

Can School Organic Food Policy Promote Healthy Behaviors in Danish Children?

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Can School Organic Food Policy Promote Healthy Behaviors in Danish Children?

Chen He, PhD student.

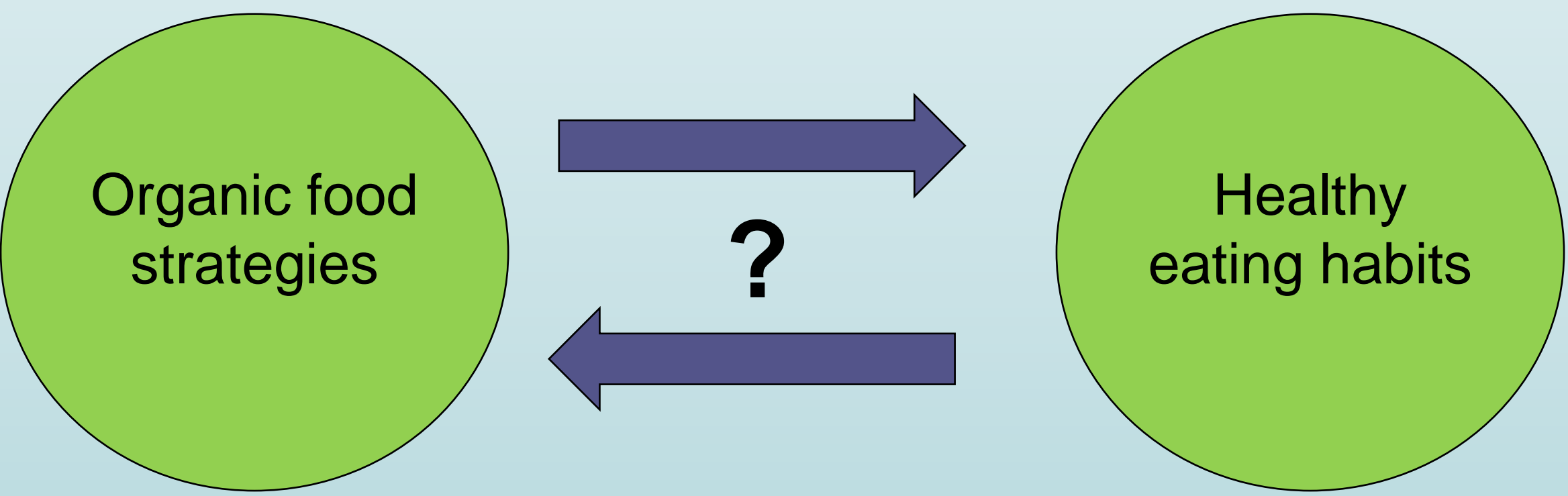
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Introduction

This paper investigates the interrelation between the two trends: **healthy eating** and **organic consumption**. In Denmark, public schools are utilized for public organic food supply strategies in a few dedicated municipalities. Concurrently, the schools are an arena for innovative strategies that may increase the availability of healthier food options. The purpose of this study was to examine whether organic food intervention strategies in Danish school meal systems can support the development of healthier eating patterns among pupils. Food strategies of “organic” schools were compared to those of “non organic” schools.

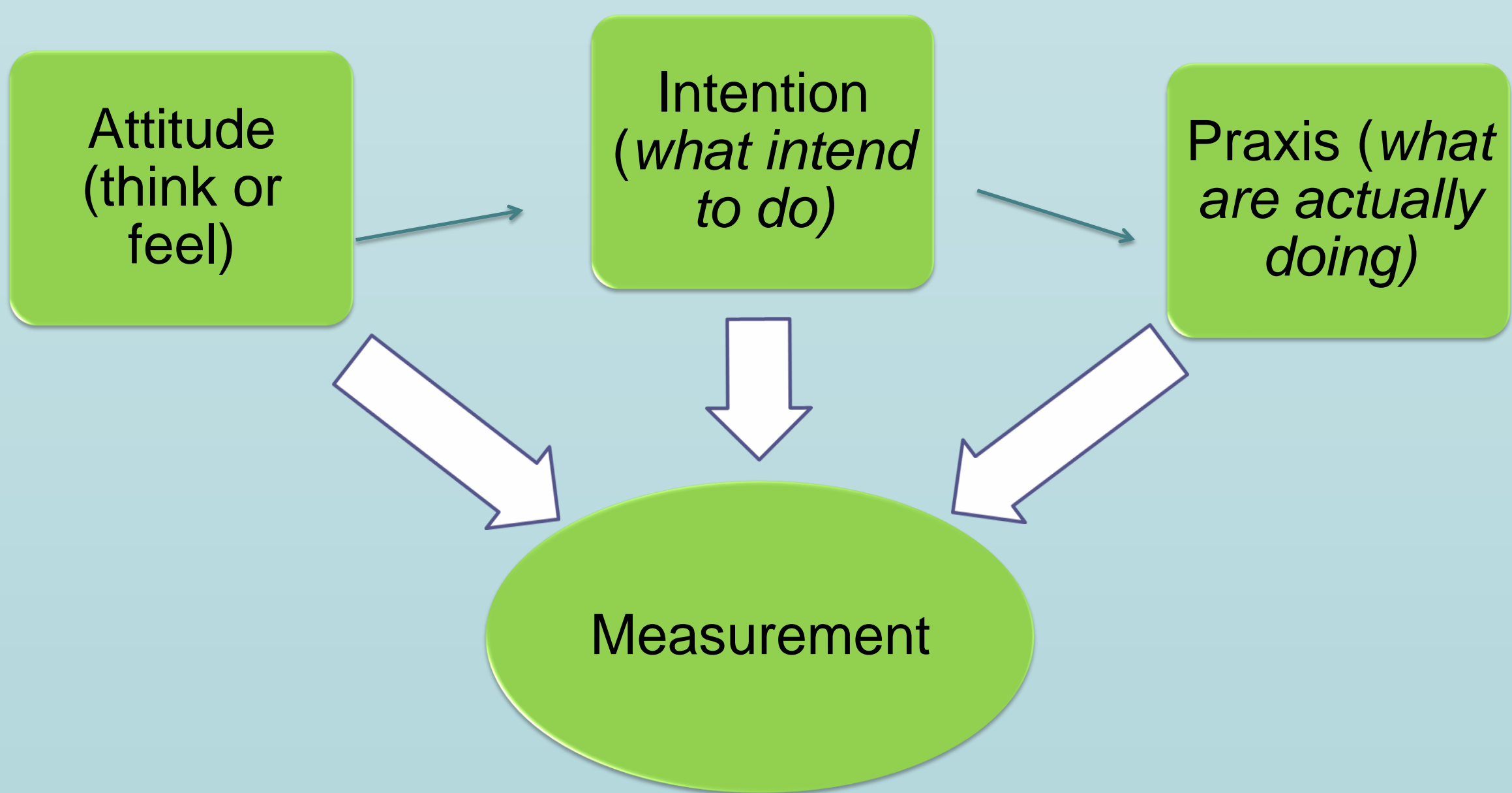
Research question

What is the interplay between organic food policies and healthy eating habits?



Methods

To measure dietary intake is very time consuming. Therefore, the present study has used organisational supportiveness to healthy eating as a measure of the degree of healthy eating in the studied schools. In a Web-Based Questionnaire (WBQ), indicators of healthy eating and the degree of school supportiveness to healthy eating, e.g. revealed by the presence of actions to support intake of fruit/vegetables, were recorded. Our informants were school food coordinators (SFCs), and the WBQ focused on the school food system at the specific school, the school food policy, the use of organic foods etc.



Results

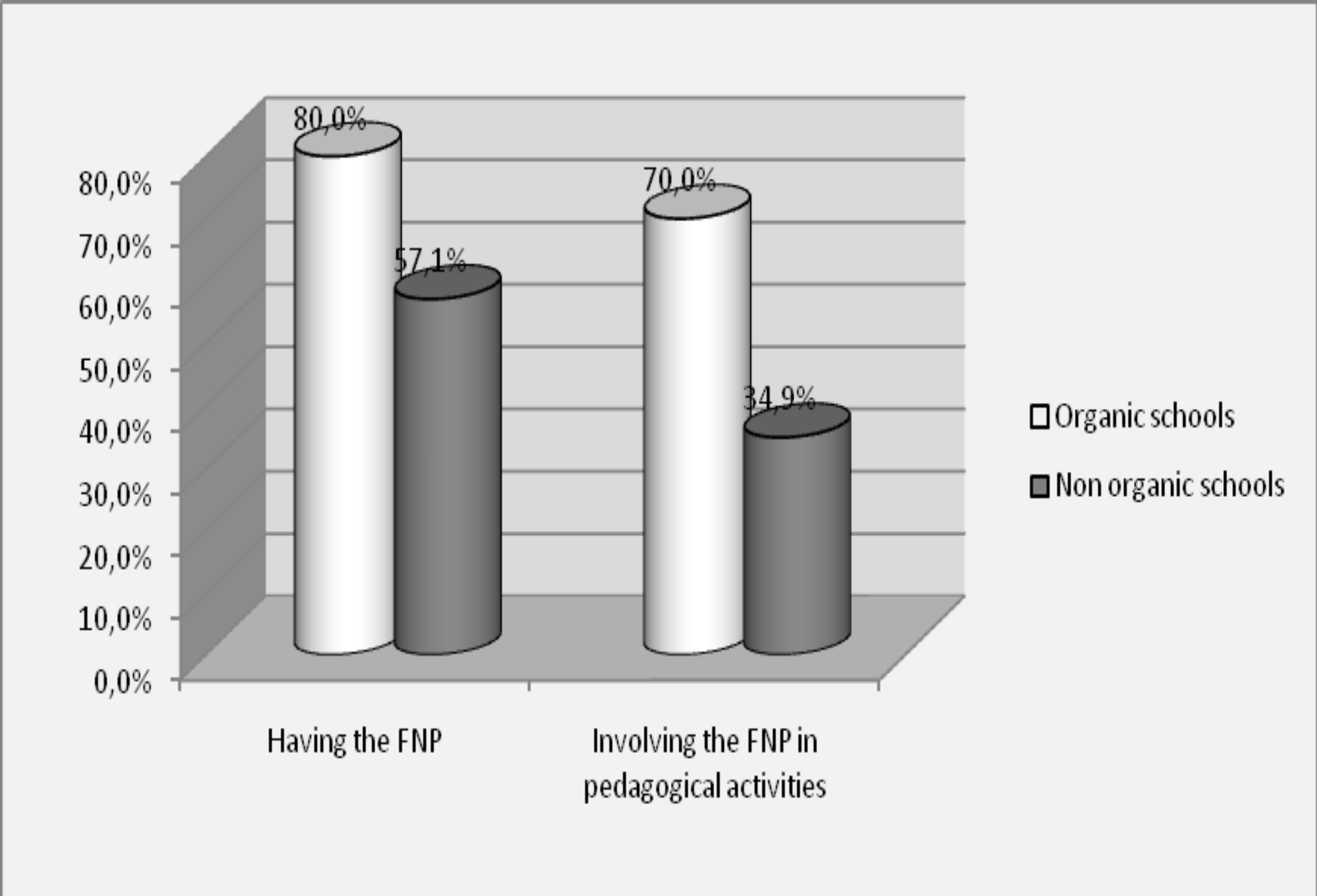


Figure 1. The share of organic and non organic schools with a food and nutrition policy (FNP) and involving the FNP issues in the pedagogical activities.

Figure 2. Nutritional recommendations and nutritionally calculated school meals in organic vs. non organic schools.

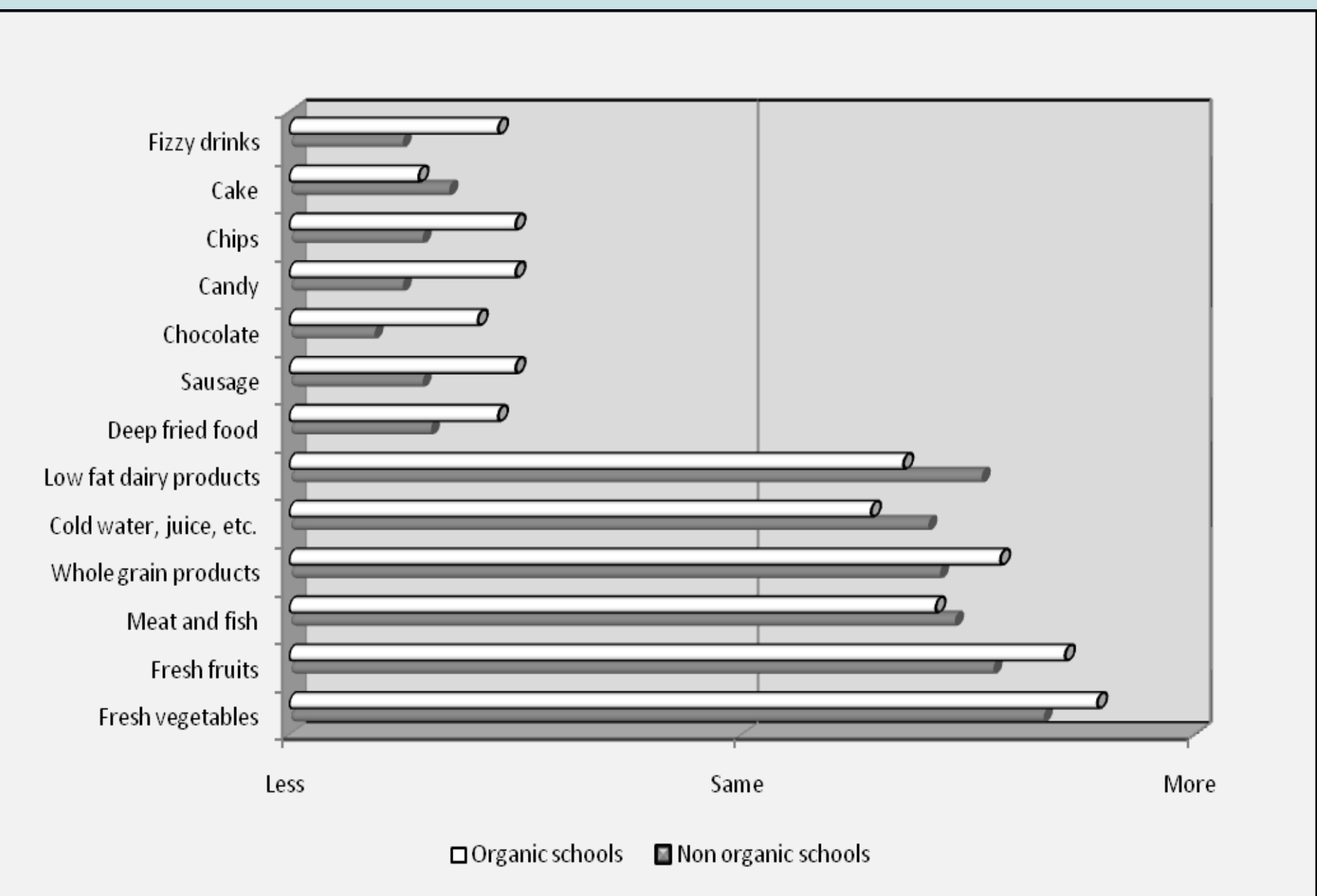
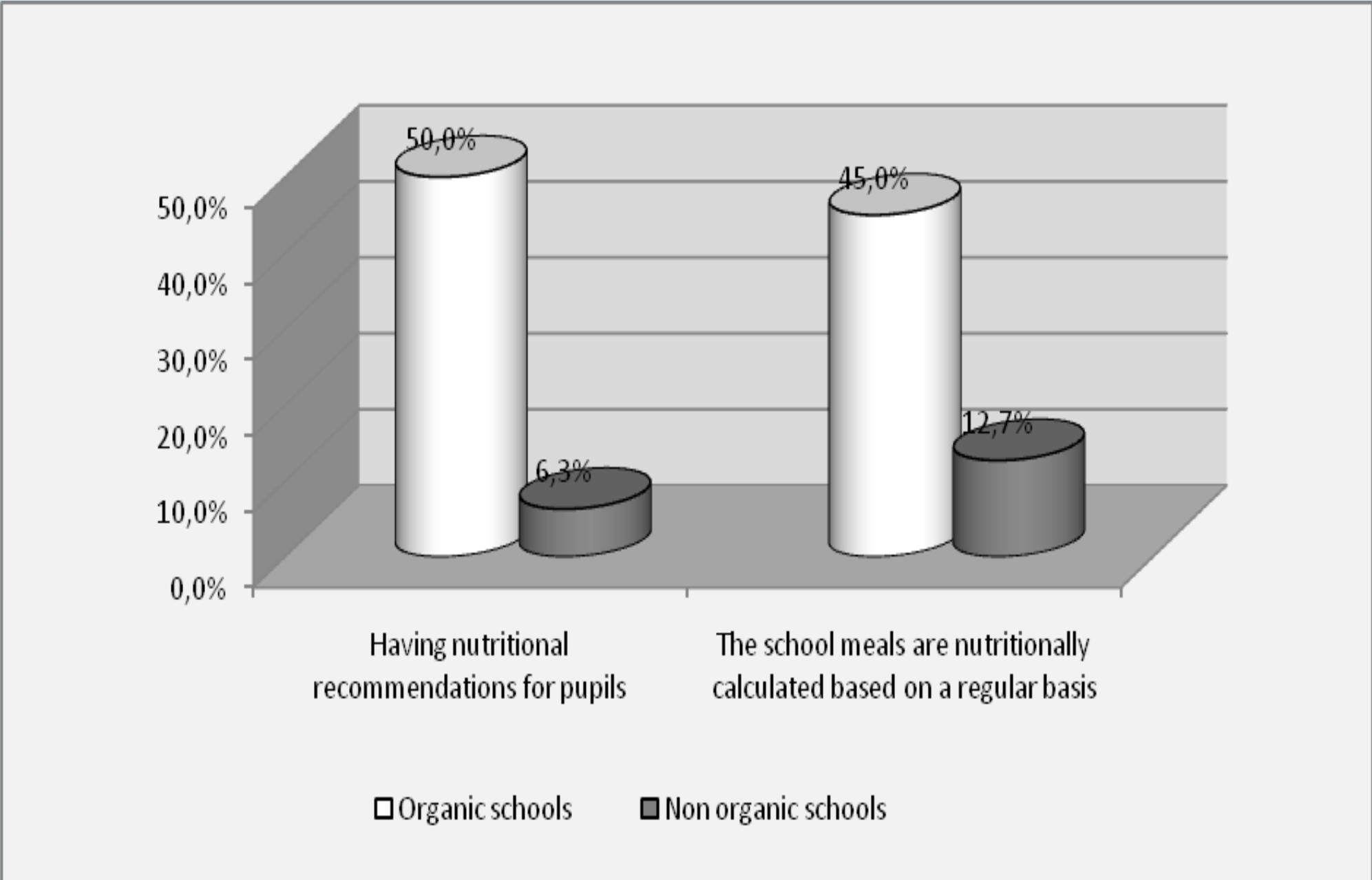


Figure 3. Changes in the availability of less and more healthy food items in schools during the last five years in organic and non-organic schools.

Conclusions

In general this research indicates that organic food policies at school seem to fit very well with the healthy eating strategies. It appears that the issues of health and organic food are moving in the same direction, in other words, it might be an ideal way to combine both agendas in order to create a healthy school.

