

## **Effectiveness of Eidetic Psychotherapy on Psychosomatic Symptoms of Young Adults with Binge Eating Issues**

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Pakistan's sociocultural factors significantly influence individuals' perceptions of body image, eating behaviors, and coping mechanisms. Cultural norms, societal expectations, and family dynamics play a crucial role in shaping young adults' attitudes towards food, body image, and emotional regulation (Liu et al., 2021; Das & Mishra, 2021). But it is worth noting that the current research landscape in the country has a restricted emphasis on the examination of Binge Eating Issues and their corresponding psychosomatic symptoms. The present body of research predominantly centers around anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa, hence creating a void in the literature (Cho, 2022). In order to bridge this existing deficiency, the use of Eidetic Psychotherapy can provide a comprehensive methodology for the treatment of psychosomatic illnesses (Sheikh, 1978). However, it is important to note that there exists a dearth of particular empirical studies examining the effectiveness of Eidetic Psychotherapy in addressing Binge Eating Issues among the young adult population. The investigation of the effectiveness of this intervention is of utmost importance due to its capacity to address the existing research void and contribute valuable empirical support for evidence-based interventions and facilitate the development of culturally sensitive strategies that cater to the distinctive psychosomatic symptoms encountered by young adults in Pakistan. Through a comprehensive examination of the efficacy of Eidetic Psychotherapy, scholars and professionals can enhance their comprehension and subsequently devise precise interventions aimed at more efficiently addressing the psychosomatic manifestations associated with the issues related Binge Eating in Pakistan.

*Keywords.* Psychosomatic illness, Eidetic Psychotherapy, Experiment

The increasing issues of Binge Eating among individuals in the young adult population has become a significant area of concern. A substantial proportion of these individuals exhibit psychosomatic symptoms as a component of their clinical manifestation (Legg, 2023). Conventional interventions, such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), have been extensively studied and recorded in the literature. Nevertheless, innovative methodologies, such as Eidetic Psychotherapy, are increasingly being employed in therapeutic settings, although their empirical support is currently constrained (Rom et al., 2023).

Eidetic Psychotherapy, based on the pioneering research conducted by Dr. Akhter Ahsen, employs very vivid and visually detailed mental images resembling photographs to explore an individual's recollections and affective experiences. The eidetic images discussed in the literature possess a level of complexity that beyond mere recalls. They are characterized by a profound emotional meaning and a wealth of detailed information pertaining to the specific situations they depict. Consequently, they provide a distinctive perspective into unresolved personal conflicts and anguish, as highlighted by previous research (Sheikh, 1978; Panagiotou & Sheikh, 1974). Ahsen's approach, based on the Image, Somatic Response, and Meaning (ISM) paradigm, argues that every eidetic image consists of three interconnected elements: a visual aspect, a corresponding bodily experience, and an emotional or affective significance. This methodology incorporates the cognitive, emotional, and physical dimensions of human

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experience, facilitating individuals in addressing emotional and psychological difficulties in a comprehensive manner (Gamby & Desposito, 2022; Kamran & Rowland, 2020).

In the practical implementation of Eidetic Psychotherapy, therapists assist clients in mentally conjuring distinct eidetic images, so enabling a thorough examination of the corresponding feelings, emotions, and memories. This procedure facilitates the exploration and comprehension of latent impacts on present behaviors and emotional conditions. One notable attribute of eidetic imagery is its inherent quality of arising spontaneously from awareness, leading to the manifestation of physical expression and movement. Consequently, this phenomenon facilitates a direct and experiential interaction with the inner realm of the individual seeking therapeutic assistance. The use of vivid imagery in Eidetic Psychotherapy has been predominantly employed in the treatment of psychological conditions, for instance depression. This therapy approach has shown promise in offering a culturally appropriate choice for addressing emotional and physical reactions, particularly within different communities (Panagiotou & Sheikh, 1974; Kamran & Rowland, 2020).

The use of Eidetic Psychotherapy demonstrates promise in the management of psychosomatic symptoms, which are characterized by the interplay between physical manifestations and psychological variables. The therapeutic approach centers on the examination of somatic reactions evoked by eidetic images, offering a means to investigate and potentially mitigate psychosomatic disorders. Given that these pictures frequently pertain to stress or trauma, engaging in therapeutic interventions to process them may result in a decrease in the associated physiological manifestations. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that although the theoretical basis of Eidetic Psychotherapy is robust, there is a scarcity of empirical research that substantiates its effectiveness. The existing body of evidence mostly consists of qualitative studies and case reports. Further investigation is warranted in the field of Eidetic Psychotherapy, with a specific focus on randomized controlled trials, in order to conduct a more thorough evaluation of its efficacy within different therapeutic domains (Syed et al., 2020).

Those who are facing Binge Eating Issues struggle with recurring periods of overeating in which they consume huge quantities of food in a brief time frame, while feeling out of control and experiencing negative emotions like shame, guilt, or disgust. Stress-related psychosomatic symptoms, like headaches and gastrointestinal difficulties, are common among people with BED (Valdez-Aguilar et al., 2023). These signs and symptoms might add to the emotional suffering a person is already feeling, perhaps reinforcing the disease (Cleveland Clinic, 2023) if not treated.

When it comes to treating the psychosomatic symptoms that might accompany BED, Eidetic Psychotherapy may be an effective method. A proposed method for effective psychosomatic symptoms is provided by the somatic response in the ISM model (Valdez-Aguilar et al., 2023) in which eidetic images might evoke bodily reactions. If a specific image is associated with a traumatic event or stress, it may trigger similar physiological responses throughout therapy. The Cleveland Clinic (2023) and Beat Eating Disorders (2022) report that processing such images can help alleviate some of the physical manifestations of an eating disorder.

Although there is a strong theoretical foundation for Eidetic Psychotherapy, there hasn't been much empirical study done on its effectiveness. The bulk of research on eidetic therapy is qualitative or case study oriented, which while useful, does not offer the same degree of proof as randomized controlled trials (Rom et al., 2023).

However, these studies do show that Eidetic Psychotherapy may help some people feel better emotionally and gain new insights, which may have an effect on their psychological symptoms. More study is needed to fully understand how well Eidetic Psychotherapy treats the psychosomatic symptoms that come with issues linked with Binge Eating.

Eidetic Psychotherapy for Binge Eating Issues, while not extensively researched, is considered a potential approach for treatment. Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and interpersonal psychotherapy (IPT) are more established methods for addressing Binge Eating Disorder (BED). IPT operates on the notion that Binge Eating is a coping mechanism for unresolved personal issues, while CBT concentrates on identifying and modifying maladaptive thoughts and behaviors related to food and eating. These therapies aim to identify the underlying problem linked to the destructive eating pattern, acknowledge it, and then initiate positive changes over a 12-to-16-week period (Hilbert et al., 2012). There is substantial evidence supporting the short- and long-term positive impacts of these therapies in reducing Binge Eating behavior.

It has been proven that online interdisciplinary treatment for BED is just as successful as more conventional forms of therapy (Valdez-Aguilar et al., 2023). As part of this strategy, we make use of web-based psychological, nutritional, and physical activity interventions. Case series research (Valdez-Aguilar et al., 2023) indicated that this method was practicable and helpful in decreasing Binge Eating symptoms in obese people. Further study is required to determine the efficacy of Eidetic Psychotherapy for the treatment of BED-related psychosomatic symptoms. Therapeutic strategies such as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), interpersonal therapy (IPT), and online multidisciplinary treatment (OMDT) have all been demonstrated to be successful in treating BED.

Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) has been demonstrated to be an effective first-line treatment for the issues related to Binge Eating, reducing Binge Eating behavior. Nevertheless, Eidetic Psychotherapy has the potential to provide additional advantages by potentially attending to more profound emotional and image-based processes that are not explicitly addressed in CBT. The resolution of internal conflicts via imagery, according to Eidetic Psychotherapy, can alleviate both psychological and psychosomatic symptoms. However, the insufficiency of substantial empirical data hinders the capacity to definitively ascertain the efficacy of Eidetic Psychotherapy as a treatment for BED (Syed et al., 2020).

Based on multiple systematic reviews and research, cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is the most effective evidence-based treatment for treating Binge Eating Issues and bulimia nervosa (Södersten et al., 2017; Agras & Bohon, 2021). The "enhanced" form of CBT, known as CBT-E, has also shown promise in the treatment of numerous eating disorders, including Binge Eating, and was introduced recently (de Jong et al., 2018). Adult patients with any clinically significant eating problem who are suitable for outpatient treatment are to receive CBT-E on an individual basis. It achieves both behavioral and cognitive changes through a flexible sequence of sequential therapy procedures and predetermined tactics.

Online multidisciplinary treatment has demonstrated efficacy in the treatment of Binge Eating, in conjunction with conventional therapeutic approaches (Wiberg et al., 2022). Online-delivered psychological, nutritional, and physical activity interventions comprise this strategy. This approach was feasible and effective in reducing Binge Eating symptoms in obese patients, according to a case series study (Wiberg et al., 2022).

In general, although may provide prospective advantages in alleviating psychosomatic symptoms linked to Binge Eating, additional investigation is required to validate its effectiveness. Online multidisciplinary treatment, CBT, and CBT-E are well-established therapeutic approaches that have demonstrated efficacy in the treatment of Binge Eating. So, when it comes to treating the psychosomatic symptoms of Binge Eating Issues, Eidetic Psychotherapy may be a useful option for young people. However, there is not yet enough solid evidence in the existing body of studies to prove its efficacy. More research is needed to confirm any positive effects and establish as a credible complement to or replacement for standard treatment.

Eidetic Psychotherapy may provide additional benefits by potentially addressing deeper emotional and image-based processes that cognitive behavioural therapy does not specifically target, even if cognitive behavioural therapy is still the preferred treatment for Binge Eating Disorder. However, it is difficult to make definitive judgements regarding the efficacy of Eidetic Psychotherapy in treating Binge Eating Disorders due to the paucity of solid empirical data. Interpersonal psychotherapy and online interdisciplinary treatment are other well-researched therapeutic techniques for treating Binge Eating Disorder. These approaches have demonstrated efficacy in lowering Binge Eating symptoms in patients who are overweight.

## **Hypothesis**

Eidetic Psychotherapy will reduce Psychosomatic symptoms in young adults with Binge Eating Issues.

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

In current research pre-post experimental research design was used in which effectiveness of Eidetic Psychotherapy was explored on psychosomatic symptoms of young adults with binge eating issues.

### **Participants**

A sample of 15 young adults within the age range of 18 years to 26 years including 7 males and 8 females were purposively selected from a population of 55 young adults within the vicinity of Islamabad. The young adults who were inclined to a higher level of Binge Eating were selected for the present study. Young adults having neurodevelopmental disorders, psychosis or any other psychological condition were excluded from the study. Young adults with any medical/endocrine conditions relevant to food intake or craving were excluded from the study.

### **Measures**

The following instruments were used for data collection.

#### ***Consent Form***

Written consent was obtained from all the participants by using the informed consent sheet regarding their participation in the research.

#### ***Demographic Sheet***

Demographic sheet was used to obtain demographic information (i.e., gender, age, date of birth, qualification, birth order, marital status, medical complaints, and psychological diagnosis).

#### ***Psychosomatic Symptoms Scale (PSS-35)***

Psychosomatic Symptoms Scale (PSS-35; Vulić-Prtorić, 2005) is a reliable and valid measure for assessing somatic symptoms in individuals aged 10 years and older. It consists of 35 symptoms grouped into seven body organ system syndromes. Scoring involves rating each symptom on two scales: frequency and severity for the past 3 months. The frequency scale ranges from 1 to 4. The severity scale ranges from 1 to 3.

The PSS demonstrates high internal consistency reliability, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.89 for the frequency scale and 0.91 for the severity scale. The PSS also includes deciles for interpretation, where deciles 1 to 3 represent scores below average, deciles 4 to 6 represent average scores, and deciles 7 to 9 represent scores above average. Scores falling within deciles 9 and 10 are considered extremely elevated and clinically significant. The PSS

has shown significant correlations with symptoms of depression and anxiety, as well as related variables such as rumination, stress, and mindfulness, in samples of adults (mostly students).

### ***Binge Eating Scale (BES)***

The Binge Eating Scale (BES; Gormally et al., 1982), is a reliable and valid self-report questionnaire designed to assess Binge Eating behavior. Consisting of 16 items, the BES measures key behavioral symptoms as well as affective/cognitive symptoms that precede or follow a Binge. The scale provides a total score ranging from 0 to 46, with higher scores indicating more severe Binge Eating symptoms. Established cut scores of Binge Eating severity categorize individuals into three groups: no or minimal Binge Eating (score  $\leq 17$ ), mild to moderate Binge Eating (score 18-26), and severe Binge Eating (score  $\geq 27$ ) (Escrivá-Martínez et al., 2019). The BES demonstrates good internal consistency with high Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.80 to 0.96, indicating strong reliability.

### **Procedure**

The research study was conducted using a pre-post experimental research design which was conducted in three phases i.e., Pre-assessment, Intervention and Post-assessment. In *Pre-assessment Phase*, sample of 15 young adults were briefed about the study and provided with a brief introduction to study. Followed by filling demographic sheet, as well as the Binge Eating Scale (BES) and the Psychosomatic Symptoms Scale (PSS-35). The questionnaire took approximately 30 minutes to complete. Screening was conducted based on the participants' level of Binge Eating scores.

In *Intervention* phase, from the screened participants, a selected group of 15 individuals was debriefed about the study and further introduced to psychotherapy. Subsequently, the participants received 8 -12 sessions of Eidetic Psychotherapy. Eidetic Psychotherapy was applied, incorporating the use of the Eidetic Parent Test on the subjects.

In *Post Intervention Phase*, the participants were asked to fill out the Binge Eating Scale (BES) and Psychosomatic Symptoms Scale (PSS-35) at the termination of the psychotherapy, and their scores were subjected to statistical analysis. The severity of Binge Eating and Psychosomatic Symptoms was assessed before and after the Eidetic Psychotherapy sessions through the completion of the questionnaire. The pre- and post-assessment scores were compared and interpreted to evaluate the difference. The collected data was compiled and analyzed using SPSS. The detailed procedure is explained in the table below:

**Table 1**  
*Procedures for Eidetic Therapy Sessions*

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Therapy Plan</b>	<b>Detail</b>
Phase 1	Pre-assessment	Intake session, BES, PSS-35, Standardized Assessment, Psychoeducation, Four steps of Preliminaries*, Composing the symptoms
Phase 2	Intervention	Administration of EPT Key image relevant to Binge Eating and its Psychosomatic symptom were/was selected for maneuvering. Images maneuvering using EPT and related imagery
Phase 3	Post-intervention	Administration of BES, and PSS-35 after the therapy and their scoring was recorded

*Note.* Four steps of preliminaries: 1) First report and symptoms. 2) Worry and concerns about the symptoms. 3) Review of systems. 4) Patient various names. Preliminary 2 and onward were used interchangeably, depending on the situation.

The fidelity of the intervention was ensured by following specific modules outlined in the treatment manual. The clinical supervisor provided sufficient briefing and training on the intervention, which included completing practice cases and participating in intervention-specific case consultations. Additionally, an expert review of the intervention notes was conducted to further ensure fidelity.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations encompassed the important steps of obtaining informed consent from all participants, prioritizing confidentiality, and ensuring that participants were well-informed about the potential consequences of therapy. Participants who were not selected for the intervention were given the option to be referred to a psychotherapist if they were interested in exploring their Binge Eating issue and any associated Psychosomatic Symptoms.

### **Results**

Paired sample t-test analysis was used to analyze the data collected through the intake form and questionnaire. The paired sample t-test was employed to examine the differences between pre- and post-intervention scores on the Binge Eating Scale (BES) and Psychosomatic Symptoms Scale (PSS-35) within the same participants.

**Table 2**

*Paired Sample t-test Showing the Effectiveness of Edetic Therapy on Binge Eating Scale, Psychosomatic (Severity & Frequency; N=15)*

Variable	Pre-test		Post-test		<i>t</i> (14)	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Binge Eating	29.1	5.4	27.3	5.7	3.361	.005	0.285
Frequency of PS	40.5	3.4	39.1	3.1	3.609	.003	0.423
Severity of PS	75.7	9.6	74.2	10	4.183	.001	0.135

*Note.* N=15, *t* (14) = degree of freedom, \**p* < .05, PS= Psychosomatic Symptoms

Paired sample t-tests revealed significant differences in Binge Eating Issues before and after Eidetic Psychotherapy conditions. There was also a significant difference in psychosomatic symptoms frequency before Eidetic Psychotherapy and after Eidetic Psychotherapy conditions. Furthermore, a significant difference was found in psychosomatic symptoms severity before Eidetic Psychotherapy and after Eidetic Psychotherapy conditions.

### **Discussion**

The objective of this study was to examine the efficacy of Eidetic Psychotherapy in alleviating psychosomatic symptoms among young adults who are grappling with Binge Eating Disorders. A repeated-measures experimental design was utilized in this study, and a purposive sample of 15 young adults between the ages of 18 and 26 was selected from the vicinity of Islamabad, Pakistan. The Binge Eating Scale (BES) and Psychosomatic Symptoms Scale (PSS-35) pre- and post-assessment scores of the subjects were analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the intervention. The individuals had seven to eight sessions of Eidetic Psychotherapy.

## EIDETIC PSYCHOTHERAPY FOR BINGE EATING ISSUES

A cohort of fifteen young adults afflicted with psychosomatic symptoms and Binge Eating Issues comprised the subjects of the current investigation; the number of therapy sessions administered differed according to the severity of the participants' conditions. The duration of each therapy session was around sixty minutes.

According to the results of the paired sample t-test, the implementation of Eidetic Psychotherapy was associated with significant reductions in both Binge Eating Issues and psychosomatic symptoms. Eidetic Psychotherapy can effectively reduce psychosomatic symptoms in young adults with Binge Eating Issues, as supported by these results.

The favorable results noted in this investigation are consistent with previous studies that have examined the effectiveness of exposure-based therapy in the treatment of eating disorders (Schaumberg et al., 2021). Although Eidetic Psychotherapy is not yet widely utilized in the treatment of psychosomatic symptoms and Binge Eating Issues, the results indicate that it may be an effective therapeutic intervention for these particular concerns.

By employing the eidetic parent test, Eidetic Psychotherapy seeks to identify and resolve unconscious conflicts. Ahsen (1972) posits that the therapeutic approach promotes an introspective examination of the emotions, thoughts, and recollections that are linked to Binge Eating Issues and psychosomatic symptoms. Eidetic Psychotherapy endeavors to induce enduring positive transformations by facilitating a more profound comprehension of the underlying causes of an individual's challenges through an exploration of the psyche's depths.

A feasible hypothesis for the noted enhancements is that Eidetic Psychotherapy facilitated heightened self-awareness and introspection among the participants. Participants were motivated to apply the ISM to their eidetic beliefs through the use of imagery of symptoms and repeated exposure to heighten the emotional and physiological sensations associated with the symptoms. Engaging in this process of self-exploration may have yielded valuable insights that could have played a role in mitigating the manifestation of psychosomatic symptoms and Binge Eating Issues.

Additionally, the improvement of psychosomatic symptoms could potentially be ascribed to the capacity of Eidetic Psychotherapy to assist individuals in managing their personal distress. Psychological and emotional difficulties, including remorse, shame, and heightened emotional reactivity, frequently coincide with Binge Eating Disorders (Kober & Boswell, 2018). These factors contribute to the development of psychosomatic symptoms. By means of the therapeutic process, participants might have acquired more adaptive coping strategies, thereby diminishing the necessity for psychosomatic manifestations of their emotional challenges.

Binge Eating Issues young adults might resort to food as a mechanism to manage distressing emotions. The emphasis of Eidetic Psychotherapy on the exploration of unconscious conflicts may assist individuals in developing an understanding of the stimuli that contribute to their Binge Eating behavior. By acknowledging and confronting these fundamental concerns, individuals may cultivate more adaptive mechanisms for managing stress, potentially resulting in a decline in instances of Binge Eating.

In a similar vein, the substantial amelioration of psychosomatic symptoms holds clinical significance. Psychosomatic symptoms are physiological biomarkers of distress or psychological issues (Nisar and Srivastava, 2018). The individual may experience a decline in quality of life and general well-being as a result of these symptoms. Eidetic Psychotherapy facilitated a more profound comprehension among participants regarding the affective underpinnings of their psychosomatic symptoms, resulting in enhanced symptom control and general psychological welfare.

Rubin et al. (2014) posit that the prefrontal cortex is of paramount importance in the process of recalling past experiences, enabling individuals to revisit momentous occurrences in their lives. The current investigation noted that the life experiences of the participants were of considerable significance, especially in the aftermath of momentous occurrences, irrespective of their sentimental nature. Eidetic Psychotherapy deliberately focused on these particular life experiences in order to facilitate substantial transformations in the lives of the subjects.

Throughout the therapeutic process, participants recounted incidents that bore resemblance to the intense emotional responses exhibited by their mothers. Additionally, some individuals disclosed that they resorted to excessive eating when their preferred foods were accessible. Other cases also exhibited resemblances to the ones identified, and Eidetic Psychotherapy centered its treatment around these experiences. The implementation of the "manipulation of image" method proved instrumental in assisting the majority of participants in surmounting their symptoms.

Participants were significantly assisted in processing and reframing their life experiences through the application of the "manipulation of image" technique in Eidetic Psychotherapy. This method afforded them the chance to confront unresolved emotions and conflicts by enabling them to vividly recall past experiences.

By examining life experiences and employing targeted therapeutic techniques, Eidetic Psychotherapy may be able to effectuate substantial life changes in its subjects, according to the findings of the present study.

Consistent with prior research on the applications of imagery-based therapies in the treatment of diverse psychological concerns, the findings of this study support this notion. The efficacy of this therapeutic approach in alleviating symptoms associated with a range of psychological disorders has been demonstrated. Further evidence bolsters the potential of Eidetic Psychotherapy as a beneficial intervention within the realm of psychotherapy, as demonstrated by the results of the present study.

## Conclusion

This study examined the effectiveness of Eidetic Psychotherapy as a treatment for psychosomatic symptoms among a group of young people suffering with Binge Eating Issues. Study findings revealed significant improvements in Binge Eating Issues and psychosomatic symptoms among the participants following Eidetic Psychotherapy intervention. Following the intervention, favorable treatment outcomes were revealed by decreased symptom scores. The study further supports the current literature on psychotherapeutic approaches directed towards this age group with particular emphasis on the effectiveness of Eidetic Psychotherapy as an innovative therapy procedure. Generally, this study demonstrates how Eidetic Psychotherapy may be an effective therapy for young people with psychosomatic symptoms and Binge Eating problems. Additionally, it has a number of important implications for mental health professionals as well as the researchers whose aim is to improve the general well-being of this population.

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