

BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY

**Social and Cultural Factors predicting nutrition and eating patterns
of Arab and Jewish youth in Israel**

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Abstract.

Scientific background: Nutrition, eating and exercise patterns are of great importance in the context of the physical and mental health of people of all ages, especially children and adolescents whose bodies and minds are still in growth. The importance of eating patterns for teens is twofold. First, the direct impact of eating and exercise habits on their current health and development; And secondly, the significant impact that proper eating habits and normal physical activity have on youth in shaping healthy behavior patterns, which will form an integral part of these children's lifestyles as they grow older and mature. These lifestyles have direct implications for the long-term adult's health and the likelihood of avoiding heart disease, vascular disease, and malignant disease later in life (Kleinberg, 2005).

Regular exercise has been shown to have prominent benefits in promoting adolescent health. Exercise contributes to strengthening the body and improving physical health, such as: reducing fat, improving metabolic processes and bone density. In addition, physical activity also contributes to the promotion of mental health, such as: reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety and increasing self-esteem, improving the quality of relationships with the peer and family group, and improving cognitive and academic achievement (Zibler-Rosenberg, 1996).

Eating patterns, consumption of food and sometimes weight loss diet habits are acquired and shaped during adolescence and are linked to various social and cultural factors. Beyond that, these patterns have a decisive influence on key aspects of their adult lives later on. Thus, food serves as a "dominant metaphor with cultural weight and sometimes even heavy religious weight" (Kleinberg, 2005). Taste of taste develops

from habit acquisition and education, and food products and ways of serving reflect a person's status and express economic power and consumer worldview. Food culture is an important measure of affiliation and it distinguishes members of different groups. 'We want to feel right, to behave correctly and most of all to look right' (Givon, 2005). Food culture is a prism for the presentation of history. The division of roles around cooking, manner of eating and food sources incorporate overt and covert social codes and can attest to the fabric of family and community life and the 'relationship of control, exploitation, respect or lack of respect for one's culture' (Kleinberg, 2005).

The purposes of the research:

The objectives of this study are:

- 1) To examine the differences in dietary, eating, and physical behavioral behavior (1) patterns among Arab and Jewish youth in Israel, according to age and gender.
- 2) to examine the differences between Arab and Jewish youth in the context of (2) parental support and family culture.
- 3) To examine the relationship between parental support and family culture and (3) patterns of nutrition, eating, and physical behaviors among the Arab youth population compared to the Jewish youth population.

Objectives (2) and (3) conceptually relate the possibility of significant cultural differences that may exist between the Arab population and the Jewish population with regard to the nature of parental involvement, family culture, and dietary and eating patterns.

The findings of this study shed light on the cultural and social differences between these two population groups, information that will allow "tailoring" of health education intervention strategies in the education system for each sector separately.

The research population: State, religious, and Arab school students who attend grades 6, 8, and 10 (ages 11, 13, and 15), representing elementary, high schools, and high schools.

The research method: The study based on a secondary analysis of WHO-HBSC Israel survey data for 2014. This survey was conducted as part of a World Health Organization-Health Behavior in School-Aged Children (WHO-HBSC) multinational study. The HBSC study was conducted once every four years in about 50 countries in Europe and North America, with the aim of providing a youth health monitoring and research system in different countries and to deepen existing knowledge and understanding in the field of health behaviors, life habits and their contexts in young people. Once every four years, a survey is conducted in all countries participating in the study, concurrently, using a common methodological scientific protocol that requires all partners in the study (Currie et al., 2014). The study is conducted by passing detailed questionnaires to a representative sample in each country. The 2013/14 International Binding Research Protocol describes the methodological conditions of the study that require each state partner in the project on three key levels: a research questionnaire, the sample, and the sampling method.

Main findings: This study focuses on the dietary and dietary habits of students in Israel, as well as the family characteristics of the students, such as: parental support, and family culture, and their relationship, in addition, the relationships between student demographic characteristics (sector and gender) and the study variables.

The findings indicate that, according to the research hypothesis, students from the Arab sector reported high fruit consumption (2.0SD = 5.0 M) compared to the Jewish sector (1.8SD = 4.6 M) as well as a high rate of candy eating (1.9SD =, = 5.0 M) In relation to the Jewish sector (= 1.7SD, 4.2 = M)

With regard to eating vegetables, there was no significant difference between the sectors.

In addition, it was found that, according to the research hypothesis, students in the Jewish sector report higher physical activity (2.2SD = 3.7 M) than Arab students (2.2SD = 3.4M).

It has also been found that girls from the Arab and Jewish sectors reported eating fruit and vegetables at a high rate compared to boys in both the Arab and Jewish sectors, both in fruit eating and in vegetable reporting, with regard to fruit eating.

The findings indicate that there is a significant correlation between sector and student gender in diet reporting, so according to the study hypothesis, diet rate among girls in both sectors is higher compared to boys in both sectors: the rate of girls in the Jewish sector is highest (about 34%) then girls in the Arab sector. (About 24%) and then boys from the Jewish and Arab sectors.

The findings indicate that there is a significant correlation between the student sector and parental support, but contrary to the research hypothesis, the prevalence of a conversation with at least one high parent in the Arab sector (about 92%) relative to the Jewish sector is also found. In addition, according to the research hypothesis, family culture was found to be of high prevalence. More significantly in the Arab sector (2.0SD = 5.5 M) compared to the Jewish sector (2.1SD = 5.3 M).

The findings show that girls show more positive dietary and dietary behaviors than boys, but report less physical activity, more data shows that as they age, they report more dieting, healthy eating habits, and more common physical activity.

The data also shows that students in the Arab sector report more dietary behaviors, in addition to reporting negative dietary habits and the prevalence of low physical activity relative to the Jewish sector.

It also turns out that positive family culture and parental support (easy conversation with at least one parent) positively predict healthy dietary habits and intense physical activity so that as the family culture is significant and supportive of dietary habits and physical activity increase accordingly.

After AMOS analysis, it emerged that although students in the Arab sector have less healthy and less good dietary habits and do less exercise, they have more parental support than students in the Jewish sector, and parental support can improve nutrition and exercise habits.

Main conclusions: In this study, the social and cultural factors predicting dietary and eating patterns of Arab and Jewish youth in Israel were examined.

The results of the study clearly indicate differences in dietary behavior patterns (eating: fruits, vegetables, sweets, and dietary habits) and physical activity among Arab and Jewish youth in Israel. Although students in the Arab sector have less good dietary habits and do less exercise, they have more parental support than students in the Jewish sector, because parental support can improve nutrition and exercise habits, this information can be used to inform parents in the sector about their ability to A change for the better in their children's eating and exercise patterns.

Moreover, in order to improve diet-related behaviors and eating patterns, dietary habits, physical activity, parental support, and family culture, significant educational support and long-term educational programs are needed, which needs to be reinforced in the education system and local authorities.

Therefore, the findings of this study may be used by educators and therapists in the field of youth promotion in various frameworks as a source for understanding the predictors of the dietary and eating behaviors of Arab and Jewish youth, shed light on the points needed to address appropriate work in these programs and contribute to the development and promotion of educational frameworks, And the informal.