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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Body image control, Problematic internet usage, Body shaming, Body surveillance, Objectified body consciousness	This research investigated the underlying dynamics of intensified self-objectification among young, educated female university students. A quantitative research design was used to collect data from N=378 female university students. The tool was designed by deductively deriving indicators from objectification theory and was further analyzed using SPSS version 21. Means, standard deviations, and hierarchical linear regression were used to examine the relationship among the study variables. The analysis showed that demographic variables, including age, currently enrolled educational program, family size, and family type, were significant and positively associated with objectified body consciousness of female students. Furthermore, body image control and problematic internet usage explained 27% of the variance in defining the objectified body consciousness among the female university students. Increasing media literacy, conducting awareness sessions, and providing psychological support can reduce young students' focus on their physical appearance.
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Introduction

Body image concerns have become increasingly prevalent in contemporary society, with a considerable impact on a person's physical, mental, and social well-being (Nayir et al., 2016). Previous research shows that adolescence is the period when people are most conscious of their physical appearance (Alharballeh & Dodeen, 2023). Global evidence from international and Pakistani contexts suggests that women are judged more for their body shape and facial features than men (Papageorgiou et al., 2022; Zubair, 2022). Therefore, women face bullying, judgment, and

stigmatization regarding their external appearance. The stick-thin model analogy is evident among young women who adhere to unrealistic beauty standards through strict dieting and exercise (Dittmar et al., 2009; Hague, 2025). Self-objectification peaks when women use various methods of self-surveillance to meet the expectations of the external observer's gaze (Donovan & Uhlmann, 2022).

Objectified Body Consciousness (OBC) refers to women's perception of their bodies as sources of dissatisfaction, leading them to endorse normative beauty standards and seek validation from outsiders (McKinley, 2011). Previous studies identify three major components of the OBC: constant body surveillance, body shaming, and appearance control beliefs (Pan, 2022; Shahid et al., 2022). In body surveillance, females constantly monitor their body shape, weight, clothing, and posture (Wang et al., 2020). Body shame refers to feelings of low self-esteem, body dissatisfaction, and shame about not meeting beauty standards for physical appearance (Fioravanti et al., 2024). Appearance control beliefs are the views that the body's appearance can be fully controlled through strict diet and exercise (Sandhu & Sandhu, 2021). These components peak due to gender discrimination in socialization, where females are expected to maintain a perfect body shape. In addition to this, cultural beauty standards (especially the thin model approach), social appearance anxiety, and social media hype reinforce unrealistic beauty standards. Young, educated females are more inclined towards OBC due to frequent interaction with the media and at societal gatherings (Söyünmez et al., 2024).

Media platforms play an imperative role in attracting young females towards unrealistic body shapes and facial features. The literature shows that youngsters are more attracted to media celebrities and YouTubers and are more likely to follow unrealistic beauty standards and trends (Chen et al., 2023; Sarda et al., 2025). Although some celebrities use surgical procedures and camera tricks to look younger and more contoured, young women feel dissatisfied with their current body shape (Brown & Tiggemann, 2022). Strict, idealized beauty standards are affecting the self-esteem and mental health of these females, leading to intensified self-objectification (Mustapić, 2024).

Adolescents and young people are strongly influenced by social media, where celebrities set the benchmark for appearance-control beliefs. These beliefs center on body awareness, an ideal body shape, and a perfect physical appearance, which have become top priorities for adolescent females (Papageorgiou et al., 2022). The primary purpose of managing an ideal body image is to seek approval from external observers and to maintain a perfect body shape (Boursier et al., 2020). These materialistic parameters gave rise to the concept of self-objectification, which encompasses a range of social and demographic variables. Cultural context and social pressures shape the internalization of appearance-control beliefs and ideas, leading to a strong sense of self-objectification among female adolescents (Abbasi et al., 2025; Cash, 2012). The problem statement of the present study addressed that OBC has become a major socio-cultural and psychological debate impacting female youth due to their increased exposure to social media platforms. In modern societies, women are often judged for their physical appearance, creating a strong need for external approval (Butt & Khan, 2025). The problem arises when females focus only on their body shape through constant

monitoring, body surveillance, and appearance anxiety. These women are convinced they can control their body shape and meet societal beauty standards. As a result, they began to ignore their skills and focus less on their academic accomplishments (Shi, 2025).

This study is sociologically significant because it highlights the intersection of gender, media, and body consciousness, which affects young female university students in the given structural context. The cultural norms, societal pressures, and peer bullying about staying fit and appropriate in a certain body shape are the major concerns of today's youth. Therefore, OBC is not only a psychological concern; it is also a sociological dilemma. In the study context of Multan (Pakistan), the dominant patriarchy plays a pivotal role in gender-based socialization, where young females internalize the beauty norms and appearance control beliefs. The phenomenon intensified as social media became a powerful tool for fostering OBC among young, educated females. Some recent studies shed light on the relationships among body image control, social media use, and OBC in the international context (Boursier et al., 2020; Çınaroğlu & Yilmazer, 2025).

To the best of our knowledge, no previous study has examined these predictor variables in determining OBC among young, educated females attending a university in Multan (Pakistan). Therefore, the primary rationale for the present study was to address this gap in previous research. Hence, the researchers formulated the subsequent research objectives: i) to find out the demographic correlates of the young females studying in the university, ii) to demonstrate the role of body control image in determining the OBC among the female university students, iii) To illustrate the role of problematic internet usage in determining the OBC among the young educated females of university, and iv) To put forth recommendations to lessen the intensity of OBC among young educated female students.

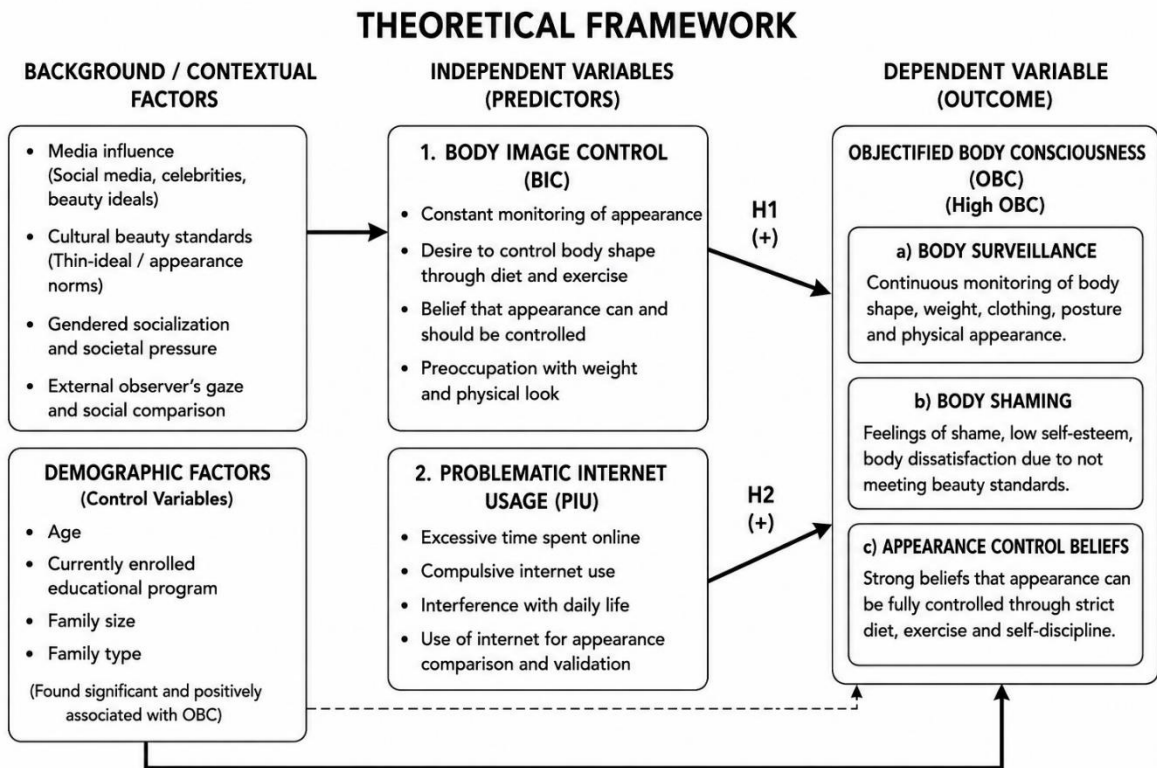
Theoretical framework

Objectification theory

Objectification theory was put forward by Fredrickson and Roberts in 1997. The nexus of the theory is that women are viewed as “objects” in society based on their physical appearance. For this purpose, women are socialized to believe that they should adhere to their normative patterns of beautification and perfect body curves. The objectification is simultaneously related to ignoring the abilities of women and focusing on their materialistic values related to body shape and sharp facial features. Despite socialization of females, social media, and societal pressures, adolescents also sought external approval for their body shape. The theoretical framework was based on two types of objectifications, i.e., i) sexual objectification, and ii) Self-objectification. In sexual objectification, females are treated as sexual objects for others' pleasure, rather than emphasizing their creativity and critical thinking. The media is a major factor that emphasizes females' physical appearance rather than their emotions and other personality traits. In self-objectification, women began to evaluate themselves through a societal lens based on their appearance. They also need outsiders' approval for their beautification to be praised. To meet the standards of beauty and attractiveness, women began constant body surveillance and monitoring. Comparisons with social media

celebrities and their unrealistic body shapes and beauty standards satisfy a person's internal thinking. Over the past five years, objectification theory has been tested and used to explain objectified body consciousness among female adolescents in international and Pakistani research studies by Ahmed et al. (2025), Wang et al. (2022), and Zhang et al. (2025).

The theory is applied in the present study, which shows that increased social media use among young people has created beauty standards for young women. These educated youngsters become aware of the need to maintain their body shape but simultaneously overemphasize self-objectification. Young, educated females studying in university follow celebrities on social media, who put forth unrealistic body shapes and beauty standards. These females need external approval and become depressed when their pictures receive fewer likes and comments. These social media apps are used as body control mechanisms, in which they feel ashamed for becoming overweight, having a dark complexion, and possessing some body feature that is mismatched with the standardized beauty norms. In light of this theory, the present research is designed to highlight the roles of body control methods and problematic internet use as baseline predictors of self-objectification among university students.



Methods and Materials

Universe and target population

All enrolled female students of the Social Sciences faculty at Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, were the universe of the present study. Students currently enrolled in BS programs were the target population.

Research design

A quantitative research design was used to study the relationship among variables. In this method, the researchers preferred a cross-sectional survey, in which data were collected at a single point in time. Given the researchers' limited time and funds for data collection, this method was a suitable approach for surveying OBC among adolescent and young female university students. Additionally, it allows researchers to explore students' opinions, beliefs, and social behaviors.

Tool for data collection

The researchers used a questionnaire to collect data from female students enrolled in the running BS programs. As the studied population was educated, we used a questionnaire that students could complete themselves. Semi-structured questions were formulated to investigate the phenomenon of "objectification" among the respondents. The first author, in collaboration with the second author, distributed questionnaires to students and explained the research objectives and the research design. The tool comprises the following sections: 1) Demographic profile, 2) Body Image Control, 3) Problematic Internet Usage, 4) Objectified Body Consciousness, and 5) Recommendations to lessen the phenomenon of OBC among young, educated female students.

Sampling procedure

A multistage probability sampling technique was used to select the sample. In this method, the first author obtained the list of enrolled students from the registrar's office. The list showed that in April 2025, the total number of enrolled students at Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, was $N=26,659$, with more than half of the students being female. For sample determination, Yamane's formula was used, with $N = 390$. A multistage sampling technique comprising the following stages was used to access the targeted sample size.

1. In the first stage, out of the 10 faculties of the university, the researchers selected the Faculty of Social Sciences through a purposive sampling technique. The primary purpose was that Social Sciences subjects are more subjective and abstract, allowing students to spend more time on their social media platforms for body monitoring.
2. The second stage comprises choosing four departments from the Faculty of Social Sciences, i.e., Education, Psychology, Sociology, and Economics.

3. In the third stage, the running semesters were selected from the BS program, comprising 2nd, 4th, 6th, and 8th semesters, along with the additional ADS programs. Students from both the Morning and Evening programs were included.
4. In the fourth stage, the list of enrolled students was chosen. A total of N=390 students were approached for the data collection.

After selecting a sample size of N=390, the first author distributed the questionnaires to respondents in print. The other researchers asked the female students to complete the questionnaire and place it in the ballot box to ensure data confidentiality. The researchers applied the law of large numbers to the sample by selecting a large number of respondents from departments with larger populations and a small number from departments with low enrollment rates. Of the N=390 questionnaires, the researchers received N=382; 4 were left more than half blank due to large ink spots, rendering the documents unreadable. Therefore, the response rate in this study was 96.93%, which is sufficient for generalizing the data.

Procedure and impediments during the data collection process

After obtaining permission from the relevant departmental heads, senior faculty, and administrative staff, the researchers visited the classrooms. Afterward, they explained the study's purpose and objectives to the sampled female students. Some female students were feeling reluctant to share their viewpoints about the topic as they faced bullying and shaming from society. The researchers assured them that their information would be kept hidden and used only for research purposes. Moreover, the first author also gave a brief lecture to female students about handling judgmental behavior and bullying in society. The respondents agreed to provide their honest opinions about the "phenomenon of objectification" as reflected in their body control mechanisms. When respondents completed the questionnaire, the main impediment was its length (102 questions). The researchers asked them to provide honest reviews, as the variables are sufficiently rich to warrant the length. Another obstacle was access to students, as some were busy attending classes and waiting for their turn in scheduled meetings with their supervisors. The male authors resolved this issue by negotiating with the departmental head and the students' supervisors and requesting their cooperation to ensure data collection. After addressing these challenges, the researchers pilot-tested 10 questionnaires. Feedback from the pilot testing revealed some overlapping and repetitive questions. Respondents recommended making some questions open-ended, allowing female students to express their views on body image and objectification through internet use for body surveillance. Some questions were left blank or answered unclearly, indicating that respondents did not clearly understand how to answer them. Afterward, the first author (the core researcher), in consultation with the second author (supervisor), revised the questionnaire and selected validated scales to minimize content errors.

Ethical considerations in the research

The researchers followed the core ethical principles of this study. In this context, the first author obtained approval from the departmental Ethical Review Board (ERC) before conducting the research. The board comprised Psychologists, Sociologists, and experts in research and gender

studies. After a thorough review, these experts approved the research conduction process, with some minor revisions. Accordingly, the researchers followed the subsequent research ethics. First, the researchers obtained informed consent letters from the female students who wanted to participate in the research. The additional terms and conditions allowed respondents to quit the survey at any time. Conversely, 11 females refused to participate and were excluded from the study. In their place, 11 other female students were selected using simple random sampling. In addition, confidentiality and anonymity were ensured by keeping respondents' names anonymous and assigning them confidential codes. For example, a female student in BS-8th semester, Evening Session, 2020-24, in the Psychology department was labeled as PSY-8th-E-2020-24 in the questionnaire. In light of the review board's recommendations, the researchers ensured that no harm would be caused to the participants. Although the topic was not violent, the fear of bullying, shaming, and taunting for body shape, and excessive usage of the internet for the purpose of showing images and videos of females, was the primary concern. This form of psychological violence was more challenging for the researchers as a significant ethical concern. To address this, the researchers upheld ethical standards of anonymity, confidentiality, and data privacy, which helped build rapport with female university students.

Data analysis

SPSS Version 21 was used to analyze the relationships among the underlying predictors of OBC among young, educated females within the given structural context. Univariate analysis used means and standard deviations, and hierarchical linear regression assessed the relationship between predictor and response variables in a multivariate analysis.

Results

Table-I: Demographic correlates of the female university students (N=378)

Demographic variables	Categorization	Frequency (Percentage)	Mean	SD*
Age	< 20 years	84 (22.2)	2.22	0.778
	20-25 years	294 (77.8)		
Currently enrolled educational program	Bachelor	218 (57.7)	1.49	0.636
	MPhil	134 (35.4)		
	PhD	26 (6.9)		
Family type	Nuclear	159 (42.1)	1.91	0.868
	Extended	91 (24.1)		
	Joint	128 (33.8)		
Family size	< 05 members	71 (18.8)	1.93	0.550
	5-10 members	262 (69.3)		
	> 10 members	45 (11.9)		
Head of the household	Father	300 (79.4)	1.29	0.618
	Mother	45 (11.9)		

Any Other	33 (8.7)
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Predictor variables: Body image control, Problematic internet usage

Response variable: OBC

*SD stands for Standard Deviation

Demographic correlates of the female university students

As mentioned, Table 1 showed that demographic variables influenced the objectification of university students through body surveillance and excessive internet use for uploading pictures. The age group showed that $n=84$ (22.2%) respondents were <20 years old, while $n=294$ (77.8%) were between 20 and 25 years old. The mean and SD values showed that young females were more engaged in body image control through continuous surveillance and shaming, as evidenced by the capture and online sharing of images. Consequently, the young female students studying at the university displayed a positive self-concept through self-modification and self-appreciation.

Data from the enrollment variable show that $n=218$ (57.7%) respondents were enrolled in the Bachelor's program, while $n=134$ (35.4%) were registered students of the M.Phil. program. The moderate variability indicates that diverse academic pressures significantly impact the objectification of female students at the university. The mean score of 1.49, with an SD of 0.636, reflected moderate variability. The table also shows that female students studying the Bachelor's program feel less confident and more specific about their body shape. They sought external evaluations and approval to inform their comments about their bodies.

The variable on family type indicated that $n=159$ (42.1%) female students belonged to the nuclear family system, while $n=891$ (24.1%) reported living in an extended family. Additionally, 128 respondents (33.8%) reported living in a joint family system. The mean (1.91) and SD (0.868) also indicated that female students experienced a variety of family environments that influenced their body control mechanisms, such as comparing their physique with other female classmates, constantly monitoring their body shape, and following social media for beauty standards. Results also showed that the young females living in the nuclear family system have low self-concept and are more vulnerable to problematic internet usage. Conversely, the data also revealed that strong social support was associated with less excessive internet use and greater focus on idealized beauty standards.

The mean (1.93) and SD (0.550) indicated that females living in moderate family sizes (i.e., 5-10 members) develop a weaker concept of "objectification" but also have greater freedom to use media apps to post their images within their circle of friends and publicly. In addition to this, females with a small family size of less than 5 feel more insecure about their body image and have lower self-concept.

The table also shows that the head of the household determines body consciousness among female university students. The results indicated that young females rely more on their parents' approval

when developing their self-concept. The mean and SD results indicated that having a father as the household head is a crucial factor shaping young women's positive self-image. The most commonly reported reason was that women felt more protected from the social pressures to look attractive and sleek. The protective effect decreases when the household head is a mother or any family member.

Table-II: Percentage distribution of the respondents with respect to their body image control (N=378)

Statements related to body image control	Agreed respondents Frequency (Percentage)
I am keen about my body shape and overall looks	312 (82.3)
I compare my body with the other female classmates	344 (91.1)
I want a perfect body shape to boost my confidence in front of my classmates	368 (97.4)
I constantly monitor my body shape	337 (89.2)
I am concerned about my outfits and their fit on my body	271 (71.7)
I feel pressured to maintain a particular body shape to look good	359 (94.8)
I control my eating habits to maintain my body shape	201 (53.2)
I want to look good so that others can judge my dedication to remain the best in body shape	330 (87.3)
I am influenced by and attracted to the comments from my social circle	362 (95.8)
I get hurt and frustrated by the negative comments on my appearance	371 (98.1)
I think the treatment of others with me depends upon how I look	355 (93.1)

Body image control among female university students

The above table shows the percentage of female university students who report controlling their body image. As noted, n=312 (82.3%) female students agreed that they are concerned about their body shape and overall appearance. These respondents reported multiple reasons for monitoring their body shape (n=337, 89.2%). The primary reasons included: i) feeling pressured to maintain a specific body shape (n=359, 94.8%), ii) wanting to boost confidence by maintaining a perfect body shape (n=368, 97.4%), and iii) being influenced by comments from their social circle at university about their body shape (n=362, 95.8%). The respondents also indicated that concerns about body image are driven by psychological issues such as: i) frustration over negative comments from others about their appearance (n=371, 98.1%), ii) fear of being judged by others for their body shape (n=330, 87.3%), and iii) constant comparison with others regarding body shape (n=344, 91.1%). Additionally, female students reported that monitoring their body shape is important because nowadays, people tend to judge others based on personality and physical appearance (agreed, n=355, 93.1%). Moreover, they noted that people generally dress well (n=271, 71.7%).

Table-III: Percentage distribution of the respondents with respect to problematic internet usage (N=378)

Statements related to problematic internet usage	Agreed respondents Frequency (Percentage)
I spend a lot of time on social media maintaining a perfect body shape	361 (95.6)
I feel irritated when I get less attention on social media due to imperfections in my body shape	352 (93.1)
I am highly influenced by the celebrities who maintain their body shape into their elderly ages	367 (97.1)
I use social media to follow the influencers' body shape and lifestyle/weight management	340 (89.9)
I am more concerned about my body shape due to comparing it with the social media celebrities	350 (92.6)
I feel pressured due to the mindset of attaining a particular body shape	362 (95.8)
I am constantly indulging in getting photos and posting on social media	348 (92.1)
I feel problematic and stressed when getting negative comments on social media related to not being in perfect physical shape these days	361 (95.6)
I use powerful editing apps to create a perfect photo to post on social media.	309 (81.8)
I wanted multiple likes and admiring comments for my posted photos	317 (83.9)

Problematic internet usage among female university students

The table above also showed that female university students spend time on social media to maintain a perfect body shape (n=361, 95.6%). The respondents also agreed that they were indulged in problematic internet use for various reasons, such as i) getting irritated when receiving less attention on social media due to imperfections in their body shape (n=352, 93.1%), ii) constantly taking and posting photos on social media (n=348, 92.1%), and iii) getting stressed when they receive negative comments about their body shape on social media (n=361, 95.6%). Problematic internet use is more prevalent among female students who are highly influenced by celebrities who maintain their body shape into adulthood (n=367, 97.1%) and follow influencers' body shapes and lifestyle management (n=340, 89.9%). As shown, constant comparison with social media influencers makes female students more concerned about their body shape and feel ongoing pressure to get in shape (n=350, 92.6%, and n=362, 95.8% of respondents agree with these views). The respondents also reported wanting to present their best selves. In this regard, they said they used various editing apps to make their photos and videos look perfect in their posts, with n=309 (81.8%).

Table-IV: Percentage distribution of the respondents with respect to objectified body consciousness (N=378)

Statements related to objectified body consciousness	Agreed respondents Frequency (Percentage)
I am thinking about how my body shape appears to the other fellows and my social media friends	341 (90.2)
I frequently compare my body shape and overall appearance to those of the other fellows	367 (97.1)
I try my level best to look presentable even on the usual and off days of university	216 (57.1)
I am concerned about the fit of my clothes and their relevance to the trending fashions in university	299 (79.2)
I feel embarrassed when my body does not appear attractive enough to the current trends in the university	349 (92.3)
I feel uncomfortable when my body is not in a perfect shape in comparison with the other female students	350 (92.6)
I struggled to maintain a perfect body shape to get approval from the social network	293 (77.5)
I struggled to remain disciplined and attain self-control to get a perfect body shape	310 (82.1)
I feel responsible for maintaining the ideal body type	354 (93.7)

Objectified body consciousness among female university students

The table above examines how female university students perceive and experience OBC. The responses indicate that most respondents (n=341, 97.1%) were aware of their body shape and facial features. In extension, these female students also responded that their objectification concept is shaped by various means, such as i) comparing their body shape with their overall appearance (n=367, 97.1%), to look presentable at the university (n=216, 57.1%), and choosing clothes that follow current fashion trends (n=299, 79.2%). The table further shows that female students feel embarrassed and uncomfortable when they do not look attractive or in perfect shape in social settings (agreed: n=349, 92.3% and n=350, 92.6%, respectively). Additional findings reveal that n=310 (82.1%) of the female students also struggle to stay disciplined and maintain self-control to achieve a perfect body shape. The desire for social approval often drives this effort as they strive to meet societal standards of objectification (n=293; 77.5% agreed).

Table-V: Hierarchical Linear Regression Analysis Predicting Objectified Body Consciousness (N=378)

Model	Variable	B	SEB	β	t	p-value
Model 1	Constant	1.80	0.22	---	8.18	<.001
	Body Image Control	0.42	0.05	0.45	8.40	<.001
Model 2	Constant	1.60	0.23	---	6.95	<.001
	Body Image Control	0.38	0.05	0.40	7.52	<.001
	Problematic Internet Usage	0.21	0.04	0.28	5.05	<.001

Model summary

Model	Variable	R	R ²	F	p-value
Model 1	Body Image Control	0.45	0.20	70.56	<.001
Model 2	Body Image Control Problematic Internet Usage	0.52	0.27	25.50	<.001

Relationship between the predictor and response variables through the hierarchical linear regression analysis

The results from the above-mentioned analysis in Table V illustrated that each predictor variable contributes uniquely to the response variable. In addition, adding the second predictor variable changes the magnitude of the first predictor variable's effect in determining the response variable.

Model 1 shows $\beta = .45$, $p < .001$, indicating that body image control is a significant predictor of OBC among the young female students. The R^2 value indicated that body image control accounted for 20% of the variance in objectification among the female university students.

Model 2 included problematic internet usage, which was added to the body image control, and it increased the variance by 7% ($\Delta R^2 = .07$) in predicting objectification among the young female students, i.e., $R^2 = 27\%$ ($R^2 = .27$). The beta value for the body image control has the high value as compared to the problematic internet usage, i.e., ($\beta = .40$, $p < .001$, as compared to ($\beta = .28$, $p < .001$). This also indicated that female university students who used surveillance methods and tended toward individual monitoring contributed meaningfully to shaping self-objectification among the respondents.

Discussion

The present study findings show that the female students studying in the BS program at the university become more aware of their bodies through body shaming and surveillance techniques. Consistent with the study's findings, empirical evidence from Pakistan on females aged 18-25 years

indicated a higher tendency toward self-objectification. These females are more concerned with their body image and experience anxiety when comparing themselves to ideal body shapes. This supportive research also indicated that young females primarily used photo-editing tools to show their followers their ideal body type (Mustafa & Akram, 2022). Another piece of empirical evidence from the international context used a sample of 502 young females and identified the underlying causes of their anxiety related to their perfect body shape. Consistent with the present study's findings, the article reported that body surveillance, body shaming, and appearance control beliefs are the major underlying factors that strengthen the conceptual understanding of OBC among females. To safeguard their self-esteem, the women engage in extensive photo editing and constantly check the likes and comments they receive from their followers (Sinclair, 2006; Vendemia & DeAndrea, 2018).

The multiple regression results show that body image control is a positive and significant predictor of OBC among female university students. A one-unit increase in body image control can raise objectification among female students by 0.35 units. In addition, the first model in the hierarchical linear regression analysis showed that body image control through body surveillance and body shaming changes the concept of OBC by about 20%. A study from Pakistan by Shahid et al. (2022) shows that fear of negative social media appearances and insecurity about low levels of appreciation are leading causes of low self-esteem among young females. Due to low self-esteem, females are more inclined towards objectified behavior. Cross-sectional evidence also suggests that young females are more conscious of their body image and more likely to control their body shape through dieting and strict exercise. A previous study by Agam et al. (2015), and later Zhang & Yang (2024), found that body image control affects female adolescents more than it does male students. The efforts to follow unrealistic, ongoing body image patterns through OBC are at their peak nowadays. This study also found that when young females feel less confident and hold appearance-control beliefs, they become more self-conscious about their bodies.

As mentioned in the results section, young female students are more concerned about their body appearance and the way they are perceived in photos. For this purpose, they are more concerned with likes and comments on their photos and with how their followers perceive their appearances. Results from multiple and hierarchical regression analyses showed a significant positive relationship between problematic internet usage and objectification among female respondents. In Model 2, adding problematic internet usage to the body image control increased the variance by 7% ($\Delta R^2 = .07$). In endorsement, a previous study by Seekis et al. (2020) conducted an online survey and compared body appearance and body image concerns among undergraduate female students. The authors used structural equation modeling to assess objectification and appearance-related concerns for future interventions. Another systematic review by Sarda et al. (2025) proposed examining self-objectification from multiple perspectives, with particular emphasis on body image concerns. Empirical evidence from previous studies by Gioia et al. (2020) and Marengo et al. (2018) indicates that social media is used to disseminate and reinforce the concept of objectification among university-going female students.

The present findings also showed that continuous body surveillance and monitoring were major factors behind intensified OBC among female university students. Consistent with this, previous research by Khan et al. (2023) in Pakistan also found that body dissatisfaction is a major cause of body surveillance. Moreover, this dissatisfaction arises when a person does not get approval from others. The study also found that body monitoring is a parallel effect of body surveillance, driven by body dissatisfaction. Social media sets idealized body images by showing unrealistic body images of celebrities. Young people became more conscious of their bodies, as this age group is considered the peak period of adherence to beauty standards and body image. These body images created dissatisfaction among young females with their bodies and intensified body consciousness. Another empirical study across 10 global contexts was conducted by Cohen et al. (2018); Rodgers & Rousseau (2022) found that when females became appearance-focused, they used various tactics to control their body image. The primary tool for controlling body image is managing the unrealistic, lean body image of female students.

Conclusion

In conclusion, OBC is the nexus of materialistic and fabricated social and cultural values. The major triggering factors that determine the intensity of this phenomenon were two central hubs: body image control and problematic internet use. Body image control is triggered in young female students who use constant surveillance, strict dietary habits, and excessive exercise to achieve their idealized body images. The urge to constantly compare themselves with celebrities and media influencers has led educated youth to reinforce objectification. Societal influences shape this body image control, leading young female students to view themselves through a self-objectifying lens. This female cadre feels pressure to manage their physical appearance and body shape according to idealized and unrealistic standards. The major problem with intensified OBC is that these female students need external approval from their social media followers. In addition, excessive exposure to the unrealistic and surgically enhanced bodies of celebrities attracted these young, educated female students and psychologically put them into constant surveillance and body shaming. Moreover, they feel overwhelmed by the need to seek validation of their physical appearance from their social network, which inclines them to engage in problematic internet use. Attractive parameters associated with social media ideals include a lean body, perfect body curves, and alignment with cultural beauty standards. Therefore, continuous surveillance and monitoring of the body through body control, along with problematic internet usage, determines the self-objectification of young female students to the utmost level.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and concluding remarks, the researchers put forth the following recommendations to address the increased objectification among the young, educated females of the study area:

1. Increasing media literacy among the young female students studying in the university can foster critical and analytical thinking among them. This evaluation helped them critically

analyze that the perfect body shapes displayed on social media are unrealistic and should not be idealized.

2. Awareness sessions must be arranged to ensure that young females studying at the university can foster critical thinking patterns among the students. They should also be encouraged for their extracurricular activities rather than being admired for their physical appearance.
3. All students, especially young females, should be given lectures that balance body awareness and foster a positive self-concept and objectification among them. Unrealistic body ideals can also affect students' academic performance.
4. Female university students should receive psychological orientation sessions in which they must be aware that uploading pictures on social media and getting approval from others increases the level of objectification among them. They should balance their approach to body shape and type, and use surveillance to maintain their body.
5. Psychological awareness sessions must be organized to raise awareness among female students to handle the criticism of their pictures on social media. In these sessions, it must be emphasized that, rather than following unrealistic dietary patterns and seeking online validation, they should accept criticism as other people's opinions.
6. There should be a separate compulsory course that must be launched by the HEC, recommended as "Copying strategies for social objectification," which must cover the contents on how the students can use various levels of social, psychological, and emotional coping strategies to combat the body image controlling methods, overemphasis on the problematic internet usage, and resultantly develop objectification among them.

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