

## Exploring the Relationship between Body Image and Self-Confidence Dimensions among females Sport Students

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*Article history: Received 2025 April 09; Revised 2025 May 29; Accepted 2025 June 03;  
Available online 2025 July 30; Available print 2025 August 30*

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**ABSTRACT.** This study explored the relationship between body image and dimensions of self-confidence among female sports students at University of Setif 2. Using a descriptive correlational approach, this study utilized a sample of 88 female students specializing in Physical Education and sports sciences. Data were collected using a body image scale and a self-confidence dimensions scale. Statistical analysis was conducted using the SPSS V 26 software. The results revealed strong and statistically significant positive correlations between body image and linguistic fluency, independence, and physiological and psychological dimensions. These findings underscore the importance of positive body image in enhancing various aspects of self-confidence among female sports students. Based on these results, it is recommended that universities implement programs to promote positive body image and self-confidence among sports students, incorporate media literacy education to counter negative influences, and provide targeted support for students struggling with body image issues.

**Keywords:** *body image, self-confidence, female athletes, sport students.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Body image is a crucial psychological concept that, exerts substantial influence on an individual's self-perception and self-confidence. The widespread impact of media portrayals and social pressure often leads to distorted ideas about how bodies should look, which worsens body dissatisfaction across all demographic groups. Studies have shown that exposure to idealized body images in the media can lead to body dissatisfaction (Möri et al., 2022). The widespread use of social media among adolescents and young adults can lead to increased body dissatisfaction (Jiotsa et al., 2021). This issue has become particularly prominent among sports students, especially in recent years, due to the widespread proliferation of social media and the active engagement of this demographic with influencers on these social media platforms (Colak et al., 2023). This could be a source of both pride and anxiety. These students are not only subject to constant physical evaluations and comparisons but also face a culture that often prioritizes specific physical aesthetics, creating a challenging environment for maintaining positive self-confidence. Social comparison, specifically upward social comparison with peers and social media influencers, serves as a mediator in the relationship between social media usage and body dissatisfaction (Pedalino & Camerini, 2022). Addition, some studies have proposed solutions to address this issue, such as mindfulness-based interventions that help reduce negative body focus. Balciuniene et al. (2022) highlighted that mindfulness-based physical activity interventions have the potential to enhance positive body image and decrease unhealthy exercise behaviors among female university students. Media literacy is instrumental in promoting a critical understanding of body image in media. Studies suggest that interventions incorporating positive body content can effectively improve mood and body appreciation among young people (Fioravanti et al., 2023).

However, students in sports science programs face the pressure to meet specific physical standards and demonstrate athletic competence, potentially leading to heightened self-consciousness and, in some cases, body dissatisfaction. The dual pressures of academic performance and athletic excellence result in varying levels of self-confidence across academic, social, and physical domains. While some students may develop psychological resilience and the ability to enhance self-efficacy (Colak et al., 2023; Sheng et al., 2024), others may experience diminished self-confidence because of dissatisfaction with their appearance. According to Aysha et al. (2024), body dissatisfaction positively predicts body-related social anxiety and negatively predicts self-esteem. Moreover, studies have shown a negative relationship between body dissatisfaction and academic performance (Zhao et al., 2024), potentially because of the impact of anxiety

and stress on focus and academic achievement. Previous research indicates that individuals with negative self-perceptions regarding their weight are more prone to mental health issues (Robinson et al., 2020), and oral or indirect encouragement to strive for physical perfection can cause people to doubt themselves, have bad thoughts, and feel less competent, even though their studies require them to do well in physical areas. This can further contribute to feelings of inadequacy and body dissatisfaction, as noted by Vasconcelos-Raposo et al. (2024), who also noted that negative thoughts can significantly undermine athletes' self-confidence.

Despite the significance of this issue, there remains a lack of in-depth research specifically exploring how body image impacts the dimensions of self-esteem among this student population within the context of the University of Setif 2. It is necessary to move beyond general assumptions and study this unique dynamic to understand how these individuals internalize cultural standards and develop positive or negative attitudes toward their bodies, which affect their academic and athletic performance, social interactions, and overall psychological well-being. This precise understanding is important for schools, and may affect how people grow and perform in this crucial area. This population is subject to distinct pressures related to physical appearance and athletic prowess, rendering it an ideal setting for examining the interaction between body image and the dimensions of self-confidence. This study has led to the formulation of the following key research questions:

What is the level of body image and self-confidence among female sports students?

Is there a relationship between body image and dimensions of self-confidence among female sports students?

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

### **Participants**

The sample consisted of all the female sports students. They are studying for the academic year 2024-2025 at the University of Mohamed Lamine Debaghine Setif 2, totaling 88 participants; the mean age was approximately 21 years. Of these, 55 specialize in sports training, while 33 on physical education. This purposive approach ensured that the study represented the entire population of interest, providing detailed insight into the dynamics of body image and self-confidence among female sports students. All research procedures involving human participants were conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the Declaration of Helsinki. The study protocol was reviewed and approved by the University of Mohamed Lamine Debaghine Setif 2.

## **Study procedure**

After reviewing the theoretical literature and previous studies, tools were selected to measure both self-confidence and body image perception in female students. Three experts reviewed the two scales and approved them after making the appropriate modifications and adjustments. Subsequently, validity and reliability were calculated using a pilot sample of 15 students who were not part of the main study sample. This process ensured the suitability of the tools used. The two scales are distributed between December 1 and December 20, 2024.

## **Instruments**

### ***The Body Image Scale***

Hamzawi's (2016) Body Image Scale comprises 22 items designed to assess three domains of body image: physical body image (13 items), composite body image (11 items), and social body image (13 items). Participants responded using a three-point Likert scale (often, sometimes, never) ranging from zero to three points. Positively worded items were scored (2, 1, 0), whereas negatively worded items were scored (0, 1, 2).

### ***Self-Confidence Scale***

The Self-Confidence scale of Nasir Bay et al. (2018), consists of 18 items designed to assess self-confidence across four dimensions: linguistic fluency (5 items), autonomy (4 items), physiological dimension (4 items), and psychological dimension (5 items). Participants responded using a five-point Likert scale (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never) ranging from 1 to 5 points. Positive statements were scored as (5, 4, 3, 2, 1), whereas negative statements were scored as (1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

## **Psychology proprieties**

### ***Validity***

The correlation coefficient between the score of each dimension and the total score of the scales was calculated as shown in the following table:

**Table 1.** Correlation Coefficient between dimensions and Total Score of the Body Image Scale and the Self-Confidence

	<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Correlation</b>
<b>The Self-Confidence</b>	linguistic fluency	5	0.889**
	Autonomy	4	0.763**
	Physiological	4	0.745**
	psychological	5	0.884**
<b>The Body Image</b>	physical body image	13	0.856**
	composite body image	11	0.879**
	social body image	13	0.951**

The significant correlation coefficients between the dimensions and the total score of the scales indicated the validity of the self-confidence and body image measures. These correlations suggest that the scales effectively capture the underlying constructs they are designed to measure, thereby supporting their construct validity.

### ***Reability***

The reliability of the scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.901. This high value indicated that the scales exhibited strong internal consistency, thereby supporting their reliability.

### **Statistical analysis**

Statistical analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. The reliability of the two scales (self-confidence and body image) was assessed by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each dimension and overall scale. Additionally, correlation coefficients were determined to ensure the validity of the scales, in addition to assessing the level of body image and self-confidence. The mean and standard deviation of the total scores for both scales were computed. Correlation coefficients were employed to examine the relationship between body image evaluation and the dimensions of self-confidence.

## **RESULTS**

To determine the level of body image appreciation and self-confidence, the mean and standard deviation were calculated for the total score on both scales for the sample participants, as shown in the following table.

**Table 2.** Level of recognition of body image and self-confidence among female students

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>Self-confident</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>76.74</b>	<b>13.888</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>Body image</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>39.35</b>	<b>6.796</b>	<b>High</b>

This table presents the level of recognition of body image and self-confidence among female students. The mean score for self-confidence was 76.74 with a standard deviation of 13.888, indicating a high level of self-confidence. Similarly, the mean score for body image was 39.35 with a standard deviation of 6.796, suggesting a high level of body image recognition. These findings suggest that female students generally have positive perceptions of themselves, which could contribute to their personal and social abilities.

**Table 3.** The Relationship between body image and dimensions of self-confidence among Female Students

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>Sig</b>
fluency among	<b>88</b>	21.43	3.826	0.891**	<b>0.00</b>
Autonomy	<b>88</b>	17.48	2.849	0.841**	<b>0.00</b>
physiological dimension	<b>88</b>	16,51	3.370	0.853**	<b>0.00</b>
psychological dimension	<b>88</b>	21.32	3.843	0.888**	<b>0.00</b>

Table 3 shows the relationship between body image and several dimensions of self-confidence among female students. Strong positive correlations were found between body image and linguistic fluency ( $R = 0.891$ ), autonomy ( $R = 0.841$ ), the physiological dimension ( $R = 0.853$ ), and the psychological dimension ( $R = 0.888$ ). All correlations were statistically significant at the  $p < 0.001$  level. These results indicate that body image plays a crucial role in enhancing self-confidence, linguistic abilities, independence, and physical and psychological well-being.

## DISCUSSION

This study aimed to explore the relationship between body image and dimensions of self-confidence among female sports students at University of Setif 2. Employing a descriptive correlational approach, the results of Table 2 align with previous research that emphasizes self-confidence as a crucial indicator of academic success, particularly among female students specializing in sports.

A study by Sadaf Latif et al. (2025) indicated that sports activities significantly enhance student confidence levels. Additionally, there is a positive and significant relationship between self-confidence and sports behavior (Toy, 2023). Engaging in sports activities has also been shown to improve the body image of female students. Results from a study by Ayesha et al. (2024) revealed that athletic female students have a lower body mass index, improved body shape, and a more positive perception of their body image compared to their non-athletic peers. In addition, participation in physical activity was associated with higher levels of self-esteem among university students, suggesting a direct link between engaging in sports and positive body image. A study by Doymaz et al. (2024) highlighted positive correlations between physical activity and self-esteem as well as between body image and self-efficacy among university students. In addition to enhancing self-confidence through physical activity, cultural and social factors also play a significant role in shaping students' perceptions of body image and increasing self-confidence. A study by Cipriani et al. (2022) noted that socio-cognitive and cultural factors influence children's perceptions, thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes toward their bodies. The proliferation of social media has significantly impacted the body image and self-confidence of female students. Social media can aid in designing effective interventions to promote a positive body image and psychological well-being (Rahman & Mehnaz, 2024). Perangin-Angin and Chandra (2022) emphasized that family support accounts for 46% of body image formation, which, in turn, contributes to increased self-confidence (Rosida Hijrianti & Taqiyah, 2024)

Table 3 highlights the significant relationship between body image and linguistic abilities among female sports students, emphasizing the crucial role of body image in enhancing self-confidence. This aligns with previous research indicating that positive body image boosts self-confidence, which in turn facilitates the fluent and clear expression of thoughts and feelings (Ouyang et al., 2020). Conversely, negative body image can lead to anxiety and stress, hindering self-confidence and negatively impacting communication styles, as supported by Du et al. (2023), who found that low self-esteem and heightened anxiety impede clear expressions. Moreover, positive body perceptions encourage interactive engagement with peers, enhancing communication skills and fostering fluent and spontaneous interactions (Yani & Basuki, 2023). Participation in sports activities within universities and fitness clubs enhances self-confidence and; positively influences body image and linguistic ability. Sports promotes positive communication among peers and elevates self-esteem, contributing to linguistic proficiency (Erkmen Hadi & Denктаş, 2023). Negative body image often results in heightened social anxiety, diminishing the ability to communicate effectively,

and exacerbating social anxiety (Xia et al., 2023). This is consistent with the finding of Jin et al. (2022), who found that negative body image increases social anxiety and negatively affects peer interactions.

In addition, Table 3 shows a statistically significant positive correlation between body image and independence, consistent with research highlighting the role of body image in psychological and social well-being (Singh & Manju, 2022). A positive body image enhances confidence and independence in decision-making (Rosida Hijrianti & Taqiyah, 2024), while a negative body image poses health risks (Batista et al., 2021). Engagement in sports activities can enhance both body image and independence, thereby creating a positive feedback loop. A supportive sports environment empowers students to improve their body satisfaction and decision-making abilities (Jankauskiene et al., 2022). Consistent yoga practice fosters mental balance, promotes health behaviors, and positive psychological traits, which increase self-efficacy and emotional intelligence 2) (Mishra, 2022), thereby enhancing independence (ÇetiN et al., 2021). Other factors such as social media and social support influence the relationship between body image and autonomy. Social media often promotes unattainable beauty ideals, leading to body dissatisfaction that affects decision making (Campbell Phillips & Proshad Halder, 2019). Social support plays a significant role; Vani et al. (2022) found that body image and peer support enhance self-acceptance and independence.

In addition, the study revealed a strong positive correlation between body image and physiological dimension among female sports students, aligning with Kriaučionienė et al. (2024), who linked positive body image to better health outcomes. Physical exercise enhances body awareness and improves body image, leading to healthier behaviors (Li & Fang, 2024; Patten et al., 2021). Intervention programs should focus on promoting a positive body image among female sports students to improve their physiological health and well-being. Studies, such as Kieselbach et al. (2024), highlight the importance of enhancing physical capabilities to improve body image. Physical activity interventions contribute to a reduction in body weight and fat percentage (Alnuaimi et al., 2023).

These results agree with those of previous studies that illustrated the role of body image in mental health. Positive body perceptions are associated with higher self-esteem and psychological well-being (Alamdarloo et al., 2019; Taniady & Murti, 2024). Sports participation acts as a mediator between body image and psychological well-being by enhancing mood and reducing stress (Zhang et al., 2024), thus serving as a protective factor against negative body image (Balčiūnienė et al., 2021). Support from family, peers, and coaches enhances psychological well-being by promoting self-esteem promotion (Scott et al., 2020). However, social media and cultural factors significantly influence body



image and, psychological well-being (Heather et al., 2021; Lôbo et al., 2020). Although our findings align with many studies, they diverge from those of Karna and Sivaraman (2023), possibly due to cultural differences in how body image is perceived. In some societies, cultural values such as modesty play a significant role in shaping female students' body perceptions.

## CONCLUSION

This study highlighted the significant relationship between body image and various dimensions of self-confidence among female sports students. The findings revealed strong positive correlations between body image and linguistic fluency, autonomy, and physiological and psychological dimensions. These results emphasize the importance of body image in enhancing self-confidence, particularly among students engaged in sports. This study underscores the role of cultural and social factors in shaping body image perceptions and self-confidence, including social media and family support. Future research should focus on developing targeted interventions to promote a positive body image and enhance self-confidence among this population, considering the unique pressures and challenges they face in their academic and athletic pursuits.

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