

STUDY REGARDING THE INFLUENCE OF EATING HABITS IN CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOR

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Abstract. Improving food processing and the continuous expansion of the product range are factors that draw attention to the link that is established between the food consumed and the health of the body. At the same time, there are several factors that influence the formation and / or change of consumers' eating habits. This paper carry out a survey on how eating habits can change consumer behavior.

Key words: food, nutrition, eating habits, survey, consumption behavior

INTRODUCTION

The culture of health is inconceivable without nutrition, this having a special importance in maintaining the state of health, in the harmonious development of the human organism, in the prevention of some diseases. [1,15]

Food provides the energy and basic substances for the development of all metabolic processes, growth and development, representing the regulator of exchange processes between the human body and the environment. The lack of a balance between food intake and nutritional needs can lead to multiple changes, especially since the human body is in high required and exposed to some stress factors. In this sense, the insufficiency of basic nutrients in the diet exerts negative influences on human health and activity by reducing work capacity and disease resistance, amplifying some metabolic disorders. [1,3,12,14]

Food must meet the nutritional needs, but people often make food choices that are not necessarily related to nutrition. Young people, in general, are strongly influenced by the consumption of foods poor in nutrients. Many of them consume foods high in calories, but with a low nutritional value, often eating outside of lunch, which, together with a sedentary lifestyle, increase the risk of health problems. [2,9,13]

Various studies have investigated the consumption patterns of young adults highlighting the links between socio-economic status and eating habits, and other studies have been based on an analytical approach based on defining eating styles, thus trying to establish useful policies to promote public health. [6,10,11]

Regarding the choosing of food, there are a number of factors that influence this selection process: the aesthetic quality of the food, the price, the nutritional aspects, the food advertising and the portrayal of the food in the media, etc. Aesthetic quality is an attribute of food that includes properties (appearance, taste, smell, color, etc.) that can influence the purchase decision to a large extent as well as the price of food. [4,5,8]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present scientific paper conducts a study on how the principles of a healthy diet are taken into account in the formation of eating habits and implicitly of consumption behavior. For this purpose, a questionnaire was developed and administered as a survey tool among young consumers (students). The studied sample consisted of 250 students, of which 120 were in the first year of study and 130 in the last year of study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the 250 respondents, 148 (59.2%) are female and 102 (40.8%) male, with residence environment 160 (64%) urban and 90 (36%) rural. At the question “How important is a nutritionally balanced diet for you?”, 67% of respondents consider it very important, and 29% of average importance (figure 1).

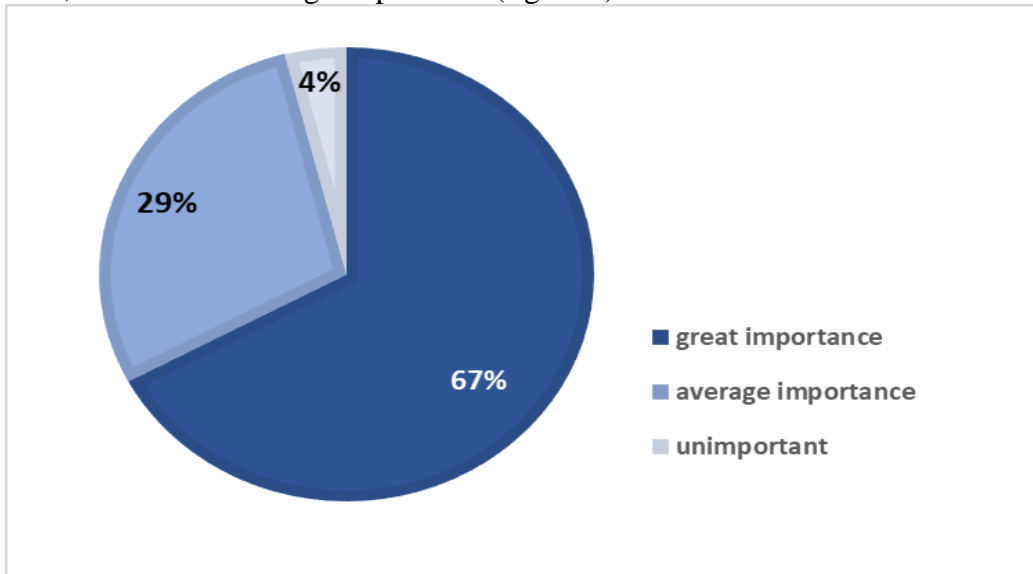
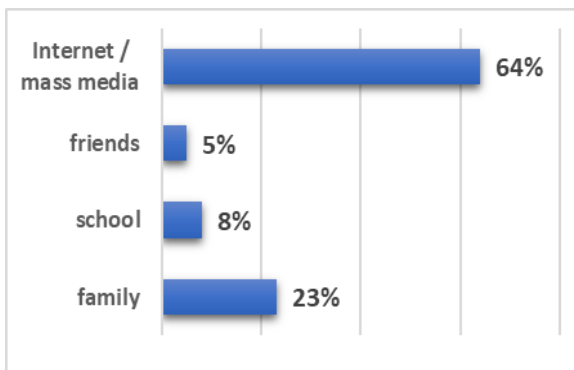
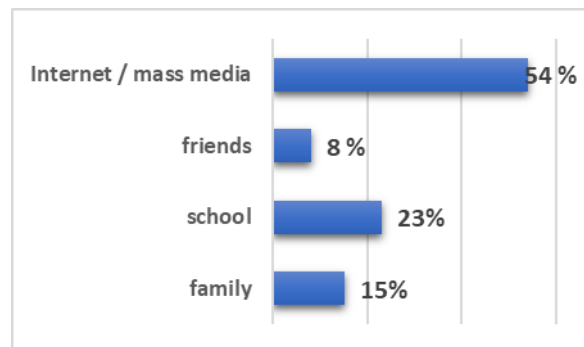


Figure 1. How important is a nutritionally balanced diet for you?

At the question “What is your source of information about healthy eating or nutrition?”, 64% of first year students, respectively 54% of final year students consider the Internet or media as the most important source of information, and school represents 8% and respectively 23%,. The lowest percentage registers the Friends version, 5%, respectively 8% (figures 2 and 3).



a). first year students



b). final year students

Figure 2. What is your source of information about healthy eating or nutrition?

Regarding the indication of preferences and frequency regarding the consumption of bread, fruits and vegetables, 47% prefer the assortment of white bread and only 23% of the respondents consume fruits and vegetables daily, and 52% weekly (figures 4 and 5).

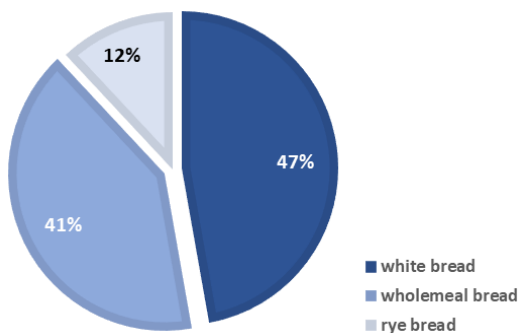


Figure 3. The indication of preferences regarding the consumption of bread

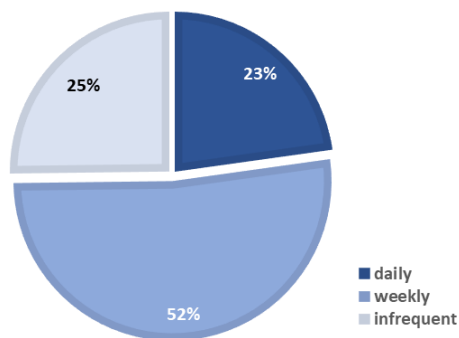
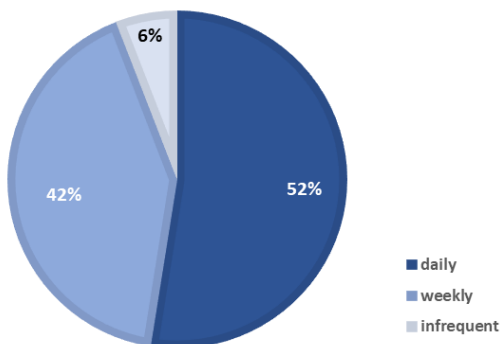


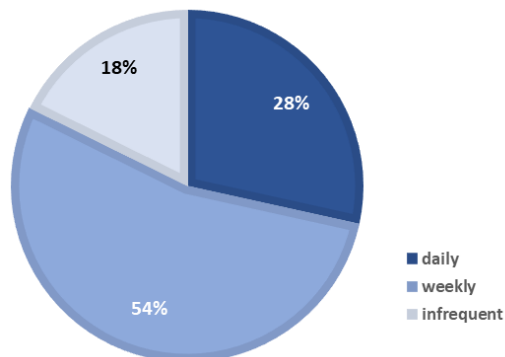
Figure 4. The indication of frequency regarding the consumption of bread

To the questions that highlight the frequency of consumption of certain product categories:

- 52% of first year students consume Fast-Food products daily, and 6% occasionally, while 28% of final year students consume Fast-Food products daily, and 18% occasionally (figure 5);
- 8% of respondents do not consume carbonated beverages, 22% and 24% occasionally and weekly, respectively, and 46% daily (figure 6).



a). first year students



b). final year students

Figure 5. The questions that highlight the frequency of consumption of certain product

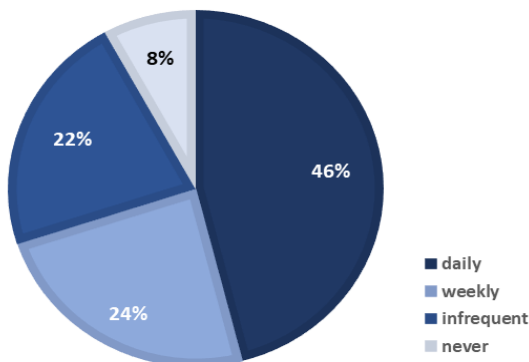


Figure 6. The questions that highlight the frequency of consumption of certain product

At the question “How often do you order food?”, 26% of respondents order daily, 70% weekly and only 4% occasionally (Figure 8). Among the dishes ordered, over 60% represent Fast-Food and pizza products, and the rest cooked dishes (figure 7).

Regarding the indication of the amount of water consumed daily, most subjects, 54%, consume 1-2 liters of water, 31% over 2 liters and 15% less than 1 liter (Figure 8).

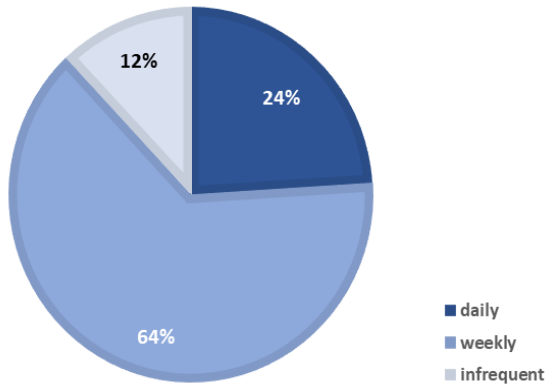


Figure 7. How often do you order food?

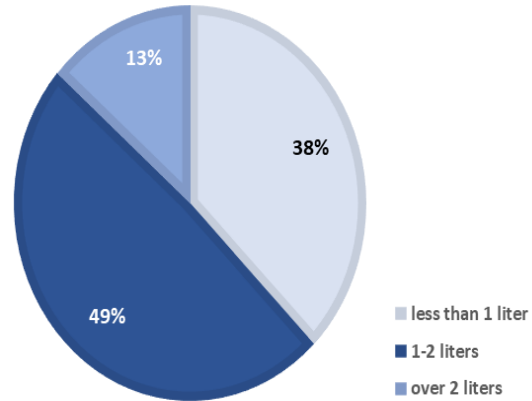


Figure 8. The indication of the amount of water consumed daily

Preferences for the main meals of the day indicate that 20% of respondents prefer the three main meals a day, 36% prefer only lunch and dinner, and 13% prefer breakfast and dinner (Figure 9).

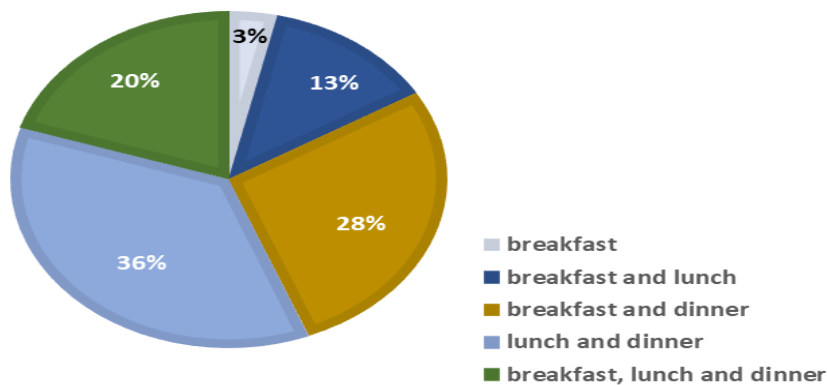


Figure 9. Preferences for the main meals of the day

At the question "Has the current pandemic affected your eating habits?" 170 (68%) of the subjects answered in the affirmative (figure 10), and of these 35% and 53% to a very large and large extent, respectively. Ask themselves to what extent and by what aspect it influenced, 60 (24%) of the respondents specified the frequency of food consumption, and the rest their quantity and quality (figures 11 and 12).

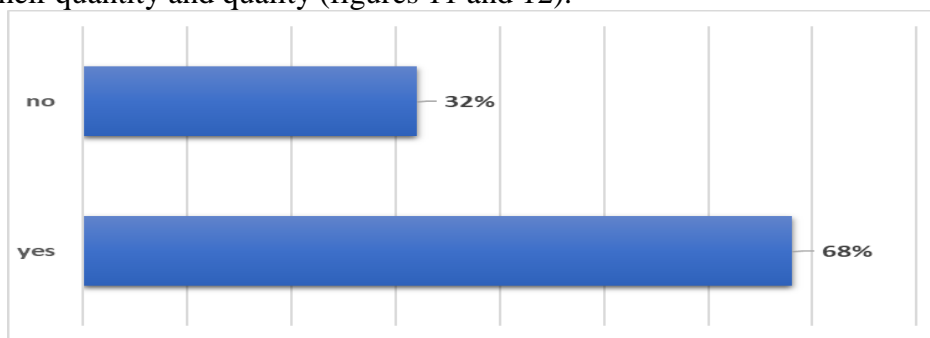


Figure 10. Has the current pandemic affected eating habits

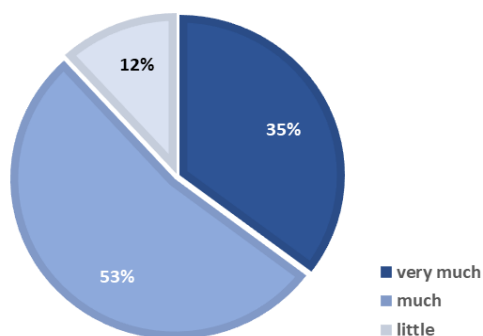


Figure 11. The frequency of food consumption

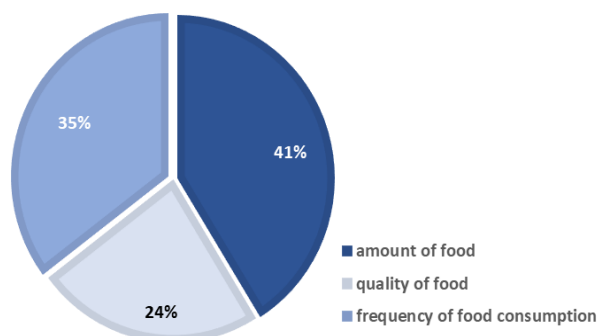


Figure 12. The rest their quantity and quality

CONCLUSIONS

Following the study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- A healthy and balanced diet is important for the respondents, over 50% of them declaring themselves very interested, and the most important source of information on this aspect is the internet/media. To a lesser extent, the school is considered a source of information on healthy eating, which raises an issue of communication and counseling in this context. Greater importance must be given to educating young people to form eating habits that can influence an individual's health throughout life. However, the fact that there is a difference between the percentage of young people who consider school a good source of information (8% first year students and 23% final year students) emphasizes the importance of their continuing education in this context.

- Eating habits that are not in a very high concordance with a healthy diet of the respondents also result from the relatively high consumption of white bread (47%) compared to other varieties. We can also say that the frequency of consumption of fast food products and carbonated drinks is too high among young people. The difference between the preferences of first year students and those in the final year indicates once again the role of education in forming good eating habits for young people.

- A good result comes from the fact that many respondents consume fruits and vegetables daily (23%) and weekly (52%). At the same time, over 50% consume between 1-2 liters of water and 54% of them are accustomed to respecting all three daily meals.

- Behavior in consumption is greatly influenced by the eating habits of young people who prefer to order food quite often (over 70%).

- The pandemic period, that we are going through, has left a serious mark on eating habits with an influence on consumption behavior, over 60% of respondents considering to a relatively large extent its influence in terms of frequency of consumption, quantity and quality of food.

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