



Why eating popcorn in company is better than eating alone

Description

Are you tired of **eating alone**? Why not try dining with your mirror image?

Your **food will taste better**, according to a recent cognitive science study.

A team of scientists at Nagoya University's Graduate School of Information Science carried out an **eating experiment** with 32 people aged between 20 and 74.

The subjects were each asked to eat salted **popcorn** and caramel-flavoured popcorn for 90 seconds alone in small rooms.

Then they were asked to compare the taste of the popcorn when **eating with a mirror** in front of them.

Eating alone vs. eating in front of a mirror



Both test groups gave higher points to the **popcorn** they ate in front of a mirror.

The portion of the [popcorn](#) they ate was also 5 to 13% greater, regardless of flavour or age group, when in front of a mirror.

According to the team led by Nagoya University researcher Ryuzaburo Nakata and associate professor Nobuyuki Kawai, the phenomenon of performing better in company than alone is called **“social facilitation”**.

People typically **consume more when eating with someone** than when eating by themselves.

The latest study reveals that the same **social facilitation** effect can also occur with a person’s own reflection in the mirror.

Quality of life



The team plans to study whether the same effect can be achieved in **different environments** such as in hospitals.

It also plans to examine the **causal relationship** between the phenomenon and the people's everyday lives.

“More people are **eating alone**,” says Nakata.

“And, especially for **elderly people** living on their own, meals can become troublesome and they often develop malnutrition.

“I hope this **research** helps people increase their quality of life.”

The team's study was **published recently** in the science journal Physiology & Behavior and [reported](#) in Japan's daily newspaper, The Mainichi.

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