

Relationship between the Big Five Personality Domains and Body Image among Adolescents in Public High Schools in Olekasasi, Kajiado County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a critical developmental period characterized by rapid physical, psychological, emotional, and social changes. During this period, adolescents become increasingly conscious of their physical appearance and how they are perceived by others. Thus, the objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between the Big Five personality domains and body image among adolescents in public high schools in Olekasasi, Kajiado County, Kenya. The study adopted the correlational research design. The target population comprised 1,692 adolescents, from whom a sample of 313 adolescents was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan formula. Stratified sampling was used to select participants. Data were collected using the Big Five Inventory, the Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire, and a sociodemographic questionnaire. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient. This study had a response rate of 90.0%. The findings indicated statistically significant weak positive relationships between body image and extraversion ($r = .284, p < .001$), agreeableness ($r = .283, p < .001$), conscientiousness ($r = .268, p < .001$), neuroticism ($r = .241, p < .001$), and openness to experience ($r = .297, p < .001$). Openness to experience demonstrated the strongest association with body image. The study recommends that schools should strengthen guidance and counselling services by ensuring that qualified counsellors are available to provide psychosocial support to adolescents experiencing body-image concerns.

Keywords: Adolescents, body image, Big Five, Personality Traits, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Openness, Kenya.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a critical developmental period characterized by rapid physical, psychological, emotional, and social changes. During this stage, adolescents become increasingly aware of their physical appearance and how their appearance is perceived by other people. Physical changes associated with puberty, including growth spurts, changes in body composition, and development of secondary sexual characteristics, increase attention to physical appearance and make body image an important component of adolescents' self-concept. Adolescents may consequently compare their bodies with those of peers, media personalities, and socially constructed ideals of attractiveness (Grogan, 2016; Ivani & Rinaldi, 2022).

Body image refers to an individual's perception, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours concerning their body. It is a multidimensional experience involving appearance evaluation, appearance orientation, satisfaction with body parts, concerns about weight, and perceptions of body size. A positive body image involves accepting, valuing, and respecting one's body, whereas negative body image is characterized by persistent concern about weight and physical appearance, frequent comparison with others, and dissatisfaction with perceived physical

characteristics. Negative body image during adolescence can be associated with psychological and behavioural difficulties, including low self-esteem, sadness, unhealthy eating behaviours, and other forms of psychological distress (Ivani & Rinaldi, 2022).

DeYoung (2015) posits that personality represents relatively stable patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving that differentiate individuals. According to Uher (2017), the Big Five model conceptualizes personality through five broad dimensions: openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Openness is associated with curiosity, imagination, flexibility, and receptiveness to new experiences; conscientiousness reflects organization, discipline, responsibility, and goal-directed behaviour; extraversion is characterized by sociability, assertiveness, and enthusiasm; agreeableness involves cooperation, kindness, empathy, and concern for harmonious relationships; while neuroticism reflects emotional instability and vulnerability to negative emotions such as anxiety, sadness, and worry.

The relationship between personality and body image has received increasing attention. The Personality dimensions and body image concerns are increasingly becoming common in psychological practice across the world in which both men and women are keenly paying attention to (Soohinda et al., 2019). Loughnan et al. (2015) hold that Asian countries have been presumed to be less vulnerable to body image concerns. However, there is growing evidence that disorders of body image are gradually reaching levels to those seen in Western countries (Pike et al., 2015). The big five personality dimensions have been shown to predict behavioral and attitudinal outcomes in different spheres of life.

In the UK, Swami et al. (2013) examined associations between the big five personality factors, actual-ideal weight discrepancy, and body appreciation. The study comprised 950 women drawn from the community in London. Their ages ranged from 18 to 84 years, with a mean age of 33.40 years ($SD = 16.45$). Self-reported body mass index (BMI) values varied between 17.30 and 31.89 kg/m^2 , with an average of 22.60 ($SD = 11.79$). The majority of respondents identified as British White (88.3%). Regarding marital status, 42.9% were single, 29.2% were married, 17.5% were cohabiting, while the remaining participants reported other marital categories. Concerning educational attainment, 23.1% had completed basic secondary education, 24.8% were currently enrolled in full-time studies, 30.2% held an undergraduate degree, 13.1% possessed a postgraduate qualification, and 8.9% reported other forms of certification. The findings indicated that neuroticism was significantly and positively related to discrepancies between actual and ideal weight, while showing a significant negative relationship with body appreciation ($p < 0.001$). Moreover, greater levels of body appreciation were significantly linked to higher scores in Emotional Stability, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. A moderate correlation was observed between actual-ideal weight discrepancy and body appreciation ($r = -0.32$). Additionally, the regression analysis predicting body appreciation was statistically significant, $F(7, 949) = 43.64$, $p < 0.001$, with an adjusted R^2 of 0.24. Among the predictors, only self-reported BMI emerged as a significant contributor ($B = -0.09$, $SE = 0.01$, $\beta = -0.27$, $t = -9.09$, $p < 0.001$).

Swami et al. (2013) examined 950 adult women drawn from the community in London, focusing exclusively on females. In contrast, the proposed study targets adolescents in public high schools, a developmentally distinct group undergoing rapid physical, emotional, and identity change. Therefore, findings from adult women in London may not be generalizable to male and female adolescents in Olekasasi. Swami et al. (2013) sampled women from the general community rather than from structured educational settings. The present study concentrated on adolescents within public high schools. The UK study concentrated solely on women and did not explore potential gender differences. The current study included both male and female high school students in carrying out this empirical investigation.

In the USA, Jones (2022) examined body image mediating the relationship between personality factors, emotionality and extraversion, and psychological well-being in a gender-diverse and queer sample. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 74 ($M = 26.97$, $SD = 10.776$). For gender, 11 of the participants were men, 66 were women, 13 non-binary or genderqueer individuals, 4 transgender individuals, 2 agender individuals, and 2 who preferred not to say what gender they identify. The outcomes of the study revealed that extraversion had a moderate negative correlation with body image (as Extraversion levels increases, body image dissatisfaction decreases) ($r = -.40^{**}$, $p \leq 0.01$ level).

Jones (2022) examined participants ranging in age from 18 to 74 years, encompassing adults across a wide lifespan. In contrast, the current study focused specifically on adolescents in secondary school. Jones (2022) focused primarily on emotionality and extraversion rather than examining all five dimensions of the Big Five personality model. This study intended to extend this by investigating the comprehensive Big Five framework openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism to provide a more holistic understanding of personality traits and body image relationships among adolescents.

In India, Soohinda et al. (2019) investigated body dissatisfaction and its relation to Big Five personality factors and self-esteem in young adult college women. The sample size of the study was 555 female college students of North. Data was collected using self-reported questionnaires. The mean age of participants was 22.24 years (± 2.75). It was reported that 27% of the participants had moderate-to-severe body concern. Body shape dissatisfaction significantly correlated with higher body mass index (BMI) ($r_s = 0.12$, $P = 0.003$). Among the personality traits, only neuroticism ($\beta = 0.35$, $P = 0.01$) and conscientiousness ($\beta = 0.29$, $P = 0.031$) significantly predicted body shape dissatisfaction. Similarly in India, Tanya et al. (2023) conducted a study on the correlation between big 5 personality traits and Self-concept with Body image among adolescents. A total of 120 adolescents (74 females and 51 males) in the age group 13-15 years from St. Michael's Senior Secondary School. majority were in the age group of 13-15 years i.e., 124 (99.2 %) and 1 (0.8 %) was above 15 years of age. Majority of them were females, 74(59.2 %) and 51 (40.8 %) were males. According to the findings of the study, there was a moderate negative correlation ($r = -0.35$) between the level of self-concept and body image and a very weak negative correlation ($r = -0.18$) between big 5 personality trait: extraversion and body image.

In Indonesia, Ivani and Rinaldi (2022) examined personality and body image of late adolescence. The study sample was 172 late adolescents aged 18-21 years. Based on the results of the study, the correlation coefficient was $r = 0.238$ with $p = 0.002$ ($p < 0.05$) for extraversion personality, $r = 0.284$ with $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$) for agreeableness personality, $r = 0.335$ with $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$) for conscientiousness personality, $r = -0.339$ with $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$) for neuroticism personality, and $r = 0.166$ with $p = 0.029$ ($p < 0.05$) for intellect personality. These results indicate that there is a positive relationship between the personality of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and intellect with body image, while the neuroticism has a negative relationship with body image.

In light of the studies by Soohinda et al. (2019) in India and Ivani and Rinaldi (2022) in Indonesia, Soohinda et al. (2019) focused on young adult college women, while Ivani and Rinaldi (2022) studied late adolescents. Although Ivani and Rinaldi's participants are closer in age to high school students, both studies largely involved individuals in structured higher education or older adolescent stages. The Indian and Indonesian studies were conducted in socio-cultural settings distinct from Kenya. While Soohinda et al. (2019) and Ivani and Rinaldi (2022) incorporated the Big Five personality factors, the Indian study also examined self-esteem as an outcome, whereas the Indonesian study explored personality-body image links broadly. Neither study specifically addressed the unique interaction of the Big Five traits with body image among adolescent. Soohinda et al. (2019) focused exclusively on female college students, limiting insights into male adolescents, whereas the current study included both male and female high school students in Kenyan setting.

In Ghana, Intiful et al. (2019) investigated the association between the Big Five personality traits and dietary patterns among students at a Ghanaian university. The researchers adopted a cross-sectional design and targeted a sample size of 403 participants, calculated using a 95% confidence interval, 5% margin of error, 50% response distribution, and a 4% anticipated attrition rate. Ultimately, 400 students consented and participated in the study. Of the respondents, 230 (57.5%) were male and 170 (42.5%) were female, with a mean age of 21.19 ± 1.96 years. Most participants were in their second and third years of study. The findings revealed that a large proportion of students scored high on conscientiousness. With the exception of neuroticism, all other personality traits demonstrated significant associations with at least one dietary behavior examined. Specifically, extraversion was positively related to food interest ($p = 0.008$). Conscientiousness showed significant associations with dietary variety ($p = 0.045$) and moderation in sugar intake ($p = 0.006$). Agreeableness was linked to meal skipping ($p = 0.007$) as well as dietary variety ($p = 0.005$), while openness to experience was positively associated with food interest ($p = 0.009$).

Intifal et al. (2019) focused on university students, who are typically older, more cognitively mature, and exposed to different social and academic pressures compared to adolescents in high school. The Ghanaian study examined the association between the Big Five personality traits and dietary patterns rather than body image. While dietary behaviors may relate indirectly to body perception, the direct relationship between personality traits and body image was not addressed. These gaps therefore gave the justification for the present study.

In Kenya, Arasa et al. (2018) investigated factors predicting body image dissatisfaction among undergraduate students at United States International University-Africa. The study sampled 114 undergraduates, of whom 39 (32.2%) were male and 75 (65.8%) were female. Participants were between 18 and 28 years old, with a mean and median age of 21.0 years ($SD = 1.97$). The findings revealed that neuroticism was a significant predictor of body image dissatisfaction. Specifically, students who scored higher on neuroticism were significantly more likely to report dissatisfaction with their body image ($\beta = .392$; $p = .007$).

Arasa et al. (2018) focused on university undergraduates, who were generally older. It further examined predictors of body image dissatisfaction such as BMI, gender, and sociocultural influences, but it did not consider personality traits, a gap this present study amplified in the Kenyan context.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between the Big Five personality domains and body image among adolescents in public high schools in Olekasasi, Kajiado County, Kenya.

Research Question

What is the relationship between the Big Five personality domains and body image among adolescents in public high schools in Olekasasi, Kajiado County, Kenya?

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the correlational research design. The target population consisted of 1,692 adolescents enrolled in public high schools in Olekasasi, Kajiado County, and a sample of 313 adolescents was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula. Three public high schools were purposively included in the study, while stratified sampling was used to select quantitative participants according to class levels. Data were collected using a sociodemographic questionnaire, Big Five Inventory by Costa and McCrae (Novikova, 2013) and the Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire (MBSRQ) developed by Cash (2000). The instruments were subjected to validity and reliability procedures. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 26, employing descriptive statistics and Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient to establish relationships between the personality domains and body image. Ethical procedures, including informed participation, confidentiality, and the required institutional and research approvals, were observed throughout the study.

Based on the response rate of this study, a total of 313 questionnaires were administered to the selected adolescents. Of these, 282 were returned, 22 were not returned, and nine were spoiled, resulting in a response rate of 90.0%. The high response rate provided an adequate basis for statistical analysis of the relationship between personality domains and body image. In addition, among the 282 respondents, 158 (56.0%) were male and 124 (44.0%) were female. Regarding age, 117 (41.5%) were aged 14–15 years, 108 (38.3%) were aged 16–17 years, and 57 (20.2%) were aged 18 years and above. With regard to educational level, 105 (37.3%) were in Form 1, 75 (26.6%) were in Form 2, 48 (17.0%) were in Form 3, and 54 (19.1%) were in Form 4. Most participants were Christians (84.8%), followed by Muslims (12.8%) and Hindus (2.5%).

FINDINGS

Relationship Between the Big Five Personality Domains and Body Image Among Adolescents in Public High Schools in Olekasasi, Kajiado County, Kenya

This study's objective was to investigate the relationship between the Big Five personality domains and body image among adolescents in public high schools in Olekasasi, Kajiado County, Kenya. The Pearson's product-moment correlation analysis was used to determine the association between each personality domain and body image. Table 1 demonstrates the outcomes.

Table 1 Relationship Between the Big Five Personality Domains and Body Image Among Adolescents in public high schools in Olekasasi, Kajiado County, Kenya		Extraversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Neuroticism	Openness	Body Image
Extraversion	Pearson Correlation	1	.370**	.267**	.174**	.214**	.284**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.003	.000	.000
	N	282	280	280	281	282	280
Agreeableness	Pearson Correlation	.370**	1	.244**	.139*	.202**	.283**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.020	.001	.000
	N	280	280	278	279	280	278
Conscientiousness	Pearson Correlation	.267**	.244**	1	.334**	.135*	.268**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.024	.000
	N	280	278	280	279	280	278
Neuroticism	Pearson Correlation	.174**	.139*	.334**	1	.246**	.241**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.020	.000		.000	.000
	N	281	279	279	281	281	279
Openness	Pearson Correlation	.214**	.202**	.135*	.246**	1	.297**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.024	.000		.000
	N	282	280	280	281	282	280
Body Image	Pearson Correlation	.284**	.283**	.268**	.241**	.297**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	280	278	278	279	280	280
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).							

The findings revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between extraversion and body image ($r = .284, p = .000 \leq 0.01$). The correlation coefficient of .284 indicates a weak positive association between the two variables. This suggests that adolescents with higher levels of extraversion were more likely to report positive body image perceptions. There was a statistically significant positive relationship between agreeableness and body image ($r = .283, p = .000$) among adolescents in public high schools in Olekasasi in Kajiado County, Kenya. The correlation coefficient of .283 indicates a weak positive relationship between agreeableness and body image. This finding implies that adolescents who score higher on agreeableness tend to have more positive perceptions of their body image than those who score lower on agreeableness. Although the association is not strong, it suggests that agreeableness plays a meaningful role in shaping how adolescents perceive and evaluate their physical appearance. agreeable adolescents may be less likely to engage in negative social comparisons and more likely to develop a healthy and accepting view of their bodies.

Further, results also showed a statistically significant weak positive correlation between conscientiousness and body image ($r = .268, p < .001$). This finding suggests that adolescents with higher levels of conscientiousness were more likely to report positive body image perceptions. The correlation coefficient ($r = .268$) indicates a weak positive relationship between conscientiousness and body image. This suggests that adolescents with higher levels of conscientiousness tend to report more positive body image perceptions than those with lower levels of conscientiousness. In other words, increases in conscientiousness are associated with improvements in body image perception among the adolescents studied. The positive relationship may be attributed to the characteristics associated with conscientious individuals. However, although the relationship was statistically significant, its strength was weak. This indicates that conscientiousness accounts for only a small proportion of the variation in body image among adolescents. Therefore, body image is likely influenced by numerous other factors, including peer relationships, family support, self-esteem, cultural norms, media influences, social comparison processes, and developmental experiences during adolescence.

The Pearson's product-moment correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between neuroticism and body image among the adolescents ($r = .241, p < .001$). The correlation coefficient of .241 indicates that the relationship was weak but positive, suggesting that variations in neuroticism were associated with corresponding variations in body image scores. Specifically, adolescents who recorded higher levels of neuroticism tended to report relatively higher body image scores, while those with lower levels of neuroticism generally tended to report lower body image scores.

The finding indicates that neuroticism was significantly associated with adolescents' perceptions of their bodies. However, the relatively small magnitude of the correlation suggests that neuroticism alone did not strongly account for differences in body image. Other psychological, interpersonal, social, and environmental factors may also have contributed to adolescents' body image perceptions. Therefore, although the direction of the relationship was positive, the association should be interpreted as modest rather than strong.

The statistical significance of the relationship ($p < .001$) indicates that the observed correlation was unlikely to have occurred merely by sampling chance under the assumption that there was no relationship in the population. Nevertheless, the correlation does not establish a causal relationship. Thus, the finding does not imply that neuroticism caused changes in body image or that body image caused changes in neuroticism. Rather, it demonstrates that the two variables were significantly related within the adolescents who participated in the study.

In addition, the Pearson's product-moment correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between openness to experience and body image among adolescents in public high schools in Olekasasi in Kajiado County, Kenya ($r = .297, p = .000$). The correlation coefficient of .297 indicates a weak positive relationship between openness to experience and body image. This suggests that adolescents who scored higher on openness to experience tended to report more positive body image perceptions than those who scored lower on this personality trait. Although the relationship is relatively weak, it demonstrates that openness to experience is significantly associated with how adolescents perceive and evaluate their bodies. The positive association may be explained by the characteristics commonly linked to openness to experience. Individuals high in openness are generally imaginative, curious, flexible in their thinking, receptive to new ideas, and more accepting of diversity and individual differences. Despite the statistical significance of the relationship, the correlation remains weak, indicating that openness to experience explains only a small proportion of the variation in body image among adolescents.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the current study both converged with and diverged from previous international and regional studies on the relationship between personality traits and body image. The present study established significant positive relationships between all the Big Five personality traits such as agreeableness, extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience and body image among adolescents in public high schools in Olekasasi, Kajiado County, Kenya. The positive association between agreeableness and body image supports the findings of Ivani and Rinaldi (2022) in Indonesia, who also reported a significant positive

relationship between agreeableness and body image. Similarly, the positive relationship between extraversion and body image in the current study is consistent with the Indonesian study, which found that adolescents with higher levels of extraversion tended to report more positive body image perceptions. However, the findings regarding extraversion differ from those of Jones (2022) in the United States, who found a moderate negative correlation between extraversion and body image dissatisfaction. Although the direction of the relationship appears different, both studies suggest that higher levels of extraversion are associated with more favorable body image outcomes. The current study also found a positive relationship between conscientiousness and body image, which partially aligns with the findings of Soohinda et al. (2019) in India and Ivani and Rinaldi (2022) in Indonesia, where conscientiousness significantly predicted body shape dissatisfaction and was positively associated with body image, respectively. These similarities suggest that conscientious individuals may engage in behaviors that enhance their perceptions of their bodies.

In contrast, the findings on neuroticism substantially differ from most previous studies. While the current study found a significant positive relationship between neuroticism and body image, studies conducted by Swami et al. (2013) in the United Kingdom, Ivani and Rinaldi (2022) in Indonesia, and Arasa et al. (2018) in Kenya reported that neuroticism was associated with body image dissatisfaction and lower body appreciation. These earlier studies indicate that individuals with higher neuroticism are more likely to experience negative emotions and concerns about their appearance. The discrepancy may be attributed to differences in cultural contexts, age groups, measurement approaches, and the unique characteristics of adolescents in the study area. Further, this finding is consistent with Ivani and Rinaldi's (2022) results, where intellect/openness was positively associated with body image. Likewise, the study by Intiful et al. (2019) in Ghana demonstrated positive associations between openness to experience and food interest, suggesting that openness may encourage healthier attitudes and behaviors that indirectly contribute to positive body image perceptions.

The findings of the current study revealed that all the Big Five personality domains were significantly and positively related to body image among adolescents in public high schools in Olekasasi, Kajiado County, Kenya. Specifically, openness to experience showed the strongest positive relationship with body image, followed by extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism. Although all the relationships were statistically significant, their magnitudes were weak, suggesting that personality traits play a modest but important role in shaping adolescents' perceptions of their bodies. These findings imply that adolescents who exhibit higher levels of openness, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism tend to report more positive body image perceptions than their counterparts with lower levels of these personality traits.

The finding that agreeableness was positively associated with body image is consistent with theoretical stance. Ferrari et al. (2023) maintain that adolescents who are cooperative, empathetic, trusting, and supportive are more likely to develop healthy social relationships and receive positive feedback from others. Such positive interpersonal experiences may foster greater self-acceptance and satisfaction with physical appearance. Agreeable individuals often prioritize harmonious relationships over competition and social comparison, reducing the likelihood of negative body evaluations. The finding is supported by evidence suggesting that agreeableness is positively associated with self-compassion and positive self-evaluations, which are important predictors of healthy body image.

The positive relationship between extraversion and body image found in the current study also aligns with previous literature. According to Allen and Walter (2016), extraverted adolescents are generally sociable, energetic, assertive, and optimistic. These characteristics often facilitate positive peer interactions, social support, and confidence in social situations, which can enhance body satisfaction. Adolescents who frequently engage with peers and participate in social activities may receive affirmation and validation that strengthen their self-concept, including perceptions of physical appearance. The finding concurs with Allen and Walter (2016), their study concluded that higher extraversion is generally associated with more positive body image and lower body dissatisfaction. Extraverted individuals are less likely to internalize negative appearance-related messages and are more resilient to social pressures concerning physical attractiveness.

In addition, the significant positive relationship between conscientiousness and body image suggests that adolescents who are organized, disciplined, responsible, and goal-oriented tend to hold more favorable

perceptions of their bodies. Based on Sharma and Arya (2023) assertion, this finding may be explained by the tendency of conscientious individuals to engage in health-promoting behaviors such as regular exercise, balanced nutrition, and adherence to healthy routines. These behaviors can positively influence physical well-being and body satisfaction. Moreover, conscientious adolescents may possess stronger self-regulatory abilities that help them manage negative emotions and resist unrealistic societal beauty standards. According to the authors, conscientious individuals tend to focus on personal growth and achievement rather than excessive concern with appearance, thereby fostering healthier body perception.

The positive association between openness to experience and body image represents one of the most notable findings of the study, given that openness exhibited the strongest correlation with body image among the five personality domains. Sharma and Arya (2023) bring to light that adolescents high in openness are typically imaginative, intellectually curious, flexible, and receptive to new ideas and experiences. Such characteristics may enable them to embrace diverse standards of beauty and develop broader definitions of self-worth beyond physical appearance. Rather than conforming rigidly to socially prescribed ideals of attractiveness, open individuals may be more accepting of bodily differences and imperfections. The authors further argued that individuals with high openness are more likely to appreciate body functionality, uniqueness, and personal growth, thereby reducing body dissatisfaction.

The finding regarding neuroticism requires particular attention. Contrary to much of the existing literature, the current study found a significant positive relationship between neuroticism and body image. Traditionally, neuroticism is characterized by emotional instability, anxiety, self-consciousness, and vulnerability to stress, and has often been linked to body dissatisfaction and negative body image. Allen and Walter's (2016) systematic review identified neuroticism as one of the strongest personality correlates of negative body image across different populations. Similarly, research examining body image and personality among university students found that neuroticism was strongly associated with body dissatisfaction and appearance-related concerns. Therefore, the positive association observed in the current study contrasts with the dominant findings reported in previous studies. Several explanations may account for this discrepancy. First, cultural and contextual factors unique to adolescents in Olekasasi, Kajiado County, may influence the way neuroticism interacts with body image. Second, the direction of the relationship may depend on how body image was operationalized and scored in the study. If higher body image scores reflected greater awareness of body appearance rather than greater satisfaction, the positive relationship would be more consistent with theoretical expectations regarding neuroticism. Third, adolescents with higher neuroticism may exhibit heightened self-awareness and concern about their appearance, which could motivate greater attention to personal grooming and body management, resulting in higher body image scores. Nonetheless, the weak magnitude of the relationship suggests that neuroticism contributes only modestly to body image perceptions.

Therefore, the findings of the current study support the proposition that personality traits are important psychological factors influencing body image among adolescents. The results are consistent with the broader personality literature, which suggests that the Big Five traits shape individuals' emotional experiences, social interactions, coping mechanisms, and self-perceptions. The positive relationships observed for openness, extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness are largely supported by previous empirical evidence. However, the positive association between neuroticism and body image diverges from most earlier studies and highlights the need for further research to explore contextual and cultural influences on this relationship. Although the correlations were weak, their statistical significance indicates that personality traits contribute meaningfully to understanding body image among adolescents.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Big Five personality domains are significantly associated with body image among adolescents in public high schools in Olekasasi, Kajiado County, Kenya. Openness to experience demonstrated the strongest positive relationship with body image, followed by extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism. Although all five associations were weak, their statistical significance indicates that personality characteristics constitute one of the factors associated with adolescents' body-image perceptions. On the other

hand, the study's outcomes also demonstrate that body image should not be understood solely in terms of personality because adolescents develop and evaluate their bodies within broader social, cultural, peer, family, and media environments. Promoting healthy body image therefore requires an approach that recognizes individual differences while simultaneously strengthening adolescents' self-acceptance, emotional resilience, positive social relationships, and ability to critically evaluate unrealistic appearance standards.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Schools should strengthen guidance and counselling services by ensuring that qualified counsellors are available to provide psychosocial support to adolescents experiencing body-image concerns. Particular attention should be given to appearance-related teasing, weight-based comments, and other forms of peer interaction that may contribute to negative body perceptions. Counselling programmes should incorporate personality-sensitive approaches that help adolescents understand their individual characteristics, develop self-acceptance, strengthen self-esteem, and manage appearance-related social comparisons.
2. Parents should provide supportive environments that emphasize adolescents' abilities, character, talents, and personal development rather than focusing excessively on physical appearance. Positive communication and avoidance of appearance-based criticism may contribute to healthier self-perceptions.
3. Adolescents should be encouraged to participate in co-curricular activities, sports, clubs, leadership, debates, and talent-development programmes. Such activities can help young people recognize their competencies and personal strengths beyond physical appearance.
4. Future studies should employ longitudinal designs to establish how personality and body-image perceptions change throughout adolescence.

Implications For Teacher Training

1. Teachers should be trained to understand that adolescents differ in personality and may therefore respond differently to body-image pressures.
2. Training should help teachers recognize students who may be particularly sensitive to appearance-related comments, peer comparison, social media influence, or criticism
3. Teacher training should include basic skills in emotional support, active listening, empathy, and appropriate communication.
4. Teachers should avoid comments that negatively label students based on weight, physical appearance, attractiveness, or body shape.

Teachers should learn how to challenge unrealistic beauty standards and stereotypes in classroom interactions.

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