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STUDENTS' HABITS IN FAST FOOD RESTAURANTS

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Abstract: Nowadays the traditional food is not trendy for young people. They have not enough time, easy way to eat something in a fast food restaurant. Do they know what they eat? What kind of ingredients are on these fast meals? Why do teenagers like fast food restaurants? In our work we present the survey of Leonardo Partnership, (Culture and Health Knowledge Integration into the Vocational Education of Food and Beverage /EN-2012-Leo-PA-6127/ Leonardo da Vinci Program Partnership Project). We would like to know the attitudes and motivation of young, and recommend them a new option – tasty, traditional, but modern meals.

Keywords: fast food, slow food movement healthy food, students' habit

1. INTRODUCTION

The fast food history has begun in California, about in 1940's years. Carl N. Karcher offered hot dog or chilli dog for 10 cents, and sold non-alcoholic beverages for 5 cents. In 1944 he had 4 hot-dog cars. The next step was an opening of a new restaurant, the Carl Drive-In Barbecue. Because of the more and more cars, people has changed their habits, they has become convenient. In 1948 the McDonald brothers started a new style in their restaurant. They used paper plates and sacs and offered only hamburgers and cheeseburgers. They bought some special equipment, for example very large grill dressing station fryer where one person made french fries , a soda fountain and milkshake machine, a counter where customers placed and received their orders. Their workers had to do only one action from the whole workflow. The costumers had got their meal during about 1-2 minutes. The most important fast food restaurant-chains are: Taco Bell, Burger King – was opened in 1950, Wendy's - in 1969. The KFC, the Carl's Jr and the Jack in the Box existed before the McDonald's, but they did not was so successfully and popular than the McDonald's (Schlosser, 2003, Wilson, 2011).

Nowadays in the USA 14146 McDonald's restaurant - it means about 40 eating places for 100.000 habitants. In the 2nd place is Japan (3096 restaurants) – I think it is surprising, in general they are eat healthy food. Hungary on the 28th place – with 100 McDonald's restaurant (en.wikipedia.org (a)). I have to mention, that the dates are from different years, so they are change, but the tendency is standard.

The favourite consumers of the fast food restaurants are the young people. Schlosser and Wilson (2006) share with children and teenagers the fascinating and sometimes frightening truth about what lurks behind those sesame seed buns. Some examples:

- ✓ A single hamburger may contain meat from hundreds, even thousands, of different cattle.
- ✓ Each can of beverage contain more than ten teaspoons of sugar.
- ✓ Chickens in slaughterhouses are sometimes killed by being thrown against a wall or stomped on.
- ✓ Leftover waste from cattle slaughterhouses is sometimes added to chicken feed.
- ✓ Leftover waste from chicken slaughterhouses is sometimes added to chicken feed, turning the doomed birds into cannibals.

They tried to convince the youth eat more healthy food.

Not only those two award winning journalists fought against the fast food meats. A hundreds of people has confronted with this style. The slow food movement was started in 1986, when in Rome had opened a new McDonald's restaurant. More than 5000 people protested against this occasion, in their opinion there is no place for fast food restaurant - near the famous historical Spanish Steps, in the Piazza di Spagna. The protest was not successful, but the leader, an Italian gourmand, Carlo Petrini began the main fighter of this new idea. From this remonstrance was born an international non-profit making organization, movement. In Paris, in 1989 the Manifesto was signed by representatives of 15 countries. Membership of the Slow Food is open to everyone. Nowadays it has about 100.000 members - all over the world. Over 1300 local groups - called Convivia - exist in different countries (Jones et al, 2003., Zsély, 2009, www.slowfood.com (a))

Slow Food is an idea that needs plenty of qualified supporters who can help turn this motion into an international movement, with the little snail as its symbol (figure 1).



Figure 1. The symbol of slow food movement. Source: en.wikipedia.org (b)

2. MATERIALS and METHODS

In our work we made a survey about the young people's knowledge and habits in fast food restaurants. The measurement made by an international group, members of Leonardo partnership (Culture and Health Knowledge Integration into the Vocational Education of Food and Beverage /EN-2012-Leo-PA-6127/ Leonardo da Vinci Program Partnership Project). We tried to know what the students' opinion is about the fast food, which is their favourite meal, how often do they go to the fast food restaurants, why they are go there. For this answers we made a questionnaire, and filled it by different pupils from each six countries. The questionnaire was published and filled on the website of EvaSys and data were evaluated with the EvaSys programme as well.

3. RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Finally we could use 465 questionnaires. The numbers of the students from different countries are different (between 30 and 150), because it depended on the headcount of the school. The rate of genders is slightly differ, 57.7% boys and 43.3% girls.

At first we asked general questions "Have you learnt during your school years about healthy nutrition, healthy foods?". More than 80% of students have learnt about it, only 11% negated it, and 8% don't remember.

In spite of the appropriate knowledge of students about healthy foods, 6% of them said, they eat in fast food restaurant on schooldays. The others, a third part of answerers eat at home, 28% at school (in the canteen). It can be say that this "only" 6% is not too much, but it should not be conventional, that teenagers almost everyday eat fast food meals. We would like to draw attention of their parents- it is easy way to supply children with money, but it is not the best method for to take care about their children.

The fast food restaurants consumers' rate does not change at the weekend (6%), but these participants of this "weekend group" differs from the "schooldays group". It would be better to stay at home and to cook together - mothers and grandmothers should be taught kids the tricks of traditional meals preparing.

Analysed by gender, we could determine, more boy visit fast food restaurants than girl. By our results teenagers usually go to the fast food restaurant with their friends (59.7%) it is a good programme for them (fig. 2).

Sometimes they spend their free time with their boy/girlfriend and go together to or date in a fast food restaurant (18.5%). Family occasions show similar results (13.8%). The less part of students go alone to this type of restaurants (7.7%). The reasons of choosing fast food restaurants are important for us. The most of asked kids (44.9%) usually link the fast food restaurant visiting with other

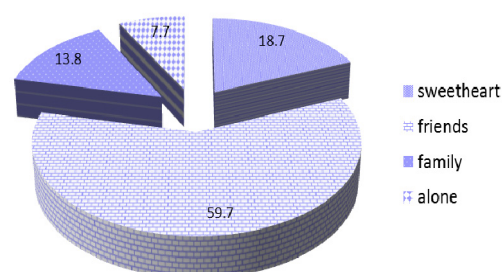


Fig 2. The distribution of students - by different accompaniment in fast food restaurants (n= 427)

spare time activity (e.g. cinema, party, etc.). 29.7% of them mentioned the fast food restaurant as a general meeting point. A quarter of all go to the restaurant for special occasion (e.g. birthday's party). The hungry or boring student group represent also a quarter parts. The fast food restaurant seems important and integral part of their life. As we know, these restaurants are very modern, youthful and funny. The staffs are very friendly and young too. So it means this connection between teenagers and fast food restaurants is very strong, so consequently to change the attitude of kids to these restaurants almost impossible.

Nowadays there are a lot of menus in the fast food restaurants. Guests can choose between the original fast food meals (hamburger – French fries – coke), and the healthier food (salad - fruit – mineral water) or we can drink only a coffee and eat some cake. We asked about it the students (fig 3.). The big part of them (78.5%) usually chooses the typical fast food menu. Only every 20th kids said, she / he eat salad and drink mineral water. We know, the original fast food meals mean the “hamburger and company”, but in our opinion the biggest marketing for healthy food would increase the interesting in this kind of foods.

We have to mention the answer “other”. Some of questionnaire filler are from Turkey. They wrote “Döner” or “köfte” – like an offer of the Turkish fast food restaurants.

Finally we can express our hope that our survey and the results will help to the Leonardo partnership to reach our aims. We try to give a book for the fast food generation and try to offer them the choice. In our book we present the national and traditional food of all six countries. We would like to recommend the new taste new style and new possibilities for healthy nutrition and healthy life.

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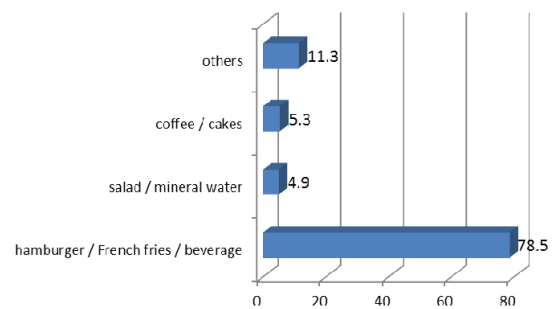


Fig 2. The distribution of students –by the choice of meal



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