Implicitly assessed attitudes toward body shape and food: the moderating roles of dietary restraint and disinhibition

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Abstract

Background: Attitudes toward body shape and food play a role in the development and maintenance of dysfunctional eating behaviors. Nevertheless, they are rarely investigated together. Therefore, this study aimed to explore the interrelationships between implicitly assessed attitudes toward body shape and food and to investigate the moderating effect on these associations of interindividual differences in problematic and nonproblematic eating behaviors (i.e., flexible versus rigid cognitive control dimension of restraint, disinhibition).

Methods: One hundred and twenty-one young women from the community completed two adapted versions of the Affect Misattribution Procedure to implicitly assess attitudes toward body shape (i.e., thin and overweight bodies) and food (i.e., “permitted” and “forbidden” foods), as well as the Three-Factor Eating Questionnaire to evaluate restraint and disinhibition.

Results: The results revealed that an implicit preference for thinness was positively associated with a positive attitude toward permitted (i.e., low-calorie) foods. This congruence between implicitly assessed attitudes [...]
Additional file 1

Figures representing associations between attitudes toward body shape and food at different levels of eating behaviors

Figure 1. Association between attitudes toward body shape and food at different levels of flexible control.

The figure shows the regression lines illustrating the relations between AMP-assessed attitude toward body shape and AMP-assessed attitude toward permitted foods at high (+1 SD), average, and low (–1 SD) levels of the flexible cognitive control dimension of restraint. The scaling of both axes ranged from –1.00 to 1.00. For AMP-assessed attitude toward body shape, a positive score indicates a relative preference for thin bodies and a negative score indicates a relative preference for overweight bodies. For AMP-assessed attitude toward permitted foods, a positive score indicates a preference for permitted foods and a negative score indicates a preference for control images. Slopes were significant at average and high levels of flexible control. * p < .01.
Figure 2. Association between attitudes toward body shape and food at different levels of rigid control.

The figure shows the regression lines illustrating the relations between AMP-assessed attitude toward body shape and AMP-assessed attitude toward forbidden foods at high (+1 SD), average, and low (−1 SD) levels of the rigid cognitive control dimension of restraint. The scaling of both axes ranged from −1.00 to 1.00. For AMP-assessed attitude toward body shape, a positive score indicates a relative preference for thin bodies and a negative score indicates a relative preference for overweight bodies. For AMP-assessed attitude toward forbidden foods, a positive score indicates a preference for forbidden foods and a negative score indicates a preference for control images. Slopes were significant at average and high levels of rigid control. * $p < .001$. 
Figure 3. Association between attitudes toward body shape and food at different levels of disinhibition.

The figure shows the regression lines illustrating the relations between AMP-assessed attitude toward body shape and AMP-assessed attitude toward forbidden foods at high (+1 SD), average, and low (–1 SD) levels of disinhibition. The scaling of both axes ranged from –1.00 to 1.00. For AMP-assessed attitude toward body shape, a positive score indicates a relative preference for thin bodies and a negative score indicates a relative preference for overweight bodies. For AMP-assessed attitude toward forbidden foods, a positive score indicates a preference for forbidden foods and a negative score indicates a preference for control images. Slopes were significant at average and high levels of disinhibition. * $p < .01$. 