



Preoccupation with Weight and Eating Patterns of Lebanese and Cypriot Female Students

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ABSTRACT

This comparative cross-cultural study explores the prevalence of preoccupation with weight and eating patterns among female university students in two distinct cultural contexts, Cyprus and Lebanon. Data was collected by means of self-administered questionnaires to 200 students from each culture. To gather the data for this study, the Dutch Eating Behavior Scale was used for the assessment of eating behaviors. Body Mass Index (BMI) and Weight directed behavior were also calculated. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to determine whether there is a linear relationship between students' BMI and eating behaviors. Findings suggested that with respect to culture and pre-occupation with weight, Cypriot students are more pre-occupied with their weight. However, Lebanese students received higher emotional and external eating scores. In addition, a positive relationship between Body Mass Index, restrained and emotional eating was found in both cultures. Also, in both cultures there was a significant positive relationship between restrained and emotional eating, emotional and external eating. These findings suggest that in the Lebanese culture, eating dysfunction among women may be due to responsiveness to external and emotional cues while in the Cypriot culture may be due to an over pre-occupation with weight fuelled by sociocultural agents. Understanding the underlying causes of eating deviations and the existing elements in each culture which promote these deviations could lead to better prevention efforts in two societies where the rise in eating disturbances has been alarming.

KEYWORDS

Cross-Cultural Study; Weight Directed Behavior; Eating Behaviors

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