

Love in the Mirror: Body Image and Confidence Struggles Among Dating App Users

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Abstract

The use of online dating apps has increased over time, due to the fact that most individuals do not feel confident when getting to know the opposite sex in person. Self-confidence is an important thing that must exist within individuals, because it is important for growth and development. *Body image* greatly affects individual confidence, appearance is considered important in life so that individuals can be more confident in the surrounding environment. This study aims to determine the relationship between *body image* and self-confidence. The subjects in this study were 100 samples of online dating application users in Pekanbaru. The sampling technique used Nonprobability Sampling, namely Snowball Sampling. Based on the correlation analysis of Person Product Moment, the correlation coefficient (r) = 0,697 and the significance value is 0,000 ($p < 0,05$). This study shows that there is a significant positive relationship between *body image* and self-confidence in online dating app users. The more positive the *body image*, the higher the self-confidence in online dating app users.

Keywords: *Body Image, Self-Confidence, Online Dating Apps.*

INTRODUCTION

As time passes, life is always subject to change each year. Today, the world has entered the modern era, where technology has developed rapidly. In this modern age, the presence of the internet is no longer unfamiliar to people of all ages, from children to the elderly. Social media platforms have also developed various features to meet the evolving needs of society in this modern era. With technology continuously advancing, individuals are expected to keep up with the rapid changes in technology. One example is the creation of online dating apps, which are widely used by social media users. These online dating apps were created with the aim of making it easier for individuals to find friends or even partners.

The phenomenon of dating apps has made it easier for individuals to find a partner. According to Lin et al. (2019), the availability of online dating can support individuals in fulfilling developmental tasks such as finding a partner or starting a romantic relationship without meeting in person. Social media, therefore, facilitates easier access for people to

search for a partner. The rise of social media is a result of technological advancements and the passage of time. With these developments and changes, almost everyone no longer has a private space, as everything has become public. As technology rapidly progresses, the culture of society also undergoes significant changes. Online dating apps provide the freedom to access and connect with others, regardless of age, gender, or occupation (Lin et al., 2019).

With current technological advancements, many people have turned to social media as their primary means of connecting with others. Traditional methods of finding a partner, such as meeting in person, are no longer as widely used, especially with the availability of online dating apps that can be accessed via smartphones and downloaded for free to help individuals find a partner or even just a conversation partner (Fadilla et al., 2023).

Today, people's lives are further facilitated by internet infrastructure, which provides easy access to various online dating apps. These apps, such as Bumble, Omi, Tinder, Tantan, and others, can be downloaded from both the Play Store and the Apple Store. According to Zikra (2022), with the introduction of online dating apps, which are increasingly popular among both younger and older generations, online dating activities have evolved rapidly and become more sophisticated. Through these platforms, users can engage in interpersonal communication with others, enabling them to meet and get to know new people much more quickly (Nayiroh & Nurhalimah, 2021).

The growing number of users of online dating apps is reflected in the research by Shania et al. (2023), which reveals that between 2020 and 2021, the percentage of users of online dating apps saw a significant increase. According to data from *Business of Apps.com*, the number of online dating app users globally reached 323.9 million in 2021, marking a 10.3% increase from the previous year, which had 293.7 million users. Specifically, Bumble, one of the popular dating apps, had 42 million users in 2020, up 20% from the previous year's 35 million users. According to a report by *The Sun*, since its launch, Bumble has facilitated 850 million matches and around 5,000 marriages. With this growing usage trend and significant results, Bumble continues to gain attention and rise in popularity year after year.

The initial survey data conducted by the researcher (from October 28 to November 5, 2023) led to the following conclusions: Out of 100 samples, 69 individuals reported using online dating apps, while 31 stated that they did not. The age range of the sample was between 17 and 19 years old, which suggests that the age range of this sample is primarily between 20 and 29 years old. The online dating apps used by the sample were as follows: 30.4% used Bumble, 23.2% used Tantan, 5.8% used Tinder, 20.3% used Omi, 17.4% used Anonymous, 1.4% used MeetMe, and 1.4% used Meeff. From this, it can be concluded that Bumble is the most widely used dating app among the sample. Regarding the reasons for using these apps, the majority of respondents (50.7%) mentioned they felt they lacked physical attractiveness, which led to a lack of self-confidence in real-life interactions. Other reasons included seeking to make new friends (10.1%), boredom or having nothing to do (17.4%), and searching for a partner (21.7%). This suggests that not all users of online dating apps are focused on finding a partner, but rather on seeking online friends to communicate with, as many individuals may lack the self-confidence to initiate face-to-face interactions. In terms of how long the respondents had been using online dating apps, 68% had used them for between 1 to 6 months, 24.6% for 1 year, 4.3% for 2 years, and 2.9% for 3 years. This indicates that the duration of online dating app usage among the sample ranged from 1 month to 3 years.

In this study, the subjects range in age from 17 to 29 years, representing late adolescence and early adulthood. According to Santrock (2012), in the late adolescence phase (ages

18 to 21), individuals begin to form a stable sexual identity that is unlikely to change. During this phase, late adolescents experience a shift in their feelings toward eroticism and sexuality, which, though previously different, now become integrated into their lives. At this stage, some individuals may also withdraw from social environments (Suryana et al., 2022).

According to Santrock (2011), the early adulthood phase (ages 18 to 40) marks the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Within the age range of 18 to 25 years, this period is characterized by experimentation and exploration. During this time, individuals often try new things that facilitate social interaction, such as using online dating apps like Tantan, Tinder, Bumble, Anonymous, Omi, and others.

Through these online dating apps, many couples are brought together via social media networks, and a significant number of these relationships progress to marriage. This demonstrates that online dating apps are not always detrimental to users. In fact, many users report feeling satisfied with their experiences on these platforms. However, there are still many individuals who feel insecure about interacting with others on dating apps, often due to concerns about their physical appearance or lack of self-confidence in social situations.

When a person has a high level of self-confidence, they are better able to develop a positive self-assessment in various environments and situations, allowing them to accept both their strengths and weaknesses. A person with higher self-confidence tends to be more motivated. On the other hand, an individual with low self-confidence often has negative feelings about themselves, doubts their abilities, and constantly feels that something is wrong with them (Aziz & Witri, 2019).

When someone wants to improve their self-confidence, they actively seek ways to achieve it. According to research by Tazkia and Nawangsih (2021), higher self-confidence is associated with a greater degree of self-disclosure. Self-confidence is defined as an understanding or awareness of the individual's capacity to achieve success (Aguss & Fahrizqi, 2020).

Research by Febry et al. (2023) found a significant positive relationship, indicating that as body image becomes more positive, self-confidence in early adulthood also increases, and vice versa. The causes of low self-confidence include physical conditions that differ from societal standards, poor appearance, unstable financial situations, low social status, frequent competition, low intelligence, difficulty adjusting to situations, anxiety, fearfulness, low educational levels in the family environment, avoidance of social interactions, and being perceived as less attractive by others (Hakim, 2002).

According to the research by Yolanda et al. (2021), there is a significant influence of body shaming on self-confidence among 11th-grade students at SMA N 1 Batu Layar during the 2020/2021 school year. This means that the impact of body shaming on self-confidence is significant. Individuals with self-confidence are more likely to overcome obstacles in life by taking action. Self-confidence is essential for everyone, regardless of age or gender. In reality, having self-confidence can help a person lead a better life (Yolanda et al., 2021).

In line with the research by Mardiyanti et al. (2022), there is a strong correlation between body image and self-confidence among teenage girls at IPPNU Ngusikan. Self-confidence is considered an indicator of a healthy life, as it enables individuals to face and overcome personal challenges. Those with strong self-confidence are also more likely to learn from their experiences and use them to realize their full potential.

According to the study by Dianningrum and Satwika (2021), the current reality is that many teenage girls struggle to complete their developmental tasks due to a lack of self-

confidence in their physical appearance. Teenage girls are increasingly aware that their physical condition plays an important role in social interactions. Many girls express insecurity about their bodies and a desire to lose weight or change their appearance. The level of insecurity among girls regarding their bodies is generally higher than that of boys, and this difference can be attributed to various factors, including family, friends, and media influences (Wenti et al., 2019).

Based on the research by Rombe (2013), it is explained that there is a significant positive relationship between body image and self-confidence among female students at SMA Negeri 5 Samarinda. When a teenage girl has a positive body image, it leads to higher self-confidence. Self-confidence can be influenced by two main factors: internal and external factors. Internal factors include body capacity, self-esteem, self-concept, personal experiences, and physical appearance, all of which can affect an individual's level of self-confidence. On the other hand, external factors also play a role, such as negative behavior from others, which tends to reduce an individual's self-confidence (Ayu et al., 2021).

According to Ulfah and Winata (2021), self-confidence is a relatively stable opinion about one's skills, leadership abilities, initiative, and other characteristics, as well as how these affect a person's emotions. Individuals with high self-confidence are not only confident in their abilities but also aware of their strengths based on their experiences. In contrast, individuals with low self-confidence often have negative self-assessments, doubt their own abilities, tend to isolate themselves, and lack courage, always being burdened by fear (Vega et al., 2019).

In the research conducted by Veronika et al. (2021), it is stated that students with higher levels of self-confidence are more likely to develop successful interventions because they are able to easily test and use their competencies. There are many factors that contribute to low self-confidence, and to overcome this, it is necessary to focus on increasing self-confidence (Awaliyani & Ummah, 2021).

According to the study by Trimayati et al. (2023), there is a significant difference in self-confidence levels between male and female students. Self-confidence is a quality that can be taught and instilled, and it is not something inherited. It is acquired through life experiences. Individuals with self-confidence have realistic expectations and a positive self-assessment (Novita & Sumiarsih, 2021).

This research is supported by previous studies which show that factors influencing self-confidence in women include external appearance, a key internal element that can affect confidence levels. Self-confidence also influences how individuals communicate, as confident people tend to speak without hesitation and are sure of what they are saying (Haura et al., 2023).

This, in turn, impacts how individuals perceive themselves. To achieve happiness, one needs a high level of self-confidence in order not to feel belittled by others and to showcase their strengths. When someone has a positive body image, it leads to a positive view of their self-confidence. Conversely, a poor body image results in a negative perception of self-confidence. Body image is positively correlated with self-confidence.

According to Muller (in Santrock's **Life-Span Development**, 2012), body image is a psychological component closely related to bodily transformation, which in turn shapes one's image of their body. During puberty, adolescent girls often feel dissatisfied with their bodies, particularly if they experience obesity, whereas adolescent boys tend to feel satisfied with their bodies as they develop more muscle mass (Santrock, 2012).

Research by Ifdil et al. (2017) shows that the self-confidence of adolescent girls generally falls into the moderate category, while their body image is usually neutral. The study also

found a significant relationship between body image and self-confidence among adolescent girls. Nowadays, individuals, especially those in late adolescence and early adulthood, are increasingly concerned with improving their bodies, more so than in middle or late adulthood. Those with a positive body image tend to develop positive self-confidence as well; they are more capable of recognizing and appreciating both their strengths and weaknesses.

Santrock (2012) also describes body image as a psychological phenomenon that significantly influences individuals, especially those who are particularly concerned with the opinions others have about their bodies. If a person feels confident in their appearance, accepts their body shape, and embraces their flaws, they are said to have a positive body image. On the other hand, someone with low self-confidence in their appearance likely has a negative body image. Women, in particular, are more likely to have a poor body image, which often motivates them to look better and feel more confident.

In the research by Sari et al. (2022), it is stated that individuals tend to feel more confident when they perceive their body as ideal and are satisfied with their appearance, leading to the formation of a positive body image. Conversely, body image becomes negative when an individual has low self-confidence and feels dissatisfied with their appearance.

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that it is essential for individuals to have good self-confidence in order to cultivate a positive body image in life. On the other hand, low self-confidence can lead to a negative body image. A person with strong self-confidence can develop this from within by understanding and accepting themselves, without the need for external validation or influence (Victoria et al., 2023). Self-confidence is a crucial aspect of an individual's character. Low self-confidence can cause various problems in social interactions. When individuals have high self-confidence, they tend to have a positive view of their body shape and are satisfied with their physical appearance, which ultimately contributes to the formation of a positive body image.

Given the importance of this relationship, the researcher is interested in conducting a study titled "The Relationship Between Body Image and Self-Confidence Among Online Dating App Users."

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative correlational research type, which involves the collection of numerical data to determine the relationship between one variable and another. The target participants in this study are individuals aged 17 to 29, with the population of online dating app users being unknown. Since the population is not known, the sample size is calculated using the Cochran formula, resulting in a sample of 97 participants with a margin of error of 10%, based on the Cochran calculation. The sampling technique used is snowball sampling. The scale used in the data collection process for this study is the Likert attitude scale. The Body Image Scale, adapted by Triwiandra (2022), and modified by the researcher to include 29 items, and the Self-Confidence Scale, adapted by Ariandra (2021), and modified by the researcher to include 26 items. To assess the ability to differentiate between high and low subjects, the item discrimination is analyzed using SPSS 26 for Windows with Cronbach's Alpha formula. The research hypothesis is that there is a relationship between body image and self-confidence among users of online dating apps.

RESULTS

The sample size used in this study is 100 respondents who are users of online dating apps, aged between 17 and 29 years. The demographic data of the subjects in this study includes gender, age, and status. Based on the table below, it is known that the majority of respondents are female (59%), aged between 20 and 29 years (65%), and are students (61%).

Table 1
Research demographic data

Demografi		Frekuensi	Persen
Jenis Kelamin	Laki-laki	41	41%
	Perempuan	59	59%
Usia	17 tahun – 19 tahun	35	35%
	20 tahun -29 tahun	65	65%
Status	Mahasiswa	61	61%
	Pelajar	9	9%
	Bekerja	28	28%
	Tidak bekerja	2	2%

Next, categorization of the scale will be provided, with the aim of placing individuals into separate groups on a continuum based on the aspects being measured (Azwar, 2012). The categorization formula used in this study is shown below:

Table 2
Categorization Formula

Category	Formula
Very high	$X \geq M + 1.5 SD$
Tall	$M + 0.5 SD \leq X < M + 1.5 SD$
Currently	$M - 0.5 SD \leq X < M + 0.5 SD$
Low	$M - 1.5 SD \leq X < M - 0.5 SD$
Very Low	$X \leq M - 1.5 SD$

The normality test was conducted for each variable, namely the body image variable and the self-confidence variable. The normality test was performed using SPSS version 26 for Windows with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method. The significance value was checked: if ($p > 0.05$), the data is considered normally distributed, and if ($p < 0.05$), the data is considered not normally distributed. The results of the data analysis are as follows:

Table 3
Results of the Normality Test for the Body Image Scale and Self-Confidence Scale

Variabel	Signifikansi	Keterangan
<i>Body image</i> dan Kepercayaan Diri	0,136 ($p > 0,05$)	Normal

Based on the results of the normality test analysis above, it shows that the body image and self-confidence variables have a significance value of 0.136 ($p > 0.05$), which means that the data for these variables are normally distributed.

The relationship between the two variables can be considered linear if the p-value is < 0.05 , indicating a linear relationship between the two variables. Conversely, if the p-value is > 0.05 , the relationship is considered non-linear. In this study, the analysis was performed using an ANOVA table to examine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The results of the linearity test are shown below:

Table 4
Results of the Linearity Test for Body Image and Self-Confidence

Variabel	Deviation from Linierity (<i>F</i>)	p	Keterangan
<i>body image</i> dan kepercayaan diri	1,202	0,262	Linear

Based on the results of the linearity test, the relationship between the body image and self-confidence variables yielded a p-value of 0.262, which is greater than the level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$). Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a linear relationship between these two variables.

For hypothesis testing in this study, Product Moment correlation analysis was used. This analysis aims to determine the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable, based on the known values of the independent variable. The correlation test was conducted using SPSS version 26 for Windows with the appropriate testing method. The results of the correlation test are as follows:

Table 5
Results of the Product Moment Correlation Test

Variabel	Signifikansi ($p < 0,05$)	Pearson Correlation	Keterangan
<i>Body image</i>	0,000	0,697	Berkorelasi

dan
kepercayaan
diri

Based on the results of the correlation test conducted, the correlation coefficient between body image and self-esteem was found to be 0.697, indicating a significant relationship between body image and self-esteem among online dating app users. The analysis results confirm that there is a significant positive relationship between body image and self-esteem in users of online dating apps. The more positive the body image, the higher the self-esteem of the users. The significance value is $p < 0.05$, specifically 0.000, which means that there is a significant positive relationship between body image and self-esteem among online dating app users. Therefore, the results of this data analysis support the acceptance of the hypothesis in this study.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the study, the correlation coefficient between body image and self-esteem was found to be $(r) = 0.697$, with a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$. This indicates that there is a positive relationship between body image and self-esteem among online dating app users. In other words, the higher the body image, the higher the self-esteem among online dating app users. Conversely, the lower the body image, the lower the self-esteem of users.

This finding is in line with the research conducted by Gati et al. (2022), which found a positive relationship between body image and self-esteem in students. The study concluded that the more positive the body image of the students, the higher their self-esteem. Conversely, the more negative their body image, the lower their self-esteem. This aligns with the findings of the current study, which show a positive relationship between body image and self-esteem in online dating app users.

The body image aspects used in this study are self-evaluation of appearance, appearance orientation, satisfaction with body parts, anxiety about gaining weight, and body categorization (Cash, 2004). Appearance evaluation is a dimension that includes the assessment of one's own appearance and the evaluation of others' appearance. The dimension of appearance orientation refers to the perspective of improving and maintaining one's appearance. The dimension of body part satisfaction reflects an individual's contentment with their appearance. The dimension of weight gain anxiety refers to the fear of gaining weight and the tendency to restrict eating habits. The dimension of body size categorization involves the assessment of body weight and height. These aspects of body image are related to self-confidence, where the dimension of appearance evaluation affects an individual's belief in their ability to do something. The dimension of appearance orientation influences an individual's perspective on efforts to improve their appearance. The dimension of satisfaction with body parts affects an individual's assessment of themselves. The dimension of body categorization impacts an individual's perspective when judging what they see, such as body weight and height. Based on the research conducted, 45 out of 100 subjects were found to have an average body image level, representing 45%. This indicates that 45% of online dating app users in Pekanbaru have an average level in the aspects of appearance evaluation, appearance orientation, satisfaction with their body parts, anxiety about becoming overweight, and body categorization.

According to a study by Annisa et al. (2023), it is explained that the higher the body image, the higher the self-confidence in adolescents. Conversely, the lower the body

image, the lower the self-confidence in adolescents. One important factor that everyone should have to be accepted by society is high self-confidence, which allows individuals not to fear trying or starting something new. The relationship between body image and self-confidence helps individuals become more confident in the shape of their body.

Based on the aspects of self-confidence used in this study, they include Self-Belief, Optimism, Objectivity, Responsibility, and Rationality & Realism. Self-belief is the dimension that encompasses an individual's belief in their abilities. Optimism refers to the belief in effort and the expectation of being accepted. Objectivity refers to the ability to make fair assessments. Responsibility involves the courage to take risks for actions undertaken by an individual. The results of this study show that 43 out of 100 subjects had a moderate level of self-confidence, which represents 43%. This indicates that 43% of online dating app users in Pekanbaru have a moderate level in aspects such as self-belief, optimism, objectivity, responsibility, and rationality & realism.

According to research by Safitri et al. (2022), self-confidence is an important trait that every individual must possess in order to trust their own abilities when undertaking something. This confidence allows individuals to overcome any physical shortcomings they may have. A strong sense of self-confidence enables an individual to adopt a positive attitude toward their body image, making it difficult for them to be influenced by the opinions or judgments of others.

In line with the findings of Rahayu et al. (2024), it is explained that if an adolescent perceives their appearance as not meeting societal standards, they will likely rate their body image negatively, which leads to a lack of self-confidence. This inability to accept their physical appearance can result in a negative body image. It can be concluded that there is a relationship between body image and self-confidence among adolescent girls in Palangkaraya, with body image being categorized as positive and self-confidence as moderate.

According to Mardiyanti et al. (2022), individuals with self-confidence can lead a positive life, as they are able to face problems that arise in their lives, whether external or internal. They possess the strength to overcome challenges and learn from experiences. Self-confidence is a key asset that helps individuals gain valuable life experiences.

Low self-confidence can have a significant impact on daily life. A person with low self-confidence may find it difficult to adapt to their environment or build close relationships with those around them. Such individuals often feel more comfortable being absent from social settings and interactions.

This is in line with the findings of Mubarokah (2023), who explains that individuals need self-confidence to develop various aspects of themselves. However, in reality, many individuals still struggle with low self-confidence. The study showed that 25% of adolescents had moderate self-confidence, while 75% had low self-confidence. Self-efficacy is one of the key aspects of self-confidence, and it can affect both body image and self-esteem. This indicates that body image and self-confidence are factors that can significantly influence an individual's life.

According to the research conducted by Safitri, Afiati, & Wibowo (2022), there is a relationship between body image and self-confidence among the twelfth-grade students at SMA Negeri 5 Cilegon. The study shows that both body image and self-confidence levels in these students are categorized as moderate.

The researcher acknowledges the limitations and weaknesses of this study. For example, one limitation is the limited amount of demographic data available for use in this research, which makes it difficult to compare the results with previous studies. Another challenge was the relatively long research period due to the difficulty in finding research subjects

that met the criteria—specifically, users of online dating apps. Many potential participants were reluctant to share their personal data due to privacy concerns.

CONCLUSION

Appearance evaluation is a dimension that includes the assessment of one's own appearance and the evaluation of others' appearance. The dimension of appearance orientation refers to the perspective of improving and maintaining one's appearance. The dimension of body part satisfaction reflects an individual's contentment with their appearance. The dimension of weight gain anxiety refers to the fear of gaining weight and the tendency to restrict eating habits. The dimension of body size categorization involves the assessment of body weight and height

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