

## Body Image, Self-Control, and Eating Self-Efficacy Among College Students

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### ABSTRACT

The current study sets out to measure the role of Body Image, Self-Control and Eating Self-Efficacy among College Students. The study was carried out in Kerala (Ernakulam, Thrissur, Kollam, and Thiruvananthapuram). There were 230 college students in the sample, with age ranging from 18 to 25. The measures used included the Body Image-Acceptance and Action Questionnaire (BIAAQ), the Brief Self-Control Scale, and the Eating Self-Efficacy Scale. The findings of the study revealed that there is a negative correlation between body image and eating self-efficacy, as well as between self-control and eating self-efficacy. However, body image and self-control were not correlated. There was a significant difference in self-control with respect to gender and the scores also implied that females were having higher self-control than men. There was also a significant difference in body image with respect to domicile. Students residing in semi-urban areas obtained higher scores. For the variable self-control, students from rural areas had high scores, and also showed a significant difference in eating self-efficacy with respect to domicile, students from rural areas had high scores.

**Keywords:** *Body Image, Self-Control, Eating Self-Efficacy*

Today, one only needs to pick up a newspaper, switch on the television, or look at the grocery store checkout line magazines to be reminded of our culture's concern with our bodies' appearance. A wealth of information is available on improving one's physical appearance, from reducing weight to surgically altering one's appearance. These are the numerous reasons why it is critical to comprehend body image. It's not surprise that people today are more worried about their appearance than previous generation's. Individual's concerns about their physical appearance and bodies are investigated by researchers. In the early 1900s, researchers started looking into "body image". As per the American Psychological Association (APA), body image is the concept of one's entire body, including all of its physical characteristics and attitudes toward those characteristics and also National Eating Disorders Association defines, "Body image" as how individual perceive themselves, how they feel about their physical appearance and how they feel inside their body. When a person is rejected by his or her peers and is subjected to persistent daily taunting and

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torment, his or her conduct gradually changes. These elements can cause the person to withdraw and isolate themselves that may result in stringent dietary restrictions and poor weight-loss habits. And Optimistic attitudes and behavior improve physical and psychological well-being and respond to the requirements of the body. A balanced lifestyle with better food and exercise habits will result from having a positive body image. People with a positive body image enjoy greater physical and psychological health and better personal development. A positive body image has the following effects, the way a person thinks about themselves is determined by their self-esteem, which can affect every part of their lives.

An individual with normal body weight did not prioritize his or her body image, and further, the same individual exhibits his or her notion that self-control of eating is necessary to reduce and maintain body weight (Tufail et al., 2016). Self-control is the ability of inhibition to control one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviours in the face of outside demands. Delaying pleasure is a crucial part of exercising self-control. It is possible to improve self-control through fostering the values of relishing and self-control. Teaching youngsters to value and efficiently divert themselves from fulfilment will benefit them throughout their lives. Adults who have not yet discovered their skills or how to use them can benefit from practice as well. The capacity for caution is another factor. Prudence is a character trait that can be used to improve self-control in a situation. People can develop this kind of character strength by learning to think for themselves rather than only acting on instinct. With experience, real time judgments can be made more effectively. Students in college have bad eating habits. Students report eating fewer fruits and vegetables each day and reporting eating a lot of high-fat, high-calorie foods (Moore et al., 2019). Lombardo et al., (2020) Eating self-efficacy is a conviction in one's capacity to control one's eating (ESE). Self-efficacy for eating is a significant predictor of weight control behaviour adoption and maintenance. Depending on one's eating habits, body mass index, and other factors, social and emotional situations can be difficult.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Aim*

The study intends to measure the role of Body Image, Self-Control and Eating Self-Efficacy among College Students.

### *Specific Objectives*

- To assess the relationship between body image and self-control among college students.
- To assess the relationship between self-control and eating self-efficacy among college students.
- To assess the relationship between body image and eating self-efficacy among college students.
- To compare body image among male and female college students.
- To compare self-control among male and female college students.
- To compare eating self-efficacy among male and female college students.
- To compare body image among the domicile of college students.
- To compare self-control among the domicile of college students.
- To compare eating self-efficacy among the domicile of college students.

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### Hypothesis

To meet the objectives of the study the following hypothesis has been put forward:

- Ho1-There is no significant relationship between body image and self-control among college students.
- Ho2-There is no significant relationship between self-control and eating self-efficacy among college students.
- Ho3-There is no significant relationship between body image and eating self-efficacy among college students.
- Ho4-There is no significant difference in body image among male and female college students.
- Ho5-There is no significant difference in self-control among male and female college students.
- Ho6-There is no significant difference in eating self-efficacy among male and female college students.
- Ho7-There is no significant difference in body image among the domicile of college students.
- Ho8-There is no significant difference in self-control among the domicile of college students.
- Ho9-There is no significant difference in eating self-efficacy among the domicile of college students.

### Variables

- **Independent variable:** Body Image
- **Dependent Variable:** Self-Control, Eating Self-Efficacy

### Sample

The study was conducted in Kerala. The sample size is 230 college students with an age limit of 18-25 years. The sample consisted of both male and female participants. The convenience sampling method was used to select the samples for the study. It was based on the characteristics of the population and the objective of the study. This kind of sampling is highly effective in situations where the researcher needs to quickly reach a targeted sample and save both time and money.

### Instruments

Two measures were used in this study,

- **Scale-1: Body Image-Acceptance and Action Questionnaire (BIAAQ) - Sandoz et al., (2009)** Body Image-Acceptance and Action Questionnaire (BIAAQ) was developed by Sandoz et al., and it is defined as the potential for experiencing perceptions, physical feelings, affections, thoughts, and beliefs about one's body image without attempting to change their intensity and frequencies while pursuing one's values despite such beliefs. The final version of this scale consists of 12 items ranked from 1 to 7 based on the Likert scale. Responses are scored on a 7-point scale ranging from Never True-1, Very Seldom True-2, Seldom True-3, Sometimes True-4, Frequently True-5, Almost Always True-6 & Always True-7. Add the 12 answers: the minimum and maximum scores are 12 and 84, respectively. A score above 60 indicates a high score and a score below 36 indicates a low score corresponding to body image flexibility.

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- **Scale-2: Brief Self-Control Scale- Tangney, Baumeister, and Boone (2004):** The Brief Self-Control Scale was developed by Tangney, Baumeister, and Boone and it is consisting of 13 items only on a five-point Likert scale and is used to measure the level of self-control among adults. 10 minutes is the estimated time to complete the measure. Scoring is done by adding up all the points and dividing the score by 13. The maximum score on this scale is 5 (extremely self-controlled), and the lowest score on this scale is below 1 (not at all self-controlled): The score of 5 indicates extremely self-controlled, a score of 4- is mostly self-controlled, a score of 3- sometimes self-controlled, score 2- a little self-controlled and 1- not at all self-controlled.
- **Scale-3: eating self-efficacy scale (ESES)- Shirley M. Glynn and Audrey J. Ruderman (1986):** Shirley M. Glynn and Audrey J. Ruderman developed the scale. The ESES is a 25-item instrument designed to assess the individual's self-efficacy regarding eating (and overeating) behavior. Eating self-efficacy refers to the individual's confidence in his or her ability to cope, in this instance, in the area of eating. Previous research suggests that people's perceptions of self-efficacy about eating may be an important influence on dieting and weight loss success. The ESES has two factors, eating as a function of negative effects (NA: items 2, 4, 5, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23, and 25) and eating as a function of socially acceptable circumstances (SA: remaining 10 items). Since few, if any, other scales on eating self-efficacy are available, the ESES may have important predictive and therapeutic applications. The ESES is scored by simply adding up item scores (1 to 7) for the subscale scores (NA = 15 items, SA = 10 items) and summing all items for a total score. Score Till 75 no difficult to control eating, 75 to 125 moderate difficult to control eating and Score 125 onwards difficult to control eating. The higher the score, the greater the problem with self-efficacy for eating, and the lower the score, the lower the problem with self-efficiency for eating. The mean on the 25-item ESES was 80.92 (range 25-155), the median was 80, and the standard deviation was 26.50. The mean of the 15-item NA subscale was 42.15 (range 1599), the median was 39, and the standard deviation was 20.03. The mean of the 10-item SA subscale was 38.92 (range 10-66), the median was 40, and the standard deviation was 11.47.

### *Procedure*

For the purpose of the data collection Participants were selected following the inclusion-exclusion criteria through the convenient sampling method. Survey method was used to collect data from the target samples and gather insights into their preferences, opinions, choices, and feedback on body dissatisfaction. All participants were informed about the nature of the study and assurance was given that their responses to the study questions will remain confidential. To participate in the study, all respondents gave their informed consent. The participation was on voluntary basis and did not receive any financial reward. Data was collected through direct visit and by circulating Google Forms through various social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook. For participants who found it difficult to follow the questionnaire, the researcher had given assistance.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The findings of the current study were presented in this chapter. Kolmogorov Smirnov used to test the normality. Spearman rank order correlation, Mann Whitney U test, and Kruskal Wallis test were the statistical tests used along with descriptive statistics. The chapter begins with the socio-demographic description of the sample, followed by descriptive statistics and then the results of the hypotheses were tested.

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**Table 4.1 Profile of the participants**

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	115	50.0
	Female	115	50.0
Education	Diploma	52	22.61
	Graduation	95	41.30
	Post-Graduation	70	30.43
	M.Phil.	13	5.65
Domicile	Rural	40	17.4
	Semi-Urban	149	64.8
	Urban	41	17.8
Body Type	Small	45	19.6
	Medium	157	68.3
	Large	28	12.2

Out of the total sample size of 230, 50% are male (n=115) and 50% are female (n=115). 22.61% of college students were studying in diploma course (n=52), 41.30% of college students were studying in graduation (n=95), 30.43% of college students were studying in post-graduation (n=70) and 5.65% of college students were studying in M.Phil. (n=13). 64.8% of students reside in semi-urban (n=149), 17.8% of students reside in urban (n=41) and 17.4% of students reside in rural (n=40). 19.6% of college students were small body type (n=45), 68.3% of college students were medium body type (n=157) and 12.2% of college students were large body type (n=28).

**Table 4.2 Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test of Body Image, Self-Control, and Eating Self-Efficacy**

Variables	df		
Body Image	230	.000	
Self-Control	.377	230	.000
Eating Self-Efficacy	.205	230	.000

From table 4.2 it can be inferred that the variables body image, self-control, and eating self-efficacy were not normally distributed as the p-value is less than 0.05. Hence nonparametric tests were used for analysis.

**Table 4.3 Correlations of Body Image, Self-Control, and Eating Self-Efficacy**

Variable	1	2	3
1. Body Image	-	.121	-.391**
2. Self-Control	.101	-	-.153**
3. Eating Self-Efficacy	-.391**	-.153**	-

Note: \*\* significant at .01 level

The findings from the table showed a negative correlation between body image and eating self-efficacy at 0.01 significance level. Body image and self-control are not correlated at 0.01 significance level, self-control and eating self-efficacy were negatively correlated.

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**Table: 4.4 Difference in Body Image, Self-Control and Eating Self-Efficacy with respect to gender**

Variable	Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of U	P
Body Image	Male	115	123.17	14165.00	0.76
	Female	115	107.83	12400.00	
Self-Control	Male	115	105.30	12109.50	.003*
	Female	115	125.70	14455.50	
Eating Self-Efficacy	Male	115	121.25	13943.50	.181
	Female	115	109.75	12621.50	

Note: \* significant at .05 level

Table 4.4 indicates the difference in body image, self-control, and eating self-efficacy with respect to gender. For body image and eating self-efficacy, the p-value obtained was .076 and .181 respectively which is greater than 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis indicating there is no significant difference in body image and eating self-efficacy with respect to gender is retained. However, for the variable self-control, the p-value obtained was less than 0.05 (p=0.003). Hence the null hypothesis indicating there is no significant difference in self-control with respect to gender is rejected. Self-control is higher among females.

**Table 4.5 The difference in Body Image, Self-Control, and Eating Self-Efficacy with respect to domicile**

Variable	Groups	N	Mean Rank	df	p
Body image	Rural	40	89.15	2	0.015*
	Semi-urban	149	122.98		
	Urban	41	114.04		
Self-control	Rural	40	137.51	2	0.010*
	Semi-urban	149	112.38		
	Urban	41	105.35		
Eating selfefficacy	Rural	40	137.50	2	0.011*
	Semi-urban	149	106.23		
	Urban	41	127.72		

Note: \* significant at .05 level

Table 4.5 indicates the difference in body image, self-control, and eating self-efficacy with respect to domicile. It can be inferred from the table that for all three variables the pvalue obtained was less than 0.05 and hence the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a significant difference in body image, self-control, and eating self-efficacy with respect to domicile. For body image, students from semi-urban areas obtained a higher score. However, for self-control and eating self-efficacy students from rural areas obtained higher scores.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

### **Implications of the study**

Provide awareness classes to the current and future generation of young adults on positive body images and a redefined view of body image. This study encourages college students to voice their body image issues regarding the difficulties faced by them in their day-to-day

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lives and the impact it has on their health and coping mechanisms. Establish ways for society in order to be more mindful of the way that raises self-love and self-acceptance and develops preventive measures for controlling the risk of emotional and behavioral problems.

### *Limitations of the Study*

In the present investigation, only a limited sample was taken, Data collection was done in four districts of Kerala (Ernakulam, Thrissur, Kollam, and Thiruvananthapuram). Most of the data was collected through google form. The majority of the respondents were graduate students and the majority of the respondents were from semi-urban domiciles.

### *Suggestions for Future Research*

The present study can be extended to other populations. The study can be conducted not only among university students or college students but also the individuals across different age groups such as adolescents, and adults. In addition to the survey, the interview method can also be adopted in order to obtain detailed information. And also considering a large number of samples from varied locations would help understand the variables better. For the survey, minimize using Google Forms and try to acquire data largely directly. Limitations are lessened as a result.

## CONCLUSION

Body image has its importance in one's life and many of them are too much concerned about their body image. Especially, college students and many college students experience difficulties with their bodies at some point. Transitions or a change in weight and/or appearance may exacerbate this problem. For many students, maintaining a positive body image might be difficult. Most college students had poor eating habits, although had good nutrition knowledge. The majority of students were aware of the food pyramid and the concept of balanced nutrition. The study concluded that there is a negative correlation between body image and eating self-efficacy, as well as between self-control and eating self-efficacy. However, body image and self-control were not correlated. It must also be noted that there was a significant difference in self-control with respect to gender and the scores also implied that females were having higher self-control than men. There was also a significant difference in body image with respect to domicile. Students residing in semi-urban areas obtained higher scores. For the variable self-control, students from rural areas had high scores, and also showed a significant difference in eating self-efficacy with respect to domicile, students from rural areas had high scores.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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