

Examining the Relation Between Intuitive Eating and Eating Behavior Within the Framework of Current Nutritional Trends in Gastronomy

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Abstract

Many people who are exposed to social and media pressures make various efforts to reach the ‘thin’ body ideal. In developed and Westernized societies, excessive importance is given to body size, weight and appearance. This situation causes disruptions in eating behavior in individuals. Deterioration in eating behaviors can be detected by indicators such as the increase in the number of diet clinics, the increase in diet recommendations in the press and media, and the spread of weight control drugs in pharmacies. For this reason, although there are those who are in favor of it today, according to some people, there is also an increase in the number of those who advocate the application of an intuitive nutrition approach to the deterioration in eating behaviors that begins with aesthetic concerns such as diet practices, surgical interventions and excessive exercises.

In the process of intuitive eating, less restrictions regarding food and feeling less guilty when eaten, as well as less disordered eating and eating by controlling emotions, come to the fore. These discussions bring to the fore the need to pay attention to eating trends and eating behavior studies, especially in today’s gastronomy and culinary arts. Likewise, when combined with marketing science, knowing the consumers who engage in intuitive eating behavior in marketing studies in food and beverage businesses, such as market research and marketing mix creation, is very important, especially

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in order to segment the market. In this context, in the study, intuitive eating, eating behavior and eating disorders were mentioned within the framework of eating behavior. It is aimed to create a map for researchers interested in these issues.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Intuitive Eating

27 years ago as of 2022 an eating strategy emerged which is an alternative to traditional diets called Intuitive eating (Resch & Tribole, 2020). It is a non-diet strategy that educates individuals to eat based on their intuition as opposed to external cues. People who create unhealthy relationships with the food they eat and their bodies, according to the intuitive eating hypothesis, are those who depend on external stimuli rather than their instincts to guide their eating decisions. The stress of trying to lose weight might increase the likelihood that an individual would develop eating disorders, have an unattractive body image, and exhibit depressive symptoms (Lee, Madsen, Williams, Browne, & Burke, 2022; Resch & Tribole, 2020; Stice, Hayward, Cameron, Killen, & Taylor, 2000; Johnson & Wardle, 2005; Goldschmidt, Wall, Choo, Becker, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2015; Ackard, Croll, & Kearney-Cooke, 2002; Rawana, McPhie, & Hassibi, 2016). Additionally, patients with eating disorders that can be caused by dietary restrictions such as anorexia nervosa, and bulimia nervosa, can gain intuitive eating habits, and eating disorders can be treated with the help of intuitive eating (Richards, Crowton, Berrett, Smith, & Passmore, 2017; Hazzard, ve diğerleri, 2021; Goldschmidt, Wall, Loth, Grange, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2012; Holmes, Fuller-Tyszkiewicz, Skouteris, & Broadbent, 2014). The non-prescriptive technique of intuitive eating may aid in the treatment of obesity and eating problems as well. There are favorable correlations between a lower body mass index, and more sentiments of self-care (Tylka, 2006; Camilleri, ve diğerleri, 2016; Denny, Loth, Eisenberg, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2013; Smith & Hawks, 2006; Sairanen, ve diğerleri, 2015; Anderson, Reilly, Schaumberg, Dmochowski, & Anderson, 2016; Gast, Madanat, & Nielson, 2012), reduced lack of food control and overall well-being, according to studies (Keirns & Hawkins, 2019; Bruce & Ricciardelli, 2016).



Figure 1: Ten basic principles of intuitive eating

Source: Haoure, 2021.

Intuitive eating is frequently known for its emphasis on hunger and satiety signals, rather than diets or emotions, to influence eating choices. When people are infants, when they have had enough to eat, they push the food away from them and can determine whether or not they enjoy a certain food. As individuals learn to eat and exercise through external cues (such as diets and exercise plans), they lose touch with their natural inclinations regarding what, when, and how much to eat from birth (Resch & Tribole, 2020). Furthermore, Dieting methods can sometimes result in an initial loss of weight, however, this loss is typically followed by weight gain. In point of fact, roughly 95% of people who engage in intentional weight loss will return their weight in the long term, with two-thirds of them regaining more weight than they first lost when they lost it (Mann, ve diğerleri, 2007; Buchanan & Sheffield, 2015). The ideas of intuitive eating include “rejecting the dieting mentality” by training individuals to eat in accordance with their body’s hunger and fullness cues, building an intuitive relationship with food and our body, and achieving a healthy weight that can be maintained over time (Resch & Tribole, 2020). On top of that increasing evidence highlights intuitive eating’s favorable correlations with measures

of physical and psychological well-being as well as habits that promote health (Schaefer & Magnuson, 2014; Dyke & Drinkwater, Review Article Relationships between intuitive eating and health indicators: literature review, 2013; Hazzard, ve diğerleri, 2021; Bruce & Ricciardelli, 2016). There is mounting evidence that intuitive eating is linked to healthful lifestyle habits (such as increasing one's intake of fruits and vegetables), improved mental and emotional health, a more stable weight, and a more positive body image (Christoph, ve diğerleri, 2021; Quansah, Gilbert, Puder, Gross, & Horsch, 2019), decreases in symptoms of depression, internalizations of weight prejudice, unhappiness with one's body, and compulsive eating (Burnette & Mazzeo, 2020; Christoph, ve diğerleri, 2021; Webb & Hardin, 2016; Braun, ve diğerleri, 2022). Moreover, numerous research has shown that body appreciation consistently correlates with reduced levels of eating disorder symptoms (Messer, Tylka, Fuller-Tyszkiewicz, & Linardon, 2022). The results of a longitudinal study indicate that body appreciation may protect against the onset of eating problem symptoms (Linardon, 2021) and intuitive eating is recognized to be a possible mediator of the relationship between body appreciation and eating pathology (Tylka & Wilcox, 2006; Anastasiades & Argyrides, 2022).

Intuitive eaters are those who practice intuitive eating principles (Resch & Tribole, 2020). The hypothalamus, which is related with the limbic system, enables humans to recognise their hunger (Goldstone, 2006; Petersén & Gabery, 2012). Humans are born with a hypothalamus in their brain anatomy (Najimi, ve diğerleri, 1990; Najimi, Bennis, Moyse, & Chigr, 2001). Instincts, emotions, and thoughts interact dynamically in human beings and are mediated by the brain (Resch & Tribole, 2020) and people are born with the capacity to eat intuitively (Resch & Tribole, 2020), the environment, such as family, friends (Faw, Davidson, Hogan, & Thomas, 2021; Paxton, 1996), and exposure to weight stigma and diet culture (Faw, Davidson, Hogan, & Thomas, 2021), affects how likely they are to stay as an intuitive eaters. An environment that lacks acceptance and/or enforces rigorous eating norms that disregard a person's inner experience can hinder intuitive eating (Resch & Tribole, 2020).



Figure 2: The components of this intuitive eating plate

Source: Adams, M. 2023.

The figure above shows the basic steps in a nutrition approach that will be created with intuitive eating behavior. In this context, the points included in intuitive eating behavior appear as follows (Adams, M., 2023);

- Foods that you have access to. There is no need for fancy foods, just go with what you have!
- Foods that will nourish you. This means they provide the energy and nutrients that you need.
- Foods that you enjoy. While it's unrealistic to think that every meal will be your favorite, hopefully, pleasure can be a component on your plate most of the time!
- Foods that satisfy you. This means choosing foods that satisfy you, but it also means eating enough total food!

Since intuitive eaters tend to have better mental (e.g. less constraint and guilt associated with eating), behavioral (e.g. less disordered and emotional eating), and physical health (e.g. less risk of cardiovascular disease among older adults and reduced risk of type 2 diabetes) than restrictive eaters (Teas, Kimiecik, Ward, & Timmerman, 2022; Anderson, Reilly, Schaumberg, Dmochowski, & Anderson, 2016; Soares, ve diğerleri, 2021; Dyke & Drinkwater, 2022), intuitive eating has gained popularity as an alternative to restrictive dieting (Bruce & Ricciardelli, 2016). However, a significant portion of the studies, on the other hand, is comprised of either brief clinical trials with obese Caucasian women or surveys carried out with undergraduate students in the United States (Dyke & Drinkwater, 2013).

2.2. Eating Behavior

Eating behavior is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon affected by various factors. These factors include physiological, psychological, social, and genetic factors that interact in complex ways to shape our eating habits. Understanding the development of eating behavior is important because it can help us identify factors that contribute to healthy eating habits and factors that contribute to unhealthy eating habits. In this context, it should not be forgotten that eating behavior is not only a physiological process but also a social and psychological process (Sobal & Bisogni, 2009; Story, Neumark-Sztainer, & French, 2002).

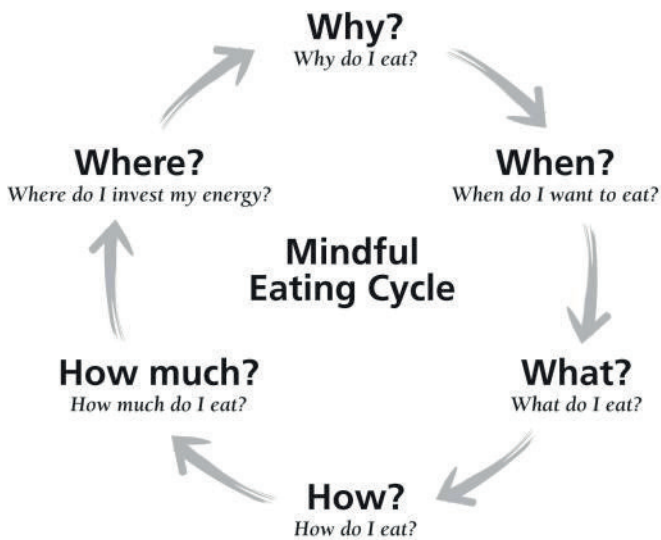


Figure 3: How We Make Eating Decisions

Source: Harris, 2013.

Eating behavior can be defined as a complex interaction of physiological, psychological, social, and genetic factors that influence meal timing, food intake amount and food preference (Grimm & Steinle, 2011). Eating is not only a physiological necessity or habit, but also a behavior with social and psychological dimensions (Plante, Rosenfeld, Plante, & Reysen, 2019). From infancy to preschool, eating behavior develops and changes rapidly (Birch & Anzman, 2010). The formation of this behavior in humans depends on the complex relationship between homeostatic mechanisms and

neural reward systems, infantile motor skills, sensory and socio-emotional capacities (Gahagan, 2012).

Women's eating behaviors and body perceptions have a complex structure today. Many young women, being exposed to social and media pressures, make various efforts to reach the 'thin' body ideal. In developed and Westernized societies, excessive emphasis is placed on body size, weight and appearance. This situation leads to disruptions in eating behaviors. Deterioration in eating behaviors can be detected by indicators such as the increase in the number of diet clinics, the increase in diet recommendations in the press and media, and the spread of weight control drugs in pharmacies. It can be the first step of an uncertain process that starts with aesthetic concerns, such as diet practices, surgical interventions, and excessive exercises (Yücel B., 2009).

Emotions play an important role in eating and food preferences (López-Moreno, Garcés-Rimón, Miguel, & López, 2021). When some people experience negative emotions such as anxiety, depression, anger and loneliness, they respond to them with emotional eating. These unhealthy eating habits lead to problems such as obesity, overeating, binge eating, and bulimia nervosa (Torrado, Velasco, Galiot, & Cambrodón, 2015). Findings of a study published in 2023 showed a relationship between the severity of a woman's depressive symptoms and the degree of her psychological distress; This suggests that severe depressive symptoms are associated with negative emotions that increase emotional eating behaviors (Jihyun & Sunghee, 2023).

Eating is necessary for both survival and pleasure (Yiğitler, 2018). People's eating behavior changes dynamically from infancy to school age, being affected by many factors such as their physiological balance, reward system, motor, sensory and emotional skills they acquire in childhood, social environment, cultural context and their parents' interests and attitudes (Gahagan, 2012).

Today, the desire for excellence is evident in every aspect of life. For this reason, individuals have aspired to excellence in their jobs, wares, and physical attractiveness (Han, 2019; Reith, 2018). This desire is also reflected in consumption trends. In the modern era, food has become a commodity and is consumed in excess of what is necessary. This circumstance has resulted in some alterations to the body's appearance and health (Özdemir, 2022; Reith, 2018). As an example, obesity has become increasingly a global health concern with its prevalence has doubled since 1980 (Chooi, Ding, & Magkos, 2019; Williamson, Nimegeer, & Lean, 2020; Hales, Fryar, Carroll,

Freedman, & Ogden, 2018). Another example of that is eating disorders which have experienced a prevalence increase of nearly 8% between the years 2013 and 2018 (Galmiche, Déchelotte, Lambert, & Tavolacci, 2019).

Consequently, in the modern world, when individualized lives predominate (Santos, Varnum, & Grossmann, 2017), the responsibility for “overeating” has been placed on the individual, along with the duty for health and diseases, and investments in this area have expanded (Özdemir, 2022). Many people nowadays succumb to this perfectionist pressure and spend disproportionate amounts of time and money pursuing this goal (Wiseman, Gunning, & Gray, 1993). People who struggle with eating disorders tend to spend an inordinate amount of time preoccupied with their bodies (Nikodijevic, Buck, Fuller- Tyszkiewicz, de Paoli, & Krug, 2018; Walker, White, & Srinivasan, 2018), the foods they consume (Hahn, ve diğerleri, 2020), calorie counting (Romano, Becker, Colgary, & Magnuson, 2018; Hahn, ve diğerleri, 2020), restriction (Jebeile, Lister, Baur, Garnett, & Paxton, 2020), shopping for so-called “miracle” diet products (Laska, Pasch, Lust, Story, & Ehlinger, 2009), abusing laxatives (Haedt, Edler, Heatherton, & Keel, 2006), purging themselves voluntarily (Laska, Pasch, Lust, Story, & Ehlinger, 2009; Keel & Striegel- Moore, 2009; Piran & Robinson, 2011), and the diet business is one of the largest industries to benefit from those who feel insecure and flawed (Kagie, 2018).

2.3. Connection Between Eating Behavior and Eating Disorders

An exhaustive review of 68 academic papers was conducted to investigate the influence of mindful and intuitive eating on the modification of eating behaviors. The studies specifically focusing on intuitive eating were relatively few, yet they demonstrated a positive correlation with the identification of hunger signals, an increased autonomy in eating decisions, and an enhanced gastronomic pleasure (Intuitive Eating, 2024). A considerable proportion of these studies suggested that interventions centered around intuitive eating were associated with a decline in disordered eating behaviors, encompassing disinhibition, loss of control, binge eating, and symptoms indicative of anorexia (Conason, 2024). Consequently, it was deduced that interventions that concentrate on enhancing individuals’ intuitive eating could potentially ameliorate mental health and mitigate disordered eating behaviors, with a particular emphasis on binge-eating. Importantly, the empirical evidence suggests that intuitive eating is a robust predictor of improved psychological and behavioral health across a diverse range of outcomes (Hazzard, et al., 2021).

Eating disorders, which are psychiatric disorders prevalent in all societies, typically emerge during early adolescence, necessitate long-term treatment, and are associated with a high mortality risk (Hoek & Hoeken, 2003; Treasure, Claudino, & Zucker, 2010). The mass media, by endorsing thinness as the standard of beauty, is reshaping societal perceptions of beauty (Wu, Ching, He, & Yuanhua, 2023). Body image, a sociocultural construct, is influenced by various societal norms and is accepted by individuals based on social welfare standards. The satisfaction or dissatisfaction an individual experiences with their appearance is contingent upon how closely it aligns with these societal norms (Marika, 2011). Media portrayals of “zero body image” can lead to harmful behaviors such as unconscious dieting, food avoidance or consumption, and the use of bacteria, laxatives, or diuretics to achieve an ideal weight (Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, & Toney, 2006; Weiss, Miller ve Chermak, 2022).

Eating disorders are a group of diagnoses in which eating behavior is severely deviated, such as Anorexia Nervosa (AN) and Bulimia Nervosa (BN). These two disorders are the most common eating disorders and can lead to severe physical and psychological complications (Erbay & Seçkin, 2016). Eating disorders are an important health problem because they are especially common during adolescence (Dagnar, et al., 2023), can be fatal (Toker ve Çolakoğlu, 2009) and cause disabilities (Johnson, Spitzer ve Williams, 2001).

In the field of human-computer interaction research, the idea of intuition has seen significant growth in popularity over the past few decades (Baylor, 2001; Naumann, ve diğerleri, 2007). According to Sutton intuition is irrational. It does not result from a series of deliberate steps that can be communicated or explained. Instead, while the process is based on extensive information, it feels natural, almost instinctive (Sutton, 2022) but in cognitive sciences intuition is a mode of processing information that is described as being based on automatic, affective, and personal norms; nonetheless, it is not the antithesis of logic (Tonetto & Tamminen, 2015). Formerly, psychologists have been hesitant to recognize intuition as a genuine construct, frequently relegating it to the “margins” of the science of psychology, inside the realms of parapsychology, telepathy, and precognition (Atkinson & Claxton, 2000). According to the findings of some researchers, intuition is a topic that is now trending in the field of psychology. Intuition is typically understood to relate to a brain mechanism that endows individuals with the ability to make decisions without the use of logical skills. In spite of the fact that this theory is widely supported by both psychologists and the general public, researchers have not been able to find a trustworthy

experiment that can collect objective data on intuition or even prove that it actually exists (Nierenberg, 2022). On the contrary, some scholarly findings indicate that psychologists have acknowledged its significance in a number of cognitive processes, ranging from the use of heuristics in decision-making to its significance in learning (Tversky & Kahneman, 1982; Klein, 1998). Research that is published in 2016 showed that intuition can be measurable. To conduct the research the researchers devised an experiment where individuals were exposed to emotional imagery outside of consciousness as they tried to make precise decisions in order to measure intuition. The findings of the study indicate that even while participants were not aware of the images, they were still able to use the knowledge provided by the images to help them reach decisions that were both more confident and accurate (Lufityanto, Donkin, & Pearson, 2016).

Many believe that intuition is an innate characteristic but according to Gary Klein who is the author of “Sources of Power” there is no shred of evidence to suggest that some people are endowed with the gift of intuition while others are not. According to him the only way to develop intuition is via experience (Klein, 1998). His theory was backed by two studies that were published in 2007 and 2012, respectively (Blackler, Popovic, & Mahar, 2007). Confirmed expert performers who are also experienced have a tendency to have incredibly forceful, calibrated intuitions. Such as the intuitions of medical professionals shed light on disorders and guide treatment. Intuition gives athletes the ability to outmaneuver opponents who have received extensive training. The intuitions of those who respond to emergencies assist bring under the control unexpected wildfires and aggressive criminals. Over the course of the past half-century, superior and repeatable expert performance has been observed in a variety of fields (Ericsson, Hoffman, Kozbelt, & Williams, 2006). Even though some intuitions can be gained through experience (Klein, 1998), some intuitions, such as understanding hunger and satiety cues, are innate (Resch & Tribolo, 2020).

3. Conclusion

Being aware of eating behavior is an important criterion for individuals to prevent unhealthy eating habits. In this way, individuals can choose healthier meals instead of unhealthy meals. Issues such as eating on smaller plates, purchasing single-serving foods, keeping unhealthy foods away from your eyes, and ordering smaller portions at restaurants can be evaluated in this context. Additionally, individuals’ development of these behaviors also affects the services offered by food and beverage businesses. Businesses have

to serve as requested by customers who are aware of their eating behavior. For this reason, studies are being conducted to investigate what kind of behavior consumers who are selective about their eating behavior tend to engage in. The information provided in this section will help food and beverage operators prepare healthy menus for modern restaurants such as fine dining, which are a qualified reflection of today, as well as classical restaurant management. Businesses that can understand customers through various applications will also come to the fore in their marketing activities. Thus, he conducts studies investigating the types of behaviors that individuals who are selective about eating behavior tend to engage in. As a result of this issue, which includes important market research information, the situation arises that in addition to classical restaurants, fine dining restaurants, which are a reflection of modern restaurants, also prepare healthy menus.

Although this issue was discussed theoretically in the study, it is important to conduct research on individuals with different measurement techniques and scales developed by various academics in the relevant field. In addition to quantitative studies using the survey technique, qualitative studies using the interview technique are needed. On the other hand, especially with the increasing use of big data applications today, the connection between the concept of intuitive eating and eating behavior of individuals should also be the subject of research.

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