

HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE EATING BEHAVIOUR DETERMINANTS IN ALTO MINHO STUDENTS

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Abstract

The transition to healthier and more sustainable food systems should start at the beginning of food education, in which parents/guardians play a key role. However, when starting school, the school plays a crucial role, as in some European countries, the main meal and snack are eaten at school. Establishing healthy and sustainable eating habits at school age is very important as it helps to prevent obesity, chronic diseases and not least the role of awareness of the pressure that food systems put on ecosystems. Studies on the internal and external factors that lead to healthier and/or sustainable food consumption in the student population are still scarce.

We purpose a conceptual model based in Social Cognitive Theory, Health Belief Model and Theory of Planned Behavior. The research will take place in school groups and non-grouped schools belonging to the 10 municipalities of Alto Minho (114 pre-school schools, 85 1st cycle schools, 26 2nd cycle schools, 33 3rd cycle schools and 32 secondary schools). In September 2023, a questionnaire will be applied, which will be completed online, sent to the management of the school groups and non-grouped schools in Alto Minho. All ethical procedures will be complied with as established by IPVC and schools, as well as guaranteeing the protection of data of all respondents, which will only be used for statistical purposes.

This study aims to understand which internal and external factors influence healthy and sustainable eating behavior in students from school in the ten municipalities of Alto Minho.

We expect that the results will show differences between students living in mountain, sea or city located municipalities. On the other hand, personal factors/skills and perceived benefits of healthy and sustainable food are expected to positively influence behavioral beliefs and these in turn have a positive influence on intention to change eating behavior leading to healthier and more sustainable behavior.

This study makes empirical and theoretical contributions, testing the relationship between internal and external factors and healthy and sustainable Dietary Behaviour. Moreover, this study was conducted in Alto Minho, Portugal, where these issues have not been researched jointly before. The results will directly contribute to providing a scientific basis for informing

dietary advice that can be used by different food system actors at the meso level to empower individuals to adopt healthier and more sustainable dietary behaviours.

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