

BREAKFAST BETWEEN YES AND NO – CASE STUDY

¹ Politehnica University of Timisoara, Faculty of Engineering Hunedoara, Hunedoara, ROMANIA

Abstract: The cultural importance of food has been neglected for years; it was not until the early seventies that food began to arouse the interest of social scientists. Breakfast is considered the most important meal of the day, because it must provide the necessary energy for the whole day. It is the main reserve of minerals, vitamins and nutrients that we need throughout the day, so that we do not feel deprived of moisture and energy. A breakfast that give us energy should be part of a healthy lifestyle. Eating a meal in the morning to get 20% of your daily calorie needs can be more important than following a specific diet. In this context, understanding the behavior of students regarding aspects of breakfast can provide a benchmark on well-being and decision-making. Anticipating the impact on the young generation, the subject of the present theme is considered important. The study can bring more knowledge by delimiting the factors that define his portrait.

Keywords: students, breakfast, well-being, behavior

1. INTRODUCTION

The role of breakfast as an essential part of a healthy diet is being promoted recently, even though breakfast practices have been known since the Middle Ages. The growing scientific evidence on this topic is highly controversial, so breakfast can be viewed from different points of view. To better understand the value of breakfast in our current culture, an analysis of this concept taking into account history, sociology, anthropology, medicine, psychology and pedagogy is useful. [1–3]

Eating behavior evolves in the first years of life, children learn what, when and how much to eat through direct personal experiences with food and by observing the eating behavior of others. [4]

It starts from the premise that from a nutritional point of view, breakfast provides us with an essential intake of nutrients. Also, if we eat in the morning we will feel hunger later, thus, we avoid snacking between meals. [5]

The need for the body to have breakfast exists, even if we do not immediately feel the sensation of hunger. There are many studies and recommendations on this topic. Most focus on health issues such as concentration, disease incidence or body weight. But we must also look at the nutritional value of food and the importance of adequate caloric intake. Each person has specific energy and nutritional needs that must be met on a daily basis. One of the certainties about breakfast is that it positively contributes to meeting the daily nutritional needs. [6] Moreover, in recent years the effect of meal times has also been studied. Higher caloric intake in the morning has a positive impact on weight loss (compared to high caloric intake at night). [7]

Research shows the importance of serving breakfast not only to children, but also to adults and the elderly. Epidemiological data from industrialized countries reveal that many individuals either eat a nutritionally unhealthy breakfast or avoid it altogether.

2. HYPOTHESES

The following two hypotheses can be stated:

- The study of students' behavior regarding the concept of breakfast allows an analysis of the behavior associated with the level of health status.
- Identifying the essential aspects regarding the attitude towards breakfast, provides information about the balanced functioning of the body, with lasting effects on decision-making.

3. CONDUCTING RESEARCH

The work includes a theoretical part that consists of a review of the theory from the specialized literature that addressed this subject and an empirical part that involved the realization of a quantitative research with the help of a survey. The research tool used is the opinion questionnaire made with the help of google forms. [8]

The questionnaire, „an investigative tool consisting of a set of written questions”, was used to obtain some information considered necessary in our research approach, for more accurate knowledge of the specific aspects of breakfast for second-year students, the undergraduate cycle from within the Faculty of Engineering Hunedoara.[9] Studying the information found in the specialized literature regarding the „type

of question”, the questionnaire administered in the study included eight closed questions and two identification questions, structured in 11 items.[10]

At the end of the study (January–february 2023), the information from a number of 114 respondents, second–year undergraduate students, was processed. Among them, 80 students (70.18%) are male and 34 students (29.82%) are female (Figure 1).

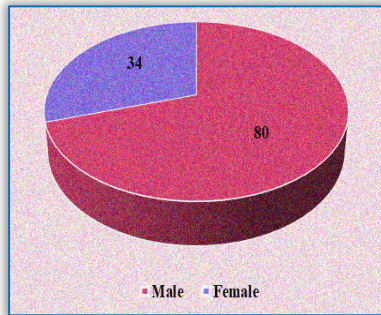


Figure 1. – Gender

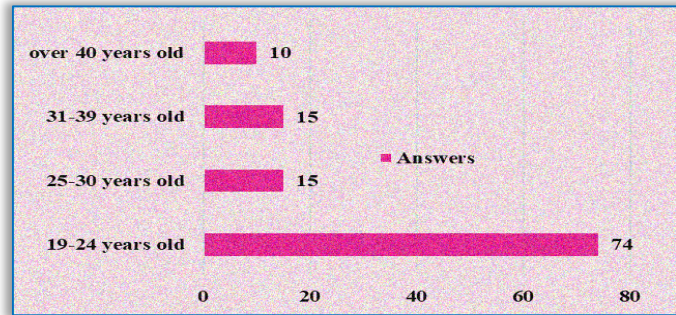


Figure 2 – Age range

The sample of students chosen for this research is considered significant due to the fact that, compared to the years of studies I, III, and IV, the grouping of the answers to delimit the age range of the respondents, visualized in Figure 2, identifies 74 students (64.91%) in the 19–24 age range.

Data interpretation with the help of the graphic method allowed the creation of a relevant image of the studied phenomenon.

In the content of the questionnaire, the specific problem of the attitude towards breakfast of the students of the second year, the undergraduate cycle, was operationalized in the eight items, of which the items 2–8 refer to the subject’s opinions.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The premise from which the research starts is determined by one of the most widespread statements about the benefit of breakfast for the well–being associated with decision–making.

The information about the current well–being of the respondents highlights that 45 of them have a very good state (39.47%), 34 respondents (29.82%) consider the state to be excellent, while 2 students (1.75 %) declaring it as displeased. (Figure 3)

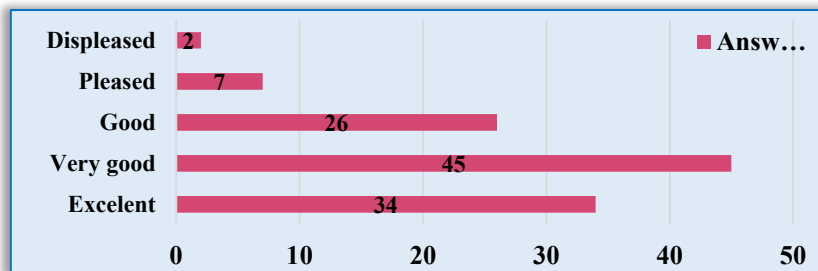


Figure 3. Item 1 – Information about respondents current well–being

On a scale from 1–5, where 5 means highly important, the opinions about the importance of breakfast are defined by 55 students (48.24%), which proves the recognition of this habit as a necessary one. It is found that 27 respondents (23.68%), almost ¼ of their total, fall into digit 3 of the reference interval, as shown in Figure 4.



Figure 4. Item 2 – Data about the importance of breakfast

In Item 3, it was identified whether students serve breakfast or not. Thus, 58% of respondents say they serve breakfast, compared to 42% who say they don't serve breakfast. Negative answers are considered not to exclude the occasional serving of breakfast. (Figure 5)

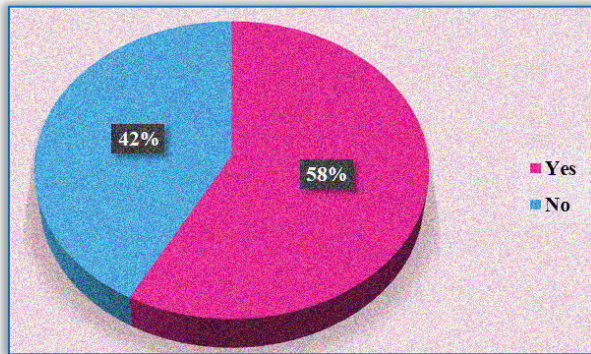


Figure 5. Item 3 – Information about serving breakfast

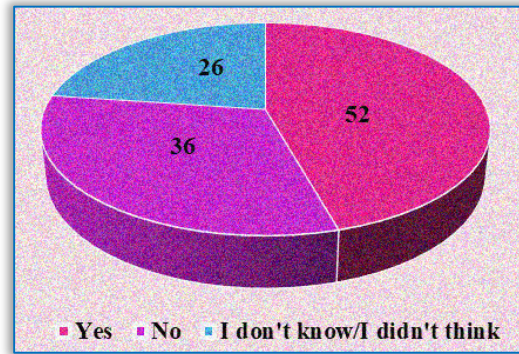


Figure 6. Item 4 – Student's perception of the nutritional value of breakfast

The student's perception regarding the nutritional value of the foods in the breakfast content (Item 4) reveals that 52 respondents (45.61%) consider the composition of the breakfast nutritious, and 26 respondents (22.80%), a percentage similar to reference value 3 about the importance of serving breakfast, they stated that they do not know/have not thought about this aspect. It can be interpreted as not relevant. (Figure 6)

In the context where the neglect of serving breakfast is interpreted as occasional, the data on the reasons why the respondents neglect to serve breakfast show that 16 students (14.03%) do not serve breakfast out of habit, 25 students (21.92%) do not find time for this habit in the morning, 34 students (29.82%) do not think about this aspect, and 39 students (34.21%), most of them state that they are not hungry. (Figure 7)

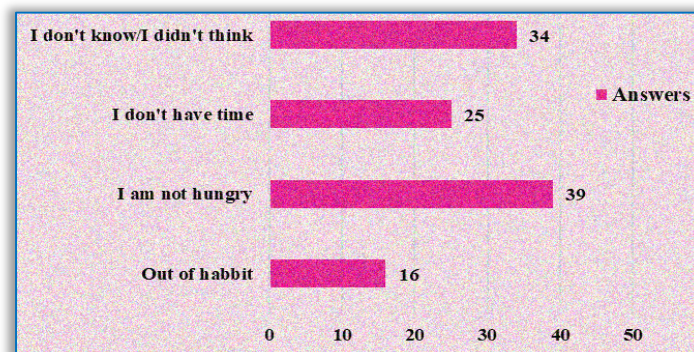


Figure 7 – Item 5 – Data on the reasons why breakfast is neglected

Item 6 identifies respondent's views on the impact of not serving breakfast (Figure 8). The answers given mean for 12 students (10.52%) the appearance of snaking between meals, 5 students (4.38%) do not consider this aspect important, 44 students (38.59%) are aware of the deterioration of health, and 52 students (45.61%) believe that in the morning they do not provide the body with nutrition.

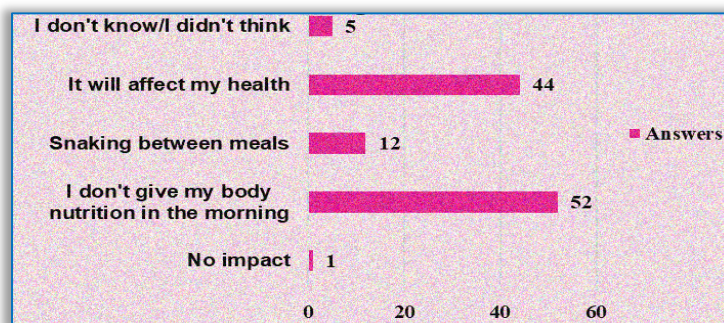


Figure 8. Item 6 – Information about the impact of not having breakfast

Regarding the level of motivation to make changes in lifestyle and diet, Item 7, on a reference scale from 1 to 5, 38 respondents (33.33%) chose number 4, 35 students (30.70%), fall into number 3, while 34 students (29.82%) consider themselves highly motivated to change something. (Figure 9)

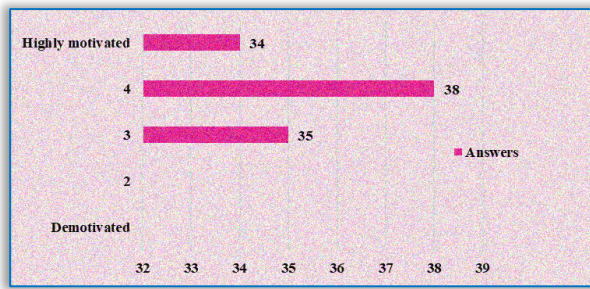


Figure 9. Item 7 – Data on the level of motivation to change habits

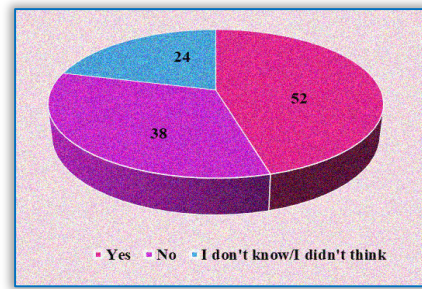


Figure 10. Item 8 – Informations about having or not having a strategy

From the analysis of student's answers regarding a strategy to implement healthy habits (Figure 10), it is found that 24 students (21.05%) do not know if they have a strategy, 38 students (33.33%) do not have one and only 52 of students (45.61%) consider that they already have a strategy, so it is applicable in their daily routine.

5. CONCLUSIONS

From the presented study, the following can be concluded:

- The study highlighted the fact that there are certain predefined behavior patterns of student's about the concept of breakfast. Also, the analysis of the answers regarding the age range of 19–24 years of 74 respondents and the percent of over 70% of male students compared to less than 30% of female respondents concludes the effects of education acquired primarily in the social framework of the family.
- The current well-being of the sample has reference data located in the range of excellent (43 respondents), very good (45 respondents) and good (26 respondents).
- The information about the importance of serving breakfast indicates that less than 50% of respondents attribute highly importance to this concept.
- On the other hand, serving breakfast as a lifestyle constant increases the percentage to 58%, while the composition of breakfast is categorized by 46% of respondents as having nutritious foods.
- Questioned about the reasons why breakfast is not a habit, 42% who do not constantly serve breakfast, 29.82% declare that they have not thought about the aspect of neglect breakfast and 14.03% do not serve breakfast out of habit. The percentages from “I don't have time” and “I'm not hungry” are considered irrelevant in relation to the 58% of students who declare that they serve breakfast.
- The investigative approach identified the awareness that health will be affected for 44 respondents and the awareness that they do not provide the body with nutrition in the morning for 52 respondents, those who already included breakfast in their daily routine.
- The level of motivation to make changes in lifestyle and diet is located between 3 and 5 on the reference scale, with 38 respondents at level 4, which denotes constant concern for health.
- The opinions outlining the existence of a strategy to strengthen the adoption of healthy habits conclude with 52 answers that yes.

Taking into account the size and dynamics of the breakfast phenomenon, as part of a healthy lifestyle, it can be said that it has become a priority for most of the respondents. In this context, but considering also the impact of breakfast on well-being and decision-making on the young generation (especially), we consider the subject of the present study to be important.

In conclusion, by identifying the factors that define its portrait, we can say that the study can bring more knowledge with effects on the behavior regarding the concept of breakfast at the level of students.

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