



# The Importance of Food Education

## — the Roles of School Cafeterias to Awakening Students' Eating Habits —

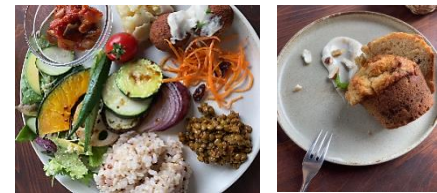
KEY WORDS: Food Education, School Cafeterias, Students' Eating Habits

### [ INTRODUCTION ]

Do you have a balanced meal on a day to day basis? In our seminar, we have learned about food and culture. We had been to a vegan restaurant as one of the seminar's activities. We thought that the food had a lack of protein but that's not true. Instead of using meat, plant based protein such as soybeans and tofu are used in the vegan meatballs. Unexpectedly, vegan meals are well balanced in nutrition. Then, we wanted to know whether the meals in our school cafeteria are well-balanced or not. We did the research on our school cafeteria by asking 150 students in our school, and got 143 answers. Why did we focus on our school cafeteria? It is because we think the cafeteria has an important role — **"Food education."**

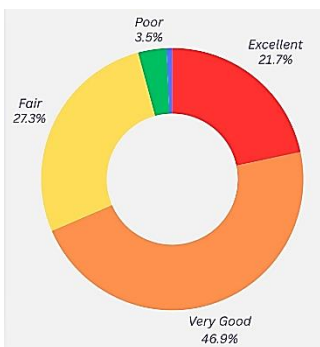
According to the Shokuiku Basic Act, food education has some aspects. One of the important roles is, through the education, we should gain an ability to choose what to eat in the view of nutrition in a comfortable environment. We strongly believe that school cafeteria must be the place for students to learn food education.

A vegan diet is an eating pattern based solely on plant foods and avoids all foods from animal sources

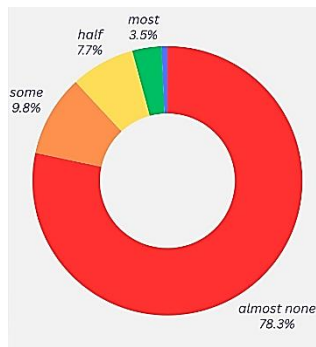


### [ METHODS and RESULT ]

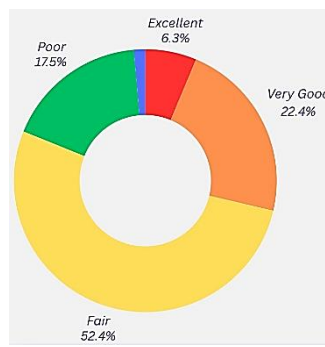
According to the result of the questionnaire, most students are pleased with the quality of the school meals. And surprisingly, nearly 80% of the students who use our school cafeteria don't leave any food. That means they are satisfied with their meals in the cafeteria. On the other hand, we didn't get positive answer on students' manners there. According to students' comments, a lot of students feel uncomfortable due to the long lines, the long waiting time and students' bad manners while waiting. Regarding nutrition, about 60 percent of the students have never seen the nutritional facts. Also, we found that only 30 percent of students choose their lunch based on nutrition. We think students should pay more attention to their nutrition.



[ MENU ]



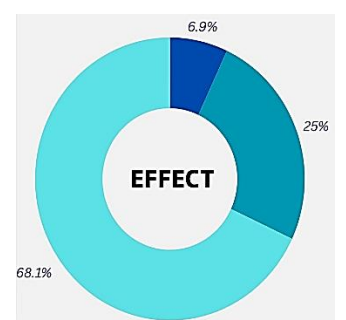
[ LEFTOVER ]



[ MANNERS ]



(LEFT: Very often 6.3%, Sometimes 34.3%, Never 59.4%)



(RIGHT: High 6.9%, Moderate 25%, Low 68.1%)

### [ NUTRITIONAL FACTS ]

### [ CONCLUSION ]

According to the results of the research, there are two types of problems. The first problem is an environmental one. Many students use the school cafeteria at their lunch time, so that makes the waiting time for meals longer. Because many students buy the lunch tickets at lunch time, it takes even longer. The second is a nutritional one. Most of the students do not pay attention to the nutritional facts, and there is a concern about the lack of nutrients because students tend to choose their meal based on their preference.

Now, we would like to suggest a **"basic plate."** First off, we divide the dishes into four colored sections based on four main nutrient—protein, carbs (fats), minerals, and vitamins. Then, students select and order one dish from each color online. The orders will be sent to the cafeteria, and staff can prepare the students' meals in advance. Finally, students can take their meal without waiting long. With this system, students would be able to eat well-balanced meals. They also could check their past orders to know what nutrients they have had each month. There are a lot of benefits for both students and staff, so we strongly believe that introducing the "basic plate" system would improve the school cafeteria in terms of food education.

