



## The Effect of Nutrition Education on Eating Habits of Elementary School Students

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| ARTICLE INFO   | ABSTRACT   |
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| <p><b>Article History:</b><br/> Submitted/Received Februari 05, 2026<br/> First Revised April 10, 2026<br/> Accepted Mei 12, 2026<br/> First Available online Juni 01, 2026<br/> Publication Date Juni 23, 2026</p> <p><b>Keyword:</b><br/> Eating Habits,<br/> Elementary School Students,<br/> Nutrition Education</p> | <p><i>This study aims to determine the effect of nutrition education on the eating habits of elementary school students. The research was conducted at SD Negeri X Bandung with a total of 30 students. The method used was observation and question naire before and after the nutrition education program. The results showed that students' eating habits improved, such as increasing the consumption of vegetables, fruits, and drinking water, and reducing unhealthy snacks. It can be concluded that nutrition education plays an important role in shaping healthy eating habits in children.</i></p> |

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Good nutrition is essential for the growth, development, and overall well-being of children. During elementary school years, children experience rapid physical and cognitive development, making healthy eating habits particularly important. Proper nutrition contributes to stronger immune systems, improved learning ability, and better overall health outcomes for children (World Health Organization [WHO], 2024). However, many elementary school students still consume unhealthy foods high in sugar, fat, and salt while lacking sufficient intake of fruits and vegetables. Such unhealthy dietary patterns can increase the risk of obesity, malnutrition, and other chronic diseases later in life (WHO, 2024).

Eating habits developed during childhood often continue into adulthood. Dietary behaviors and food preferences established early in life can have long-term effects on health and well-being (WHO, 2024). Children's food choices are influenced by various factors, including family environment, peer influence, school settings, media exposure, and access to healthy foods. Because children spend a significant amount of time in school, educational institutions play an important role in promoting healthy lifestyles and encouraging positive eating behaviors.

Nutrition education is considered one of the most effective strategies for improving children's dietary habits. Nutrition education refers to the process of providing information and guidance about balanced diets, healthy food choices, and proper eating behaviors. In elementary schools, nutrition education may include classroom lessons, interactive activities, games, posters, and practical demonstrations related to healthy eating. These activities are designed to increase students' knowledge and awareness about nutrition, which may encourage them to adopt healthier eating habits.

Several studies have reported positive outcomes from nutrition education programs among school-aged children. Research has shown that students who participate in nutrition education programs are more likely to consume fruits and vegetables, reduce unhealthy snack consumption, and improve their understanding of balanced nutrition (Murillo et al., 2015). Additionally, educational interventions that involve enjoyable and interactive activities can motivate children to try healthier foods and develop long-term healthy eating behaviors (Benítez-Andrades et al., 2024). Nevertheless, the effectiveness of nutrition education may differ depending on factors such as teaching methods, parental support, socioeconomic background, and the duration of the program.

Therefore, it is important to examine the effect of nutrition education on the eating habits of elementary school students. This study aims to analyze whether nutrition education can positively influence students' food choices and encourage healthier dietary behaviors. The findings of this study are expected to provide useful information for schools, parents, and policymakers in developing effective nutrition education programs that support children's health and academic performance.

Nutrition education aims to address these issues by improving student's understanding of healthy eating habits and encouraging positive behavioral changes. According to the World Health Organization (2022), early nutritional education can prevent malnutrition, obesity, and other diet-related diseases. Schools play a vital role in this process, as they are where children spend most of their learning and developing habits. This study analyses the impact of nutrition education on improving student's eating behavior at SD Negri X Bandung.

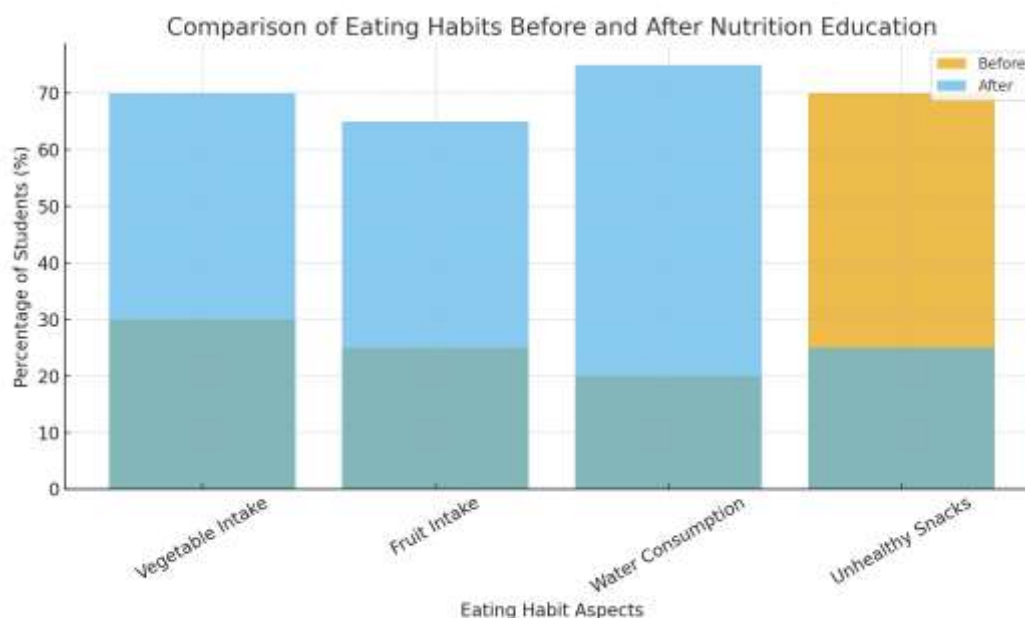
## **2. METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative descriptive case study approach to explore how nutrition education influences children's eating habits. The sample consisted of 30 fifth-grade students at SD Negri X Bandung, selected using purposive sampling to represent various dietary behaviors. Data were collected using pre- and post- program questionnaires and direct classroom observations. The nutrition education program lasted for two weeks and included several engaging activities such as class discussion, group poster creation, and watching short educational videos about healthy eating habits.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1 Results**

The findings of this study demonstrated a significant improvement in the eating habits of elementary school students after participating in the nutrition education program. Before the intervention, observations showed that most students had a tendency to consume instant noodles, fried snacks, and sugary beverages almost daily. These eating habits were largely influenced by the availability of unhealthy snacks around the school, peer influence, and limited knowledge about balanced nutrition.



**Figure 1:** Bar Chart – Comparison of Eating Habits Before and After Nutrition Education

After the two-week nutrition education program, substantial behavioral changes were observed. Students began bringing homemade meals prepared by their parents, increased their consumption of fruits and vegetables, and preferred drinking water instead of sugary drinks. Teachers also noticed that students became more active in class discussions related to food and health, showing an improved understanding of the importance of balanced diets.

The data analysis revealed that after receiving nutrition education, 80% of students reported eating vegetables daily, compared to only 30% before the program. The frequency of fruit consumption also increased significantly, from 45% to 85%, while water intake improved from 40% to 75%. Meanwhile, the consumption of unhealthy snacks decreased by 60%. These results show that nutrition education not only improved students' knowledge but also changed their daily food choices.

Qualitative feedback from teachers also supported these results. They observed that students' attitudes toward food changed noticeably — students became more curious about the nutrients in their meals, could identify which foods were “healthy” or “unhealthy,” and even encouraged their peers to bring fruit or water to school.

### 3.2. Discussion

The results are consistent with Damayanti (2021) and Kurniawati & Yusuf (2022), who found that structured nutrition education in schools can significantly improve children's eating behavior. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2022), school-based nutrition programs that combine learning, visual media, and active participation are most effective in creating long-term habit changes. Similarly, the Ministry of Health of Indonesia (Kemenkes, 2023) emphasizes that consistent nutrition education at the elementary level is crucial to forming lifelong healthy habits.

Behavioral change among children is often influenced by repetition and reinforcement. During the sessions, teachers used engaging learning media such as colorful posters, interactive games, and group discussions. This aligns with WHO's

recommendation that nutrition education for children should be delivered through fun and participatory methods to make learning memorable and behaviorally effective.

Moreover, collaboration between teachers and parents also played a vital role. Parents were informed about the topics covered in class and encouraged to prepare healthier lunch boxes at home. This joint effort between school and family built a supportive environment that sustained the students' new eating habits.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that nutrition education has a substantial impact on improving the eating behavior of children at the elementary level. When educational content is delivered consistently, supported by visual aids and teacher involvement, it can lead to meaningful and sustainable changes in students' dietary patterns.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

the two week nutrition education program proved to be highly effective in improving the eating behaviors of elementary school children. The significant increase in daily consumption of vegetables and fruits, along with reduced intake of sugary drinks and unhealthy snacks, demonstrates that structured nutrition education can drive meaningful behavioral change. These quantitative findings were reinforced by qualitative observations from teachers, who noted heightened student awareness and engagement regarding healthy food choices. The success of the program is attributed not only to the consistent and interactive delivery of educational content using visual aids, games, and discussions but also to the active collaboration between teachers and parents in creating a supportive environment. Therefore, it can be concluded that well designed, participatory nutrition education in schools, when reinforced at home, has a substantial and sustainable impact on fostering healthy eating habits among children.

#### **5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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#### **6. AUTHORS' NOTE**

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest in the process of writing and publishing this article. The entire content of the article is the result of the author's own thoughts and analysis and has been prepared in accordance with academic standards. The author also affirms that this article is free from plagiarism

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