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## Impact of Body Image on Middle-Aged Thai Men's Self-Esteem and Job Performance

Chachadapa Vichitrananda  
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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Chachadapa Vichitrananda

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Walden University  
2021

Abstract

Impact of Body Image on Middle-Aged Thai Men's Self-Esteem and Job Performance

by

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MACA, Bangkok University, 1995

BEd, Srinakarinwirot University, 1992

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Organizational Psychology

Walden University

October 2021

## Abstract

Body image issues are generally associated with a person's dissatisfactions toward their body. Body image dissatisfaction can adversely affect a person's mental and physical well-being, self-esteem, and behavior. Previous studies on men's body image issues have focused on younger men, their desire for muscularity and mostly used quantitative research methodology. There is a gap in the literature regarding the effects of body image dissatisfaction on middle-aged men's self-esteem and job performance using the qualitative research method. This study aimed to investigate body image perceptions of middle-aged men in Thailand aged 35-50 years to determine how their body image perceptions affect their self-esteem and job performance. The theoretical foundation for this study was the objectification theory and self-objectification theory. Ten middle-aged Thai men aged between 35 and 50 years who are currently employed or self-employed were recruited through purposeful and snowball samplings. The data collection strategy of this study was a semistructured interview. Findings revealed that having negative concerns with excessive weight gain and baldness were the primary sources of the participants' body image dissatisfaction, which also negatively impacted their self-esteem. The social significance of this study may contribute to positive social change by providing understanding and guidance for human resource departments of organizations; for the man, if he is self-employed; and for the I/O psychologists working with middle-aged men who have experienced body image dissatisfaction to mitigate or solve these issues.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my beloved dad and mom - Sub Lt. Pairoj and Mrs. Ranchuan Vichitrananda. You two have shown to me how great love can be. I am so blessed to be your youngest daughter. I would not have passed this doctoral degree without being motivated by the thought that you will be proud of me. I am me today because of your love and your blessings. I love you two the most.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

### **Introduction**

Body image is a multifaceted psychological experience of embodiment that includes an individuals' perceptions of physical appearance, body related self-perceptions, and self-attitudes towards personal appearance (Reddy, 2013). Body dissatisfaction occurs when an individual feels dissatisfied with their body, either with some particular features or in general terms (Reddy, 2013). A negative body image can affect a person's psychological well-being and lead to low self-esteem, depression, stress, and anxiety (Brokhoff et al., 2012; Latner et al., 2011). Early studies on body image satisfaction revealed negative relationships between body image satisfaction, self-esteem, and work performance (Alessandri et al., 2012; Cusack, 2000; Judge et al., 1998). However, the exact mechanisms by which body image dissatisfaction might affect aspects of peoples' work lives, such as job performance, has received scant attention from researchers in the organizational psychology discipline. During my literature review, I did not find any literature that addressed the impact of body image dissatisfaction on the work performance of middle-aged working men in an oriental culture like Thailand. This study was unique because it will explore whether body image dissatisfaction might affect the work life aspect of middle-aged Thai men particularly their self-esteem and job performance.

This chapter discusses studies on body image dissatisfaction and the problems among men. Additionally, this chapter discusses the purpose of this study and why the relationship between body image and job satisfaction of middle-aged men should receive more attention in the literature. This chapter also discusses research questions, the nature of

the study, and the significance of the research. The chapter presents a definition of the proposed research's terms, assumptions, limitations, scope, and delimitations.

### **Background**

An individual's body image relates to how they perceive or feel about their physical appearance (Burlew & Shurts, 2013; Khan et al., 2011), as well as how they perceive that others feel about their body (Khan et al., 2011). Current research about men's body dissatisfaction is limited, despite established evidence that men increasingly experience this problem (Primus, 2014). Most studies about men's body image issues address aspects such as the desire for muscularity (e.g., Gattario et al., 2015; Parent, 2013), investment in appearance improvement, and/or well-being (e.g., Goughet al., 2016; Tylka, 2015), health (e.g., Černelič-Bizjak, & Jenko-Pražnikar, 2014), or psychological, social, and sexual performance (e.g., Davison, & McCabe, 2005; Dunkley et al. 2015). However, studies on the negative effects on work deriving from men's body image dissatisfaction are rare.

Clarke and Korotchenko (2011) conducted a literature review of existing sociocultural research and theories related to aging, body image, and embodiment to determine whether gender or age was related to differences in body image satisfaction. The researchers found that cultural standards on body appearance and how men regard their body image have changed. Clarke and Korotchenko (2011) found that age, culture, ethnicity, gender, health condition, sexual preferences, and social status can shape older adults' body image. Body image has been highlighted as one of the key issues among older male adults (Clarke & Korotchenko, 2011).

Chaipraditkul (2013) analyzed 49 research articles published between 1979 and 2012 to gain information on how culture influences Thai men and women to develop certain concepts of beauty. The researcher concluded that cultural perceptions of beauty enticed Thai people to undergo physical transformations to create a satisfactory body image. Chaipraditkul found that the pursuit of a well-groomed appearance by some men (and women) was a form of self-empowerment because it frequently led to greater social acknowledgment and acceptance. This article emphasized the importance of body image in Thai culture and how Thai culture influences the concept of idealistic beauty amongst Thai men. This was both relevant to my qualitative study on the effect of body image on Thai men's self-esteem and/or job performance.

Employees who have healthy minds tend to display better contributions to their work (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). Seminal studies on body image satisfaction revealed negative relationships between body image satisfaction, self-esteem, and work performance (Alessandri et al., 2012; Cusack, 2000; Judge et al., 1998). While job performance has been shown to contribute to an organization's success/profits, effectiveness, and endurance (Ferris et al., 2010; Johnson, 2003; Motowidlo, et al., 1997; Van Wingerden et al., 2017), research about men's body image dissatisfaction and its relations to self-esteem or job performance is almost nonexistent. Findings from seminal studies (Judge et al., 1998; Korman, 1970) on this topic provided perspectives on the relationship between self-esteem and job performance, but the research did not include body image dissatisfaction. Korman (1970) remarked that people with high self-esteem are more likely to have higher self-drive to show better performance at work than individuals with low self-esteem because they



want to maintain a positive image of themselves and feel good about themselves. Judge et al. (1998) suggested that when people with high self-esteem receive negative feedback on their job performance, they tend to increase their effort to perform better to meet expected performance criteria; in contrast to people with a low sense of self-worth, which typically either perform their job less efficiently or completely shut down as a result of criticism.

The discipline of organizational psychology has given little attention to how body image dissatisfaction might affect people's work life aspects, particularly their job performance. Furthermore, existing organizational psychological studies rarely address how body image dissatisfaction might affect working men in middle-age in an oriental culture like Thailand. This study will examine how body image affects middle-aged Thai men's self-esteem and their perceptions of their job performance.

### **Problem Statement**

In the past, body image was believed to have been predominantly a concern for women (Burlew & Shurts, 2013). However, Burlew and Shurts (2013) proposed that body image issues are increasingly becoming a matter of concern for men. Changing cultural trends regarding body image have increased focus on men's appearance, and men worldwide are becoming more concerned about their physical appearance (Burlew & Shurts, 2013; Chaipraditkul, 2013). This emerging trend has resulted in increasing men seeking psychological help for body image problems (Parent, 2013).

Research findings on body image among Thai men are consistent with the changing cultural trends regarding body image (Chaipraditkul, 2013). An individual's projected image or personal presentation is critical in Thailand's labor market (Chaipraditkul, 2013).

Researchers have shown that a job applicant's projected image and employment suitability are key criteria in Thailand's job market, and the applicant's physical image affects whether the applicant receives a job offer (Kurkoon et al., 2014).

Most studies on male body image were conducted among young men and mainly consisted of quantitative research (Gough, et al., 2016). There is a pressing need for studies on body image issues among adult populations (including middle-aged men) of other cultures to provide better overview of who experiences these issues (Sarma & Robinson-Kurpius, 2012). Liechty (2012) emphasized the need to investigate how older men in different cultures perceive their changing physical appearance to for researchers to offer a broader view on the body dissatisfaction problem amongst men from diverse cultures in different parts of the world.

However, the debate on how self-esteem affects job performance continues (Ferris, et al., 2010; Sackett et al., 2017). Therefore, this study addressed how body image affects middle-aged Thai men's self-esteem and perceptions of their job performance.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study aimed to investigate how body image perceptions of middle-aged Thai men, aged 35-50 years, who live in Bangkok and the vicinity, affect their self-esteem and job performance. Several researchers have proposed a pressing need for studies on body image issues among adult populations of other cultures (Liechty, 2012; Sarma & Robinson-Kurpius, 2012). Knowledge derived from the results could highlight the need to inform leaders, managers, and supervisors of how body image affects the self-esteem and job performance of employees.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions are intended to address the identified gap in the literature:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): How do middle-aged Thai men perceive their body image?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): What role does the body image of middle-aged Thai men play in their perceived job performance?

### **Theoretical Foundation**

The theoretical foundation used for this study was the objectification Fredrickson and Roberts initiated in 1970 to provide a framework for explaining the sexual objectification of women (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) explain how women who live in a culture where it is commonplace to objectify their physical appearance are harmed by that objectification. This results in women becoming very conscious of their looks, seeing themselves as objects, and valuing their physical appearance over their abilities (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

The objectification theory has subsequently been used as a theoretical foundation for research that has encompassed studies on such diverse subjects as body image and eating disorders, the psychology of women, sexuality, and sexual well-being (Moradi, 2010). Parent et al. (2016) stated that objectification theory had become the second of the four most influential theories for grounding studies in body image. Additionally, preceding researchers have suggested that the adoption of cultural norms regarding what

is considered attractive has affected perceptions of self-objectification (e.g., Cashel et al. 2003; Karazsia & Crowther, 2008; Levesque & Vichesky 2006; Morry & Staska 2001; Moradi, 2010). The adoption of cultural norms also has affected dissatisfaction with one's body and an urge towards greater masculinity (e.g., Cashel et al. 2003; Karazsia & Crowther, 2008; Levesque & Vichesky 2006; Morry & Staska 2001; Moradi, 2010).

A study on men's body image dissatisfaction can benefit from objectification theory (Oehlhof et al., 2009). Middle-aged Thai men might be affected by changing cultural trends regarding physical appearance and might perceive themselves as objects. They might experience a decreased sense of self-worth due to their valuing their looks more than their performance. Therefore, objectification theory principles will provide a context for me to explore how changing cultural trends and beliefs about body image affect middle-aged men in Thailand's body image dissatisfaction, self-esteem, and perceptions of their job performance.

### **Nature of the Study**

This study used a generic qualitative approach to explore how perceptions of body image satisfaction affect middle-aged men's self-esteem and work performance in Thailand. The generic qualitative research approach is used in studies that are not predicated upon one research methodology (Kahlke, 2014; Merriam, 2009). Generic qualitative researchers aim to determine how people perceive or create a sense of understanding of their world and the experiences they have within the world (Merriam, 2002). The generic qualitative approach is a solid enough foundation to be used as a researcher's single analysis method (Merriam, 2009). Therefore, the generic qualitative

approach was an appropriate method for exploring middle-aged Thai men's perceptions of how their body image affects their self-esteem and job performance.

Ten Thai men between ages 35-50 years who live in Bangkok and Thailand's vicinity volunteered to participate in this study. The targeted participants were recruited via an announcement that I posted on social media groups' pages. The participants were recruited through the use of purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling focuses on utilizing people whose particular profiles correspond to a study's purposes, and who were likely to help provide deep and exclusive information voluntarily (Etikan et al., 2016). Therefore, purposeful sampling allowed me to recruit individuals who have experience with the phenomenon of interest. I used semistructured interview questions and interview techniques to gather rich information from participants. The length of each semistructured telephone or webcam interview (up to the participants' preference) was 30-45 minutes.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Body image:* An individual's personal view of their physical appearance (Pisitsungkagarn et al., 2014), which involves both self-perception and comments or reactions one receives from others (Urgesi, 2015).

*Job performance:* An individual's specific actions that drive them to achieve the goals of their organization, with the help of knowledge, expertise, aptitude, and drive (Zyphur et al., 2008).

*Middle-aged men:* Men between 35-50 years old (Lachman, 2004; Santrock, 2010).

*Self-esteem*: How an individual perceives their worthiness, which is believed to be an indicator of a person's general well-being (Maddyet al., 2015).

### **Assumptions**

To arrive at the conclusions of this qualitative study about body image dissatisfaction in middle-aged men, I considered several assumptions. The first assumption is that participants would see the value of how my study and their participation would provide contributions to the literature. I assumed that participants would do their best to respond honestly to my semistructured interview questions. The second assumption participants would open up and divulge their personal information. The participants' honest responses and willingness to provide a truthful portrayal of their perspectives and experiences was critical for the usefulness of results from this study.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

To assure the feasibility of the research process, this qualitative research study focuses on middle-aged Thai men or Thai male adults aged between 35-50 years (out of a potentially huge study population) who live and work in Bangkok and vicinity, Thailand. I was particularly interested in body image issues concerning self-esteem and job performance among these middle-aged men because this group of men, according to Lachman (2004), are at a life stage that encounters "key sets of issues and challenges" (in terms of physical, mental, social/professional changes/transitions from early adulthood into midlife life stage). I agreed not to take the number of years that study participants have spent in their current job position/workplace into account. I did not evaluate the participants' sexual orientation or their marital status.

### **Limitations**

This qualitative research study was designed with an awareness of several boundaries or limitations of the research. At the same time, body image problems are often lifelong accumulative issues. This research concentrates on the viewpoints and experiences of the study participants only, not those close to them. Moreover, that might not be enough to offer comprehensive perspectives about the participants' body image issues. To understand the root of their problems and the effects on sufferers' overall lives and well-being, aside from their work performance, may require more than interviews or self-report descriptions.

The study size of this qualitative study of 10 participants, who are middle-aged Thai men who live in Bangkok and vicinity, Thailand, may not provide indications effective enough to address transferability to broader population groups of which the studied interest group.

Qualitative studies require a high level of experience and expertise and avoidance of bias by the researcher, which is quite a challenge. Otherwise, the studies might not be as authentic, accurate, or insightful as they should be. The researcher designed, interpreted and utilized the data from qualitative research and made it acceptable and relevant to as many people as possible without being perceived as biased or too focused on a limited number of people. Finally, it is appropriate to acknowledge the limitations of qualitative research.

### **Significance of the Study**

This qualitative study gathered information about middle-aged Thai men's body image dissatisfaction and how it impacts their self-esteem and perceptions of their job performance. Although most previous studies of men's attitudes about body image have explored how it relates to various life issues, contemporary studies have not provided any insight into the link between body image, self-esteem, and job performance of middle-aged Thai men. Urgesi (2015) indicated the necessity of having a comprehensive approach to truly understand body image dissatisfaction by integrating multidisciplinary perspectives. He stated that perspectives from "psychiatry and clinical psychology, social psychology, cognitive psychology, personality psychology, anthropology, philosophy, cognitive neuroscience, and biological psychiatry" are important building blocks developing a more comprehensive understanding of body image representation and how it affects individuals in the work environment (Urgesi, 2015).

Therefore, findings from this study would have practical significance for human resources departments of organizations and I/O psychologists working with middle-aged males (aged 35-50 years) in Thailand who have experienced body image, self-esteem, and job performance mitigate or solve those issues. For instance, the organization might help those middle-aged male employees who display low self-esteem and low job performance by inviting them to join an interactive workshop on how to improve their physical appearance and sense of well-being by adopting a healthier lifestyle. At the same time, employers might provide fitness or sports facilities or membership to fitness clubs to their employees while also promoting an active lifestyle, as well as a balanced diet that



is both achievable and sustainable through its internal communication systems, such as the intranet, posters, and its announcement board. The intended result would be increased employee job performance and productivity, which ultimately benefits the organization.

### **Gap in Literature**

There is scant information on middle-aged men's body image dissatisfaction and its effect on aspects of their professional lives. More importantly, there is even less information on body image dissatisfaction and experiences that focus on adult Thai men. There are no studies that exclusively address middle-aged Thai men's body image problem and their influences on their self-esteem and job performance. This study will use the experiences and opinions provided by the participants of this research study to create guidelines designed to reduce body image dissatisfaction among middle-aged men.

### **Summary and Transition**

Chapter 1 presents the foundation and concept of this study. The chapter begins with the study's background, why it matters, and introduces the essential core concept of this body image dissatisfaction qualitative research study. Following that, I systematized the problem statement and strengthened it with a precise purpose statement. The theoretical framework is created by this study framework and leads to the research questions of this study. Key definitions are presented next to provide clarifications of the content discussed. Finally, I summarized and discussed the purpose of the study. In the next chapter, I provided information about the literature search strategy of this study, the theoretical framework, and the past research on body image and men's body image

dissatisfaction. Chapter 2 also discusses the literature reviewed for this study in more detail, especially the theoretical framework that I used to ground this study.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

Millions of men worldwide suffer a certain degree of body image dissatisfaction (Burlew & Shurts, 2013). Men's body image dissatisfaction has been linked to negative outcomes such as poor self-esteem, sadness, inability to adjust to one's environment, disturbed eating habits, use of steroids, and addiction to exercise (Cordes et al., 2016; Hildebrandt et al., 2012; Pritchard, 2014). An early study of body image revealed a connection between body image dissatisfaction and low self-esteem (Van den Berg et al., 2010). More importantly, findings from the study showed that the connections between body image dissatisfaction and low self-esteem remained consistent in later years (Van den Berg et al., 2010). Additionally, results from meta-analyses in other studies have revealed that an individual's lack of self-esteem could negatively affect the individual's job satisfaction and work performance (Judge & Bono, 2001; Sackett et al., 2017).

Despite a growing number of publications discussing body image issues in the male population, body image in middle-aged men has not received as much attention. More importantly, most of the existing literature on men's body image has focused on eating disorders (Cook-Cottone, 2015; Mitchison, & Mond, 2015; Strother et al., 2012), excessive exercise (Gattario et al., 2015; Homana & Tylkab, 2014), or sexual dysfunction (Bossio & Pukall, 2017; Milhausen et al., 2014). Liechty (2012) remarked that existing research includes strikingly few studies that shine a light on how men operate within body image concepts and what factors beyond basic weight issues play into a state of dissatisfaction with one's appearance. The current study intended to draw attention to the

effects of body image dissatisfaction issues on the professional lives of middle-aged men. Neither the men in this age group nor the focus of the study received a great deal of attention from organizational psychologists or social psychologists.

No literature could be found from the field of organizational psychology that addressed the inner workings of how problems related to middle-aged men's body image dissatisfaction could affect their work performance. Further investigation into this relationship is crucial to help middle-aged men experiencing or suffering from body image issues experiencing or suffering from body image issues understand their problems and pinpoint which factors might trigger their discontent. Greater understanding would be helpful to improve the men's self-esteem and, consequently, their work performance. At the same time, the insights derived from this study could be useful for organizations where male staff might have some work performance issues resulting from low self-esteem due to their dissatisfaction with their body image. Furthermore, this study is a vital addition to filling the void in the literature covering the impact of body image satisfaction on middle-aged Thai men's self-esteem and job performance.

This chapter discusses literature concerning body image dissatisfaction in men, particularly in older male adults. The literature review will introduce the definition of body image dissatisfaction and discuss the impact of body dissatisfaction on men. Subsequent topics covered in the chapter include body image dissatisfaction issues in middle-aged male adults, research into self-esteem, and studies that address the relationship between self-esteem and job performance. This chapter will also provide

contextual information on how culture and changing trends are related to body image troubles that men may experience.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

The literature search for this chapter was performed through the Walden University Library online database, including EBSCOhost, PsycINFO, JSTOR, ProQuest, Science Direct databases, and The National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), and Google Scholar. The literature included in this review includes articles published between 1954 and 2020, during which body image dissatisfaction has held scholars' attention. The literature reviewed covers integrated peer-reviewed journals, scholarly journals, dissertations, government documents, and mass media articles.

There is a great deal of research on body image in female populations (both girls and women of various age groups), adolescents, bisexual and gay men, and older adults. There is also a significant amount of research on body image and muscularity and body image and eating disorders. However, there is a scarcity of current research on middle-aged male body image and aging. Even fewer than 10 of those investigations exclusively focused on middle-aged men and body image. Most psychology literature about middle-aged men discusses declining health and alcoholism. There is drastically less current research (probably none) on body image and self-esteem and how those factors affect work performance. Perhaps this absence of material suggests that body image issues and their effect on work-related matters are only now forming an emerging trend in organizational psychology.

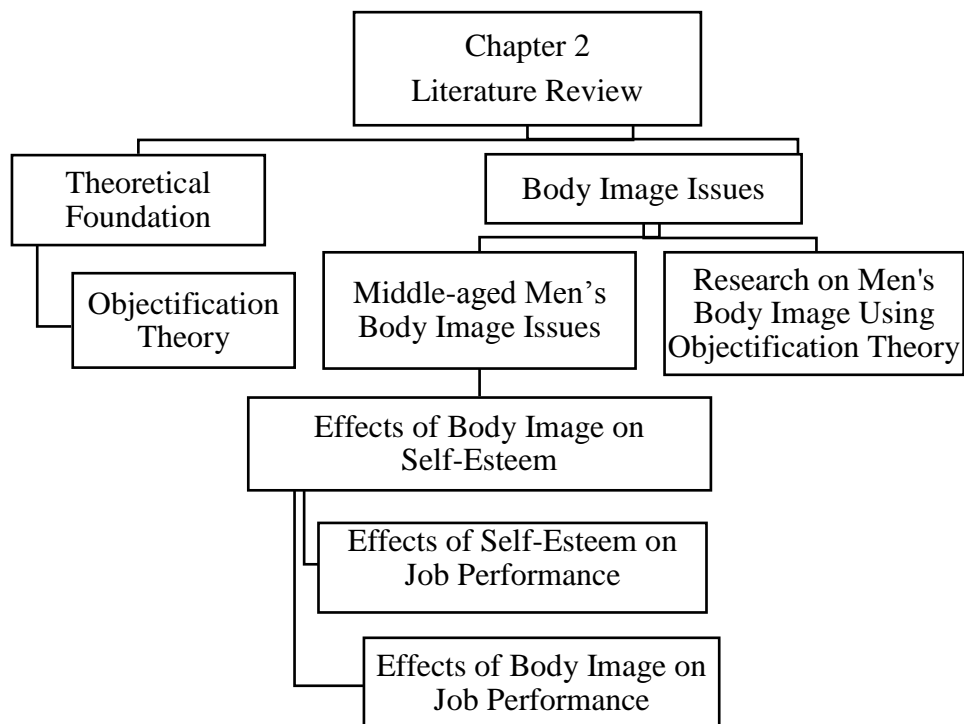
Keywords used in this literature search included: *body image issues, men's body image issues, middle-aged men's body image problems, the effect of body image on self-esteem, and self-esteem on job performance*. These keywords were employed to scour the databases mentioned above and search engines for related research and literature. The hunt included the following divisions and subdivisions of psychology: *organizational psychology, organizational studies, organizational behavior, personality psychology, social psychology, health and clinical psychology, governmental and educational institute documents, and articles in the mass media*. Figure 1 illustrates the search schemes used to find key information related to this study.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

Body image dissatisfaction is a complex psychological issue. Objectification theory and self-objectification theory were selected to provide a theoretical basis for this study. The two theories will be used as lenses when examining how middle-aged men are influenced by social standards and media norms of attractiveness and ideal masculinity.

**Figure 1**

*The Strategic Approach to Conducting the Literature Review*



### **Objectification Theory**

The primary theoretical framework for this study will be Fredrickson and Roberts's (1997) objectification theory, which was developed to explain the sexual objectification of women. Objectification theory was used to explain how women and girls are perceived and are made to believe that their bodies are sexual objects. According to the premises of objectification theory, the degree to which people are satisfied or dissatisfied with their bodies depends on their beliefs about an idealized body image (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997). A person's perception of the ideal body image will

determine the degree of dissatisfaction they have with their body image (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997; Grogan et al., 2016).

Objectification theory focuses on how women's bodies are objectified in Western culture and the impact that objectification has on women (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997). Objectification theory has been used to explain the pressures and adverse mental health consequences, such as "unipolar depression, sexual dysfunction, and eating disorders" (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 173), which women and girls experience in Western culture where they are valued by their appearance and/or the potential utility of their bodies or body parts for sexual pleasure. As a result of the objectification, women and girls start internalizing and adopting these culturally influenced perceptions (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997). Women and girls also come to regard their bodies as something to be viewed as sexual objects distinct from their being (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997). Cultural concepts of beauty strongly influence women's and girls' levels of satisfaction with their bodies and self-esteem, especially if their appearance does not fit into society's ideal beauty parameters (Bhatti, 2018; Grogan et al., 2016).

### **Self-Objectification Theory**

Frederickson and Roberts's (1997) self-objectification theory is used to explain what women and girls go through as they internalize the objectification of their bodies by others. The self-objectification theory hypothesizes that women and girls can experience sexual self-objectification because of their desire to adopt and conform to social norms (Rollero et al., 2018). The process of self-objectification occurs when women and girls internalize the objectification of others and begin to view their bodies as objects (Arroyo



et al., 2014). Vandebosch and Eggermont (2014) indicated that self-objectification occurs in the following three stages: (a) an individual interacts socially or consumes mass media and absorbs widely shared concepts of sexually objectified attractiveness; (b) the individual begins to internalize those concepts; and (c) the individual begins to self-monitor and self-evaluate their worth based on their appearance or societal standards of beauty, instead of on their abilities and skills.

Oehlhof et al. (2009) stated that the self-objectification theory sheds light on men's body image issues. However, variables of self-objectification in men and women may differ (Oehlhof et al., 2009). Self-objectification leads to adverse mental and physical reactions, including body image dissatisfaction, body shame, depression, disordered eating, and sexual dysfunction (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Those who can leave the influence of body objectification behind will find that their well-being and sense of self-worth will be less affected by body image anxiety (Mellor et al., 2010). More recent studies in body image problems affirmed that men also experience sexual objectification (Slater & Tiggemann, 2010; Vandebosch & Eggermont, 2013, 2014).

### **Self-Objectification in Body Image Research**

Several studies address the relationships between objectification theory and body image. Slater and Tiggemann (2010) conducted a questionnaire survey study to measure the three central components of objectification: (a) body surveillance, (b) body shame, and (c) appearance anxiety, to examine their relation to eating disorders, and to understand the differences between the genders. Their research participants included 714 Australian adolescents (382 boys, 332 girls) between 12 and 16 years of age (Slater &

Tiggemann, 2010). Despite the findings from multivariate analysis of variance, which reported that there is a significant gender difference effect  $F(4,709)=32.2$   $p<.001$ , adolescent girls displayed higher levels of body surveillance  $F(1,712)=59.24$ ,  $p<.001$ , body shame  $F(1,712)=11.28$ ,  $p<.001$ , appearance anxiety  $F(1,712)=88.07$ ,  $p<.001$  and disordered eating  $F(1,712)=72.20$ ,  $p<.001$  than adolescent boys (Slater & Tiggemann, 2010). In particular, the researchers found that self-objectification through body surveillance had a strong association with body shame, appearance anxiety, and disordered eating in both adolescent girls and boys. The researchers concluded that the objectification theory model applies to both genders in assessing their body image dissatisfaction issues. Moreover, the general findings from Slater and Tiggemann (2010) reaffirmed that both boy and girl adolescents' psychological health was negatively affected by self-objectification. The relevance of Slater and Tiggemann's (2010) findings to this research is that male individuals' mental health can fall under the negative influence of self-objectification: body surveillance, body shame, and appearance anxiety can result in body image dissatisfaction. While Slater and Tiggemann (2010) focused on disordered eating among boy and girl adolescents, the current research is focused on discerning how men's body image issues stemming from self-objectification can affect their job performance as a result of poor self-esteem.

Calogero (2012) reviewed previous research on objectification theory, self-objectification, and body image to determine the benefits and limitations of the theories related to body image. Calogero noted that most researchers who used the theories focused on heterosexual White female adults living predominantly in North America and

Australia. However, Calogero provided useful information about men's studies on objectification theory, self-objectification, and body image. The researcher indicated that gay men reported a much higher rate of instances of self-objectification than heterosexual men (Calogero, 2012). Heterosexual men did not seem to experience sexual objectification from other men like gay men do (Calogero, 2012).

In addition, being sexually objectified by women did not seem to lead to negative feelings in heterosexual men, and body dissatisfaction and eating disorders were more prevalent among men who experienced self-objectification (Calogero, 2012). Calogero concluded that although sexual objectification has been directed primarily at girls and women, boys and men also suffer from sexual objectification, particularly men who live in “hypersexualized cultural contexts” (Calogero, 2012). Calogero called for more research on sexual self-objectification in male populations. This study on middle-aged men’s body image and self-objectification problems and their relation to self-esteem and job performance should add value to the literature, per Calogero’s recommendations.

Arroyo et al. (2014) conducted two separate quantitative studies using objectification theory to examine the connections between self-objectification, fat talk, and health among young female adults and their peers. Although the participants were all female undergraduate students from colleges located in the southwestern United States, the research provided useful findings the effectiveness of self-objectification theory in body image dissatisfaction studies. Communication such as fat talk and old talk was conclusively associated with adverse physical health and mental well-being effects. Findings from the research provided evidence to support the idea that the theories of

objectification/self-objectification are useful tools to provide a framework for body image dissatisfaction studies among diverse age and gender groups (Arroyo et al., 2014).

Arroyo et al. suggested that future researchers could use their model to explore these issues in groups of male participants. The theory of objectification and self-objectification will be a sound framework for this study on how middle-aged men's body image and self-esteem affect their work performance.

Lanzieri and Hildebrandt (2016) conducted a literature review to understand how gay male adults develop body image dissatisfaction due to the media's influence, using objectification theory to analyze the process and discuss the problem. The researchers highlighted the notion that gay men are affected by certain idealized male body types they consume through the media. The researchers interpreted the process of self-objectification as a cause of men's dissatisfaction with their body image. After gay men viewed images in advertisements, they started to internalize some idealized body images and scrutinize their bodies through a third party perspective as if their bodies were objects, resulting in dissatisfaction with their bodies (Lanzieri & Hildebrandt, 2016). Eventually, this body dissatisfaction led gay men to take action to produce a more muscular and leaner body, including unhealthy workout behavior and disordered dieting (Lanzieri & Hildebrandt, 2016).

Nonetheless, like most research on men's self-objectification and body image dissatisfaction, the focus of Lanzieri and Hildebrandt's (2016) study was gay men. Unlike any prior research, my qualitative study uses the theory of objectification and self-objectification as its theatrical framework. It offers a unique awareness of the

accumulation of body image problems in heterosexual and gay men in their midlife stage, offering insight into these issues and providing an opportunity for resolution. Moreover, this study should help better understand the rise of social problems, namely the effect of men's body image issues on their work performance, a recently emerging area of concern.

Rollero and De Piccoli (2017) conducted a quantitative study among 371 Italian undergraduate psychology students (284 women, 86 men ages 18-29 years) to examine the relationship between a person's values and how likely it is for that person to be affected by the objectification typical to the Western cultural context. The researchers also investigated the degree to which a person might internalize or adopt a third party point of view when considering their own body. Surveys were used to collect data on the variables of interest: body shame, body surveillance, personal values, and body mass index. With similar results for men and women, the regression analysis revealed that the degree of self-objectification correlates with how high or low an individual ranks personal values, specifically on self-enhancement [self-worth or self-esteem], or has a particular "priority to achieve personal success in society" (Rollero & De Piccoli, 2017). Notably, an individual's general personal values do not influence either men or women's self-objectification or body shame (Rollero & De Piccoli, 2017). Rollero and De Piccoli's (2017) study is relevant to this research because it looks at middle-aged men's specific value on the "priority to achieve personal success in society." This also applies to their workplace, where middle-aged men under the influence of self-objectification might care deeply about the acceptance they receive from their work colleagues based on their

appearance. This study will look beyond the effect of self-objectification, and body dissatisfaction on the self-esteem and work performance of middle-aged men sensitized to social concepts of idealized body images.

The aim is to apply the concept of self-objectification theory as the primary framework for this study. The premises of objectification theory and Vandembosch and Eggermont's (2014) three-step process of self-objectification have informed my study as follows: (a) Middle-aged men might experience sexual objectification when they engage in social interaction, be that at the workplace or while consuming some form of media; (b) men might internalize a projected ideal of attractiveness and self-objectify or monitor their appearance from a third-person's perspective rather than from their own; and, (c) might self-monitor and self-evaluate their value based on how attractive they perceive themselves to be, instead of their skills and capabilities. These negative cycles of self-doubt might leave middle-aged men with a feeling of inferiority, dissatisfaction with their body image, depression, a lack of self-confidence, and low self-esteem.

### **Body Image and Body Image Dissatisfaction Defined**

An individual's body image relates to their experiences, cognitions, and responses to their looks (Bolton et al., 2010; Jackson & Kennison, 2011). Concepts of body image begin at an early age when children become conscious of their appearance (Bolton et al., 2010). Positive body image relates to how an individual appreciates their body for its abilities as well as its relations to others (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015). Self-acceptance towards the uniqueness of one's body image/appearance also relates to positive body image (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015). In contrast, body image

dissatisfaction relates to body image disturbance, which refers to the negative attitudes and perceptions one holds toward one's body or specific parts of one's body (Daniel & Bridges, 2010; Reddy, 2013). A person might suffer problems related to body image dissatisfaction to the point where well-being could affect (Allen & Walter, 2016).

This study focuses on body image dissatisfaction among male adults. Evidence shows that body image dissatisfaction is more prominent in men and is associated with negative consequences in psychological health or quality of life (Griffiths et al., 2016). Frederick and Essayli (2016) stated that men of all sexual preferences expressed suffering from body dissatisfaction and stress about their appearance. Such issues are experienced mostly among overweight men (Frederick & Essayli, 2016). Previous studies on male body image indicated that more attention is required to solve related problems among men (Frederick & Essayli, 2016). The number of men who suffer from body dissatisfaction has increased in recent decades (Swami & Voracek, 2013). Gray and Ginsberg (2007) noted that in the United States in 1972, 15% of men were dissatisfied with their body image while in 1985, the percentage increased to 34%; the percentage rose to 43% in 1997. Mitchison and Mond (2015) reported that 83% of male adults suffered from the problem in Australia, while only 71% of female adults suffered from the same issue.

### **Body Image Dissatisfaction in Men**

Body image dissatisfaction can harm the lives of sufferers, both male (or female), in several ways, including depression, low self-esteem, body shame, higher body surveillance, reduced quality of life, eating disorders, and sexual dysfunction (Jackson &

Kennison, 2011). Because of excessive concerns over body image, an increasing number of men have started seeking help to feel better about themselves (Parent, 2013; Reddy, 2013). However, body image issues tend to be underdiagnosed. Griffiths et al. (2016) stated that eating disorders among men are four times greater than the reported figures. The following sections address the definition, development, and consequences of body image dissatisfaction in men.

Burlew and Shurts (2013) conducted a meta-analysis of scholarly articles published between 1961 and 2011. The researchers sought to explore body image dissatisfaction/distress (BID) in men and the adverse consequences. The researchers stated that today's idealized male appearance trends could negatively affect men's self-image, leading men to develop unfavorable perceptions of their body image. The researchers found that the preferred appearance or ideal body image for men included the following attributes: "Muscular, toned, lean, physically fit, masculine, young, powerful, self-confident, and sexually desirable" (Burlew & Shurts, 2013).

The meta-analysis also revealed that men experienced body image issues differently from women (Burlew & Shurts, 2013). The noteworthy instances included the findings that men with BID usually kept their suffering to themselves. Men were less likely to ask for help or seek therapy or counseling because they felt ashamed of their feelings (Burlew & Shurts, 2013). For these reasons, Burlew and Shurts (2013) emphasized the need for additional research into BID to gain information that can be used to develop a tool to measure and diagnose BID. The researchers asserted that any new insights from further BID research, in turn, could contribute to developing and



implementing practical treatment strategies to help men who suffer in silence with their BID issues (Burlew & Shurts, 2013).

The study by Burlew and Shurts underscored the importance of examining BID issues in men to help them recognize their problems and reduce the adverse outcomes associated with BID. In response to Burlew and Shurts's (2013) suggestion to conduct additional research on BID in men, my study will add new insights into men's BID research because it will address the middle-aged group, which has not been studied. Also, this qualitative study will offer observations of men's experiences with BID issues and an increased understanding of how BID might affect their work performance and self-esteem. This study will address psycho-social problems and work-related issues.

Loehle et al. (2017) examined the relationship between men's genital self-image, body image, and social appearance pressure using self-report surveys to understand the pressure men experience resulting in image dissatisfaction. The sample consisted of 674 gay and heterosexual men (average age  $M = 32.14$ ) from Canada, the United States, and Western Europe. The researchers used simultaneous multiple regression for data analyses to measure the relationships between genital self-image and the following variables: (a) body image, (b) pornography use, (c) circumcision status, (d) age, and (e) social appearance anxiety (Loehle et al., 2017). This current qualitative study will also address men's sexual orientation to understand body image issues and the factors contributing to the problems.

The results revealed that men's body dissatisfaction was associated with feelings of unhappiness, anxiety issues at social functions, and unhealthy eating behavior (Loehle

et al., 2017). The study further revealed that men whose bodies do not quite match the socially preferred, idealized body types were more likely to experience dissatisfaction toward their body image, particularly their genital self-image. The results of Loehle et al.'s (2017) study point out significant insights in a similar vein out significant insights similar to the study by Burlew and Shurts (2013) of men's body image issues and associations with the adverse outcomes. However, the two studies do not provide insights into how BID problems among men might affect their work lives. In a novel approach, this current study will fill a gap in the BID research, examining how middle-aged Thai men whose body image does not match the socially preferred/idealized body types might experience body dissatisfaction and how this might affect their self-esteem and work performance.

### **Middle-Aged and Older Men's Body Image Perceptions and Issues**

Middle age is a complex period in people's lives (Lachman, Teshale, & Agrigoroaei, 2015). Middle age, commonly refers to people aged 40 to 59 years, is associated with psychological and physical changes and other types of transitions/adjustments midlife affects older adults' perceptions of themselves (Lachman et al., 2015). The following section discusses factors that might affect middle-aged men's perceptions of their body image, as covered in earlier studies. Kwan and Trautner (2009) conducted an analysis of studies published between 1965 and 2008 that explored "beauty work and beauty practices as work that individuals perform on themselves" to attain rewards, particularly in social ranking. Kwan and Trautner (2009) found that being young and good-looking is advantageous in the work setting. An attractive personal appearance

impacted other people's perceptions of a person at personal and organizational levels (Kwan & Trautner, 2009).

Additionally, an attractive appearance facilitated work-related advantages, including employment opportunities, more favorably appraised job performance, increased income, and job advancement (Kwan & Trautner, 2009). Moreover, negative feelings about personal body image/appearance can lead to absenteeism, affecting work performance (Kwan & Trautner, 2009). Kwan and Trautner (2009) highlighted the importance of appearance in people's work life and a growing readiness to do/apply "beauty work" to look younger and better. This reflects the pressures and prejudices middle-aged adults face when they yearn to be perceived as part of a youthful and effective workforce in the job market.

Demuth et al. (2012) conducted a quantitative study of educated middle-aged male and female adults aged 40 to 60 years in Wielkopolska, Poland. Demuth et al. explored the differences in self-image perception between the men and women concerning their morphological attributes (body size, shape, form) and the level of physical activity they engaged. Demuth et al. found that body image, a component of self-image, affected self-perception and affected how other people perceived that particular individual, which had a direct impact on the individual's self-esteem. Having an attractive body/appearance promoted favorable appraisals from others with generous descriptions of positive attributes. These encompassed numerous qualifications, including competency in engaging with people personally and professionally, being more appealing, adjusting to the changing social environment, and intellectual competence

(Demuth et al., 2012). There are also correlations between levels of physical activity and body image satisfaction in men and women (Demuth et al., 2012). The more physically active participants were, the higher level of satisfaction they reported regarding their body image (Demuth et al., 2012). However, Demuth et al. (2012) did not provide insights into the effects of male body image satisfaction or dissatisfaction on work or the direct impact on self-esteem. In the current study, I address how body image might negatively affect middle-aged men's self-esteem and work performance.

Reddy (2013) offers insights into how men perceive and value their body image. Reddy conducted a qualitative study to explore how middle-aged men felt about their looks, what they thought about the physical aspects of getting older, and how they coped with the physical changes of aging. Reddy used semi-structured interviews with eight well-educated men from the United States aged 52 to 71. Reddy reported that participants indicated that their appearance was as important as their health. Most men in the study, even overweight, viewed themselves as normal weight (Reddy, 2013). The participants reported that having a positive mindset was the key to coping with changes and aging (Reddy, 2013). Reddy remarked that the results of her study, which concentrated on a limited and specific group of participants, might not have been sufficient to make general statements on specific characteristics of men of similar ages in different cultures.

Jankowski et al. (2016) examined how aging, appearance, and pressures from sociocultural norms to conform to an idealized youthful appearance impacted older adults' body image. Jankowski et al. conducted a six-focus-group study in the United Kingdom with 28 White British and South Asian older adults ages 65 to 92. Participants

indicated that they felt pressured by sociocultural norms to maintain idealized, youthful looks. Such pressure negatively impacted their body image, thoughts, emotions, and overall behavior related to their appearance (Jankowski et al., 2016). Jankowski et al. also found that older adults continued to place importance on their bodies. For older people, appearance was not only important in an aesthetic sense, but it was also important to their social status, identities, and capabilities [performance] in the eyes of others (Jankowski et al., 2016).

Moreover, Jankowski et al. (2016) highlighted that although older people felt pressured by current sociocultural attitudes to retain youthful looks and an attractive appearance, only a few participants said that this caused negative feelings toward their aging looks. The participants also reported a positive side to age, which was manifested when they received respect and help from younger people (Jankowski et al., 2016). However, Jankowski et al. did not examine how the importance of appearance to men in midlife impacted their professional life. This current study is intended to fill the gap in body image studies by exploring body image problems and their influence on self-esteem and work performance among middle-aged Thai men.

The studies by Kwan and Trautner (2009), Demuth et al. (2012), Reddy (2013), and Demuth et al. (2016) provided insights and evidence that body image is important to men in their middle age or older, and they experience adverse effects from the body image issue. Even so, none of the selected studies provide any insights into men's performance, particularly at work. My study will expand the literature on body image in

older males by exploring how body image may influence middle-aged Thai men's self-esteem and their performance at work, keeping in mind the sensitivities of Thai culture.

### **Body Image Dissatisfaction Related to Self-Esteem**

Body image dissatisfaction has been associated with various adverse conditions such as decreased self-esteem, depression, social anxiety, and sexual impairment (Alleva et al., 2015). Self-esteem relates to an individual's overall self-valuation of their being (Wagner et al., 2014). Prior research has established an association between men's low self-esteem and high levels of body dissatisfaction (Reddy, 2013). Mellor et al. (2010) conducted a longitudinal quantitative study to explore the relationship between body image, age, gender, and self-esteem in Australia. The authors conducted surveys with participants at the beginning of the study in 2001 and again 2 years later. Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem Scale was used to measure self-esteem, and the Body Image Dissatisfaction Scale was used to measure the participants' level of dissatisfaction. The participants included 150 men and 239 women between 20 and 86 years of age in Australia. The results indicated that greater self-esteem was related to lower levels of dissatisfaction with one's appearance. However, the results did not establish a clear relationship between an individual's body image perception and self-esteem over time, spanning various life periods, or any differences between men and women from different age groups.

Wagner et al. (2014) conducted a study to understand the role of resources in self-esteem changes throughout adulthood. The authors conducted three studies. In Study 1: the authors explored the different self-esteem levels of each person and changes

concerning resources. Their participants include male and female participants ( $N = 12,609$ ) in Germany aged 17 and 100. Study 1 aimed to measure age-specific resources, such as subjective health, partner status, education, and positive personality, and their relations with self-esteem. The researchers noted that previous longitudinal studies stated that late adults' self-esteem levels tended to fluctuate under the influence of variables including education, socioeconomic status, and health. They measured self-esteem (using a 7-point self-rated response scale), self-rated health, personality (using a 15-item short version of the Big Five inventory). The results from Wagner et al.'s (2014) Study 1 indicated that there are two main differences among age groups in the mean levels of self-esteem: (a) the late adult participants showed lower self-esteem than the young adults concerning resources such as subjective health and neuroticism; (b) participants, at any age, who were married or in a relationship displayed higher levels of self-esteem with relation to their positive subjective health.

Study 2 and Study 3 involved two longitudinal 4-year and 8-year studies in measuring self-esteem in relation to personal resources and changing over time. The participants of Study 2 consisted of young adults ( $N = 339$ , 45% male) aged between 17 and 30 ( $M = 24.07$ ,  $SD = 3.85$ ) while Study 3 consisted of older adults ( $N = 325$ ) aged from 64 to 84 ( $M = 70.88$ ,  $SD = 4.23$ ; 36% male) in Germany. Studies 2 and 3 measured (1) self-esteem: using Marsh and O'Neill's (1984) 5-point self-response scale questionnaire; and (2) resource variables: using the German version of the NEO-FFI, a 5-point self-response scale, by Borkenau and Ostendorf (1991). The two studies' results found differences in self-esteem levels between young and late adult groups: global self-

esteem throughout the 4- and 8-year studies increased in the young adult group ( $d = 0.22$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and decreased in the late adulthood group ( $d = -0.13$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Self-esteem levels for both groups in both periods showed clear stability across the 4- and 8-year groups (Wagner et al., 2014). Results from Studies 2 and 3 also showed that higher levels of self-esteem have positive relations with education in the young adult group. In contrast, the self-esteem level in the older adult group has a positive relationship with personal health (Wagner et al., 2014). Additionally, changes in self-esteem had either positive or negative relations to resources in both young and older adults (Wagner et al., 2014). Wagner et al. (2014) concluded from the results of their studies that, in general, self-esteem levels are “reflective of age-specific constraints and risks”. Nonetheless, their study does not exclusively mention the middle-aged adult group’s self-esteem level. This current study aims to fill this gap in the research by determining what factors can influence middle-aged men’s self-esteem levels, focused on the career-related domain.

Alleva et al. (2015) conducted a meta-analysis of literature that used 62 assessments of interventions ( $N = 3,846$ ). The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of various interventions and 48 selective change techniques that were used in the interventions to help ease body image disturbance issues. The researchers stated that approximately 40% of male adults suffered from body image dissatisfaction and that the problem continued unabated throughout their lives. Moreover, the detrimental effects of a negative body image have been associated with various adverse conditions such as decreased self-esteem, depression, social anxiety, and sexual impairment (Alleva et al., 2015). Even though this current study does not aim to provide any of the intervention



solutions utilized in the study by Alleva et al., the two studies share a similar goal: to enhance the understanding of male adults' body image problems brings about positive changes.

Groven et al. (2015) explored the effect of body image dissatisfaction on self-esteem in men. Groven et al. conducted a qualitative study to offer new insights into life experiences, feelings, and perceptions of men who underwent gastric bypass surgery to reduce body weight and size. Groven et al. explored participants' health, attitudes, self-image, self-esteem, and views of life in general. The study participants included five Norwegian men between 24 and 46 years of age. Groven et al. used semi-structured interviews to obtain deep and personal information on the participants' postsurgery experiences. The participants, whose bodies were bigger and heavier than average before surgery, described their suffering due to body shame because of the negative opinions and criticism (Groven et al., 2015).

Halliwell (2015) performed a literature review on positive body image research published during the past decade to provide future studies on body image issues. While positive body image relates to positive well-being through several personal traits such as self-esteem, proactive coping, optimism, positive affect, self-compassion, life satisfaction, and subjective happiness, negative body image has been associated with reduced performance and reduced achievement levels (Halliwell, 2015). Existing body image research indicates differences in body dissatisfaction between young men and older men (Halliwell, 2015). Adolescent men report being dissatisfied because they want a more muscular body (Halliwell, 2015). Adult men report being dissatisfied because of

their weight and lack of muscle tone (Halliwell, 2015). But there is no exclusive focus on middle-aged men's body image trends as found in my study. Based on Halliwell's (2015) literature review results, the researcher affirmed that people with a positive body image not run out of mental resources. Neither will they accumulate extra resources of any kind. However, individuals with a positive body image tend to have more mental and other resources at their disposal to enable both educational and physical aspects of engagement, as well as a higher predisposition to succeed (Halliwell, 2015). This study aims to examine the relationship between body image, self-esteem, and job performance of middle-aged men in Thailand. These findings may be a significant addition for the field of body image and its effects on individuals' professional lives.

### **Influence of Self-Esteem on Job Performance**

An individual's self-esteem and their body image are interconnected (Elsherif & Abdelrao, 2018). Research reveals that self-esteem can influence people's performance at work (Alessandri et al., 2012). Job performance relates to the typical work-related exercises expected to perform (Ansari pour et al., 2017). Healthy self-esteem enhances job performance in general, reduces workers' engagement in destructive actions, and boosts satisfaction at work (Ansari pour et al., 2017). Judge and Bono (2001) conducted a meta-analysis to examine how self-esteem, locus of control, neuroticism, and generalized self-efficacy affected job satisfaction and job performance. Judge and Bono found that job satisfaction and job performance were related to self-esteem, locus of control, neuroticism, and generalized self-efficacy. The results showed the correlation between self-esteem and job performance at work (Judge & Bono, 2001). Although the research

by Judge and Bono (2001) is dated, their findings document the relationship between self-esteem and job performance. This current study will address how men's body image perception may affect their self-esteem and influence their job performance.

Ferris et al. (2010) conducted a quantitative study using three online surveys to explore the relationship between self-esteem and job performance. Their participants consisted of two samples: sample 1 included 296 employees (49 percent men) mean age  $M=42.6$  years; and sample 2, who responded to two questionnaires surveys, including 191 full-time employed respondents (47 percent men) mean age  $M=34.1$  years. The results revealed that the level of self-esteem could influence job performance. To extend a valuable addition to Ferris et al.'s (2010) study and the existing literature on self-esteem and work performance, this current study will explore further how body image perceptions amongst middle-aged men might affect their self-esteem and work performance.

Alessandri et al. (2012) conducted a research project with three sub-studies to measure how and to what positive degree orientation (POS) contributes to organizational behavior, including "in-role and extra-role performance". In addition, their study aims to shed light on how an employee's positive affectivity (PA) can predict job performance and organizational citizenship behavior (Alessandri et al., 2012). The authors remarked that although POS relates to PA and CSE, they are different constructs. Employees with better POS tend to display better job performance because they have sufficient personal ability to cope with stress (Alessandri et al., 2012).

In Study 1, the authors interacted with 203 participants (90 percent men, 10 percent woman) who worked at a security company in Italy, mean age  $M=39.81$  ( $SD = 7.3$ ). To measure the participants' self-esteem, the authors used Rosenberg's (1965) Self-esteem Scale with 10 items. The authors used Diener et al.'s (1985) Satisfaction with Life five-item set scale to measure the participants' life satisfaction. The revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R) by Scheier et al. (1994) was used to test the participants' overall optimism. The authors used 10 items from the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson et al., 1988) to assess the frequency of positive emotions among the participants. To test the participants' Big Five Personality traits, the authors used a short version of the Big Five Questionnaire with 60 items (BFQ; Caprara et al., 1993). The authors reported that POS is a better predictor of in-role job performance than the effects of "its lower-order components (such as self-esteem, optimism, and life satisfaction), the Big Five, and positive affectivity" (Alessandri et al., 2012). The authors stated that "95 per cent CI associated with the effects of POS (CI= .09, .59), conscientiousness (CI = .02, .49), and agreeableness (CI = .04, .44) did not include zero" (Alessandri et al., 2012).

In Study 2 the authors contacted 372 participants (men = 43 percent, women = 57 percent) who were residents of Rome, mean age  $M = 39.45$  ( $SD = 11.03$ ). The authors used the same tools as Study 1 to measure the participants' self-esteem, life satisfaction, optimism, and PA. To measure each participant's organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), the authors used Williams and Anderson's (1991) scale, assessed by one of the participants' colleagues. They found that POS was a better indicator to predict extra-role

performance (or Organizational Citizenship Behaviors) than the effects of its lower-order components, the Big Five and PA (Alessandri et al., 2012).

For Study 3, the researchers interviewed 311 male participants at a security company in Italy, mean age of  $M=39.00$  ( $SD = 9.81$ ) using a self-reported questionnaire. For data on their work performance, the authors obtained information regarding performance from the human resources department. The authors found that PA is a better predictor of in-role job performance than Core Self-Evaluations and the conscientiousness trait (Alessandri et al., 2012). The relevance of Alessandri et al.'s (2012) study and their findings to this current proposed research study include: (a) the main participants are middle-aged men and (b) the purpose is to understand the role of personal orientation toward oneself, and the role of self-esteem in work performance. This current study places a specific focus on how each man's perspective of his body image can affect his self-esteem and job performance.

Kuster et al. (2013) conducted a longitudinal study to systematically understand the interplay between self-esteem, work conditions, work stressors, job satisfaction, job success, and counterproductive work behavior and work outcomes. Results from the study showed that high self-esteem significantly influenced superior work outcomes. They conducted two separate longitudinal studies that included five measurements over 8 months ( $N=663$ , age between 16 and 62) and three assessments over 2 years ( $N=600$ , age between 22 and 51). The results from all of their studies indicated that high self-esteem is an inclinational predictor of work conditions and work outcomes/performance for both male and female participants. Conversely, work conditions and outcomes as an indicator

of higher self-esteem are insignificant for both male and female participants. The researchers stated that poor self-esteem was an indicator of depression. Employees with low self-esteem were more likely to seek unproductive comments from their colleagues or managers (Kuster et al., 2013). Incidences of these psychological patterns can lead to negative consequences such as rejection and reduced cooperation in the workplace (Kuster et al., 2013). The researchers emphasized the importance of healthy self-esteem as it contributes to overall work effectiveness, reduces discourteous and aberrant behavior, increases job satisfaction, and improves job performance/achievement. The researchers suggested that future studies explore the influence of self-esteem on people's well-being and work accomplishments. Although this current study does not deal with interventions designed to improve self-esteem, it should provide useful insights into how the level of middle-aged men's self-esteem, as a result of positive or negative self-image, may affect their work performance.

Ansari-pour et al. (2017) conducted a survey-based, correlational study to examine the relationships between self-esteem and successful job performance. The participants included 86 employees aged between 24 and 55 years at the Shahrekord University of Medical Sciences (SKUMS) in Iran. Data were collected from a series of questionnaires. Results from the data analysis indicated a statistically significant correlation between job performance and self-esteem ( $p < 0.001$ ,  $r = 0.41$ ). The researchers found that the relationships between demographic characteristics, job performance, career success, and self-esteem were not statistically significant. In addition, the researchers also indicated that employee job performance could improve through company support, which fortifies

self-esteem and enables career success. Ansaripour et al. concluded that healthy self-esteem was related to the following outcomes: enhanced the general effectiveness of work performance, reduced the likelihood of engaging in rude or deviant actions, and boosted job satisfaction. The researchers suggested that future studies explore the influence of self-esteem on people's well-being and work accomplishments. Although this current study does not propose interventions designed to improve self-esteem, it should provide useful insights into how the level of self-esteem among middle-aged men, a result of positive or negative self-image, may affect their work performance.

Sackett et al. (2017) conducted a review of literature that deals with individual differences and their measurements and that had been published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology* over the past one hundred years (1917-2017). The researchers focused on the three domains of individual differences: "(a) knowledge, skill, and ability, including both the cognitive and physical domains; (b) personality, including integrity, emotional intelligence, stable motivational attributes (e.g., achievement motivation, core self-evaluation), and creativity; and (c) vocational interests" (Sackett et al., 2017, p. 2). There are multiple relevant ideas that relate to this current study on self-image/self-perception, self-esteem, and job performance. The researchers stated that individual differences in goal orientation have a secondary effect on performance via more immediate motivational variables (Sackett et al., 2017). An individual's goal orientation is associated with general or generalized self-efficacy (GSE) that replicates the individual's perception towards their ability to succeed in different circumstances (Sackett et al., 2017).

Additionally, GSE has a positive relationship with job satisfaction and job performance. However, GSE remains within the range of core self-evaluations (CSEs). Sackett et al. remarked that CSEs denote a hidden paradigm, explaining the common discrepancy between GSE and three other paradigms - emotional stability, locus of control, and self-esteem. Based on the analyses of the previous research, the researchers cited that healthy self-esteem has a significant influence on general effectiveness at work, reduces the likelihood to engage in rude and deviant actions, boosts job satisfaction, and enhances work performance and success. The researchers suggested that future studies explore the influence of self-esteem on people's well-being and work accomplishments. Although the current study does not examine interventions designed to improve self-esteem, it should provide useful insights into how the level of self-esteem among middle-aged men, a result of positive or negative self-image, may affect their work performance.

Elsherif and Abdelraof (2018) conducted a quantitative research study to understand the relationship between body image and self-esteem. Their study aimed to establish correlations between body image perception, self-esteem, and academic performance by focusing on the first year ( $N = 200$ ) and fourth year female adolescent nursing students ( $N = 200$ ) at Tanta University in Egypt. The authors revealed that individuals who experience a high level of body image dissatisfaction toward their body image also tend to have poor self-esteem, and one consequence of this is substandard academic performance. Findings from Elsherif and Abdelraof's quantitative study highlighted the relationships between body image, self-esteem, and study performance. An individual's negative self-perception towards their body appearance can negatively



impact their self-esteem and academic performance (Elsherif & Abdelraof, 2018).

Elsherif and Abdelrao's study results report that body image dissatisfaction and self-esteem have a significant negative correlation in both the first year and the fourth year ( $r = 0.167$  and  $p = .018$ ; and  $r = 0.285$  and  $p \leq .001$  respectively) (Elsherif & Abdelraof, 2018). In addition, the results also found that self-esteem and academic behavior have a remarkable positive correlation in both the first year and the fourth year students ( $r = -0.253$  and  $p \leq .001$ ; and  $r = 0.235$  and  $p \leq .001$  respectively) (Elsherif & Abdelraof, 2018). Despite the study's focus on the first year and fourth year female adolescent nursing students, the results are useful and relevant to this current study regarding the probable correlations between body image, self-esteem, and work performance.

### **Summary and Transition**

This chapter has emerged from literature reviews of existing research on body image. Following on, arguments are put forward as to why a qualitative research approach is used to uncover the study participants' personal information. This chapter ends by emphasizing that men of any age group and any sexual orientation face pressure concerning their appearance and body image. The published evidence endorses the potential value of this study and gives new insights as to how the issue may affect men in mid-life, looking beyond self-esteem to their performance at work. No study such as this on body image among men has been conducted before. Chapter 3 introduces the research design. This includes the methodology, data analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical procedures.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

In this study, I explored middle-aged Thai men's body image perceptions to assess how they might affect their self-esteem and job performance. This chapter comprises three main sections: the research design, the rationale, and the methodology used in this study. The theoretical framework chosen for this study was a generic qualitative study. The second section discusses the researcher's role, researcher bias, and plan to reduce researcher bias. The third section focuses on the instrumentation, participant selection logic, sampling strategy, participant recruitment process, data collection method, interview plan, and data analysis procedures. The last section provides information on trustworthiness and ethical components.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

This study used a generic qualitative research approach to collect information about how middle-aged Thai men perceive their body image and how they may affect their self-esteem and job performance. Qualitative research is an approach that aims to extract information on the thinking processes, reasoning, perceptions, and experiences of people (Sutton & Austin, 2015). To accomplish the goals of this study, I used a qualitative approach to address the following proposed research questions:

RQ1: How do middle-aged Thai men perceive their body image?

RQ2: How does middle-aged men's perception of their body image affect their perceived job performance?

The present study employed generic qualitative research to address the research questions. Qualitative researchers are primarily engaged in getting a sense of what participants think and feel (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Additionally, generic qualitative research offers an approach to qualitative research when other designs such as a case study, an ethnography, grounded theory, or phenomenology are not appropriate (Percy et al., 2015). Percy et al. (2015) suggested that researchers should use the generic qualitative approach when their study focuses on examining people's attitudes, opinions, or beliefs toward a certain issue or experience. Furthermore, Percy et al. suggested that for researchers whose studies focused on the exact point of view, the actual life experiences, and the specific reflections of participants, generic qualitative analysis is more suitable than a study based on phenomenology. A phenomenological qualitative inquiry focuses on “the lived experience” of a different psychological happening, “the internal subjective structures of the experience itself,” and the inner essence of the cognitive process (Percy et al., 2015). This present study sought to understand the perception of middle-aged Thai men toward their body image and involves them sharing their impressions of their perceptions, viewpoints, and life experiences. Therefore, generic qualitative analysis enabled me to determine the middle-aged Thai male subjects’ perceptions and issues surrounding body image. Additionally, generic qualitative analysis provide a map to understanding the effects that body image has had on self-esteem and work performance among the target participants.

The psychological study is the discipline that aims to understand human behavior, mental processes, culture, similarities, and differences. Quantitative methodologies are

frequently used to accomplish the goals of psychological inquiry. “Quantitative methods use hypothesis testing to achieve the research goals in controlled and contrived studies” (Park & Park, 2016). This study neither aims to test hypotheses nor tries to draw generalizations among target populations. Moreover, this study does not attempt to understand any transferability between groups of populations. An older study on body image by Grogan (1999) pointed out the limitations of using a questionnaire survey in a quantitative study designed to determine why men are dissatisfied with their body image. The estimations [drawn from the numeric values in the questionnaires] would shed little light on the issues of men, their bodily dissatisfactions, and their quality of life (Grogan, 1999). According to Leett et al. (2018), human behavior can hardly be reduced to the numeric figures that rigorous quantitative scholars desire (Levitt et al., 2018). Even though qualitative research data involves fewer participants than quantitative research, the qualitative study can collect in-depth, comprehensive information from each subject (Levitt et al., 2018). Taking a quantitative approach to my proposed study would limit my ability to develop a comprehensive, in-depth, nuanced understanding of middle-aged Thai men’s body image problems. Therefore, a quantitative approach is not an appropriate tool for addressing the research questions that this study aims to resolve.

### **Role of the Researcher**

My role as a researcher required my involvement in every step in this research process. This included studying the related literature, recruiting participants, screening prospective participants, conducting the interviews, managing any biases, protecting the participants’ safety and confidentiality, performing data analyses, and interpreting the

results. Additionally, my role as the researcher involved critical responsibilities at every step in this process to ensure the validity of the research study. As a qualitative researcher, I acted as an observer-participant collecting data during semi-structured interviews with the study participants, not simply an objective observer. This is because I performed the role of observer and interviewer, asking the open-ended pre-determined research questions designed for this study. I also asked additional questions in case the responses from any participants are unclear or invite follow-up. During each interview, I also observed the participants' reactions and tone of voice, and their facial expressions and gestures, whether they choose to meet face-to-face or through a webcam interview. I noted everything I observe during the interviews in my field notes. I and used the information later when I performed the data analysis and interpretation of this study. Van Manaen (2014) suggested that the process I have described categorizes me as an observer-participant.

Sivell et al. (2019) suggested that every researcher who conducts a study concerning the experiences of a targeted group of participants should pay attention to all ethical considerations. In addition, for interviews to be valid, the interviewer's ability to engage with the participants is vitally important. Sivell et al. (2019) suggested that every researcher who employs the interview method as a data collection tool should be aware that there are few things as important as forging a connection between a researcher and participants. It is necessary to recognize that the carefully planned rapport building should begin immediately for maximum effect (Sivell et al., 2019). The researcher must remain cognizant of the balance of power between themselves and the participant and its

effect on the success of the bonding experience (Sivell et al., 2019). During the interviews, I will perform the role of interviewer.

### **Researcher Bias**

When engaging in research, qualitative researchers must be straight,forward and provide information about their potential personal biases and beliefs to their readers (Sutton & Austin, 2015). The researcher's personal biases and beliefs in this case, regarding my perspective toward the participants' body image issues and experiences] are not necessarily deleterious. Still, they are hard to avoid (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Hence, a high level of advanced transparency on the side of the researcher in an attempt to prevent bias is desirable (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

I have over 25 years of experience working in the communications and public relations consultancy field. Working in this field allows me to interact with and work closely with my clients and their consumers, which consists of many middle-aged Thai males. The targeted participants for this study included males from various walks of life with distinct backgrounds and diverse needs. My experience working with this population has informed my understanding of body image issues for middle-aged Thai men. For instance, I have noticed that they do not want to be perceived as old, fat, or outdated; they want to be seen as good-looking, fit, and relevant. Without my work experiences, I would not have such a clear insight into the body image issues faced by middle-aged Thai men.

One key ethical point to be mindful of while working in this field has always been the assertion that each consultant must maintain professionalism. Consultants must perform their role as observers while collecting details and information from clients and

concerned parties without adding their opinions. This ethical guideline allows consultants to minimize bias when gathering data from clients and interpreting the data beforeconsulting services. Based on my background and experience, I realize that my role as the researcher in this proposed study was to observe, gather the most insightful information possible, and interpret participants' responses while remaining detached from the participants' emotions and personal situations. I ensured that the research findings of this study would be unbiased and useful for society and the academic world.

Sutton and Austin (2015) also advised qualitative researchers to be spontaneous and aware of their personal bias, which is almost impossible to prevent. Qualitative researchers should pay thoughtful attention to pre-research preparations and the process of gathering information so that they may examine the results carefully and critically (Sutton & Austin, 2015). To prevent the effect of personal bias on my research, I used the following bias management strategy to avoid bias and to guarantee that this study's results are reliable:

1. I used the bracketing process to enable me to remain aware of my thoughts and feelings and any potential biases I might have. Van Manen (2014) remarked that the bracketing technique is useful to help researchers recognize and exclude their presumptions. This allows the researcher to document the research participant's experience with the topic (Van Manen, 2014). I used the bracketing technique in two stages of this study as follows. Stage 1 was the time I conducted interviews with the participants for data collection. During this stage, I firmly focused on suspending any judgment and attempting to understand the

participants' personal experiences, thoughts, and feelings (Dörfler, Stierand, 2018). Stage 2 proceeded alongside the interview transcriptions with my research assistant (Dörfler, Stierand, 2018). At this stage, I consciously raised my awareness of any prior knowledge, beliefs, or opinions I hold or have held before conducting this study and the interviews with the participants (Dörfler, Stierand, 2018). I also reminded my research assistant not to add their opinions to the transcripts (Dörfler, Stierand, 2018).

2. I used the technique of self-reflexivity through journaling to identify my probable personal biases and articulate them (Martin-Cuellar, 2018). The practice of self-reflexivity through journaling is a self-monitoring scheme. This method helps the researcher perform self-care to maintain “a mindfulness-based practice” to prevent fatigue or burnout (Martin-Cuellar, 2018). Additionally, performing self-reflexivity through journaling is useful to bring awareness to the practitioner of “their subjective and objective selves” [to prevent biases] (Martin-Cuellar, 2018). During the data collecting process; I noted the information about my thoughts and feelings to recheck myself and minimize any possible researcher bias.
3. I also used a peer review system to help make sure that my study is unbiased, accurate, transparent, and valid. Feedback from the peer review was used to help me improve the quality, accuracy, transparency, and reliability of this study.



To prevent bias and avoid personal involvement or relationship complications; I only recruited participants with whom I did not have professional relationship bias and avoid personal involvement or relationship complications; I only recruited participants with whom I did not have professional relationships participate in this study. I wanted to prevent myself from exerting any power over the participants and vice versa to ensure that data gathered from this study would be as unbiased as possible. After I receive responses to participate in my study, I screened the volunteers carefully to ensure that the participants and I did not have any professional connection.

## **Methodology**

### **Participant Selection Logic**

Ten Thai men ages 35-50 who lived in or near Bangkok, Thailand participated in this study. The participants must met the following qualifications to participate in this research: (a) must have some experience with body image dissatisfaction or have negative thoughts or feelings about his body (Franchina & Coco, 2018); (b) must be currently employed (self-employed, own a personal business or be an employee in a workplace); and (c) must be able to communicate in English. The participants of this study were not restricted to any specific sexual orientation, marital status, religion, educational level, or socioeconomic profile. Thai men who did not meet the inclusion criteria were not be allowed to participate in this study. I recruited the participants via an announcement that I posted on the pages of social media groups on Facebook and on the timeline of Line, which is a popular communication application in Thailand.

### ***Sampling Strategy***

Purposeful sampling was the primary technique I used to recruit participants for this study. Purposeful sampling is recruiting participants who have profiles or qualifications related to the research questions (Robinson, 2014). Robinson (2014) stated that purposive sampling strategies utilize non-random methods to ensure participants are somewhat representative of the population of interest in a study. Purposeful sampling involves engaging with individuals who can provide comprehensive information related to the phenomenon of interest to the study (Robinson, 2014). In addition, I used snowball sampling as a secondary technique to recruit the participants to participant in this study. Snowball sampling enables a researcher to invite interested correspondents to refer potential participants who have profiles that match the study criteria (Lopez & Torres-Fernandez, 2019). By using both purposeful sampling and snowball sampling strategies, I was able recruit middle-aged Thai males who are currently employed as participants for this research.

***Sample size and saturation.*** The nature of qualitative research involves using smaller samples of participants than quantitative research (Levitt et al., 2018). One goal in qualitative research is to obtain a sufficient sample size for achieving saturation of data obtained from participants. According to Mason (2010), data saturation describes the instance when new data does not provide any new insights about the phenomenon of interest for a study. The concept of saturation is relatively flexible and not easy to pinpoint (Mason, 2010). Therefore, the sample size of a qualitative study should be a sufficient size [not too small] to enable the researcher to uncover most of or all of the

participants' pertinent insights on the phenomenon being studied (Mason, 2010). At the same time, the sample size should not be so large that it results in redundant or surplus data (Mason, 2010).

Yunos and Ahmad (2014) stated that the sample size for qualitative research could range from 1 to 30 or more participants depending on the aim of the research and the chosen methodology. In addition, Hennick et al. (2017) suggested that researchers should be able to reach code saturation at nine interviews. Namey, Guest, McKenna, and Chen (2016) also stated that between 8 and 16 interviews, researchers should reach the saturation point. An older study by Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) remarked that data saturation is reachable with between 7 and 12 interviews. Based on this information, I was able to collect data from 10 middle-aged Thai men.

The following explains why the targeted number of 10 - 12 participants is sufficient to achieve saturation. According to Mason (2010), qualitative studies involve much smaller numbers of participants than quantitative studies. Mason (2010) provided several reasons for this:

1. When conducting qualitative studies, a one-time incidence of data can be as helpful as multiple occurrences towards providing information on the topic being studied.
2. Qualitative studies focus on deep, rich, meaningful data. Qualitative studies do not focus on generalizations or hypothetical statements.

3. Data collection and analysis in qualitative research is time-consuming; thus, it is not practical to involve a large group of participants in qualitative studies.

### **Instrumentation**

For this research study, I used a semi-structured interview to guide the data collection process. The semi-structured interview involves conducting in-depth interviews with participants using predetermined, open-ended questions (Jamshed, 2014). The semi-structured interview is the most commonly used method in qualitative data collection because of its versatility and flexibility (Kallio et al., 2016). The semi-structured interview is ideally suitable for collecting data to gain insight and points of view from participants (Kallio et al., 2016). Semi-structured interview questions also work well with participants who might find it hard to express themselves in large groups (Kallio et al., 2016). The semi-structured interview guide that I used in this study were approximately 5-15 predetermined questions to help the researcher understand the issues of body image dissatisfaction that the participants are expected to share (McGrath et al., 2018). However, McGrath et al. (2018) suggested that the interviewer ask additional questions to retrieve more detailed information from participants' answers. The interview guide must be structured under the study's methodological approach (McGrath et al., 2018). The interview-guided questions for this study focused on understanding the process, context, and circumstances that led the research participants to develop and experience body image dissatisfaction and how they might affect their self-esteem and work performance (Evans, 2018).

Typically, interviews provide a space for participants to express themselves freely and the opportunity to articulate the emotions they choose to reveal (Alshenqeeti, 2014). It is important that the data obtained from the interview be real, rich, and comprehensive (Kallio et al., 2016). During the interviews, I kept the interview questions precise but clear. I did not interrupt or lead the participants in any direction to feel comfortable, open, and spontaneous; they were able to be themselves. However, suppose there are any unclear responses. In that case, I repeated any necessary questions and might ask any particular question differently to help the participants better understand what I was asking. This was to enable the participants to reply to my questions effectively.

### **Procedures for Recruitment**

This study used a purposive sampling methodology. Before I began approaching participants who have profiles aligned with the study, I secured approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Walden University to conduct the study. I recruited Thai men aged 35-50 years who experience body image issues by posting an announcement poster on several online platforms in which I participated, such as Facebook, Instagram, and the Line application's timeline. I aimed to attract men aged between 35-50 years to my network and contact lists. I chose these social media platforms because they are effective ways to reach the target group. Another advantage was that these networks do not require securing any permission (as I was neither operating commercially nor disturbing anyone's privacy).

## **Participation**

In my research participation recruitment announcement (see Appendix A), I provided basic information about this study, the reason for conducting the study, the potential to contribute to positive social change, the requirements for participating, and the expected duration of the interviews required to collect data from the participants. I also included information regarding compensation and the expected pros and cons of joining this study. Additionally, I included my contact details, which included my email information, Facebook Messenger, and my Line ID.

As individuals contact me to express interest in participating in the research, I confirmed their eligibility. I asked for the necessary information, including their full name, age, occupation, mobile phone number, email address, and home address; so that I could distribute the informed consent as well as the short demographic form to all the interested parties either via post, by hand through a messenger delivery service, or to their email address.

I asked all the interested men to confirm their intent within 10 days after I delivered the consent form to them as to whether they are still interested in participating in the study after reading the consent form. I asked them to indicate their decision by sending a short message to my cell phone or an email. I also asked for feedback from any men who indicate that they do not want to participate in this study after reading the consent form. For their privacy, I used only pseudonyms to identify each participant. I did not keep a list of the participants' real names that could be traced back to the pseudonyms in the study.

### **Data Collection**

After completing the interviews (audio recorded interviews, about 30-45 minutes for each participant) or data collection with the research participants, I began interview transcription process to generate the written transcripts. Additionally, I also used coded numbers instead of the participants' real names when labeling the transcripts' electronic and hard copy files to guarantee confidentiality.

Sutton and Austin (2015) suggested that researchers who have audio or video recordings of the interviews of participants should transcribe verbatim audio or video recordings of the interviews of participants should transcribe every word exchanged before beginning the data analysis process. For this study, the data from the audio records were transcribed into a word processing document that was used to code and categorize themes that emerge from the data (Percy et al., 2015).

The purpose of this research is to gather data regarding the impact of body image on middle-aged Thai men's self-esteem and job performance. The initial phases of the research will be determining the existence of a problem and reviewing the available literature on the topic. The next steps were recruiting participants, data collection and analysis, and generation of the report (Merriam, 2009). I planned to support the analysis of this study by using NVivo 11 qualitative data analysis software. In addition, I secured all documents in my office to ensure the privacy of the data collected for this study.

Once the interviews were completed, the transcriber entered every word from the audio recordings into Microsoft Word, a word processing program. To ensure the accuracy of the interview transcription, I carefully rechecked every word in the

transcription against the original tape recording of each interview at least two times for each participant. I sent a transcription of the interview to each participant by email. This process is called member checking. Member checking, or participant validation, is an option for determining the accuracy of information obtained from participants (Birt et al., 2016). The process of member checking consists of the researcher sending the transcripts from the interview back to each participant to confirm that the transcription accurately reflects the information the participants have shared (Birt et al., 2016). The accuracy of the data and the validity of the interview transcriptions are the fundamental basis for ensuring a sound interview-based qualitative study (Clarket al., 2017).

Furthermore, I provided my personal contact information, including mobile phone number, email address, and online messenger account name, so that participants can reach out to me if they need any help during the member checking process. As suggested by Birt et al. (2016), it is vitally important that a researcher provides a method for participants to communicate with her if any questions or concerns arise. This is so that the participants did not feel alone if they need any help and answer any questions they may have.

I asked the participants to return their comments and approval of the transcripts via email. If any participants wanted me to make amends to the transcript of their interview, I followed their feedback and make revisions accordingly. I sent the revised transcript for their approval via email, and I asked the participants to confirm their approval via email.



After all, participants have reviewed the transcripts and confirmed their approval, I imported the transcript text files to the NVivo 11 software program. I planed to use the computer-based NVivo to store, manage and organize the data collected for this study. Ishak and Bakar (2012) stated that advanced technology today makes it easier for researchers to manage and analyze their data. Electronic software can be used to simplify the complex procedures associated with analyzing qualitative data. The quality and the procedure of qualitative research are not affected when using qualitative software (Ishak & Bakar, 2012). Using this software makes handling and analyzing data more straightforward. Managing data becomes both more convenient and more accurate (Ishak & Bakar, 2012). As a result, researchers can benefit from NVivo as follows: (a) cost savings: the software provides effective cost management for data processing and analysis; and (b) time saving: the software also serves as an effective time management tool to assist researchers in completing their study within the allotted time (Ishak & Bakar, 2012).

As I am familiar with the data. I will begin data analysis by reading and rereading the reviewed transcripts (Hurtado, 2019). While reviewing the transcripts, I identified the statements that seem pertinent to the research questions of this study. I used NVivo 11 to highlight the relevant statements and allocate them into nodes (Hurtado, 2019). Pierre and Jackson (2014) suggested that after researchers have completed the interview transcript data coding process, they can assign labels to categories of ideas. These labels can then be used to identify themes that emerge from the data being analyzed. Later, I provided the theme and the descriptions in the results sections. After I clustered every node into

themes, I synthesized and review all the themes (Hurtado, 2019). I used the statements taken verbatim from the original data in the interview transcripts to incorporate rich text descriptions of the participants' lived experiences of body image dissatisfaction. The text descriptions was used to develop the themes (Hurtado, 2019). I described each theme, and the framework and content of each theme will be analyzed and displayed in a detailed portrayal (Percy et al., 2015). After I completed this process for the data from each participant, I combined data across participants using NVivo 11. Patterns and themes that persist throughout the field of participants were combined with all of the analyzed data (Percy et al., 2015). Then I synthesized themes to provide concise answers to the intrinsic questions under examination, and the synthesis of the themes will then be generated (Percy et al., 2015). In the end, the thematic framework emerged from the combination of every interview with the study participants under the applicable sections (Maruster & Gijzenberg, 2013).

### **Trustworthiness**

The trustworthiness of a research study is judged by the methods used to safeguard the quality of the study, the implicit confidence in the data that has been collected, and the rigor of the data interpretation (Connelly, 2016). Trustworthiness in qualitative research strengthens the value of the findings from a qualitative study (Elo et al., 2014). To make a qualitative research study trustworthy, the researcher must specify how they will assess the research's credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Anney, 2014; Elo et al., 2014; Korstjens and Moser, 2018). This study

established credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability through the following strategies and methods.

### **Credibility**

According to Korstjens and Moser (2018), credibility relates to the truth-value of qualitative research, and it is comparable to internal validity in quantitative research. To increase the study's credibility, I used triangulation, feedback from my chairperson and the dissertation committee, and member checking to diminish any bias in my analysis of this research. Triangulation is a method to test a qualitative research study's validity by combining multiple data sources (Carter et al., 2014). I used the triangulation method to increase the credibility of the data I will collect through the semi-structured interviews following the interview guide. To enhance the reliability of the data collection, it is important that the researcher use sound research instruments (Hurtado, 2019). I used the triangular technique to ensure that at least three participants echo every important finding; this is to focus on the most important issues of this study (Hurtado, 2019). The participants were all Thai men who experience body image issues, so the reliability of the study should not be open to question (Hurtado, 2019).

Additionally, to enhance the credibility of this research study, I also carried out a member checking process. Member checking involves the researcher inviting participants to review results from the data analysis (Thomas, 2017). Member checking provides an opportunity for participants to give feedback on the researcher's interpretation of their interview responses (Douglas, 2018). Iivari (2018) stated that member checking is a common method in qualitative research. The method enables the researcher to reduce any

bias in the study, improve understanding, and provide an assessment for the researcher to detect any problems in their research (Douglas, 2018). Through the member checking process, the researcher will receive feedback, comments, or approval from the member who helps review whether they think the analyses are accurate or meaningful (Iivari, 2008). I contacted the participants and inform them that I would send the interview transcripts to each participant for their review and feedback. I sent the transcript to the participants via email, post, or deliver them by hand. I asked each participant to review my interpretation of their responses in the interviews (Douglas, 2018). I explained clearly in the cover letter sent along with the transcript to every participant what I would like the participant to do and request that they return their feedback to me by a certain date and through which specific channels. If any participants have any objections to my interpretation of their responses, I amended the transcript according to the feedback I receive from each participant.

### **Transferability**

Transferability refers to how findings may apply to people from other demographics or backgrounds (Connelly, 2016). In qualitative research, transferability is related to external validity (Hurtado, 2019). To facilitate my methods by other researchers with varied demographics or locations, I provided comprehensive details regarding this study. In addition, to ensure the transferability of this study, I covered for other researchers all of the minutiae from each of the interviews, including a full description of the methodology (Hurtado, 2019). So that if other researchers plan to follow this study's methodology, they will be able to do so (Hurtado, 2019). In addition, I

used purposive and snowball sampling strategies to enhance my ability to draw out participants whose profiles correspond directly with this the study's intent and the questions it seeks to answer (Anney, 2014). Purposeful sampling techniques [and snowball sampling] enhance the ability to locate participants who are “especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest” (Palinkaset al., 2015). This also allows the researcher to gather more relevant, comprehensive data than is usually available when relying on methods like probability sampling; it is a way to single out participants whose profiles are aligned (Anney, 2014).

### **Dependability**

Dependability is established when other researchers can repeat the results from a study over time and in varied circumstances (Elo et al., 2014). The strategy applied to establish the dependability of this study is peer examination. Peer examination is similar to the member checking process but performed by a colleague who can be a doctoral peer, an individual conducting a qualitative study, or one who has experience conducting qualitative research (Anney, 2014). I asked a minimum of two doctoral peers, including Mr. Eduardo Hurtado (Ph.D.) and Ms. Irma Paul (Ph.D.), to help review my findings. According to Anney (2014), peer examination helps elevate a researcher’s “deeper reflexive analysis” and verify that she had been “honest about her study”. In addition, I established dependability using techniques as advised by Yin (2014): (a) use multiple sources of data; (b) create a chain of verification throughout the data collection process; and (c) entreat participants to review the results from the data analysis. Moreover, I maintained detailed documentation of this study to reinforce clarity and accuracy

(Hurtado, 2019). This transparency enables other researchers to decide whether the current research process is relevant and allows them to repeat the process (Hurtado, 2019).

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability refers to the degree to which other researchers will validate the findings (Hurtado, 2019). An audit trail, a reflexive journal, and triangulation are strategies a researcher can use to enhance the confirmability of a qualitative study (Anney, 2014). I used and maintained a reflexive journal throughout this study. The process through which a researcher continually observes their behaviors, emotions, and thoughts is reflexivity. The researcher should be focused on maintaining a high degree of self-reflection. (Darawsheh, 2014). I enhanced the quality of their research by engaging in reflexivity throughout the research process (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Reflexivity is a critical process where researchers direct self-reflection or self-awareness on themselves as a researcher, including exploring ways to determine how their own biases, preferences, and preconceptions might affect aspects of the research (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

### **Ethical Procedures**

I submitted an application to the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for permission to conduct the study before beginning the data collection for this research. The information included in the application included the objectives for the study, the intended research tools, details related to the data collection plan, the targeted participants, the plan for contacting and engaging participants in the data collection process, the interview questions, and interview process, details regarding data analysis

and interpretations, and the ethical protection strategies that will be used to protect participant privacy and confidentiality. Finally, the IRB approved me to conduct this study (approval number 05-11-20-0281387). I followed the guidance of the IRB strictly throughout the entire process.

Researchers should anticipate potential ethical issues which might arise during the study process (Creswell, 2009). Alshenqeet (2014) noted that researchers must comply with ethical rules and guidance, particularly when their research involves human participants. Additionally, researchers should take all possible precautions to protect their study participants rights, safety, well-being, and privacy (Alshenqeet, 2014). Therefore, all data must be anonymous and confidential (Alshenqeet, 2014). Sanjari et al. (2014) discussed multiple procedures to strengthen and protect the ethical standards of qualitative studies. I applied the relevant procedures, as recommended by Sanjari et al. (2014), in my study as follows:

1. Protecting study participants' confidentiality and personal information. To protect the participant's privacy and confidentiality, I systematically assigned a coded number for each participant, instead of using their real name, to identify their data files: access to participants' personal information and other research materials will be restricted solely to the researcher and the supervising dissertation committee if they request the information.
2. Maintaining professional boundaries: upholding appropriate relationships to prevent any intimacy between researchers and participants. This arrangement is attainable when the researcher and the participants respect each other's

privacy. For instance, when each interaction between the researcher and a participant is open and sincere, and when each party is conscious and careful in every engagement and communication to eliminate any misrepresentations. I avoided getting involved with, influenced by, or manipulated by the participants.

3. Protecting participants from potential harm. Qualitative research, in general, seeks to uncover insights from sensitive personal issues, which can expose both participants and researchers to overwhelming emotions and other risks. I used reflexive journaling and self-monitoring to manage any of my stress that may arise from conducting the research and eliminate biases to strengthen the quality of data obtained from the participants. After the interviews are completed, I debriefed every participant in the study as soon as possible, per APA guidelines.

Specifically, within the context of this study concerning men's body image dissatisfaction, it is conceivable that some participants might feel vulnerable when they discuss negative experiences from their past. During interviews, as participants discuss their perceptions towards their body image, they might feel anxious or distressed. To address the probable stress and anxiety of the participants, I implemented the following strategies to assure the ethical protection of the study participants.

- Before the start of the research, I explained to the participants the purpose, duration, procedures, risks, rewards and conditions, and the confidentiality



protections. I advised them of their right to withdraw from participating if they feel uncomfortable (APA, 2010).

- I informed participants in a letter of consent before the interview and again that they can take a break every time they experience feelings of discomfort. Taking a break as needed guarantees the ethical protection of the rights and well-being of the study participants (APA, 2010).

All data is securely in a locked file cabinet in my private study at my house, including the interview audiotape records and the transcripts. The securely stored electronic and printed data files will be stored in my house for 5 years after completing the research. All electronic files are kept on my password-protected computer and backed up on a password-protected hard drive for 5 years as well. After the 5 years, I will destroy all printed files in a paper shredder. I will also permanently delete all electronic data files.

### **Summary and Transition**

This chapter provided the rationale and strategy for the chosen methodology, specifically a semi-structured interview as the data collection tool. This chapter also discusses the plan for data analysis in this study. Lastly, the chapter examined the trustworthiness and ethical standards which form the foundation of the research study.

The information in this chapter is intended to provide additional insight for psychologists and other researchers to understand the concept, rationale, and steps of the research data collection and analysis as proposed to answer the questions submitted in this study. Furthermore, this study purposefully aims to contribute to organizational psychology in a meaningful way by examining the relationships between body image,

self-esteem, and work performance. Chapter 4 will provide the participants' demographic information as well as this study's results.

## Chapter 4: Results

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this generic qualitative research study was to investigate how body image perceptions of middle-aged Thai men aged 35-50 years affected their self-esteem and job performance. Knowledge derived from the results could highlight the need to inform leaders, managers, and supervisors of how body image affects employees' self-esteem and job performance. Data were collected to address the following research questions:

RQ1: How do middle-aged Thai men perceive their body image?

RQ2: What role does the body image of middle-aged Thai men play in their perceived job performance?

This chapter is presented in multiple sections. The first half of the chapter discusses the introduction, setting, participants' demographic information, and data collection method. The second half of the chapter presents data analysis procedures, evidence of trustworthiness, results from the data analysis, and a summary of Chapter 4.

### **Setting**

The setting for this study was Bangkok, Thailand, and the surrounding vicinity. Middle-aged men between ages 35-50 years were recruited as participants. Preliminarily, I planned to provide two interview options for the participants according to their preferences. The options were a face-to-face interview at a private meeting room in my office or a Line application call interview. Due to the advent of the Coronavirus-19 pandemic, I completed all interviews via Line application calls. I made all the Line calls

with the participants, primarily working from home (in Bangkok) to comply with the Royal Thai government's lockdown requirements (during March 22 and April 30, 2020) and social distancing policy (March 22, 2020, onwards).

### **Demographics**

The study participants included 10 employed middle-aged Thai men who experienced issues with their body image. All the participants lived in Bangkok. Table 1 shows a summary of the participants' demographic data. Four participants indicated they were in manager or senior manager levels, while four others were in senior management levels. Only two participants indicated that they were self-employed. Eight of the participants indicated that they were gay, while the other two indicated they were straight. The most common body image issues among the participants included obesity and becoming bald or baldness. Two participants indicated they had both obesity and baldness issues, although each man described only one issue as the source of their BID.

**Table 1***Household Locations, Employment Details, and BID Issues of the Participants*

Participant	Location	Employment Details	Age	Sexual Orientation	Body Image Issues
1	Bangkok	Key Account Manager, Pharmaceutical	37	Gay	Bald, Obese
2	Bangkok	Associate Director, Retail Business	44	Gay	Obese
3	Bangkok	Country Manager, Online Application	42	Gay	Scars, Aging Hand
4	Bangkok	Head of Project Management, Information Technology Business	46	Gay	Obese
5	Bangkok	Executive Placement Manager	35	Gay	Obese
6	Bangkok	Media Agency, Director	43	Gay	Bald, Facial Wrinkles
7	Bangkok	Self-employed, Bakery Business	39	Gay	Bald, Big Belly
8	Bangkok	Project Manager, Information Technology Business	40	Straight	Bald, Obese
9	Bangkok	Communications Director, Petroleum Business	50	Gay	Obese
10	Bangkok	Business Owner, Men's Hair Salon	46	Straight	Obese

### **Data Collection**

Data were collected for this study using semi-structured interviews. I conducted each interview at dates and times that were convenient for the participants. Each interview via the Line application's call took approximately 45-60 minutes. I conducted all recruitment, participation, and data collection procedures per the procedures described

in Chapter 3. However, I decided to manually perform data analysis instead of using NVivo11 software for practicality, as indicated in Chapter 3.

### **Data Analysis**

I conducted data analysis for this study following the procedures described in Chapter 3. The purpose of data analysis was to identify themes from the entire data regarding body image dissatisfaction among middle-aged Thai men and how it may have affected their self-esteem and/or work performance. I performed the analysis manually without using any qualitative data analysis software.

I began data analysis by first reading the data several times to familiarize myself with the data. Secondly, I performed open coding to identify the responses that seemed pertinent to answering the interview questions and highlighted them differently. While I read the responses, I wrote down recurring keywords and phrases related to the interview questions. Thirdly, I assigned the open codes into several categories. Fourthly, I labeled the categories (St. Pierre & Jackson, 2014). Lastly, I developed themes, labeled the themes, and merged the relevant data categories into themes, then developed narrative descriptions for each theme. Inductive analysis was used to determine emergent themes from the data.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

The trustworthiness of qualitative research defines the real value of the study (Connelly, 2016). The usefulness of qualitative research depends on the trustworthiness in which it is conducted (Connelly, 2016). Establishing credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability can enhance the trustworthiness of results from a

study. The following paragraphs describe how I increased the level of trustworthiness of the findings for this study.

### **Credibility**

The credibility of the findings from a study relates to the accuracy of the results and interpretations of data. The findings' accuracy establishes the particular study's truth-value (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). I enhanced the credibility of findings from the study through systematic recruitment and selection of research participants who were employed middle-aged Thai men who experience body image dissatisfaction. I used transcript review and member checking to enhance the credibility of the findings. After the interview with each participant, I immediately transcribed every word of the audio recordings using Microsoft Word. I sent the transcripts to the participants via e-mail to review their responses and verify whether the transcriptions of the data accurately captured their comments. After I emailed the transcript to the participant, I also sent a text message via Line application to inform them the transcripts had been sent. In the text of email, I informed the participants that they had 10 calendar days for the transcript review and to provide feedback to make changes as they felt appropriate. Participants were asked to email their feedback to me after they completed their reviews. Two participants asked this researcher to amend some parts of his interview transcript. After every participant reviewed and approved the transcripts' content, I then began the data analysis. I also used member checking to enhance the credibility of the findings by emailing the composite summary of results to participants to determine whether the summary accurately described their experiences. Participants were given 10 days to

review and provide comments or make requests for edits. No participant asked that any edits be made to the composite summary of results.

### **Transferability**

Transferability relates to how findings from a study can be applied to people in other settings (Maxwell, 2020). To increase the transferability of findings from this study, I used the audit trail method and properly documented every step of the study from the beginning to the completion. The purpose of the audit trail was to allow readers to receive comprehensive and rich information of the studied group and the setting where the study was conducted as possible and for easy understanding. Additionally, should any researcher be interested in conducting similar research in other contexts or with other target studied groups, they can conveniently follow the research methodology for this study. I also recruited a purposeful sample of middle-aged Thai males with self-reported BID issues as participants. Purposeful sampling enhances findings from the study by including the perceptions, opinions, and attitudes of individuals who are familiar with the phenomenon being investigated in a study (Palinakas, 2015).

### **Dependability**

Dependability defines whether findings from a study will be consistent if replicated (Mohajan, 2017). Dependability also establishes the stability of data across time and settings (Connelly, 2016). In this study, I established dependability through the peer examination method by helping my two doctoral peers, including Ms. Donna Daniels (Ph.D.) and Mr. Eduardo Hurtado Jr. (Ph.D.). They had earned a doctoral degree from Walden University and had experience in conducting research. Ms. Irma Paul



(Ph.D.), whom I mentioned in chapter 3 to help do the peer examination, was not available to help at the time. I emailed the data analysis results, interpretation, and composition textural description to the two doctoral peers to review and comments on. Before I requested Ms. Daniels and Mr. Eduardo Jr. in the peer examination process, I emailed a brief detail of my study, its objectives, procedures, and goals (2-page long), and their role in the peer review process timeline. Ms. Daniels' specialty is in public policy so that she could provide me with a non-psychological peer's review perspective. In contrast, Mr. Hurtado Jr., who specialized in I/O psychology, could provide me with psychological peer review perspectives. The peer reviews helped reassure me that my study's data analysis, interpretation, and summary were unbiased and easily comprehended by readers.

Additionally, I also applied the three techniques as advised by Yin (2014) to increase the dependability of this study as per the following:

1. Using multiple sources of data. I used two major data sources, the participant-reviewed interview transcript, and my field notes, to cross-check the accuracy and consistency of the collected data.
2. Creating a chain of verification throughout the data collection process through the peer examination method.
3. Entreating participants to review the results. After I completed the data analysis process and summarized the results, I conducted member checking as outlined in the section on credibility.

## **Confirmability**

Confirmability defines the consistency and repeatability of the study's findings (Connelly, 2016). The confirmability of findings from this study was enhanced through the audit trail that documented details of the methodology and the data analysis process (Connelly, 2016). I also conducted transcript reviews to increase the confirmability value for this study (Connelly, 2016). Details of the transcript review and member checking process are described in the section on credibility.

## **Results**

The following section provides a summary of the result of this study. The results that emerged from the participant's responses to the nine interview questions were grouped into three topic areas. The first research question addressed participants' perceptions of middle-aged Thai men who experienced body image dissatisfaction. I grouped responses from interview questions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 to address Research Question 1: How do middle-aged Thai men perceive their body image? Then, I grouped, analyzed, and synthesized results from interview questions 6 and 7 to answer Research Question 2: What role does the body image of middle-aged Thai men play in their perceived job performance? The final interview questions addressed final comments and recommendations.

Additionally, I also grouped, analyzed, and synthesized interview questions 8 and 9 provided recommendations/concluding comments. After I grouped the interview questions and used each research question's results to answer each research question, I also provided rich, thick quotes to support emergent themes. Then, I developed a

paragraph to answer the research question using the themes that emerged from the relevant interview questions.

**RQ1: How do middle-aged Thai men perceive their body image?**

I developed six questions to address middle-aged Thai men's perceptions of their body image. Table 2 presents the six questions and emergent themes related to each question. A detailed discussion of responses for each question follows Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Overview of the Themes Research Question 1*

Topic	Emergent Themes
1. Source of body image dissatisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baldness</li> <li>• Obese or excessive weight</li> </ul>
2. Age when BID first impacted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School years</li> <li>• Before age 35</li> <li>• After age 35</li> </ul>
3. Personal impact from the BID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lost confidence</li> <li>• Negative feelings and behaviors               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Depressed, low</li> <li>○ Shame, embarrassment, feelings of inferiority</li> <li>○ Hateful, aggressive, mood swing</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
4. BID and the impacts on self-esteem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact</li> <li>• Not impact, but impacts confidence</li> </ul>
5. How to improve BID issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on work</li> <li>• Self- motivation               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Self-awareness and acceptance</li> <li>○ Self-disciplined</li> <li>○ Self-improvement</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
6. Discussions of BID with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close friends, colleagues, family, partner/wife,</li> <li>• No one</li> </ul>

### *Source of Body Image Dissatisfaction*

Participants were asked to describe the source of their body image dissatisfaction. The two primary themes that emerged were baldness and obesity/weight gain. Although participants might have had more than one body image issue, most participants only chose to describe one issue they felt very dissatisfied. Only Participant 7, whose BID issues included becoming bald and belly said that both issues negatively impacted him.

Some participants (1, 6, and 7) described baldness as the primary source of their BID. The participants indicated that being bald impacted their confidence and the quality of their everyday life. Participant 1 described his BID by indicating that the baldness was hereditary. Participant 1 stated, "My body image issue is about baldness from genetics, especially on the frontal head that is wider than the average man." Participant 6 also shared how the hair issue made him dissatisfied with his body image in the following quotes, "Thin hair or hair loss, I guess it is genetic from my father side. My father, grandpa, great-grandpa are and were all bald." Participant 7 described his baldness below:

Number two of my body image issues is becoming bald. It is something related to genetics. It is that most men kind of suffering as well. When we grow older, we become balder. Hair balding contributes to the overall image or the overall perception that people have of you. Balding most equals would be a leeway that he is growing old and all those kinds of stuff.

### **Weight issues**

Almost all participants, except Participants 3 and 6, described weight issues as their primary BID source. The degree of dissatisfaction varied from person to person.

Participant 2 articulated the following:

I was a fat boy when I was young. Although I do not have a big body image dissatisfaction from the weight issue the same as when I was younger, I can be referred to as a high body image-conscious person. I am still a little plump and seem to gain weight easily if I do not eat consciously and exercise regularly. I always want to be slimmer to dress nicely and find the clothes' size easily, similarly to my friends who had an average weight.

Participant 4 felt that he is “too fat.” The participant described that his weight had fluctuated over the past decade between 75 and 92 kg. Participant 4 reiterated,

My body image issue includes my body size. Since I was 35, now I am 46, I felt that I am too fat. I am 172 cm, but I weigh 87 kg. I gained a lot of weight during the last ten years, from 75 to 87 now. At one point, my weight was up to 92 kg. I was 69, typically in my university years.

Participant 9 said he had done everything to control his excessive weight, but “nothing works.” Participant 9 explained:

I can say that I had not had anybody image issues before; until a recent year, I began to have excessive weight. I have been trying many ways to lose the extra weight, but nothing works, for example, exercising and controlling my eating behavior and having a sufficient sleep.

*Age when body image dissatisfaction first impacted*

Participants were asked to describe the age that they first experienced body image dissatisfaction. The three primary themes that emerged included school years, before age 35, and after age 35.

**School years**

Participants (1, 2, and 3) shared that they started to experience BID in school. The participants' responses revealed the BID during childhood tended to be worse because their classmates tended to tease, make fun of, or bully them concerning the body images that were the source of the participants' dissatisfaction. Responses from participants 1, 2, and 3 best capture BID participants' experiences during their school years. Participant 1 described the following experience with the BID in his school years:

Since I was in high school, my frontal line was receding further than my friends. So, all my friends started to gossip or talk about it. When we took pictures, it was a kind of bully; they said we do not need a flashlight because we already have a sunrise.

Participant 3 also recalled that the name calling he experienced from his peers was embarrassing shamefully. When he talked about the BID experiences during his school years, he indicates the following:

The dissatisfaction started when I was at school, those school friends were teasing me about the aging hands. They called me "อีหิ้ว" (e-hiew) in Thai that means wrinkled dude. I hated that name-calling so much. I felt very awfully about my

aging hands. But it is something I could not avoid or resolve because it is genetic issue.

### **Before Age 35 Years**

Participants 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10 stated that they began to experience BID around aged 25-30 years after they finished master's degrees and/or started working. Participant 5, who returned to Thailand after went to study abroad, narrated:

My weight problem started seven years ago when I started my first career in Thailand after I returned from NYC, as I mentioned before. At that time, my weight was heightened to 80 kg. from 68 kg.

Participant 6, who also went to study master's degree abroad and experienced BID related to the thin hair problem, asserted that “When I was 28, I returned to Bangkok after I graduated from the master's degree. I went to cut my hair with a professional hairstylist who informed me that I had a hair loss issue.” Participant 7 indicated that he has two primary sources of the BID. He indicated that the fat around his abdominal surface and thin hair caused severe BID for him. This participant described when each source of BID began in the following passage:

For body fitness, I started to experience after a few years after I started working – the third year at the workplace and when I hung out after work at restaurants or clubs. For balding, I started to notice that my hair starting to fall more in 2012, aged around 30-31 years of age when I showered or brushed my hair, just sat down and some hair would fall off, which sent some alarm to me.

Participants 8 and 10 shared that they gained after they finished their master's degree. Participant 8 shared the following: "I started gaining weight after I finished my MA. I felt the body image affected me when I was 30 years old. During the past 10 years, my weight grew from 60 kg. to 100+ kg." Participant 10 also recalled the excessive weight after he finished the MA and began working for the first time. Participant 10 stated the following: "The body image dissatisfaction issue from my fatness started to affect me a lot when I finished my master's degree, aged around 25 years old when I started working at my first company."

### **After age 35**

Participants 4 and 9 indicated they started to experience BID after turning 35 years of age. Participant 4 stated that "The fatness issue began after I turned 35 years old. I gradually gained weight and got fatter and fatter since then. It's challenging to lose some weight." Participant 9, who did not have any weight problems until a few years ago, expressed that "aging and stress" were the probable causes of his weight problems. Participant 9 highlighted:

I began to gain weight two years ago (aged 48 years), my weight increased 6 kg. from before, because I enjoyed eating desserts a lot, either cakes or Thai desserts. I think getting older and having lots of stress from work that involves a lot of decision-making made me want to eat more food and more sweets after work.

### ***Personal impact from body image dissatisfaction***

When participants were asked to describe how they were personally affected by their BID, two primary themes emerged as the top consequence: loss of confidence and



negative feelings or behaviors (depressed, low, hateful, shamed, embarrassed, inferior as aggressive, and mood swing).

### **Lost confidence**

Participants. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 9 described how the BID impacted their confidence. Participants indicated that they tended to lose confidence and/or feel anxiety when they needed to engage with people they did not know before, appear in social events, or on social media. The following selected statements portray the impact that BID had on the participants' confidence. Participant 4 described how weight had affected his self-confidence. He also described how questions from his friends and family regarding his weight affected his confidence. The excerpt below is a summary of this participants' comments:

Since my body has changed from a regular weight size to an overweight one, I do not look smart; so, I lost confidence. Also, my friends, colleagues, and family asked why you become so fat and why you do not lose weight or do anything with it. The way they asked made me feel unconfident even more.

Several participants described how the BID mainly affected them when they interacted with other people. Participant 5 described how the BID impacted him at work when interacting with others. This participant indicated the following:

During that time [when I was fat], the weight issue made me feel unconfident. I did not feel confident when I had to greet and talk to any job applicants because I did not think that I looked good due to my heavyweight.

Participant 6 discussed the following in terms of how BID affected his confidence when he had to interact with other people at work:

At work, everyone wants to look good in front of other people. Overall, it is all about the issue of feeling confident. That is how my body image issues affect me in general. Facial and thin hair issues involve confidence levels when I meet other people, friends, social media, and when I go out at night or go to parties, meet new people. We need to feel confident, right? These are how the two key body image issues affect me in general.

Participant 8 described that his BID generally impacted his confidence when he felt he became the center of attention as follows:

Day-to-day, I am doing okay, but if I need to socialize, I do not feel confident when I act as a point of interest or a leader in various scenarios, especially when I have to get to know new people. I am afraid to show up in my big body.

### **Negative feelings and negative behaviors**

Some participants (Participants 1, 3, 7, and 10) indicated that their BID resulted in them experience negative feelings. Feeling shame, embarrassment, depression, inferiority, anger, and aggression have emerged in the responses.

Participant 1 indicated how his changing hairline caused him to feel embarrassed.

According to Participant 1:

It is embarrassing for me when other people see my face and my head. In general, when you have less hair in the front of your frontal hairline is more expansive than average; you can look older than the people your age.

Participant 7 described how he compared himself to others and how that made him feel terrible about himself. The participant stated, “So when seeing people with more muscular, it had an impact on me. It made me feel depressed about how I was approaching my fitness.” Participant 10 shared that after he gained much weight and became very fat when he worked in a beer company, he did not feel happy or confident about himself. He increased his confidence loss by acting aggressive, so people would not bother him or tease him about his weight problems. He said:

I was generally moody. My subordinates and boss said that I was too aggressive, impatient, mood swings, and generally used strong words, and quite emotional when working with the team. Not only that, but I also received feedback from a recruiting agency that, based on their assessment, the reflection of my work habit or personality that I was a person who can hardly control his tempers.

### **Body image dissatisfaction and the impact on self-esteem**

This theme emerged from interview question 3 that asked participants to describe how the body image issues affected their self-esteem. According to the responses from several participants (1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, and 10), their BID impacted their self-esteem, self-worth, and/or pride. In contrast, the other participants (2, 6, and 8) indicated that their BID did not affect their self-esteem, but their self-confidence.

### ***BID impacts self-esteem***

Participants 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, and 10 described how BID problems affected their self-esteem. The following excerpts highlight how BID impacted the participants' self-esteem. Participant 1 indicated that his BID affected his self-esteem because the balding

made him look older. According to this participant: “The body image dissatisfaction impacted my self-esteem, mostly when I met new people. They always thought that I am 40 or 43. I am only 37.” Participant 3 described how the BID affected his self-worth as follows:

I feel I am not as perfect as I wanted to be like other people. The [BID] issues lowered my value. I felt I am not valuable; I wanted to be perfect or be the same as others. I felt the others are better than me.

Participant 5 described how seeing himself in the mirror affected his sense of self. He stated that he hated the way he appeared and did not have any pride in himself. He stated that “As per expectation and people’s perception in this position [a recruiter], I was always the first person whom candidates met. It made me feel not confident in myself.”

Participant 7 described how his BID affected him once when he was giving a presentation. He the BID: “It makes me more self-conscious. An effect on self-esteem does not happen on the spot, but afterward, like after you finished your presentation, or after you are done with your workshop.” He explained that because he was on the spot when giving the presentation, still needed to push things forward, and could not break down on the spot; however, he was affected later on. Participant 7 indicated the following: “So, it [the BID issue] did not affect my self-esteem instantly at that point, although it distracted me. The emotional impact of losing self-worth, I guess, comes afterward.” Participant 9 described how being overweight was related to a feeling of loss. This participant stated: “The body image dissatisfaction can affect my self-esteem when

someone sees me in too tight clothes that are unmatched with my body size. Being overweight has cost me many things.”

### **BID affects self-confidence**

Participants 2, 6, and 8 described that the BID impacted their self-confidence but not their self-esteem. The following statements highlight some of their responses to interview question 3 that supported the experiences they shared. Participant 2 shared the following comments about BID and confidence:

I believe that our body image is very important, as it can enhance confidence to live our lives in society and the workplace. I think Thai culture still pays great attention to every individual's body image, personality, and appearance. As a result, it reinforced me always to do my best to keep myself looking good. I try my best to present myself well.

Participant 6, whose BID involved becoming bald, mentioned that the baldness does not affect his self-esteem:

The body image issues affect my confidence, but they do not lower my self-esteem or value. Appearance is one factor that builds up self-esteem, but other factors like my capability are another factor that builds up my self-esteem. And both factors work together to build my self-esteem, in my opinion.

Participant 8, whose BID is concerned with obesity, shared that the BID has impacted his self-worth. He states that “I might have some feeling downs, some anxiety or felt little embarrassed when I have to meet new people or new female clients, but I do not think the body image issues have impacted my self-esteem or personal worth.”

### ***How to improve body image dissatisfaction***

Participants were asked to describe what they think could improve their perceptions of their body image. The two themes that emerged from the participants' comments were self-motivation, focusing on quality work.

#### **Focus on delivering quality work**

Some participants (3 and 5) said they chose to “focus on delivering quality work” or “something that I am good at” could help them to keep their minds away from the BID problems. These participants indicated that delivering quality work was within their ability to control. In contrary to their body image, that seemed uncontrollable. The response from Participant 3 showed how focusing on work could help him feel more comfortable and less distracted by his body image issues. Participant 3 indicated the following on how he focuses on work rather than his BID:

I realized that both of my physical issues could not be solved. Therefore, I was trying to focus more on my work and be the best I could be. I focus on my work quality to distract my mind from my body image issues.

Participant 5 also described that focusing on delivering good work quality was his strategy to stop thinking about his body image issue. Participant 5 stated how hard work distracted his thoughts about his BID.

I changed to focus that the most important thing is the quality of my work. The way I look was not as important as the quality of my work. He asserted that “I believed that always to improve and deliver the best quality of work as you can, and always improve your work skills is the best way to make people accept you.”

### **Improve BID through self-motivation**

Several participants (1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10) stated that they think BID could be improved through self-improvement efforts such as increasing self-awareness and acceptance, being self-disciplined, and having self-motivation. Several participants commented on how self-motivation and self-discipline could decrease BID as follows. Participant 1 reflected on how self-motivation could improve the decrease of the BID. This participant stated: “Sometimes, I think, we need to motivate ourselves when we look at ourselves in the mirror, that we still look okay.” Participant 2, who was growing up being obese and had always been his body image issue, stated that self-motivation or self-believe belief was the key to overcoming BID. Participant 2 commented regarding how self-motivation and self-belief improved his satisfaction with his body image:

No one can help me change or improve my negative body image perception but myself and myself. I think self-awareness and self-acceptance are the keys. I must feel confident from the inside and out, as it could improve my perceptions of my body image in general.

Participant 9 gave comments related to self-motivation and how it could improve BID.

This participant asserted that:

First of all, for me, self-motivation and the can-do attitude, I can do anything I want to, including losing weight and better-eating behavior. Second, it should be having the right work-life balance and having good plans and preparations for everything. These two things are pivotal, as they could lead you, both direct and indirect, to feeling satisfied with your body image.

Several participants commented on how self-motivation and self-discipline could decrease BID. Participant 10 stated the following: “Self-motivation and self-discipline are very important. I knew that if I can control my diet and exercise regularly, I could improve the fatness issue. I have already taken action, although I am still overweight.”

### ***Discussions of BID with others***

Participants were asked whether they have asked for help or shared their body image dissatisfaction with anyone. This interview question contained three sub-questions aimed to draw in-depth information about who, what, when the participants shared their BID. Several participants indicated that they shared the BID with someone they trusted. The other participants kept the BID issues to themselves.

#### **Shared with colleagues, family, friends, partner, or wife**

Participants 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 10 described that they shared the BID issue with their friends, colleagues, family, partner, or wife. The main reasons for the sharing included: obtaining moral support, getting reassurance, and gathering knowledge/know-how sharing. A few direct quotes from the participants and how they shared their concerns are presented below. Participant 1, whose BID involved baldness, shared the following comments.

I shared my concerns about the wide hairline issues with my partner and my family. I also discussed the hair issues with my university friends who are the same age but have worse hair loss problems. So, I just asked for their opinion about the hair transplant and costs.



Participant 6 indicated that sharing was an attempt also to gather possible solutions for the issues that caused the BID. This participant indicated the following:

I share my body image issues with a few close friends to exchange our body image issues for getting solutions, especially the face issue. Because every close friend is the same age, we have the same problems and try to find solutions like seeing the doctors who have a good reputation.

Participant 10, who shared that he has always been conscious about his weight, revealed the following BID with others: “Yes, I have talked about my health issues and how to control my weight with my family, my friends and my doctor, because I wanted to be healthier and lighter.”

#### **Kept the BID issues to self**

Three participants (3, 8, and 9) said they did not share their BID matter with anyone. Participant 3 reflected that he felt his BID was a personal issue. His BID issues were the skin scars in the upper left side of his body from a hot water burn accident and the inherited premature aging hands. According to Participant 3:

I have not shared my BID with anyone before. Would I think it is a very personal issue? I should solve it by myself. I decided to participate in this study because now I grow older, I have experience in life and have settled down. I feel that I am stronger and can express what I think, which is important. When I participate in this study, I felt very excited. Then I also felt great; it is a good chance to explore and get to know myself more.

I have never really looked into myself or explored the inside of me. I only look at the outside of me or external. But when I answered your questions, the feelings are all mixed up. One part of me thinks that I should try to answer your questions beautifully. Another aspect of me says I should not hide my feelings. They are intense, very, very deep.

Participant 7, with whom the BID issues included becoming bald and unfitted upper body part (big belly), described that he kept the issues to himself. He explained that:

No, I have never talked about these body image issues with anyone because I already know the solutions. I am quite an introvert. Although I had asked my friends about the postures of exercises I should do to relieve the muscle pains; I have not shared or discussed my body issues.

Participant 9 considered himself an introverted person because he is the only child of the parents who had him in their forties. He said he typically did not open up about his private matters to anyone, nor did he usually ask for help from anybody. He asserted the following in terms of where he had discussed his BID issues:

No, I have not shared my BID with anyone as I have been learning or self-educating myself by reading books or magazines and observing my surroundings and/or activities I attended. I can see for myself whether I am fit in or whether I start to have any issues.

### **Composition Textural Description of Results for Subquestion 1**

The data showed that several participants (Participants 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10) perceived being overweight as the main body image issue. The weight issue made them

feel “imperfect,” “not good enough”, and dissatisfied with their body image. Baldness was also a problem that caused the participants (Participants 1, 6, 7) to feel dissatisfied with their body image.

The data also showed that several participants experienced the BID before reaching 35 (Participants 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10). The participants indicated that after they finished their master’s degree and started working, their changing lifestyle from being a student to a career person and the change in the body due to age were the key contributors to the cause of their body image problems. A few other participants (Participants 1, 2, and 3) shared that the BID happened during school years when friends liked to tease friends who looked different, unlike most classmates, for fun. A couple of participants (Participants 4 and 9) stated that their BID occurred after age 35 years, mainly from excessive weight issues.

Most of the participants (Participants 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, and 10) admitted that the BID had affected their self-esteem, self-worth, and/or pride. They did not feel proud of themselves and many times liked to hide away. The participants felt they were not feeling proud of themselves or feeling shameful and inferior, especially those who could not control their weight.

Among these seven men, only Participant 10 is straight and married with one child. In this study, most gay men shared that body image among the gay guys’ community tended to be more serious. The gay community is far more competitive and stressful than the straight men’s community. Gay men were spontaneously pressured to look good from head to toes, physically (toned or muscular body, flat stomach) and

cosmetically (the way they dress needs to be neatly or well-presented). As these gay participants do not own such body image pertinent to the idealistic body types among the gay people, they can become stressed and worsen their BID degree. One gay man in this study, Participant 1, whose BID involves becoming bald, mentioned that he might undergo hair transplant surgery in a few years from now if his hair loss problems become worse.

The other three participants (2, 6, and 8) admitted that their BID made them lose confidence and felt bad, but it did not impact their self-esteem yet. These three men (Participants 2, 6, and 8) believed that they have other abilities that are more significant than a human body image or appearance. However, two out of three said they only kept their BID issue to themselves. BID is a big scar, has a deep root in their heart. They could not open up about their BID issue with anyone, not even their romantic partner, a close friend, or a family member.

**RQ2: How does middle-aged men's perception of their body image affect their perceived job performance?**

I developed two questions to address middle-aged Thai men's perceptions of how BID affected their job performance. Table 3 presents the themes that emerged from the two related interview questions and the themes from each question. A detailed discussion of responses for each question follows Table 3.

**Table 3***Overview of Themes Research Question 2*

Major theme	Emergent themes
7. Impact of BID on work performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decreased productivity               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Decreased confidence</li> <li>○ Loss of focus</li> <li>○ Negative moods</li> <li>○ Overly self-conscious</li> <li>○ Feeling tired easily</li> </ul> </li> <li>• No impact</li> <li>• Positive impact</li> </ul>
8. Strategies to reduce the impact of BID on work performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being well-dressed</li> <li>• Focus on delivering quality work and being well-prepared</li> <li>• Being self-motivated               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Knowing self-worth</li> <li>○ Practicing self-discipline</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

***Impact of BID on work performance***

Participants were asked to describe how their BID impacted their work performance. The major theme that emerged was decreased productivity, referenced by 7 out of 10 participants of this study. Two other participants said the BID only impacted their confidence, not their work performance. While 1 participant said that his BID empowered his work performance, his work performance is within his control. Details regarding the decreased productivity are as the following.

**Decreased productivity**

Some participants (Participants 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10) indicated their BID harmed their work performance. Some participants (Participants 1, 4, 5, and 7) stated the BID impacted their work productivity mainly because it negatively affected their confidence and focused on their work. These participants explained that the excessive concern about

the problematic body image led them to lose track of what they were doing, lose their chain of thoughts, and weaken their ability to speak with confidence. The impact of the BID on work performance was particularly strong when the participants had to make presentations in front of many people when they had to negotiate on some serious business matters, or when they met new people who were good-looking/had admirable body image. Participant 5 described how his weight gain and BID affected his confidence. He also explained how the loss of confidence affected his work performance.

According to Participant 5:

The weight gain at that time made me feel unconfident; I did not feel comfortable going to work. I did not concentrate on my work; I concentrated on my body image issues. I lost focus, and the body image issues had affected my work performance.

Participant 7, whose BID included becoming bald and having a big belly, shared how BID affected his job performance as follows:

It affected more on your performance or your productivity on that day. Your mind just set off to what you should be doing and change, so you will not feel like you want to work. Sometimes it impacted me only half an hour; sometimes it did for 2 hours, it depends. But I have not kept track of it. But it did not have a prolonged effect like a whole day or entire night.

Participant 8 described that the BID made him feel awkward and unconfident when presenting IT product information to people he had met for the second time, particularly if they were female and good-looking. Participant 8 highlighted:

It can have some impact on me with some sales activities. For example, when I need to present the products and IT solutions to the new customers or at IT Fairs' booths, especially if those people are good-looking or well dressed. I tend to feel unconfident in introducing or presenting yourself, so I might not be in my best performance as I usually am in this regard.

Several participants commented on how the BID affected their work performance. For Participant 9, his BID from weight gain had a direct effect on his work performance. Here is how he described it:

I can say that my body image issue affects my work performance or productivity. I felt tired a lot easier than before I gained weight. I guess it is because I am both overweight and malnutrition. In some work situations last year, when I handled much fieldwork under time constraints and needed to run several back-to-back activities, I tended to feel tired quickly. However, I had to act like I was okay because I want my colleagues to notice and question my health's fitness. I was exhausted.

Participant 10 shared that the BID affected his health, both physically and psychologically, affecting his work performance. Participant 10 asserted:

When I was an employee, the weight issue made me less active and slow or merely lazy and unproductive, especially when I weighed 120 kg. I was always moody, unconfident, and passive because I felt tired so easily. The body image issue made me less productive when I worked.

**No impact on work performance**

Two participants described that their BID did not impact their job performance. However, the BID impacted both of the participants' confidence. Participant 2 state the following regarding BID's impact on his work performance.

I am a body, image-conscious person. I could feel quite reluctant to go to work-related events or social functions when I was not entirely confident about my body image, e.g., when I gained some weight, but that was not the big issue with the overall performance I worked on. The body image concerns made me super well-prepared to prevent any flaws in my work. And that helped increase my work confidence.

Participant 4 also indicated that his overall performance was not affected by the BID. He did state the following in terms of how BID affects his confidence:

I still can do my work with no problems with this current weight. The fat issue just reduced my confidence level when I had to meet new people, new clients, or when I needed to do a presentation. Hence, the body image issue did not reduce my work performance.

**Positive impact on work performance**

Comments from one participant represented a discrepant case compared to the comments from other participants. Participant 3 indicated that his BID became positive fuel for him to deliver perfect work results, unlike any other participants. He reasoned that doing so helped offset his imperfect body. Following is an excerpt from his responses.



I know that I am not a perfect person, physically, at all. So, when I do anything, all my works must be perfect and successfully overcome those imperfections. I do not know why; this is me; I am a very perfectionist. I am very detailed. I need all compliments, all the performances, and the achievements. It drives me to improve every day, to improve myself.

### ***Strategies to minimize the impact of BID on work performance***

Participants were asked to describe the strategies they have used to reduce body image dissatisfaction on work performance. The top themes that emerged from the analysis including (a) being well-dressed; (b) focusing on doing good work quality and being well-prepared; and (c) self-motivation, knowing self-worth, and practicing self-discipline.

#### **Being well-dressed**

Half of the participants (Participants 2, 4, 7, 8, and 9) indicated that being well-dressed helped improve their BID. The participants said selecting clothes that complimented their bodies improved their confidence in their work performance.

Participant 2 shared his observation that, in a workplace, well-dressed people tend to win some kind of fondness or subtle positive support from people surrounding them. So, he adopted the notion he learned over the years to his style. He explained that:

I always prepared clothes for work the night before to ensure that I dress appropriately every day for the overall external appearance. If I have any big presentations, I will always take time to write a constructive presentation, rehearse in front of the mirror, prepare a proper outfit - well-groomed, etc.

Participant 7 described how he focused on choosing the right patterns that would mask one of his BID issues - his weight while complementing his overall appearance. This participant gave the following comment regarding his focus on choosing complementary patterns to hide his physical proportions:

To help me boost my confidence level, I try to wear some clothes with more patterns to distract from it [the big belly]. In general, I would choose to wear loose clothes or have a pattern or darker shades so that I do not feel struggling or self-conscious. I would be careful to make sure the fit or pattern does not make me look sluggish.

Participant 8 also commented on how he chose clothes to mask his imperfect body image, the cause of his BID. This participant indicated that he decided to clothe to accomplish the following:

To make me feel more confident, I choose to wear an oversized polo shirt in dark-colored tones and a big pair of jeans, and I do not tuck in to hide my shape. I do not go for light-colored shade for clothes. Clothes or dressing are not serious issues for me as long as I do not wear a tight shirt that could show off my belly.

Comments from Participant 9 summed up the participant's perceptions of how appearance and clothing choice could affect a person's body image issues. The comments also highlight the participants' views of how the proper selection of clothing could minimize BID and positively affect job performance. The comments below reflect Participant 9's response:

I believe that a positive body image is an additional factor that could enhance success for every member because any well-groomed, confident, polite, and professionally self-represented tends to be more impressive and outstanding than their peers. I believe that proper manners and well-groomed are attainable and trainable for our success, pride, and positive self-esteem. In my opinion, if one could simply portray himself in an appropriate outfit that matches the occasion he attends and presents himself well. I believe this can be a strategy for success that could help him reduce or overcome the body image dissatisfaction that he may have, feel more confident, and help enhance his performance when he works.

#### **Focus on doing good work**

To minimize their BID's impact on their work performance, several participants (Participants 2, 3, 5, 6, and 9) said they focused on being well-prepared and delivering good work quality. These participants chose to focus on their work because it was something that they believed they had some abilities to control. Besides, the work quality that these men delivered could act as an arena for them to draw other people's attention to their values/worth and/or abilities rather than their body image.

Participant 2 said that being well-prepared helps elevate his confidence, which is related to his work performance. He described that:

For work performance related, I am always well-prepared. I plan and prioritize things in advance on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. I feel more confident when I had well-prepared my work beforehand. I believe people will respect me and pay more attention to the good quality of work that I do, focusing on my body

image or appearance. I feel I am in more control of situations when I am well-prepared. Being well-prepared makes me less concerned about my body image. Participant 3 believed that focusing on work and delivering good work quality helped turn negative thoughts and impacts resulting from BID into something positive. He explained that:

Focus on your work or what you are doing. Anything you do, you should stay focused and forget about the issues in your life. Make it perfect, the best you can. Talk about your perfection first, not about other people's ideals. Set your benchmark, your criteria for perfection, not others.

Participant 6 also suggested that men with BID issues should focus on their work. He shared the following:

As I said earlier, image is one thing; capability is another thing that adds up to confidence and esteem. I control the capability part; I can perfect my work. I always prepare my work, the presentation, and everything well in advance.

### **Being self-motivated**

Several participants (Participants 1, 3, 4, and 10) described how being self-motivated helped minimize the negative impact of BID issues on their work performance. The participants indicated that self-motivation, knowing self-worth, and self-discipline could reduce BID's impact on work performance. Participant 1 gave comments related to overall self-motivation. This participant described activities he engaged in to motivate himself. According to Participant 1:

For me, reading a good book can inspire me to stay positive about myself. I tried to motivate myself that I am okay right now. We need to believe in ourselves first before we can make anybody else believe in us.

Participant 3 commented that knowing one's self-worth and never stopping to improve one's skills and abilities could reduce the negative impact of BID issues. Participant 3 gave the following comments about self-worth and BID:

Knowing your value and your capability are very important. I always try to find my worth. It is tough to explain from my end. But you need to know what you are good at, offer to other people. You should have your values and capability at the place you go, where you belong in society, and treasure your value. I do not know how to say. You need to appreciate your value and capability and always set your goal high, too. You should always improve yourself to be a better version of yourself from yesterday. If you can help, you can contribute, help others.

Participant 4 believed in willpower. He once successfully lost weight. He believed he would be able to lose weight again when he determines to do so. According to Participant 4:

I know that I need to be more disciplined, and I should lose weight. I must exercise regularly and be well-behaved with my eating habits. I had succeeded in getting rid of my weight before; I should start being disciplined again to work more efficiently, not feel tired, and feel more confident when I work.

## **Composition Textural Description of Results for Subquestion 2**

Participants were asked how their BID affected their job performance. The three themes that emerged from the data were that BID had: (a) a negative impact by lowering their job performance, (b) no impact on their job performance, and (c) a positive impact on the job performance for some participants. The men indicated that their BID made them feel less confident about presenting themselves to someone new, their clients, female clients, and good-looking people. The BID made them become highly self-conscious and caused them to lose focus or become distracted from the work that they were doing. As a result, the BID had impacted job performance by reducing their work quality and efficiency. Other participants said their BID did not impact their job performance, although it impacted their confidence levels. The participants professed that the BID made them more self-conscious and caused them to lose focus on their work.

In contrast, one participant stated that his BID influenced his job performance to become even better. He reasoned that although he might not control/improve his imperfect body image, he could perfect his performance at work and the work quality. In other words, the imperfect body image or the BID acted like a fuel that drove him to concentrate on delivering the best possible job performance to prove his value/worth to others surpassed his imperfect body image.

### ***Recommendation/conclusion/comments***

Interview question 8 was included in the interviews to gather insight from what the participants might have to say to other men with BID to help them cope. Interview question 9 was included to provide insights of the participants about the BID issues in

general and their thoughts about this men's BID study. Table 4 presents the two questions and emergent themes for each question.

**Table 4**

*Overview of Additional Comments from the Participants*

Major responses	Emergent suggestions
What men with BID should do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize BID issues and fix them</li> <li>• Believe in yourself; never-give-up</li> </ul>
Opinion toward BID and this study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BID is challenging to discuss               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Men's nature: keep things to themselves</li> <li>○ Private matters</li> <li>○ Thai/Asian cultures</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Call interview made it easier to open-up</li> <li>• Pleasant body image is important for success</li> <li>• This BID study is unique and useful               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ BID also affects men's psychology profoundly</li> <li>○ Men's BID study is rare</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

***Recommendation Coping with BID***

Participants were asked what recommendations they had for men with the BID regarding what they could do to improve their BID issues. These two sub-themes merged from the analysis: (a) recognize BID issues and fix them, and (b) Believe in yourself; have a positive mindset.

**Recognize the BID issues and fix them**

Eight participants (except Participants 1 and 9) suggested that men who experience the BID should recognize their BID and find ways to fix the body image issues. Five participants (2, 3, 5, 6, and 7) also explicitly suggested the following solutions for the men with BID to improve their BID problems. According to Participant 2:

The men with BID issues should figure out the main cause that made them feel dissatisfied with their body image. Then they should fix it [the BID issue]. The men with BID may consider consulting some experts, someone they trust, or somebody who can give them honest feedback or fruitful recommendations. They [the men with BID] should be open-minded when listening to what those people said and have a strong intention to improve themselves.

Participant 3 first highlighted the important thing to the men with BID: they should be aware of their BID issues. Then they should try to eliminate the causes of their BID. If the issues are improvable or curable, then fix them. Participant 5 also suggested the men with BID should accept that they have issues with their body image. This participant also recommended tips to help men with BID cope with their issues.

Participant 5 stated:

First, step out of your comfort zone or your fear and take action. Second, doing your best to deliver the best quality of work and always improve your work skills is the best way to make people accept you.

Participant 6 suggested that any men with body image issues recognize their problems early the way he did. Then fix the issues. According to Participant 6:

Men with BID should notice that they have a BID issue. Then they should take action to improve the issue's condition before it becomes more prominent and worse; they might not be able to bring back their self-esteem or self-confidence if they let the issue worsen. For example, if they gain weight, they should realize



that it will be easy to gain weight when men get older but harder to lose the extra weight.

Participant 7 advised that the men with BID issues should be realistic. He said that they should look at their health and their lifestyle and eat healthier. He also suggested that:

The men with BID should set a goal and find role models to feel that their goal is achievable. He recommended that they have a role model for you to follow, not compare, and work towards that goal.

**Believe in yourself; have a positive mindset**

Participant 1 suggested the men with BID should motivate and be kind to themselves. He said, “He or they need to look in the mirror. Then he should talk to himself that the guy in the mirror is his friend. So, he should help motivate him when he looks at the mirror”. Similarly, Participant 9 suggested the following:

Everybody is unique. I would like to recommend that they accept who they are and recognize their values and capabilities but never stop improving themselves.

The men who experience body image issues should train themselves to have positive mindsets that could enable them to achieve body image improvements and surpass their body image issues if they want to.

***Opinions toward BID and this BID study***

The last interview question asked the participants whether they liked to add to the interview responses. Most of the participants did not get what I meant, so I had to add some further examples to understand better the question, including: (a) your thoughts

about this study; and (b) you thought towards the BID. As a result, the following five subthemes emerged from the analysis.

### **BID is challenging to discuss**

Four participants (Participants 1, 3, 4, and 7) stated that the BID topic is sensitive, very personal/secretive, and difficult to discuss in English. They also said they felt a little depressed when they gave the interview to me because they had to look back to their past, think, and describe the BID issues. Participants 4 and 7 said perhaps it is men's nature not to express their problems and feelings. Thai/Asian cultures made it difficult for them to share their BID issues with anyone. Some highlights from these participants' statements are as follows. Participant 1 indicated in the following comment how difficult is it to discuss BID:

From my point of view, I think this research topic is quite sensitive when the respondent needs to look back and think about the body image issues. It is quite depressing, sometimes, when we need to think about our body image issues.

Participant 3 also discussed below the difficulty of discussing the topic of BID:

It would be very difficult for Thai people to express their feelings and emotions in a second language. When you do not even clearly know your issues, but you need to describe them in English. What words you should use to be accurate to make it understandable. It is so difficult.

### **Pleasant body image is vital for success**

Some participants (Participants 2, 5, 9, and 10) commented that a good body image is important in society and the workplace. They reasoned that a good body image

could enhance individuals with good body image or pleasant body image. The participants emphasize that it is essential for everyone to recognize whether they have any BID issues and resolve /them. Excerpts from these participants' statements are as the following.

Participant 2 discussed Thai cultural perceptions of body image and success:

Thai society still pays great attention to every individual's body image, personality, and appearance. As a result, it reinforced me always to do my best to keep myself looking good. I try my best to present myself well. To keep me confident, I do everything to get in shape and take care of my total appearance.

Participant 5 addressed how exercise and eating healthy could improve body image:

I wanted to tell anyone who has a body image issue that you should believe in yourself to do everything. If you can do anything to improve your body image dissatisfaction issues. Like in my case, I exercise regularly and eat healthily, lose weight, do it. It will help you feel better about yourself and become more confident. When you feel good about yourself, you will feel more confident; you will do things better, including your work.

Participant 9:

In my opinion, the sooner, the better to recognize and understand your body image dissatisfaction problems. People should understand how important good body image is, and they should never-give-up to improve themselves and resolve the body image issues the best they can. People who have a pleasant personality,

well-groom, or pleasant body image could step forwards in their career path and experience another level of success more easily.

### **Men's BID study is interesting and useful**

Some participants (Participants 3, 6, 7, and 8) said that it was nice to have somebody to talk to about their BID issues. "It helped me mirror myself and see how I feel about myself. I hope my response might be a bit useful to other men with BID issues", said Participant 3. Participant 6 found it was enjoyable to talk to someone about his BID. He said, "I still enjoy answering your questions (laugh), sharing my issues and my opinion to you." Whereas Participant 6 asserted that "I think your study will be useful for other people if your research gets published and communicated to the public." Similarly, Participant 7 also commented that "I think this study is interesting because its topic is not something typical that many people have talked about - the body image or body issue amongst men." He also added the uniqueness of this men's BID study as follows:

I think many people do not realize that there are a lot of psychological impacts on men as well. We have many topics about women's image, and it becomes a topic why are we just letting the ideal woman be white, slim, and sexy? It has been debating for a long time.

### **Call interview made BID discussion easier**

Two participants, Participants 6 and 8, said that the call interview (via Line application) and talk with a stranger (this researcher) made it easier to express a personal experience related to BID. The participants said that because they do not know this

researcher, it was easier for them to discuss their BID issues openly. “I do not feel awkward to share my private information about the BID with a stranger like you because it was a call interview,” said Participant 6. Whereas Participant 8 said that

Perhaps it is because we [the participant and this researcher] do not know each other, and it is a call interview, so I feel free to share with you my personal story and how I feel. If we do know each other or if this is a face-to-face interview, I might not dare share all this BID information with you.

### **Textural-Structural Descriptions**

I generated textural-structural descriptions related to BID for each participant in the following sub-sections. The purpose of the textural-structural descriptions is to provide the essence of the participants' BID perceptions and the BID's impact on their work-life in more detail. In the following section, I synthesized and described what and how the participants experienced the BID, the impact of the BID on self-esteem and/or job performance.

#### ***Participant 1***

Participant 1 was a 37-year-old key account leader at a sales department of an international pharmaceutical company. His dissatisfaction with his body image included baldness and fatness. His baldness on his forehead made him look older than his age. The baldness issue made him lose confidence. The baldness also impacted self-esteem as well as efficiency at work. He could feel distracted quickly from the hair issue when he needed to perform essential tasks, such as business negotiations, mainly when the

participant thought that people (customers) stared at him/his head, he could lose track of his thoughts.

The participant experienced a baldness problem since he was in high school. His school friends teased him about the hair loss, and the teasing negatively impacted his memories about school life. This participant had three strategies to cope with the BID as follows: (a) moral support from someone close to him that he still looked okay; (b) a positive mindset toward himself; and (c) he compared himself to other friends whose baldness issues are worse than his. Although he feels that the baldness issue is still manageable right now, he keeps looking for information about the hair transplant surgery.

### ***Participant 2***

Participant 2 (44 years old) works at a leading retail space company. Although he does not have dissatisfaction with his body image, he considered himself an image-conscious person. As a fat boy, he had experienced BID since he was young. He could still recall that he always desired to buy clothes at shops and department stores the same as his school friends in regular sizes. He successfully managed to get rid of excessive weight and became a normal-sized man during his last year at the university. Since then, he became very careful about his body image and his appearance. This participant built up his confidence and improved his work performance by being well-prepared for everything. For instance, he always rehearsed and prepared himself well in advance before any big presentation. He also selected his clothes for work one night before. So, he could be as perfect as he could, both the job and the appearance.

To help him feel satisfied with his body image, this participant regularly exercises, tries to be mindful with his diets/food consumption, and visits dermatologists; so he will not gain weight, go back to obesity, or look old. His advice for the men with BID included: (a) figure out what makes you feel unsatisfied with your body image satisfaction and fix it; (b) consult someone you trust who can give you honest feedback and fruitful recommendations; (c) consult the experts like a dermatologist or personal trainer at some gyms if you do not satisfy with your facial or body appearance; (d) attend a personality development course if you have any personality issues. However, the participant said the key is that the men with BID should be open-minded to listen to all comments and have a strong intention to improve themselves. The participant also advised that being well-prepared is the key to achieve high performance at work.

### ***Participant 3***

Participant 3 (42 years old) works as a leader in Thailand's branch of a global mobile phone application company. This participant has unique BID issues – scars from an accident and hereditary pre-matured hands during his very young life. He felt the negative impact of the issues since he was in primary school. Conversely, the BID uniquely had a positive effect on his work performance. The imperfect body image has been a critical drive to his perfection at work.

This participant said that perhaps the musical training/activities he took after school saved his soul. He found supportive friends outside of school through the music club. The music training made him focus on mastering his musical playing skills instead of feeling sad about his imperfect body image problems. As he became an adult, he put

all his efforts into perfecting his work results. He also paid attention to maintaining decent looks and good self-presentation through the well-preparing of work, clothes, hair, and facial skin. Although the BID had huge adverse effects on his self-esteem when this participant was young, the BID has a positive impact on his work performance when he has grown up.

#### ***Participant 4***

Participant 4 (46 years old) works as a project manager of an IT company. His primary BID included excessive weight issues. He started to experience BID when he was 35, and he could not improve the problem yet. He felt that the weight issue impacted his self-esteem, his confidence, although it did not affect his work performance. This participant felt that his BID issue held him back from job promotions because he was not strong enough during price negotiations and supervising his team due to the lack of confidence. He typically felt unconfident when he had to meet new people, new clients, and new colleagues. He got feedback from his direct supervisor and bosses that he should be more aggressive and assertive when he worked, mainly when dealing with clients and suppliers on pricing-related matters. He described that the weight issue made him feel "imperfect" and had become unconfident.

Moreover, he could not stand up and fight for success at work. Although the participant knew he should be more disciplined to exercise and eat more healthily regularly, he still could not kick himself to start. He suggested the men with BID issues be well-dressed and disciplined with diets and exercises. Additionally, the men should appreciate their goodness or what they are good at while trying to eliminate or improve



their weak points. The participants felt the tips could improve the negative impacts of the BID issues on self-esteem and job performance.

***Participant 5***

Participant 5 (35 years old) works as a manager at an executive placement agency. He experienced BID from excessive weight gained during his late twenties after returning from New York, where he lived for two years. He gained about 10 kg, from 70 to 80 kg, while his height is 173 cm tall.

The participant did not feel that the weight was an issue when he was in NYC because people there were not as slim as those in Thailand. So as soon as he began work at his first workplace, he could experience the negative impact of being overweight. He lacked self-confidence, felt unconfident, and felt destructive towards himself. The feeling of not being confident made him lose focus on his work because the BID problem distracted him from work. At one point, he did not want to go to work. He felt like he could not portray his company's right image when he met any candidates who came for job interviews. However, not until he had a health check and the doctor said he started to have unhealthy results. It was the turning point for this participant to change his lifestyle. At the same time, his supervisors noticed his poor work quality problems and asked him to improve them. That was the beginning of the participant's self-improvement journey. It took him three months to lose those extra 10 kgs. Since then, he has resolved his excessive weight issue and has never had any more problems with the BID. He said he felt much better about himself and regained his self-confidence and work performance. His advice to men with BID included: (a) focus on maintaining good health; good health

is the most important (not the looks); (b) focus on improve your skills and deliver good work quality, rather than overly concerned about your problematic body image; and (c) motivate yourself, you can do everything better. He said that believe in yourself; everybody can do good things for their own life. The participant advised that what matters the most is good health, then your work's quality, not your body image or appearance.

### ***Participant 6***

43 years old works as a director at a media planning and buying company. His BID issues included thin hair/hair loss from genetics and facial wrinkles. He started to experience BID issues when he turned 30. However, when he was asked to determine which BID issues negatively impacted him in general and his work performance, he said the baldness. Hence, the BID issues did not impact his self-esteem yet. The issues only impacted his confidence.

This participant mentioned that the trigger point was when some friends posted photos in them on social media like Facebook and Instagram, and the friends tagged him. He felt so embarrassed; he felt he looked so terrible in those photos. He felt lucky in a way to have recognized the two-body image issues in time at the early stage, so he had visited doctors to slow down the hair loss, as well as the facial aging process. The participant described that when a bad hair day happened, it could take him up to three times to wash, dry, and set up the hair repeatedly so his hair could look acceptable. However, there were also days when he could not manage his hair to look good at all. His strategy was not to look at any mirrors; he just got the job done get the task done the best

he could, and quickly returned home. The BID from baldness impacted his confidence and performance on those bad hair days but did not his esteem. He added that self-esteem is a combination of two key things: our body image or the way we appear; and our capabilities.

His advice to the men with BID included: (a) recognize your BID issues as early as possible; and (b) fix the BID problems – by finding solutions to improve or resolve the BID issues at the earliest possible stage. Nonetheless, if there is nothing the men with BID can do to improve their problems, the participant suggested that the men adjust their mindset and place value on their capability, not their body image or appearance. After all, the participant stated that everyone can perfect their work regardless of their inability to perfect their body image.

### ***Participant 7***

Participant 7 (39 years old) is self-employed in the bakery business, but he used to work in advertising agencies. His BID included becoming bald and poor body fitness - and an unformed body in the upper part/having some belly. Although he did not intend to own a muscular body, he wishes his body could be firmer, particularly the stomach area. Reasons, this participant did not want to look sloppy, aging (look older than the real age), or look as if he did not take care of himself. He started to experience the BID issues before turning thirty after a few years that he started working. At the time, it was a big boom time for fitness centers. The body image problems affected this participant's self-esteem after a particular incident and triggered his dissatisfaction with the two-body

image issues. As a result, the BID feelings affected the participant's performance or productivity on that particular day.

Participant 7 mentioned that he felt it has been harder for him and most men in the Thai and oriental cultures to express their BID feelings to other people. The participant said that the men in oriental cultures show their strength by not portraying signs of weaknesses, including being vulnerable. He felt it should be easier for the men in western cultures to share their deep personal BID problems because people in those cultures tend to have more freedom to express their feelings. He also felt that this study is very interesting and should help men with BID issues because men can also be susceptible to their imperfect body image, not only women, as most BID studies had discussed. The participant felt that the Line app's interview made it easier for him to share his very private matters about the BID.

### ***Participant 8***

Participant 8 (40 years old) works as a software product development manager at an IT company. His body image issues included excessive weight and baldness. However, he only felt disturbed by the weight, not the baldness.

This participant described that the BID did not affect his self-esteem, but it did affect his work performance, particularly when he needed to walk up the stairs for many floors. He would feel tired and could hardly work instantly after the walks. He also felt BID's impact mostly during the second or third meeting with clients or people who were good-looking, well-dressed, and/or female. He would feel unconfident and could lose his chain of communications. Hence, he said such negative effects usually did not occur to

him during the first meeting with those people. He felt at ease and could easily initiate conversations with strangers, such as taxi drivers and other customers who used some café (coffee shops). On a personal level related to dating for loves, he said the excessive weight made him less enthusiastic in asking any women out for a date. He had never shared his BID with anyone. He only asked a close friend for some workout tips and some other male and female friends to help when he needed to buy some new clothes, such as jackets, shirts, and pants, when he needed to attend formal attire events. He said that he found this study useful and could talk openly with this researcher, perhaps because it was a Line call interview (not a face-to-face one) and because we did not know each other before. His tips for men with BID issues included having good self-disciplined with their exercise regimes and eating behavior.

### ***Participant 9***

Participant 9 (50 years old) works in an oil and petroleum company's public affairs department. He had never experienced any BID or had any body image issues before, until recent years that his weight become uncontrollable. The excessive weight did not only impact his self-esteem, but it also impacted his work performance.

The problematic weight made this participant usable to wear more than 60 percent of his clothes. He had to buy lots of new clothes to be able to fit into them and feel confident. His work involved meeting with diverse groups of stakeholders and colleagues, well manner, looking good was critically important to him and his work – looking more credible. He is a single child of an older married couple, which contributed to his introverted personality. So, he never shared his BID issue with anyone, not even his

close friends. When some friends asked him or initiated some talks about weight issues or weight management strategies, he would share his opinion about the subjects. He is a food lover and sweet tooth, so it has been hard to control his diet, but he always makes a change. His strategy to cope with the BID and improve it included: (a) waking up at 5 AM and exercise at his condominium's gym for an hour every day before going to work; and (b) skipping dinner when he did not need to attend any events or see any friends. Stay positive, look for positive solutions to improve the BID issues were among the tips this participant would like to offer to the men with BID issues.

### ***Participant 10***

Participant 10 (46 years old) is a business owner in men's hair salons. He started to have body image issues with excessive weight after finishing his M.A. and began working in a beer company. The work duty during that time involved visiting and having dinner clients – owners of restaurants, pubs, or bars during nighttime. The work duty added more problems to his weight problems. Eventually, the weight issue had led to dissatisfaction with his body image. The BID had adverse impacts on both his self-esteem and work performance during that time.

The participant described that he felt bad about his fatness but could not control or improve the weight issue during that time. The BID from the weight made him become a short-tempered person. He described negative feedback from his supervisors, peers, and subordinates about his aggressive and mood-swing behaviors. He described how the BID impacted his self-esteem that he constantly felt depressed and awful about the way he behaved and how he looked. The BID impacts his work performance in the sense that he

felt tired so easily, so his daily productivity tended to be lower than what he could have achieved.

Years later, the participant changed their job from a beer company to a retail space provider company. His lifestyle became more balanced between work and private time. The participant shared his BID issue with his wife, close friends, and experts [doctors and fitness trainers]. He began to change his habit to become more active and more health conscious. He dropped much of the excess weight through regular exercise and better nutrition, but he considered himself chubby still. The positive side effect of losing weight helped improve his mood, temper, and self-esteem. Now he ran his own men's hair salon business; he said he had learned a lot from the past mistakes. He is no longer has mood swings or aggressive. His advice to the men with BID was to seek advice from experts, including doctors and personal trainers. He found this study useful for men with BID, including himself.

### **Composite-Structural Description**

Overall, the middle-aged Thai men's lived experience of BID harmed the participants' self-image, self-esteem, and job performance. The primary body themes related to BID issues resulted from subthemes that included excessive weight and fatness, becoming bald, baldness, thin hair, and aging lines wrinkles on the face. The negative impact of BID on the participants' self-image and self-esteem was fueled by loss of confidence, negative feelings including shame, embarrassment, and feelings of inferiority, depression, hatefulness, aggression, and mood swings.

Furthermore, all participants revealed that the BID had negatively impacted their self-confidence and/or self-esteem because they felt they could not look as good or the same as most other men. The poor self-esteem and loss of confidence resulting from BID also harmed their perceived job performance. They said that. After all, they were overly anxious, and other people might see or stare at their problematic body image. The anxiousness causes the men to lose concentration on their work, which reduced the quality and smoothness in delivering the work. However, that did not mean the participants could not do their work; they could still do their work and deliver acceptable work performance.

The most important thing that all participants said was recognizing BID and doing something to improve the problem. Participants recommended that men with BID should seek advice or help from experts to improve the issue. Almost every participant (9 out of 10) also said that the men with BID should believe in themselves, see the value in themselves, have a positive mindset, and let go of negative thoughts, memories, and feelings. The participants suggested the following strategies could help reduce the impact of BID on work performance: (a) being well-groomed; (b) being well-prepared for work and staying focused on delivering good work quality; and (c) being self-motivated by having a positive mindset, believing in your self-worth, and being self-disciplined.

### **Summary and Transition**

This chapter presented details and highlights of the study's results, responding to the study's purpose to explore middle-aged Thai men's body image perceptions to determine how they might affect their self-esteem and job performance. The research



design was a generic qualitative approach. The data collection method was completed through a semi-structured interview with 10 middle-aged Thai men, aged 35-50, who lived and worked in Bangkok, Thailand. The data analysis procedures used to develop themes have followed the guidelines of Pierre and Jackson (2014). The results were used to answer the following main research questions: 1. How do middle-aged Thai men perceive their body image? 2. What role does the body image of middle-aged Thai men play in their perceived job performance?

I identified eight themes that emerged from the data to answer the two main research questions for the study. The theme included: (a) main body image dissatisfaction was associated with fatness and baldness, (b) age when BID first impacted happened mostly before participants reached age 35, (c) major impacts from BID on the men were losing of confidence and having negative feelings toward themselves, (d) BID impacts the self-esteem of seven out of 10 participants, (e) close friends, family, and colleagues were among the support circles which the men turned to for help to cope with BID, (f) BID impacts job performance of seven out of 10 participants, (g) self-motivation, self-belief, and positive mindset was among strategies to cope with BID, and (h) BID is a private matter that the participants hardly shared with anyone. Each theme emphasized the individual and collective essence of the experiences of the middle-aged Thai men's perception towards their body image dissatisfaction and its impact on self-esteem and job performance.

Chapter 5 will present the study results' interpretation and compare the findings to the literature review. I will include how the study's results may endorse and expand body

image dissatisfaction concerning work performance. Moreover, I will also discuss the limitations of this study, recommendations for future research, and implications to create positive social change.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

### Introduction

This generic qualitative study examined middle-aged Thai men's perceptions of their body image and how those perceptions affected their self-esteem and job performance. Most body image studies have focused on females (Primus, 2014). There have been few studies of body image in older males. Seyed et al. (2020) noted that unhealthy body image could adversely impact work performance, contribute to poor mental and physical health, and harm a person's self-esteem. Data were collected in this study to address the following two research questions:

RQ1: How do middle-aged Thai men perceive their body image?

RQ2: What role does the body image of middle-aged Thai men play in their perceived job performance?

The first question addressed middle-aged Thai men's perceptions of their body image. The first research question revealed that having negative concerns with excessive weight gain and baldness were the primary sources of the participants' BID. Additionally, the majority of the participants (seven men) conferred that their BID negatively impacted their self-esteem. The other participants (three men) stated that their BID impacted their confidence and made them lose focus on their work, but BID issues did not impact their self-esteem or work performance. Findings for the second research question revealed that the BID negatively impacted most of the participants' perceived job performance (seven men). In one discrepant case, a participant stated that his BID positively impacted perceived job performance by impelling the participant to deliver the highest quality

work possible. The rest of this section presents an interpretation of the key findings for each research question.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

This section provides the key findings of this study based on the analyses of the participant's responses to the interview questions. Themes from eight topics emerged from the data analyses. Six topics were associated with the first research question, and two were addressed in the second research question. This section interprets the key findings from each of the eight topics, and I discuss the finding in the context of existing literature related to each topic.

#### **Middle-Aged Thai Men's Perceptions of Body Image**

The first research question addressed participants' perceptions of their body image. Six predetermined questions were used during the interview with every participant to elicit information about their BID perception. Key summaries of the findings are as follows.

#### **Source of BID**

The first interview question asked participants to describe the source of their body image dissatisfaction. The two primary themes that emerged were baldness and obesity/weight gain. Regarding the theme of baldness, the participants indicated that being bald impacted their confidence and the quality of their everyday lives. Some participants acknowledged that while they knew the baldness was hereditary, they were still negatively affected by losing their hair and becoming bald. The findings are consistent with prior studies that noted that baldness can make men feel anxious, decrease

their self-esteem, and cause body dissatisfaction (Premanand & Rajkumari, 2019). In concert with a tall, toned, and youthful figure, hair symbolizes masculinity (Premanand & Rajkumari, 2019). The impression that any real man has a full head of hair can be intimidating (Premanand & Rajkumari, 2019). Bald men can suffer the ill effects of the stigma associated with hair loss. This can lead to body dissatisfaction as they consider the myriad ways that their bodies do not possess the basics of the ideal appearance (Jankowski et al., 2021).

Almost all participants, except two, described weight issues as their primary source of the BID. The degree of dissatisfaction varied from person to person. Several participants noted that the increase in weight became more problematic as they age. The result from this study related to weight and BID issues is consistent with findings from a previous study by Frederick and Essayli (2016), who found that the rate of BID issues was high among overweight men. Weinberger et al. (2017) also found through a systematic review of the literature that BID was higher among individuals identified as overweight. Moffitt et al. (2018) also found that when individuals perceived that their body weight and shape [and physical appearance] were not the way they wish them to be, they could experience BID issues. In recent research, Baldissari and Andrighetto (2021) found that the internal or external factors which trigger BID could contribute to persistent feelings of unhappiness.

### ***Age of Onset of BID***

One interview question asked participants when they first experienced BID issues. The participants' responses were grouped into the following three themes: (a) during the

school years as young as at the primary school level), (b) before age 35, and (c) after age 35. Findings from this research are consistent with findings from previous studies, which found that BID can begin as early as pre-adolescence. In one study in Melbourne, Australia, McCabe et al. (2017) found that 30% to 50% of pre-adolescent boys aged 8–10 years in Grades 3 and 4 experienced BID issues. The pre-adolescent boys expressed a wish that their bodies could be leaner and/or more muscular (McCabe et al., 2017).

Additionally, the findings from this study regarding the typical age of onset of male BID are consistent with those presented in previous research by Barnes et al. (2020). These scholars (Barnes et al., 2020) conducted a systematic review of a total of 23 cross-sectional studies. They reported that body dissatisfaction affected men in various age groups, sexual identities, and body shapes.

### ***Personal Impact of BID***

When asked how BID issues impacted them, the primary themes that emerged from the participants were the BID resulted caused them to have a loss of confidence, and they experienced various negative feelings. I did not locate any research that assessed the relationship between BID and confidence during the literature review. However, a body of literature addresses self-esteem and BID, which will be presented in the section that follows.

Participants also indicated that their BID issues resulted in them experiencing negative feelings such as depression, embarrassment, feelings of inferiority, and mood swings. They also reported exhibiting negative behaviors such as hateful and aggressive behavior toward others. The findings from this study about negative feelings are

consistent with findings from prior research that linked f BID to negative emotional and psychological states. For instance, in an early study, Jackson and Kennison (2011) found that BID was related to depression, body envy, increased body monitoring, decreased quality of life, and sexual dysfunction among those with BID issues. Several researchers have recently reported that BID was related to various negative consequences such as poor self-esteem, mental health issues, eating disorders, and other health and wellbeing issues (Liao et al., 2020; Quittkat et al., 2019; Yurdagül et al., 2019). The participants further indicated that their BID issues made them feel inferior and worthless. Findings from this study are aligned with results from previous studies, which found that BID was linked to adverse effects for individuals, such as intensified anxiety towards the individuals' physical appearance and feelings of body shame (Demuth et al. 2015; Manago et al., 2015; Wollast et al., 2020).

### ***Impact of BID on Self-Esteem***

Participants were asked to describe how the BID affected their self-esteem. The two primary themes that emerged were that BID harmed their self-esteem and self-confidence and that BID did not affect their self-esteem, but it did affect their self-confidence. The decreased self-esteem and self-confidence caused participants to experience feelings of inferiority, lack of pride, and shame. The other three participants said although they did not feel that the BID diminished their self-esteem, it took away from their confidence. The results of this study are consistent with the earlier studies that found that men with BID experienced negative consequences, which included low self-esteem, dejection, decreased ability to adapt to an environment, eating disorders, and an

inclination to exercise excessively (Cordes et al., 2016; Vocks et al., 2016; Pritchard, 2014). Several other researchers found that BID issues were strongly related to low self-esteem (Alleva et al., 2015; Groven, 2015).

### **How to Improve BID Issues**

When asked, participants indicated they used various approaches to cope with their BID issues. The two primary themes that emerged from participants' responses were being self-motivated and focusing on work. The majority of the participants remarked that their self-motivation consisted of self-awareness and acceptance of their BID issues, self-disciplined and self-improvement. They believed that self-motivation, self-acceptance, and self-discipline could either improve or resolve their BID. Self-compassion and self-esteem were found to be closely linked (Moffitt et al., 2018). When individuals have self-compassion [self-kindness and self-acceptance], their self-esteem was found to be greater (Moffitt et al., 2018). In addition, Quittkat et al. (2017) also recommended that promoting one's body appreciation could help reduce the negative effects of body image dissatisfaction. Body appreciation is related to self-acceptance, self-respect, a positive perception of one's own body, and the ability to reject the idealistic body image (Quittkat et al., 2019). In addition, Wollast et al. (2020) found that individuals with high self-compassion were more likely to experience lower levels of body shame and less body surveillance. Findings from Braun et al.'s (2016) study also revealed that promoting self-compassion could help safeguard individuals from the negative effects of the BID.



### **Discussions of BID with Others**

Participants were asked if they had discussed their BID issues with others. Several participants considered BID issues a very personal matter, to the point that being a participant in this study was the first time they had ever discussed their BID with anyone. Other participants said they had turned to someone they trusted, such as their close friends, colleagues they had known for a long time, or family, for moral support and possible ways to improve their BID issues. Primus (2014) stated that many men keep their body image issues confidential as they believe that discussing body image problems is not a man's domain. The more men keep their BID a secret, the less aware of men's BID problems society becomes (Primus, 2014).

In contrast, other participants said that they had shared their body image concerns with someone they trusted, including friends, family, and long-term work colleagues, to seek comfort and motivation, exchange information, and find solutions to the problems. Many body image researchers have suggested useful strategies to help sufferers cope with their BID issues. Mancuso (2016) suggested that to help men who suffer from body image concerns, men must first understand that other people may believe their body image is imperfect. Extending help to men with body image concerns and helping them to recognize that they are not alone may prevent male sufferers from developing more serious problems, such as body dysmorphic disorder or disordered eating (Mancuso, 2016).

### **Impact of BID on Perceived Job Performance**

The second research subquestion explored participants' perceptions of how BID impacted their job performance. The three themes that emerged from this question were decreased productivity, positive impact, and no impact on work performance. Results from this study revealed that BID reduced the majority of the participants' perceived job performance due to the following reasons: (a) they lacked confidence when performing their assigned tasks; (b) they lost focus on the task at hand; (c) they experienced negative moods (sadness, anger, or mood swings); (d) they felt overly self-conscious about their looks; and (e) they tired quickly (mostly as a result of their excessive weight). During the literature review, I only located two seminal articles investigating the direct relationship between the BID and job performance (Cusack, 2000; Judge & Bono, 2001). Cusack (2000) suggested that individuals' negative body image could lead to a greater magnitude of issues that might include a lower self-assessment of their overall value. Subsequently, such a negative self-evaluation could result in an individual being portrayed as lacking drive or being less productive at work. Cusack (2000) posited that BID issues could adversely affect an individual's work performance and other people's perceptions of their work performance (Cusack, 2000). Judge and Bono's (2001) seminal work conducted a meta-analysis of research related to BID and job performance. Judge and Bono found that job satisfaction and job performance were related to self-esteem, locus of control, neuroticism, and generalized self-efficacy. The early research revealed that BID had an indirect effect on job performance and was mediated by the effects that BID has on a person's emotional and psychological state. Several researchers reported a link between

poor self-esteem and job performance (Elheril et al., 2018; Ansaripour, 2017; Sackett et al., 2017).

Findings from recent research support the premise that BID issues can have an indirect effect on job performance. Hosseini and Padhy (2020) found from a recent study that a person with an unhealthy body image might experience mental and physical health issues. The results showed the health issues adversely affected the job performance of some participants in the study. Satghare et al. (2019) recently indicated that adults with BID tend to have a greater prevalence of poor mental health issues such as depression, apprehension, and thoughts of self-destruction. Findings from recent research support the premise that BID issues can have an indirect effect on job performance. Participants in this study described how their BID issues negatively affected their mental state by lowering their self-esteem, self-confidence, and ability to focus on their work tasks. The participants further discussed how the changes in their mental state affected their job performance.

### **Strategies to Reduce Impact of BID on Work Performance**

Participants in this study discussed various strategies they used to help reduce the impact of BID on their work performance. The three main themes that emerged were (a) being well-dressed, (b) focusing on being prepared and delivering quality work, and (c) being self-motivated, acknowledging self-worth, and practicing self-discipline. Some participants described "being well-dressed" as the most important strategy to help overcome their BID problems. They reasoned that being well-dressed could help increase their confidence. Simultaneously, focusing on delivering top quality work and being

well-prepared were among the essential strategies employed to reduce the negative effects of their BID. The results of this study relate to the consideration of whether being well-dressed could help improve BID issues and are corroborated by prior studies as follows. Saiki and Crecelius (2016) posited that a man's clothing provides social clues to those around him, projecting many unspoken yet easily understood signals. A man's clothes can bring to bear a subtle but noticeable shift in his mindset (Saiki & Crecelius, 2016). Lee et al. (2020) remarked that most researchers do not pay enough attention to how people dress can affect their perception of and attitude toward their body image.

### **Key Findings Relative to Theoretical Orientation**

The framework used in this study was Fredrickson and Roberts's (1997) self-objectification theory. The theory was originated to explain the female population's symptoms of body surveillance caused by beauty norms. Fredrickson and Roberts' (1997) objectification theory posited that people could become self-objectified or perceive themselves as objects after being treated as objects instead of living individuals. A preoccupation with personal appearance demonstrates the concept of self-objectification—perceiving oneself as an object to be visually inspected and evaluated by others (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). According to Fredrickson and Roberts (1997), self-objectification negatively affects a sufferers' mental, behavioral, and physical health. The self-objectification condition results in individuals' perceiving themselves as objects [not as a life-being] and valuing their worth based on their appearance [not their qualities or capabilities] (Rollero & De Piccoli, 2017). The negative effects of self-objectification include body image dissatisfaction, body shaming, depressive disorders, eating disorders,

sexual disorders, diminished well-being, and low self-esteem (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Wollast et al. (2020) also indicated that engaging in self-objectification could lead to a sufferer engaging in body scrutiny and experiencing body dissatisfaction. This study revealed that all participants engaged in some form of self-objectification that adversely affected their self-esteem and perceived work performance. The findings of this study showed that the negative feelings affected the participants' overall moods and well-being and negatively affected their perceived job performance. These findings are consistent with results from a recent study by Winn and Cornelius (2020), who explained the probable mechanisms of how an individual's self-objectification could occur and how the condition could affect their cognitive performance. According to Winn and Cornelius (2020), when individuals closely monitor their appearance, they can easily find discrepancies between their actual and ideal bodies. These observations can stimulate the individuals' unfavorable self-perceptions and even bring up feelings of gender inadequacy (Winn & Cornelius, 2020). The effects of self-objectification were evident in results from this study because the participants said their BID made them feel inferior, sad, and worthless. Several participants indicated the BID issues caused them to feel depressed. One or more of these harmful mindsets can lead to the emergence of the individuals' state of self-objectification (Winn & Cornelius, 2020). [The person could view their body as a lifeless object.] The continuing state of self-objectification can be a fluctuating hindrance to the individuals' work performance (Winn & Cornelius, 2020).

Results from this study support the premise that self-objectification can negatively affect job performance. Participants commented that their decreased sense of confidence

and lack of focus caused by BID issues negatively affected their work performance.

Wollast et al. (2020) advised that male (and female) individuals who suffered from self-objectification could benefit from self-compassion or more positive perception of their body image. The suggestion by Wollast et al. (2020) was consistent with the emerging theme of this study regarding participants' recommendations that being well-dressed and focusing on performing well at work as a strategy for minimizing the impact the BID has on work performance.

Men's thoughts can profoundly affect their lives. Studies by Winn and Cornelius (2020) and Wollast et al. (2020) found that positive male mindsets such as being self-motivated, recognizing self-worth, and staying self-disciplined could reduce the impact of their BID on their perceived work performance. Additionally, when the participants were asked about recommendations for men with BID issues, most of the participants (eight men) said the men with BID should recognize BID issues and fix them. However, if the BID problems are not something the men can fix, they should believe in themselves, foster a positive mindset, and never give up. The higher the level of self-acceptance, the greater the individual's body image esteem, and the lesser their interest in weight issues or comparing their appearance to that of other people (Rodgers et al., 2017; Braun, Park, & Gorin, 2016). In addition, cultivating self-compassion was found to have helped protect BID sufferers from the pressure to attain the idealized body depicted in advertisements (Rodgers et al., 2017).

### **Limitations of the Study**

The participants of this study were 10 middle-aged working Thai men living in Bangkok, Thailand, who have experienced body image dissatisfaction. Likewise, the targeted participants for this study were middle-aged Thai men living in Bangkok. Therefore, the findings from this study may not be transferable to middle-aged Thai males living in other provinces in Thailand or Thai males living in other countries. Furthermore, findings from this study may not be transferable to Thai men in other age groups or other men in other countries in any age group. Because this study was exclusively focused on middle-aged Thai men, it would be beneficial to include women as participants in a future study. It would be useful to know whether women experience BID and job performance issues similarly.

The sexual orientation of participants in this study might be another limitation of the transferability of the findings. Most of the participants (80%) self-identified as gay. Gauvin et al. (2021) remarked that men who self-identify as gay, bisexual, or queer (GBQ) might be more likely to be impacted by a negative body image. Therefore, findings from a sample of mostly gay males potentially limit the results' transferability to men in Thailand who self-identify as straight or bisexual. Similarly, the findings from this study may not be transferable to straight or bisexual men in Thailand living outside of Bangkok or to straight or bisexual males from other countries.

Each culture has its beauty ideals, which can shape each individual's perception of body image differently. The participants in this study were middle-aged Thai men who live and work in Bangkok, the capital city of Thailand. Their preference for the Thai

idealized body image might be different from that of men in other cultures. This limits the transferability of the findings to men from different backgrounds, such as unemployed men in Thailand or other countries.

Fundamentally, the transferability of these generic qualitative research findings may be limited due to the sample size. This study compiled responses from only 10 participants, which is a considerably small sample size. Theoretically, a small sample size limits the transferability of the results. Data from a larger sample may produce different findings.

### **Recommendations**

Findings from this study presented several strategies that the participants, middle-aged Thai men with careers, used to cope with the impact of BID on their self-esteem and work performance. For instance, several participants mentioned that being well-dressed, well-groomed, and well-prepared is useful to help elevate their confidence. It would be beneficial to conduct a cross-sectional, online survey-based study to collect a greater volume of information about middle-aged employed men's BID problems, either inside or outside of Thailand or both. Additionally, researchers could conduct a follow-up survey to determine whether the coping strategies shared by the participants in this study helped reduce the negative impacts of BID on their confidence, self-esteem, and perceived work performance.

Finally, while all 10 participants in this study were middle-aged Thai men aged 35-50 years who lived and worked in Bangkok and experienced BID, the results also revealed that the majority of the participants self-identified as gay. Although this study



did not aim to compare the differences between gay and straight men's BID perceptions or how they were affected by BID issues, it would be valuable to conduct a study with a larger sample to determine whether BID issues are consistent across the spectrum of male sexual orientation. In this vein, future cross-cultural, quantitative research could be conducted to explore whether sexual orientation has a differential impact on men's perceptions of how BID affects their self-esteem and perceived work performance. A quantitative study could involve a larger, more diverse sample of individuals from a broader range of locations and backgrounds. Results from a larger qualitative study could increase the transferability of the findings to a broader population of males from diverse age groups, sexual orientations, geographic areas, and cultures.

### **Implications**

Findings from this study make a significant contribution to the literature. Results from this study can contribute to positive social change by providing information to I/O psychologists, HRD departments, and employers regarding how BID issues affect middle-aged Thai men in their professional lives. Additionally, this study's results provide information that reveals the need for educational programs and seminars in the workplace that promote a healthy, realistic, positive body image. These programs could emphasize how strategies such as promoting a positive self-concept, encouraging people to exercise, and wearing appropriate clothing could mitigate the effects of BID workers' self-esteem, confidence, and work performance. The provision of self-sponsored or workplace-sponsored educational seminars that address how BID affects work performance could improve performance for those who experience BID issues. In turn,

organizations could benefit from the increased work performance of those members who have healthier perceptions of their body image. Through expanded awareness and education, organizations could be proactive in addressing potential BID image issues before those issues adversely impact the job performance of individuals in their organizations.

### **Conclusion**

This generic qualitative study examined the impact of body image dissatisfaction (BID) on 10 middle-aged Thai men's self-esteem and work performance. The two goals of this study uncovered deep-seated, unique findings. These included how middle-aged Thai men's opinions of their body image can affect their work. This study also examined their coping strategies for functioning within the confines of their BID in their place of work. The goals were, a) to provide research information about how career middle-aged Thai men's self-esteem and perceived BID impacts work performance, and b) to provide HRD and I/O psychologists with new information that could help them understand and actively support working middle-aged Thai men who are affected by the BID.

Chapter 5 provides the key findings of this study, including an interpretation of the findings: middle-aged Thai men's perception of body image, source of BID, age of onset of BID, personal impact of BID, the impact of BID on self-esteem, ways to overcome BID issues, discussion of BID with others, impacts of BID on perceived job performance, and strategies to reduce the impacts of BID on work performance. This chapter also discusses key findings relative to theoretical orientation, study limitations, recommendations, implications, and offers the conclusion.

BID issues are prevalent among the male populations in various age groups, including middle-aged men. These men form a set that has typically been excluded from body image studies and received less attention from body image researchers. In previous research studies, very little information has been provided about the causes of BID among middle-aged men and the impacts on their work performance. This study's findings help advance the literature regarding the adverse effects of body image dissatisfaction on middle-aged men's work performance.

Findings from the study expand the body of literature related to the effects of body image dissatisfaction on middle-aged men's work performance. Findings from the study expand the body of literature related to the effects of body image dissatisfaction on middle-aged men's work performance. Knowledge inspires change. These findings can expand awareness and understanding of BID issues – crucial information that enables support I/O psychologists and HRD to provide the help men need more quickly and accurately. Significantly, these findings also provide guidelines for systematic support circles and shed light on supportive coping strategies that could help middle-aged men deal more effectively with their BID problems and their impacts on their self-esteem and work performance. Chapter 5 marks the completion of this study.

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## Appendix A: Recruitment Flyer

**Research participants needed!**

For a research study entitled:

**“Impact of Body Image on Middle-Aged Thai Men’s Self-Esteem and Job Performance”**

The purpose of this study is to investigate body image perceptions of middle-aged men in Thailand aged 35-50 years to determine how their body image perceptions affects their self-esteem and job performance.

Knowledge derived from the results could be used to highlight the need to inform leaders, managers, and supervisors of how body image affects the self-esteem and job performance of employees.

*You may participate if you:*

- (a) Are Thai, male, aged 35 – 50 years, and live in Bangkok or vicinity
- (b) Have some experiences with body image issues, such as, dissatisfy with your body image, have low or no confidence in your body image, and/or have been teased or bullied by others about your body image
- (c) Are currently employed (self-employed, own a personal business or be an employee in a workplace);
- (d) Are able to communicate in English.

*Activities include:*

- Participating in a telephone conversation to determine eligibility to participate (about 15 minutes).
- Reading and signing the informed consent form (about 20 minutes).
- Partake in an audio recorded interview (about 30-45 minutes) either by phone, in person at a meeting room in an office at the Emporium Tower (Sukhumvit Rd.; BTS: Promphong station), Line VDO call, or Facebook Messenger VDO call.
- At a later stage check if the researcher captured the information correctly (member checking) lasting about 30-45 minutes.
- Compensation: each participant will receive a gift voucher worth THB 500 (approximately USD 16) after the interview has been completed.

*Interested? Any Questions?*

Please email, Line the researcher at ....

I am looking forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Chachadapa Vichitrananda (JJ)

## Appendix B: Invitation to Participate

I am a doctoral student from Walden University, and I am conducting a research study as part of my doctoral degree requirements. My study is entitled, *Impact of Body Image on Middle-Aged Thai Men's Self-Esteem and Job Performance*. This is a letter of invitation to participate in this research study and is intended for Thai male adults (35-50 years), currently employed or self-employed, live in Bangkok or vicinity, who experienced body image dissatisfaction. The purpose of this study is to investigate body image perceptions of middle-aged men in Thailand to determine how their body image perceptions affects their self-esteem and job performance.

By agreeing to participate in the study, you will be giving your consent for the researcher to include your responses in the data analysis. Your participation in this research study is strictly voluntary, and you may choose not to participate without fear of penalty or any negative consequences. You will have the option to withdraw from the survey at any time and all survey responses will be deleted, including the informed consent form agreement. Further, there will be no individually identifiable information, remarks, comments nor other identification of you as an individual participant.

All results of the study will be presented as aggregate, summary data. If you wish, you may request a copy of the results of this research study by emailing the researcher at .... The interview will last approximately 30-45 minutes.

Your participation will contribute to the current literature on the subject of the psychological and job performance impact from body image dissatisfaction. Each participant will receive a gift voucher worth THB 500 (approximately USD 16) after the interview has been completed. If you would like to know more information about this study, please contact the researcher at: ....

Please indicate your interest to participate by emailing the researcher after you read the Informed Consent form that was emailed to you together with this invitation.

I am looking forward to hearing from you!

Chachadapa Vichitrananda

### Appendix C: Inclusion Criteria

People who are eligible to participate:

- (a) Are Thai, male, aged 35 – 50 years, and live in Bangkok or vicinity?
- (b) Have some experiences with body image issues, such as, dissatisfied with your body image, have low or no confidence in your body image, and/or have been teased or bullied by others about your body image?
- (c) Are currently employed (self-employed, own a personal business or be an employee in a workplace)?
- (d) Are able to communicate in English?

## Appendix D: Interview Guide

1. What are your body image issues? Please describe.
2. Describe when you started to experience the body image dissatisfaction. How did the body image issues affect you in general?
3. How has the body image dissatisfaction affected your self-esteem (how you feel about yourself)?
4. What could help you improve your perceptions of your body image?
5. Have you ever asked for help or shared your body image dissatisfaction issues with anyone? Why or why not?
  - a. Who did you share your body image issues with and when?
  - b. What did you share with that individual(s)?
  - c. ?How did their response affect your mind and overall feelings?
6. How has your body image dissatisfaction impacted your work performance?
7. What strategies have you used to reduce the effects of body image dissatisfaction on your work performance?
8. What recommendations do you have for the men who experience body image dissatisfaction?
9. Is there anything that you would like to add to your interview responses?

## Appendix E: Demographic Screening Questions (Telephone)

Sawasdee ka (hello), may I speak to \_\_\_\_\_.

Sawasdee ka, I am Chachadapa Vichitrananda. Is it convenient for us to speak or should I call you later?

Thank you for indicating your interest to participate in the research study about the *Impact of Body Image on Middle-Aged Thai Men's Self-Esteem and Job Performance*.

You have read the flyer about the research, is there anything that you would like to ask about it?

To ensure that you are eligible to participate in the research, I would like to ask you some questions, if you don't mind.

- (a) Are you a Thai man who aged between 35 and 50 years? Or What is your birth year? (Between 1985 and 1970)
- (b) Are you current employed or self-employed?
  - (b-i) What kind of work did you do?
- (c) When did you experienced body image dissatisfactions?
- (d) What are your the body image issues?
- (e) Do you speak and understand English well? (We do not have translators).

Thank you for your time.