



## Unraveling the Associations among Fear of Negative Evaluation, Self-Criticism and Collective Self-Esteem in Dark-Skinned Youth: A Comprehensive Analysis

Maheen Asif<sup>1</sup>, Zohaib Ahmed<sup>2</sup>, Shamaila Mukhtar Khan<sup>3</sup>

### Abstract

This study investigated the relationship of fear of negative evaluation, self-criticism and collective self-esteem in dark skinned young adults. It also aimed to examine gender differences in fear of negative evaluation, self-criticism and collective self-esteem in dark skinned young adults. A purposive sample of 200 students (Males n = 100 and females n =100) was recruited using correlational research design. Following measures were administered on participants: Demographic information sheet, Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation-R, Forms of Self-Criticizing/Attacking & Self –Reassuring Scale and Collective Self-Esteem Scale. Results revealed a significant negative relationship between fear of negative evaluation, self-criticism and collective self-esteem in young adults with dark skin complexion. Independent sample t-test indicated that there is a significant gender difference between fear of negative evaluation, self-criticism and collective self-esteem in young adults with dark skin complexion. Findings highlight the need of awareness programs for promoting positive body image overall, redefining standard of beauty and to raise awareness about colorism negative impact on the low self-esteem, distorted self-confidence of dark skinned people.

**Keywords:** fear of negative evaluation, self-criticism, collective self-esteem, young adults, and dark skinned

### 1. Introduction

Dark is a word that brings goose bumps to the body, especially in those countries where the concept of colorism exists. Colorism is a global attitude of discrimination based on skin tone; it considers dark complexion less desirable and prefers lighter skin tone on dark skin tone (Jones, 2000). Dark complexion also affects a person self-efficacy, self-esteem, and collective self-esteem, fear of negative evaluation and level of confidence. They also may face more criticism from parents, siblings, relatives, neighbors, friends, class fellows, teachers, colleagues, and authority figures and, their life partner than individuals with fair complexion. Skin color is considered a criterion of attractiveness and it is also used to identify and categorize peers as pretty or ugly (Maan et al, 2009).

Especially for girls in Asia and South Asian culture, dark skin is the most undesirable trait. Having white skin or being beautiful and is considered the same thing (Philips, 2004). Due to colorism, girls have lived very difficult lives in the culture where germs of colorism exist. Women with dark skin color feel alienated or isolate from their societies due to which healthy market is provided to products and procedures that aim to make skin lighter overnight. In the media, “fairness creams” and “bleaching agents” are widely advertised and available in the market. Different procedures such as cosmetic therapies are available in non-medicated treatment in a beauty salon and dermatologist clinic. Girls from a very young age are taught that if they are dark, they are not beautiful and experience withdraws from the society whereas, if they are fair-skinned, they are beautiful and confident (Lodhi, 2016). According to Lal (2004), from south Asian movies, the desire of white skin has been driven. In South Asian movies, positive characters such as hero and heroines are always fair and good looking while negative characters are dark. The study of facial features explains that women with dark skin have destroyed a sense of self because they often have negative appraisal regarding themselves comparatively to the men. Across all cultures, Women with physical unattractiveness and dark skin face issues than men. For dark skinned women, the stereotype of color preferences and attractiveness is more intense than men (Morris, 2009).

Dark complexion has a different impact on fear of negative evaluation, self-criticism and collective self-esteem for females along with males. Hill (2002) stated that women with dark skin are generally rated negatively by others and by themselves, whereas, men with dark skin are rated positively by others and by themselves. According to the research results of Hill, males don't suffer through color biases corporately to females. Strong preference for lighter skin was found in women when attractiveness score was assigned to them but on another hand, the same relationship was weaker for men. Kejriwal (2018) stated that there is a negative stereotype that people with dark complexion are not beautiful, are from a lower-middle-class family and due to this individual with dark skin color become overly critical of themselves and develop a fear of negative views by others, which lowers their self-esteem and confidence due to which people avoid social situations in order not to become a victim of negative evaluation.

Self-criticism leads to projection of negative beliefs onto other people, which can lead to the expectation of negative feedback or outside criticism. Feeling of isolation, low self-esteem, loneliness and withdrawal from others is developed due to internal and external criticism. Individual with self-criticism find it difficult to convey their own opinion in a fear of rejection or criticism from others. Women with low collective self-esteem experience high level of depression and perceived discrimination (Corning, 2002). Those with high collective self-esteem or positive evaluation for their group are more

<sup>1</sup> Lecturer, Lahore School of Behavioural Sciences (LSBS), The University of Lahore, Pakistan

<sup>2</sup> Corresponding Author, Lecturer, Lahore School of Behavioural Sciences (LSBS), The University of Lahore, Pakistan, [Zzahmad40@gmail.com](mailto:Zzahmad40@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup> Lecturer, Lahore School of Behavioural Sciences (LSBS), The University of Lahore, Pakistan

expected to evaluate themselves on the basis of group performance and they respond favorably when their group does well than it does not do well. Positive regard for social group protects social self (McFarland & Buehler, 1995)

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Research Design

This research was planned with a correlational design to evaluate relationship between fear of negative evaluation, self-criticism and collective self-esteem in dark-skinned young adults.

### 2.2. Participants (Sample and Sampling Strategy)

The sample comprised of 200 young adults (100=Males, 100=Females) and their age range was from 18 to 25 years ( $M=18.8$ ;  $SD=0.67$ ) from different universities of Pakistan. Purposive sampling strategy was used to select the sample based on inclusion criteria.

## 3. Data Collection Tools

### 3.1. Demographic form

A self-constructed demographic form was used to get demographic information of the participants regarding participant's age, gender, education level, university and skin tone which added meaning to the research.

The Massey-Martin scale (Massey & Martin, 2003) is used in this research to measure skin darkness of the participant. It is an 11 point scale consisting of ten shades of skin color ranging from 0 to 10. Each shade is represented by an identical hand of a different color. Brief fear if negative evaluation-R (BFNE-R) is a 12-item revised version of the brief fear of negative evaluation scale (Carleton et al., 2006). It is a 5-point likert scale ranging from 0 (not at all characteristic of me) to 4 (extremely characteristic of me). This scale has an excellent internal consistency  $\alpha=.96$ . The Forms of self-criticizing/Attacking & Self-Reassuring Scale (FSCRS) (Gilbert et al., 2003). It is 22 item which consist of a three subscales, there are two forms of self-criticalness; inadequate self and hated self and the third subscale is Reassure self. It's a 5 point likert scale ranging from 0 (not at all like me) to 4 (extremely like me). Cronbach alpha value for inadequate self is 0.90 and for hated self and reassure self is 0.86. Collective self-esteem scale was developed by Luhtanen & Crocker in 1992. This scale is a 7 point likert scale ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). It consist of 16 items and four subscales i.e. Membership Self-Esteem (item 1, 5, 9 and 13), Private Collective Self-Esteem (item 2,6,10 and 14), Public Collective Self-Esteem (item 3,7,11 and 15) and Importance to Identity (4, 8, 12 and 16). Collective self-esteem scale has satisfactory test-retest reliability.

### 3.2. Procedure

The institutional approval was taken to conduct this research. Permission was taken from authors of the scales which were used in this study. For main study, the participants were selected based on the criteria of inclusion and exclusion. They were informed regarding the research purpose, its implication, time required and procedure. Furthermore, written consent of the participants was taken to participate in the present research. They were informed that the information will be kept private and confidential. Participants had the right to withdraw from the Survey at any point they feel like. Individual testing was carried out. Participants were administered scales. Administration took 20-25 minutes approximately. 150 Participants participated in the current study. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was applied to check the relationship of Fear of negative evaluation, self-criticism and collective self-esteem among dark skinned young adults. Independent sample *t*-test was applied to assess gender differences in study variables.

## 4. Results

The statistical sample included 200 young adults with a mean (standard deviation) age of 18.8 (0.67) years who were of an age between 18 to 25 years.

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants**

Variables	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>M(SD)</i>
Age		21.26(1.98)
Level of Education		
Intermediate	39(19.5%)	
Bachelors	95(47.5%)	
Postgraduate	66(33%)	
Gender		
Male	100(50%)	
Female	100(50%)	
Scale of skin tone		
3&4	60(30%)	
5&6	91(45.5%)	
7&8	48(24%)	

*Note:* *n*= sample size (200)

Results in Table 2 suggest that the data of fear of negative evaluation scale, self-criticism subscales, collective self-esteem scale are approximately normally distributed as all skewness and kurtosis values are within the standard range of  $\pm 2$ .

**Table 2: Psychometrics Properties of Major Study Variables in the sample**

Variables	<i>k</i>	M	SD	<i>a</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
BFNE	12	1.84	1.22	.97	.206	-1.61
Self-criticism	22	2	.44	.26	1.16	2.34
CSE	16	4.37	1.64	.93	.262	-.723

*Note:* *k*: number of items, M: Mean, SD: Standard Deviation, *a*: Cronbach Alpha; BFNE = Brief fear of negative evaluation, CSE= Collective self esteem

Results in Table 3 suggest that There is a positive moderate relationship between Fear of negative evaluation and self-criticism ( $r = .656^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) stating that higher the level of fear of negative evaluation in young adults with dark skin color tone, higher will be the level of self-criticism. There is a significant negative relationship between the level of brief fear of negative evaluation and collective self-esteem among young adults with dark skin color tone i.e. higher level of brief fear of negative evaluation indicates lower level of collective self-esteem. Self-criticism has a significant negatively relationship with collective self-esteem ( $r = -.497^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) stating that higher the level of self-criticism in young adults with dark skin color tone, lower will be the level of collective self-esteem.

**Table 3: Shows the mean (Mean), standard deviation (SD), Correlation (r) and significance value (p) of fear of negative evaluation, self-criticim and collective self-esteem in dark-skinned young adults. (N=200).**

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	BFNE	SC	CSE
1.BFNE	1.83	1.22	-	.656**	-.792**
2.SC	2	.44		-	-.497**
3.CSE	4.37	1.64			-

*Note:* *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard Deviation; BFNE = Brief fear of negative evaluation, SC= Self-criticism, CSE= Collective self-esteem \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$

Results in Table 4 suggest that there is significant gender differences in fear of negative evaluation, self-criticism and collective self-esteem in young adults with dark skin color tone are identified using an independent sample t-test. The results show that females have more brief fear of negative evaluation and self-criticism in females as compared to male. The results also show that males have higher level of collective self-esteem as compared to females with dark skin complexion.

**Table 4: Gender differences in brief fear of negative evaluation, self-criticim and self-esteem in dark-skinned young adults. (N=200)**

Variables	Male		Female		<i>t</i> ( <i>df</i> 198)	<i>p</i>	95% CI	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>LL</i>	<i>UP</i>
FNE	1.39	1.15	2.28	1.14	-5.45	.001	-1.20	-.56
Self-criticism	1.90	.44	2.1	.421	-3.20	.002	-.317	-.07
Collective self esteem	4.79	1.71	3.95	1.46	3.70	.001	.39	1.27

*Note:* FNE= Fear of negative evaluation boys = 97; girls = 103; *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; *df* = degree of freedom

## 5. Discussion

The present study, titled "Unraveling the Associations among Fear of Negative Evaluation, Self-Criticism, and Collective Self-Esteem in Dark-Skinned Youth: A Comprehensive Analysis," aims to investigate the intricate connections between fear of negative evaluation, self-criticism, and collective self-esteem among young adults with dark skin complexion. The research findings shed light on the relationships among these variables and provide valuable insights into the psychological experiences of individuals belonging to this specific group. The results of the study revealed a significant negative association between fear of negative evaluation, self-criticism, and collective self-esteem, highlighting the potential impact of these factors on the well-being and self-perception of dark-skinned youth. Furthermore, an independent sample t-test indicated the presence of a noteworthy gender difference in fear of negative evaluation, self-criticism, and collective self-esteem within this population.

Research examining fear of negative evaluation has consistently highlighted its detrimental impact on individuals' self-esteem. These findings are consistent with previous researches. Pervez (2012) concluded from his study that there is a negative relationship between fear of negative evaluation and inadequate self in individuals with dark skin. Our study specifically extends this knowledge to young adults with dark skin complexion, emphasizing the relevance of considering this factor within the unique sociocultural context. Moreover, in our study it was found that there is negative relationship between self-criticism and collective self-esteem. Findings of this study that the negative relationship between self-criticism

and self-esteem has been well-established in psychological literature. According to the results of the study conducted by Dunn, Lauren, O'Neill, Jenna, Feldman, and Steven (2011). Individuals who engage in high levels of self-criticism tend to experience lower self-esteem and higher levels of distress. This suggests that self-critical thoughts and behaviors may play a role in shaping the self-perception and overall collective self-esteem of individuals within this specific group.

Additionally, Independent sample t-test was applied to figure out the gender differences in fear of negative evaluation, self-criticism and collective self-esteem in young adults with dark skin color tone. Results of our study revealed a significant gender difference in fear of negative evaluation, self-criticism, and collective self-esteem among young adults with dark skin complexion. This finding is consistent with previous research that has identified gender disparities in various psychological constructs across different populations. A study conducted by Jabeen (2006) on fear of negative evaluation and collective self-esteem among individuals with the dark complexion and the findings of this research also revealed a significant gender difference between fear of negative evaluation and collective self-esteem in female and male with dark skin

### 5.1. Limitations and suggestions

In conclusion, while our study on the associations among fear of negative evaluation, self-criticism, and collective self-esteem in young adults with dark skin complexion provided valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge the limitations. These include the limited generalizability due to the specific sample and the cross-sectional design preventing causal inferences. Furthermore, reliance on self-report measures may introduce biases. Future research should involve diverse populations, employ longitudinal designs, and incorporate multiple assessment methods to enhance validity. Additionally, investigating underlying mechanisms, developing tailored interventions, and exploring comparative studies across different racial and ethnic groups would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of these constructs and promote psychological well-being among individuals with diverse skin complexions.

### 5.2. Implications

The implications of our study on the associations among fear of negative evaluation, self-criticism, and collective self-esteem in young adults with dark skin complexion are twofold. From a practical standpoint, our findings emphasize the need for targeted interventions and support systems to address the unique psychological experiences of this population, with a focus on reducing fear of negative evaluation, promoting self-compassion, and fostering collective self-esteem. Additionally, interventions should be tailored to account for potential gender-specific challenges. Theoretical implications involve expanding our understanding of these constructs within the context of dark skin complexion, highlighting the importance of cultural, social, and historical factors. These implications can inform the development of interventions and advance theoretical knowledge to foster a more inclusive and supportive environment, promoting positive self-perception, well-being, and mental health for individuals with diverse skin complexions.

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, our comprehensive analysis of the associations among fear of negative evaluation, self-criticism, and collective self-esteem in young adults with dark skin complexion revealed a significant negative relationship between these variables. The study findings corroborate existing research on fear of negative evaluation and self-criticism, emphasizing their detrimental effects on self-esteem and overall well-being. Furthermore, our study identified a significant gender difference in fear of negative evaluation, self-criticism, and collective self-esteem within this population.

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