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## **EMOTIONS RELATED TO THE PROCESS OF EATING BEHAVIOUR CHANGE. THE MEASUREMENT SCALE.**

### **Abstract:**

World Health Organization (2018) provides statistics showing that obesity has tripled across the world between 1975 and 2016. The global prevalence of obesity stimulates research on the causes and consequences of overweight and obesity, as well as on the determinants of effective behaviour change.

The process of behaviour change is difficult, as it requires – among others - coping with emotions accompanying the process. Many previous studies have shown that most people who try to change their eating habits fail to achieve their objective. Medical and social scientists try to understand the underlying reasons in order to optimise treatment (both time and cost efficient), both for the patient and for the health care system.

To achieve this objective a new scale to measure emotions experienced in the process of behaviour change (Scale on Emotions Related to the Behaviour Change, SEBeCh) has been developed. The psychological theory of emotions by Mehrabian and Russell (1974; Bakker et al., 2014) has been selected as the theoretical background of the scale. The new scale consisted of subscales that referred to various aspects of: 1) cooperation with a health professional (satisfaction with dietary advice, quality of the relationship and the level of freedom in making choices), and 2) diet-related emotions (attributes of a new diet, difficulty to manage the new diet, effectiveness of a new diet, attitude toward a new diet, and satisfaction with a progress and with herself/himself).

The aim of this study was to test and validate the newly developed SEBeCh scale. An online study, with 300 participants (50% women and men), who declared passing through the process of eating habits change (40% with support of a health professional) was conducted. Positive and negative emotions related to the cooperation with a health professional reflect two-factor structure (75% of explained variance), elicited in the principal component analysis. The internal consistency of the scales is very high (Cronbach alpha equals respectively 0.98 and 0.97). The scales correlate with Health Care Climate Questionnaire used for validation purposes. Also for the diet change related emotions two factors were found (67% of explained variance), Cronbach alpha for positive and negative emotions subscales equals respectively 0.94 and 0.98. The subscales correlate highly with goal directed emotions (listed by Bagozzi, et al., 1998), which confirms validity of the scales.

### **Keywords:**

emotions, health, obesity, weight

**JEL Classification:** I10, I19, C83