

The Influence of Social Support for Exercise on Body Image and Maladaptive Exercise in Female College Students



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Introduction

- Among female college students, body image concerns are associated with compulsive exercise¹
- Social support for exercise is broadly related to increased exercise², but previous literature does not differentiate between adaptive and maladaptive exercise

Hypotheses

- There will be a positive relationship between body uneasiness and compulsive exercise
- Among individuals with high body uneasiness, higher friend social support would be associated with more compulsive exercise behaviors

Methods

Participants & Procedure

- 227 female college students
- $M_{age} = 19.88 (3.12)$

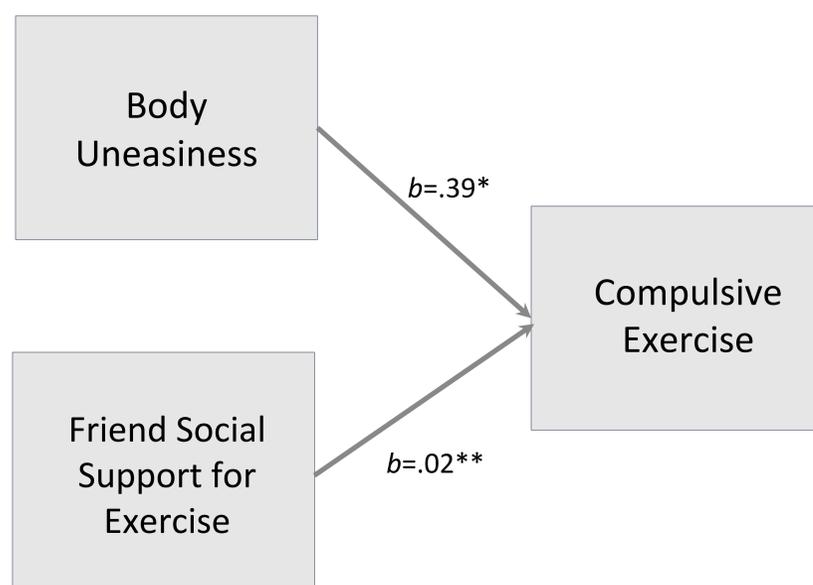
Procedure

- Collected online via Qualtrics
- Exercise and Eating Disorder Questionnaire³
- Body Image subscale of body uneasiness test⁴
- Friends subscale of social support for exercise scale⁵

Data Analysis

- Multiple linear regression and PROCESS Model 1⁶ were used to test hypotheses

Body uneasiness and friend support for exercise are associated with *higher compulsive exercise* among college women.



* $p < .001$, ** $p = .007$

References

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- ⁴Cuzzolaro, M., Vetrone, G., Marano, G., & Garfinkel, P. E. (2006). The Body Uneasiness Test (BUT): Development and validation of a new body image assessment scale. *Eating and Weight Disorders*, 11(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03327738>
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Results

- There was not a significant interaction between friend social support for exercise and body uneasiness ($p = .313$)
- There was a main effect of friend social support for exercise with compulsive exercise ($p = .007$)
- There was a main effect of body uneasiness with compulsive exercise ($p < .001$)

Discussion

Implications and Conclusions

- Findings extend to previous literature
- First study that broadly examines social support for exercise and compulsive exercise
- In addition to body uneasiness, friend support for exercise may increase college women's risk of engaging in compulsive exercise

Future Directions

- Further research is needed to investigate factors that facilitate the relationship between friend social support for exercise
- Future studies could include
 - More diverse samples (e.g., males, broader age range)
 - Longitudinal design to examine change over time

