality was completed by 151 heterosexual couples in the Netherlands using a cross-sectional methodology. With couple members' body image serving as predictors, couple members' sexual pleasure serving as mediators, and couple members' relationship quality serving as outcomes, hypotheses were investigated using the APIM and an APIMeM. The findings showed that greater sexual pleasure among people was associated with a better perceived romantic relationship quality. There were no gender differences, suggesting that sexual pleasure and body image are equally significantly correlated with how well people consider their relationships to be. The findings showed no links between a person's sexual pleasure and body image and their partner's perception of the quality of their relationship. These results suggest that therapies aimed at fostering and preserving a favourable body image may contribute to a more fulfilling sexual life and improved reported relationship quality

2.2.2 Studies related to Intimacy

Sheeba Farhan (2022) conducted a study to investigate the association between body shape, intimacy and sexual satisfaction in the life of married females. A Sample of 293 married females, with age range of 25-28 years was chosen through convenient purposive sampling technique. Scales used are Body Shape Satisfaction Scale, Personal Assessment of Intimacy in relationship scale (PAIR) and Sexual Satisfaction Scale. Correlation is used through statistical analysis on data through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS -25). The findings of the current research revealed that there is significant weak negative correlation of body shape satisfaction with sexual satisfaction in married females ($r=-.20$ $p=0.01$); body shape satisfaction with personal intimacy ($r=-.232$ $p=0.01$) and a positive

moderate correlation of sexual satisfaction with personal intimacy ($r=.694$ $p=0.01$). The results show that there is no significant difference between body shape satisfaction and years of marriage of married females however, there is a significant correlation between years of marriage and sexual satisfaction, also shows the significant relationship of Body shape, intimacy and sexual satisfaction may result in dysfunctional and dissatisfying sexual experiences and the study suggests that incorporating body image intervention into therapy for sexual problems may be useful.

Ismail, F (2022) conducted a study named 'The Relationship Of Body Shape Satisfaction With Personal Intimacy And Sexual Satisfaction Among Married Females'. The purpose of the current study was to investigate the association between body shape, intimacy and sexual satisfaction in the life of married females. It has been hypothesized that there is a significant relationship of body shape, intimacy and sexual satisfaction of married females. Also, with respect to the duration of marriage, impact of body shape, intimacy and also sexual satisfaction has been analysed. Sample of 293 married females, with age range of 25-28 ($M=1.96$, $SD=.1714$) years was chosen through convenient purposive sampling technique. Scales used are Body Shape Satisfaction Scale, Personal Assessment of Intimacy in relationship scale (PAIR) and Sexual Satisfaction Scale. Correlation is used through statistical analysis on data through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS -25). The findings of the current research revealed that there is significant weak negative correlation of body shape satisfaction with sexual satisfaction in married females ($r=-.20$ $p=0.01$); body shape satisfaction with personal intimacy ($r=-.232$ $p=0.01$) and a positive moderate correlation of sexual satisfaction with personal intimacy ($r=.694$ $p=0.01$). The results show that there is no significant difference between body shape satisfaction and years of marriage of married females however, there is a significant correlation between years of marriage and sexual satisfaction, also shows the significant relationship of Body shape,

intimacy and sexual satisfaction may result in dysfunctional and dissatisfying sexual experiences and the study suggests that incorporating body image intervention into therapy for sexual problems may be useful.

2.2.3 Studies related to relationship satisfaction

Butzer Bethany and Lorene Campbell (2008) conducted a study “Adult attachment, sexual satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction: A study of married couples”. The aim of this research was to work on adult attachment and sexuality, A Canadian sample of 116 married couples aged 21–75 years completed self-report measures of adult attachment, marital, and sexual satisfaction. Results revealed that participants with higher levels of anxiety and avoidance reported lower levels of sexual satisfaction at the individual level. Individuals with more avoidant spouses also reported lower levels of sexual satisfaction. Furthermore, the relationship between sexual and marital satisfaction was stronger for more anxiously attached individuals and those with more anxiously attached spouses. These results suggest that attachment is linked in theoretically predictable ways to marital and sexual satisfaction

Andrade, Wachelke, and Rodrigues (2015) performed a study on relationship satisfaction in young people based on the gender and love dimensions,. The triangular love theory by Sternberg served as the foundation for the researcher's relationship quality models. 335 participants were in romantic relationships, 190 of whom were men and 145 of whom were women. The study's findings demonstrate how distinct love factors predict relationship satisfaction for each gender. While the commitment variable was not significant for men, the closeness, passion, and commitment factors were significant predictors for women.

Hana, Y., Rashmi, G, et al (2013). Conducted a study on topic Couple Communication, Emotional and Sexual Intimacy, and Relationship Satisfaction. In a sample of 335 married couples from the Flourishing Families Project, the authors examined the associations between

couple communication, emotional intimacy, sexual satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction, using the couple as the unit of analysis. The results of path analysis suggested that sexual satisfaction significantly predicted emotional intimacy for husbands and wives, while emotional intimacy did not appear to have a significant influence on sexual satisfaction. In terms of how a spouse's perception of sexual satisfaction is associated with his or her partner's relationship satisfaction. In this study, although wives' relationship satisfaction was not associated with their husbands' sexual satisfaction, husbands tended to report high levels of relationship satisfaction when their wives reported greater sexual satisfaction. Findings suggest that both components of intimacy-emotional and sexual-should be comprehensively addressed in research and clinical work with couples.

Cole (2022) studied conflict, friendship, gender, and relationship satisfaction in couple relationships using quantitative investigation. The goal of the study was to determine which friendship characteristics—specifically minor turns toward moment-to-moment interactions or particular ways that disagreements start, known as harsh start-ups—were more closely associated with relationship happiness. To fill a gap in the literature, gender differences, one feature of conflict (hard start-up), and one aspect of friendship (turning toward behaviours) were investigated to see if they predicted relationship satisfaction. It was done using a quantitative, non-experimental approach. Online data from a convenience sample was gathered using . The participants were heterosexual couples who had been married for at least five years. To assess the individual and combined predictive power of the independent factors on the dependent variable, a simultaneous multiple linear regression was performed. The independent variable or combination of independent variables that explained the greatest variation in relationship satisfaction was examined using a forward stepwise multiple linear regression. According to the findings, difficult start-ups predicted 7.2% of the variability, turning toward behaviours predicted 65.1%, and all of the variables combined

predicted 72.3% of the variability in relationship satisfaction. The effect size was large. The results of the study suggest that turning towards behaviours contribute the most to relationship satisfaction in heterosexual couples that have been married for 5 or more years.

Baker, et al. (2022). Done a study on "The Association Between Personality, Emotional Intelligence, and Romantic Relationship Satisfaction" This study aims to increase the understanding of how one's perception of oneself affects the perception of and interactions with other people. The study intends to build on earlier research, which is typically found in longitudinal studies, by examining whether emotional intelligence mediates the association between the Big Five personality characteristics and relationship happiness. Research from the past suggests that traits like extraversion, agreeableness, and openness may be used to predict emotional intelligence. To determine whether there is a link between the major five personality traits and relationship satisfaction, the study used a correlation coefficient.

Lad & Kakulte (2022) conducted a correlation study in married couples to determine the association between locus of control, dyadic coping, and relationship satisfaction. The sample included 52 heterosexual married couples from India (a total of 104 people, 52 men and 52 women). The study made use of the Locus of Control Scale by Terry Pettijohn, the Dyadic Coping Inventory by Guy Bodenmann, and the Relationship Satisfaction Scale by David Burns. SPSS was used to do the correlation analysis. The findings indicated low positive correlations between locus of control and relationship satisfaction as well as between locus of control and dyadic coping, and a strong positive association between dyadic coping and relationship satisfaction. Despite the specific minority stressors that same-sex couples must deal with, there is surprisingly little study on how partner and individual experiences of internalised stigma affect relationships over time.

Nickull , Kallstrom et al (2022) conducted an exploratory network study of sexual and relationship satisfaction comparing partnered cisgender men and women. By examining the linkages to other pertinent indicators, the study sought to deconstruct the relationship between sexual and relationship pleasure. Men's and women's regularised mixed graphical model networks were individually estimated and compared using the network comparison test. The findings indicate that there was no noticeable difference between partnered, cisgender men and women in the link between measures, indicating sexual and relationship satisfaction and related categories. For both men and women, sexual pleasure, sexual anxiety, and sexual communication were related to both sexual and relationship satisfaction.

2.2.4. Studies related to body image and relationship satisfaction

Lee.(2016) conducted a study named 'Body Image and Relationship Satisfaction Among Couples: The Role of Perceived Partner Appearance Evaluations and Sexual Satisfaction'. The purpose of the current study was to investigate mediating mechanisms involved in the association between body satisfaction and relationship satisfaction, building on earlier research that has highlighted the potential importance of sexual satisfaction, and incorporating the literature on partner perceptions. Participants were partners in 251 heterosexual dyads involved in committed relationships. Partners within each dyad completed online self-report questionnaires independently. Consistent with hypotheses, body dissatisfied individuals perceived that their partners shared their negative opinions of the respondent's body, regardless of their partner's actual feelings. Perceived partner dissatisfaction with the respondent's body predicted reduced sexual satisfaction, which in turn, predicted reduced relationship satisfaction. Major contributions of the current study include identifying explanatory processes underlying the body image and relationship satisfaction association, and showing that this process does not differ by gender. Significant methodological and

statistical strengths of the current study include the inclusion of both romantic partners, the use of statistical techniques.

Nidhi. R ., et al (2021) conducted a study on Body Image Dissatisfaction in Young Adults: Impact of social media use. . Social media platforms uphold unhealthy beauty standards and false body ideals, which affect users' perceptions of their own bodies. Body dissatisfaction and bad self-perceptions may result from perceived pressure to maintain the perfect appearance. Social media users may internalise images that promote an unachievable physical ideal, which might result in diminished self-worth and self-esteem. The effects might include heightened body awareness, a focus on judging oneself based on physical characteristics, and a propensity for eating problems to develop. It has been noted that depending on the user profile and activity on a social media site, comparisons centred on looks, internalisation of a body ideal, and body dissatisfaction might differ.

Thus, studies have found that body image has a serious role in the overall intimacy and satisfaction in relationship among married individuals and other studies explained the necessity of intimacy and relationship satisfaction among married. The relation between body image, intimacy and relationship satisfaction together was not studied in depth or very little research was conducted. Also, studies on body image, intimacy and relationship satisfaction in the Kerala population were very scant with few studies, thus arise the research gap. Although body image and relationship satisfaction has been studied separately, the relationship between these two variables was rarely studied. So, the study to understand the relation between body image, intimacy and relationship satisfaction is very important in the current scenario.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

The deliberate, scientific process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting data in order to come up with conclusions or test hypotheses is known as research methodology. Researchers can select from a range of research methodology types depending on the nature of the research topic, the resources available, and the goals of the study. Common research methodology includes quantitative research, qualitative research methods, mixed-method research, experimental research, and case study research. Each of these research methodologies has specific benefits and drawbacks, and it is best suited for specific types of research topics and conditions. Selecting the appropriate technique is an essential first step in ensuring that research is accurate, reliable, and valuable.

This chapter goes into great detail on the participants, how they were chosen, the instruments used, and other information that would be required to conduct a similar study.

3.1 Research Design

Kothari & Garg (2014), defined research design as the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. There are several research questions in every research that can be done using a research design.

A Descriptive research design is used in this research. A descriptive research design is a type of research methodology that aims to describe or document the characteristics, behaviours, attitudes, opinions, or perceptions of a group or population being studied.

3.2 Participants

The sample consists of individuals who are married belonging to the age group of 18 to 35 Both love and arranged married individuals were selected for the study. The participants were residing in Kasargod, Kannur, Kozhikode, Malappuram, Palakkad, Thrissur, Kollam, Alappuzha, Trivandrum districts in Kerala. Some of them were studying and some were working and a few were doing nothing in particular. The sample size is 72 and among them, 30 were men and 41 were women. The sample was selected using non probability sampling. Probability sampling is a sampling technique where the probability of any member being selected for a sample cannot be calculated.

3.3 Tools used for data collection

Informed Consent Form

The permission form gives research subjects enough written information to make an informed decision about whether or not to participate in a study based on a description of the proposed research and the type of participation that is required of them. All subjects were chosen at the start of the study with their consent having been given voluntarily.

Personal Data Sheet

The demographic details of the participants were collected in Google form. It included the participant's name, age, gender, religion, educational qualification, place, marital status, type of marriage, married (date), age when married, current age, and relationship duration. These questions were used to describe the general nature of participants in the study.

The Body-Esteem scale for Adolescents and Adults

The Body-Esteem Scale for Adolescents and Adults was used to assess body image satisfaction. The 23-item Body-Esteem Scale is an easy-to-administer, psychometrically sound instrument that taps three aspects of body esteem in adolescents and adults: general feelings about appearance, weight satisfaction, and others' evaluations about one's body and appearance.

Reliability

The test-retest Reliability were high for three subscales BE appearance $r(95)$ -.89, BE weight (95)-.92, and BE attribution $r(95)$ -.83 which supports the reliability of the measures (Cronbach alphaTM 0.9).

Validity

The Rosenberg self-esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965) were administered in order to assess the convergent validity of the the body esteem scale for adolescents and Adults. It revealed a high score indicating good self-esteem and low self esteem

Scoring

This scale consists of 23 questions in which the respondents are asked to indicate how often they have the experience . Response options for each item were never agree-0, hardly agree-1, sometimes agree-2, often agree-3, and always agree-4. The negatively worded items were reversely scored. The item scores of each subscale were averaged. There were no cut-off points, the higher scores implied greater BE. Scores ranges from 0-92. The sum scores were divided into 3 categories: low satisfaction (0-30), moderate satisfaction (30-61) and high satisfaction (61-92).

Relationship Assessment Scale

The Relationship Assessment Scale (1980) is a brief measure of global relationship satisfaction. It consists of 7 items, each rated on a five-point Likert scale. Respondents answer each item using a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (low satisfaction) to 5 (high satisfaction). It is suitable for use with any individuals who are in an intimate relationship, such as married couples, cohabiting couples, engaged couples, or dating couples.

Scoring

To calculate the total score, add up all of the items. Were items 4 and 7 are reverse scored. The scores range from 7 to 35. The higher the score, the more satisfied the respondent is with his/her relationship.

Personal assessment of intimacy in relationship scale

Schaefer & Olson (1981) developed the Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships (PAIR) scale to evaluate the level of intimacy within a relationship across a range of different areas. They proposed that individuals would desire differing degrees of intimacy within their relationships, and across various types of relationships, from friendship to steady dating to marriage. The PAIR contains 36 items which aim to assess the following: Emotional, Social Intimacy, Sexual Intimacy, Intellectual Intimacy, Recreational Intimacy. They also included a six-item Conventionalism or “faking good scale” . The scale can either be phrased in terms of how the relationship “is now” or it can be phrased in terms of how the relationship “should be” (or both), depending on what the researcher wishes to study.

Reliability

The reliability of the PAIR questionnaire has been evaluated in several studies, one measure of reliability is internal consistency, which refers to the degree to which different

items within the questionnaire measure the same construct. The internal consistency of the PAIR questionnaire has been found to be high, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.80 to 0.93, indicating that the items in the questionnaire are measuring the same construct. The test-retest reliability of the PAIR questionnaire has been found to be moderate to high, with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.69 to 0.89.

Validity

The PAIR questionnaire has been found to have good face validity, meaning that the items in the questionnaire appear to be relevant and appropriate for measuring intimacy in romantic relationships. Additionally, the PAIR questionnaire has been found to have good convergent validity, meaning that it correlates well with other measures of intimacy, such as the Love Attitudes Scale and the Relationship Assessment Scale. The questionnaire was a self-administrative scale.

Scoring

The PAIR has some of its items written in each direction positive and negative manner. Scores for the total questionnaire is based on the sum of all 36 items. The respondents were asked to rate items on the 5-point scale. High score on the scale represents high intimacy, so the scores on the negatively worded items must be reversed before summing with the positively worded into total score.

The reverse scored items are: 13,25,31,8,14,32,15,21,33,10,16,22,28,11,29,12,36.

3.4 Procedure of data collection

For the purpose of data collection, responses were collected from couples by providing questionnaires directly and also by sharing google forms. The individuals could choose to take part in the study voluntarily. On the first page, there was a brief summary of the study's purpose and informed consent information. Additionally, demographic information was gathered, which explains the study's overall methodology and excludes samples that don't meet the exclusion criteria. The questionnaire for the participants was located on the remaining pages. They were thanked for taking part in the study after completing the questionnaire. A thorough check on the responses obtained was done. Since data was obtained through Google forms it was easy to ensure that there were no missing responses. The design of the study is descriptive in nature.

3.5 Statistical Technique used for the study

The data obtained was converted to excel sheets and it was coded for scoring and analysis. Data analysis was done using SPSS-23(statistical package for social sciences). The following analysis was done: t-test and Pearson correlation.

t-test

To compare the means of two groups, a t test is a statistical test that is employed. It is frequently applied in hypothesis testing to ascertain whether a procedure or treatment truly affects the population of interest or whether two groups differ from one another.

Pearson correlation

The strength of a linear link between two variables is measured by the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, or Pearson correlation coefficient, which is abbreviated as r . The Pearson correlation coefficient, r , measures how far all of these data

points are from this line of best fit (i.e., how well the data points fit this new model/line of best fit). Basically, a Pearson product-moment correlation attempts to draw a line of best fit through the data of two variables.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Body image among married individuals

The result obtained for body image among married individuals are discussed in the following tables:

Table 4.1

Frequency Distribution of body image among married individuals

Variable	Level	Married individuals
Body image	Low	36
	Average	29
	High	6

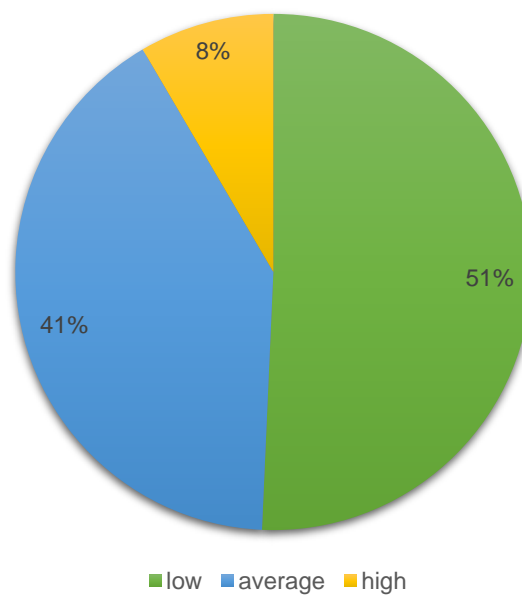


Figure 4.1 . Frequency distribution of body image among married individuals

Table 4.1 and the respective figure 4.1 presents the frequency distribution of body image among married individuals (N-71). Both the table and the pie chart show that among 71 married individuals 51% (36) of married individuals have low body image, 41%(29) of married individuals have average body image and 8% (6) of married individuals have high levels of body image

Intimacy among married individuals

The result obtained for intimacy among married individuals are discussed in the following tables:

Table 4.2

Frequency Distribution of intimacy among married individuals

Variable	Level	Married individuals
Intimacy	Low	33
	Average	10
	High	28

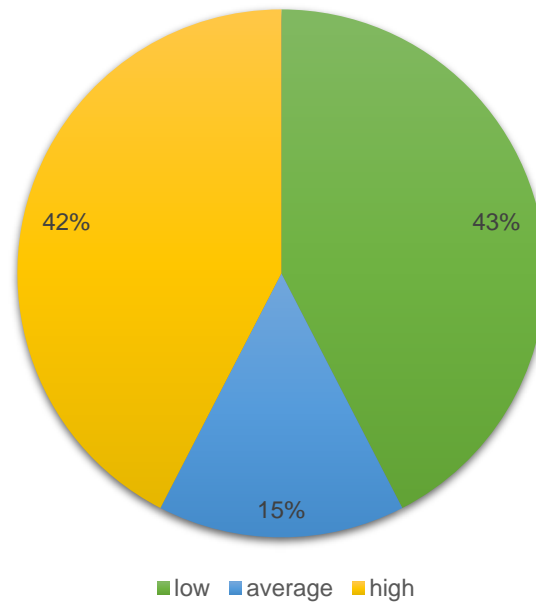


Figure 4.2 . Frequency distribution of Intimacy among married individuals

Table 4.2 and the respective figure 4.2 presents the frequency distribution of body image among married individuals (N-71). Both the table and the pie chart show that among 71 married individuals 43 % (33) of married individuals have low intimacy, 42%(28) of married individuals have average intimacy and 15% (10) of married individuals have high levels of intimacy.

Relationship Satisfaction among married individuals

The result obtained for relationship satisfaction among married individuals are discussed in the following tables.

Table 4.3

Frequency Distribution of relationship satisfaction among married individuals

Variable	Level	Married individuals
Relationship satisfaction	Low	2
	Average	10
	High	59

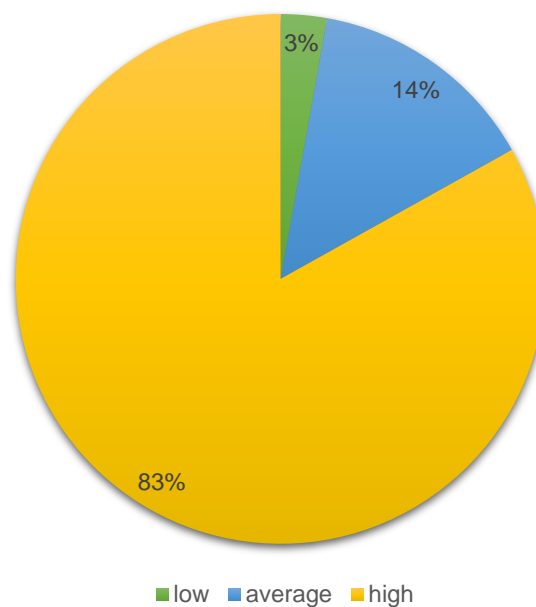


Figure 4.3 . Frequency distribution of relationship satisfaction among married individuals

Table 4.3 and the respective figure 4.3 presents the frequency distribution of relationship satisfaction among married individuals (N=71). Both the table and the pie chart show that among 71 married individuals 3% (2) of married individuals have low relationship

satisfaction, 14% (10) of married individuals have average relationship satisfaction and 83% (59) of married individuals have high levels of relationship satisfaction.

Body image among married individuals

Table 4.4

Mean value and standard deviation of body image among married individuals

Variable	N	Mean	S.D
Body Image	71	58.70	17.730

Table 4.4 shows the mean and standard deviation of body image among married individuals. The mean value of body image among married individuals (N-71) is found to be 58.70 (S.D. = 17.730). Thus, the result, indicates that married individuals in the present study as a whole have an average level of body image .

Intimacy among married individual**Table 4.5***Mean value and standard deviation of intimacy among married individuals*

Variable	N	Mean	S.D
Intimacy	71	124.97	17.624

Table 4.5 shows the mean and standard deviation of intimacy among married individuals. The mean value of intimacy among married individuals (N-71) is found to be 124.97 (S.D. = 17.624). Thus, the result, indicates that married individuals in the present study as a whole have a high level of intimacy.

Relationship satisfaction among married individuals**Table 4.6***Mean value and standard deviation of relationship satisfaction among married individuals*

Variable	N	Mean	S.D
Relationship Satisfaction	71	27.90	5.993

Table 4.6 shows the mean and standard deviation of relationship satisfaction among married individuals. The mean value of relationship satisfaction among married individuals (N=71) is found to be 27.90 (S.D. = 5.993). Thus, the result, indicates that married individuals in the present study as a whole have a high level of relationship satisfaction.

Body image, Intimacy and Relationship satisfaction among married individuals

Table 4.7

Correlation of body image with intimacy and relationship satisfaction among married individuals

	Intimacy	Relationship satisfaction
r	.216	.241*
Body image		
Sig	.071	.043

The findings for the correlation of body image with intimacy and relationship satisfaction among married individuals are shown in table 4.7. For body image and intimacy, the correlation coefficient was found to be $r = .216$ and the correlation is not significant at 0.071 level. This indicates that there is no significant relationship between body image and intimacy among married individuals. Hence the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between body image and intimacy among married individuals is accepted.

For body image and relationship satisfaction, the correlation coefficient was found to be $r = .241^*$ and the correlation is significant at 0.043 level. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between body image and relationship satisfaction among married individuals. Hence the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between body image and relationship satisfaction among married individuals is rejected.

Intimacy, Body image and relationship satisfaction among married individuals

Table 4.8

Correlation of intimacy with body image and relationship satisfaction among married individuals

		Body image	Relationship satisfaction
Intimacy	r	.216	.758**
	Sig	.071	.000

The findings for the correlation of intimacy with body image and relationship satisfaction among married individual are shown in table 4.8. For Intimacy and body image the correlation coefficient was found to be $r = .216$ and the correlation is not significant at 0.071 level. This indicates that there is no significant relationship between intimacy and body image among married individuals. Hence the null hypothesis which states that there is no

significant relationship between intimacy and body image among married individuals is accepted.

For intimacy and relationship satisfaction the correlation coefficient was found to be $r = .758^{**}$ and the correlation is significant at 0.000 level. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between intimacy and relationship satisfaction among married individuals. Hence the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between intimacy and relationship satisfaction among married individuals is rejected.

Body image intimacy and relationship satisfaction among married individuals

Table 4.9

Correlation of relationship satisfaction with body image and intimacy among married individuals

	Body image	Intimacy
r	.241*	.758**
Relationship satisfaction		
Sig	.043	.000

The findings for the correlation of relationship satisfaction with body image and intimacy among married individuals are shown in table 4.9. For relationship satisfaction and body image the correlation coefficient was found to be $r = .241^*$ and the correlation is

significant at 0.043 level. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between relationship satisfaction and body image among married individuals. Hence the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between relationship satisfaction and body image among married individuals is rejected.

For relationship satisfaction and intimacy, the correlation coefficient was found to be $r = .758^{**}$ and the correlation is significant at 0.000 level. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between intimacy and relationship satisfaction among married individuals. Hence the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between relationship satisfaction and intimacy among married individuals is rejected.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The study aimed to examine body image, intimacy and relationship satisfaction among married individuals. The sample size of the present study was 71 (41 females and 30 males). Both males and females within the age group of 18-35 years are selected for the study by using the convenience sampling technique. To measure the variables of interest, existing standardized measures are used such as The Body-Esteem scale for Adolescents and Adults(1994) ,Relationship Assessment Scale(1980)and Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships(1981). Informed consent and personal data sheet are also collected from the selected participants. After data analysis, parametric tests such as the t-test and Pearson product-moment correlation method are used for the statistical analysis of the data. The results obtained from the analysis are thoroughly discussed in terms of objectives and hypotheses.

Summary of the study

The major objectives of the study were 1)To find out the relationship between Body Image and Intimacy among Married individuals.2)To find out the relationship between Body Image and relationship satisfaction among Married individuals. 3)To find out the relationship between Intimacy and Relationship satisfaction among Married individuals.4) To provide recommendations and interventions that can help married individuals improve body image perceptions, enhance intimacy, and promote overall relationship satisfaction.

The hypotheses of the study were, Hypotheses 1 There will be no relationship between Body Image and Intimacy among Married individuals. Hypotheses 2 There will be no relationship between Body Image and Relationship Satisfaction among married

individuals . Hypotheses 3 There will be no relationship between Intimacy and Relationship Satisfaction among Married individuals.

The sample chosen for the study was married individual belonging to the age group of 18 – 35. The sample was selected through a convenient sampling method. The data were collected through google Forms. Informed consent and demographic details were collected . Tools used for the study includes The Body-Esteem scale for Adolescents and Adults(1994), Relationship Assessment Scale(1980) and Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships (1981). The design used for the study is a descriptive design and analysed using SPSS-22 version. The statistical analysis techniques used in the study were frequency distribution and percentage, mean and standard deviation, t-test and Pearson product-moment correlation method.

The findings of the present study state that there is no significant relation between body image and intimacy among married individuals. There is a significant relationship between body image and relationship satisfaction among married individuals and there is a significant relationship between intimacy and relationship satisfaction among married individuals.

Major findings and Conclusions of the Study

Based on the results of the research following findings are made:

1. Among 71 married individual samples majority of the individuals (51%) have a low level of body image.
2. While assessing married individual samples (N=71) in the present study as a whole have an average level of body image

3. The findings for the correlation of body image with intimacy and relationship satisfaction among married individuals are , body image and intimacy have no significant relation .Body image and relationship satisfaction have a significant relation.
4. Among 71 married individual samples majority of the individuals (43%) have a low level of intimacy
5. While assessing married individual samples (N=71) in the present study as a whole have a high level of intimacy
6. The findings for the correlation of intimacy with body image and relationship satisfaction among married individuals are , intimacy and body image have no significant relation . Intimacy and relationship satisfaction have a significant relation.
7. Among 71 married individual samples majority of the individuals (83%) have a high level of relationship satisfaction.
8. While assessing married individual samples (N=71) in the present study as a whole have a high level of relationship satisfaction
9. The findings for the correlation of relationship satisfaction with body image and intimacy among married individuals are , relationship satisfaction and body image have a significant relation . Relationship satisfaction and intimacy have a significant relation.

Tenability of hypotheses

The tenability of hypotheses based on the results obtained from the study is discussed here:

Table : 5.1

Tenability of hypothesis

No.	Hypothesis	Tenability
1.	There will be no relationship between Body Image and Intimacy among Married individuals.	Accepted
2.	There will be no relationship between Body Image and Relationship Satisfaction among Married individuals.	Rejected
3.	There will be no relationship between Intimacy and Relationship Satisfaction among Married individuals	Rejected

Implications of the study

The study provides some implications for both academic understanding and practical counselling applications. Will shed light on how perception of body image affects an individual's psychological well-being in the context of marriage. This could reveal a link between body dissatisfaction and self-esteem, potentially leading to interventions that improve overall mental health. Will helps to understand how body image affects intimacy can provide insight into how couples communicate about sensitive topics. Research could highlight the importance of open communication and assistance in addressing body image issues and maintaining intimacy. Clear up how body image perception affects overall

relationship satisfaction and this information might help couples who are looking to improve their relationship by addressing individual and mutual body image concerns.

Will provide an insight clinicians and therapists working with couples can use these findings to design interventions that address body image issues in the context of relationships. This may involve developing strategies to promote body positivity and improve their communication skills.

In addition, research could provide insights into preventing potential relationship problems related to body image dissatisfaction thus couples can be educated about the potential impact of these issues and taught strategies for maintaining a healthy body image and relationship satisfaction. Will help schools, community centres, and organizations develop educational programs that promote body positivity and healthy relationships. These programs can target both teens and adults to early promote healthy body image and communication skills. It is also possible to uncover gender differences in how body image affects intimacy and relationship satisfaction. This can lead to discussions about the social pressures and norms that contribute to these differences. Also gives us insight into how cultural norms and values affect the relationship between body image, intimacy, and relationship satisfaction. Overall, the implications of this study extend beyond academia, potentially providing practical guidance for couples, therapists, educators, and policymakers in promoting sexual orientation. healthy body image, intimacy and relationship satisfaction among married people.

Limitations of the study

- Since the data were collected through Google Forms, the researcher couldn't fully involve in the data collection process

- The study was based on a small sample of 71 participants. Compared to the general population, the sample size is thought to be relatively small.
- The ratio of men to women is not balanced.
- This study did not investigate the association of structure with other demographic variables like gender, duration of marriage, type of marriage . Potential covariates may have been observed among other demographic variables.
- Conclusions are based on self-reported data and may be subject to bias in responses.

Suggestions for further research

A mixed-method research design that includes both qualitative and quantitative would have been able to provide a lot more information. If participants were asked to explain their views on the topic, that could better explain the results and also help find information that could not be obtained with a quantitative method. This research would be highly valid if it is done using more samples. In this way, a theoretical framework can be developed.

Furthermore, by maintaining the gender ratio, a wide scope of the study can be developed.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Hello, I am _____ , currently pursuing Masters in Counselling Psychology at Loyola College of Social Sciences. As part of my course curriculum, I'm conducting a study among married individuals to assess the behaviour pattern.

There is no known risk to this study. Your participation is strictly voluntary and you may refuse to participate at any time.

If you are between the ages of 18 to 35 years and married , you can take up the survey. This is completely voluntary and I will use this information only for my study purpose.

I request you give your voluntary consent to participate in this study. Any information collected from you during the process would be kept confidential and will be used strictly for research purposes only.

Sincerely ,

I give my voluntary consent to participate in this study.

Yes

No

APPENDIX II

PERSONAL DATA SHEET

Name:

Age:

Gender : Male

Female

Others

Religion :

Educational Qualification :

Place :

Marital status :

Type of marriage :

Marriage duration :

APPENDIX III

Body-Esteem Scale for Adolescents and Adults
Beverley K. Mendelson, Donna R. White, and Morton J. Mendelson

Indicate how often you agree with the following statements ranging from "never" (0) to "always" (4).
 Circle the appropriate number beside each statement.

		Never	Seldom	Some- times	Often	Always
1.	I like what I look like in pictures.	0	1	2	3	4
2.	Other people consider me good looking.	0	1	2	3	4
3.	I'm proud of my body.	0	1	2	3	4
4.	I am preoccupied with trying to change my body weight.	0	1	2	3	4
5.	I think my appearance would help me get a job.	0	1	2	3	4
6.	I like what I see when I look in the mirror.	0	1	2	3	4
7.	There are lots of things I'd change about my looks if I could.	0	1	2	3	4
8.	I am satisfied with my weight.	0	1	2	3	4
9.	I wish I looked better.	0	1	2	3	4
10.	I really like what I weigh.	0	1	2	3	4
11.	I wish I looked like someone else.	0	1	2	3	4
12.	People my own age like my looks.	0	1	2	3	4
13.	My looks upset me.	0	1	2	3	4
14.	I'm as nice looking as most people	0	1	2	3	4
15.	I'm pretty happy about the way I look.	0	1	2	3	4
16.	I feel I weigh the right amount for my height.	0	1	2	3	4
17.	I feel ashamed of how I look.	0	1	2	3	4
18.	Weighing myself depresses me	0	1	2	3	4
19.	My weight makes me unhappy	0	1	2	3	4
20.	My looks help me to get dates.	0	1	2	3	4
21.	I worry about the way I look.	0	1	2	3	4
22.	I think I have a good body.	0	1	2	3	4
23.	I'm looking as nice as I'd like to.	0	1	2	3	4

Three subscales: BE-Appearance (1, 6, 7*, 9*, 11*, 13*, 15, 17*, 21*, 23); BE-Weight (3, 4*, 8, 10, 16, 18*, 19*, 22); and BE-Attribution (2, 5, 12, 14, 20). [* negative items, which must be recoded for scoring by reversing the scale (i.e., 0 = 4, 1 = 3, 2 = 2, 3 = 1, 4 = 0).]

Address correspondence, including requests for a copy of the manual for the Body-Esteem Scale for Adolescents and Adults, to Dr. Beverley K. Mendelson at <bev@ego.psych.mcgill.ca>.

APPENDIX IV

RAS

Please select the option that best indicates how true the statement is for you, with respect to your marriage.

	Low				High
1. How well does your partner meet your needs?	1	2	3	4	5
2. In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5
3. How good is your relationship compared to most?	1	2	3	4	5
4. How often do you wish you hadn't gotten into this relationship?	1	2	3	4	5
5. To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations?	1	2	3	4	5
6. How much do you love your partner?	1	2	3	4	5
7. How many problems are there in your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX V

PERSONAL ASSESMENT OF INTIMACY IN RELATIONSHIPS SCALE (PAIR)

The PAIR contains 36 items which aim to assess the following: Emotional Intimacy, Social Intimacy, Sexual Intimacy, Intellectual Intimacy, Recreational Intimacy. They also included a six-item Conventionalty or “faking good scale”.

Respondents answer each item on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. My partner listens to me when I need someone to talk to. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. We enjoy spending time with other couples. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I am satisfied with our sex life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. My partner helps me clarify my thoughts. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. We enjoy the same recreational activities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. My partner has all the qualities I’ve ever wanted in a mate. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. I can state me feelings without him/her getting defensive. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. We usually “keep to ourselves.” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. I feel our sexual activity is just routine. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. When it comes to having a serious discussion it seems
that we have little in common. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. I share very few of my partners’ interests. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

BODY IMAGE, INTIMACY AND RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12. There are times when I do not feel a great deal of love and affection for my partner. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. I often feel distant from my partner. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. We have very few friends in common. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. I am able to tell my partner when I want sexual intercourse. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. I feel “put-down” in a serious conversation with my partner. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. We like playing together. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. Every new thing that I have learned about my partner has pleased me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. My partner can really understand my hurts and joys. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. Having time together with friends is an important part of our shared activities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. I “hold back” my sexual interest because my partner makes me feel uncomfortable. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. I feel it is useless to discuss some things with my partner. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. We enjoy the out-of-doors together. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. My partner and I understand each other completely. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. I feel neglected at times by my partner. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. Many of my partner’s closest friends are also my closest friends. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

BODY IMAGE, INTIMACY AND RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 27. Sexual expression is an essential part of our relationship. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28. My partner frequently tries to change my ideas. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29. We seldom find time to do fun things together. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30. I don't think anyone could possibly be happier than my partner and I when we are with one another. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 31. I sometimes feel lonely when we're together. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32. My partner disapproves of some of my friends. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 33. My partner seems disinterested in sex. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 34. We have an endless number of things to talk about. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 35. I think that we share some of the same interests. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 36. I have some needs that are not being met by my relationship | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |