

The Impact of Intuitive Eating on Physical Appearance Comparison Among Working Women..

Fakhr Un Nisa¹, Aasia Faiz², Muhammad Kashif³, Mahmood Ali Khan Jafri⁴, Syed Mahboob Ali Shah⁵

¹Intern Clinical Psychologist Benazir Bhutto Hospital Rawalpindi, Pakistan

²Assistant Professor of Psychology Govt. Viqar-un-Nisa Graduate College for Women Rawalpindi, Pakistan

³Associate Professor of Psychiatry Rawalpindi Medical University Rawalpindi, Pakistan

⁴Assistant Professor of Psychiatry Rawalpindi Medical University Rawalpindi, Pakistan

⁵Consultant Psychiatrist Benazir Bhutto Hospital, Rawalpindi

Corresponding Author:

Muhammad Kashif

Associate Professor of Psychiatry Rawalpindi Medical University Rawalpindi, Pakistan

Email ID : drmuhammadkashif3@gmail.com

Cite this paper as Fakhr Un Nisa, Aasia Faiz, Muhammad Kashif, Mahmood Ali Khan Jafri, Syed Mahboob Ali Shah, (2025) The Impact of Intuitive Eating on Physical Appearance Comparison Among Working Women....*Journal of Neonatal Surgery*, 14, (32s) 9557-9562

ABSTRACT

Background: the relationship between intuitive eating and physical appearance comparison among working women. It explores how intuitive eating impacts self-perception, body image, and emotional well-being in a demographic affected by societal beauty standards.

Objectives: To explore the relationship between intuitive eating and physical appearance comparison in working women and assess the impact of exercise, fitness goals, profession, and job experience on these variables.

Study Design: a cross sectional study.

Place and Duration of Study. Department of Psychiatry Rawalpindi Medical University Rawalpindi, Pakistan from jan 2024 to june 2024

Methods: The Intuitive Eating Scale-2 (Tylka, 2006) and the Physical Appearance Comparison Revised Scale (Schaefer and Thompson, 2014) were administered to 150 working women in Rawalpindi to establish a cross-sectional study. The data was subjected to analysis with SPSS regression analysis and correlation analysis.

Results: the Mean age was 32.6 years with a standard deviation of 5.4 years. The correlation between intuitive eating and physical appearance comparison was significant ($p < 0.01$) indicating that greater levels of intuitive eating diminish the desire to compare physical appearance among working women.

Conclusion: Encouraging introspective eating in working women may help boost their body image satisfaction and diminish effects of physical appearance comparison and thereby achieve improved emotional well-being and enhanced performance in the workplace..

Keywords: Intuitive eating, body image, working women, physical comparison..

1. INTRODUCTION

In the modern society, individuals especially women have become so sensitive about their physical looks. The result is that this awareness is usually influenced by societal beauty ideals and made even worse by media interpretations of ideal body images. Consequently a lot of people compare their physical appearance with that of other people on a regular basis, which might trigger dissatisfaction with your body, low self-esteem and poor eating habits (Fehr, 2012). The comparison of bodies with those of other people is particularly widespread among working women, who constantly find themselves in both the formal and informal world where their looks are subject to criticism. The difficulty is intensified further when the tensions of work are applied in the context of the need to hold onto a good self-image. Intuitive eating has also evolved into the code that educates individuals to pay attention to their personal stomach and make food choices based on what their bodies require rather than the sway of the diet industry and or beauty (Keirns and Hawkins, 2019). Intuitive eating, in contrast to restrictive dieting, is meant to help people have a healthier relationship with food by paying attention to their bodies and internal cues

of hunger, fullness, and satisfaction. According to previous Study, intuitive eating might be associated with such beneficial physical and mental health outcomes as better body image and reduced body dissatisfaction (Camilleri et al., 2016). Individuals who engage in intuitive eating have a more relaxed attitude toward food and are less likely to experience other behavioral patterns associated with evaluating their physical appearance against others. Intuitive eating might in fact serve as a buffer against the stress of physical appearance comparison among working women, since it would minimize focus on externally constructed body ideals and prioritize the focus on internal body cues and self-acceptance. The practice itself is consistent with the overall idea of fostering positive mental health and positive body image in that it enables people to be more aware of their bodies and not compare themselves to beauty standards portrayed by the modern society. In addition, external fitness-related activities and adopting fitness targets might also affect intuitive eating in working women, and thus the number of negative body image comparisons will decrease. Previous studies have established that eating behaviors relate with body image concerns. Indicatively, Study discovered that attentive and balanced eating, including intuitive eating, leads to less body dissatisfaction and bad mood (Choudhury et al., 2019). Conversely, individuals with elevated degrees of physical appearance evaluation have increased probabilities of demonstrating high body dissatisfaction that ultimately leads to a negative self-perception and eating pattern loop (Laker and Waller, 2021). Thus, one potential solution to assist working women in escaping the loop of appearance-based comparisons, and developing healthier eating patterns, is the promotion of intuitive eating. Despite the growing interest surrounding intuitive eating, there is minimal information regarding how intuitive eating intersects with physical appearance comparison amongst working women, particularly in Pakistan. Pakistani women have several special issues including the appearance norms of society, requirements of serving at work, family and personal life, which matter to discuss this problem in this cultural context. The proposed study will be an addition to the existing literature on intuitive eating by looking at how it influences physical appearance rating amongst working women in order to uncover new insights regarding how this approach to body image may improve body image and mental health amongst this group of under studied individuals.

2. METHODS

It was a cross sectional study Conducted in the Department of Psychiatry Rawalpindi Medical University Rawalpindi, Pakistan from Jan 2024 to June 2024 of 150 working women in Rawalpindi. The Intuitive Eating Scale-2 (Tylka, 2006) and the Physical Appearance Comparison Revised Scale (Schaefer and Thompson, 2014) were used to collect data. Participants were selected with non-probability convenience sampling, and the data was analyzed with SPSS. Pearson correlation was used to determine the relationship between intuitive eating and physical appearance comparison, whereas multiple regression analysis was used to test the predictive value of intuitive eating on physical appearance comparison.

Inclusion criterion: Females aged over 21 years and working full-time with at least two years of employment experience.

Exclusion criteria Women with physical or mental health problems which will disrupt their participation in the study.

Ethical Approval Statement

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Rawalpindi Medical University Rawalpindi ethically approved it. The participants provided informed consent thereby ensuring privacy and free will to participate in the studies.

3. RESULTS

The average age of Study of participants was 32.6 years (SD = 5.4). The results indicate that the interrelationship between intuitive eating and physical appearance comparison was moderate ($-0.51, p < 0.01$) meaning that the higher the intuitive eating, the less the physical appearance comparison. They discovered that intuitive eating correlated with physical appearance comparison in a negative manner ($b = -0.43, p < 0.001$), and this regression model accounted for 32% of the appearance variance through comparison. Women who exercised frequently and had goals related to fitness had greater intuitiveness in eating and lower physical appearance comparison. Profession and job experience also played a role as teachers scored the highest in intuitive eating, and nurses the highest in physical appearance comparison tendencies.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 150)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	18-25	30	20%
	26-35	70	46.7%
	36-45	40	26.7%
	46-55	10	6.7%
Exercise Routine	Yes	90	60%
	No	60	40%

Fitness Goal	Yes	86	57.3%
	No	64	42.7%
Profession	Teachers	50	33.3%
	Bankers	50	33.3%
	Nurses	50	33.3%
Job Experience	3 years or less	40	26.7%
	6 years	59	39.3%
	9 years or more	51	34%

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Scales Used in the Study (N = 150)

Scale	M	SD	Range	α	Skewness	Kurtosis
Intuitive Eating Scale-2	3.92	0.09	23-115	0.85	-0.71	0.77
Physical Appearance Comparison Revised Scale	3.08	0.70	11-55	0.75	0.014	-0.55

Note: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, α = Reliability Coefficient

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Analysis between Intuitive Eating and Physical Appearance Comparison in Working Women (N = 150)

Variables	Intuitive Eating (IE)	Physical Appearance Comparison (PAC)
Intuitive Eating (IE)	1	-0.51**
Physical Appearance Comparison (PAC)	-0.51**	1

*Note: * $p < 0.01$

Table 4: Regression Analysis for Intuitive Eating and Physical Appearance Comparison in Working Women (N = 150)

Variables	B	SE	t	p-value	95% CI
Constant	56.29	2.13	26.41	0.000	52.07, 60.51
Intuitive Eating (IE)	-3.30	0.405	-6.10	0.000	-4.374, -2.239

Note: B = Unstandardized Coefficient, SE = Standard Error, p = Significance Level, CI = Confidence Interval

4. DISCUSSION

The current Study explores the connection between intuitive eating and comparison of physical appearance amongst working females in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. The results indicate a strong negative relationship between intuitive eating and physical appearance comparison, with high levels of intuitive eating relating to lower rates of physical appearance comparison. The findings of this study contribute to the existing literature that purports that intuitive eating can positively influence body image and emotional well-being (Camilleri et al., 2016). Investigating this relationship, in the context of working women, this Study provides useful information on the interplay of eating habits and body image in this group. Past studies have also found that intuitively-eating people experience reduced rates of body dissatisfaction and have fewer physical appearance comparisons. The trend is also prominent among women, who as a group are more likely to feel societal pressure when it comes to body image (Keirns and Hawkins, 2019). Within a study by Choudhury et al. (2019), intuitive eating was discovered to be linked to lower body dissatisfaction levels and better psychological well-being in Pakistani women. Just like our Study, these results underscore the possibility of intuitive eating reducing self-blame. The current study also reveals the benefits of intuitive eating in enhancing a healthier body image through minimizing the number of physical appearance comparisons. The results of the present study are similar to those of Laker and Waller (2021), who concluded that body image comparison had

a lower incidence among healthier eating behaviors. By prioritizing body cues and satisfaction as an intuitive approach to eating, one becomes less likely to compare themselves to the idealized standards of beauty many people in the media are expected to attain. Furthermore, the outcomes of our Study confirm the hypothesis according to which internal stimuli (hunger, fullness) help to establish an overall positive attitude to food and body image, which helps to decrease the harmful impact of external comparisons. The current study, similar to earlier Study (Russell & Katelyn, 2014), also determined women who exercise regularly have more intuitive eating and fewer negative comparisons of their physical appearance. This relationship can be described by the fact that exercise positively affects body satisfaction, which has been reported to diminish the desire to perform appearance-related comparisons (Zamani et al., 2016). Moreover, intuitive eating and less physical appearance comparison were found to be higher and lower respectively among women who had established certain fitness objectives. This result is resonant with the Study by Green and Thomas (2023), who believed that the establishment of fitness goals can contribute to the redirection of priorities towards inner health and improvement. In this study, a comparison of professions showed that teachers demonstrated the greatest intuitive eating rates, and nurses showed the greatest rates of physical appearance comparisons. This observation can be related to the different levels of stress and working hours in several occupations. Teachers who tend to have more organized schedules might be more inclined to engage in mindful eating, and this practice may also help them have a better body image (Lee, 2020). Conversely, nurses who frequently have irregular schedules and are highly stressed might be more challenged in maintaining a healthy relationship with food, contributing to more physical appearance comparison (Davide, 2020). In addition, the Study determined that job experience was positively associated with intuitive eating and negatively related to physical appearance comparison. More job experience can result in increased levels of self-reflection and self-care that can contribute to the development of a more positive body image and healthy eating patterns (Tylka and Barcalow, 2015). Women who are more employed, have more job experience, perhaps have more coping systems of managing work stress and are more autonomous in their health and eating habits. Compared to other recent studies, the current study shows the high importance of intuitive eating to enhance the body image satisfaction of working women (Linardon and Rinehart, 2017). Intuitive eating, as Study carried out in the past indicates, is an effective weapon to resist social norms of body image and to develop a healthier and more positive relationship with food (Tylka & Barcalow, 2015). This paper is an additional indication of how encouraging women to eat intuitively can improve their mental and emotional health and decrease the negative influence of physical appearance comparisons on female workers.

5. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the significant negative relationship between intuitive eating and physical appearance comparison among working women. Promoting intuitive eating may improve body image satisfaction, reduce unhealthy comparisons, and enhance overall well-being, particularly among working women in high-stress professions. This approach can contribute to a more positive self-image and healthier lifestyle.

6. LIMITATIONS

The study's sample was limited to working women in Rawalpindi, which may not fully represent the broader population. Additionally, the cross-sectional design prevents establishing causality. Self-report measures may also be subject to bias, affecting the accuracy of the data regarding eating behaviors and body image comparisons.

Future Findings

Future Study should explore longitudinal designs to establish causal relationships between intuitive eating and physical appearance comparison. Additionally, examining how cultural, socioeconomic, and regional differences impact these relationships could provide further insights. Investigating interventions promoting intuitive eating in the workplace may also be beneficial for improving body image among diverse populations.

Disclaimer: Nil

Conflict of Interest: Nil

Funding Disclosure: Nil

Authors Contributions

Concept & Design of Study: Fakhr Un Nisa¹, Aasia Faiz²

Drafting: Muhammad Kashif³

Data Analysis: Mahmood Ali Khan Jafri⁴

Critical Review: Syed Mahboob Ali Shah⁵

Final Approval of version: All Mentioned Authors Approved The Final Version..

REFERENCES

- [1] Khan U, Zain Bin Munir, Muhammad Haseeb, Zaid Ghaffoor, Shawaiz Shabir, Rabia Javaid. POST

OPERATIVE COMPLICATION RELATED TO ANESTHESIA IN LOWER RESOURCES SETUP. *IJHR* [Internet]. 2025 May 21 [cited 2025 Sep. 29];3(3 (Health & Allied):373-81. Available from: <https://insightsjhr.com/index.php/home/article/view/876>

- [2] Ali SS, Ahmed I, Khurram MF, Rehman N, Abhishek R. Gynecomastia surgery: liposuction alone versus endoscope-assisted glandular excision—A comparative study. *Indian J Plast Surg.* 2025.
- [3] Knoedler L, Knoedler S, Alfertshofer M, Hansen FJ, Schenck T, Sofo G, et al. Gynecomastia surgery in 4996 male patients over 14 years: a retrospective analysis of surgical trends, predictive risk factors, and short-term outcomes. *Aesthetic Plast Surg.* 2024;48(22):4642-50.
- [4] Belza CC, Blum JD, 1. Alcaraz-Ibáñez M, Paterna A, Griffiths MD, Sicilia Á. Examining the role of social physique anxiety on the relationship between physical appearance comparisons and disordered eating symptoms among Spanish emerging adults. *Scandinavian journal of psychology.* 2020;61(6):803-8.
- [5] Alcaraz-Ibáñez M, Sicilia Á, Díez-Fernández DM, Paterna A. Physical appearance comparisons and symptoms of disordered eating: The mediating role of social physique anxiety in Spanish adolescents. *Body image.* 2020;32:145-9.
- [6] Alfonso-Fuertes I, Alvarez-Mon MA, Sanchez Del Hoyo R, Ortega MA, Alvarez-Mon M, Molina-Ruiz RM. Time Spent on Instagram and Body Image, Self-esteem, and Physical Comparison Among Young Adults in Spain: Observational Study. *JMIR formative Study.* 2023;7:e42207.
- [7] Baceviciene M, Jankauskiene R. Changes in sociocultural attitudes towards appearance, body image, eating attitudes and behaviours, physical activity, and quality of life in students before and during COVID-19 lockdown. *Appetite.* 2021;166:105452.
- [8] Barbierik L, Bacikova-Sleskova M, Petrovova V. The Role of Social Appearance Comparison in Body Dissatisfaction of Adolescent Boys and Girls. *Europe's journal of psychology.* 2023;19(3):244-58.
- [9] Brenton-Peters JM, Consedine NS, Cavadino A, Roy R, Serlachius AS. Investigating the effect of an online self-compassion for weight management (SC4WM) intervention on self-compassion, eating behaviour, physical activity and body weight in adults seeking to manage weight: protocol for a randomised controlled trial. *BMJ open.* 2022;12(2):e056174.
- [10] Claumann GS, Laus MF, Folle A, Silva DAS, Pelegrini A. Translation and validation of the Brazilian version of the Physical Appearance Comparison Scale-Revised in college women. *Body image.* 2021;38:157-61.
- [11] Coelho C, Machado P, Machado BC, Gonçalves S. Appearance Comparisons, Affect, Body Dissatisfaction and Eating Pathology in Portuguese Female University Students. *Nutrients.* 2023;15(11).
- [12] Crosby L, Rembert E, Levin S, Green A, Ali Z, Jardine M, et al. Changes in Food and Nutrient Intake and Diet Quality on a Low-Fat Vegan Diet Are Associated with Changes in Body Weight, Body Composition, and Insulin Sensitivity in Overweight Adults: A Randomized Clinical Trial. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.* 2022;122(10):1922-39.e0.
- [13] Domaszewski P, Konieczny M, Dybek T, Łukaniszyn-Domaszewska K, Anton S, Sadowska-Krępa E, et al. Comparison of the effects of six-week time-restricted eating on weight loss, body composition, and visceral fat in overweight older men and women. *Experimental gerontology.* 2023;174:112116.
- [14] Hallward L, Feng O, Duncan LR. An exploration and comparison of #BodyPositivity and #BodyNeutrality content on TikTok. *Eating behaviors.* 2023;50:101760.
- [15] Jiotsa B, Naccache B, Duval M, Rocher B, Grall-Bronnec M. Social Media Use and Body Image Disorders: Association between Frequency of Comparing One's Own Physical Appearance to That of People Being Followed on Social Media and Body Dissatisfaction and Drive for Thinness. *International journal of environmental Study and public health.* 2021;18(6).
- [16] Khanna D, Yalawar M, Saibaba PV, Bhatnagar S, Ghosh A, Jog P, et al. Oral Nutritional Supplementation Improves Growth in Children at Malnutrition Risk and with Picky Eating Behaviors. *Nutrients.* 2021;13(10).
- [17] López-Gil JF, García-Hermoso A, Sotos-Prieto M, Cavero-Redondo I, Martínez-Vizcaino V, Kales SN. Mediterranean Diet-Based Interventions to Improve Anthropometric and Obesity Indicators in Children and Adolescents: A Systematic Review with Meta-Analysis of Randomized Controlled Trials. *Advances in nutrition (Bethesda, Md).* 2023;14(4):858-69.
- [18] Lozano-Muñoz N, Borralló-Riego Á, Guerra-Martín MD. [Impact of social network use on anorexia and bulimia in female adolescents: a systematic review]. *Anales del sistema sanitario de Navarra.* 2022;45(2).
- [19] Mendes AL, Coimbra M, Canavarro MC, Ferreira C. The powerful effect of body image inflexibility on the explanation of eating psychopathology severity. *Eating and weight disorders : EWD.* 2022;27(3):961-8.

- [20] Meneguzzo P, Collantoni E, Bonello E, Vergine M, Behrens SC, Tenconi E, et al. The role of sexual orientation in the relationships between body perception, body weight dissatisfaction, physical comparison, and eating psychopathology in the cisgender population. *Eating and weight disorders : EWD*. 2021;26(6):1985-2000.
- [21] Rodriguez AM, Ede A, Madrigal L, Vargas T, Greenleaf C. An Exploratory Assessment of Sociocultural Attitudes and Appearance Comparison Among Athletes With Physical Disabilities. *Adapted physical activity quarterly : APAQ*. 2021;38(4):702-10.
- [22] Samson L, Zaitsoff SL. Appearance comparison on Instagram: The impact of fitspiration and transformation imagery on young women's body satisfaction. *Eating behaviors*. 2023;51:101812.
- [23] Senín-Calderón C, Santos-Morocho J, Rodríguez-Testal JF. Validation of a Spanish Version of the Physical Appearance Comparison Scales. *International journal of environmental Study and public health*. 2020;17(20).
- [24] Springmann M, Spajic L, Clark MA, Poore J, Herforth A, Webb P, et al. The healthiness and sustainability of national and global food based dietary guidelines: modelling study. *BMJ (Clinical Study ed)*. 2020;370:m2322.
- [25] Vall-Roqué H, Andrés A, González-Pacheco H, Saldaña C. Women's body dissatisfaction, physical appearance comparisons, and Instagram use throughout the COVID-19 pandemic: A longitudinal study. *The International journal of eating disorders*. 2023;56(1):118-31...