

Effects of Involvement on Students' Food Choices

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Problem:

- Obesity is a national issue and affects all age groups, including college students.
- Determining what influences college students' food choices is a complex problem.
- Effective strategies are needed to address this issue.

What is Involvement?

- Originally designed for marketing research to determine how important and relevant a product and/or decision to purchase a product is to an individual to develop effective marketing strategies that influence consumers' choices.
- Previous research shows involvement can be used to determine how important and relevant food decisions are to college students to develop effective nutrition interventions.

Purpose:

- To explore the relationship between involvement and college students' food decisions at UW-Stout.

Research Questions:

- 1) What are the differences in involvement in making food decisions among UW-Stout undergraduate students?
- 2) Which aspects of food decisions are associated with gender differences?
- 3) Does involvement correlate with obesity?

Methodology:

- 44 completed surveys out of a random sample 400 UW-Stout undergraduate students.
- Qualtrics online survey.
- Survey tool obtained with permission from Dr. Annette Levi at California State University, Fresno¹.
- Statistical analyses completed using SPSS version 21.0 and utilized independent samples t-tests to determine significant differences between males and females and a Pearson's correlation to determine if any relationship existed between composite involvement scores and BMI scores.
- Approved by UW-Stout IRB.

Results:

Composite Involvement Scores

Involvement Level	Total		Male		Female	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Low	14	37.8	6	40.0	8	36.4
Middle	8	21.6	5	33.3	3	13.6
High	15	40.6	4	26.7	11	50.0
Total	37	100	15	100	22	100

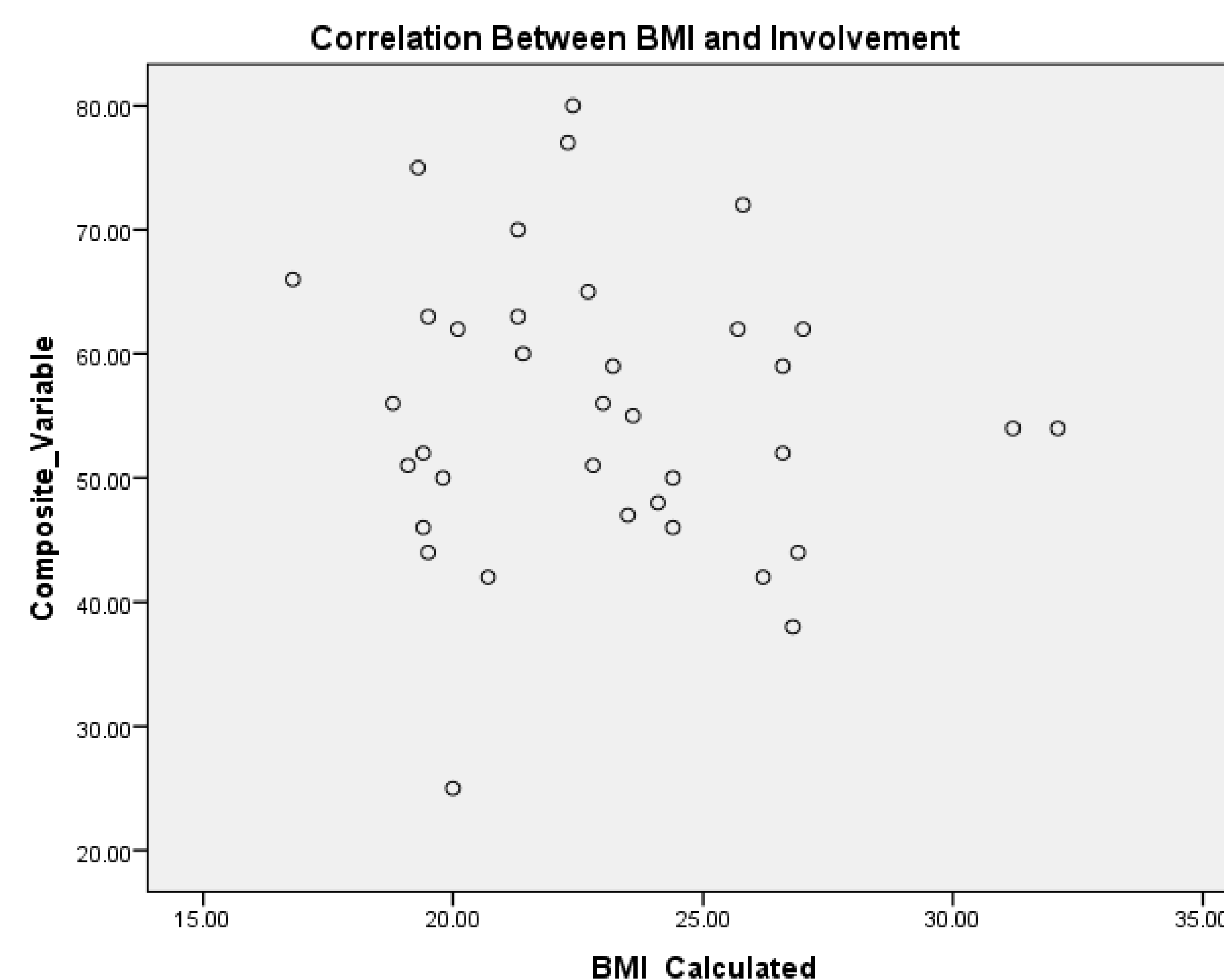
n = 37

- Although involvement scores were higher for females (M = 57.0) than males (M = 53.1), there were no significant differences between them, $t(35) = -1.03, p > 0.05$.

Food Decision Factors

- Higher importance mean scores on taste, convenience, appearance, and label information for females.
- Higher importance mean scores on quality and healthiness for males.
- Similar importance mean scores on mood and organic content for both genders.
- Differences were not found to be significant.
- Overall, participants considered cost, taste, and quality to be the most important factors that influence their food choices.

Involvement and Obesity



- No correlation found between involvement and obesity (n = 43) ($r = -0.098, p > 0.05$).

Conclusions:

- Although results from current research are similar to a previous study, further research is needed to see if significant differences can be found in a larger, more diverse sample.
- Gender differences may exist in level of involvement and factors influencing food choices.
- Consumer involvement may be a useful application, when developing effective nutrition interventions to reach those who may not see food-choice decisions as important or relevant.
- Dining halls and other on-campus dining locations should offer more quality, low-cost, healthy items.

¹Source: Levi, A., Chan, K. K., & Pence, D. (2006). Real men do not read labels: The effects of masculinity and involvement on college students' food decisions. *Journal of American College Health, 55*(2), 91-98. doi:10.3200/JACH.55.2.91-98