

Investigation of nutritional attitudes and mindful eating among adults

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Abstract

This research aimed to examine the general nutritional behaviors of individuals by assessing the Mindful Eating and Healthy Eating Attitudes of Adults. The study was conducted on 228 adults (118 female and 110 male) who attended a private clinic in Istanbul between July 2025 and September 2025. A questionnaire was used to determine the sociodemographic characteristics of the participants. The Mindful Eating Scale was used to assess their levels of mindful eating, and the Attitudes Toward Healthy Eating Scale was used to evaluate their attitudes toward healthy eating. The mean age of the participants was 33.46 ± 10.89 years for females and 32.29 ± 12.31 years for males. The change in daily physical activity level showed a significant difference between genders ($p < 0.05$). It was found that females scored higher than males in the total Mindful Eating score ($p > 0.05$). The sum scores of females' attitudes towards healthy nutrition were found to be higher than those of men ($p < 0.05$). Positive and significant differences were demonstrated by age for the total scores of Mindful Eating, Impulsive Eating, Emotional Eating, Mindful, and Interference subscales ($p < 0.05$). A negative correlation was observed between the total score for Attitudes Toward Healthy Eating, body weight, and Waist-to-Hip Ratio ($p < 0.05$). Females have higher Attitudes Toward Nutrition and Mindful Eating than men. Furthermore, it appears that their eating habits increase with age. It was also observed that two scale scores decreased as body weight increased. For this reason, it can be said that practices aimed at

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increasing Mindful Eating and Attitudes Towards Healthy Eating can be effective in weight management processes.

Keywords: *Mindful eating, nutritional attitude, adult, healthy eating, obesity. Energy efficiency, Mosquito.*

Yetişkinlerde beslenme tutumları ve yeme farkındalığının incelenmesi

Öz

Bu araştırma yetişkinlerin yeme farkındalığı ve sağlıklı beslenme tutumlarını değerlendirerek bireylerin genel beslenme davranışlarını incelemeyi amaçlamıştır. Araştırma, Temmuz 2025- Eylül 2025 tarihleri arasında İstanbul'da özel bir kliniğe başvuran 228 yetişkin (118 Kadın, 110 Erkek) üzerinde yürütülmüştür. Katılımcıların sosyodemografik özelliklerini belirlemek için anket formu, yeme farkındalık düzeylerini belirlemek adına Yeme Farkındalığı Ölçeği ve sağlıklı beslenme tutumlarını belirlemek adına Sağlıklı Beslenmeye İlişkin Tutum Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Katılımcıların yaş ortalamaları kadınlarda 33.46 ± 10.89 , erkeklerde ise 32.29 ± 12.31 olarak bulunmuştur. Günlük fiziksel aktivite düzeyleri açısından cinsiyetler arasında anlamlı bir farklılık saptanmıştır ($p < 0,05$). Yeme farkındalığı toplam puanında kadınların erkeklerden daha fazla puan aldığı saptanmıştır ($p > 0,05$). Sağlıklı beslenmeye ilişkin tutum toplam puanında kadınların erkeklere göre daha yüksek puan aldığı saptanmıştır ($p < 0,05$). Yeme Farkındalığı toplam puanı, Düşünmeden Yeme, Duygusal Yeme, Farkındalık ve Enterferans alt boyutları yaş ile pozitif yönde anlamlı ilişkiler göstermiştir ($p < 0,05$). Sağlıklı Beslenmeye İlişkin Tutum toplam puanı, vücut ağırlığı ve Bel/Kalça Oranı ile negatif yönde anlamlı ilişki göstermiştir ($p < 0,05$). Kadınların yeme farkındalığı ve sağlıklı beslenmeye yönelik tutumları erkeklere göre daha yüksek olduğu bulunmuştur. Ayrıca bireylerin yaşı ilerledikçe yeme davranışlarına yönelik farkındalıklarının arttığı bulunmuştur. Vücut ağırlığı arttıkça iki ölçek puanının azaldığı da gözlemlenmiştir. Bu sebep ile kilo yönetimi süreçlerinde, yeme farkındalığı ve sağlıklı beslenmeye ilişkin tutumları artırmaya yönelik uygulamaların etkili olabileceği söylenebilir.

Anahtar kelimeler: *Yeme farkındalığı, beslenme tutumu, yetişkin, sağlıklı beslenme, obezite.*

Introduction

Nutrition, one of the most basic human needs, is vital for sustaining life and health (Tüber, 2022). A healthy diet is essential for life, physical activity, growth, development, mental health, and reproductive health (Monterrosa et al., 2020). There is a link between food choices and environmental factors, including gender, age, genetics, lifestyle, and socioeconomic and cultural factors. A balanced and adequate diet helps reduce the risk of diet-related health problems and chronic diseases, while also preventing vitamin and mineral deficiencies, as well as protein and energy deficiencies (Rattan and Kaur, 2022).

To contribute to health, nutrition should be mentally satisfying and enjoyable for individuals. Individuals must make informed food choices to maintain and preserve their health. If not made consciously, excessive or inadequate nutrient intake can lead to disorders such as obesity, cancer, cardiovascular disease and diabetes (Turé et al, 2021). Obesity is an ongoing public health problem and contributes to many chronic diseases (Monterrosa et al., 2020). Calorie restriction interventions used to treat obesity have proven largely ineffective in achieving long-term, sustainable weight loss. Therefore, calorie restriction alone is not sufficient, and additional interventions are necessary (Rattan and Kaur, 2022).

A healthy lifestyle is defined as making sound decisions about one's health that allow an individual to control behaviors that may negatively impact their well-being. This is important for maintaining health (Zergani et al., 2024). Currently, the importance of mindful eating in acquiring healthy eating behaviors is increasing, and its success as an intervention in obesity treatment is being debated (O'Reilly et al., 2014). By improving their ability to recognize and cope with emotional states during eating, individuals can gain awareness of their eating and thus increase the effectiveness of weight management practices (Zergani et al., 2024).

By increasing their attention to food during eating, internalizing it, and reducing the expression of emotions and thoughts, individuals can make more beneficial choices. With these practices, mindfulness and conscious eating have become increasingly popular concepts (Dunn et al., 2018). This study aims to examine individuals' general eating behaviors by assessing adults' Mindful Eating and Healthy Eating Attitudes.

Method

The research received permission from the Istanbul Aydin University Non-Interventional Ethics Committee and the clinic where it was implemented and conducted. This research aimed to examine the general nutritional behaviors of individuals by assessing the Mindful Eating and Healthy Eating Attitudes of Adults. The study was conducted on 228 adults (118 women, 110 men) who were admitted to a private clinic in Istanbul between July 2025 and September 2025. Demographic characteristics and anthropometric measurements were collected from the participants through a face-to-face survey, and the Mindful Eating Scale and the Attitude Towards Healthy Nutrition Scale were also administered.

Data collection tools

Socio-demographic form

Socio-demographic characteristics of adults were collected, including age, gender, education level, income level, alcohol use, chronic diseases and physical activity levels. Anthropometric measurements involved body mass index, height, waist/hip circumference and body weight

Mindful eating scale

In 2009, Framson and colleagues first developed the Mindful Eating Scale. Köse and colleagues then developed the Turkish version of the validity and reliability scale in 2017. The adapted Turkish scale consists of 30 questions, using a five-point Likert-type scale (1: never, 2: rarely, 3: sometimes, 4: often, 5: always) and seven different subscales (eating control, awareness, disinhibition, focus, intervention, emotional eating, and eating discipline). The scale also includes 20 reverse-type items. Questions 1, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 18, 24, 25, and 27 are evaluated directly. The remaining questions are evaluated inversely. The total scale score is evaluated by averaging the scores of the subscales. The scale score also provides a total Conscious Eating score (Köse et al., 2016).

The attitude towards healthy nutrition scale

Tekkurşun Demir and Cicioğlu tested its validity and reliability in 2019. It consists of a 5-point Likert-type scale with 21 items and four factors. These factors can be categorized as Knowledge About Nutrition, Poor Nutrition, Emotional Attitude Towards Nutrition, and Healthy Nutrition. Knowledge About Nutrition factor is 90, Poor Nutrition factor is 83, Emotion Towards Nutrition factor is 84, and Healthy Nutrition factor is 75. Test-retest reliability was generally calculated as 0.81, 0.79, 0.68, and

0.80. The lowest score that can be obtained from the Attitude Towards Healthy Nutrition Scale is 21; the highest score is 105. In the Attitude Towards Healthy Nutrition Scale, 21 points are defined as having a very nether attitude towards healthy nutrition, 23-42 points as having a low attitude, 43-63 points as having a middle attitude, 64-84 points as having a high attitude and 85-110 points as having an best high attitude towards healthy nutrition (Demir and Cicioğlu, 2019).

Statistical analysis

All data obtained in the study were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 27.0. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and percentage distributions) were calculated for the individuals' demographic characteristics and the scores obtained from the scales. Skewness and kurtosis values were examined to determine whether the scales used in the study met the assumption of normal distribution. The obtained coefficients were within ± 1 , indicating a normal distribution, and parametric testing methods were used in data analysis. An independent samples t-test was used to determine differences between two groups, and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for comparisons of three or more groups. The Bonferroni post hoc test was used to determine which variables showed significant differences. In the study, Pearson Correlation Analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between eating awareness and attitude scales and their sub-dimensions regarding healthy eating, with a significance level of $p < 0.05$ (George and Mallery, 2019; Ghasemi and Zahediasl, 2012).

Reliability and validity

The Eating Awareness and Attitudes Toward Healthy Eating Scale, which has been validated and proven in the literature, was used in this study for adults. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated for the scales and subscales used in the study. According to the analysis results, Cronbach's alpha values for all scales and subscales were above 0.70, indicating adequate internal consistency and reliability of the measurement tools used. The fact that most of the values obtained in this study fell within the 0.70–0.90 range indicates that the scales provide reliable measurements.

Ethical aspects of the study

The authors obtained the necessary permissions for the scales used in the study, and ethical permission was obtained from Istanbul Aydın University to initiate the study. Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the

relevant institution, the Istanbul Aydın University Non-Interventional Ethics Committee. (Date: 09/07/2025, Decision No: 156/2025). Voluntary consent was obtained from each participant in accordance with the principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki.

Results

Demographic and BMI characteristics of the survey participants are presented in Table 1. A total of 228 individuals participated in the research, comprising 118 females and 110 males. The mean age was 33.46 ± 10.89 for females and 32.29 ± 12.31 for males. When examining the level of education, it was found that males with university degrees (46.4%) were more likely than females (36.4%). When looking at income status, it was found that males with higher incomes (52.7%) were more likely than females (45.8%). When examining alcohol use, it was found that males (13.6%) consumed alcohol regularly compared to females (2.5%). When discussing the presence of chronic diseases, the prevalence was low in both groups. Body mass index (BMI) was found to be higher for males (47.3%) than for females (27.1%).

Table 1. Demographic and BMI characteristics of the participants (n=228)

		Female (n=118)		Male (n=110)		Total (n=228)		χ^2/t	P
Sub-Categories		n	%	n	%	n	%		
Age	Ort $\pm$ SS	33.46 $\pm$ 10.89		32.29 $\pm$ 1 2.31		32.90 $\pm$ 11.59		0.759t	0.449
	Elementary education	13	11.0	8	7.3	21	9.2		
Education level	High school	18	15.3	26	23.6	44	19.3		
	Associate degree	30	25.4	11	10.0	41	18.0	11.865 χ^2	0.018*
	Undergraduate degree	43	36.4	51	46.4	94	41.2		
	Postgraduate degree	14	11.9	14	12.7	28	12.3		
Income level	Low	44	37.3	40	36.4	84	36.8		
	Medium	20	16.9	12	10.9	32	14.0	2.055 χ^2	0.358
	High	54	45.8	58	52.7	112	49.1		

Alcohol status	Yes	3	2.5	15	13.6	18	7.9	$9.674\chi^2$	0.008*
	Sometimes	76	64.4	64	58.2	140	61.4		
	No	39	33.1	31	28.2	70	30.7		
Chronic illness	Yes	27	22.9	27	24.5	54	23.7	$0.087\chi^2$	0.768
	No	91	77.1	83	75.5	174	76.3		
Body mass index	Underweight (<18.5)	6	5.1	1	0.9	7	3.1	12.505	0.006*
	Normal (18.5-24.9)	66	55.9	44	40.0	110	48.2		
	Overweight (25.0-29.9)	32	27.1	52	47.3	84	36.8		
	Obese (>30)	14	11.9	13	11.8	27	11.8		

The distribution of daily physical activity levels among participants is presented in Figure 1. In terms of daily physical activity levels, men (20%) were found to be more active than women (6.8%).

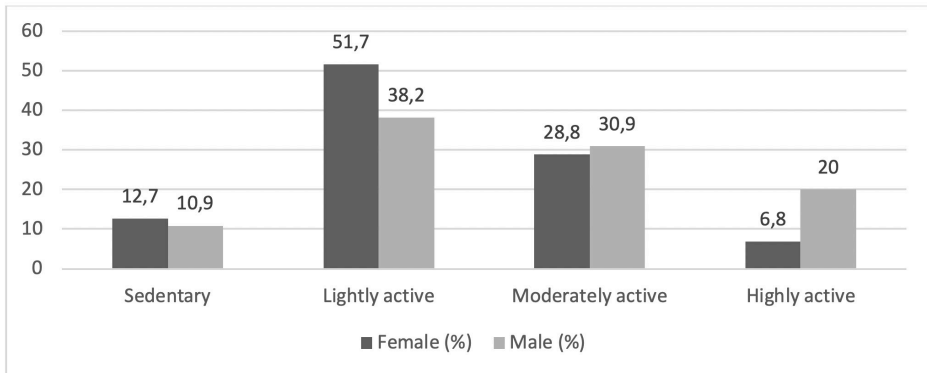


Figure 1. Distribution of physical activity levels

A comparison of participants' scores on the Mindful Eating Scale and its sub-dimensions by gender is presented in Table 2. Mindful Eating scores were found to be higher in women than in men ($p>0.05$). Men had substantially higher scores on the Emotional Eating subdimension ($p < 0.05$). Women had significantly higher scores on the Eating Control and Conscious Eating sub-dimension ($p<0.05$).

Table 2. Association of participants' scores on the mindful eating scale and its sub-dimensions by gender (n: 228)

	Female (n=118)	Male (n=110)		
	X$\pm$SS	X$\pm$SS	t	p
Mindful eating	98.67 $\pm$ 14.02	96.26 $\pm$ 13.93	1.299 _t	0.195
Impulsive eating	16.34 $\pm$ 4.27	15.57 $\pm$ 4.59	1.306 _t	0.193
Emotional eating	16.85 $\pm$ 5.30	18.56 $\pm$ 5.29	-2.445 _t	0.015*
Eating control	14.11 $\pm$ 3.50	11.86 $\pm$ 3.41	4.904 _t	<.001***
Mindfulness	15.72 $\pm$ 2.61	15.54 $\pm$ 2.03	0.591 _t	0.555
Eating discipline	12.02 $\pm$ 3.13	12.58 $\pm$ 3.16	-1.355 _t	0.177
Conscious nutrition	16.47 $\pm$ 2.98	15.36 $\pm$ 2.86	2.849 _t	0.005**
Interference	7.17 $\pm$ 1.94	6.78 $\pm$ 2.05	1.466 _t	0.144

A comparison of participants' scores on the Attitude Scale and its sub-dimensions towards Healthy Nutrition by gender is presented in Table 3. Attitude scores towards healthy nutrition were found to be significantly higher in women than in men ($p < 0.05$). In the Emotion Towards Nutrition and Positive Nutrition sub-dimension, men's scores were found to be substantially higher than those of women ($p < 0.05$).

Table 3. Association of participants' scores on the attitude scale and sub-dimensions towards healthy nutrition by gender (n: 228)

	Female (n=118)	Male (n=110)		
	X$\pm$SS	X$\pm$SS	t	p
Attitude towards healthy nutrition	67.43 $\pm$ 8.89	64.71 $\pm$ 9.64	2.219 _t	0.027*
Knowledge about nutrition	19.14 $\pm$ 5.25	19.04 $\pm$ 4.97	0.146 _t	0.884
Emotion towards nutrition	17.91 $\pm$ 4.79	19.77 $\pm$ 5.15	-2.834 _t	0.005**
Positive nutrition	17.31 $\pm$ 4.42	18.57 $\pm$ 4.31	-2.191 _t	0.029*
Poor nutrition	12.49 $\pm$ 4.62	11.98 $\pm$ 4.77	0.819 _t	0.414

The Relationship Between Participants' Eating Awareness, attitudes towards healthy nutrition, age, and anthropometric measurements is presented in Table 4. The sum score of Eating Awareness, as well as its sub-dimensions of Impulsive Eating, Emotional Eating, Awareness, and Interference, showed significant positive relationships with age ($p < 0.05$). A substantially negative interrelation was found between the Eating Control and Conscious Eating sub-dimensions and body weight ($p < 0.05$). A substantially negative interrelation was found among the Eating Control, Conscious Eating, and Interference sub-dimensions and height ($p < 0.05$). The total score of Attitudes Towards Healthy Nutrition showed a significant negative relationship with body weight and the waist-to-hip ratio ($p < 0.05$). The Emotion Towards Nutrition sub-dimension exhibited significant positive relationships with body weight and height ($p < 0.05$).

Table 4. Relationship between mindful eating, attitudes towards healthy nutrition, and age and anthropometric measurements (Pearson correlation analysis) (n: 228)

	Age	Body weight (kg)	Height (cm)	Body mass index (BMI)	Waist/hip ratio (WHR)
	r/p	r/p	r/p	r/p	r/p
Mindful eating	0.220 / 0.001**	-0.126 / 0.057	-0.109 / 0.102	-0.076 / 0.255	-0.062 / 0.352
Impulsive eating	0.197 / 0.003	-0.120 / 0.070	-0.089 / 0.179	-0.080 / 0.228	-0.059 / 0.378
Emotional eating	0.157 / 0.017	-0.016 / 0.814	0.118 / 0.075	-0.083 / 0.212	0.089 / 0.179
Eating control	0.086 / 0.195	-0.257 / 0.000***	-0.321 / 0.000***	-0.101 / 0.127	-0.190 / 0.004**
Mindfulness	0.192 / 0.004**	0.086 / 0.196	-0.007 / 0.912	0.104 / 0.116	0.074 / 0.268
Eating discipline	-0.031 / 0.643	0.082 / 0.216	0.134 / 0.043*	0.002 / 0.980	-0.016 / 0.814
Conscious nutrition	0.088 / 0.184	-0.183 / 0.006**	-0.211 / 0.001**	-0.079 / 0.236	-0.123 / 0.063
Interference	0.222 / 0.001	-0.068 / 0.308	-0.188 / 0.004	0.046 / 0.493	-0.076 / 0.250
Attitude towards healthy nutrition	0.116 / 0.080	-0.138 / 0.037*	-0.078 / 0.241	-0.112 / 0.091	-0.139 / 0.036*
Knowledge about nutrition	0.021 / 0.751	0.068 / 0.307	0.077 / 0.244	0.024 / 0.722	-0.073 / 0.270
Emotion towards nutrition	-0.110 / 0.096	0.201 / 0.002**	0.178 / 0.007**	0.105 / 0.113	0.097 / 0.144
Positive nutrition	0.017 / 0.803	0.095 / 0.153	0.103 / 0.120	0.044 / 0.504	0.075 / 0.258
Poor nutrition	-0.105 / 0.113	0.044 / 0.512	-0.049 / 0.460	0.094 / 0.158	0.021 / 0.754

r: Pearson correlation analysis; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Discussion

This research aimed to assess the interrelation between mindful eating and attitudes toward healthy eating in adults, while identifying the sociodemographic, anthropometric, and behavioral factors that influence these variables. Adulthood is a period during which an individual's lifestyle habits have a direct impact on health, and nutritional behaviors play a significant role in determining the risk of chronic diseases (Demirbaş et al., 2024; Trovato, 2012). Therefore, assessing mindful eating and healthy eating attitudes during this period is crucial for maintaining healthy lifestyles and protecting public health. This study found a significant difference between genders in terms of daily physical activity levels, with men being more physically active than women. Another study found no significant difference between men and women (Yaşar and Yaşar, 2025). The higher eating discipline scores of participants with higher levels of physical activity indicate that physical activity supports self-control in eating behaviors, which is consistent with the findings of Yalçın et al. (2022); the higher emotional eating scores, however, suggest that this relationship is influenced by psychosocial factors. Mindful eating scores were higher in women than in men, with women showing greater eating control and conscious eating, while men exhibited a higher tendency toward emotional eating. These findings suggest that women may regulate their eating behaviors more effectively, whereas men may be more prone to emotionally driven eating. The results are consistent with previous studies reporting higher total mindful eating scores and eating control in women, and higher emotional eating tendencies in men (Yalçın et al., 2022; Özgür et al., 2024). The total Mindful Eating score, along with the Impulsive Eating, Emotional Eating, Mindful Eating, and Interference subscales, showed significant positive correlations with age. This result suggests that individuals' awareness of their eating behaviors increases with age. One study found a low-level negative correlation between the Mindful Eating Scale and age (Sayın et al., 2019). A substantially negative correlation was found among the Eating Control and Conscious Eating subscales and body weight. This suggests that increased conscious eating behaviors are associated with decreased body weight. One study found significant negative correlations between total eating awareness scores, disinhibition, eating control, conscious eating, and body weight (Karaca and Rakıcıoğlu, 2024). Another study observed that Mindful eating scores increased as body weight decreased (Chung et al., 2016). This suggests that individuals with high body weight may struggle to manage their diet and

eat consciously. In this case, mindful eating practices aimed at promoting weight management may be effective in achieving and maintaining weight loss. The fact that women's attitude scores toward healthy eating are higher than those of men suggests that women have more positive attitudes toward healthy eating. Some studies have shown that the total attitude score toward healthy eating is higher and insignificant in men (Demirbaş et al., 2024; Özenoğlu et al., 2021). Another study, however, reveals a higher and more significant total attitude score toward healthy eating in women, suggesting similar results to those of the present study (Çelik and Duran, 2022). The higher mean scores for men on the Emotion Toward Nutrition and Positive Nutrition subscales compared to women suggest that men may have more positive attitudes toward nutrition. A study conducted on teachers showed similar results to this study (Sargın and Güleşce, 2022). In another study, the emotion toward nutrition subscale was found to be significantly higher in women, while the positive nutrition subscale was not significantly higher (Çelik and Duran, 2022). A significant negative correlation was found between the total Attitudes Toward Healthy Eating score and body weight. Similarly, Demirbaş et al. (2024) reported non-significant negative associations between healthy eating attitudes, emotions toward nutrition, and body weight. In addition, eating control was negatively correlated with the waist/hip ratio, suggesting that more positive healthy eating attitudes are associated with a more favorable body composition.

Conclusion

An assessment of mindful eating and attitudes toward healthy eating in adults has highlighted the importance of mindfulness-based eating behaviors for public health. This study shows that the relationship between physical activity level and eating behaviors varies according to sub-dimensions; it exhibits a more pronounced relationship with eating discipline, while the relationship with emotional eating needs to be considered within the context of psychosocial factors. It has been shown that women have higher mindful eating and more positive eating attitudes than men, while emotional eating is more prevalent in men. The increasing prevalence of mindful eating with age, along with the negative correlation between mindful eating behaviors and body weight, suggests that mindfulness-based approaches may be effective in weight management and the prevention of chronic diseases. Consequently, the development of community-based education programs to increase mindful eating, reduce emotional eating behaviors, and strengthen healthy eating attitudes in

adults is recommended. Furthermore, further research conducted across different age groups and anthropometric levels will contribute to a more comprehensive assessment of this relationship.

Conflict of interest statement

There is no conflict of interest between the authors.

Ethics committee statement

This study was approved by the Non-Interventional Clinical Research Ethics Committee of Istanbul Aydın University (Date: July 9, 2025; Decision No: 156/2025). The research was conducted in accordance with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki, and informed voluntary consent was obtained from all participants.

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