

Project Outcomes I Campus Menu and Perception Assessment

EAT LOCAL
EAT SEASONAL
EAT REAL

MEDDIET
- MENUS 4 CAMPUS -

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Objectives

- To analyse **students' perceptions of the canteen services and its food offer.**
- To verify **students' knowledge and readiness** to comply with a Mediterranean Diet (MD) menu.
- To explore **how individual characteristics influence students' perceptions of canteens and knowledge of the MD.**

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Participants



1614 university students



n = 500



n = 604



n = 510



71.2%



26.6%



average age of **22.4 years old**
(SD = 5.27)



76.7% full-time university students



85.1% pursuing an undergraduate degree



26.8% on Life Sciences



23.6% on Formal Sciences

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Instruments

Online questionnaire (Qualtrics) to assess students' perceptions of their university canteens and the Mediterranean Diet (available in 4 languages).

Sociodemographic
screening

Health status
screening

Dietary practices
scale

Perceptions about food services and offers in campus canteens
scale

- NET promotion score
- Willingness to pay

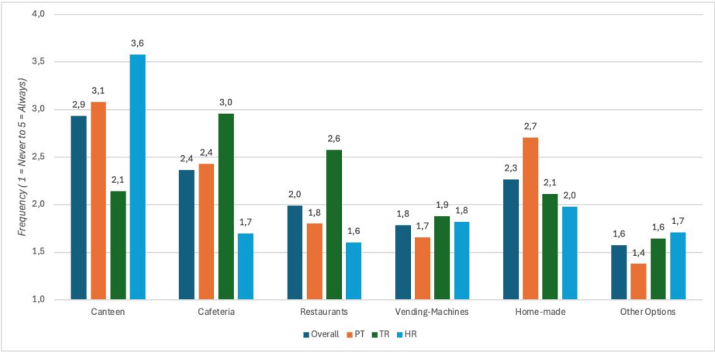
Mediterranean Diet
Adherence
index

Mediterranean Diet
Knowledge scale &
Information seeking

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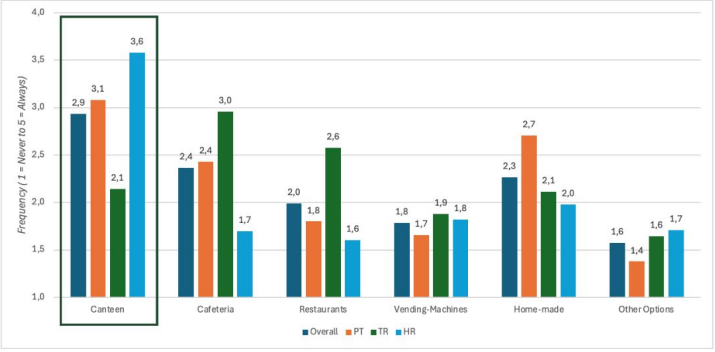
Results

Dietary Practices on Campus



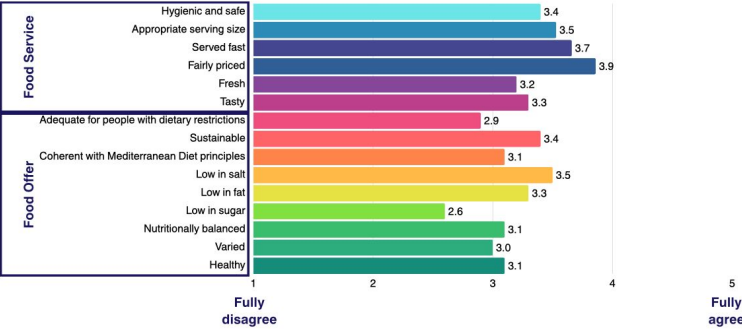
Results

Dietary Practices on Campus



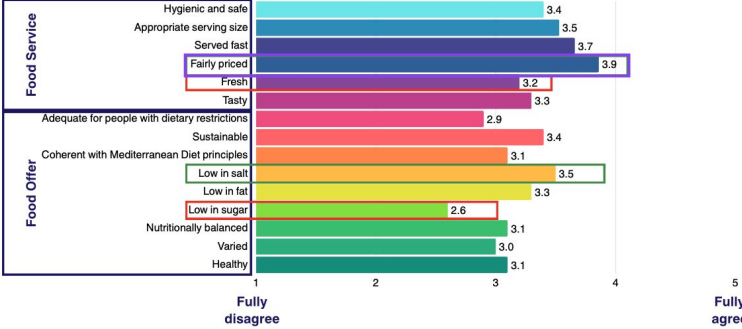
Results

Canteen Appraisal



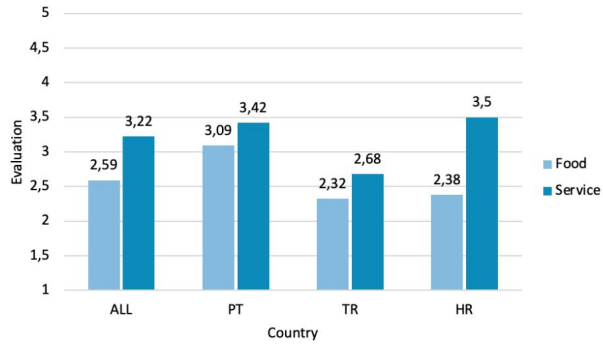
Results

Canteen Appraisal



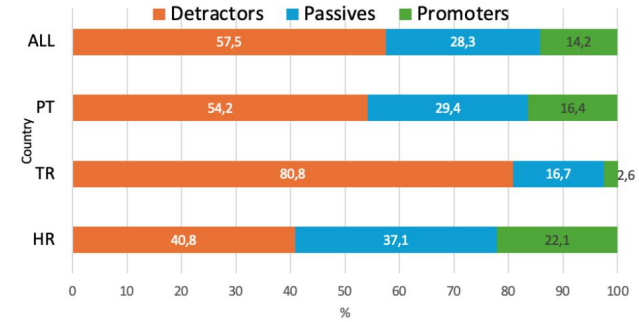
Results

Interaction between Canteen Appraisal Dimensions and Country



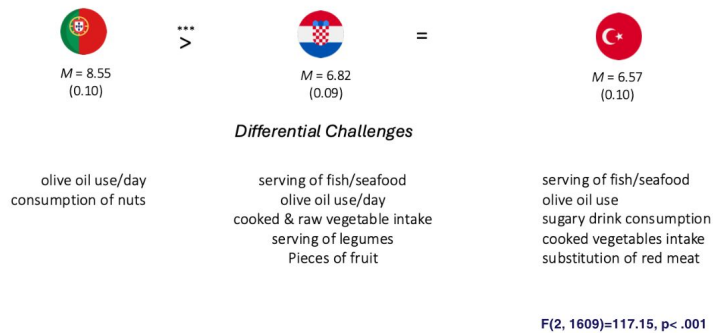
Results

Net Promoter Score: Overall and per Country



Results

MD Adherence: PrediMed



Focus Group

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Objectives

- Understand **students' daily eating practices** and **identify factors influencing their food choices**.
- Explore **students' experiences and perceptions of the quality, accessibility, and appeal of the food** provided by university canteens.
- Assess the **level of awareness, understanding, and personal significance of the Mediterranean Diet** among university students.
- Explore students' views regarding the **feasibility and potential benefits or challenges of adopting the Mediterranean Diet** within academic environments.



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Participants



66 Portuguese university students



35 received course credits



31 were compensated with a 15€ voucher



snowball sampling → recruited through social networks (i.e. Instagram, WhatsApp)

Inclusion Criteria

- Be **full-time university students** enrolled in day courses
- Have **lived in Portugal** for at least two years
- Be **fluent in Portuguese**

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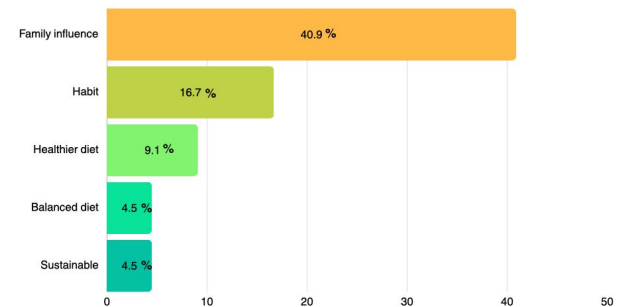
Procedure

- The focus groups were conducted with a **maximum of 8 participants per session**, each lasting **approximately 90 minutes**.
- The sessions were systematically **moderated by the same researchers to ensure standardisation**.
- Used a **semi-structured script**, covering topics such as students' eating habits, their experiences and perceptions of university canteen services, their knowledge of and adherence to the Mediterranean Diet and their perceptions of its implementation in academic environments.
- All data was analysed with MAXQDA.

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Results

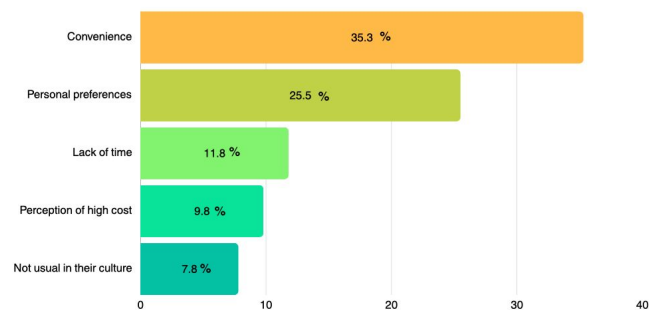
Students' Reasons to Choose a Mediterranean Diet



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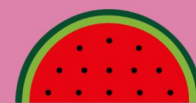
Students' Reasons Not to Choose a Mediterranean Diet



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Results

Students' Perception of Mediterranean Diet Dishes Developed by a Chef



Theme	Subtheme	N	Examples
General Positive Reactions	Visual appealing	10	"They all look good"
	Opportunity to try new dishes	4	"It was also a great way to introduce people to food they didn't know".
	Innovative	3	"I think I'd end up choosing them too, because they're a far cry from what we normally eat here in the canteen"
General Negative Reactions	Personal preferences	3	"It's just that there are a lot of things I've never got used to eating, so I can't eat them."
	Not usual dishes	3	"People don't know what it is, I don't know if they would choose to try it and them starve if they didn't like it."

Focus Group Conclusions

- **Family influence** → The main reason to adopt the MD, especially when food choices are made by other family members.
- Students recognise health benefits as a reason to adopt this diet.
- **Convenience** → The main barrier since there is a perception that other foods are easier to cook and take less time.
- The cost of food is also important, because **this diet is perceived as expensive** (e.g., olive oil, fish).

- **Visual appeal** is a key driver of positive perceptions about MD dishes. This aligns with previous research, highlighting the impact of food presentation on taste expectations and consumption (Zellner et al., 2010).
- These new dishes are also seen as an **opportunity to try new foods** and **innovative** compared to the usual offer.



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Acknowledgments

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Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia





Thank you for your attention

For further details and information:



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