

Abstract

Although fruit and vegetable consumption is protective against the development of overweight and related health problems, consumption remains low among elementary school students. This process and impact evaluation assessed both implementation and outcomes of our K-6 Harvest of the Month (HOTM) program. Teachers (n=344) from 60 schools in 15 school districts completed a survey in both 2009 and 2010. Scores for outcome Likert statements were compared between Lower (LI, < 66% of all HOTM program activities), and Higher Implementers (HI, ≥ 66%). More than 62% of teachers reported using each of the three most preferred components of the HOTM program (fruit/vegetable tastings, educator newsletters, and parent newsletters) at least eight out of nine possible times per year. Among HI teachers, the remaining two program components (workbooks, farmer of the month flyer) were implemented at least seven times per year. As expected, Likert scores for outcome behaviors and teacher perceptions were highest for the HI group. Statistically significant differences were found between Likert means for six of the nine outcome variables for the LI group compared to the HI group. Outcome variables receiving the highest level of agreement include: “students are receptive to tasting/eating vegetables,” “students are receptive to tasting/eating fruits,” and “I limit high sugar, high fat foods in my classroom.” The mean score of all outcome variables was significantly lower for LI compared to the mean score for HI. Mean scores for outcome variables decreased significantly when program implementation level dropped below 66%.

Background

The teacher survey is used to assess effectiveness of network funded SCNAC activities.

Harvest of the Month (HOTM) activities include:

- 🍓 Fruit and vegetable tastings
- 🍓 Student work books
- 🍓 HOTM Book of the Month
- 🍓 Farmer of the Month flyer
- 🍓 Teacher and parent newsletters

Non-HOTM activities include:

- 🍓 School nutrition education assemblies
- 🍓 Breakfast and lunch week promotions
- 🍓 School-wide promotions such as Treats for Troops, Lunch Leagues, Walk and Bike to School, and TV-Turnoff Week

Purpose

The teacher survey was used to assess:

- 🍓 Level of SCNAC program implementation
- 🍓 Program impact at the student, classroom, and school levels

Hypothesis

There will be a significant difference in teacher survey program outcome responses between High Implementers (HI) and Low Implementers (LI).

Table 3: Teachers' Perceptions of Student, Classroom, and School Nutrition Related Attitudes and Practices by HOTM Implementation Level

Likert Statements for Outcome Variables	Higher Implementation Group* (n= 214)**	Lower Implementation Group* (n= 130)**	p-value
	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD	
Students demonstrate interest in improving their eating habits	4.1 ± 0.7	4.0 ± 0.7	.021
Students demonstrate interest in increasing their physical activity	4.1 ± 0.7	4.0 ± 0.7	.167
Students show less interest in drinking soda and sweet drinks	3.4 ± 0.9	3.3 ± 0.8	.388
Students are more receptive to tasting/eating vegetables	4.6 ± 0.6	4.4 ± 0.6	.003
Students are more receptive to tasting/eating fruits	4.7 ± 0.5	4.5 ± 0.6	.000
I do not use food as a reward in my classroom	3.7 ± 1.1	3.4 ± 1.1	.011
I limit high sugar, high fat foods in my classroom	4.3 ± 0.7	4.1 ± 0.8	.212
There has been a positive change to healthier classroom snacks	4.0 ± 0.8	3.8 ± 0.8	.046
My school is more supportive of healthy eating and activity patterns	4.2 ± 0.8	4.0 ± 0.8	.004

* Higher Implementers = Teachers implementing ≥66% of all activities of HOTM program.

Lower Implementers = Teachers implementing <66% of all activities of HOTM program.

** N varies by variable for implementation groups, i.e. Higher=211-214 and Lower=126-130.