



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BODY IMAGE AND SELF-CONFIDENCE AMONG HEALTH SCIENCES STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

University students are individuals who are in a transitional phase from late adolescence to early adulthood, characterized by various physical, psychological, and social changes. Body image is one psychological aspect related to how individuals perceive and evaluate their bodies. Body image can play a role in the development of self-confidence, which is needed to engage in academic and social activities. Self-confidence is a positive attitude that reflects an individual's belief in their abilities, objective self-assessment, and the ability to act rationally and responsibly. Adequate self-confidence plays an important role in supporting learning processes, environmental adaptation, and students' psychological well-being. Therefore, understanding the relationship between body image and self-confidence among university students is important. This study aimed to determine the relationship between body image and self-confidence among students of the Faculty of Health Sciences at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta. This study employed a quantitative correlational design with a sample of 96 students selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected using body image and self-confidence questionnaires that had been tested for validity and reliability. Data analysis was conducted using Spearman correlation analysis. The results showed that most respondents had a moderate level of body image (74%) and a moderate level of self-confidence (54.2%). Spearman correlation analysis showed a p-value of 0.001 ($p < 0.05$) with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.557$, indicating a positive relationship with moderate strength between body image and self-confidence. It can be concluded that there is a significant and positive relationship between body image and self-confidence among students of the Faculty of Health Sciences at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta. The more positive an individual's perception of their body, the higher their level of self-confidence.

Keywords: body image; mental health; self-confidence; university students

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INTRODUCTION

University students are individuals who are in the early adulthood developmental stage, ranging from 18 to 25 years of age (Gerliandi et al., 2021). This phase is characterized by various significant changes, including physical, psychological, and social changes. During early adulthood, individuals face demands to establish personal identity, develop independence, and adapt to increasingly complex academic and social environments. The process of adapting to these changes can affect various psychological aspects of students, including perceptions of themselves and their bodies. These changes may influence how individuals view and evaluate their bodies. An individual's perception of their body is known as body image. Body image is a mental representation that individuals have regarding the shape, size, and appearance of their bodies and is subjective in nature. This perception is not formed solely by physical conditions but is also influenced by personal experiences, social interactions, and the values and norms prevailing in social and cultural environments (Maulida & Astuti, 2025).

Body image consists of several components, including perception, attitude, and behavior that individuals display toward their physical appearance (Iswanti et al., 2021). According to Thompson, aspects of body image involve how individuals evaluate and view their bodies in terms of shape,

function, and attractiveness. Individuals may view their bodies differently from how others view them. Such perceptions can lead to feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with certain body parts, as well as positive or negative emotional responses. Individuals may also evaluate their appearance by comparing themselves to others based on body shape, physical standards, or clothing style. In addition, sociocultural factors such as environmental influences and cultural values can trigger various reactions, including praise, criticism, or ridicule, toward physical appearance. The role of social media, including advertisements and celebrities who are considered to meet ideal body standards, as well as social pressure to conform to certain cultural norms or expectations, can further influence individuals' perceptions (Maulida & Astuti, 2025).

Theoretically, body image and self-confidence are interrelated. An individual's perception of their body can influence how they evaluate themselves as a whole. Individuals who have a positive perception of their bodies tend to feel more comfortable with themselves, enabling them to display confident attitudes in various situations. Conversely, negative perceptions of the body can reduce individuals' confidence in themselves, particularly in the context of social interactions and evaluations from the surrounding environment.

One psychological aspect that is closely related to body image is self-confidence. Self-confidence is identified as a psychological condition in which a person is able to assess themselves as a whole, resulting in a strong belief in their abilities and the value of what they have (Ashar & Pamungkas, 2023). Self-confidence is a positive attitude that reflects an individual's belief in their abilities, objective self-evaluation, and the ability to act rationally and responsibly. Self-confidence does not develop instantly but evolves through continuous social interactions, life experiences, and support from the surrounding environment. Self-confidence plays an important role in students' lives. Students with a good level of self-confidence tend to be able to cope with academic demands, interact socially, and make decisions more confidently. In contrast, students with low self-confidence tend to doubt their abilities, fear failure, and avoid situations that require active participation. Therefore, self-confidence is an important factor that supports students' academic success and psychological well-being.

Several previous studies have shown a relationship between body image and self-confidence among adolescents and university students. These studies indicate that individuals with more positive body image tend to have higher levels of self-confidence. However, most of these studies were conducted in adolescent populations or among university students in general; therefore, studies that specifically examine students of the Faculty of Health Sciences remain limited. Understanding the relationship between body image and self-confidence among students of the Faculty of Health Sciences is expected to provide a more comprehensive picture of students' psychological conditions and to serve as a basis for the development of mental health promotion programs in higher education settings. Therefore, this study aimed to determine the relationship between body image and self-confidence among students of the Faculty of Health Sciences at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research design with a correlational approach and used a cross-sectional design. The correlational design was selected because this study aimed to determine the relationship between body image as the independent variable and self-confidence as the dependent variable without manipulating the variables under investigation. The cross-sectional approach was chosen because data collection was conducted at a single point in time to describe respondents' conditions simultaneously (Abduh et al., 2023). The study was conducted at the Faculty of Health Sciences, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, December 2025 – January 2026. The population of this study comprised all students of the Faculty of Health Sciences at Universitas

Muhammadiyah Surakarta, totaling 2,162 students, including those from the Nursing, Physiotherapy, Nutrition Science, and Public Health study programs.

The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a margin of error of 10%, resulting in a sample of 96 respondents. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, considering the suitability of respondents' characteristics with the research objectives. The research instruments consisted of a body image questionnaire and a self-confidence questionnaire developed by Faza Maulida. The body image questionnaire was constructed based on Thompson's theory and consisted of 23 items, while the self-confidence questionnaire was constructed based on Lauster's theory and consisted of 20 items. Both instruments had undergone validity and reliability testing, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.942 and 0.883, respectively. Data were collected online using Google Forms after respondents provided informed consent. Data analysis included univariate analysis to describe respondents' characteristics as well as the distribution of body image and self-confidence, and bivariate analysis using Spearman correlation to determine the relationship between body image and self-confidence. The relationship between variables was considered statistically significant if the p-value was less than 0.05. This study applied research ethics principles, including respect for respondents, data confidentiality, and the use of data solely for research purposes.

RESULT

Table 1.
Respondent Characteristics (n= 96)

Respondent characteristics	f	%
Gender		
Male	15	15.6%
Female	81	84.4%
Age		
19	5	5.2%
20	27	28.1%
21	43	44.8%
22	19	19.8%
23	1	1.0%
24	1	1.0%
Height		
140 – 149 cm	2	2.1%
150 – 159 cm	52	54.2%
160 – 169 cm	34	35.4%
170 – 179 cm	8	8.3%
Weight		
40 – 49 kg	35	36.5%
50 – 59 kg	24	25.0%
60 – 69 kg	25	26.0%
70 – 79 kg	9	9.4%
80 – 89 kg	3	3.1%

This study involved 96 respondents who were students of the Faculty of Health Sciences at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta. The gender distribution showed that 81 respondents (84.4%) were female, while 15 respondents (15.6%) were male. The predominance of female respondents reflects the composition of students in the Faculty of Health Sciences, where most study programs have a higher proportion of female students. The age distribution indicated that the majority of respondents were 21 years old, totaling 43 respondents (44.8%), followed by those aged 20 years, totaling 27 respondents (28.1%). This indicates that the respondents were in the early adulthood phase. Based on height, most respondents were in the range of 150–159 cm, with 52 respondents (54.2%). Based on body weight, the largest proportion of respondents were in the range of 40–49 kg, totaling 35 respondents (36.5%). These findings indicate variation in respondents' physical characteristics, which may influence individuals' perceptions of their bodies. The distribution by study program showed that most respondents were from the Nursing program, totaling 81 respondents (84.4%). Based on academic semester, the majority of respondents were in the seventh

semester, with 60 respondents (62.5%), indicating that most respondents had relatively extensive academic experience.

Table 2.
Distribution of Students' Body Image (n=96)

Category	f	%
Low body image	15	15.6
Moderate body image	71	74
High body image	10	10.4

Table 2, most respondents had a moderate level of body image, totaling 71 respondents (74.0%). Respondents with a low level of body image amounted to 15 respondents (15.6%), while those with a high level of body image totaled 10 respondents (10.4%). These results indicate that the majority of students have a fairly positive perception of their bodies, although some dissatisfaction with certain aspects of physical appearance remains. A moderate level of body image indicates that students are generally able to accept their physical condition, but are still influenced by social comparisons and specific appearance standards.

Table 3.
Distribution of Students' Self-Confidence (n=96)

Category	f	%
Moderate self-confidence	52	54.2%
High self-confidence	44	45.8%

Based on Table 3, most respondents had a moderate level of self-confidence, totaling 52 respondents (54.2%). Respondents with a high level of self-confidence totaled 44 respondents (45.8%). No respondents were classified as having a low level of self-confidence. These results indicate that, in general, students of the Faculty of Health Sciences have a relatively good level of self-confidence. A moderate level of self-confidence indicates that students have confidence in their abilities, although in certain situations they may still experience doubt or uncertainty.

Table 4.
Results of Spearman Correlation Analysis (n=96)

Variable 1	Variable 2	Correlation Coefficient	Significance
Body image	Self-confidence	0,557	0,001

The results of the Spearman correlation analysis presented in Table 4 show a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.557$ with a significance value of $p = 0.001$ ($p < 0.05$). These results indicate a significant and positive relationship between body image and self-confidence among students of the Faculty of Health Sciences at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta. The correlation coefficient falls within the moderate strength category, indicating that body image plays a fairly strong role in the formation of students' self-confidence.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate a significant and positive relationship between body image and self-confidence among students of the Faculty of Health Sciences at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta. Aggarwal et al., (2023)) stated that both male and female university students may experience body dissatisfaction; however, male students tend to be more satisfied with and accepting of their bodies than female students. This relationship indicates that students' perceptions of their bodies are associated with their confidence in their abilities to engage in academic and social activities. Most students in this study were classified as having a moderate level of body image, totaling approximately 71 respondents (74%). This finding indicates that the majority of students have sufficient self-acceptance of their physical condition, although it is not yet optimal. A moderate level of body image reflects an adaptive condition in which individuals do not completely reject their bodies. This condition can be understood given that respondents were in early adulthood, with an average age of approximately 21 years, a developmental stage characterized by increased awareness of appearance as well as the process of identity formation. At this stage, individuals begin to develop a more realistic perspective of their bodies (Terence et al., 2024).

Regarding the self-confidence variable, most students were classified as having moderate to high levels of self-confidence, with more than half of the respondents in the moderate category, totaling 52 respondents (54.2%), and nearly half in the high category. The absence of students with low self-confidence indicates that, in general, students of the Faculty of Health Sciences have a relatively good level of self-confidence. The majority of respondents were in their final semesters, accounting for 62.5%, suggesting that longer academic experience plays a role in the development of self-confidence. Students with high self-confidence tend to have strong belief in their abilities, are willing to take risks, and act independently despite social pressure. This is consistent with the characteristics described by Puri et al., (2021), which include having good awareness of strengths and weaknesses, the ability to control pressure, and optimism.

The correlation analysis showed that the relationship between body image and self-confidence was positive with moderate strength ($r = 0.557$). This value indicates that body image makes a meaningful contribution to self-confidence but is not the only influencing factor. The distribution pattern of respondents indicates that students with better body image tend to have higher self-confidence. This suggests that positive and realistic perceptions of the body can enhance comfort with oneself, which in turn supports the development of confident attitudes in various situations. However, because the strength of the relationship was moderate, it can be understood that self-confidence is also influenced by other factors such as academic experience, social support, and the educational environment.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research demonstrating a positive relationship between body image and self-confidence. Safitri et al., (2022) reported that the majority of respondents had moderate levels of body image and self-confidence among twelfth-grade students at SMA Negeri 5 Cilegon. Similar findings were reported by Maulida & Astuti, (2025) among university students in Yogyakarta, showing that higher body image is associated with higher self-confidence. In addition, Abdillah & Masykur, (2021) also found a relationship between body image and self-confidence among eleventh-grade students at SMAN 6 Tangerang Selatan.

These findings indicate that efforts to enhance students' self-confidence should not focus solely on physical appearance. Body image serves as an important supporting factor; however, strengthening academic competence, self-acceptance, and environmental support also plays a significant role in shaping students' self-confidence. The results of this study support the need for interventions focused on improving body image, as it has been shown to be associated with self-confidence. The impact of health education on improving mental health has been shown to produce positive effects in efforts to enhance mental health. Improving knowledge and attitudes can be supported by promoting health in existing events or phenomena (Widodo et al., 2023).

The limitations of this study include the use of online questionnaires distributed via Google Forms, which resulted in an uneven distribution of respondents across study programs. In addition, because the study was conducted in the Faculty of Health Sciences, which is predominantly female, the number of male respondents was relatively small. This study aimed to examine the relationship between body image and self-confidence; therefore, other mental health-related factors were not examined in depth.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the majority of students in the Faculty of Health Sciences at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta have moderate levels of body image and self-confidence. These findings indicate that students generally have sufficient self-acceptance of their physical condition and relatively good self-confidence in carrying out academic and social activities. The analysis revealed a significant and positive relationship between body image and self-confidence

with a moderate strength of association. This indicates that students' perceptions of their bodies play a role in the development of self-confidence, although they are not the only influencing factor.

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