

Extrovert and introvert children are not equally influenced by plate size

November 25 2013

As dish size increases, so do portion size and the amount of food actually eaten—but could personality traits play a role in how susceptible people are to this plate-size bias? New research by the Cornell Food and Brand Lab indicates that extraverted and introverted children respond differently to environmental cues, such as plate size, when it comes to portion control.

Researchers examined the breakfast behaviors of kids, ages 6 to 10, in a within-subject study. First, adults served breakfast: after being given a large bowl kids indicated how much milk and cereal they wanted for breakfast, and the adults served them accordingly. Next, on a different day, the children were in charge: they were given a large or a small bowl, but they then served themselves as much as they wanted.

To determine each child's personality type, four teachers and counselors rated each child's degree of introversion and extraversion on a scale of 1 to 9. Researchers used the average of these scores to classify each child as an introvert or an extravert. To measure the amount of food children asked for or served themselves, researchers weighed each student's serving through scales hidden in the table. The serving sizes were then compared for introverts and extraverts.

When serving themselves, extraverted kids were far more likely to be impacted by the size of the bowl; they served a heaping 33.1% more breakfast in the large bowl, compared to introverted kids who only served themselves 5.6% more when bowl size increased. This indicates

that the extraverted kids were more influenced by the external cue of bowl-size than introverted kids were. This benefit for introverted kids, however, is only present when serving themselves; when served by adults, all kids requested more cereal to fill up the the large bowl than the small bowl.

Extraverted children appear to be highly influenced by [environmental cues](#) when serving themselves, filling their big bowls to the brim when left in charge of their own portions. These extraverts may benefit from having an adult serve. Introverted kids, however, are less likely to base portions on bowl size only when serving themselves, so parents may want to allow young introverts to serve their own food to avoid dish-size bias.

Provided by Cornell Food & Brand Lab

Citation: Extrovert and introvert children are not equally influenced by plate size (2013, November 25) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-11-extrovert-introvert-children-equally-plate.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--