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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Teacher Attitudes in Mixed Ability Classes Şaban ÇEPIK.....	1
Effective Classroom Management in Relation to Classroom Routines and Rules M. Yavuz KONCA, Rabiye OTUGEN.....	6
Games in the Teaching of Foreign Languages Mehmet KARA.....	16
A Study on Teacher Leadership Styles of Teacher Candidates Studying at the Departments of Secondary Education Muhammet Hanifi ERCOŞKUN, Fatih BEKTAŞ, Ahmet NALÇACI.....	21
Four Effective Ways to Enrich Your Vocabulary Alpaslan TOKER.....	25
The Substantive Universals in the Relationship between Language Ideology and Language Education Azamat Anvarovich AKBAROV.....	32
Democratic Parents from the Point of View of Pupils Osman SAMANCI, Çağrı Tuğrul MART.....	42
On The Way of Sustainable Development: The Role of Higher Educational Institutions Cüneyt GÖZÜ, Uğur Cem HASAR Mehmet AKTAN Gökay AKKAYA.....	46
Sustainable Development as a Course: Social Service Applications M. Ruhat YAŞAR, Ömer AYTAÇ.....	49
The Comparison of Vocational Colleges Located Both in City Center and In a Town in Erzurum Region in Terms of Teaching Process M. Dursun Kaya, Y. Ziya AYIK, A. Samet HAŞILOĞLU, Reşat KARCIOĞLU.....	61
Teachers' Disfunctional Attitudes Mücahit DILEKMEN, Şükrü ADA, Birol ALVER, Durmuş KILIÇ.....	69
Academic Writing in English: Approaches, Processes and Challenges in Higher Education, Oktay YAGIZ, Kemalettin YIGITER, Gencay GENC.....	80
ELT Prep Students Perceptions of Their Problems with Reading: Perception of Failure or Failure of Perception? M. Naci KAYAOĞLU, Fehmi TURGUT.....	89
Exploring Comprehension Strategies of Low & High Ability Listeners with a Focus on the Effect of Explicit Strategy Instruction M. Naci KAYAOĞLU, Ali Şükrü ÖZBAY.....	94
A Study of Differences in Learning Orientations of EFL Students Öznur SEMİZ, Makbule KÜLERİ.....	101
Assessment of the Teachers of Social Sciences Education at Grade Four and Five by the Pre-Service Teachers as for Teachers' Use of Teaching Strategies, Methods-Techniques and Equipment, Ahmet NALÇACI, Muhammet Hanifi ERCOŞKUN, Fatih BEKTAŞ.....	107
Learning and Teaching Strategies for Technology Education in Turkey, Ahmet APAY, İbrahim YUKSEL.....	111
The Value of Emotional Intelligence for EFL Settings M. Naci Kayaoğlu, Ali Murat YEL.....	129
The Democracy Education at Schools and Pre-service Teachers' Observations to the Democratic Attitudes and Behaviors in School Selçuk UYGUN.....	138
Trends and Issues in Renewable Energy Education Çağlayan ACIKGOZ, Alev A. BORAZAN.....	145

# Effects of Knowledge on Nutrition and Eating Habits of Bilecik University Students

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**Abstract:** A problem facing youth today is the lack of available healthy fast foods or easily prepared foods. During adolescence, young people are assuming responsibility for their own eating habits, health-related attitudes and behaviours and their growing independence is often associated with unconventional eating patterns. The aim of this study was detecting the effect of knowledge on nutrition and affecting healthy food choices in Bilecik University students. Researching data were collected from 471 of Bilecik University students in 2 campuses. In the present study which was done the method of simple randomized sampling and completed questionnaires to nutritional knowledge, eating habits and behaviours of them. 209 (%44.4) of male students and 262 (%55.6) of female students were examined. It was found that the average weights of the male and female students, who were at the ages of 17-23, were 60.85 kg and the average heights of them were 168.03m. Applied questionnaires before and after giving nutritional training, the results demonstrated that students improved their eating habits and behaviours; consumption ratio of fruits-vegetables for everyday was increased from %36.7 to %46.2; sugary foods consumption ratio was decreased from %91.7 to %88.7. At breakfast, drinking tea-coffee ratio was also decreased from %81 to %73.9; drinking fruits / vegetable juices -milk ratio was raised to %26.1 from %19. The lunch and dinner choices of students were seemed to develop; eating nick nack frequency was reduced from %18.1 to % 15.8, consumption meat with unhealthy fats was down %38.3 to %27.7. On the other hand eating vegetables frequency was getting increase %9.8 up to %16.6. Nutrition education for students should incorporate self-efficacy, relevant health values and barriers-to-change, education about nutrients, and improved access to healthy foods. Student smoking and drinking should also be targeted.

*Keywords: Nutrition, knowledge, eating habits, University student*

## Introduction

University students living away from home had developed more unfavourable eating habits than students living at the family home. These findings suggest that moving away from the family home and assuming responsibility for food preparation and purchasing for the first time affect dietary habits in this sample of University students. Students living at home did not show major changes in their eating habits since starting University [1,2].

University students living away from the family home have little time and space when it comes to meal preparation within the confines of dorms, apartments, or shared housing. An additional concern is the knowledge needed to determine which food items to select [3,4]. Students living away from the family home had made some changes; they decreased their weekly consumption of fresh fruit, cooked and raw vegetables, oily fish, seafood, pulses and olive oil, and increased their sugar, wine, alcohol and fast food intake [5-7]. During adolescence, young people are assuming responsibility for their own eating habits, health-related attitudes and behaviours and their growing independence is often associated with unconventional eating patterns [8,9]. Healthy eating related negatively to television watching and alcohol, and positively to self-efficacy, nutrition knowledge, considering weight control [10,11].

Recognition of barriers to change, the extent of social support and the development of skills, e.g. in selecting low-fat foods, are among enabling factors affecting food choices. Assessment of the costs and benefits of dietary change and dealing with feelings of deprivation from restriction of favourite foods also influence diet-related behaviour [12-15]. Sufficient knowledge about diet is needed for an individual to assess the quality of their own diet and their perception of dietary norms, particularly in regard to people whose opinions they

consider significant, influences their classification with regard to stage of change. Motivation to adopt healthy eating patterns and self-efficacy are important determinants of behavioural change . The aim of this study was detecting the effect of knowledge on nutrition and affecting healthy food choices in Bilecik University students.

## Materials and Method

In this study was chosen one faculty and one Higher Education School of Bilecik University. A self-reported questionnaire was administered to 471 students, ranging in age from 19-23 years. 209 (%44.4) of male students and 262 (%55.6) of female students were examined. It was found that the average weights of the male and female students, who were 60.85 kg and the average heights of them, were 168.03cm. An interviewing form consisting of 15 questions about eating habits and nutrition was applied to these students. Questionnaire data were analysed with the method of simple randomized sampling and completed questionnaires to nutritional knowledge, eating habits and behaviours of Bilecik University students.

## Results

Applied questionnaires before and after giving nutritional training, the results demonstrated that students improved their eating habits and behaviours. Figure1. shows that the consumption ratio of fruits-vegetables for everyday. It was increased from %36.7 to %46.2 .

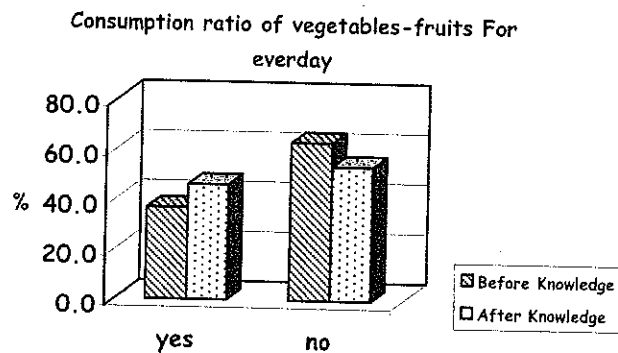


Figure 1. The consumption ratio of fruits-vegetables for everyday

Sugary foods consumption ratio data is given in Figure 2 as a block diagram. As you seen, the sugary foods consumption ratio was decreased from %91.7 to %88.7.

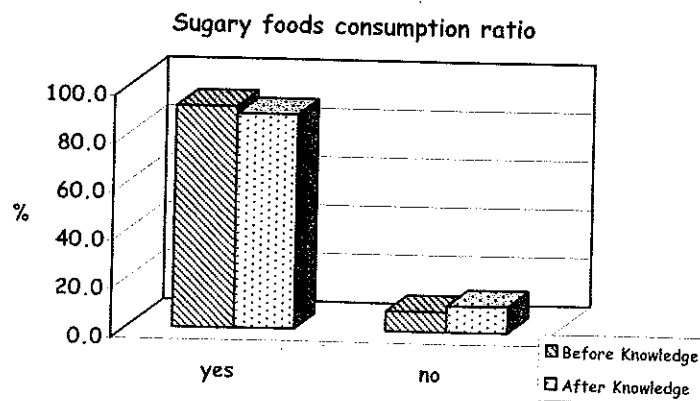


Figure 2. Sugary foods consumption ratio

What kind of foods do you prefer to consume to keep away from cancer?

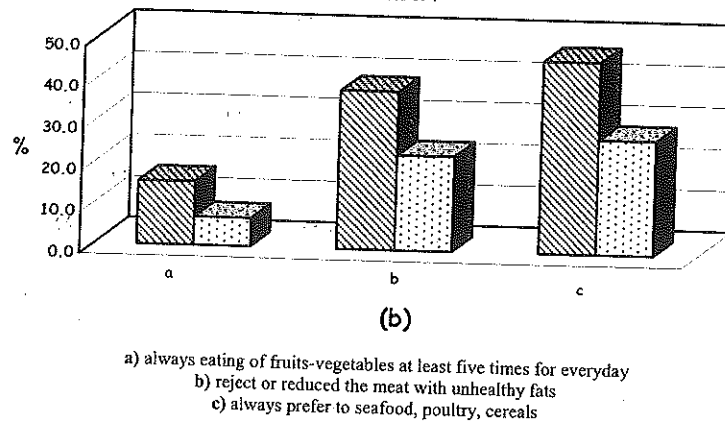


Figure 4(a,b) Most preferred foods to healthy body

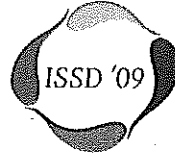
To enable the young generations to gain healthy dietary practices and to provide the access to healthy food are the main measures.

## Conclusion

Although students have adequate knowledge about nutrition, they eat frequently junk food. But the best thing is that the students prefer mostly healthy food after knowledge on nutrition and eating habits. Habits involving regular eating patterns and vegetable intake were reported and represent practices that ought to be encouraged. Knowledge about healthy food choices can be a predisposing factor for the adoption of a healthy diet but it is insufficient to motivate healthy eating and psychosocial factors must also be considered. Nutrition interventions in this young population should be encouraged to promote healthier diets and lifestyles, as well as adherence to the traditional Mediterranean diet. Current research indicates that as the students' knowledge increases, nutritional quality of food choices improves.

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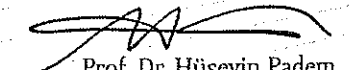
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