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BODY IMAGE AND SELF CONFIDENCE AMONG PREGNANT WOMEN: A CROSS SECTIONAL STUDY IN RURAL INDONESIA

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Abstract

Background: Pregnancy in the second and third trimesters involves significant physical changes and psychological adjustments that may influence women's perceptions of their bodies and their level of self-confidence.

Purpose: This study aimed to examine the relationship between body image and self-confidence among pregnant women in the second and third trimesters in Sumogawe Village, Getasan District.

Methods: A quantitative correlational design with a cross-sectional approach was applied. A total of 56 pregnant women were selected using purposive sampling. Body image was assessed using the Body Image Scale, while self-confidence was measured using the Self-Confidence Scale based on Lauster's concept. Data were collected online through Google Forms with coordination from the village midwife and analyzed using univariate analysis and the Spearman Rank correlation test.

Results: The results showed that most respondents had a positive body image (57.1%), while 42.9% reported a negative body image. In terms of self-confidence, 57.1% of respondents had low self-confidence and 42.9% had high self-confidence. Statistical analysis revealed a strong, positive, and significant relationship between body image and self-confidence (Spearman's $\rho = 0.727$; $p < 0.001$), indicating that a more positive body image is associated with higher self-confidence.

Conclusions: Body image is an important factor related to self-confidence among pregnant women and reflects psychological adaptation during pregnancy. These findings highlight the need to integrate psychosocial assessment and support, particularly related to body image and self-confidence, into routine antenatal care to promote maternal well-being.

INTRODUCTION

Pregnancy is a natural physiological process accompanied by significant physical, hormonal, and psychological changes, particularly during the second and third trimesters. During this period, women experience weight gain, abdominal enlargement, postural adjustments, and increasing physical discomfort, which require both physical and

psychological adaptation (WHO, 2022). Recent studies also indicate that mid-to-late pregnancy involves changes in mobility, balance, mood, anxiety, and self-perception (Hrvatin et al., 2024; Kurt & Arslan, 2020; Pawestri et al., 2024; Turan et al., 2025; Wakkar & Patil, 2022).

These transformations can influence how women perceive and evaluate their bodies. Body image during pregnancy becomes increasingly salient as rapid bodily changes interact with personal expectations, social norms, and prior experiences. While some women interpret these changes positively as part of maternal adaptation, others may develop negative body image when pregnancy-related changes conflict with societal standards of attractiveness (Crossland et al., 2023; Salzer et al., 2023). Negative body image has been associated with psychological distress, depressive symptoms, and challenges in maternal functioning (Antonie et al., 2020; Olabisi et al., 2024).

Beyond physical adaptation, pregnancy-related bodily changes may also influence women's psychological adjustment, including body image and self-confidence. During the second and third trimesters, changes such as weight gain, abdominal enlargement, and altered body shape become more visible and may affect how pregnant women perceive themselves. Recent evidence shows that body image during pregnancy is closely related to psychological well-being, self-esteem, and emotional distress. Zamiri-Miandoab et al. (2022) reported that self-esteem was significantly associated with body image and attitudes toward motherhood and pregnancy among pregnant women. Similarly, Olabisi et al. (2024) found that body image perception and social support predicted psychological distress among third-trimester pregnant women. These findings indicate that women's responses to pregnancy-related physical transformation should be understood not only as a physical adaptation, but also as part of broader psychosocial adjustment.

Preliminary observations in Sumogawe Village, Getasan District, showed that pregnant women in the second and third trimesters had different responses to bodily changes. Some women reported discomfort with changes in body shape and appearance, while others experienced reduced confidence in social interactions. These local observations are consistent with international evidence showing that body image dissatisfaction during pregnancy may be associated with psychological distress, depressive symptoms, and lower maternal well-being (He et al., 2025; Olabisi et al., 2024). Therefore, examining the relationship between body image and self-confidence in this community is important to identify psychosocial concerns that may not be captured through routine biomedical assessment.

Although antenatal care commonly prioritizes fetal growth, maternal nutrition, and obstetric risk monitoring, psychosocial aspects of pregnancy require greater attention. Body

image assessment has been identified as an important component of pregnancy-related psychological evaluation because body image concerns may affect maternal mental health and adaptation (Salzer et al., 2023). Integrating psychosocial support into antenatal care may help pregnant women better understand, normalize, and accept pregnancy-related bodily changes. A recent systematic review of randomized clinical trials also showed that psychological and educational interventions may improve body image among pregnant and postpartum women (Shen et al., 2024). Thus, antenatal care that includes supportive counseling, body image assessment, and confidence-building strategies may contribute to more holistic maternal care, particularly during the second and third trimesters when physical changes become increasingly visible.

Self-confidence is an important component of psychological adaptation during pregnancy because it reflects a woman's perceived ability to cope with bodily changes, social expectations, and preparation for motherhood. In the context of pregnancy, self-confidence can be understood through related constructs such as self-esteem, body acceptance, psychological readiness, and perceived maternal competence. Recent evidence indicates that women's self-evaluation during pregnancy is closely related to how they perceive their bodies. Zamiri-Miandoab et al. (2022) found that self-esteem was significantly associated with body image and attitudes toward motherhood and pregnancy among pregnant women. Similarly, Meireles et al. (2022) reported that body appreciation, self-esteem, and depressive symptoms were interrelated during pregnancy and the postpartum period. These findings suggest that women who perceive their pregnancy-related body changes more positively are more likely to demonstrate better psychological adjustment.

Although body image, self-esteem, and maternal psychological well-being have been widely examined, evidence specifically focusing on self-confidence as a distinct psychological outcome remains limited, particularly in rural community settings. Existing studies have shown that body image perception and social support can influence psychological distress among third-trimester pregnant women, indicating that local context and interpersonal support may shape maternal psychological responses (Olabisi et al., 2024). In addition, systematic reviews emphasize that body image during pregnancy is a multidimensional construct requiring appropriate assessment because it is closely linked with mental health and psychosocial adaptation (Crossland et al., 2023; Salzer et al., 2023). However, the relationship between body image and self-confidence has not been sufficiently explored in community-based maternal health contexts.

This gap is particularly relevant in Sumogawe Village, Getasan District, where social norms, family interactions, and community expectations may influence how pregnant women interpret bodily changes and maintain confidence in daily life. Therefore, this study aims to examine the relationship between body image and self-confidence among second- and third-trimester pregnant women in this rural setting. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on self-confidence as a specific psychological outcome and its examination within a rural community context. Based on previous evidence linking body image with self-esteem, psychological distress, and maternal adjustment, this study hypothesizes that a more positive body image is associated with higher self-confidence, whereas negative body image is associated with lower confidence. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the relationship between body image and self-confidence among second and third trimester pregnant women in Sumogawe Village, Getasan District.

METHODS

Study Design

This study employed a quantitative correlational design with a cross-sectional approach to examine the relationship between body image and self-confidence among pregnant women in the second and third trimesters. This design was selected because the study aimed to assess the strength and direction of association between two psychosocial variables measured at one point in time, without manipulating the study environment or providing an intervention. Cross-sectional correlational designs are commonly used in maternal health research to explore associations among psychological factors such as body image, self-esteem, self-confidence, anxiety, and maternal well-being (Daniluc et al., 2024; Salzer et al., 2023; Tavananezhad et al., 2022). Although this design does not allow causal inference, it is appropriate for identifying relevant associations within a specific population and community setting.

Setting and Participants

The study was conducted in Sumogawe Village, Getasan District. This setting was selected because preliminary observations indicated that pregnant women in the community showed varied psychological responses to pregnancy-related bodily changes, including concerns about body shape, appearance, and confidence in social interaction. A community-based setting was considered appropriate because body image and self-confidence during pregnancy may be shaped not only by individual experiences but also by sociocultural norms, family support, and local maternal health practices. Previous studies have also emphasized that rural and community contexts may influence psychosocial adjustment during pregnancy (Dăescu et al., 2023; Daniluc et al., 2024; Olabisi et al., 2024).

The target population was pregnant women in the second and third trimesters living in Sumogawe Village. These gestational periods were selected because pregnancy-related physical changes become more visible and may have greater psychological meaning during mid-to-late pregnancy. A total of 56 respondents participated in this study. Participants were recruited using purposive sampling based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria were pregnant women in the second or third trimester, residing in Sumogawe Village, willing to participate in the study, able to read and understand Indonesian, and able to complete the questionnaire independently through the online form. The exclusion criteria were pregnant women with severe pregnancy complications, those experiencing conditions that limited their ability to complete the questionnaire, and those who did not provide informed consent.

Purposive sampling was used to ensure that all respondents had characteristics directly relevant to the research objective, namely being in mid-to-late pregnancy and being able to provide information about body image and self-confidence during the current pregnancy. This sampling technique was considered appropriate for a community-based study involving a specific maternal population, although it may limit the generalizability of the findings to broader populations.

Instruments and Data Collection

Data were collected using two structured questionnaires: the Body Image Scale and the Self-Confidence Scale. Body image was assessed using the Body Image Scale developed by Khairani et al. (2019), which was based on the theoretical framework of body image by Cash and Smolak. The instrument measures individuals' perceptions and evaluations of their bodies, including acceptance of and dissatisfaction with physical appearance. The use of this instrument was considered appropriate because body image during pregnancy is closely related to psychological well-being, self-esteem, and maternal functioning (Nagl et al., 2019; Olabisi et al., 2024). In the study by Khairani et al. (2019), the Body Image Scale showed acceptable validity, with item-total correlation coefficients ranging from 0.41 to 0.72. The reliability test showed a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.843, indicating good internal consistency.

Self-confidence was measured using a structured Self-Confidence Scale developed based on Lauster's theoretical framework. This framework defines self-confidence as a psychological attribute reflected in belief in one's own ability, optimism, independence, responsibility, and the capacity to act without excessive doubt. The use of a Lauster-based scale was considered relevant because the study focused on pregnant women's confidence in accepting bodily changes, engaging socially, and adapting to pregnancy-related psychological demands. Previous Indonesian validation studies of Lauster-based self-confidence instruments have reported acceptable psychometric properties, including good item validity and internal consistency (Hidayati et al., 2023; Suhartiwi, 2020). Suhartiwi (2020) reported a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.842, while Hidayati et al. (2023) reported a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.794, supporting the methodological relevance of this framework for self-confidence measurement in Indonesian research contexts.

Data collection was conducted using an online questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. The researcher coordinated with the local community midwife to identify eligible respondents and facilitate access to participants in the community. Eligible pregnant women received an explanation of the study objectives, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and instructions for completing the questionnaire. Respondents who agreed to participate completed the questionnaire independently through the provided link. The online format was chosen to support efficient data collection in the community setting and to allow respondents to complete the questionnaire at a convenient time. To reduce misunderstanding, the questionnaire was written in clear Indonesian language and structured with simple response options.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using univariate and bivariate procedures. Univariate analysis was used to describe respondent characteristics and the distribution of the main variables, including pregnancy trimester, body image category, and self-confidence category. The results were presented using frequencies and percentages.

Bivariate analysis was conducted using the Spearman Rank correlation test to examine the relationship between body image and self-confidence. This test was selected because the study variables were categorized and the analysis aimed to determine the direction and strength of association between two ordinal psychosocial variables. Spearman correlation is commonly used in maternal health research when data do not require parametric assumptions (Nagl et al., 2019; Tavananezhad et al., 2022; Zamiri-Miandoab et al., 2022). Statistical significance was determined at $p < 0.05$. The correlation coefficient was interpreted to determine the strength and direction of the relationship.

Ethical Consideration

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical principles for research involving human participants. Ethical approval was obtained from the Health Research Ethics Committee of Universitas Ngudi Waluyo under reference number 950/KEP/EC/UNW/2025. Participation was voluntary, and all respondents received information about the study objectives, procedures, confidentiality, and their right to decline participation before completing the questionnaire.

Because the study involved personal perceptions related to body image and self-confidence, the questionnaire was presented in a respectful and nonjudgmental manner. Respondents' identities were kept confidential, and the data were used only for research purposes. Coordination with the village midwife helped ensure that recruitment was conducted appropriately within the local maternal health context while maintaining participant autonomy, privacy, and dignity.

RESULTS

Univariate Analysis

This study involved 56 pregnant women in the second and third trimesters in Sumogawe Village, Getasan District. The results are presented in two parts: univariate analysis describing respondent

characteristics, body image, and self-confidence; and bivariate analysis examining the relationship between body image and self-confidence.

Table 1 . Frequency Distribution Based on Respondent Characteristics (n= 56).

Characteristics	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Pregnancy Trimester		
Second trimester	33	58.9
Third Trimester	23	41.1
Body Image		
Positive	34	60.7
Negative	22	39.3
Self confidence		
Low	35	62.5
High	21	37.5

Table 1 shows that most respondents were in the second trimester of pregnancy, with 33 respondents (58.9%), while 23 respondents (41.1%) were in the third trimester. A sample composed primarily of women in the middle stage of pregnancy, although a substantial proportion had entered late-stage gestation. Regarding body image, 34 respondents (60.7%) had a negative body image, while 22 respondents (39.3%) had a positive body image. In terms of self-confidence, 35 respondents (62.5%) had low self-confidence, whereas 21 respondents (37.5%) had high self-confidence.

Bivariate Analysis

Table 2. Relationship between Body Image and Self-Confidence Among Pregnant Women in the Second and Third Trimesters (n= 56).

Body Image	Self-Confidence				r	p value
	Low		High			
	n	%	n	%		
Positive	6	17,1	16	76,2	0,727	<0,001
Negative	29	82,9	5	23,8		

Table 2 shows that among respondents with positive body image, most had high self-confidence, namely 16 respondents (76.2%), while 6 respondents (17.1%) had low self-confidence. In contrast, among respondents with negative body image, most had low self-confidence, namely 29 respondents (82.9%), while only 5 respondents (23.8%) had high self-confidence.

The Spearman Rank correlation test showed a statistically significant relationship between body image and self-confidence, with a p -value < 0.001 and a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.727$. These results indicate a strong positive relationship between body image and self-confidence. Therefore, pregnant women with a more positive body image tended to have higher self-confidence, whereas those with a negative body image tended to have lower self-confidence.

DISCUSSION

This study found that body image was significantly associated with self-confidence among second- and third-trimester pregnant women in Sumogawe Village. The finding suggests that how women perceive and accept pregnancy-related bodily changes is closely related to their confidence during mid-to-late pregnancy. Rather than being limited to appearance evaluation, body image may represent an important aspect of psychological adaptation, particularly as physical changes become more visible and socially noticeable during the second and third trimesters.

Pregnancy involves substantial physical and psychological adjustment. During mid-to-late pregnancy, women experience visible bodily changes such as abdominal enlargement, weight gain, postural changes, and physical discomfort, all of which may influence self-perception and emotional well-being. These changes may be interpreted positively when women view them as part of the transition to motherhood, but they may also create distress when they conflict with personal expectations or sociocultural ideals of attractiveness. Previous studies have shown that pregnancy-related body image is associated with self-esteem, anxiety, depressive symptoms, and psychosocial adjustment (Crossland et al., 2023; Nagl et al., 2019; Salzer et al., 2023; Zamiri-Miandoab et al., 2022). Therefore, the relationship found in this study indicates that positive body image may support women's sense of self and confidence in adapting to pregnancy.

The association between body image and self-confidence may be explained through the role of body acceptance in strengthening psychological readiness. Women who accept their bodily changes may feel more capable of engaging socially, preparing for childbirth, and adjusting to the maternal role. In contrast, negative body image may increase self-doubt and reduce confidence in daily interactions. This interpretation is supported by evidence that body appreciation and self-esteem are interconnected during pregnancy and the postpartum period (Meireles et al., 2022). Similarly, body image dissatisfaction has been linked to psychological distress among pregnant women, while social support may serve as a protective factor (Olabisi et al., 2024).

Sociocultural and relational contexts are also important in understanding these findings. Pregnant women's perceptions of their bodies are shaped not only by individual adaptation but also by family responses, partner support, community norms, and cultural expectations regarding women's appearance during pregnancy. In a rural community context, these social influences may be particularly meaningful because interpersonal interaction and family involvement often play a central role in maternal experiences. Previous studies have emphasized that community setting, relationship dynamics,

pregnancy planning, and social support may influence body image and psychosocial well-being during pregnancy (Dăescu et al., 2023; Daniluc et al., 2024; Olabisi et al., 2024). Thus, the findings from Sumogawe Village highlight the need to consider local context when addressing maternal psychological adaptation.

The findings have practical implications for antenatal care. Maternal health services often prioritize physical monitoring, fetal growth, nutrition, and obstetric risk, while psychosocial aspects such as body image and self-confidence may receive less attention. This study suggests that body image assessment and confidence-building support should be integrated into antenatal services, particularly during the second and third trimesters. Nurses, midwives, and other maternal health providers can help women understand normal pregnancy-related body changes, develop realistic expectations, and express concerns about appearance or confidence in a supportive environment. Empowerment-based education and counseling may also strengthen self-efficacy and emotional resilience during pregnancy (Bień et al., 2025; Tavananezhad et al., 2022).

This study has several limitations. The cross-sectional design prevents causal interpretation, so the direction of the relationship between body image and self-confidence cannot be determined. The use of online self-administered questionnaires may have introduced response bias, and the researcher could not fully ensure that all respondents completed the questionnaire independently. In addition, several potential influencing factors, such as partner support, family support, anxiety, parity, body mass index, socioeconomic status, and pregnancy planning, were not measured. Future studies should involve larger and more diverse samples, use longitudinal designs, and include multivariate analysis to clarify the mechanisms linking body image and self-confidence during pregnancy.

Overall, this study reinforces the importance of body image as a psychosocial factor related to self-confidence among pregnant women. The findings support the need for more holistic antenatal care that addresses both physical and psychological adaptation. Integrating body image assessment, supportive counseling, and family involvement into maternal health services may help improve women's confidence and well-being during pregnancy.

IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The findings suggest that antenatal care should address psychological adaptation in addition to routine physical monitoring. The association between body image and self-confidence indicates that pregnant women may benefit from psychosocial assessments, particularly during the second and third trimesters when bodily changes become more visible. Nurses, midwives, and other healthcare providers can support maternal well-being by providing counseling, explaining normal pregnancy-related body changes, and encouraging women to discuss concerns about appearance, confidence, and emotional readiness. Early identification of negative body image or low self-confidence may help guide timely psychosocial support.

These findings also have implications for nursing and midwifery education. Maternal health training should prepare students to assess both physical and psychological responses to pregnancy and to provide woman-centered counseling. At the policy level, integrating simple mental health screening and psychosocial counseling into antenatal services could strengthen maternal support, particularly in rural community settings where family and partner involvement are important.

This study has several limitations. The cross-sectional design prevents causal interpretation, and the relatively small sample from one village limits generalizability. The use of purposive sampling may reduce representativeness, while online self-administered questionnaires may introduce response bias. In addition, potential influencing factors such as partner support, family support, anxiety, parity, body mass index, education, and socioeconomic status were not examined. Future studies should utilize larger and more diverse samples, longitudinal designs, and multivariate analysis to better explain the relationship between body image and self-confidence during pregnancy.

CONCLUSION

This study found a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between body image and self-confidence among second- and third-trimester pregnant women in Sumogawe Village, Getasan District. Pregnant women with a more positive body image tended to have higher self-confidence, indicating that body image is an important aspect of psychological adaptation during pregnancy.

Although most respondents showed positive body image, many still reported low self-confidence. This suggests that simply self-confidence during pregnancy may also be influenced by other psychosocial factors beyond body image. Overall, the findings support the importance of considering body image and self-confidence as part of maternal psychological assessment in antenatal care. Future studies with larger samples and broader settings are needed to confirm these findings and further explore factors influencing self-confidence.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

Risa Putri Utami : Conceptualization, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft.

Eko Mardiyarningsih : Methodology, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing, Supervision.

All authors contributed to the interpretation of the findings, critically reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript, and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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Table Captions

Table 1. Frequency Distribution Based on Respondent Characteristics (n= 56).

Table 2. Relationship between Body Image and Self-Confidence Among Pregnant Women in the Second and Third Trimesters (n= 56).