Personality Types and Self-Reported Eating Habits

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Personality Types and Self-Reported Eating Habits

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Background

- An unhealthy diet has become common in the United States
- Many individuals consume too much sugar, sodium, and saturated fat
- Repeated unhealthy eating behaviors can lead to chronic health problems such as diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease
- This project sought to uncover what makes an individual more susceptible to unhealthy eating habits by examining personality types.

Methods & Results

- Participants were recruited using Amazon’s Mechanical Turk service
  - 287 total responses were recorded
- A questionnaire was created online using Survey Monkey
- Questionnaire was constructed of four separate sections:
  - Demographic survey
  - IPIP-NEO (Personality Item Pool Test)
  - Self-Reported Habit Index Survey (SRHI)
  - Perceived Eating Habits Survey (PEH)
- Results demonstrated strong correlations amongst several of the variables:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Self-Reported Habit Index</th>
<th>Perceived Eating Habits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BMI</td>
<td>0.166 correlation 0.006 significance</td>
<td>No significant correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Reported Eating Habits</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.609 correlation 0.000 significance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1

Survey Design

- This survey investigated the relationships between:
  - Different personality traits:
    - Extraversion
    - Conscientiousness
    - Agreeableness
    - Emotional Stability
    - Intellect/Imagination
  - Self-reported Eating Habits
  - Perceived Eating Habits

Discussion

- Strong negative correlations between SRHI and all five personality factors
- Strong negative correlations between PEH and personality factors of conscientiousness, emotional stability, and agreeableness.
- Overall, lower scores on personality traits led to higher incidences of unhealthy eating
- Study was limited by the inability to observe and record an individual’s actual eating habits
- Further research could include a longitudinal study to re-evaluate eating habits every few months

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