

Explanatory Model of Behaviors and Stress of Women Who Enter or Aspire to Enter Professional Careers in Agriculture

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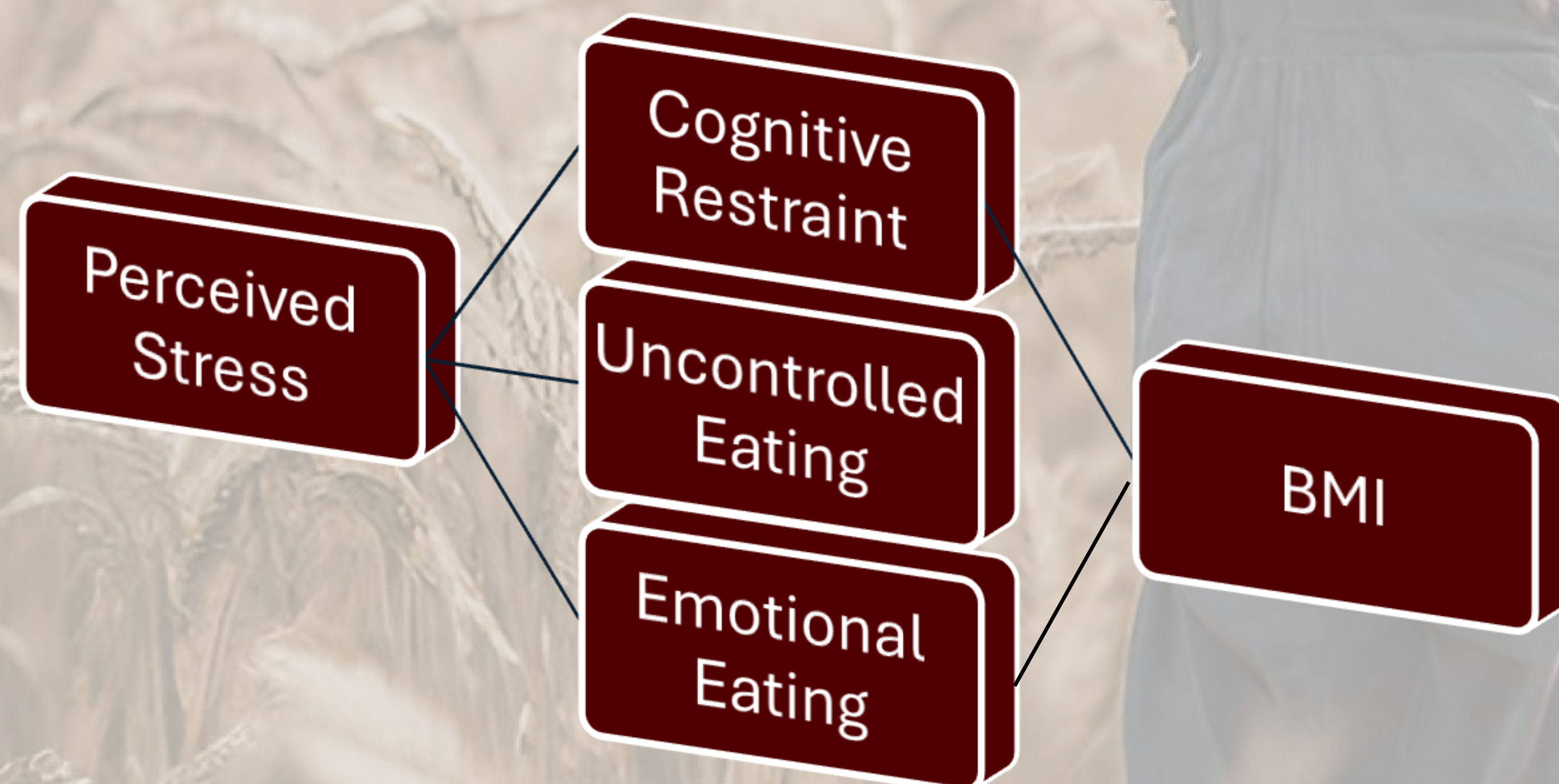


Introduction

In the U.S., health issues may stem from daily stressors, cultural barriers, and unhealthy eating habits, impacting both psychological and physical well-being. Perceived stress refers to how individuals assess their life situations as unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloading (Choenarom et al., 2005). Elevated perceived stress is linked to poorer diet quality, increased consumption of snack food, and episodes of binge eating (Richardson et al., 2015). Women with an elevated BMI might experience increased susceptibility to BMI gain when consistently exposed to work-related stress (Fujishiro et al., 2015).

Purpose: to analyze the stress of women employed in or directly associated with agriculture and the effects of stress on their eating behaviors and subsequent health outcomes.

Conceptual Framework



Methodology

A questionnaire which combined the Three Factor Eating Questionnaire (TFEQ) and the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) was administered through Qualtrics. An anonymous link was posted on women-based agricultural groups on social media platforms, including Facebook and Twitter. A structural equations model (SEM) was constructed after creating a detailed measurement model through a confirmatory factor analysis. 59% of responses were usable (n = 337).

Results



The average age of the participants was 30. (SD = 12.81)



The average self-reported body mass index was 27.14 (National average BMI 18.5-24.9).



The average self-reported level of stress was 3.32 on a 5-point scale. (SD = .358)

Relationship Between	r	Strength of Association
Stress and Emotional Eating	r = -.27	Low
Age and Stress	r = -.27	Low
Emotional Eating and BMI	r = -.26	Low
Emotional Eating and Uncontrolled Eating	r = .49	Medium
BMI and Weight	r = .94	High

Conclusion & Recommendations

This study confirmed the indirect pathway from higher levels of stress to higher BMIs through emotional eating behaviors. Manufacturers should promote the consumption of healthy foods as a means of coping with stress. Promoting the consumption of healthy foods may mitigate obesity of those who experience emotional eating behaviors to cope with stress.