The Relationship Between Eating Behavior and Self-Perception

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Abstract: Eating behaviors and self-perception affect a wide variety of people. Does a person’s eating behavior reflect on one’s self-image? By exploring one’s eating behaviors and self-perception, a potential link between eating disorders and mental state can be established. The current study examines the relationship between self-perception and eating behavior among college students at Wichita State University. An online survey was completed by 66 participants. Participants were recruited through on campus, through social media advertisements, and the SONA portal. The participants’ self-perceptions were assessed using Rosenberg’s Self-Esteem Scale and Mendelson’s Body-Esteem Scale; eating behavior was determined using the Three-Factor Eating Questionnaire (TFEQ-R18). Contributing to research with these variables can help determine students who are at risk to things such as eating disorders. Understanding the factors that lead people into making these unhealthy choices can aid in the production of effective treatment programs. This study explores the relationship between self-perception and eating behavior among college age males and females, two variables that can easily disrupt someone’s mental health and lifestyle. If research can gain a better understanding on these risk factors, it can bring society closer to reducing suicide rates, eating disorders, and self-esteem issues. Findings showed self-esteem to have significant relationships with eating behavior, and the BE-attribution subscale within the Body-Esteem Scale. Significant relationships were also found between the BE-appearance subscale and BE-weight subscale. A strong correlation was found between two of the TFEQ-R18 subscales: Emotional Eating subscale and Uncontrolled Eating subscale.

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