

# INPLASY

## Mukbang Exposure and Body Image–Eating Risk Across Developmental Transitions: A Scoping Review Protocol

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### ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

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**Review Stage at time of this submission** - Piloting of the study selection process.

**Conflicts of interest** - None declared.

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**Amendments** - This protocol was registered with the International Platform of Registered Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols (INPLASY) on 12 June 2026 and was last updated on 12 June 2026.

### INTRODUCTION

**Review question / Objective** This scoping review aims to systematically map the existing evidence on the associations between mukbang (eating broadcast) exposure and body image concerns and eating-related risk outcomes among adolescents (12–17 years) and emerging adults (18–25 years), as defined by the American Psychological Association (APA).

Primary review question:

To what extent, and in what ways, is exposure to mukbang content associated with body image disturbances and eating-related risk outcomes among adolescents (aged 12–17 years) and emerging adults (aged 18–25 years)?

Secondary review questions:

What is the scope and nature of existing research on mukbang exposure and body image or eating-related outcomes specifically within adolescent and emerging adult populations?

What study designs, theoretical frameworks, and measurement instruments have been applied to examine mukbang exposure and its outcomes in these developmental populations?

How do findings differ between adolescents (12–17 years) and emerging adults (18–25 years) with respect to the direction, magnitude, and type of associations reported?

What moderating or mediating variables (e.g., frequency of viewing, platform type, sex/gender, impulsivity, loneliness) have been examined in relation to mukbang exposure and body image or eating outcomes in these populations?

What gaps in the current literature warrant further primary research or systematic review?

**Objectives:**

To identify and characterize all empirical studies examining mukbang exposure in relation to body image disturbances (e.g., body dissatisfaction, body shape concern, weight perception, body image distortion) among adolescents and emerging adults

To identify and characterize all empirical studies examining mukbang exposure in relation to eating-related risk (e.g., disordered eating, emotional eating, binge eating, inappropriate weight control behaviors, eating disorder symptomatology) in these populations

To synthesize evidence across developmental stages, geographic contexts, and study methodologies in order to identify consistent patterns, contradictions, and understudied areas

To provide a conceptual map of the theoretical frameworks and measurement tools employed, and to identify methodological strengths and limitations in the existing literature

To generate evidence-informed recommendations for future research priorities and potential intervention targets relevant to adolescent and emerging adult health This scoping review aims to map the existing evidence on the associations between mukbang (eating broadcast) exposure and body image concerns and eating-related risk outcomes across developmental stages. Specifically, the review addresses the following questions:

What is the nature and extent of research on mukbang exposure and body image or eating-related outcomes?

Which developmental populations (adolescents, emerging adults) have been studied?

What theoretical frameworks and measurement tools have been applied?

What gaps exist in the current literature that warrant future research?

**Rationale** Mukbang, originating in South Korea around 2014, has become a globally popular online phenomenon in which hosts consume large quantities of food while interacting with viewers. With the rapid proliferation of short-form video platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram, mukbang exposure has become particularly prevalent among adolescents and young adults—populations known to be vulnerable to body image disturbances and disordered eating. Although a growing body of literature has begun to examine the psychological and behavioral consequences of mukbang viewing, no scoping review has systematically mapped evidence across developmental stages or comprehensively

synthesized findings on both body image and eating-related risk outcomes. This scoping review follows Arksey and O'Malley's framework and the JBI methodology for scoping reviews to address this gap.

**Condition being studied** This review focuses on two interrelated health conditions: (1) body image disturbance, encompassing body dissatisfaction, body shape concerns, body image distortion, and weight perception; and (2) eating-related risk, including disordered eating behaviors (binge eating, purging, restrictive eating), emotional eating, problematic weight control behaviors, and eating disorder symptomatology. Both conditions are highly prevalent during developmental transitions—particularly adolescence and emerging adulthood—and have been associated with digital media consumption patterns, including food-related social media content such as mukbang.

## METHODS

**Search strategy** Searches will be conducted across 12 electronic databases, encompassing major international and Korean databases:

International databases: PubMed, Embase, Cochrane Library, CINAHL, PsycINFO, Scopus, Web of Science

Korean databases: KoreaMed, RISS, KCI, ScienceON, 국회도서관 (National Assembly Library of Korea)

The search will be conducted from database inception to the date of the final search. No date restrictions will be applied.

Search terms are organized into eight concept blocks and combined using Boolean operators:

#1 – Mukbang / Eating broadcast

mukbang[TIAB] OR meokbang[TIAB] OR "eating broadcast"[TIAB] OR "eating show"[TIAB] OR "food broadcast"[TIAB] OR "food casting"[TIAB] OR "food-related video"[TIAB] OR "food video"[TIAB] OR "food content"[TIAB] OR "online media"[TIAB] OR "food media"[TIAB] OR "food medium"[TIAB]

#2 – Body dissatisfaction / Body image

"Body Dissatisfaction"[Mesh] OR "body dissatisfaction"[TIAB] OR "body image dissatisfaction"[TIAB] OR "Negative Body Image"[TIAB] OR "body image concern"[TIAB] OR "body image disturbance"[TIAB] OR "body image distortion"[TIAB] OR "body image perception"[TIAB] OR "body size perception"[TIAB] OR "weight perception"[TIAB] OR "body shape concern"[TIAB] OR "appearance dissatisfaction"[TIAB] OR "appearance concern"[TIAB]

#3 – Weight stigma / Weight bias

"Weight Prejudice"[Mesh] OR "anti-fat bias"[TIAB] OR "fat stigma"[TIAB] OR "fat bias"[TIAB] OR "obesity stigma"[TIAB] OR "obesity bias"[TIAB] OR "weight bias"[TIAB] OR "weight stigma"[TIAB] OR "weight-based stigma"[TIAB] OR "weight-based discrimination"[TIAB] OR "weight prejudice"[TIAB] OR "weight self-stigma"[TIAB]

#4 – Emotional eating

"Emotional Eating"[Mesh] OR "emotional eating"[TIAB] OR "emotion-induced eating"[TIAB] OR "stress eating"[TIAB] OR "comfort eating"[TIAB] OR "affect-driven eating"[TIAB] OR "negative affect eating"[TIAB]

#5 – Inappropriate weight control behaviors

"weight control behavior"[TIAB] OR "weight loss behavior"[TIAB] OR dieting[TIAB] OR "restrictive eating"[TIAB] OR "Fasting"[Mesh] OR fasting[TIAB] OR purging[TIAB] OR "Vomiting"[Mesh] OR vomiting[TIAB] OR "Laxatives"[Mesh] OR laxative\*[TIAB] OR "diet pill"[TIAB] OR "meal skipping"[TIAB] OR "skipping meals"[TIAB]

#6 – Eating disorders / Disordered eating

"Feeding and Eating Disorders"[Mesh] OR "disordered eating"[TIAB] OR "eating disorder"[TIAB] OR "Feeding Disorder"[TIAB] OR "eating pathology"[TIAB] OR "eating psychopathology"[TIAB] OR "binge eating"[TIAB] OR "loss of control eating"[TIAB] OR "compulsive eating"[TIAB] OR "food addiction"[TIAB] OR "night eating syndrome"[TIAB] OR anorexi\*[TIAB] OR bulimi\*[TIAB]

#7 – Combined search

#1 AND (#2 OR #3 OR #4 OR #5 OR #6)

#8 – Animal filter

#7 NOT (animals[mh] NOT humans[mh]).

**Participant or population** The population of interest for this scoping review comprises two developmentally distinct yet overlapping groups: adolescents aged 12 to 17 years and emerging adults aged 18 to 25 years, both defined in accordance with the American Psychological Association (APA) developmental framework.

Adolescence (12–17 years) is characterized by rapid pubertal change, heightened sensitivity to peer evaluation, identity formation, and increased engagement with digital media. These developmental features render adolescents particularly susceptible to social comparison processes and body image disturbances triggered by appearance- and food-related media content such as mukbang.

Emerging adulthood (18–25 years) represents a transitional period marked by identity exploration, instability, and self-focused development. This stage is associated with elevated risk for the onset and persistence of disordered eating, alongside intensive social media engagement, making

emerging adults a critical population for examining mukbang-related eating and body image outcomes.

**Intervention** The exposure of interest is mukbang viewing (or equivalent food-related eating broadcast content), defined as online audiovisual content in which a host consumes food—often in large quantities—while interacting with viewers. This includes mukbang and food-related social media content where mukbang is a primary component. Frequency, duration, platform, and type of viewing are documented where reported.

**Comparator** Given the scoping review design, a formal comparator is not required. Where applicable, studies comparing mukbang viewers vs. non-viewers, or high-frequency vs. low-frequency viewers, are documented and their comparisons noted.

**Study designs to be included** All empirical study designs will be included: cross-sectional surveys, longitudinal/prospective studies, experimental and quasi-experimental designs, qualitative studies, mixed-methods studies, and ecological momentary assessment (EMA) studies. Systematic reviews and scoping reviews will be referenced for citation mapping only, not as primary evidence. Case reports with fewer than 3 participants will be excluded.

**Eligibility criteria** Inclusion criteria:

Population: adolescents (12–17 years) and/or emerging adults (18–25 years) per APA definition, or mixed-age samples with extractable subgroup data for these age ranges

Exposure: mukbang viewing or equivalent food-related eating broadcast content as a primary independent or dependent variable

Outcome: at least one body image or eating-related risk outcome (body dissatisfaction, disordered eating, emotional eating, binge eating, inappropriate weight control behaviors, or eating disorder symptomatology)

Publication type: peer-reviewed journal articles, theses, and dissertations

No date restriction

Exclusion criteria:

Studies targeting exclusively children ( $\leq 11$  years) or adults ( $\geq 26$  years) with no separable adolescent or emerging adult data

Studies where mukbang exposure is indistinguishable from general social media use and no subgroup analysis is available

Studies reporting only nutritional content of mukbang without viewer-level outcomes

Opinion pieces, editorials, letters, and commentaries without original data  
Duplicate publications (most complete or most recent version retained).

**Information sources** Searches will be conducted across 12 electronic databases:

International: PubMed, Embase, Cochrane Library, CINAHL, PsycINFO, Scopus, Web of Science  
Korean: KoreaMed, RISS, KCI, ScienceON, National Assembly Library of Korea (국회도서관)  
Supplementary sources:

Grey literature: Google Scholar, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global

Hand-searching of reference lists of all included studies and relevant reviews

Forward citation tracking via Google Scholar for key papers (e.g., Kircaburun et al., 2021; von Ash et al., 2023)

No contact with individual authors is planned unless clarification of unpublished age-stratified data is required

The search will cover all years from database inception to the date of the final search. An updated search will be conducted immediately prior to manuscript submission to capture any newly published studies.

### **Main outcome(s)** 1. Body image outcomes

Body dissatisfaction, body shape concern, body image distortion, weight perception, and appearance dissatisfaction. Measurement tools include, but are not limited to: Body Shape Questionnaire (BSQ), Body Uneasiness Test (BUT), Eating Disorder Examination–Questionnaire body shape subscale (EDE-Q), and self-reported subjective body image perception scales. Both state-level and trait-level assessments will be included.

### 2. Disordered eating outcomes

Binge eating, purging behaviors, restrictive eating, and eating disorder symptom severity. Measurement tools include: Eating Attitudes Test (EAT-26), Eating Disorder Examination–Questionnaire (EDE-Q), SCOFF questionnaire, Dutch Eating Behavior Questionnaire (DEBQ), Three-Factor Eating Questionnaire (TFEQ), and Mukbang Addiction Scale (MAS). Direction of association (positive, negative, or null), statistical significance, and effect size ( $\beta$ , OR,  $r$ , Cohen's  $d$ ) will be extracted where reported.

**Additional outcome(s)** - Emotional eating and affect-driven eating: measured by emotional eating subscales of DEBQ, TFEQ, or Emotional Eating Disorder Scale (EEDS)

- Inappropriate weight control behaviors: fasting, self-induced vomiting, laxative use, unprescribed diet pill use, one-food dieting

Psychological and emotional correlates: loneliness, perceived stress, depression, anxiety, and negative affect co-reported alongside primary outcomes

Parasocial relationship with mukbang host: where measured as a potential moderator or mediator

Dietary behavior changes: meal skipping, late-night snacking, fast food intake, and sugary beverage consumption, when reported alongside body image or eating disorder outcomes

BMI and anthropometric measures: when reported in conjunction with primary body image or eating outcomes.

**Data management** Records from all 12 databases will be exported and imported into Covidence (covidence.org) for deduplication and blinded title/abstract screening by two independent reviewers. Discrepancies at the screening stage will be resolved through discussion; persistent disagreements will be adjudicated by a third reviewer.

Full-text review will be conducted for all records passing title/abstract screening, with eligibility decisions documented and reasons for exclusion recorded in accordance with PRISMA-ScR guidelines. Covidence's full-text review module will be used to manage and track all inclusion/exclusion decisions systematically.

Data extraction will be performed using a standardized extraction form developed in Microsoft Excel, piloted on five randomly selected included studies prior to full extraction. The extraction form will capture the following fields: study ID, author(s), year, country, study design, data collection method, sample size, age range, sex/gender composition, developmental stage, mukbang exposure platform, exposure measurement tool, exposure frequency/duration, content type, body image outcome variables and tools, eating behavior outcome variables and tools, psychological/emotional variables, theoretical framework, main findings (direction and significance), effect sizes, moderator/mediator variables, and methodological limitations. All extracted data will be verified by a second reviewer, with disagreements resolved by consensus.

**Quality assessment / Risk of bias analysis** As this is a scoping review, formal risk of bias assessment is not mandatory per JBI scoping review methodology (Peters et al., 2020). However, a descriptive methodological quality appraisal will be conducted to contextualize findings, using the following tools according to study design:

Cross-sectional studies: Appraisal Tool for Cross-Sectional Studies (AXIS)

Qualitative studies: JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist for Qualitative Research

Experimental/quasi-experimental studies: NIH Quality Assessment Tool for Controlled Intervention Studies

Mixed-methods studies: Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT)

Reviews included for mapping: AMSTAR-2

Quality appraisal will be conducted independently by two reviewers. Results will be reported narratively in a summary table and used to interpret the strength of available evidence, but will not serve as a basis for study exclusion. Methodological limitations identified across the body of literature will be discussed as part of the scoping review's gap analysis.

**Strategy of data synthesis** A narrative synthesis approach will be employed, consistent with JBI methodology for scoping reviews. Quantitative meta-analytic pooling is not planned given the anticipated heterogeneity in study designs, populations, exposure measures, and outcome instruments.

Data will be synthesized and presented across the following dimensions:

Study characteristics: design, country, publication year, sample size, developmental stage

Mukbang exposure characteristics: platform, measurement tool (validated vs. non-validated), frequency and duration of viewing, content type

Outcome variables: type (body image vs. eating behavior), measurement instruments used, and validated vs. non-validated tools

Direction and pattern of associations: positive, negative, or null associations between mukbang exposure and each outcome category

Theoretical frameworks: presence or absence of explicit theoretical grounding (e.g., Social Comparison Theory, Objectification Theory, Uses and Gratifications Theory)

Moderators and mediators: variables identified as moderating or mediating the mukbang–outcome relationship

Findings will be presented in summary tables stratified by developmental stage (adolescents vs. emerging adults) and by outcome type (body image vs. eating-related risk). A narrative thematic summary will identify convergent findings, contradictions, and evidence gaps. Where sufficient studies report comparable quantitative data, a vote-counting approach (tallying direction

of statistically significant effects) will supplement the narrative.

**Subgroup analysis** The following subgroup analyses are planned to address the developmental and contextual objectives of the review:

Developmental stage: adolescents (12–17 years) vs. emerging adults (18–25 years) – primary subgroup of interest, reflecting the APA-defined populations

Geographic/cultural context: Korean studies vs. non-Korean studies, given the disproportionate representation of Korean samples and the cultural origin of mukbang

Exposure measurement: studies using the validated Mukbang Addiction Scale (MAS) vs. studies using single-item or non-validated frequency measures – to assess whether measurement approach moderates reported associations

Outcome domain: body image outcomes vs. eating behavior outcomes vs. combined outcomes – to examine whether associations differ by outcome type

Sex/gender: studies reporting sex-stratified or gender-stratified findings vs. those that do not – to identify differential vulnerability patterns

Study design: experimental vs. observational studies – to assess whether study design influences direction or magnitude of reported associations

Subgroup findings will be reported descriptively in stratified summary tables. Formal statistical comparison across subgroups is not planned given the scoping review design.

**Sensitivity analysis** Given the scoping review design, sensitivity analyses will be conducted descriptively to assess the robustness of the evidence map:

–Restriction to post-2019 publications: Given that mukbang gained global prominence approximately from 2019 onward, a sensitivity analysis restricted to studies published from 2019 to the search date will be conducted to assess temporal trends and whether earlier studies reflect a meaningfully different evidence base

–Restriction to validated exposure measures: Limiting the synthesis to studies employing the Mukbang Addiction Scale (MAS) or other psychometrically validated exposure instruments will be conducted to evaluate whether measurement quality affects the pattern of reported associations

-Restriction to studies with clearly defined age ranges: Studies in which the 12–25 year population cannot be cleanly separated from broader mixed-age samples will be excluded in a sensitivity pass to confirm that inclusion of such studies does not distort the developmental subgroup findings. Results of each sensitivity analysis will be reported alongside the main synthesis findings, with discrepancies noted and discussed.

**Language restriction** No language restriction will be imposed. Studies in English and Korean will be reviewed directly. Studies in other languages will be assessed via verified machine translation where necessary.

**Country(ies) involved** Republic of Korea. This review is being conducted by researchers affiliated with institutions in the Republic of Korea.

**Other relevant information** This scoping review follows the JBI Manual for Evidence Synthesis (Peters et al., 2020) and will be reported in accordance with the PRISMA extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) (Tricco et al., 2018).

The review addresses a significant gap in the literature: while prior scoping and systematic reviews have examined mukbang viewing and psychological outcomes broadly (Kircaburun et al., 2021) or food-related social media and body image across all ages (Roorda & Cassin, 2025; Wu et al., 2024), no review to date has focused specifically on the two APA-defined developmental populations most vulnerable to mukbang-related body image and eating risk — adolescents (12–17 years) and emerging adults (18–25 years) — within a unified developmental framework.

The theoretical lens of this review is informed by Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954), Objectification Theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), and the Uses and Gratifications framework (Katz et al., 1973), which together provide a basis for understanding why adolescents and emerging adults may be differentially affected by mukbang content featuring idealized body types alongside large-volume food consumption.

This protocol was registered with INPLASY prior to the commencement of formal data extraction. Any amendments to the protocol following registration will be documented with dates and rationale in the final published review.

**Keywords** mukbang; eating broadcast; body image; disordered eating; emotional eating; adolescents; emerging adults; scoping review; social media; food-related media; body dissatisfaction.

**Dissemination plans** The findings of this scoping review will be disseminated through multiple channels targeting both academic and practice audiences. The completed review will be submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed international journal. Results will be presented at relevant national and international conferences in the fields of public health, health informatics, and nursing science.

A structured summary of key findings and evidence gaps will be prepared for dissemination to stakeholders in adolescent health, school-based nursing, and digital media literacy education. Findings are expected to inform the development of targeted media literacy programs and clinical screening tools relevant to mukbang-associated eating and body image risk in adolescent and young adult populations.

The registered protocol and final published review will be made publicly accessible via the INPLASY registry. Open-access publication will be pursued where feasible to maximize reach among researchers, clinicians, and policymakers working in adolescent mental health and nutrition.

#### Contributions of each author

Author 1 - Jihea Choi - Conceptualized and designed the scoping review protocol, developed the search strategy, led title/abstract screening and full-text review, performed data extraction, conducted narrative synthesis, and drafted the manuscript. Author 1 drafted the manuscript.

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Author 2 - Namhee Kim - Participated in independent title/abstract screening and full-text eligibility assessment, conducted data extraction verification, assisted in Korean-language database searches and screening, and reviewed and approved the final manuscript.

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Author 3 - Kieun Kim - Assisted in the development of the data extraction form, participated in full-text review, contributed to data tabulation and narrative synthesis, and reviewed and approved the final manuscript.

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Author 4 - Mikyung Lee - Supervised the overall design and conduct of the review, provided methodological guidance on JBI scoping review methodology and PRISMA-ScR reporting, critically reviewed and revised the manuscript, and is responsible for the accuracy and integrity of the registered protocol.

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