

# Student Perception of Breakfast as a Support for Learning Concentration: A Qualitative Study of Grade V Students at State Elementary School 1 Tumpang

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## Keywords

Learning Concentration  
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## Abstract

Learning concentration is a crucial aspect of successful learning, especially for elementary school students who are in their cognitive development stage. One of the factors influence concentration is the habit of eating breakfast. This study aims to examine the perceptions of fifth-grade students at State Elementary School 1 Tumpang regarding breakfast as a support for learning concentration. The research method used is descriptive qualitative, with data collection techniques in the form of interviews with three students who have different breakfast habits. These three students were selected as the main informants based on the variation in their breakfast routines, with triangulation conducted through interviews with teachers and parents. The results of the study show that students who regularly eat breakfast demonstrate better concentration compared to those who do not. Positive perceptions of breakfast are associated with physical readiness and focus during learning, while negative perceptions lead to low energy and difficulty maintaining attention. This study highlights the important role of families and schools in fostering healthy breakfast habits as a strategic effort to improve the quality of student learning in elementary school.

## 1. Introduction

Learning concentration is a crucial aspect determining the success of the learning process, especially among elementary school students who are undergoing rapid cognitive development. At this developmental stage, the brain's ability to receive, process, and retain information is highly influenced by the students physical and psychological states. One factor that affects students' ability to concentrate is the habit of skipping before going to school.

Breakfast is more than just a morning routine it plays a vital role in maintaining energy balance and optimal brain function. Nutritional intake from breakfast such as complex carbohydrates, protein, vitamins, and minerals is essential to support brain activity. Students who skip breakfast are more likely to experience low energy, poor focus, and fatigue, which directly hinders the effectiveness of learning in the classroom.

Several prior studies have shown a positive correlation between breakfast habits and students learning concentration. For instance (Safaryani & Ma, 2017) revealed that students who regularly eat breakfast tend to have better concentration than those who do not. Similarly, (Suraya et al., 2019) found that breakfast improves children's cognitive functions including focus and memory. (Syarifah Ramadhani, 2019) also emphasized the significance of breakfast as a factor that supports energy stability and learning readiness in school.

Despite this, the implementation of healthy breakfast habits has not been fully optimized. Many students continue to neglect breakfast, often citing reasons such as lack of appetite, time constraints, or discomfort after eating in the morning. Others may not consider breakfast important due to limited awareness of its benefits. This reflects as perceptual barrier students may have access to food but still choose not to eat breakfast because of how they perceive its importance.

In addition, prior studies tend to focus more on the physiological benefits of breakfast or the statistical relationship between breakfast and academic outcomes, rather than on the students'

subjective perceptions and internal motivations. Research by (Damastuti et al., 2025), for example, highlights the cognitive stability of students who consistently eat breakfast, while (Gede Ariyasa et al., 2016) explores environmental factors such as family and school roles in shaping breakfast habits. However, these studies often lack in depth exploration of students' perspectives.

A more recent systematic review by (Nihayatur Rohmah et al., 2023) suggests that even when students are aware of the benefits of breakfast, their perceptions significantly influence the consistency of the habit. This indicates a gap in the literature regarding how students themselves view breakfast and its role in their learning concentration.

This study seeks to fill that gap by specially exploring the perceptions of fifth grade students at State Elementary School 1 Tumpang about breakfast and its relation to their learning concentration. Unlike most previous research that focuses on outcome measures or interventions, this research is grounded in Piaget's cognitive developments theory, which posits that children at this stage begin to think logically about concrete events, making them capable of understanding the importance of routines like breakfast. Moreover, motivational theories, such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs, suggest that physiological needs like foods must be fulfilled before higher order cognitive processes such as concentration can occur.

By focusing on student perceptions, this study is expected to contributed to both theoretical and practical understanding. Theoretically, it expands psychopedagogical discourse on learning readiness. Practically, the findings may serve as a foundation for schools and families to develop educational strategies and health policies that cultivate sustainable breakfast habits among students.

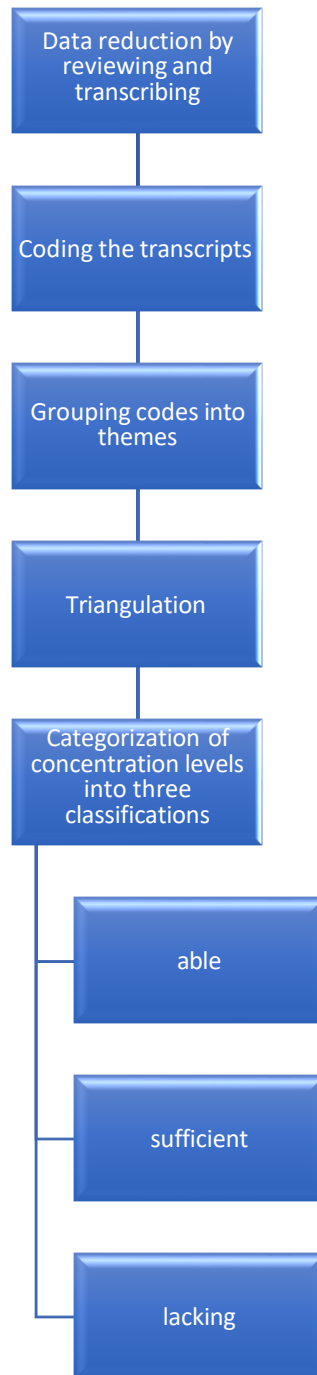
## 2. Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design aimed at exploring the relationship between breakfast habits and students' concentration during the learning process. The procedures are explained in detail below to ensure reproducibility. This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to explore students' perceptions of breakfast and its relationship with their ability to concentrate during the learning process. The research was conducted at State Elementary School 1 Tumpang on Saturday, April 12, 2025.

This population in this study consisted of fifth grade students with a purposive sample of three students selected based on variations in their breakfast habits. The inclusion criteria for participant selection were; students who consistently eat breakfast before school, students who sometimes skip breakfast, and students who rarely or never eat breakfast. This variation was intentionally selected to capture diverse perceptions and experiences regarding breakfast and its perceived effect on learning concentration.

Data collection was carried out through semi structured interviews, with students serving as the primary subjects. Interview questions explored their breakfast routines, reasons behind these habits, and personal learning experiences in the classroom. To ensure depth and triangulation of the data, additional interviews were conducted with the class teacher to gain insights into students learning behaviors and with the students' parents, to confirm patterns of breakfast habits at home.

The data analysis was conducted using a thematic analysis approach, which involved several steps:

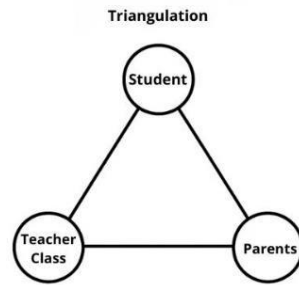


These categories were determined based on the students' own narratives and were further validated using observations and insights from teachers and parents.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Results

The results showed that there were variations in students' perceptions and experiences related to the importance of breakfast before learning. To strengthen the validity of the data, triangulation of sources from students, teachers, and parents was conducted.



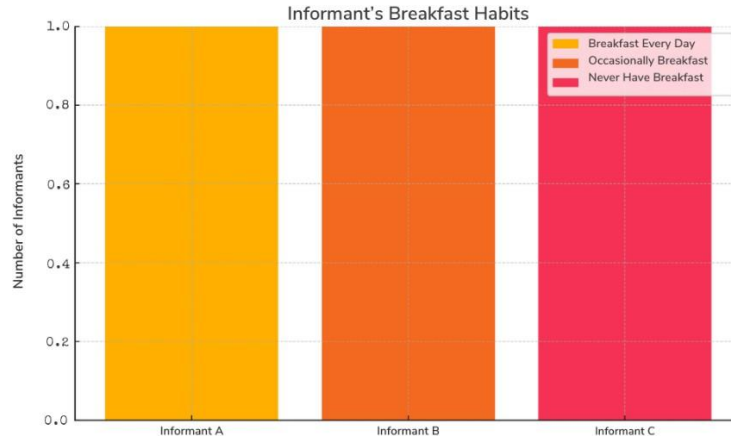
Picture 3.1 Data Source Triangulation.

Based on data analysis, students are grouped into three categories of ability to maintain concentration, namely being able to maintain learning concentration, moderately maintaining learning concentration, and not maintaining learning concentration, which is determined based on the source's personal experience narrative and reinforcement from triangulation data.

The category of students' ability to maintain concentration can be seen in the following table:

Table 3.1 Table Supporting Student Learning Concentration Based on Breakfast Patterns.

Student Categories	Concentration Categories	Captions	Data Reinforcement
A	Able	Breakfast regularly every morning, feel energized and focused when studying	Teacher: Actively ask questions and be enthusiastic Parents: Making breakfast a habit
B	Sufficient	Rarely have breakfast and feel weak in the middle of the lesson	Teacher: Sometimes unfocused Parents: Rarely eats breakfast
C	Lacking	Do not have breakfast, feel hungry, and have difficulty focusing during the lesson	Teacher: Lack of enthusiasm Parents: Didn't have time to prepare breakfast



Picture 3.2 Bar Chart of Informants' Breakfast Habits

Figure 3.2 shows a comparison of breakfast habits among the three informants. Informant A consistently eats breakfast, Informants B only eats breakfast occasionally or not regularly, and Informants C never eats breakfast. This pattern is consistent with the classification of learning concentration in Table 3.1. The diagram reinforces the connection between breakfast patterns and students' physical readiness and focus during the learning process.

The interview results for each student are explained as follows:

Student A is categorized as able to maintain concentration during lessons because of the habit of having breakfast every morning. He stated that he always feels more energized and is able to understand the lessons well after having breakfast.

"I prefer to study after breakfast. My stomach doesn't growl, and I can focus on learning in class. If I haven't had breakfast, my stomach hurts, and I can't focus on the lesson," (Interview, Student A, March 27, 2025).

The class teacher confirmed that Student A is one of the students who actively answers questions, rarely feels sleepy, and appears enthusiastic during the learning process. The student's parents also stated that their child is used to having breakfast, and they make sure the child has breakfast before going to school.

Student B is categorized as moderately able to maintain concentration. He does not always have breakfast because he reasons that his stomach often hurts after eating breakfast or he doesn't feel hungry. He mentioned that he can still follow the lessons, but he easily feels weak during the lesson.

"Sometimes I have breakfast, sometimes I don't. If I haven't had breakfast, I can still learn at first, but after a while, I feel weak and want to eat," (Interview, Student B, March 27, 2025).

The teacher mentioned that Student B is capable of following the lessons but there are moments when he appears unfocused. The parents admitted that their child rarely has breakfast.

Student C is categorized as struggling to maintain concentration during lessons because he does not have breakfast before going to school. He revealed that he often feels hungry during lessons, which makes it difficult for him to concentrate.

"I often don't have breakfast because I don't like it. In class, I feel hungry, so I want to go to the canteen," (Interview, Student C, March 27, 2025).

The teacher stated that this student often appears unmotivated. The parents also mentioned that they do not have time to prepare breakfast, so they just give him pocket money.

### 3.2 Discussion

Student A shows a high level of concentration during learning. He is used to having breakfast every morning and feels more prepared to follow lessons after eating. According to the interview, Student A stated that a full stomach helps him concentrate better and prevents hunger from becoming a distraction. He usually has breakfast around 6:00 a.m. before going to school, with a typical menu of rice, eggs, and a glass of milk or warm tea. The breakfast moment is also shared with his mother, which creates a supportive social interaction and helps him feel more motivated to start the day. This highlights that not only the type of food consumed but also the breakfast atmosphere plays a role in shaping students' mental readiness to learn.

The class teacher also observed that Student A actively answers questions and is rarely seen dozing off in class. The parents confirmed that their child has the habit of having breakfast every morning before going to school. This finding aligns with the opinion of (Supariasa, 2012), who emphasizes that breakfast contributes to maintaining nutritional status and supports cognitive function. Additionally, (Soekirman, 2000) also stresses that the brain needs energy intake in the morning to function optimally. The energy obtained from breakfast helps the brain absorb lessons more effectively.

In addition to nutrition, basic needs such as eating also play an important role in readiness for learn. (Tarwoto & Wartonah, 2010) emphasize that fulfilling basic needs like eating significantly affects a student's physical and mental readiness to receive learning material. Students who consume nutritious food before starting learning activities are physically more prepared, less likely to feel tired, and better able to maintain focus for longer periods. This condition is clearly reflected in Student A, who consistently shows enthusiasm and actively participates in class activities.

In contrast to Student A, Student B shows a moderate level of concentration. He rarely eats breakfast before school, citing reasons such as not feeling hungry in the morning or experiencing stomachaches after eating. Based on the interview, Student B can follow lessons well at the beginning of school day but tends to lose concentration after a few hours. The teacher observed that he starts becoming distracted around midday. The parents also admitted that their child has an inconsistent breakfast routine. In addition, student B's parents work early in the morning, which limits their ability to prepare breakfast or eat together. This illustrates a social factor that contributes to the inconsistency in breakfast habits.

This finding is supported by research from (Putu Sri Ratna Dewi et al., 2020) which shows that students with irregular breakfast patterns tend to experience a decline in focus. Research by (Hidayat & Nurhayati, 2021) also mentions that inconsistency in morning eating patterns correlates with decreased concentration stamina during the learning process.

Meanwhile, Student C shows a low level of concentration during learning. Student C admitted to skipping breakfast because he doesn't like eating in the morning. As a result, Student C often feels hungry during lessons and prefers to go to the canteen rather than pay attention to the lesson. The teacher noted that this student appeared less enthusiastic during learning, and the parents acknowledged that they struggled to prepare breakfast for their child. Financial constraints were cited as the main reason, as the family could not consistently afford to provide breakfast every day. This reflects an economic barrier in establishing healthy breakfast habits.

Research by (Mustikowati et al., 2022) supports this finding, showing that students who skip breakfast tend to experience fatigue more quickly and a decline in motivation to learn. This is reinforced by research (Mujahidah & Wahjuni, 2022), which states that skipping breakfast increases the risk of concentration disorders and a decline in academic performance.

The findings from all three students align with previous theories and research. (Supriyadi, 2018) emphasizes that adequate nutrition is a crucial foundation for students' physical and mental readiness to receive learning material. (Hananiya Pratiwi Khoirun Nisa et al., 2021) also

demonstrated a significant relationship between breakfast habits and student learning outcomes, particularly in subjects that require high concentration. Breakfast not only meets the body's basic needs but also directly supports academic success by enhancing focus and learning endurance.

In contrast, (Adolphus et al., 2015) found that children who regularly have breakfast show better concentration, cognitive speed, and working memory compared to those who skip breakfast. This is supported by (Fathimah Ahmad, n.d.) who indicates that the benefits of breakfast on concentration are not limited to childhood but continue into adulthood. These international findings complement the local findings in this study. However, unlike the study by (Kawabata et al., 2021), which emphasized the combined impact of breakfast and morning physical activity, the current research focused solely on eating patterns. It was found that local socio-economic conditions had a more significant effect on student readiness than physical activity factors. This suggests the importance of understanding contextual variables in interpreting the effects of breakfast.

Research from various international journals also strengthens this finding. (Kawabata et al., 2021) found that a combination of breakfast and physical activity in the morning significantly improves academic and cognitive performance in adolescents. Additionally, (Roberts et al., 2022) emphasized that preschool nutrition interventions, including breakfast habits, play a major role in the development of children's cognitive functions. On the other hand, a study by (Al Turki et al., 2019) showed that regular breakfast consumption is associated with better academic performance and cognitive function among elementary school children in Riyadh.

Therefore, this research highlights the importance of having breakfast in the morning as part of a strategy to improve student readiness for learning. Collaboration between schools and families is key to raising awareness about the importance of healthy and regular breakfasts. Schools can initiate educational programs about nutrition and health, while parents play a role in providing nutritious breakfasts before school. Through these concrete steps, it is hoped that a more productive learning environment can be created, supporting students' cognitive potential development optimally.

The findings also support the importance of providing healthy breakfast programs at the elementary school level. One example is the "free breakfast" policy implemented in inclusive schools in several developed countries. By directly understanding students' perceptions, school and education policymakers can design more targeted interventions based on the actual needs of students in the field. This becomes a strategic preventive step in addressing concentration disorders from an early age and indirectly contributes to improving the overall quality of primary.

### 3.3 Conclusion

Based on the research conducted at State Elementary School 1 Tumpang, it can be concluded that the habit of eating breakfast significantly affects students learning concentration. Students who regularly eat breakfast, such as Student A, showed better focus and enthusiasm during lessons, as observed by teachers and supported by parental feedback. Meanwhile, students who skipped or inconsistently ate breakfast, like student B and student C, experienced fatigue, hunger, and difficulty concentrating highlighting the role of breakfast in supporting cognitive readiness.

To address this issue, collaboration among teachers, parents, and students is essential. Schools can take concrete steps such as implementing nutrition education, launching breakfast awareness campaigns or even offering simple school-based breakfast programs, especially for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Parents should also receive guidance on preparing quick and nutritious breakfast to help their children be more prepared for learning each day.

For future research, it is recommended to involve a broader and more diverse group of participants and to examine the long-term impact of breakfast habits on academic performance. Including quantitative data such as test scores or attention span measurements could offer deeper insights into how biological and behavioral factors like eating habits influence learning outcomes in elementary education.

## Author Contributions

Welda Wahyu Andini: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Data Curation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

The author has read and approved the final manuscript.

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Declarations of interest: none.

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