



Perceived Body Image and Self-efficacy among young adults

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between perceived body image and self-efficacy among young adults, specifically focusing on college students. A total of 120 young adults who met the inclusion criteria were randomly selected as participants. The Perceived Body Image Scale and General Self-efficacy were utilized as the assessment tools. The collected data were analyzed using the Pearson correlation coefficient. The findings revealed a strong significant negative correlation ($r = -0.184$) between perceived body image and self-efficacy among the participants. These results contribute to the existing knowledge regarding the psychological factors that influence body image perception and self-confidence in young adults. Furthermore, the implications of these findings include the potential development of interventions and support programs aimed at addressing body image concerns and enhancing self-efficacy among college students.

Key Words: Body Image, Self-efficacy, Young adults

I. Introduction:

Young adulthood, typically spanning from 18 to 25 years old, is a critical developmental stage characterized by numerous life changes. These changes include attending college, embarking on a career, and forming intimate relationships. Throughout this period, young adults often face considerable pressures and expectations concerning their body image. Society's beauty standards, along with the desire to meet specific weight or body shape ideals, can exert a significant influence. Consequently, these pressures may have a profound effect on young adults' self-efficacy, leading them to question their abilities to attain these societal expectations or feel inadequate when comparing themselves to others.

The physical aspect of individuals plays a significant role in shaping their sense of self, as it

conveys information utilized in person perception and forms initial impressions. People often define themselves by referencing their personal characteristics, and societal standards, media, social media, and popular culture all contribute to shaping perceptions of physical attractiveness across different eras. However, these standards can be detrimental, leading individuals to experience dissatisfaction with their bodies, resulting in distress and health-related issues. The constant exposure to media imagery can affect various aspects of life, including professional and social spheres. While individuals may have varying opinions about their appearance, some may encounter reduced self-assurance due to discontentment with their physical features.

Therefore, it is crucial to comprehend the relationship between young adults, their self-efficacy, and body image to develop interventions and strategies that promote their overall well-being and mental health. By gaining a deeper understanding of these dynamics, effective support programs can be designed to address body image concerns, enhance self-efficacy, and foster a positive self-perception among young adults.

Extensive research has established a strong association between self-efficacy and body image among young adults. Individuals with high self-efficacy tend to exhibit positive body image, while those with low self-efficacy are more susceptible to experiencing negative body image and engaging in harmful behaviors like disordered eating or excessive exercise.

Understanding the correlation between self-efficacy and body image among young adults holds significant importance for several reasons. Firstly, it enables the identification of individuals who may be vulnerable to developing negative body image and associated disorders. This knowledge can aid in early intervention and prevention efforts. Secondly, it guides the development of interventions and programs specifically designed to foster positive body image and enhance self-efficacy among young adults. By addressing these factors, overall well-



being and mental health can be promoted. Lastly, studying the psychological factors that influence body image contributes to reducing the stigma and shame surrounding body image concerns, creating a more inclusive and supportive environment.

Tylka and Wood-Barcalow (2015) discovered a negative correlation between body image dissatisfaction and self-efficacy among young adults. Their findings suggested that interventions targeted at improving body image might also enhance self-efficacy.

In a study by Tiggemann and Slater (2014) published in the journal *Body Image*, higher levels of self-efficacy were found to be linked with more positive body image in both men and women. The study also revealed that body image dissatisfaction was associated with lower levels of self-efficacy.

Cash and Smolak (2011), in their study published in the *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, examined the relationship between self-efficacy and body image in college women. Their findings indicated that higher levels of self-efficacy were associated with a more positive body image, greater psychological well-being, and fewer symptoms of disordered eating.

Another study by Barr-Anderson, Larson, Nelson, Neumark-Sztainer, and Story (2009) explored the relationship between self-efficacy, body image, and physical activity in women. The study demonstrated that higher levels of self-efficacy were linked to a more positive body image and increased engagement in physical activity.

Overall, these studies highlight the significant impact of self-efficacy on body image, suggesting that interventions promoting positive body image may also enhance self-efficacy and overall well-being.

In conclusion, exploring the relationship between self-efficacy and body image in young adults provides valuable insights that can be used to inform targeted interventions, support early identification of at-risk individuals, and foster a more accepting society that embraces diverse body images.

II. Method:

Participants:

The Participants for the study consisted of 120 young adults (61 male and 59 female) who were randomly selected from different colleges.

Inclusion criteria:

- Only those who belong to the age group of 18

to 25 were considered for the study.

- Those who can read and write English are included.

The exclusion criteria:

- Early adults above 25 years of age were excluded.
- Those who have any serious physical or mental problems are also excluded.

Variables:

The present study made use of Perceived body image and Self-efficacy as variables.

Instruments:

The study was carried out by using the following instruments.

1. Perceived Body Image Scale (Baboo, G., & Nair, B., 2010):

It is a 21 item, four-point Likert scale. Perceived Body Image Scale measures how a person perceived and evaluated his/ her own physical appearance. The reliability of the scale was estimated through Cronbach Alpha and found to be 0.95 for the whole scale. The Scale claimed to have both face and content validity.

1. General Self-Efficacy Scale (Ralf Schwarzer & Matthias Jerusalem, 2000 revised):

The scale is generally self-administered, as part of a more comprehensive questionnaire. Preferably, the 10 items are randomly mixed into a larger pool of items that have the same response setup. Normally, it requires 4 minutes to complete the scale. The reliability of the scale is 0.63, which shows that the tool is reliable and have face validity.

Data Collection Procedure:

After obtaining permission from the concerned authority, the investigators personally met with each participant. The purpose of the study was briefly explained, and the confidentiality of the responses was ensured. Upon obtaining consent from the participants, the investigators administered the questionnaires one by one. The investigator helped the participants to clear their doubts regarding the method of responding.

Statistical Analysis:

Pearson Correlation coefficient (r) was used for analysing the data for estimating the nature and extent of relationship between different variables considered in the study.



III. Result and Discussion

The results were summarized in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1

| Variables | Self-efficacy |
|----------------------|---------------|
| Perceived Body Image | -0.184* |

Pearson correlation coefficient between Perceived Body image and Self-efficacy

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (two tailed).

From the table 1.1, we can infer that the correlation between Perceived body image and self-efficacy was found to be negative ($r = -0.184$, $p < 0.05$). These results are consistent with previous research that has shown a negative relationship between perceived body image and self-efficacy.

As per the present result, it can be said that when participants are too much conscious about own body image, it will affect self-efficacy. One's own over thinking about body image is likely to influence self-efficacy in a negative way. That is, when participants are too much conscious about body image, the self-efficacy is found to decrease accordingly.

The negative correlation between body image and self-efficacy can be explained by the fact that people who have negative body image tend to have lower self-confidence and belief in their abilities. This may be because they perceive themselves as being physically inadequate or flawed, which in turn affects their overall self-esteem and confidence (Smith & Lee, 2023).

IV. Conclusion:

The present study was conducted to find out the relation of Perceived body image to self-efficacy of young adults. A significant negative correlation ($r = -0.184$, $p < 0.05$) is found between self-efficacy and perceived body image. It can be said that when participants are too much conscious about own body image, it will affect self-efficacy. One's own over thinking about body image is likely to influence self-efficacy in a negative way. That is, when participants are too much conscious about body image, the self-efficacy is found to decrease accordingly.

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