

## INVESTIGATING CAUSES OF LOW PATRONAGE OF BREAKFAST MEALS BY STUDENTS AND TUTORS AT AL-FARUQ COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

The quality of micronutrient intake, weight status, and lifestyle factors are all positively impacted by breakfast consumption. Students learning, behaviour, cognition, and academic achievement have all been linked to breakfast as having a good impact. These claims, however, are mainly supported by data showing that breakfast has immediate benefits for cognitive function. The study aimed at investigating causes of low-patronage of breakfast meals by students and teachers at the al-faruq college of education. The study was conducted using a mixed-methods approach. The sample population was made up of students and instructors. A sample size of 359 respondents, or 50.2 percent of the population, was chosen by the researchers using the randomized stratified sampling method. Using a purposive sampling strategy, the respondents were chosen. Students' quantitative data was gathered using questionnaires, and teachers' qualitative data was gathered using an interview schedule. Version 25 of IBM's Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the survey data. Using SPSS, the organized, numerically coded, and collected quantitative data were entered. Descriptive and inferential statistics were combined by the researchers to analyse the data. The demographic features of the respondents were analysed using frequency tables and percentages. The study indicated that low patronage of breakfast meals was caused by a variety of factors, including late morning serving, insufficient amount, and poor quality of the breakfast supplied. The study so proposed that the dining hall and meals orientation of student-teachers should be planned, strong enforcement of the dining hall rules and regulations, and maintaining the dining hall in a clean condition to attract student-teachers.

## Keywords

Breakfast, cognitive learning, micronutrient, low patronage, poor quality meals

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## Introduction

The most significant meal of the day is often considered to be breakfast. Children who regularly eat breakfast are more likely to have nutrient intakes that are favorable, including higher dietary fiber, total carbohydrate intakes, and lower total fat and cholesterol intakes (Deshmukh-Taskar et al., 2010). The daily micronutrient intake is also significantly influenced by breakfast (Balvin Frantzen et al., 2013). When compared to people who skip breakfast, students who consistently eat breakfast have levels of iron, the B vitamins (folate, thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, vitamin B6, and vitamin B12), and vitamin D that are 20–60% greater (Gibson, 2003). Having breakfast can help keep the body mass index (BMI) within the usual range. Other aspects of a healthy lifestyle are also linked to breakfast intake. Lack of breakfast increases the likelihood that students will be less active and have lower levels of cardiorespiratory fitness (Sandercock et al., 2010). Studies typically show that eating breakfast improves children's cognitive function, especially in the areas of memory and attention, even though the fact that the evidence is sometimes contradictory (Wesnes et al., 2003, 2012; Widenhorn-Muller et al., 2008; Cooper et al., 2011; Pivik et al., 2012).

Attitudinal issues toward food have received quite a bit of attention in research interventions regarding meal consumption. Interventions for addressing attitude problems toward breakfast meals relate to the conditions surrounding accessibility and availability of quality breakfast based on where, when, and how it is purchased or prepared and consumed (Larson, 2006). It must be pointed out that various interventions proposed for addressing attitudinal and perceptual issues of students regarding their massive patronage and consumption of breakfast meals served in the dining halls of schools and colleges have not been effective in promoting such changes. A lot of studies have been done on the attitude of students toward breakfast in school (Galal & Hulett 2003; Doku, Koivusilta, Raisamo, & Rimpelä, 2013; Intiful, & Lartey, 2014). Many of these studies have argued that students who consume breakfast are likely to meet their energy and overall nutrient requirement compared to those who do not have breakfast (Nicklas, Bao, Webber, & Berenson, 1993). These studies have also proven that breakfast consumption also contributes to the intellectual or cognitive development of students. It must be stressed that breakfast meal has numerous health benefits including prevention of overweight, obesity, and reduction in risk of cardiovascular diseases.

Even though the literature has found the consumption of breakfast to be very significant to the cognitive development of students (Chitra, & Reddy, 2007), there has been extensive research regarding the negative impact of skipping breakfast for students over the past few decades. Skipping breakfast is commonly practiced by people globally. The 1999-2006 National Health and Nutrition Survey of the United States reported that between 20% and 30% of children and adolescents skipped breakfast frequently. In view of this, Nicklas (2007) argues that hunger in the morning can affect performance at school mainly due to lack of concentration. This is very surprising because the student-teacher attitude toward breakfast in Al-faruq College of Education is a problem that needs to be assessed. Surprisingly, this observation has been confirmed by Galal & Hulett (2003) who have argued that issues of nutritional health are considered to be an indispensable element for the quality of student-teachers education because skipping breakfast affects young students' ability to concentrate and attend lectures. Skipping breakfast is a common practice by people around the world.

Accordingly, Intiful & Lartey (2014) have expressed that breakfast is considered the most important meal of the day, yet many people skip breakfast. Studies indicate those school students who regularly skip breakfast are not likely to concentrate in class, thus affecting school performance. Breakfast skippers in most cases are unable to

compensate for the nutrients lost during the rest of the day (Nicklas, Bao, Webber, & Berenson, 1993). Given this, the goal of the current study was to assess the student-teacher attitude towards breakfast meals in Al-faruq College of Education in Wenchi Municipality of Bono Region of Ghana.

### **Materials and Methods**

A mixed-method approach was used for the study. Mixed method is "the class of study when the researchers combine techniques, methodologies, approaches, ideas, or language of quantitative and qualitative research in single report" according to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004). The importance of using the mixed method is "to broaden understanding by incorporating both qualitative and quantitative research or to use one approach to better understand, explain, or build on the results from other approaches" (Creswell, 2009, p.205). The study took place at Al-Faruq College, Wenchi in the Bono East of Ghana. Purposive sampling was used to choose the respondents. The population of the study comprises students and tutors in Al-faruq College of Education in Wenchi Municipality, in the Bono East Region of Ghana. A sample size of 362 students and tutors was used in the study. A well-designed questionnaire with open and close-ended questions was formulated and distributed to respondents to be filled and after a time, the questionnaires were collected for recording and analysis as a way of obtaining primary data. Due to the respondents' greater likelihood of providing

in-depth explanations, this approach aided the researchers' ability to gather thorough information from many sources. A quantitative method of data analysis such as tables, percentages, and frequencies was used. Data from the questionnaires were analysed using IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.

A questionnaire was pretested to modify ambiguous items being administered to the respondents. This allowed the researchers to establish or estimate the reliability and the validity of the research instrument chosen. Research clearance was sought from the Al-faruq College of Education. Secondly, the head of departments and tutors were informed of the purpose and value of the study, and their willingness to participate was established. Thirdly, participants were encouraged to get involved fully and answer all the questionnaire and interview questions freely. Fourthly, the participants were informed that their information would be kept confidential and that their identity will not be revealed in any way in the resulting report and only the researcher had to keep such information. The code of conduct for research ethics warns researchers not to harm anybody physically, psychologically, or otherwise.

## Results and Discussion

### Demographic Characteristic of Respondents

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents according to the gender and age

of the sampled. The distribution of respondents by the sampled students' gender and age is shown in Table 1 for the respondents. Male and female students made up the study's respondents. The majority of the 359 students who participated in the study were female, with only a small number being male. This demonstrates that in Al-Faruq College of Education, female students outnumbered male students who were enrolled in a variety of programs. As a result, the distribution shows that there is a gender gap at the college that favors female students. The consequence is that many of the students enrolled in teacher preparation programs at Al-Faruq College of Education are female. It was claimed that compared to their male counterparts who favor universities, more females enroll in colleges of education. The percentage of women at public universities in 2012/13 was 33.6%, in polytechnics it was 33.1%, and in colleges of education it was 43.3%, supporting the above result (Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 2014, p. 10).

Regarding the respondents' ages, 231 of the students who responded were between the ages of 20 and 25, compared to 14 who were under the age of 19. This suggests that the student-teachers who deliver the various programs at the Al-Faruq College of Education are young adults with the freedom to choose the food they want to consume and the time and manner in which they want to eat it. If people are not properly tutored about breakfast as an essential meal of the day and as a result acquire a favorable attitude toward its consumption at this time,

it may result in numerous health concerns including obesity, ulcers and diabetes. According to Nicklas et al. (2004), those who skip breakfast are at a higher nutritional

risk because the nutrients they miss out on at breakfast are not significantly supplemented at later meals (Murphy, 2007).

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristic of Student Respondents**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	130	36.2
Female	229	63.8
<b>Age</b>		
Below 19	14	3.9
20-25 years	231	64.3
26-30 years	114	31.8
Above 30 years	0	0
<b>Education</b>		
	<b>%</b>	
First year student-teachers	90	25.1
Second year student-teachers	102	28.4
Third year student-teachers	167	46.5

In table 2, some of the sampled respondents attributed their low patronage of breakfast meals served in the College's dining to going for breakfast being just a waste of time by expressing strong disagreement (3.9%), disagreement (15.6%), agreement (28.2%) and agreement (27.9%), while 24.2% remained undecided. On the issue of student-teachers, low patronage of breakfast served in the College dining hall due to the meals served at breakfast are not well cooked, 6.1% strongly disagreed, 14.5% disagreed, 27.3% agreed and 26.7% strongly agreed, whereas 23.4% remained undecided. In respect of whether meals served at

breakfast are tasty and very nutritious, 24.5% of the respondents indicated that they strongly disagreed, 23.1% disagreed while 17% strongly agreed and 16.4% agreed but 18.9% remained undecided. Concerning respondents' low patronage of breakfast meals served in their College dining hall because breakfast is not served at the specified time on the school timetable, the sampled participants expressed strong disagreement (11.7%), disagreement (14.2%), agreement (32.9%) and strong agreement (32.9%), whereas 24.5% remained undecided.

Regarding student-teachers low patronage of breakfast meals served in the College dining hall because the breakfast served is not prepared from the best foodstuff options (e.g. rice), 26.2% and 26.7% indicated that they agreed and strongly agreed as against 13.4% and 8.6% indicating they disagree and strongly disagree. Meanwhile, 25.1% remained undecided. On the issue of student-teachers low patronage of breakfast meals served in their College dining hall due to their natural preference for heavy meals in the morning, the study participants strongly disagreed (12.8%), disagreed (12.8%), agreed (25.6%) and strongly agreed (22.3%), while 26.5% remained undecided. On student-teachers low patronage of breakfast meals served in their College dining hall because they do not like what is available to eat, 5.6% strongly disagreed, 13.9% disagreed, 29.2% agreed and 27.6% strongly agreed, while 23.7% remained undecided. Concerning student-teachers low patronage of breakfast meals served in their College dining hall because they are not hungry at that time of the morning, 16.7% strongly disagreed, 13.1% disagreed, 25.3% agreed and 23.4% strongly agreed, while 21.4% remained undecided.

In respect of student-teachers, low patronage of breakfast and meals served in their College dining hall due to they want to lose weight, 21.4% strongly disagreed, 10.6% disagreed, 24.5% agreed and 21.2% strongly agreed, while 22.3% remained undecided. The study revealed late serving of breakfast; The low quantity of the breakfast meals served, poor quality of the breakfast served,

disregard for student-teachers breakfast preference, disregard of the health needs and considerations of the student-teachers, and certain conditions such as examinations periods, early part of the semester when they have just arrived from home, the incidence of sickness, peer group influence, the problem of shyness, absenteeism, having enough provisions, unkempt nature of the dining hall, not being hungry in the morning, maintenance of body shape and loss of weight (in the case of female student-teachers), preference for heavy breakfast instead of light ones, tasteless meals, monotonous nature of breakfast meals and too much of sugar/salt/pepper in the meals as the main attributing factors accounted the low patronage of breakfast at the Al-Faruq College of Education.

From this finding of this study, it can be inferred that student-teachers patronage of meals is largely a function of individual and environmental influences (Taylor, 2017). This is because the individual influences are psychological as well as biological, while environmental influences involve social environments such as family, friends, peer networks, and other factors such as the quality of breakfast meals served in the College's dining hall, condition of dining hall environment, the time meals are served and individual preferences, availability of provisions in the "chop box". The social system or macro-system, which is also an influence, includes mass media, marketing, and advertising, and social and cultural norms of the society (Talyor, 2017) are all multiple influential motivators that have

occasioned (caused) the development of student-teachers attitude toward breakfast

consumption in the dining hall of the Al-Faruq College of Education.

**Table 2: Causes of Student-teachers' Low patronage of breakfast meals**

No.	Questionnaire Item on the Causes of low patronage of breakfast meals by student-teachers in Al-Faruq College of Education.	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Undecided 3	Agree 3	Strongly Agree 5
1	Going for breakfast is just waste of time.	14 (3.9%)	56 (15.6%)	87 (24.2%)	102 (28.4%)	100 (27.9%)
2	The meals served at breakfast are not well cooked.	22 (6.1%)	52 (14.5%)	91 (25.3%)	98 (27.3%)	96 (26.7%)
3	The meals served at breakfast are tasty and very nutritious.	88 (24.5%)	83 (23.1%)	68 (18.9%)	59 (16.4%)	61 (17%)
4	Breakfast is not served at the specified time on the school timetable.	42 (11.7%)	51 (14.2%)	88 (24.5%)	118 (32.9%)	60 (16.7%)
5	Breakfast served are not prepared from the best of food stuff options (e.g. rice)	31 (8.6%)	48 (13.4%)	90 (25.1%)	94 (26.2%)	96 (26.7%)
6	Student-teachers do not consume breakfast at the college's dining hall because they naturally prefer heavy meals in the morning.	46 (12.8%)	46 (12.8%)	95 (26.5%)	92 (25.6%)	80 (22.3%)
7	Student-teachers do not consume breakfast at the college's dining hall because they do not like what is available to eat.	20 (5.6%)	50 (13.9%)	85 (23.7%)	105 (29.2%)	99 (27.6%)



8	Student-teachers do not consume breakfast at the college's dining hall because they are not hungry at that time of the morning.	60 (16.7%)	47 (13.1%)	77 (21.4%)	91 (25.3%)	84 (23.4%)
9	Student-teachers do not consume breakfast at the college's dining hall because they want to lose weight.	77 (21.4%)	38 (10.6%)	80 (22.3%)	88 (24.5%)	76 (21.2%)

### Interview Responses by Tutors (Qualitative Data)

The objective of the study was to examine the causes of low patronage of breakfast meals by student-teachers at the Al-Faruq College of Education by providing the tutor's responses to the question: "What are the causes of low patronage of breakfast meals by student-teachers at the Al-Faruq College of Education?"

#### Tutor "A" (Dining Hall Master of the College)

When asked whether student-teachers exempt themselves from breakfast meals, the participant indicated that a good number of them do exempt themselves (Yes). Again, when asked why they exempt themselves, he reported the following:

*Time of taking the breakfast: when I say the time of taking the breakfast I mean, the students are coming from different cultural backgrounds, as a result, some of them take*

*their breakfast as early as 6 O'clock, 7 O'clock, 8 am, anything after 8 O'clock, they seem it to be hunger, so if you serve the students with their breakfast at 9 O'clock, which is normally done at the Al-Faruq College of Education, some had already taken their breakfast, so definitely, they will skip the breakfast served in the dining hall. Another reason why student-teachers usually skip breakfast in the dining hall is the quantity of breakfast. When I say the quantity of the breakfast, there are some them when they are taking their breakfast, they take it in the quantity that satisfies them. So assuming a student-teacher goes outside to buy food for breakfast, he or she can buy the quantity that satisfies him or her. But being in an academic environment where he or she may not get that quantity sometimes makes them skip the breakfast served in the dining hall.*

*Another reason why some students skip dining halls is the quality of breakfast. If the quality of the breakfast is compromised, there is no way you can get the students to*



*patronize the breakfast in the dining hall. When I talk of quality, I want to compare it to the kind of breakfast they take in their various homes. Do not underrate the students because some of them take breakfast that is rich in quality. But when they are in an academic environment where they are not served the kind of quality meal that they want, I don't think they will patronize the dining hall. They will be skipping it all the time every morning.*

*Preference of the student is another cause of low patronage of breakfast on campus. When I say preference of the student, I mean, there are some of the students who prefer a particular meal or a particular*

### **Tutor “B” (Hall Mistress)**

Regarding whether student-teacher exempts themselves from breakfast meals, the participant indicated in the affirmation that a good number of them do exempt themselves. When asked to explain the reasons why student-teachers skip breakfast meals served in the College's dining hall, the participant stated the following:

*Student teachers skip breakfast meals especially during examination week because they are so engrossed in their studies and by the time they realize that it is time for breakfast they feel that time has elapsed. Again, out of sickness, some student-teachers skip breakfast because they do not have the appetite to consume such meals. Peer influence also contributes to the*

*breakfast to be served. For instance, if breakfast is served on Wednesday (porridge is served on Wednesday) and I don't like porridge, on that Wednesday definitely, I won't go to the dining hall. The preference of the students also matters. The health needs of the student-teachers. Some students are diabetic patients, some students have hypertension, and some students have health-related problems. Those student-teachers don't take pepper or sugar, so they want their breakfast to be sugar-free. So now tell me, what breakfast served in the dining hall doesn't contain pepper, that doesn't have sugar in it? It is as a result of health problems that some of them skip breakfast.*

*skipping of breakfast meals by student-teachers, especially when they realize that some of their friends do not get to the dining hall for breakfast. Some student-teachers who skip breakfast in the College's dining hall complain of shyness. Some student-teachers also skip breakfast when they are not in school as a result of either they are on exeat or have left the school unceremoniously.*

### **Tutor “C” (Quality Assurance Officer)**

When asked whether some student-teachers exempt themselves from breakfast meals in the College's dining hall, the participant answered “Yes”. When asked why student-teachers exempt themselves from breakfast meals in the College's dining hall, the participant stated the following:

*The quality of the food; when the quality of the food is low, they do not patronize breakfast served in the dining hall. The quantity of the food; since they are not kids, when they realize that the quantity of the breakfast served is less and would not satisfy them, they will rather not go there to waste their time. They will instead go to the food vendors and buy food from them to get satisfied. Also, when the breakfast is served late, they patronize those of food vendors in order to attend class on time. When their preferred meal is not served during breakfast, they will not show up in the dining hall during breakfast time. They will rather stay in their dormitories and eat from the provisions. When they have enough provisions in their rooms, they will not waste their time and go there. Moreover, they are not allowed to bring food to their dormitories, so they, especially the ladies who feel shy to eat outside will feed on their provisions and will not show up in the dining hall for breakfast.*

*Poor timing of breakfast meals served in the College's dining hall. Considering the time, they go to class and when they go for breakfast, it is not favourable to students and as a result find alternative means of satisfying their hunger, thereby skipping breakfast meals served in the College's dining hall. The condition of the dining hall is very poor. Currently, the College does not have a dining hall. The College's mosque now doubles as the College's dining hall and auditorium. This multi-purpose use of*

*the facility makes the place crowded and unkempt.*

## Conclusion

The study also revealed that the causes of low patronage of breakfast meals by student-teachers in the dining hall of the Al-Faruq College of Education were late serving of breakfast, low quantity of the breakfast meals served, poor quality of the breakfast served, disregard of student-teachers breakfast preference, disregard of the health needs and considerations of the student-teachers, certain conditions such as examinations periods, early part of semester when they have just arrived from home, incidence of sickness, peer group influence, problem of shyness, absence from school, having enough provisions, unkempt nature of the dining hall, not being hungry in the morning, maintenance of body shape and loss of weight (in the case of female student-teachers), preference for heavy breakfast instead of light ones, consumption of breakfast making student-teachers dull or sleep in the mornings, Tastelessness of meals, monotonous nature of breakfast meals and too much of certain ingredients such as sugar/salt/pepper etc. in the meals.

## Recommendations

- Continuous education of kitchen staff on hygiene and preparation of quality breakfast meals will boost student-teachers confidence to consume such meals.
- Construction of a new dining hall, provision and maintenance of a conducive dining hall environment coupled with the

serving of breakfast at convenient times will encourage student-teachers to patronize breakfast meals served in the dining hall of the College.

c. Finally, the provision of different varieties of breakfast meals will motivate students to consume such meals.

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