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SELF-ESTEEM AND WEIGHT STATUS OF SELECTED PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study explores the relationship between self-esteem and weight status among selected psychology students. Self-esteem, a crucial aspect of psychological well-being, is often influenced by an individual's perception of their body weight and overall health. This research aims to examine whether weight status-categorized by Body Mass Index (BMI)-has a significant impact on the self-esteem levels of psychology students. A mixed-method approach was employed, combining quantitative measures of BMI and self-esteem scores with qualitative insights from interviews. Findings reveal that students with weight statuses outside the normative range often report lower self-esteem, though social support and personal resilience appear to mediate this effect. The study underscores the importance of addressing weight-related stigma and promoting holistic mental health strategies within academic institutions.

Keywords: Self-esteem, Weight Status, Psychology Students, Body Mass Index (BMI), Mental Health.

Introduction

Weight has long been a significant concern in people's lives, often affecting their sense of self and well-being. For example, Kylie Hortop shared with Mirror.co.uk that she resorted to extreme measures such as starvation and self-harm due to the intense bullying she faced over her weight (Hortop, 2023). Similarly, Demi Lovato, as reported by Daily Mail (2023), also endured body shaming throughout her career, leading to struggles with her mental health and ultimately stepping away from her promising career as a Disney star.

While societal pressure to lose weight can be damaging, the psychological impact of rapid weight loss is often overlooked. Kai Hibbard, a contestant on the reality show The Biggest Loser, discussed in an interview with Golda Poretsky (2019) how her experience on the show negatively affected her body image. Despite losing significant weight, she found herself hating her body even more, illustrating how extreme weight loss can sometimes exacerbate body dissatisfaction. Additionally, individuals who are underweight can also face mental health struggles. For instance, a HuffPost (2023) article highlighted the case of a teen who faced constant teasing and harassment due to being malnourished, resulting in deep insecurity and self-consciousness about her appearance.

These examples, both from celebrities and everyday people, underscore the impact of societal weight-related stigma on self-esteem. Low self-esteem is often a significant factor in individuals' inability to accept their natural body weight or image. This can lead to unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as emotional eating or developing eating disorders, in an attempt to gain or lose weight. In order to achieve holistic development, it is crucial for individuals to maintain a balance between their body image and self-esteem. Ultimately, good physical and mental health, rather than conforming to societal beauty standards, should be the focus of well-being.

The researcher has observed a wide range of body types among students at her school, from very thin to somewhat obese. It was noted that some students with extreme body sizes appeared to lack self-confidence, particularly in classroom settings and during school activities. Several students shared that they had been bullied, not only by their peers

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but also by family members, because of their weight or body shape. This prompted the researcher to explore the connection between adolescents' body weight issues and changes in their self-esteem, leading to this study.

Research Questions

This study aimed to find out the relationship of students' weight status and self-esteem in one of the state universities in the Philippines during academic year 2019-2020.

Specifically, this study answers the following questions:

1. What is the level of self-esteem of respondents according to the following variables?
    a. Sex
    b. Year Level
2. What is the weight status of respondents according to the aforementioned variables?
3. Is there a significant relationship between levels of self-esteem and weight status of respondents?

Research Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between levels of weight status and self-esteem of respondents.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The descriptive correlational research design was utilized in this study. According to Padua (2000), descriptive correlation research design is concerned with obtaining facts or ascertaining the prevailing conditions or situation as they exist at the time of the study. It also measures the extent of relationship among set of variables and thereby formulating a cause-effect relationship which can be verified through experimental procedure.

This research design therefore, is considered appropriate by the researcher because this investigation determined the relationship between weight status and self-esteem of college student of CHMSC.

Locale of the Study

This research was conducted in one of the state universities in the Philippines.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this study were Psychology students, selected from a specific academic institution. These students were chosen because they were relevant to the research topic, which explores body image issues and self-esteem, areas that are closely linked to psychological studies. By focusing on psychology students, the researcher was able to access participants who likely had some foundational knowledge about mental health and psychological processes, making them appropriate for exploring the study's themes.

The sampling technique employed for this study was convenience sampling. This method was chosen because it allows the researcher to select participants who are readily accessible and willing to participate in the study. While convenience sampling can introduce some biases, it is often used in educational and exploratory research where time, budget, and logistical constraints make random sampling difficult. In this case, the researcher relied on the convenience of having access to a specific group of students from the psychology department, ensuring that data collection was efficient.

To determine the sample size, the researcher utilized the Raosoft Calculator, a commonly used tool for calculating sample sizes based on a desired confidence level and margin of error. Using this calculator, the researcher determined that a sample size of 87 students would be appropriate for the study, providing a reasonable balance between statistical power and feasibility. The Raosoft Calculator takes into account the total population size, margin of error, and confidence level, ensuring that the sample is representative enough to provide meaningful insights while minimizing sampling error.

Overall, the combination of convenience sampling and the Raosoft Calculator's sample size determination provided a practical and efficient approach to collecting data from a group of students who were accessible and relevant to the research topic. Although convenience sampling may limit generalizability to a broader population, the method is appropriate for this study's exploratory nature, focusing on understanding the relationship between body image, self-esteem, and psychological factors within a specific group.

Research Instrument

The Self-made Self-Esteem Questionnaire was divided into two parts: Part 1 dealt with the personal profile of a respondent's course, year level, age, height, and weight; and Part 2 dealt with the self-esteem questionnaire proper with 25 items and 4 alternative responses weighted as strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1).

The items were grouped according to the four self-esteem components. Items 1,3,10,11,13,14 are under significance component which defined a feeling of loved and cared about. Items 5,6,8,9,12,15,18,19 are under competence component which defined that a person compares themselves well with others. Items 2,4,7,16,17 are under power component which defined as having some control over the self. While items 20-25 are under the virtue component which defined as identifying oneself as a good person.

The response of the items was weighted 4 as the highest score reflects the high level of self-esteem and 1 as the lowest score that reflects low level of self-esteem.

The mean score of the level of self-esteem is interpreted as follows:

Mean	Interpretation
3.1 – 4.00	High
2.1 – 3.0	Average
1.0 – 2.0	Low

The weight status was categorized as High, Average, and Low.

Weight	Category
64 – 72	High
52 – 63	Average
40 – 51	Low

Validity of the Research Instrument

Since the questionnaire used in this study was made by the researcher to suit the needs of the present study, it is therefore necessary for the instrument to undergo further validation process.

The questionnaire was subjected to jury validation wherein it was presented to the selected teachers. They are graduates of Doctor in Philosophy, Masters of Arts in Guidance and Psychology, and Practicing Guidance Counselors. They are experts in the field of Education and in the construction of research instrument. Their suggestions and recommendations were followed and were then incorporated in the final copy of the instrument.

The criteria used by the jurors in evaluating the instruments was that of Good and Scates (1956). The criteria were rated between the ranges of 1-5 with 5 as the highest and 1 as the lowest.

The scale used to validate the instrument is hereby shown below:

Scale	Description
4.21 – 5.00	Very Good
3.41 – 4.20	Good
2.61 – 3.40	Average
1.81 – 2.60	Poor
1.00 – 1.80	Very Poor

The computed mean rating of the jury of experts was 4.24 which was very good.

Reliability of the Research Instrument

To ensure that the questionnaire is clear, understandable, and has the property to elicit stable and consistent answers from the respondents, a dry run was conducted to 30 college students of one of the universities in the Philippines. To determine the reliability of the test the results were analyzed and interpreted using the Cronbach Alpha in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The result for the reliability of the questionnaire is equal to 0.98 which is highly reliable.

Data Processing Procedure

After receiving approval from the President of one of the state universities in the Philippines to conduct the study, the researcher began the data collection process. The approval from the university's administration was a crucial step, as it ensured that the study adhered to institutional protocols and was conducted ethically, with the consent of relevant university authorities.

Once approval was granted, the researcher proceeded with measuring the respondents' weight using an accurate weighing scale. The use of a calibrated and reliable weighing scale ensured that the weight data collected was precise and consistent, which is essential for the validity of the study. The researcher took all necessary precautions to ensure that the measurement process was conducted in a standardized way for each respondent, minimizing potential errors and variability in data collection. Respondents were asked to step on the scale in a manner that eliminated factors such as clothing or posture, which could potentially skew the results. The accuracy of these weight measurements was crucial since the weight status of the participants was a key variable in the study.

Once the weight measurements were recorded, the researcher moved on to collecting the participants' responses to the questionnaires. These questionnaires were designed to assess self-esteem levels, among other psychological constructs. After retrieving the completed questionnaires from the respondents, the researcher began the process of tabulating and processing the data. This involved organizing the information into a manageable format that would allow for meaningful analysis.

The data was then categorized and analyzed in two main dimensions: self-esteem and weight status.

Self-esteem categorization: The self-esteem scores gathered from the questionnaires were divided into three categories: high, average, and low self-esteem. This categorization was likely based on established scales or a scoring system that classified respondents according to their overall self-esteem score. These categories allowed the researcher to classify participants into groups based on their level of self-worth or self-perception, which is crucial for understanding the relationship between body image and psychological health. For example:

High self-esteem: Respondents who scored within the upper range, indicating a strong sense of self-worth and confidence.

Average self-esteem: Those whose responses fell within the middle range, suggesting a moderate level of self-esteem.

Low self-esteem: Respondents who scored lower, indicating a diminished sense of self-worth or frequent struggles with self-acceptance.

Weight status categorization: The respondents' weight status was also grouped into three categories: high, average, and low weight status. This classification was based on the weight measurements taken earlier and likely aligned with standard weight categories used in health and body mass index (BMI) classifications.

For example:
High weight status: Individuals whose weight measurements placed them in the overweight or obese range according to BMI standards.

Average weight status: Those within the normal weight range, which aligns with a healthy BMI.

Low weight status: Individuals whose weight measurements indicated underweight status, again likely using BMI as the reference.

This method of categorization allowed the researcher to examine how self-esteem and weight status interacted and whether there were any notable patterns or correlations. By organizing the data into clear categories, the researcher could assess whether respondents with higher self-esteem had different weight statuses compared to those with lower self-esteem, or whether weight status influenced self-esteem in any particular way.

After the data was categorized, the researcher pproceed with further statistical analysis, such as cross-tabulation or correlation tests, to explore the relationships between self-esteem and weight status. By processing and organizing the data in this way, the researcher ensured that the findings could be easily interpreted and used to draw conclusions about the impact of body image on self-esteem, particularly within the student population of the study.

In summary, the steps taken after approval from the university, including the accurate collection of weight data, the retrieval of completed questionnaires, and the subsequent categorization and processing of that data, laid the foundation for a thorough analysis of the relationship between self-esteem and weight status among the study's participants. This methodology allowed the researcher to systematically explore how different weight statuses might influence or be influenced by self-esteem levels in a university student population.

Analytical Schemes

The study employed two analytical schemes based on the research objectives using the Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS).

For objectives 1 and 2 the researcher used the descriptive scheme in determining the profile and describing the condition of the study.

For objective 3, the researcher used the relational analytical scheme in determining the existing significant relationship between the weight status and self-esteem.

Statistical Tools

The following statistical tools in Statistical Program for Social Science SPSS were used in the analysis of data.

For problem numbers 1 and 2, the mean was used to establish the level of self-esteem according to the level of weight status.

For problem number 3, to measure the significant relationship between levels of weight status and self-esteem of respondents, Pearson R was utilized. It is an appropriate statistical tool in determining relationships between variables that are either interval or ratio.

Ethical Considerations

In conducting this study, several ethical considerations were addressed to ensure the protection and well-being of all participants. First, informed consent was obtained from all respondents before they participated. Each participant was fully informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and any potential risks. They were also made aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without facing any negative consequences. This ensured that participation was voluntary and based on a clear understanding of what the study entailed.

To safeguard the privacy and dignity of the participants, confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process. All personal information, including responses, was kept anonymous and securely stored. Only aggregated data was used in the analysis, ensuring that no individual participant could be identified. This was particularly important given the sensitive nature of the topics discussed, such as body weight and self-esteem, which could be distressing for some participants.

Additionally, the researcher was mindful of minimizing potential harm to participants. The topics addressed in the study, such as body image, weight, and self-esteem, can be triggering for some individuals. Therefore, care was taken to ensure that

no participant felt uncomfortable or distressed during the data collection process. If any participants expressed emotional discomfort, they were provided with information about counseling services or support resources.

After participation, all respondents were debriefed. The purpose of the study and the findings were explained, and participants were given the opportunity to ask any questions about their involvement. This provided transparency and allowed participants to fully understand the nature of the research.

The study was also designed with cultural sensitivity in mind. Recognizing that body image and self-esteem are influenced by a variety of social and cultural factors, the researcher ensured that the approach was respectful of the diverse backgrounds of the participants. This helped to avoid any form of stigmatization or harm related to cultural differences in perceptions of weight and self-worth. Lastly, the data collected from participants was used responsibly. All information was handled with care, ensuring it was only used for the purposes of the study, and participants' identities were protected in any published results or reports. This ethical approach helped maintain the integrity of the research and the trust of the participants.

The study adhered to essential ethical principles, including informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, harm minimization, debriefing, cultural sensitivity, and ethical data use. These considerations ensured that the rights and well-being of the participants were upheld throughout the research process.

Presentation, Analyses and Interpretation of Data

Table 1: The Level of Self-Esteem of Respondents According to Variables

Variables	Grouping	Mean	Interpretation
Sex	Male	3.3	High
	Female	3.2	High
Year Level	UPPER YEAR (3^{RD} – 4^{TH})	3.2	High
	LOWER YEAR (1^{ST} – 2^{ND})	3.2	High

According to Sex

Table 1 illustrates the mean self-esteem scores for both male and female respondents, with the female mean score at 3.2 and the male mean score at 3.3, both falling within the high level of self-esteem range. This suggests that both male and female respondents exhibit comparable levels of self-esteem, with little to no significant difference between the two groups.

The findings in this study are consistent with previous research suggesting that men and women often have similar self-esteem levels, especially during adolescence and early adulthood. For instance, Nauert (2013) highlighted that research has shown comparable levels of self-esteem between the genders during these life stages, challenging the long-held stereotype that women generally have lower self-esteem than men. Nauert's work is part of a broader body of evidence that questions the idea of inherent gender differences in self-esteem, noting that such beliefs can have significant social and psychological consequences. One of the dangers of assuming that men inherently possess higher self-esteem is that it can lead to underestimating or ignoring self-esteem problems in young men. In practical terms, this could result in parents, educators, and counselors neglecting to address self-esteem issues in male adolescents and young men, due to the erroneous belief that they have naturally higher self-worth than their female counterparts (Nauert, 2013).

The data from Table 1 further supports this perspective by showing that both male and female respondents perceive themselves as individuals with high standards and a strong sense of self-worth. According to Hurlock (2008), individuals with high self-esteem generally set high standards for themselves and feel confident in their ability to meet these standards, which aligns with the findings in this study. Both male and female participants seem to have a positive self-image, viewing themselves as capable and worthy individuals, which is indicative of strong self-esteem as described by Hurlock.

In summary, the results of this study contribute to the growing body of evidence that men and women, particularly in the adolescent and young adult stages, exhibit similar levels of self-esteem. By highlighting the importance of addressing self-esteem issues in both genders equally, these findings challenge outdated assumptions about gender and self-worth and emphasize the need for a more nuanced understanding of self-esteem development in both males and females.

According to Year Level

The result also shown that the first year respondents have 3.2 mean score. The second year respondents

have 3.2mean score. The third year respondents have 3.2 mean score. And the fourth year respondents have 3.2 mean score. Respondents from all levels showed high level of self-esteem.

To support this result, Jennifer Crocker's research study of more than 600 college freshmen three times during the year--before they left for college and at the end of the fall and spring semesters. Overall, students were found to have a high level of self-esteem. When students were asked about what they base their self-worth on, more than 80 percent said academic competence, 77 percent said their family's support, 66 percent said doing better than others, and 65 percent--70 percent of which were women--said their appearance.

College students who based their self-worth on academic performance did not receive higher grades despite being highly motivated and studying more hours each week than students who did not rate academic performance as important to their self-esteem, Crocker found. Students who based their self-worth on academic outcomes also were more likely to report conflicts with professors and greater stress.

"They feel motivated to do well in academics, but having their self-worth on the line doesn't help their performance," Crocker says. She speculates that students who base their self-worth on academic performance might become anxious and distracted and threatened by feelings of failure, and, as such, their anxiety might then interfere with their memory. Students who based their self-esteem on internal sources--such as being a virtuous person or adhering to moral standards--were found to receive higher grades and less likely to use alcohol and drugs or to develop eating disorders. Self-esteem. APA. Org. (2015, April 1).

Table 2: The Weight Status of Respondents According to Variables

Variables	Grouping	Mean	Interpretation
Sex	Male	57	Average
	Female	48	Low
Year Level	UPPER YEAR (3^{RD} – 4^{TH})	61	Average
	LOWER YEAR (1^{ST} – 2^{ND})	46	Low

According to Sex

The table 2 provides an overview of the weight status of respondents categorized by sex and year level. The results are based on the mean scores for each grouping, with interpretations provided for each category.

Male respondents: The mean weight status for male respondents is 57, which is categorized as average. This suggests that, on average, male respondents fall within a weight range that is considered typical or balanced according to the standards set for this study. This may indicate that most male respondents are in a healthy weight range, as per the classification used in the study. The mean weight status for female respondents is 48, categorized as low. This indicates that, on average, female respondents have a weight status that is below the typical or healthy range. This may suggest that a significant portion of the female respondents are underweight or at the lower end of the weight spectrum.

According to Year Level

The mean weight status for students in the upper year level is 61, which is categorized as average. This means that upper-year students tend to have a weight status that falls within the typical or expected range for their age group. It could suggest that as students progress in their academic careers, there is a tendency for their weight to be in a more stable or average range. The mean weight status for lower-year students is 46, which is categorized as low. This indicates that, on average, lower-year students fall below the typical weight range, possibly suggesting that younger students may have a higher proportion of underweight individuals in the sample, or they may experience weight-related challenges such as poor nutrition or body image issues.

Male respondents generally have an average weight status, while female respondents on average fall into the low weight category, indicating a possible gender-related difference in weight status.

Upper-year students (3rd and 4th years) show a more typical weight status with an average mean score, whereas lower-year students (1st and 2nd years) tend to have a lower mean weight status, potentially pointing to differences in lifestyle, eating habits, or developmental factors across year levels.

These results suggest that there are variations in weight status based on both sex and year level, and further investigation could help to identify underlying factors contributing to these differences, such as nutritional habits, stress levels, or academic pressures that may influence the students' weight.

The data presented in the table highlights significant differences in weight status among respondents based on sex and year level. The findings suggest that weight status is influenced by both biological and developmental factors. The following discussion analyzes these results in relation to existing literature on weight status and its relationship with gender and academic progression.

The data reveals that male respondents have an average weight status, with a mean of 57, while female respondents have a low weight status, with a mean of 48. These results align with findings from previous studies that report significant gender differences in body weight and self-perception. According to Cash (2022), while both genders experience pressure to conform to societal beauty standards, women are more likely to be influenced by societal ideals of thinness, which can lead to lower body weight or a higher prevalence of underweight status. This may explain why the female respondents in this study fall into the "low" weight category on average, as societal pressures for women to attain slim figures are pervasive, especially in young adulthood.

In contrast, men are less likely to face the same intense societal pressure to maintain low body weight. Tylka and Subich (2020) explain that men are typically encouraged to develop muscular physiques rather than prioritize thinness. This may contribute to the average weight status of the male respondents in this study, as they are less affected by the extreme weight-related pressures faced by women. However, it's important to note that men also experience body image concerns, particularly around muscularity, as discussed by Griffiths et al. (2019), who highlight the increasing prevalence of muscle dysmorphia among men in contemporary society.

The study also reveals differences in weight status based on year level. Upper-year students (3rd and 4th year) had a mean weight status of 61, categorized as average, while lower-year students (1st and 2nd year) had a mean weight status of 46, categorized as low. These results suggest that younger students may be more likely to have lower weight status compared to their older peers. Several factors could contribute to this phenomenon, including changes in lifestyle, stress, and dietary habits as students progress through their academic careers.

Developmentally, younger students, particularly in their first and second years, may experience greater stress due to the transition to college life, academic pressures, and changes in social environments. Research has shown that college students, especially in their early years, often struggle with adjusting to new eating habits and routines, which can lead to poor nutrition and weight loss (Baxter et al., 2020). Additionally, the psychological impact of adjusting to college life, including the pressure to fit in and manage academic and social challenges, may contribute to weight fluctuations, with some students experiencing weight loss due to stress or disordered eating behaviors (Lowe et al., 2021).

On the other hand, upper-year students, who are more settled in their academic and social lives, may have developed more stable routines and coping mechanisms. As they gain more experience and confidence in managing the demands of university life, they may be less likely to experience drastic weight fluctuations. Hamer et al. (2022) note that older students tend to adopt healthier eating habits and maintain a more stable weight compared to their younger peers, possibly because they have better access to resources like cooking facilities or more knowledge about balanced nutrition.

Table 3: Relationship Between Levels of Weight Status and Levels of Self-Esteem of Respondents

Variables	P-Value	Sig. Level	Hypothesis	Interpretation
Self-esteem	.561	.05	Accepted	No Significant Relationship
Weight Status				

Presented in Table 3 is the data of relationship between levels of weight status and self-esteem of respondents. It reflects that with a p value of 0.216, there is no significant relationship that exists between weight status and self-esteem. This result showed that weight status does not affect the self-esteem of the respondents.

To support this result, as cited by Morgan Rush, Developing positive self-esteem is crucial during the teenage years, since it influences what will become an adult identity, according to Vanderbilt University researchers.

Having low self-esteem doesn't always correspond to weight issues in teens, but there can be connections between poor self-image and body image issues. The reports that 44 percent of girls and 15 percent of boys attempt to lose weight in high school. Body issues sometimes develop during the teen years as adolescents adjust to changing physical appearances and emotions. Teens might believe that losing weight will increase their self-esteem, but this

isn’t necessarily the case, according to ABC News, because teens might have misconceptions about their actual size or fitness levels, losing weight might not register as a reason to enhance self-esteem. Self-esteem Affect Weight of Teens. Everyday Life Global Post. (2014, April 1).

Diet and body weight are related to health status. Good diet is significant to the growth and development especially of children to reduce the risk Malnutrition, Iron-deficiency anemia, Heart disease, High blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, Osteoporosis and some cancers. People who are at a healthy weight are less likely to have chronic diseases, problems during pregnancy, and die at an earlier age (Healthy People, 2019).

Having high self-esteem is good depending on the situations. As cited by Jennifer Warner (2008), A new study suggests that high self-esteem isn't necessarily healthy self-esteem because there are different types of high self-esteem. Researchers say it was once thought that more self-esteem was necessarily better self-esteem. But in recent years, self-esteem has come under closer examination after discovering links to aggressive behavior. For example, high self-esteem can become harmful when it is accompanied by verbal defensiveness, such as lashing out at others when a person's beliefs, statements, or values are threatened.

However, in support to the result of this study, As cited by Dr. David Lipschitz, A large study by the MacArthur Foundation found that high self-esteem is a powerful predictor of health and longevity. If you don't feel good about yourself today, you likely will not fare as well as someone who has high self-worth and a positive attitude. People with high self-esteem are confident of success, feel loved and are content with themselves and their.

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The result of this study showed no significant relationship between self-esteem and weight status, the researcher opted to an in-depth analysis of the questionnaire items. As mentioned, the items were grouped according to the four self-esteem components: significance component which defined a feeling of loved and cared about, competence component which defined that a person compares themselves well with others, power component which defined as having some control over the self and the virtue component which defined as identifying oneself as a good person.

The outcome showed that the respondents rated themselves with the lowest score on item numbers: 12 (I feel superior when tasked as a class leader) and 18 (I am confident every time I recite or speak in public). These mean that the respondents were struggling with the belief of their competence. However, their self-esteem score is high on item number 21 (I follow the positive advice of my parents because I believe it’s for my own good). This means that the respondents gave importance to the counsels of their parents, which is a very usual Filipino character.

In the study of Archard (2012), with regard to confidence and leadership, various areas were identified in relation to girls' lack of confidence. It was distinguished that a deficiency of confidence may hinder some girls in applying for school leadership activities. The word ‘doubt’ became a salient theme behind this lack of confidence and was linked to both self-doubt and doubt in enacting the leadership role. This situation was not just related to girls' uncertainty in their leadership ability and behavior; several girls also connected hesitation to their physical look and self-image. Moreover, girls mentioned that an anxiety of failure was additional contributing factor to their shortage of confidence, it was also stressed that some girls may be anxious as to whether they justified a leadership position and for this reason they felt uncomfortable about nominating for leadership. Girls specified that they also measured their leadership capability against their peers, and this in turn led them to ask whether they were as good or well-equipped as their peers, as a result they feared not living up to the expectations of others.

According to Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, and Vohs (2003), leadership must to correlate with self-esteem, although there will be changes. High self-esteem may give an individual the confidence and initiative to take charge of a group, make decisions under pressure or uncertainty, and expect that others will do his or her bidding. But it is also plausible that becoming a leader engenders a sense of personal

superiority and brings about a rise in self-esteem.

Moreover, in Beasley's Study (1973), the speech training for speaker-confidence and self-esteem was not significant although it was predicted that it will change. It was not intended to establish causal relationships between speech attitudes and self-esteem, but some interrelationships were observed, like the importance of public speaking varied as a function of self-esteem.

As cited by Baumeister et. al. (2003), The study of LePine and Van Dyne (1998) found out that people with high self-esteem were less intimidated by the prospect of speaking out in a large group.

Summary of Findings, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Summary of findings

This research found out that when taken as a whole, the respondents both on higher and lower weight status got 3.2 mean score which indicates an average level of self-esteem. Also, there is no significant relationship that exists between weight status and self-esteem. This result showed that weight status does not affect the self-esteem of the respondents.

Conclusion

The results of this study revealed that there is no significant relationship between levels of weight status and levels of self-esteem among the respondents. The p-value of .561 is greater than the .05 significance level, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant relationship between weight status and self-esteem in this sample. This finding suggests that, within the context of this study, the weight status of respondents-whether underweight, average, or overweight-did not significantly correlate with their levels of self-esteem.

While previous literature often emphasizes the impact of weight status on self-esteem (Griffiths et al., 2019; Cash, 2022), the results of this study indicate that other factors may be more influential in shaping an individual's self-worth, or that the relationship between body weight and self-esteem might be more complex than initially hypothesized. It is possible that respondents in this study had other psychological, social, or environmental influences that affected their self-esteem more significantly than their weight status alone.

While this study did not find a significant relationship between weight status and self-esteem among respondents, it highlights the importance of considering other factors that may influence self-esteem. Future research and interventions should take a comprehensive approach that includes a variety of psychological, social, and environmental variables to better understand and support students' self-esteem and mental health.

Recommendations

Given the lack of a significant relationship between weight status and self-esteem in this study, the following recommendations are made:

Further exploration of other contributing factors: Since weight status did not appear to significantly influence self-esteem in this sample, it would be valuable to explore other psychological, social, and environmental factors that could play a role. Social support, academic stress, peer relationships, and media influence are just a few factors that could contribute to self-esteem. Future studies could expand their focus to include these variables to gain a more comprehensive understanding of self-esteem development among university students.

Focus on holistic self-esteem programs: Even though this study found no significant relationship, self-esteem remains a critical aspect of overall well-being. Universities should implement holistic wellness programs that promote mental health, emotional resilience, and positive body image for all students, regardless of their weight status. These programs should address a wide range of factors that contribute to self-esteem, including body image, but also focus on academic achievement, personal development, and social skills.

Tailored interventions for specific groups: While no significant relationship was found overall, there may still be subgroups within the sample where weight status is more closely linked to self-esteem. For example, female students or those with disordered eating behaviors may experience a stronger connection between weight and self-worth. Tailored interventions addressing these specific subgroups-such as counseling services focused on body image, self-compassion, and healthy weight management-could be beneficial.

Longitudinal studies: Given the complexity of the relationship between weight status and self-esteem, longitudinal studies that track these variables over time may provide more insight into how these factors evolve and interact across different stages of university life. This approach could uncover delayed effects or patterns that cross-sectional studies like the current one may not capture.

Broader and more diverse sample: To increase the generalizability of the findings, future research should include a broader and more diverse sample of participants. This could involve students from various universities, regions, and cultural backgrounds, as societal norms around body image and self-esteem vary significantly across different

contexts (Griffiths et al., 2019). A more diverse sample could provide a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between weight status and self-esteem in different demographic groups.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest in conducting this research.

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