

## The additive role of body image flexibility in explaining disordered eating behavior

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In treating individuals with disordered eating (DE) concerns, such as excessive dieting, bingeing, and purging, evidence shows that emotion/behavior regulation plays a principal role in the nature and treatment of DE. Body image flexibility (BIF) is a fairly new concept that reflects adaptive regulation processes in the context of DE. The purpose of this cross-sectional study is to investigate whether BIF accounts for a unique proportion of variance in DE behaviors while controlling for gender, body mass index (BMI), DE cognition, mindfulness, and general psychological inflexibility. The investigated sample consisted of male ( $n=135$ ) and female ( $n = 438$ ) non-clinical undergraduates of varying demographic backgrounds ( $M_{age}=21$ ). Along with demographic information, students also completed the self-report measures of interest (MAAS, AAQ-II, MAC-R, Eat-26-Behavior, and BI-AQQ). A hierarchical regression analysis revealed that mindfulness (MAAS), psychological inflexibility (AAQ-II), DE cognitions (MAC-R) and demographics (age, gender, race, BMI) together explained 17% of the variance in DE behaviors ( $R^2\Delta=.166, p<.001$ ). Furthermore, when BIF was added, the model then accounted for an additional 5% of variance ( $R^2\Delta=.046, p<.001$ ). These findings suggest that BIF is a unique and useful construct in understanding DE behavior and may be beneficial to target in DE treatment.

**Key words:** body image flexibility (BIF), DE cognition, DE behavior, mindfulness, psychological inflexibility