

Factors Affecting Adolescents' Eating Habits: From the Viewpoints of Body Image, Commonsense Knowledge and School Knowledge

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to investigate the characteristics of adolescents' eating habits and how body image, commonsense knowledge, and school knowledge influence their eating habits. Theoretically, I conceptualize eating habits as Bourdieu's habitus, and base this study on the Structuration theory. Questionnaires were administered to 1629 high school students. It was found that eating habits differed by gender, however, an exploratory factor analysis indicated that the structures of male and female eating habits were similar. The factor analysis extracted four factors, which were labeled as "valuing body control," "valuing every day meals," "valuing favorite food," and "valuing nutritional balance." The results of multiple regression analysis indicated that the body image was positively related to "valuing body control," and that school knowledge had a positive effect on "valuing nutritional balance" among both males and females of every school type (i.e., boys' schools, girls' schools, and coeducational schools). Therefore, adolescents had certain ideal body images that influenced the selection of strategies for their eating habits, and the attitudes toward home economics education positively influenced their eating habits. Commonsense knowledge from their parents impacted "valuing body control." These results suggest that creating Home Economics curricula and combining school knowledge with that from adolescents' parents are important.

Key words; adolescents, eating habits, body image, commonsense knowledge, school knowledge