



Motivation for Eating and the Nutrition Transition in the Philippines

Steven R. Hawks, Hala N. Madanat, TeriSue Smith and M. Lelinneth B. Novilla

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ABSTRACT Individual motivations that prompt various eating styles can play a central role in the development of unhealthy eating habits and obesity within the context of the nutrition transition. This study was conducted to compare motivational eating styles among two convenience samples of women in the Philippines. The first sample consisted of urban women attending a university in Manila ($n = 68$), while the second included working women in the rural province of Bacolod ($n = 109$). The Motivation for Eating Scale (MFES), a 43-item self-report questionnaire, was used to assess four different motivations for eating: environmental, emotional, physical (hunger-based), and social. It was found that the college sample was younger ($p < .001$) and more likely to be underweight ($p = .003$), while the community sample was older ($p < .001$) and more likely to be overweight or obese ($p = .003$). No differences in physical and social eating were found between the two samples, but the college females had significantly higher levels of environmental and emotional eating ($p < .001$). Other research has shown that environmental and emotional eating may be associated with binge eating, weight gain, and the development of eating disorders. The potentially negative eating styles found in higher levels among the college female population in Manila need to be studied more fully and addressed through prevention and education programs before they lead to more serious and widespread eating problems such as overnutrition, weight gain and eating disorders.

Authors' Addresses: Steven R. Hawks, TeriSue Smith and M. Lelinneth B. Novilla, 229L Richards Building, Health Science Department, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602, USA.

Fax: (801)422-0273, E-mail: steve_hawks@byu.edu

Hala N. Madanat, Department of Sociology, College of Family, Home and Social Sciences, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602 USA.

E-mail: hala_madanat@byu.edu