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**PERCEPTION OF CORRELATION BETWEEN HUMAN HEALTH AND HEALTHY NUTRITION BY YOUNG CONSUMERS IN GEORGIA****Babulia MGHEBRISHVILI,***Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgia**[babulia.mgebrishvili@tsu.ge](mailto:babulia.mgebrishvili@tsu.ge)***Nino POLETAEVA***Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgia***Abstract**

*In the article, the authors attempt to demonstrate that healthy nutrition is the solution to not only individuals', but also of the wide society's problems, as, in their opinion, human health directly depends on healthy nutrition. Only healthy individual is able to perform his/her obligations to his/her family and general society – states the article. In the authors opinion, to make decision on switching to healthy nutrition, the individual should see and properly perceive correlation of health with the consumed food products and diet regime. The authors regards that individual should understand the need of collection of information about food products for consumption and gaining of required knowledge, also, be aware in dangers caused by consumption of unhealthy food consumption for human health. On the basis of the results of conducted survey, the article admits that most young people of Georgia has information about healthy nutrition and they have positive attitude to healthy diet. In addition, they understand dependence of human health on the consumed food products. Though, in the author's opinion, irrespective of the young people's proper attitude to healthy nutrition, in some cases, they have unhealthy diet. This fact indicates that there is need to provide more information about benefits of healthy nutrition to them and the specialists should be actively involved in this. Discussing the healthy nutrition in wide respect, the authors regards that each individual must take care about his/her health and the healthy nutrition should be the starting point. In this way, he/she will be able to be the full capacity member of the society and make his/her contribution to sustainable development, to achieve the goals set by the country.*

**Keywords:** *Healthy nutrition, health, consumer, perception***JEL Classification:** *I10, I11, I12, I18***I. INTRODUCTION**

Society's attention has always been focused on healthy nutrition, as proper nutrition is vital for maintaining good health and well-being (Edris Nury, 2023). Society's attitude to nutrition became particularly active in the recent period, with expanding the scales of production and sale of unhealthy food. This was conditioned by many factors. Among these factors, first of all, we should mention active use of the fertilizers in agriculture, expansion of use of food additives in food production, increase of genetically modified products at market. In such conditions, the consumers should clearly understand that with a focus on whole, nutrient-dense foods and healthy eating habits, we can nourish our bodies and minds, paving the way for a vibrant and fulfilling life (Edris Nury 2023). It is necessary that the people properly perceive the substance of interrelation between good health and healthy nutrition. This, in turn, requires proper awareness of wide masses of the consumers about the issues of healthy nutrition necessity and dependence of good health on healthy nutrition. All these require activation of work of the people with relevant competences and bodies, in the sphere of the society's awareness in interrelation of good health and healthy nutrition.

**II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

To clarify the consumers' attitude to the problems of healthy nutrition and good health, their direct interrelations, there were applied general research methods, particularly analysis and synthesis and of the marketing methods, we applied observation and survey. By online marketing method, there were questioned 196 people. Observations were conducted with significant number of individuals. Proper attention was paid to studying of the

literature dealing with these issues. In the process of work on this Article, we relied on the published works by various authors about the mentioned problem, as well as on our ones that have plaid the role of theoretical-methodological basis for this article.

### III. RESEARCH RESULTS

Dealing with the healthy nutrition problem, in our opinion, primarily, mostly depends on individuals. The way, the consumers perceive interrelations between nutrition and health, can directly affect the situation, with respect of production and sale of healthy foods/ People. By their reasonable behavior, can contribute to the pieces of healthy food production and sale. This will take place, if they will be oriented towards sustainable consumption of healthy products and thus perform the role of contributors of sustainable development. I.e., the consumers should understand that making choice in favor of healthy products in the buying process, they support the companies with social responsibility in further expansion and profitable operation (Mghebrishvili B., 2019). Supposedly, the population has the opportunity to push the businesses to operate with social responsibility and this should be necessarily utilized (Mghebrishvili B., Urotadze E., Veshaguri M., 2022). But for this, great majority of people need information in simple and easily understandable language about healthy qualities of the products, their testing means, possibilities for stimulation of businesses' development in proper orientation. Relevant specialists should convince the consumers that overall, switching from irresponsible consumption to sustainable consumption is up to them (Kotler Ph. & Armstrong G., 2018). Work of the enterprises with social responsibility, on one hand, increases the costs and on the other – improves attitude of the employees, consumers and entire society to the enterprise's activities. In such situation, irrespective of increase of costs, the situation is favorable for profitable operation (Mghebrishvili B. & Urotadze E., 2021). But the representatives of the businesses also need reminding/convincing, relying on the relevant arguments that operation with social responsibility is beneficial for them as well.

Currently, actually all are aware that chemicals are extensively used for yielding of the agricultural products [28]. And this is one of the causes that healthy nutrition is a significant problem in modern Georgia (Todua, N., 2019). Significant part of the population does not pay attention to the quantity of nitrates in the agricultural products. Though, it could be said that even most of the people, for whom healthy food is significant, are not aware how to measure content of nitrates in the food. And today, there is such possibility. Measurement device by Green test, allow measurement of nitrates content in the fruits and vegetables in three seconds. But this device is not known to Georgian population and for most of them its price is too high. Relevant structures should perform effective measures for activation of its use.

For making decision on switching to healthy nutrition by certain individual, it is required that there was positive attitude to healthy nutrition in the society. Social marketing, as innovative and effective form of solving social problems should play active role in this (Todua, N. & Jashi. Ch., 2018). It is good that most of our respondents showed positive (71%) or neutral (23%) to healthy nutrition. Minority of the respondents (6%) either showed negative attitude to healthy nutrition or they could not formulate their opinion in this respect. Presence of positive attitude to healthy nutrition in most people provide significant opportunities to deal with the problem of healthy nutrition.

To switch to healthy nutrition, it is significant that the individual had belief that he/she is a "Lord's" temple" and his/her obligation is to take care about his/her own health, similar to the environment and other people (Mghebrishvili, B., 2019).

And for this, it is needed that the individual clearly understood:

- ✓ Reality of direct correlation between health and consumed food;
- ✓ Need of collection of information about the products used for consumption as a food;
- ✓ Need of gaining of knowledge about indicators of healthiness of the food products;
- ✓ Dangers to human health conditioned by consumption of unhealthy food products;
- ✓ Need for seeking the new ways for healthy nutrition.

Making decision on switching to healthy nutrition, first of all, depends on understanding interrelation between healthy food and good health. People should make sure that maintenance of good health is directly related with nutrition. This is about both, healthy food and proper dietary regime. It turned out that Georgian young people are aware in these issues. At a time of survey, some of them fully agreed (30%), agreed (45%) or partially agreed (19%) with the views about interrelation between human health and the diet. Only minority of the surveyed respondents (6%) did not share this view, as they cannot see correlation between nutrition and health. Naturally, the fact that most young people understand the correlation between human health and the diet, should be assessed positively. The basis for this is the currently existing situation, with respect of their awareness. According to the self-evaluation of

the respondents, the level of their awareness, with respect of healthy nutrition, is very high (29%), high (23%) or average (43%). Only small part of the respondents evaluate their awareness in the healthy nutrition issues as low (5%) or very low (2%). Part of the respondents named as the source of their awareness the specialists (14%). Share of the family members, friends and other sources, according to the survey results, in total number of the surveyed, amounted to only 14%. Naturally, information obtained from the internet and mass media, to certain extent, is from the specialists and this should be positively assessed. And still, it is desirable that the specialists became more active, among the sources of information for the society. Firstly, information from the specialists is more trustworthy for the people and secondly, the specialists provide adequate advice, with respect of healthy nutrition.

In our opinion, awareness, in addition to understanding of correlation between health and nutrition, should include as the initial stage of readiness, to switching to healthy nutrition. To make decision on switching to healthy nutrition, only passive possession of relevant information is not sufficient. Certain knowledge should be gained about the healthy products and their benefits for human body. Marking of the products is very useful for gaining of such information, as the labels contain significant information about product ingredients and its good qualities (Mghebrishvili B. and Urotadze E., 2016; Todua N., 2019). Conducted survey showed that Georgian young people are aware in benefits of healthy nutrition. Slightly more than half of the respondents (53%) regard that healthy food is the guarantee of human health. In the opinion of about one fourth of the surveyed, healthy food make people more energetic and hence more productive. It was clarified that for the significant part of the surveyed (51%), healthy nutrition means consumption of the products that are good for health. Relatively small part of the respondents (20%) regards that healthy nutrition provides healthy and cheerful life and for the smaller part (15%), this implies abstaining from consumption of the fast food products. Part of the respondents (7%) knows that healthy nutrition is possible only by consumption of ecologically pure food products. Also small part of the respondents (4%) associated healthy nutrition with human life expectancy. They regard that healthy food provides long life. Hence, among Georgian young people, there is proper attitude to healthy nutrition. This is very good, but observations on operation of fast food entities show that in real life, young people behave differently. The fast food facilities are always overloaded with the consumers. In addition, according to our observations, quite frequently, young people do not or cannot follow the dietary regime as well. And still, it is pleasant and should be evaluated positively that Georgian young people have positive attitude to healthy nutrition.

It should be mentioned as well that healthy nutrition prevent excessive weight and this is the best way for maintaining active lifestyle and health. Part of Georgian young people can see this positive outcome of healthy nutrition/ Part of the respondents (17%) emphasized that healthy diet allows control of individual's weight.

Young generation has information about unhealthy food products as well. They (25% of the respondents) know that popularity of unhealthy food products is conditioned by the food additives that add to the meals the best taste qualities. Young people (21% of the respondents) have information that by consumption of unhealthy food products, people become dependent on them and this is not desirable. While consuming unhealthy food products, Georgian young people and, generally, the wide society, to some extent, offer excuses. In this respect, in the process of questioning, we would mention the following reasons: lack of time, motivating people to frequently consume fast food products; easy availability of the unhealthy food products; acceptable level of services at the fast food entities. In our opinion, people are able to have healthy food, if they desire. Though, this requires more efforts and mobilization. We cannot share the view that the unhealthy products are easily available to the people. In Georgia, prices of these products are quite high and significant part of the people cannot buy them. So, in our opinion, visiting fast food entities became some kind of "fashion" and in most cases, this is not related to the prices and affordability of products in such entities.

As mentioned above, the adolescents and young people, irrespective of whether they are aware in substance of healthy nutrition and its benefits or not, extensively consume fast food products. Frequently, this is due to the taste qualities of the products. For some reason, they prefer the taste of products bought at the fast food entities, rather than meals prepared at home. For them, instant satisfaction is more significant than long-term benefits. All above allow us to offer than the young people have incomplete knowledge about healthy nourishment and its relation to health. Relevant specialists and mass media should work more to ensure better awareness of the society in the healthy nourishment issues. The people need the specialist's explanation that the whole grains, lean proteins, fruits, vegetables and healthy fats should form the foundation of our diet (Yarmolinsky, J., 2023). After gaining awareness from the specialists, the people will show interest to healthy nutrition and they will find the ways to switch to healthy nutrition. Answers to the question about the respondents's opinion about what could cause interest of the wide masses of young people in healthy nutrition showed that this would be increase of the range of healthy food products, ensuring their affordability, with respect of price, in time and space (46% of the respondents). Survey confirmed our offer about necessity of providing more information dealing with healthy nutrition to the society. Significant part of the respondents (42%) stressed necessity of providing more information, to cause interest of

young people to healthy nutrition. In the opinion of some respondents (10%), implementation of frequent discount policies for the products good for health can greatly contribute to achievement of the society's interest in healthy nutrition.

We should emphasize the fact that absolute majority of the respondents (64%) regard that their food is healthy, one fourth (25%) of them regard that their food is partially healthy. And all above, where the fast food entities actively operate at market and frequently people even have no any information about healthiness of agricultural products. Therefore, it would be reasonable to offer that some people are not properly aware in the substance of healthiness of products and healthy nutrition and cannot distinguish between good, pleasant and desired products. Today, quite many people have to violate the dietary regime, this greatly impacts the nutrition process and hence – the health status. In addition, quite significant number of respondents (44%) pays less attention to the benefits from the food, though, attempts to take into consideration this factor in their diet. Some respondents (6%) does not think about benefits gained from the food at all. For them, the main thing is that the food was delicious. The fact that for about half (49%) of the respondents the most important is the benefit from the food, should be assessed positively. Regarding this information, stating by the respondents that their food is healthy, is far from reality, to some extent.

For healthy nutrition, the healthy food products should exist at market and this is the obligation of businesses, according to the law. In Georgia, to ensure food safety, there were developed and operate the laws harmonized with EU legislation: Law of Georgia Product Safety and Free Movement Code [Legislative Herald of Georgia (2012)]; Law of Georgia Food Product / Animal Food Safety Veterinary and Plant Protection Code (Legislative Herald of Georgia (2012)); Law of Georgia on Environment Protection (Legislative Herald of Georgia (1996)); Law of Georgia Wastes Management Code [Legislative Herald of Georgia (2014)]. Legislation is permanently refined and becomes more and more perfect. In the opinion of the most of respondents (61%), products available at Georgian market provide possibility of healthy nutrition. Much less respondents (17-34%) regard that it does not. Part of the respondents (22%) could not state their opinions in this respect. According to our observations, currently, quantity of local agricultural products is reduced, compared with the earlier periods. In our opinion, this is not good and indicate that Georgian agriculture faces certain problem. Rural population is decreasing and reduction of the quantities of local agricultural products is a phenomenon accompanying this process. According to National Statistical Service, in 2015, Georgian population was 3721.9 thousand, by 2020, it was 3716.9 thousand and in 2023 – to 3736.4 thousand. Population increase, in the recent period, took place only in the urban areas. For example, in 2015, population of Georgian cities was 2135.6 thousand and 1586.3 thousand people lived in the rural areas. By 2020, these figures achieved 2194.5 thousand people in urban and 1522.4 thousand people in rural areas. By 2023, urban population increased and rural population still decreased and respectively achieved 2255.7 and 1480.6 thousand people. Decrease of rural population is associated with external, as well as internal migration and increase of urban population, in our opinion, was conditioned by the wars in Ukraine and Israel. Measures should be taken in this respect, to revive rural life. This, in turn, requires activation of the governmental bodies.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

Healthy nutrition is not a separate, standalone problem facing people that must be solved by them. A person is a member of the society and he/she has certain obligations to it. To perform these obligations, he/she needs to be healthy and healthy nutrition plays very significant role in achievement of health. That's why people attempt to have healthy food. And for this, the state takes care about providing proper conditions for people, to ensure their healthy nutrition. Healthy nutrition, by playing its role in ensuring human health, provides condition for sustainable development, and in the sustainable development provide opportunities to the people to have healthy food, be healthy and take care about further development of the society and achievement of sustainable development goals (Mghebrishvili B. and Keshelashvili G., 2023). As a rule, middle aged and aged people pay greater attention to healthy nutrition than young people. Therefore, certain steps should be made for causing interest of young people to healthy nutrition. For this purpose, all means of social marketing should be extensively used, including marking of the food products, useful information, based on which, Georgian consumers could follow healthy lifestyle (Todua N., 2019). In addition, we regard that the following would be reasonable: providing knowledge about healthy nutrition in young people, through further improvement of their awareness; promotion of involvement of the relevant structural units of the state authorities, activation of the specialists; making more active steps for regulation of the nitrates in the food products by the relevant bodies; support to revival of Georgian villages and production of the ecologically pure products by the state authorities; improvement of the social responsibility of businesses, with respect of manufacturing healthy products and their sale.

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