JSSH (Jurnal Sains Sosio Humaniora)
Vol. 10 (1), 2026
https://online-journal.unja.ac.id/jssh
e-ISSN: **2580-2305;** p-ISSN: **2580-1244**

Analysis of Participants' Perceptions of Intermittent Fasting in the Weight Loss Process among Individuals with Obesity

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Individuals Obesity, Intermittent Fasting, Weight Loss Process

DOI:
10.22437/jssh.v10i1.57145

Received:
April 17th, 2026

Reviewed:
May 5th, 2026

Accepted:
June 18th, 2026

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze participants' perceptions of practicing intermittent fasting (IF) as a method for weight loss among individuals with obesity. A qualitative descriptive approach was used with a purposive sampling technique involving three participants with varying experiences: a beginner (two weeks), an intermediate participant (three months), and an experienced participant (ten years). Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed thematically. The results show that beginners faced adaptation challenges such as hunger, fatigue, and mood changes, although they began to observe physical improvements. Intermediate participants experienced more stable benefits, including improved fitness, better eating control, and social support. Experienced participants perceived IF as a sustainable healthy lifestyle with positive impacts on both physical and mental health. In conclusion, IF is generally perceived positively, although the initial stage requires adaptation. It is recommended to provide guidance, maintain consistency, and integrate IF with physical activity and balanced nutrition for optimal results.

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1. Introduction

Obesity is one of the greatest public health challenges worldwide. Data from 2014 indicated that more than 1.9 billion adults were overweight, with over 600 million classified as obese. In Indonesia, approximately 13.8% of the population is overweight, while 28.7% is obese. The healthcare costs and productivity losses associated with obesity are estimated to affect the global economy by approximately USD 2 trillion annually. Obesity, defined by a Body Mass Index (BMI) of ≥ 25 kg/m^2, results from an imbalance between energy intake and energy expenditure.

Obesity not only affects physical appearance but also increases the risk of various chronic diseases, including type 2 diabetes mellitus, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and metabolic syndrome. Metabolic syndrome, which consists of a cluster of metabolic disorders such as dyslipidemia, hyperglycemia, and hypertension, has become increasingly prevalent alongside the rising incidence of obesity. This situation highlights the importance of prioritizing obesity management as part of efforts to improve public health.

One dietary approach that has gained increasing popularity in addressing obesity is intermittent fasting (IF), which involves alternating periods of eating and fasting. Previous studies have demonstrated that IF can contribute to weight loss and improvements in metabolic health. For example, Putra (2023) found that IF reduced body weight and increased high-density lipoprotein (HDL) levels among overweight individuals. Furthermore, Djunet (2024) reported that this fasting-based dietary approach not only contributed to weight reduction but also resulted in positive metabolic changes and increased muscle mass.

Despite these findings, individuals' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of this method remain underexplored, particularly among people with obesity. Saputri (2025) reported that the 5:2 intermittent fasting model influenced total cholesterol levels in overweight and obese individuals, providing further evidence of its potential contribution to improved health outcomes. Similarly, Ma'arang (2023) highlighted the effects of IF on low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol and triglyceride levels in hypertensive patients, demonstrating its potential role in managing cardiovascular disease risk factors. Many individuals who practice IF may have diverse experiences and perspectives regarding its effectiveness in achieving weight-loss goals. For instance, Muttaqina (2018) found that IF affected glutathione peroxidase levels, an important antioxidant enzyme involved in oxidative processes and overall health. In addition, Safitri (2023) reported that IF reduced fasting blood glucose levels and increased sirtuin-1 activity, which plays a significant role in metabolic regulation.

Therefore, further research is needed to gain a deeper understanding of participants' perceptions of IF and its impact on weight loss. Studies conducted by Cahyaningrum (2024) and Sapitri (2024) also demonstrated that IF may influence total cholesterol levels and body fat percentage, further emphasizing its importance as a strategy for obesity management. The findings of this study are expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of IF and assist individuals with obesity in selecting dietary approaches that best suit their needs. Research Problems, Based on the background of the study, the research questions are formulated as follows: How do participants perceive the effectiveness of intermittent fasting (IF) in the weight-loss process among individuals with obesity?, What factors influence the success of intermittent fasting in promoting weight loss among individuals with obesity?, How does intermittent fasting affect other health parameters, such as cholesterol levels, blood glucose levels, and overall metabolic health?, What challenges do participants encounter while following an intermittent fasting program?

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, focusing on the analysis of participants' subjective perceptions regarding their experiences with intermittent fasting (IF) as a strategy for weight loss related to obesity. The study aims to explore in depth the participants' views, motivations, challenges, and perceptions of the effectiveness of IF based on their direct experiences.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Intermittent Fasting (IF)

Intermittent Fasting (IF) is a dietary pattern that restricts the timing of food consumption within a day. It involves designated fasting periods during which no food is consumed. Unlike conventional diets that focus on the types of foods that may or may not be eaten, intermittent fasting primarily regulates eating schedules. This dietary approach has been shown to be effective in promoting weight loss, improving insulin sensitivity, reducing inflammation, and lowering the risk of cardiovascular disease (Harahap et al., 2023).

The term intermittent fasting refers to an eating pattern that incorporates regular periods of fasting. The duration of fasting can vary, ranging from several hours to a full 24-hour period.

The objectives of intermittent fasting are diverse, including weight reduction, metabolic improvement, and the enhancement of overall health. There are various approaches to practicing intermittent fasting. Some individuals fast for several hours each day, while others undertake a full-day fast once or twice a week. More intensive approaches involve fasting for three to four days per week. In some cases, individuals permit the consumption of protein during fasting periods while avoiding carbohydrates and still classify the practice as intermittent fasting (Yudhistira et al., 2021).

Some practitioners also allow limited consumption of carbohydrates or other nutrients during fasting periods, provided that such intake does not interfere with the process of ketosis. Nevertheless, the primary objective of intermittent fasting remains the reduction of overall caloric intake. Due to its growing popularity, many low-calorie dietary approaches are often categorized under the umbrella of intermittent fasting. To prevent dehydration during fasting periods, the consumption of calorie-free beverages, particularly water, is strongly recommended (Vasim I., 2022).

2.2 Obesity

According to the World Health Organization Talahatu and Nur (2025), obesity is defined as a condition characterized by the excessive accumulation of body fat to the extent that it negatively affects health. Dewita., dkk. (2021) describes obesity as an indicator of health risk identified through Body Mass Index (BMI) measurements. Warsid., dkk (2023) defines obesity as a metabolic disorder that results in a significant increase in body weight and contributes to the development of various diseases (Ismawati et al., 2024).

According to Faridi., et al. (2022), obesity is the accumulation of fat within adipose tissue resulting from multifactorial causes and is associated with adverse health outcomes, including an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, metabolic syndrome, and cancer. Ernawati, dkk. (2022) further explains that obesity is the result of multiple interconnected determinants that contribute to excessive body fat accumulation, including physical inactivity, unhealthy dietary patterns, sedentary lifestyles, socioeconomic status, and cultural factors (Ismawati et al., 2024).

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research method using a phenomenological approach. The purpose of this approach is to explore participants' personal experiences regarding how they perceive the effects of each type of exercise on the weight-loss process. According to Creswell (2013), phenomenological research is a form of inquiry that seeks to describe individuals' lived experiences or the phenomena they have encountered. A key characteristic of phenomenology is the description of human experiences, requiring researchers to focus on what appears and emerges from individuals' perceptions of reality.

Through the phenomenological approach, research is conducted in a natural setting, where individuals cannot be separated from their environmental context. This means that participants' experiences are not mixed with unrelated phenomena or influenced by interpretations derived from culture, beliefs, or pre-existing scientific theories held by the researcher. This principle is consistent with the fundamental aim of phenomenology, namely to "return to the things themselves" (Creswell, 2013). Such an approach enables researchers to understand participants' perceptions without being influenced by prior assumptions or opinions, thereby ensuring that the study remains focused on the participants' subjective experiences and perspectives.

3.2 Participants

Participants in this study were selected using a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is employed when the target participants possess specific characteristics that are relevant to the research objectives, making it inappropriate to select individuals who do not meet the predetermined criteria. These characteristics are not common to the general population; therefore, the participants selected for the study are individuals who specifically possess the attributes required to address the research objectives (Mulyatiningsih, 2017, p. 10).

The total population consisted of 15 individuals. However, only three individuals practiced Intermittent Fasting (IF) and met the inclusion criteria established for this study. Therefore, the sample comprised these three participants, who were selected purposively based on their direct experience with intermittent fasting.

3.3 Instruments

These methods will help answer the key research questions by providing in-depth and comprehensive data regarding how each type of exercise contributes to the weight-loss process. Each instrument will be strategically employed to collect data from various perspectives, thereby offering a holistic understanding of the primary focus of this study. Therefore, this research is expected to make a significant contribution to understanding the effectiveness of exercise programs in supporting weight loss and improving the quality of fitness programs at fitness centers in Jambi City.

3.3.1 Interview

The interview technique is a method of data collection conducted by interviewing individuals who are considered knowledgeable about the research topic, including their attitudes, opinions, and experiences, in order to obtain accurate and reliable data directly from the source. Interviews are defined as a process of obtaining information through face-to-face question-and-answer interactions between an interviewer and a respondent, using an interview guide or structured interview protocol. An interview is essentially a conversation with a specific purpose. It involves two parties: the interviewer, who asks questions, and the interviewee, who provides responses to those questions (Sarvitri et al., 2020).

The success of an interview depends on several factors, including the informant, the research topic, the interview setting, the interviewer's ability to apply appropriate interviewing techniques, and socio-cultural factors that may influence interactions between the interviewer and the respondent. Several elements can affect the flow of information during an interview, including the interviewer, the respondent, the interview guide, and the interview situation. These factors may influence both the interview process and its outcomes, thereby affecting the achievement of the research objectives. It has been argued that there is no single criterion that definitively determines whether an interview is successful or can be classified as a "good interview".

The interview process was conducted face-to-face to maximize the quality of data collection and minimize the possibility of miscommunication. The process began with careful planning, including determining the time and location of interviews based on each respondent's availability. The researcher recognized that each respondent had different commitments and responsibilities; therefore, flexibility in scheduling was essential. Efforts were made to adjust interview schedules according to the respondents' activities and availability to ensure that the data collection process proceeded smoothly and effectively.

Through this approach, the data obtained were expected to accurately represent participants' involvement and perspectives in accordance with the objectives of the study.

3.3.2 Documents

According to Sugiyono (2013, p. 240), documents are records of past events that may take the form of written materials, images, or other works. In this study, the documentation method was used to collect research-related data and to serve as evidence supporting the research process.

3.3.3 Observation

Maolani Rukaesih A. (2015, p. 148) explains that observation is a data collection technique conducted through direct observation and systematic recording of the phenomena being investigated. These phenomena are not limited to human behavior but may also include objects and other observable conditions. Observation is a data collection technique carried out through direct observation and recording of social phenomena in the field or at the research site.

Observation techniques are used to gather data from sources such as events, locations, objects, and visual records. The observation method enables researchers to obtain information through direct examination of the conditions of the research object. This technique is characterized by direct social interaction between the researcher and the participants or subjects being studied. During the observation process, efforts are made to record and document all relevant data required for the research.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis can be defined as a process of systematically searching, organizing, and classifying data obtained through in-depth interviews, field notes, observational findings, documentation, and other supporting records. Through data analysis, the collected information becomes easier to understand, and the findings can be communicated more effectively to a wider audience. According to Miles and Huberman (cited in Iskandar, 2008, pp. 222–224), the data analysis process consists of the following stages:

1. Data Reduction

At the data reduction stage, the researcher collects as much relevant information as possible through observation, in-depth interviews, and various documents related to the research subject. During this process, the researcher archives or records the collected data in the form of field notes and other important records that may initially lack clear descriptions. These records are then interpreted, separated, and classified according to their relevance to the focus of the research problem.

Data that are considered invalid or unrelated to the research topic should be separated and stored in a different file to avoid confusion during the analysis process. Data reduction is an essential stage because it facilitates the subsequent analysis of the collected information and helps researchers explain the findings more effectively. The process of data reduction involves summarizing information, coding data, identifying research themes, and focusing on relevant aspects of the study. This process continues throughout the research period, beginning with fieldwork and continuing until the completion of the final research report. Data reduction is an integral part of data analysis aimed at separating relevant information from unnecessary data, thereby enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. It is a process of sharpening, organizing, and simplifying data by eliminating irrelevant information, making it easier to draw and verify conclusions related to the research problem.

2. Data Display

Data obtained through observations and field investigations can be organized into matrices or tables containing classifications of the collected information. Data may also be presented in the form of charts, diagrams, or narrative descriptions that explain the findings in detail. In qualitative research, data are generally presented in narrative form and often consist of large amounts of information. To facilitate understanding and interpretation, the data must be displayed effectively and systematically. Since qualitative data are often extensive and complex, it is not always possible to present them comprehensively. Therefore, data display is necessary to organize and present the information in a structured and coherent manner. The researcher should describe and explain the data systematically so that the information follows a logical sequence and provides clear answers to the research questions.

3. Drawing Conclusions

Following data display, the next step is drawing conclusions from the analyzed research data. Conclusion drawing represents an advanced stage of analysis and is closely related to data reduction and data display. At this stage, the researcher formulates conclusions based on the data and facts obtained during the research process. The conclusions serve as evidence that the analysis has been verified and that meaningful findings have been generated. However, conclusions should not be drawn hastily, as doing so may reduce their accuracy. Instead, the validity of the analyzed data must be re-examined through reflection, discussion with other researchers or experts, and the application of triangulation techniques. These procedures help ensure scientific validity and credibility. After completing these verification processes, the researcher can formulate conclusions based on the results of the analysis. The conclusions are then presented in the form of descriptive narratives, serving as both a summary of the findings and a component of the final research report.

4. Findings

4.1 Sub Findings

This study aimed to analyze participants' perceptions of practicing intermittent fasting (IF) as a weight-loss method for individuals with obesity. Three participants with different durations of IF practice were selected as research informants: Participant 1 (approximately 2 weeks of practice), Participant 2 (approximately 3 months of practice), and Participant 3 (approximately 10 years of consistent practice). The differences in duration of practice revealed variations in perceptions, experiences, and the physical and psychological impacts perceived by each participant.

1. Participant 1 (Approximately 2 Weeks of Practice)

At the initial stage, Participant 1 described intermittent fasting as a challenging experience. The participant reported experiencing physical symptoms such as fatigue, weakness, and mood fluctuations.

> *"At the beginning, I felt lazy all the time, became easily irritated, and often felt angry. But people said that once I get used to it, it will become easier."*

Despite these difficulties, Participant 1 remained committed to practicing IF because it was perceived as a simpler and more affordable approach compared to other weight-loss methods that often require expensive programs or medication. The participant was also encouraged by friends from an aerobics community who had previously adopted IF.

Although no significant weight loss had yet been observed, the participant reported changes in eating behavior and food awareness.

> *"Whenever I want to eat unhealthy food, I think twice. For example, when I want to buy cake or snacks, I immediately worry about gaining more weight."*

These findings are consistent with the study by Patterson and Sears (2017), which reported that the initial phase of IF is often accompanied by physical discomfort as the body adapts to metabolic changes. Similarly, Hatori et al. (2012) explained that the transition toward using fat as the primary energy source requires time, making symptoms such as excessive hunger and mood changes relatively common. In conclusion, Participant 1 perceived IF as a major challenge requiring a high level of self-discipline. Although significant positive outcomes had not yet been observed, the participant had begun developing greater awareness and control over food intake.

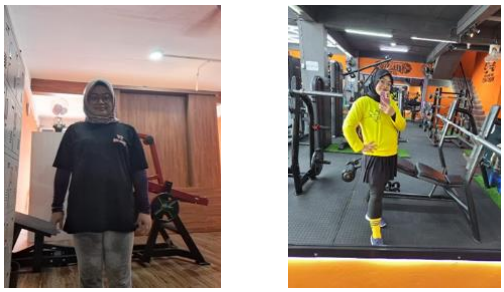

Figure 1. Before and After Practicing Intermittent Fasting (IF)

2. Participant 2 (Approximately 3 Months of Practice)

Participant 2 described a more stable experience compared to Participant 1. After completing an adaptation period of approximately three weeks, the participant began experiencing several positive effects, including increased energy levels, improved stamina, a more stable mood, and a reduction in waist circumference.

> *"I used to get tired easily, but now I feel much lighter. I also sleep better."*

From a psychological perspective, the participant reported increased self-confidence. Visible physical improvements attracted positive comments from others, which further enhanced motivation.

> *"People say that my body looks more proportionate—not too thin and not too heavy. That makes me feel more confident."*

However, the participant emphasized that maintaining consistency in social settings remained a significant challenge. Family gatherings and social events often made it difficult to adhere to fasting schedules. To overcome this obstacle, the participant usually chose healthier options such as fruits and water. Participant 2 also associated IF with regular physical activity, including aerobics, weight training, and trampoline exercises. According to the participant, exercise contributed to muscle development, while IF was particularly effective in reducing abdominal fat.

> *"Exercise alone cannot reduce belly fat effectively; fasting is what really helps."*

These findings support the research of Tinsley and La Bounty (2015), who found that IF practiced for 8–12 weeks effectively reduced body fat and improved physical fitness. Likewise, Gabel et al. (2018) reported that a 12-week IF intervention resulted in weight loss and improved psychological well-being. In conclusion, Participant 2 perceived IF as an effective and health-promoting method. The primary challenges shifted from physical adaptation to social pressures and maintaining consistency. Nevertheless, the benefits experienced served as a strong source of motivation.

Figure 2. Before and After Practicing Intermittent Fasting (IF)

3. Participant 3 (Approximately 10 Years of Practice)

Participant 3 provided the most comprehensive perspective on intermittent fasting. After approximately ten years of practice, IF was no longer perceived merely as a dieting strategy but rather as a healthy lifestyle integrated into daily life. Physically, the participant reported maintaining a stable body weight, high stamina, and reduced health complaints.

> *"I am already 46 years old, but I can still participate in 5-kilometer runs, morning aerobics, weight training during the day, and trampoline exercises in the evening. Without intermittent fasting, I would not have the energy to do all of that."*

The participant also emphasized the importance of consuming adequate protein and natural sugars from fruits or honey while avoiding processed sugars. Psychologically, the participant reported increased self-discipline, emotional stability, and self-confidence.

> *"My mood has become much more stable. I used to get stressed easily, but now I feel more relaxed. Once you pass the first 21 days, your body starts to feel comfortable."*

The participant further explained that successfully overcoming the adaptation phase strengthened resistance to food temptations. In addition, Participant 3 believed that IF contributed to maintaining a youthful appearance and overall well-being.

> *"People often say that my body looks ideal—not overweight and not underweight. That makes me more confident. Whenever I eat carelessly, I can immediately feel the negative effects on my body."*

These findings are supported by Longo and Mattson (2014), who argued that long-term intermittent fasting improves metabolic function, increases resistance to chronic diseases, and contributes to longevity. Similarly, Wilhelmi de Toledo et al. (2019) suggested that long-term IF can serve as a sustainable healthy lifestyle rather than merely a temporary dieting strategy.

In conclusion, Participant 3 perceived IF as a comprehensive healthy lifestyle. The positive effects extended beyond weight management to include enhanced stamina, improved mental health, greater self-discipline, and a higher overall quality of life.

Figure 3. Before and After Practicing Intermittent Fasting (IF)

4.2 Comparison Among Participants

The findings revealed notable differences in perceptions based on the duration of intermittent fasting practice:

Participant 1 (2 weeks): Perceptions were dominated by physiological challenges, with no significant results observed yet. Self-discipline was perceived as the key factor for success.

Participant 2 (3 months): Positive physical and psychological effects had begun to emerge. However, maintaining consistency in social situations remained the primary challenge.

Participant 3 (10 years): Intermittent fasting had evolved into a sustainable healthy lifestyle, providing comprehensive benefits for physical health, mental well-being, self-discipline, and overall quality of life.

Table 1. Comparison of Participants' Perceptions and Experiences of Intermittent Fasting (IF)

Aspect	**Participant 1 (2 Weeks)**	**Participant 2 (3 Months)**	**Participant 3 (10 Years)**
Duration of Practice	Recently started the adaptation phase (approximately 2 weeks)	Has consistently practiced IF for approximately 3 months	Has consistently practiced IF for approximately 10 years
General Perception	Perceives IF as difficult and highly challenging; experiences fatigue and emotional instability, but has begun developing awareness of food intake control	Experiences greater stability; feels physically lighter, has a better mood, and increased self-confidence; social consistency remains the main challenge	Considers IF a healthy lifestyle that requires discipline and provides comprehensive benefits in physical, mental, and social aspects
Physical Impact	Experiences fatigue and low energy; no significant physical changes observed yet	Weight loss has begun to occur; waist circumference has decreased and stamina has improved	High stamina, rarely becomes ill, maintains physical fitness despite being 46 years old, and appears more youthful
Psychological Impact	Easily irritated, experiences mood	Increased self-confidence, more stable	High level of self-discipline, greater self-

	swings, and has relatively fragile motivation	mood, and improved self-discipline	confidence, positive mood, and feels more relaxed when facing food temptations
Social Impact	Requires community support to maintain motivation and avoid giving up	Faces challenges during family gatherings and social events where it is difficult to refuse food outside the IF schedule	Serves as a role model for others and is able to motivate fellow participants
Coping Strategies	Relies on motivation and encouragement from the community	Combines IF with regular exercise, including aerobics, weight training, and trampoline workouts	Maintains a healthy eating pattern, drinks approximately 6 liters of water daily, and consumes protein along with natural sugars from fruits, honey, and sugarcane
Individual Conclusion	The initial stage is difficult and results are not yet visible; however, awareness of self-control and healthy eating habits has begun to develop	IF is perceived as effective for weight loss and improving stamina, although discipline is required in social environments	IF has become a long-term healthy lifestyle that supports physical health, mental well-being, and overall quality of life

5. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that participants' perceptions of intermittent fasting (IF) are strongly influenced by the length of time they have practiced it. Participant 1, who had practiced IF for approximately one week, tended to experience physiological complaints such as fatigue, excessive hunger, and mood fluctuations and was still in the adaptation phase. Participant 2, who had practiced IF for three months, began to experience positive physical effects, including weight reduction, increased stamina, and a smaller waist circumference, as well as psychological benefits such as improved self-confidence and emotional stability. Meanwhile, Participant 3, who had consistently practiced IF for ten years, no longer perceived IF as a temporary dieting method but rather as a comprehensive healthy lifestyle.

1. Initial Perception: Physiological Adaptation Challenges

The findings from Participant 1 revealed that the early stage of IF was characterized by physical complaints, including fatigue, low energy, and unstable moods. This finding is consistent with the theory of bodily homeostasis, which suggests that the metabolic system requires time to shift from using glucose as its primary energy source to utilizing stored fat (Patterson & Sears, 2017). This phenomenon is also consistent with the findings of Hatori et al. (2012), who reported that the adaptation period for IF generally lasts between two and three weeks and is commonly accompanied by symptoms such as excessive hunger, dizziness, and mood disturbances. During this stage, motivation and social support play crucial roles in maintaining adherence to the fasting regimen. Interpretation: The challenges experienced during the initial phase demonstrate that participants' perceptions of IF are strongly influenced by short-term physical experiences. Nevertheless, the motivation to achieve weight loss and support from the exercise community encouraged participants to persist despite the difficulties.

2. Intermediate Perception: Physical Benefits and Social Barriers

Participant 2, who had practiced IF for approximately three months, reported significant improvements, including increased stamina, better sleep quality, and reduced waist circumference. The participant also experienced enhanced self-confidence due to visible physical changes. These findings are consistent with the study conducted by Gabel et al. (2018), which demonstrated that a 12-week IF intervention could lead to weight loss, improved metabolic health, and greater psychological satisfaction. However, the primary challenge encountered during this stage was social pressure, particularly when attending family gatherings or being in environments that were not supportive of fasting practices. This finding aligns with the Health Belief Model (HBM), which emphasizes that health-related behaviors are influenced not only by perceived benefits but also by external barriers (Glanz et al., 2015).Interpretation: At the intermediate stage, positive perceptions become stronger as physical improvements become more noticeable. However, consistency in practicing IF continues to be challenged by social environments and cultural eating habits.

3. Advanced Perception: Intermittent Fasting as a Healthy Lifestyle

Participant 3, who had practiced IF consistently for ten years, demonstrated the most substantial and comprehensive benefits. The participant reported stable body weight, high stamina, improved health status, and an enhanced quality of life. More importantly, IF was perceived as a form of self-discipline that positively influenced physical, psychological, and even spiritual well-being. This perspective is supported by the research of Longo and Mattson (2014), who found that long-term IF can improve metabolic function, enhance resistance to chronic diseases, and contribute to longevity. Similarly, Wilhelmi de Toledo et al. (2019) emphasized that periodic fasting practices such as IF can evolve into sustainable healthy lifestyle patterns. From a psychological perspective, Participant 3 reported increased self-confidence, greater emotional stability, and a more positive mindset. These findings are consistent with Self-Regulation Theory, which suggests that consistent self-control practices contribute to emotional balance and improvements in overall quality of life (Baumeister et al., 2007). Interpretation: At the advanced stage, participants' perceptions of IF undergo a transformation from viewing it as merely a "weight-loss diet" to recognizing it as a "healthy lifestyle." The benefits extend beyond physical outcomes and encompass mental well-being, self-discipline, and spiritual growth.

4. Theoretical and Practical Implications

From a theoretical perspective, the findings of this study reinforce the view that perceptions of dietary interventions are dynamic and evolve over time as individuals gain experience with the practice. The longer the duration of IF practice, the more positive the perceptions tend to become, supporting theories of health behavior adaptation. From a practical perspective, these findings highlight the importance of support systems, such as exercise communities and dietary support groups, particularly for individuals in the early stages of IF practice. Furthermore, education regarding healthy eating patterns and strategies for managing social environments is essential for promoting long-term adherence and success in intermittent fasting programs.

6. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the practice of intermittent fasting (IF) provides different experiences for each participant depending on the duration of implementation. However, all participants demonstrated generally positive perceptions

regarding the benefits they experienced. Participant 1, who had practiced IF for only one week, was still in the adaptation phase and experienced initial symptoms such as fatigue, low energy, and mood fluctuations. Nevertheless, the participant began to notice improvements in stamina and developed motivation to continue the practice after recognizing its potential long-term benefits. This finding is consistent with previous studies suggesting that the initial stage of intermittent fasting is often characterized by physiological and psychological challenges. However, once the adaptation period is successfully overcome, individuals generally experience greater physical comfort and well-being.

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