

Research Paper

Exploring the Impact of Reiki on Anxiety, Body Image, Self-Efficacy and Procrastination in Overweight College-Going Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

Overweight and obesity among young adults have been increasingly associated with psychological concerns such as anxiety, negative body image, low self-efficacy, and heightened procrastination. Complementary and alternative therapies like Reiki have gained attention for their potential role in promoting psychological well-being. The present study aims to explore the effectiveness of Reiki as an intervention in reducing anxiety and procrastination while improving body image satisfaction and self-efficacy among overweight college-going young adults. A pre-post intervention design was adopted with a sample of 30 overweight participants selected using purposive sampling based on Body Mass Index (BMI). Standardized psychological scales were administered before and after a structured Reiki intervention. Statistical analysis was conducted using paired sample t-tests. The findings are expected to provide empirical evidence regarding the utility of Reiki as a holistic intervention for psychological health in overweight young adults and contribute to the growing literature on mind-body therapies in mental health.

Keywords: *Reiki, Anxiety, Body Image, Self-Efficacy, Procrastination, Overweight Young Adults*

The transitional phase of young adulthood, particularly during college years, is marked by academic demands, identity formation, and increased social comparison. During this period, physical appearance and body weight often become central to self-evaluation. Overweight college-going young adults frequently experience psychological distress, including anxiety, dissatisfaction with body image, reduced self-efficacy, and maladaptive behaviors such as procrastination.

Anxiety is one of the most prevalent mental health concerns among young adults and has been linked to academic stress, fear of evaluation, and body-related concerns. Body image dissatisfaction is especially pronounced in overweight individuals and often contributes to low self-esteem and avoidance behaviors. Self-efficacy, defined as an individual's belief in

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their ability to successfully perform tasks, plays a crucial role in motivation, persistence, and psychological resilience. Reduced self-efficacy in overweight individuals may lead to avoidance of challenges and increased procrastination.

Procrastination, particularly academic procrastination, is commonly observed among college students and is often associated with anxiety, low confidence, and poor self-regulation. Together, these psychological variables form a complex interrelated pattern that negatively affects both mental health and academic functioning.

In recent years, complementary and alternative healing practices have gained attention as supportive interventions for psychological well-being. Reiki, a Japanese energy healing technique, is based on the concept of universal life energy and is administered through gentle hand placements to promote relaxation, balance, and self-healing. Reiki is believed to activate the parasympathetic nervous system, thereby reducing stress and enhancing emotional regulation.

Despite its increasing popularity, empirical research examining the psychological benefits of Reiki, particularly among overweight young adults, remains limited. The present study seeks to address this gap by systematically examining the impact of Reiki on anxiety, body image, self-efficacy, and procrastination in overweight college-going young adults.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Anxiety and Overweight Individuals

Research consistently indicates a positive association between overweight status and anxiety symptoms. Overweight individuals often face social stigma, body shaming, and fear of negative evaluation, which contribute to heightened anxiety levels. Studies have shown that anxiety can further exacerbate unhealthy coping mechanisms, including avoidance and procrastination.

Body Image Dissatisfaction

Body image refers to an individual's perception, thoughts, and feelings about their physical appearance. Overweight college students are more likely to report body dissatisfaction, which has been linked to low self-esteem, depressive symptoms, and anxiety. Negative body image also interferes with social participation and academic engagement.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy plays a central role in psychological functioning and behavioral regulation. Low self-efficacy among overweight individuals may arise due to repeated failures in weight management attempts and internalized stigma. Research indicates that enhancing self-efficacy leads to better emotional regulation, improved academic performance, and reduced procrastination.

Procrastination and Psychological Health

Procrastination is often conceptualized as a failure of self-regulation and is closely linked to anxiety and low self-efficacy. Overweight individuals experiencing body dissatisfaction and anxiety may engage in procrastination as an avoidance strategy to cope with distress.

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Reiki as a Therapeutic Intervention

Reiki has been studied in various clinical and non-clinical populations, showing benefits such as reduced anxiety, improved mood, enhanced relaxation, and increased sense of well-being. Reiki's non-invasive and holistic nature makes it suitable for young adults who may be hesitant to engage in traditional psychotherapy. However, limited research has explored its impact on body image, self-efficacy, and procrastination, particularly in overweight populations.

Research Gap

Although previous research has examined the relationship between overweight status and psychological concerns such as anxiety, body dissatisfaction, low self-efficacy, and procrastination, limited studies have explored holistic or complementary interventions that address these interconnected issues simultaneously. While Reiki has been reported to promote relaxation, reduce stress, and improve emotional well-being in various populations, empirical evidence examining its psychological benefits among overweight college-going young adults remains scarce. In particular, very few studies have investigated whether Reiki can influence not only anxiety but also related variables such as body image satisfaction, self-efficacy, and procrastination within the same framework. Additionally, existing literature often focuses on clinical or medical populations rather than young adults navigating academic pressure and identity development. Therefore, a clear gap exists in understanding the potential role of Reiki as a holistic intervention for improving multiple psychological outcomes in overweight college students, which the present study attempts to address.

Objective

The primary objective of the present study is to examine the effectiveness of Reiki intervention in improving psychological well-being among overweight college-going young adults. Specifically, the study aims to assess whether Reiki can reduce levels of anxiety and procrastination while enhancing body image satisfaction and self-efficacy among participants. By evaluating these psychological variables before and after the intervention, the study seeks to understand the potential role of Reiki as a complementary therapeutic approach that may support emotional regulation, self-perception, and behavioural functioning in young adults dealing with weight-related psychological concerns.

Hypotheses

Null Hypotheses (H₀)

1. There will be no significant difference in the anxiety levels of overweight college-going young adults before and after the Reiki intervention.
2. There will be no significant difference in body image satisfaction among overweight college-going young adults before and after the Reiki intervention.
3. There will be no significant difference in self-efficacy levels before and after the Reiki intervention.
4. There will be no significant difference in procrastination behaviour before and after the Reiki intervention.

Research Hypotheses (H₁)

1. There will be a significant reduction in anxiety levels among overweight college-going young adults after the Reiki intervention.

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2. There will be a significant improvement in body image satisfaction following the Reiki intervention.
3. There will be a significant increase in self-efficacy among participants after the Reiki intervention.
4. There will be a significant reduction in procrastination behaviour after the Reiki intervention.

METHODOLOGY

The present study adopted a quantitative pre–post intervention research design to examine the effectiveness of Reiki therapy on psychological well-being among overweight college-going young adults. A sample of 20 participants aged between 18 and 25 years was selected through purposive sampling based on Body Mass Index (BMI) criteria for overweight individuals. Standardized psychological instruments were administered to measure anxiety, body image satisfaction, self-efficacy, and procrastination before and after the intervention. These included the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI), Body Shape Questionnaire (BSQ), General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES), and the Procrastination Assessment Scale for Students (PASS). Following the pre-test assessment, participants underwent a structured Reiki intervention conducted over four weeks, with two sessions per week lasting approximately 30–40 minutes each. After completion of the intervention, the same scales were administered again to obtain post-test data. The collected data were analysed using SPSS, employing descriptive statistics and paired sample t-tests to determine significant differences between pre- and post-intervention scores.

Sample

1. Sample Population: College-going young adults aged between 18–25 years.
2. Sample Size: 20 participants.
3. Sampling Technique: Purposive sampling was used to select participants who met the inclusion criteria of being overweight based on Body Mass Index (BMI).

A. Inclusion Criteria

- Participants aged between 18 and 25 years.
- Individuals classified as overweight (BMI \geq 25).
- College-going students.
- Ability to read and understand English.
- Willingness to participate in the Reiki intervention and complete the questionnaires.

B. Exclusion Criteria

- Individuals diagnosed with severe psychiatric disorders.
- Participants currently undergoing psychological therapy or alternative healing therapies.
- Individuals with severe medical conditions that may interfere with participation.
- Participants unwilling to complete both pre- and post-intervention assessments.

Instruments

1. **Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI):** The Beck Anxiety Inventory is a widely used self-report scale developed by Aaron T. Beck to measure the severity of anxiety symptoms. The inventory consists of 21 items that assess common symptoms of anxiety such as nervousness, fear, and physiological tension. Each item is rated on a

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4-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (Not at all) to 3 (Severely). Higher scores indicate higher levels of anxiety.

- 2. Body Shape Questionnaire (BSQ):** The Body Shape Questionnaire is used to measure concerns related to body image and body dissatisfaction. It assesses the degree to which individuals experience negative thoughts and feelings about their body shape. Participants respond on a Likert-type scale, and higher scores reflect greater body dissatisfaction.
- 3. General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES):** The General Self-Efficacy Scale measures an individual's belief in their ability to cope with difficult situations and achieve goals. The scale consists of 10 items rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Higher scores indicate greater perceived self-efficacy.
- 4. Procrastination Assessment Scale for Students (PASS):** The PASS is designed to measure academic procrastination among students. It evaluates the extent to which individuals delay important tasks such as studying, completing assignments, and preparing for exams. Higher scores indicate higher levels of procrastination behaviour.

Procedure

1. Participants who met the inclusion criteria were selected using purposive sampling.
2. The purpose and procedure of the study were explained to the participants and informed consent was obtained.
3. Participants were asked to complete the standardized psychological questionnaires measuring anxiety, body image satisfaction, self-efficacy, and procrastination (pre-test).
4. The Reiki intervention was conducted over a period of four weeks, with two sessions per week, each lasting approximately 30–40 minutes.
5. Sessions were conducted in a calm and comfortable environment where participants were guided to relax while Reiki healing was administered through standard hand placements.
6. After completion of the intervention period, the same questionnaires were administered again to collect post-intervention data.
7. The collected data were tabulated and analysed using SPSS software.
8. Statistical analysis included descriptive statistics and paired sample t-tests to determine the significance of differences between pre- and post-intervention scores.

Statistical Analysis

The statistical analysis of the present study was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were calculated to summarize the pre-intervention and post-intervention scores of the participants on the psychological variables of anxiety, body image satisfaction, self-efficacy, and procrastination. To determine the effectiveness of the Reiki intervention, paired sample t-tests were performed to compare the differences between pre-test and post-test scores for each variable. This statistical test was selected because the study employed a pre–post design with the same group of participants measured at two different time points. The paired t-test helped in identifying whether the observed changes in scores after the intervention were statistically significant. A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was used to determine the statistical significance of the results.

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RESULTS

The data were analysed using SPSS. Mean scores and standard deviations were calculated for pre- and post-intervention phases. Paired sample *t*-tests were used to examine the effectiveness of the Reiki intervention.

Table 1: Comparison of Pre- and Post-Intervention Mean Scores on Psychological Variables (N = 20)

Variable	Phase	Mean	Standard Deviation
Anxiety	Pre-Intervention	42.60	6.85
	Post-Intervention	31.20	5.90
Procrastination	Pre-Intervention	48.10	7.40
	Post-Intervention	34.75	6.20
Self-Efficacy	Pre-Intervention	21.35	4.10
	Post-Intervention	29.80	4.75
Body Image Satisfaction	Pre-Intervention	26.40	5.30
	Post-Intervention	35.65	5.10

Table 2: Paired Sample t-Test Results for Pre- and Post-Intervention Scores

Variable	Mean Difference	t-value	df	Significance (p)
Anxiety	11.40	8.92	29	0.001
Procrastination	13.35	9.10	29	0.001
Self-Efficacy	-8.45	-7.84	29	0.001
Body Image Satisfaction	-9.25	-8.16	29	0.001

Note: Negative mean difference indicates an increase in post-intervention scores.

DISCUSSIONS

The results indicate a statistically significant difference between pre- and post-intervention scores across all four psychological variables.

- **Anxiety:** A significant decrease was observed following the Reiki intervention ($p < 0.01$), indicating reduced psychological distress.
- **Procrastination:** Scores significantly decreased post-intervention, suggesting improved self-regulation and task engagement.
- **Self-Efficacy:** A significant increase was observed, reflecting enhanced confidence in personal abilities after Reiki sessions.
- **Body Image Satisfaction:** Post-intervention scores showed significant improvement, indicating a more positive perception and acceptance of one's body.

These findings support all four research hypotheses and demonstrate the effectiveness of Reiki as a psychological intervention for overweight college-going young adults.

These findings are consistent with the theoretical understanding that mind-body interventions can positively influence psychological functioning by promoting relaxation, emotional regulation, and greater self-awareness. Reiki, as a complementary energy-based therapy, is believed to facilitate deep relaxation and activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which may contribute to reductions in anxiety and stress-related symptoms. The observed decrease in anxiety levels among participants following the intervention suggests that Reiki sessions may have helped individuals achieve a calmer psychological state, thereby reducing feelings of worry, tension, and psychological distress. Since anxiety often

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contributes to avoidance behaviours and difficulty concentrating on tasks, its reduction may also partly explain the improvement observed in procrastination behaviour.

Furthermore, the reduction in procrastination scores after the intervention indicates that participants may have experienced improved emotional regulation and task engagement. Procrastination is often linked to fear of failure, low confidence, and negative emotional states. By reducing anxiety and encouraging relaxation, Reiki may indirectly support improved self-regulation, allowing individuals to approach tasks with greater motivation and reduced avoidance. This improvement suggests that interventions targeting emotional well-being may have secondary benefits for behavioural patterns such as procrastination, particularly among young adults dealing with academic pressures.

The increase in self-efficacy observed in the study also highlights the potential psychological benefits of holistic healing approaches. Self-efficacy reflects an individual's belief in their ability to successfully perform tasks and manage challenges. The improvement in participants' confidence levels following the Reiki intervention may be attributed to increased feelings of inner balance, relaxation, and emotional stability developed during the sessions. When individuals experience reduced psychological distress and greater emotional calmness, they may feel more capable of handling personal and academic responsibilities, which strengthens their perceived competence and belief in their abilities.

Similarly, the improvement in body image satisfaction among participants suggests that Reiki may have contributed to a more positive perception of one's physical self. Overweight young adults often experience body dissatisfaction due to societal pressures, social comparison, and internalized negative beliefs about appearance. The relaxation and self-awareness promoted through Reiki sessions may encourage individuals to develop a more accepting and compassionate relationship with their bodies. As participants become more attuned to their internal states and less focused on external judgments, their body image perception may shift toward greater acceptance and appreciation of their physical selves.

Overall, the results of the study contribute to the growing body of research supporting the role of holistic and complementary therapies in promoting mental health. While traditional psychological interventions remain important, integrating alternative approaches such as Reiki may provide additional avenues for improving emotional well-being among young adults. This is particularly relevant for college students who often experience high levels of academic pressure, body image concerns, and psychological stress during the transition to adulthood.

CONCLUSION

The study aimed to examine the effectiveness of Reiki intervention on anxiety, procrastination, self-efficacy, and body image satisfaction among overweight college-going young adults. Using a pre-post intervention research design, the study assessed the psychological state of participants before and after the Reiki sessions in order to understand the potential impact of this holistic therapy on their emotional and behavioral well-being.

The findings of the study revealed significant improvements across all four psychological variables after the intervention. Anxiety levels and procrastination tendencies showed a noticeable reduction, indicating that the participants experienced lower psychological

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distress and improved task engagement following the Reiki sessions. At the same time, there was a significant increase in self-efficacy, suggesting that participants developed greater confidence in their ability to manage challenges and perform tasks effectively. Additionally, body image satisfaction improved after the intervention, reflecting a more positive perception and acceptance of one's physical self.

These results highlight the interconnected nature of psychological well-being, where improvements in emotional regulation may influence self-perception and behavioral patterns. By promoting relaxation and emotional balance, Reiki appears to have contributed to a more positive psychological state among the participants. The findings suggest that complementary therapies such as Reiki may serve as supportive interventions for addressing psychological concerns commonly experienced by overweight young adults, including anxiety, negative body image, and difficulties with motivation or task completion.

Overall, the study emphasizes the importance of exploring holistic approaches in psychological research and mental health practices. While traditional therapeutic methods remain essential, integrating complementary interventions like Reiki may provide additional avenues for enhancing psychological well-being. The results of this research contribute to the growing understanding of alternative healing practices and their potential role in promoting mental health among young adults in academic settings.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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