

A Case Study on Trend of Food Style among College Students

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ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to explore the trend of having food related life styles among the college students, to identify their socio –demographic characteristics and investigate the difference in attitude towards fast food and normal food. The survey was conducted with 110 female fast food and homemade food users ranging in age from 18-24 years. A questionnaire has been used to obtain the research data. According to the data obtained from the research results, the average females prefer homemade food (N=124). Significant differences were found among the six segments in terms of socio-demographic characteristics and attitudes to fast food and normal food. The frequency of distribution of food related segments was 28.0 % (fast food), 82.0 % (homemade food) respectively. It has been determined that the females involved in the research prefer homemade because they like it, it is nutritious, prices are reasonable and they intake vegetables. Thus, we conclude that age group young females is associated with substantially increased usage for homemade food than the fast food food.

INTRODUCTION

In the human life, food plays a major role as we need it to survive. We share it with our families and our friends and we often make it a central part of our celebrations. We shop for it, cook it, read about it, talk about it, and sometimes worry about it. In the world, socio demographic changes are driving the growth of food intake due to the rise of dual-income. Eating meals away from home requires mobility, and fast food is also more expensive than home meals. Food eaten away from home may be related to increased weight because energy density is higher in these meals (Bowman et al .). Recent surveys have revealed that many Americans believe women have purchasing power but less time to prepare ,cook, eat , cleanup and lack the knowledge in having primary responsibility for food purchasing and preparation within the home (Bowers, 2000).

However, because eating meals prepared away from home is related to increase BMI among adults, identifying the factors that predict who is likely to eat away from home is important. These fast food requirements are not healthful practices, but they do represent the current reality. Furthermore, when people eat frequently from outside the home, obesity rates increases.

Obesity is one of the most important public health problems facing adolescents in many developed

countries. Health authorities are concerned because obese adolescents may suffer a number of health problems, are likely to remain overweight into adulthood and are at risk of serious, chronic conditions including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and fatty liver disease. Furthermore, because obesity is now a characteristic of populations and not only of individuals, researchers, government health organizations, and advocacy groups characterize obesity as an epidemic (Institute of Medicine 2005, 2006a; World Health Organization 2003).

The goal of this article is to provide a better understanding of student's consumption behaviour with regard to fast food and home food. The specific objectives are (1) to determine the Students who consume fast food and home food, (2) to find out students who consume fast food consumption based on the impact of factors such as an individual's socioeconomic/ demographic attributes, (3) to analyze the impact of students attitudes, knowledge and preferences on the consumption of food products.

It is hypothesized that household with higher incomes and education tend to spend more on fast food than those of lower-income and less educated . In addition, we assume that the number of people and children living in a household also may influence their consumption of home food. In

particular, as a household adds more members, food prepared at home may become more economical and also we expect that households with younger members tend to consume more fast food, while households with older people tend to consume less (Mihalopoulos & Demoussis, 2001)

Previous research further suggested that as more married women experience higher opportunity cost of time from participating in labour force, then more food will be consumed at fast food as opposite to eating at home (Yen, 1993). Moreover, we also assume that consumers’ attitudes and knowledge such as price, health concern, child preferences and environment are significant factors on consumers’ fast food consumption preferences (Davies & Smith, 2004)

The fast food restaurant is one typical form of global business (Emerson, 1990). Why was the fast food industry in India grown so growing rapidly? There are some unique cultural differences in Indian fast food consumption. For example, Indians tend to consider fast food

restaurants as representative of western culture. In addition, they are recognized being not only an efficient and economic eating environment but also as an exotic place for social interaction and entertainment.

The aim of this paper was to examine the associations between personal, social and environmental factors among young college students consumption of fast foods and normal foods. A secondary aim was to examine whether these associations varied according to age and employment.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research was conducted in Nirmala College For Women, Coimbatore. College women students are losing their fundamental food preparation qualities. This study helps to identify about specific intake of foods i.e., fast foods or home foods based on socio-demographic changes. 200 females participated who were 18 years and older in the research usually ate at fast-food and home food. The research data were collected using the technique of interview by questionnaire forms. The questionnaire form consisted of five sections which were general information about individuals, their food preferences, were they prefer to have, with whom, how often they have and drink they take in fast food and home food. In the questions where the participants were asked to specify their preferences out three choices provided in the questionnaire.

As for the anthropometric measurements of the participants, their body weight (kg) and height (cm) were measured and the body mass index (BMI) was calculated. Recently, the definition of the most appropriate weight to length is BMI (kg/m²). The evaluation of BMI is “<18.5 underweight”, “18.5-24.9 normal weight”, “25.0-29.9 overweight” and “≥30.0

obesity” (Lutz, C et al., 2001)

Research data were analysed by using the SPSS statistical package program. For statistical analysis Chi-square (X²) importance test were used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Showing distribution of food style among the students

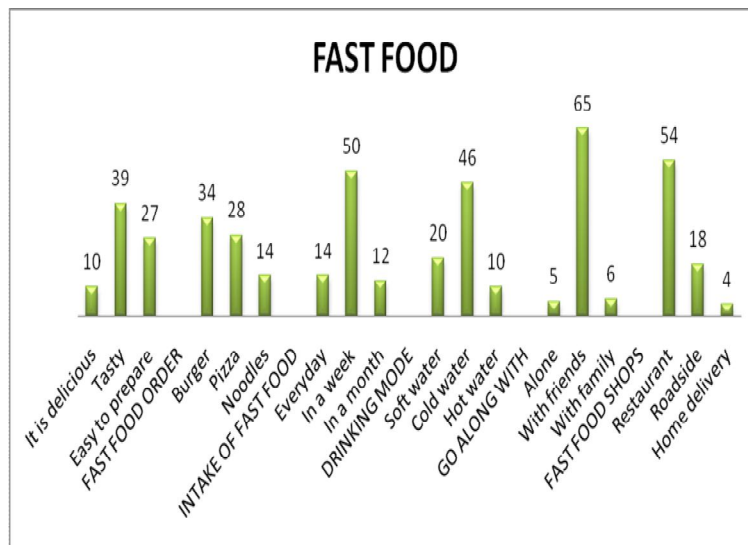
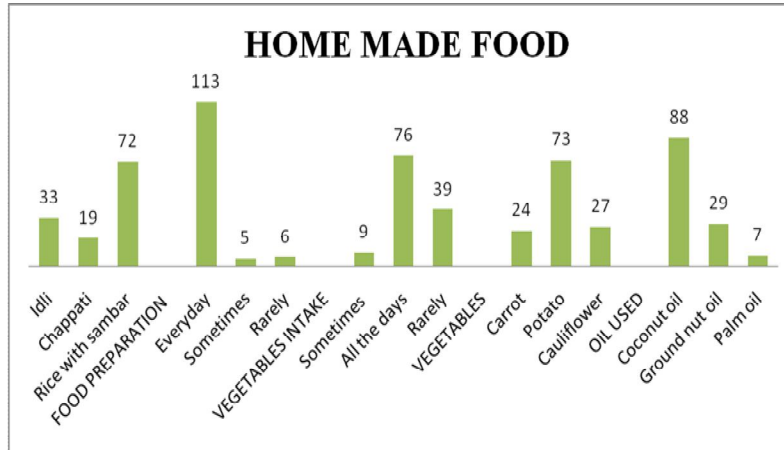
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS	HOME MADE FOOD		FAST FOOD		TOTAL	
	N=124	N%	N=76	N%	N=200	N%
TOTAL						
AGE						
18-20	74	37	51	25.5	125	62.5
20-22	32	16	19	9.5	51	41.5
22 and above	18	9	6	3	27	13.5
MARITAL STATUS						
Married	10	5	5	2.5	15	7.5
Unmarried	114	57	71	35.5	171	85.5
OCCUPATION STATUS						
Employee(part time)	8	4	10	5	18	9
Unemployee	116	58	66	33	182	91
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION						
Under graduate	104	52	62	31	166	83
Post graduate	20	10	14	7	34	17

Table 2: Showing distribution of BMI among the students of different food style

BMI	HOME MADE DOOD		FAST FOOD	
	N	%	N	%
Under Weight	35	17.5	12	6
Normal Weight	80	40	43	21.5
Obese	9	4.5	21	10.5
X²=11.21	Df=2		P<0.01	

Table 3: Showing distribution of food style among different age group

AGE	HOME MADE DOOD	FAST FOOD
18-20	74	51
20-22	32	19
22 and above	18	6
$\chi^2=58.35$	Df=2	P<0.05



As can be seen in the table, 62.5% of the respondents were in the 18-22 age group. When the table is evaluated according to the preference of food, the percentage of the homemade food in the 18-22 age group is 37.0% and that of the fast food is 25.5%. According to these results, it can be said that younger girls of Coimbatore still prefer homemade food.

In Table 1, when the occupation status of the participants was examined, it was determined that 91.0% were unemployed, while 9.0% were employed. The preference of food as far as the occupation status is concerned was determined as statistically important. When the marital status of the respondents was evaluated, it was found that 7.5% were married and 85.5% were not. The percentages of those who were married and not

married in both groups were not close to each other.

When the education levels of the participants who were students were examined, 83.0% of them were under graduate students and remaining 17.0% were post graduate students degrees (Table 1).

Overweight and obesity are caused by energy imbalance have become a global epidemic, affecting about a billion people worldwide (Peng, Y., 2004.).The body weights of the 200 respondents participated in this research were evaluated according to their body mass index (Table 2).

It has been determined that the difference between the genders as per BMI is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). In the research which was conducted to compare the diet quality and the overweight status of homemade food and fast food over 18-24 above years, it was determined that there was a small but important positive relation between home-food consumption and being overweight.

Homemade-food Preferences

In this food system, the “rice with sambar” menu is the most popular one. The homemade-food sector could generally be classified under six main topics. These are reasons, menu, food preparation, vegetables intake, vegetables and oil used. According to this classification, ethnical food chains, on the other hand, are establishments which involve products reflecting the food culture of different societies. The most important attribute of homemade food was “it is nutritious” (79), “hygienic” (26), “cheap and best” (19) and so on. The average preference points of the females who preferred that everyday prepared food was good and intake of vegetables was also rare. In vegetable, potato consumption was high when compared to other vegetables and in this study it was found that food was tasty in coconut oil. For fruits, Lee [30] found that female students had better nutritional habits than men (were more likely to report eating fruit/vegetables), providing support that women behaved ‘healthier’ than men in terms of fruit consumption.

Fast food Preferences

Fast-food restaurants serve fast and standard menus to the consumers. In this food system, the “burger” menu is the most popular one. The fast-food sector could generally be classified under six main topics. These are reasons, menu for fast food, intake of food, drinks, go along with and preferences of fast food. The fast-food

Chains of Chinese and Indian food and kebab meals are examples of this sector (Korkmaz, S et al., 2005). The average preferences are related that fast food is tasty. It was also determined that 11.0% of the students ate in fast-food restaurants several times a year, 12.0% ate a month, 50.0% ate several

times a week and 14.0% ate everyday a day. Driskell and colleagues (2006) indicated that one of the two primary reasons for choosing to eat fast foods was to eat with friends and family. In this study, also it is indicated that young females choose to fast food was with friends in restaurant. According to the 1993 data, the most preferred fast-food products in US were pizza, sandwiches with ham, steak, hamburgers, macaroni with cheese, sandwiches with turkey, spaghetti and sandwiches with cheese (Hollingsworth, D., 1994).

The link between food consumption of home made food and fast food is also the focus in some more recent studies. Even though, the fast food industry in India is grown so growing rapidly, the consumers in the Coimbatore preferred mostly homemade food and the most preferred food types were rice with sambar and potato.

CONCLUSION

Food consumption patterns differed across the studied countries, with females typically making more healthy choices. According to the results of the research, it has been determined that young females of Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore, Tamilnadu still prefer traditional homemade food than fast food i.e., western style of having food in restaurants. Health is important than taste so by increasing in eating homemade food give insurance to our health as by fast food consumption calories. When the choices of western style and traditional fast-food are assessed separately, for young females, it has been found that the most preferred homemade food style is rice with sambar and potato.

Accordingly, this study is subject to data availability. It is well recognized that lifestyles have strong influences on individual homemade food consumption patterns. Future research needs to be done addressing all the lack of knowledge about household composition. Promotion of healthy eating habits and education about foods needs to be strengthened.

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