Impact of Fashion on The Body Image of Adult of Age Group 18-60 Years Living in Mumbai

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Abstract:

This paper explores the complex connection between women's body image and fashion, with an emphasis on modern influences and ramifications. It investigates how the fashion industry affects women's perceptions of their bodies and defines societal standards of beauty through an extensive analysis of scholarly literature and media sources. The paper discusses the self perception of women's body image and their several methods to alter their appearance. The impact that fashion industry, social media, and celebrity culture have in encouraging women to have unsatisfactory bodies and unattainable body ideals is examined. The article also addresses the rise of body-positive movements and diverse fashion representation, emphasizing how these developments have the ability to subvert conventional notions of beauty and advance acceptance of a range of body shapes. This paper adds to a deeper understanding of the complex interactions between fashion, media, and self-perception by examining both the positive and negative effects of fashion on women's body image. In the end, it advocates for more inclusive and powerful representations of women in the fashion industry.

Keywords : Body Image, size zero cult, surgery, diet

Aim : To explore the relationship between fashion and the participant's body image

Hypothesis : There is no impact of fashion trends/garments on the person's body image

Objective
1. To understand what is body image
2. To understand the participants perception of self body image and their methods of acknowledging it
3. To recommend ways to establish healthy self-fashion relationship

Introduction

It has long been acknowledged that fashion has a significant influence on how society norms, cultural values, and personal identities are shaped. Since ancient times, the idea of body image has been widely accepted. Most people have multiple insecurities and worry about how they look on their bodies. The constant barrage of pictures of unachievable beauty standards, from glossy publications to social media platforms, can negatively impact women's impressions of their own bodies. People are choosing various

hazardous self-destructive procedures that are detrimental to human health in an attempt to conform to the socially accepted norm of a certain body type. Some of the self destructive methods are as follows :

Engaging in Extreme Diets : Extreme dieting can be a symptom of poor body image, which occurs when people feel pressured to meet unattainable beauty standards and have a skewed view of their bodies. In terms of health, severe dieting can result in vitamin shortages, electrolyte imbalances, dehydration, immune system deterioration, muscular atrophy, and even organ damage. It can psychologically worsen depressive, anxious, or low self-esteem sentiments as well as compulsive thoughts about food and weight. Severe dieting can also lead to a vicious cycle of yo-yo dieting, in which people constantly lose and gain weight, damaging their bodies and self-esteem in the process. Without expert assistance, it may be challenging to escape this cycle.

Undergoing body appearance altering Surgeries : People who are unhappy with their physical characteristics might get plastic surgery to change their appearance, which boosts confidence and elevates self-esteem. For instance, cosmetic operations such as liposuction, rhinoplasty, or breast augmentation can assist people in achieving their ideal physical look, leading to an increased level of body satisfaction. Plastic surgery can occasionally result in dissatisfaction or disappointment if the outcomes do not fulfill expectations, even when the intended goal was to improve body image. Unrealistic expectations, surgical difficulties, or discontent with the result can all lead to low self-esteem and a negative body image.

Engaging in Overexercising : The motivation behind overexercising to improve body image is frequently a desire for physical perfection or the conviction that a particular body type or size will raise one's sense of acceptability or self-worth. Overtraining, however, can really be harmful to one's physical and mental well-being. Physically, overtraining raises the risk of injuries including stress fractures, tendinitis, and muscle strains by putting undue force on the muscles, joints, and ligaments. Even though the original intention of overexercising was to improve body image, overexercising frequently results in increased unhappiness because people may never feel like they've reached their desired appearance. This can have major mental consequences. Obsessive thoughts and actions related to food and exercise might result from a constant emphasis on exercise, calories burnt, and body measurements.

Social Comparison: People may get plastic surgery to seem like celebrities or influencers in today's world, when social media frequently presents unattainable beauty standards. This can lead to a vicious cycle of continual comparisons and discontent with one's natural appearance, which feeds the need for additional treatments to reach the desired ideal.

Isolating onself from various social events : Isolating oneself because of a negative body image frequently entails retreating from social interactions, giving up hobbies they formerly enjoyed, and cutting relationships with friends and family. Feelings of humiliation, guilt, or the fear that people may make snap judgments about them based just on how they look can all contribute to this loneliness. Because there are less opportunities for pleasant contacts and distractions from negative thoughts, isolation can exacerbate the negative thoughts and sensations linked with having a low body image. Additionally, it may result in a cycle of avoidance in which the person stays out of circumstances that make them feel insecure, which over time serves to reinforce their fears.

Size zero cult : The "size zero" movement, which is frequently connected to extreme thinness, can be harmful to one's perception of one's body. It encourages unattainable beauty standards, which can result in eating disorders, mental health problems, low self-esteem, and body dissatisfaction, especially in young people who are influenced by the media and social pressures. It ignores the variety of body shapes and sizes and instead reinforces the notion that one must be abnormally slim in order to be deemed attractive.
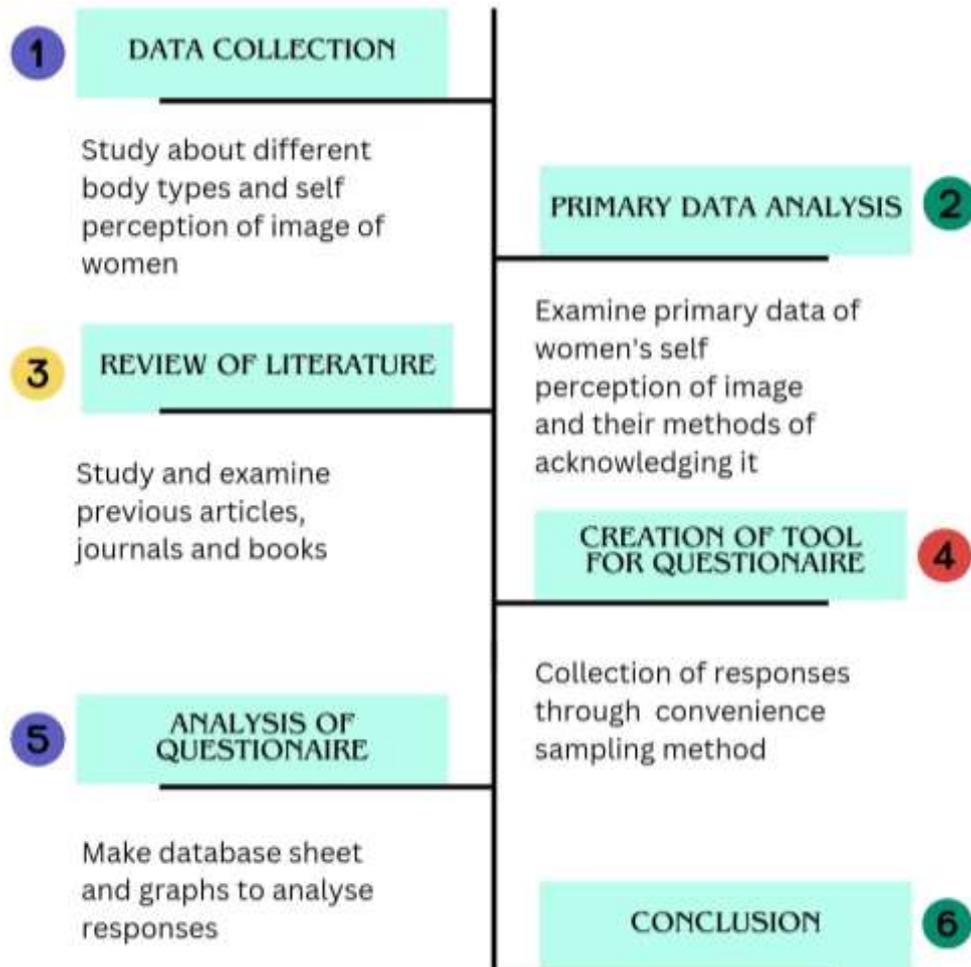
In order to combat these negative influences, it is crucial to encourage body positivity and positive views toward body image.

Women's perceptions of their bodies can be significantly impacted by the fashion industry. It frequently promotes limiting and unattainable beauty ideals, like incredibly slender bodies, perfect skin, and particular facial traits. Women may experience pressure to live up to these expectations as a result, which may lead to eating disorders, low self-esteem, and unfavorable opinions about their bodies. Further warping ideas of beauty and creating feelings of inadequacy is the widespread use of severely manipulated photographs in fashion advertisements and the media, which leads to an inaccurate portrayal of women's bodies.

Nonetheless, there is a growing trend in the fashion business that features models of a variety of body types, sizes, and backgrounds in order to promote diversity and body positivity. Traditional notions of beauty are starting to be questioned by this change.

This study aims to pinpoint the detrimental behaviors and provide strategies for establishing a positive self-fashion relationship. It examines the complex relationship between women's body image and fashion, exploring the ways in which media depictions, industry practices, and social influences interact to influence how women view their bodies and their value.

Methodology:

1 DATA COLLECTION

Study about different body types and self perception of image of women

2 PRIMARY DATA ANALYSIS

3 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Study and examine previous articles, journals and books

Examine primary data of women's self perception of image and their methods of acknowledging it

4 CREATION OF TOOL FOR QUESTIONAIRE

5 ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONAIRE

Collection of responses through convenience sampling method

Make database sheet and graphs to analyse responses

6 CONCLUSION

Review of Literature:

1. Naomi Wolf's (1990) book "The Beauty Myth" explores how society views beauty and how it affects women. According to Wolf, beauty standards serve as instruments to restrict and subjugate women's autonomy in addition to being purely aesthetic. She looks at the media, fashion, and cosmetics, among other businesses, that uphold unattainable standards of beauty. The Beauty Myth by Naomi Wolf examines how society views beauty and how it affects women. According to Wolf, beauty standards are strategies used to restrict and control the agency of women, not merely for aesthetic purposes. She looks at the ways that a variety of businesses, including as the media, fashion, and cosmetics, promote unattainable beauty standards, which lead to a generalized dissatisfaction with one's body and the objectification of oneself in women.

2. Sonya Renee Taylor's (2018) revolutionary book, "The Body Is Not an Apology: The Power of Radical Self-Love," examines the relationship between body positivity, social justice, and individual empowerment. Taylor contends that the pressure to live up to unattainable beauty standards and our society's fixation with looks have a negative impact on people and uphold oppressive regimes. Taylor encourages readers to embrace radical self-love—which she describes as accepting ourselves and others without limitations or judgment based on appearance—through personal tales, social criticism, and perceptive analysis. She stresses how crucial it is to acknowledge the intrinsic value and dignity of every body, regardless of its identity, size, form, or aptitude. Taylor also covers the connections between racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, and body shame and discrimination with other types of oppression. She emphasizes the necessity of working together to destroy these oppressive structures and build a society that is more inclusive and equal.

3. Singh, R. (2023, May 6) Eating Disorders and the Fashion Industry paper in the Fashion Law Journal is a great piece on eating problems brought on by the fashion business. One kind of psychiatric problem that is associated with eating disorders is skewed views concerning food, weight, and body form. The business has come under fire for encouraging the size zero mentality. The internet and social media, which encourage perfection and serve as catalysts for these behaviors, also exacerbate the issue. The fashion business needs extensive reforms since it has a significant impact on daily living. The media frequently perpetuates the idea that thin celebrities and models are the ideal of beauty, which negatively affects people—especially teenagers.

4. kunkelMD. (2023, January 17) - The Psychology of Plastic Surgery: How it Affects Self-Esteem and Body Image. A person's self-perception can be altered by cosmetic and/or reconstructive plastic surgery, which is one of the biggest ways these procedures can impact someone's self-esteem. A person's appearance can cause self-consciousness, embarrassment, or even shame. Those who get plastic surgery may feel better about themselves and more at ease in their own skin, which can boost self-esteem. Plastic surgery may make it easier for some people to accept and value their bodies. Others can become more dissatisfied and want more changes as a result of it. It's crucial to remember, though, that increased self-esteem isn't a given. It depends on the patient's state of mind, the situation, and the surgical result.
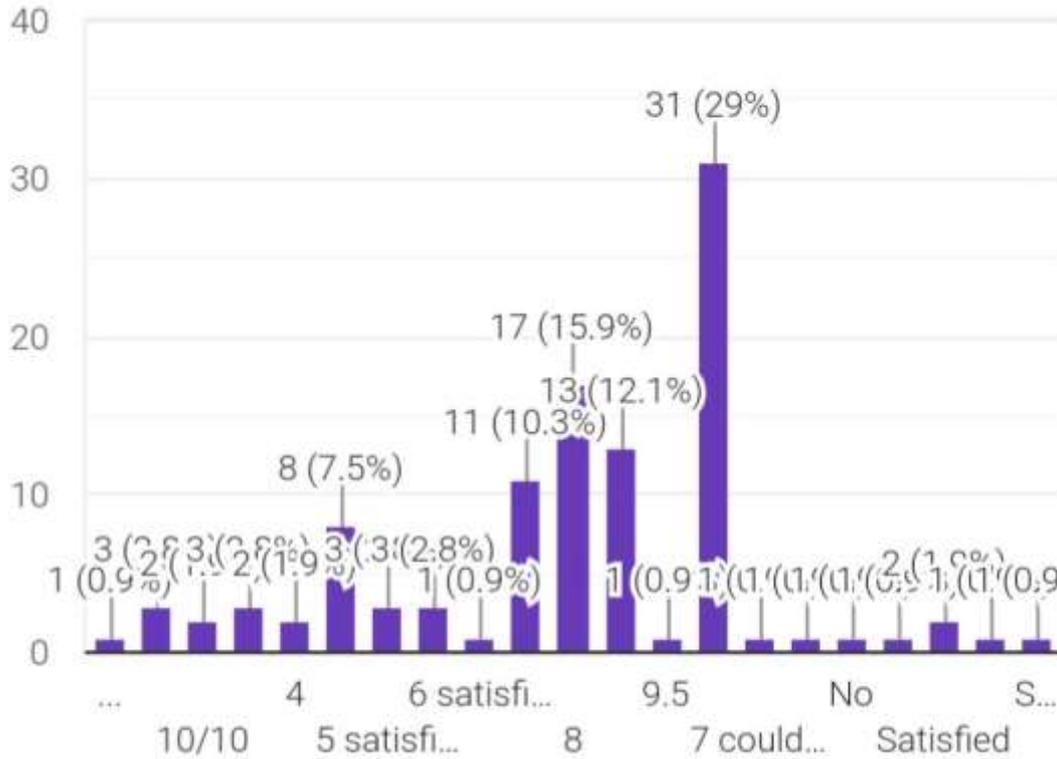
Results & Conclusion

Fig. 1 Rating of the participants on their self body image

In graph 1 we can see that around 33 of the participants of the survey conducted have an excellent body image as they gave themselves 10/10 for their body image. One person gave herself a staggering 9.5/10, around 13 people gave themselves 9/10 for their body image, 17 people gave themselves 8/10, 11 people gave themselves 7/10, a person gave herself a 6/10, around 3 people gave themselves 5.5/10, around 8 people gave themselves 5/10 indicating moderate body image. About 2 people gave themselves 4/10, around 3 people gave themselves 3/10, around 3 people gave themselves a 2/10 and finally one person gave herself 1/10. Numerous elements, such as genetics, environment, upbringing, society standards, media influences, and individual experiences, all have an impact on one's body image. Individuals who have a positive body image typically have a healthy relationship with their bodies and prioritize their abilities over their appearance. On the other hand, comparing oneself to unattainable ideals, repressed memories, peer pressure, or mental health conditions like anxiety or depression can all contribute to a negative body image.

Body image is how a person feels around oneself in relation to their appearance. From this we can say that majority i.e. 30% of the people have extremely good body image. Another 30 % of the participants have good to very good body image. Around 7.6 % of the people have moderate body image and around 10% of the participants have poor body image. Numerous elements, such as genetics, environment, upbringing, society standards, media influences, and individual experiences, all have an impact on one's body image. Individuals who have a positive body image typically have a healthy relationship with their bodies and prioritize their abilities over their appearance. On the other hand, comparing oneself to unattainable ideals, repressed memories, peer pressure, or mental health conditions like anxiety or depression can all contribute to a negative body image.
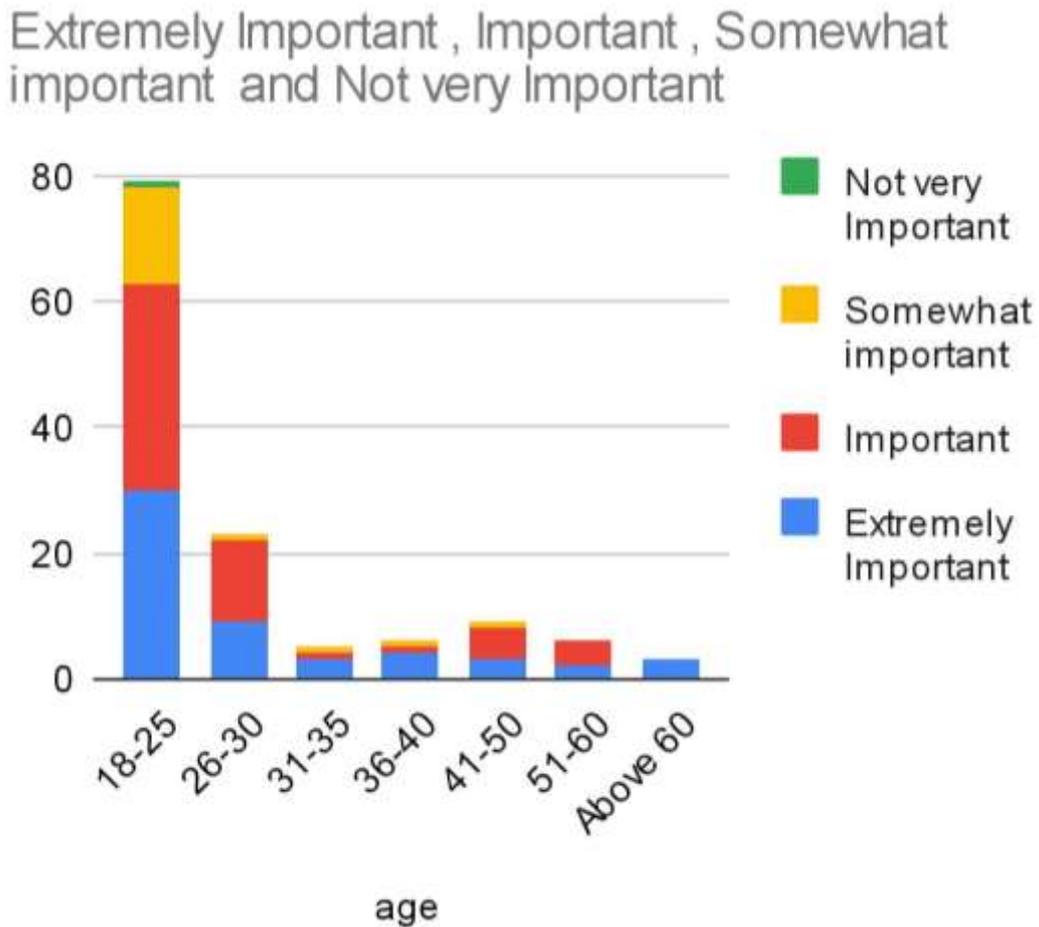
Fig. 2 Importance of participants appearance in women of different age group
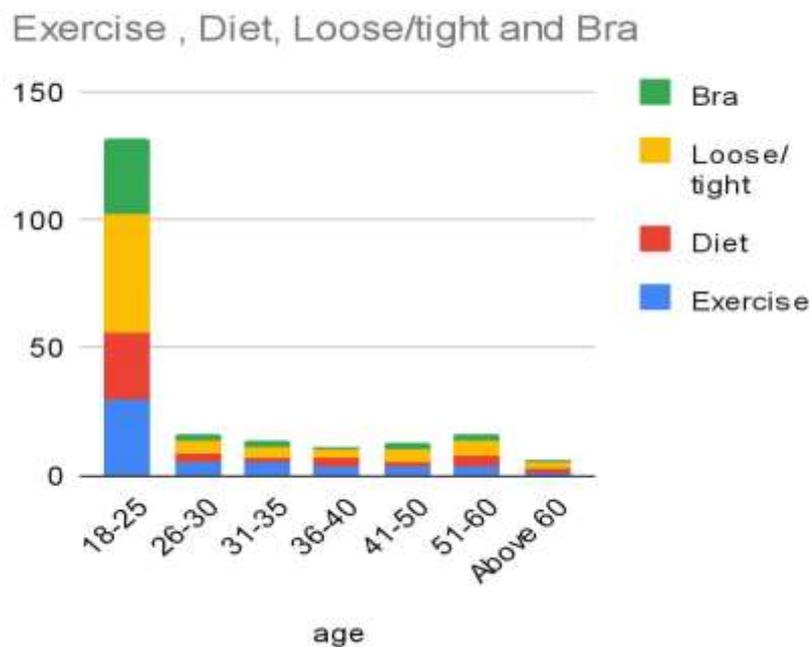

Fig.4 Number of women of different age group engaging in exercise, diet, breast uplifting bras and wearing of loose/tight clothes

In graph 4 we can see how participants of different age group engage in different ways to alter their appearance. We can observe that irrespective of the age almost everyone exercises, wear loose or tight garments, wear breast uplifting bras and diet to alter their appearance. To get the body type or size they want, women frequently change the way they eat. Women work out to improve particular body areas, tone muscles, and reduce weight. Women employ a variety of cosmetic operations, such as Botox injections, liposuction, and breast augmentation. Depending on their body shape, they select clothing designs and sizes that either highlight or hide particular traits. Women use makeup to emphasize or contour face features, as well as to provide the appearance of symmetry or particular proportions. To improve their overall appearance, women also alter the length, color, or style of their hair and even wear wigs.

In graph 5 we can see that majority of the participants irrespective of the age group have positive influence of body positivity movement in their lives but their were also a few participants in each age group who were not aware of the body positivity movement.
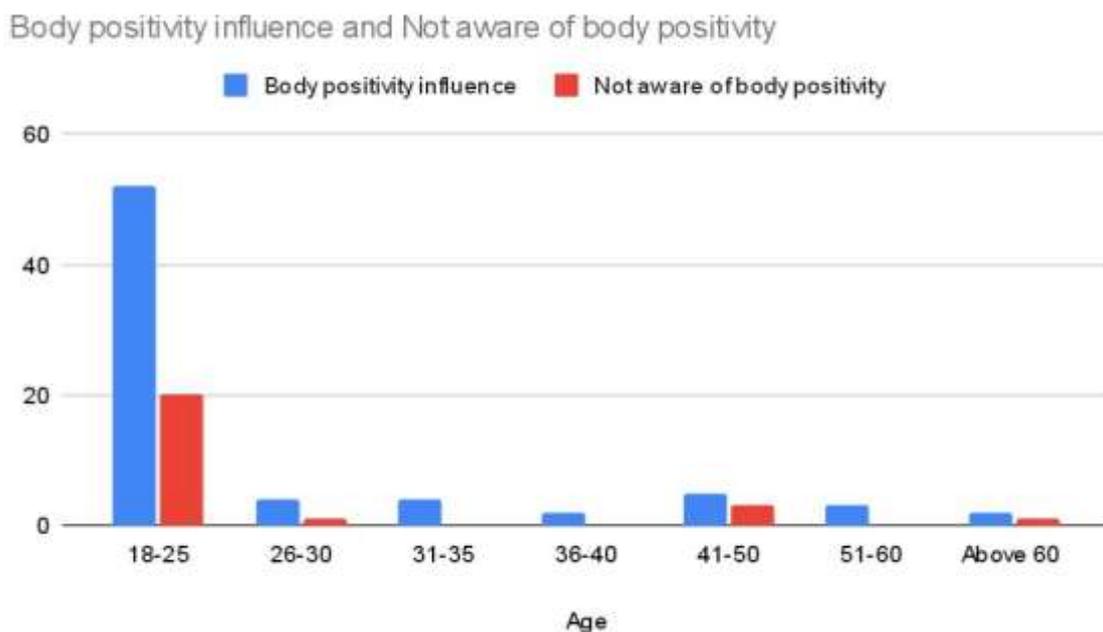

Fig. 5 Number of participants aware about the Body positivity movement vs not being aware of it
An Individual's body image is affected by the positive or negative thoughts person's have about themselves. It is also manipulated by natural aging and our life experiences. Wearing clothing designed to complement one's unique figure helps experience improved body image and enhances creativity. The bright sides of fashion impacts on self-image are that it instils in one a sense of belongingness, confidence and self-esteem. Positive thoughts can increase self-esteem level and lead to success in many aspects of life. On the other hand, negative thoughts can decrease self- confidence and, in some cases, lead to depression.

The widespread acceptance of different body types and a re-examination of societal views surrounding body image would also ease the burden on mental health by letting them be themselves without insecurities. Fashion choices also reflect progress and morality.

It is found that following fashion influencers has been found to have an impact on the followers in various ways, while it can be detrimental for the mental health and well-being of the followers leading to body image dissatisfaction, shrinking of self, it can also have a positive impact on their followers as it is found

to develop motivation, inspiration among their followers and help making the followers aware and updated about latest trends.

Methods of having a healthy body image:

- Develop Self-Compassion: Accept that no one is perfect and treat yourself with kindness. Accept that your shortcomings and weaknesses are what make you special.
- Put Health Before Appearance: Instead of concentrating on getting a particular look, turn your attention to taking good care of your body by eating a healthy diet, exercising frequently, and getting enough sleep.
- Fight Back Against Negative Ideas: Positive affirmations should take the place of negative self-talk. Remember that bodies come in a variety of shapes and sizes and challenge unattainable beauty standards.
- Embrace Positive Influences: Assemble a circle of friends and family that encourage and support you. Steer clear of social media and media sources that perpetuate unattainable beauty standards.
- To cultivate mindfulness, stay in the present and observe your thoughts and feelings without passing judgment. You can have a more balanced perspective on your body image by practicing mindfulness.
- Establish Achievable, Realistic Goals: Don't just focus on beauty; instead, set goals that will improve your health and well-being.
- Seek Therapy: People who are experiencing excessive dieting and negative body image should get help from medical specialists, such as registered dietitians, therapists, or counselors with expertise in eating disorders. These experts can offer advice on fostering a positive connection with food, enhancing self-esteem, and resolving psychological problems that may be the root cause of disordered eating patterns.

Conclusion:

Cultural norms and societal pressures play a significant role in shaping individuals' perceptions of beauty and attractiveness. In some cultures, certain physical features may be idealized, leading individuals to undergo surgery to conform to these standards. However, as societal norms evolve, there is increasing emphasis on embracing diversity and natural beauty, challenging traditional notions of attractiveness and the necessity of plastic surgery. The impact of fashion on women's body image is multifaceted. While fashion can empower women by providing opportunities for self-expression and confidence, it can also perpetuate unrealistic beauty standards, leading to body dissatisfaction and low self-esteem. The emphasis on thinness and specific body types in the fashion industry often excludes diverse representations, contributing to negative body image perceptions among women. Additionally, the prevalence of digitally altered images in fashion media further distorts perceptions of beauty and body ideals. Overall, while fashion can influence body image positively, its negative effects highlight the need for greater diversity and inclusivity within the industry to promote healthier body image perceptions among women.

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