

POSITIVE BODY IMAGE AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR ACCEPTANCE AND COMMITMENT THERAPY

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the level of positive body image among senior high school students in one of the public high schools in Karawang Regency and to identify its implications for Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) counseling services. The research employed a quantitative approach with a survey design. Convenience sampling was used to select 140 senior high school students as participants. Data were collected using the Positive Body Image among Adolescents Scale (PBIAS), which had been adapted into Indonesian following the Beaton adaptation procedure. The results revealed that 69% (96 students) exhibited a positive body image, consisting of 57 female and 39 male students. Meanwhile, 31% (44 students) experienced a negative body image, with 27 females and 17 males. These findings highlight the importance of systematic efforts to foster positive body image among adolescents. One effective intervention is Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), which utilizes six core processes: acceptance, cognitive defusion, self as context, being present, values, and committed action, that work integratively to promote a healthy and adaptive body image. These processes can be applied in school counseling services to support students in developing positive body image.

Keywords: Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), guidance and counseling, positive body image, and adolescents

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan tingkat citra tubuh positif pada siswa SMA Negeri di salah satu kota Kabupaten Karawang serta mengidentifikasi implikasinya terhadap layanan konseling Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain survei. Teknik pengambilan sampel dilakukan secara convenience sampling dengan melibatkan 140 siswa SMA sebagai responden. Instrumen yang digunakan adalah Positive Body Image among Adolescents Scale (PBIAS) yang telah diadaptasi ke dalam bahasa Indonesia melalui prosedur adaptasi Beaton. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa 69% (96 siswa) memiliki citra tubuh positif, terdiri atas 57 siswa perempuan dan 39 siswa laki-laki. Sementara itu, 31% (44 siswa) mengalami citra tubuh negatif, dengan rincian 27 siswa perempuan dan 17 siswa laki-laki. Temuan ini menegaskan pentingnya upaya sistematis untuk membangun citra tubuh positif di kalangan remaja. Salah satu pendekatan yang efektif adalah Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) melalui enam proses inti yang terintegrasi, yaitu acceptance, cognitive defusion, self as context, being present, values, dan committed

action. Proses-proses tersebut dapat dimanfaatkan dalam layanan konseling di sekolah untuk membantu siswa mengembangkan citra tubuh yang sehat dan adaptif.

Kata kunci: *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), bimbingan dan konseling, citra tubuh positif, dan remaja*

PENDAHULUAN

Body image is a multifaceted psychological experience (Cash and Pruzinsky, 2002). Body image refers to the perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and beliefs that individuals hold about their own bodies. This body image encompasses how individuals view their appearance, size, color, shape, weight, and other physical attributes. Body image can have a significant impact on a person's mental and physical health, as well as their overall well-being (Cash, 2004; Secord & Jourard, 1953) (Tunç et al., 2023). Smolak and Thompson (2009) add that body image is the picture a person has of their body in terms of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, which results from the individual's subjective experiences.

Attention to the body and the formation of body image occur in adolescents aged 12–18 years. During this adolescent period, body image becomes a major concern, as adolescents are undergoing significant physical and psychological changes. Puberty often triggers body dissatisfaction, which is closely linked to low self-esteem and mental health (Rodgers et al., 2025). Many adolescents feel dissatisfied with their bodies due to social comparisons and the influence of media that portray ideal standards (Fardouly et al., 2015).

Rapid and significant physical changes—such as changes in body shape, breast development, the onset of acne, and voice changes—cause adolescents to pay closer attention to their physical appearance and begin to evaluate their bodies critically (Vidiana & Sudarmiati, 2021). When adolescents feel comfortable and satisfied with their physical changes, they develop a positive body image, which boosts their self-confidence and self-acceptance, leading them to exhibit positive behaviors. Conversely, adolescents who have fluctuating perceptions and tend to reject the physical changes they are experiencing, along with dissatisfaction with their bodies, are said to have a negative body image. This leads adolescents to experience restlessness, low self-confidence, anxiety, and even depression.

The emergence of body image issues among adolescents is influenced by several interrelated factors—biological, psychological, cultural, social, and media—that place pressure on adolescents to meet certain standards of the “ideal” body. According to Grogan (2021), the true concept of an ideal body image involves an interplay between physical and emotional aspects in adolescent development. In general, adolescents have a desire to present themselves in the best possible light. Consequently, they become increasingly aware of social attitudes toward physical appearance, paying close attention to various aspects of their appearance—particularly their bodies—such as skincare routines and clothing choices to ensure they look their best. As a result, adolescents are driven to think more frequently about their body image (Regehr et al., 2020).

Several issues related to body image in adolescents include: first, social pressure and ideal beauty standards. These can influence adolescents' body image, particularly the standards prevalent in their immediate environment. This leads adolescents to feel that their bodies do not meet these standards. The standards promoted typically involve an ideal body—for girls, this means being slim, tall, and fair-skinned, while for boys, it means having an athletic or muscular build. This pressure triggers dissatisfaction and unhealthy behaviors, such as adolescents drastically reducing their food intake to lose weight or resorting to extreme diets. This is because, in their view, body weight is a major factor influencing body image among adolescents, particularly regarding physical appearance.

Ideal—and often unrealistic—standards of beauty and attractiveness circulate on social media. This encourages teenagers to engage in *upward social comparison*—that is, comparing themselves to people they perceive as more attractive. Social media is one of the factors influencing the formation of body image. One of the social media platforms frequently used by teenagers is Instagram. Instagram is a visual-based social media app that allows users to share stories, edit photos and videos, and interact *online*. Research findings indicate that 33% of teenage girls who use Instagram report having a negative body image as a result of using this platform. These findings are supported by research revealing that the core issue among adolescents is dissatisfaction with their bodies. Adolescents may experience body-related distress in the form of negative thoughts and feelings. The presence of these negative thoughts and feelings among adolescents significantly impacts body image; therefore, this is crucial to highlight when understanding the meaning of a positive body image.

Furthermore, the phenomenon of skincare use among adolescents has a significant influence on their body image (Nabila & Sahputra, n.d.), particularly regarding how they perceive and evaluate their physical appearance. The use of *skincare* among adolescents serves as one way to improve and enhance their body image, particularly as they navigate the physical changes of puberty. Skincare helps address skin issues that often contribute to self-dissatisfaction, thereby boosting self-confidence. However, if adolescents feel pressured to meet ideal standards of beauty and attractiveness, this can lead to excessive use of *skincare*. This consumerist behavior has the potential to cause stress and psychological problems. Therefore, it is crucial to provide education and support so that adolescents can develop a healthy attitude toward self-care and body image without falling into the trap of unhealthy, excessive consumption. Long-term interventions are needed to foster a positive body image in adolescents—without side effects—through overall self-acceptance.

METODE

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method to obtain an overview of the level of *positive body image* among high school students. The survey method was chosen because it allows researchers to obtain data directly from respondents in natural settings through the distribution of research instruments. According to Sugiyono (2013), the survey method is a research method used to collect data from a specific population or

sample through techniques such as questionnaires, tests, or structured interviews. The research sample consisted of 140 students from a public high school in Karawang Regency. The sampling technique used was *convenience sampling*, which involves selecting a sample based on ease of access and the availability of respondents who meet the research criteria (Bougie & Sekaran, 2019). Based on demographic characteristics, the participants consisted of 56 male students (40%) and 84 female students (60%). Most respondents were 16 years old (82 participants, 59%), followed by 15-year-olds (36 participants, 26%), 17-year-olds (21 participants, 15%), and a single 14-year-old (1%).

The research instrument used was the *Positive Body Image among Adolescents Scale* (PBIAS) developed by Maes et al. (2021). This instrument consists of 15 statements that measure four dimensions: appreciation of one's own body, appreciation of others' bodies, resilience to media-shaped beauty standards, and resilience to negative feedback regarding appearance. Each item is measured using a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), where a higher total score indicates a higher level of *positive body image*. Since this instrument was not yet available in Indonesian, the researchers conducted a cultural adaptation process using the procedure developed by Beaton, which includes the stages of *translation, synthesis, back translation, expert judgment*, and instrument pilot testing. The data obtained were then analyzed descriptively through scoring and categorization. The determination of categories was based on the method proposed by Rangkuti (2017), using the theoretical *mean* value calculated by multiplying the number of items by the midpoint of the Likert scale. With 15 items and a midpoint of 4, a cutoff score of 60 was obtained. Scores ≥ 60 were categorized as high or positive *body image*, while scores < 60 indicated low or negative *body image*. This categorization is used to provide an overview of the state of positive body image among high school students who participated in the study.

HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

Based on the data analysis, the findings of this study are presented as follows.

Table 4. Frequency Distribution of Positive Body Image Among Senior High School Students

CATEGORY	INTERPRETATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
HIGH/POSITIVE	$X \geq 60$	96	69%
LOW/NEGATIVE	$X < 60$	44	31%
TOTAL		140	100%

Based on Table 4, out of 140 participants, 96 students (69%) demonstrated a positive body image, whereas 44 students (31%) exhibited a negative body image. These findings indicate that although the majority of students possess a positive body image, nearly one-third still experience negative perceptions of their bodies, suggesting that positive body image among senior high school students has not yet reached an optimal level. This finding is consistent with previous studies reporting that approximately one-third of adolescents experience negative body image, while body dissatisfaction remains prevalent during adolescence.

Table 5. Distribution of Body Image Based on Gender

GENDER	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	TOTAL
FEMALE	27	57	84
MALE	17	39	56
TOTAL	44	96	140

Table 5 shows that 27 female students and 17 male students experienced negative body image. Meanwhile, positive body image was reported by 57 female students and 39 male students. Although female students constituted a larger proportion of both positive and negative body image categories due to their greater representation in the sample, previous studies have suggested that adolescent girls are generally more vulnerable to body image concerns because they are more likely to compare themselves with socially constructed beauty standards, whereas boys tend to compare themselves with ideals related to muscularity and athletic appearance.

To obtain a more comprehensive understanding of positive body image, the researchers further analyzed the four dimensions of the Positive Body Image among Adolescents Scale (PBIAS). The results revealed the following percentages:

- Body Other Appreciation: 73%
- Resilience Against Body Ideals in Media: 69%
- Body Self-Appreciation: 68%
- Resilience Against Negative Appearance Feedback: 67%

Figure 1. Distribution of Positive Body Image Dimensions Among Senior High School Students

POSITIVE BODY IMAGE DIMENSION	PERCENTAGE
BODY OTHER APPRECIATION	73%
RESILIENCE AGAINST BODY IDEALS IN MEDIA	69%
BODY SELF-APPRECIATION	68%
RESILIENCE AGAINST NEGATIVE APPEARANCE FEEDBACK	67%

The findings indicate that Body Other Appreciation contributed the highest percentage (73%) to positive body image among adolescents. This dimension reflects adolescents' ability to appreciate body diversity, respect others regardless of physical appearance, and believe that everyone deserves to value and love their own body. The highest-scoring statement within this dimension was, *"I hope everyone can love their body just the way it is."* These findings suggest that most students have already developed positive attitudes toward accepting the physical uniqueness of others.

The second strongest dimension was Resilience Against Body Ideals in Media (69%). This dimension represents adolescents' ability to resist unrealistic beauty ideals promoted through traditional and social media. Although students demonstrated moderate resilience, the findings suggest that many adolescents remain influenced by media

portrayals of ideal physical appearance and continue to compare themselves with these unrealistic standards.

The third dimension, Body Self-Appreciation, contributed 68%. This aspect refers to individuals' ability to appreciate, respect, and accept their own bodies despite perceived imperfections. The relatively moderate score indicates that many students still struggle with self-confidence, frequently compare themselves with others, focus excessively on perceived physical flaws, and have difficulty accepting compliments regarding their appearance.

The lowest contribution was found in Resilience Against Negative Appearance Feedback (67%). This dimension reflects adolescents' capacity to withstand criticism or negative comments regarding their physical appearance while maintaining self-worth and body appreciation. The findings suggest that many students remain psychologically vulnerable to appearance-related criticism and have not yet developed sufficient resilience against negative evaluations from others.

Overall, the analysis demonstrates that Body Other Appreciation and Resilience Against Body Ideals in Media were the strongest contributors to positive body image among the participating students. These findings differ from those reported by, where Body Self-Appreciation and Resilience Against Negative Appearance Feedback were identified as the most influential dimensions. Such differences may be attributed to variations in demographic characteristics, cultural background, educational settings, and social environments between Indonesian adolescents and those in previous international studies.

The presence of negative body image among nearly one-third of participants deserves particular attention because previous research has consistently demonstrated its association with numerous adverse psychological outcomes, including low self-esteem, social anxiety, depression, eating disorders, body dysmorphic disorder, and reduced overall quality of life. Several factors contribute to the development of negative body image, including exposure to social media, peer relationships, socioeconomic status, personality traits, and sociocultural expectations regarding physical appearance.

Given these findings, early psychological intervention is essential to promote healthy body image during adolescence. One promising intervention is Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), which has demonstrated long-term effectiveness in improving body image and psychological well-being. ACT operates through six interconnected processes—acceptance, cognitive defusion, being present, self-as-context, values, and committed action—that collectively enhance psychological flexibility. Through these mechanisms, adolescents learn to accept difficult thoughts and emotions related to body image, reduce the influence of negative self-evaluations, clarify personal values, and engage in meaningful behaviors consistent with those values rather than societal appearance standards. Consequently, ACT represents a promising evidence-based intervention for fostering positive body image among adolescents.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that body image among adolescents at a public high school in Karawang is at a high or positive level. However, there are still adolescents who experience negative body image, highlighting the need for appropriate interventions to foster a positive body image. *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy* (ACT) was selected as the intervention to foster a positive body image through six main processes because of its proven effectiveness in fostering a positive body image among adolescents. This study has implications for Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers to pay closer attention to adolescents, particularly in fostering a positive body image, in order to promote good psychological well-being among students.

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