



FOOD HABITS IN INDIA: A STUDY OF UNDER STUDENTS

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this paper to investigate the food choices of college students and determinates of their food choices.

Methods –The paper has qualitative as well as quantitative aspects of research. Primary data has been gathered from the students of Starex University, Gurugram and secondary data have been gathered from various journals, books, magazines and articles. A total 50 students participate in this study. Frequency and percentage method is applied to conclude the quantitative findings.

Findings – The study found that college students are mostly like to eat modern food (60%), spicy food (78%), and Non-Vegetarian food (60%). The determinates of food choices/like; such as – good taste, healthful food, good nutrition, hygienic, low cost, good quality and convenience food found very important for choose/like a food.

Conclusions & Significance – It has been concluded that college students like to eat modern food such as Chowmin, burger, and sandwiches etc. The change has also been registered due to the Life style changes and the duality of the income in the households. The study is significant for the caterers of colleges to cater the students. It is helpful for them decided their menu to serve in their cafeteria.

Keyword –Food, Food Choice, College, Student

Introduction & Background of the Study

The Indian life style has changed tremendously since independence. Food and taste has followed the same trend of change. As food is an important part of one's life style. It is said some people eat to live and some people live to eat. Industrialization of food industry has changed our plate; earlier fresh food constituted most of our meal, whereas now it has been replaced with processed food. Food choices among the college students vary from their culture, family background, society and living standard. (Greaney, Less et al. 2009, Nelson, Kocos, Lytle, Perry, 2009, Cluskey & Grobe, 2009). Eating behavior of student have been found to be affected by several different factors such as availability of time, discipline, self-control, society, price, budget limit, option available etc. However, the findings are related to U.S.A and remain silent on the students' background or education qualification. It has been observed that college students prefer to eat fast-food mostly. These constraints may have affected the outcomes Nagla (2007) concluded that the consumption pattern is changing in Indian household; green leafy vegetables are least preferred may be due the length of time consumed during the preparation process, viz. cleaning, washing, chopping, and finally, the cooking. In addition to this, method of preparation and cooking has become more and more advance with the use of ultra-modern equipments and fuels. Anand (2011) in her study investigated the variable affecting fast food performance of customers in India. The study revealed that the key elements laying the impact on the consumers food choice were passion for dining out, socialize, ambience and the taste for students pursuing the school and higher education along with the convenience for dual-income families in urban India. Boek (2012) investigated the determinants of Students' Food Choices on a College Campus. The study found that the students' preferences for food are positively associated with their gender and profiles. She revealed that among these, male's student consider cost, taste and quality while choosing food over quality and nutritional value. However, in case of white students showed different preference than others, location of food outlet and nutritional value of food were found to affect by gender of students.

Objective: The aim and objective of this paper is to investigate the determinates of food choices and food choices of college student.

Methods: The paper has qualitative as well as quantitative aspects of research. Primary data has been gathered from the students of Starex University, Gurugram and secondary data have been gathered from various journals, books,



magazines and articles. A total 50 students participate in this study. Frequency and percentage method is applied to conclude the quantitative findings.

Analysis of Data and Results: Demographic Details

Table No. 1

Gender	N=50	Percentage (%)
Male	20	40 %
Female	30	60 %

As the table illustrated, 40 percent participants were male, and 60 percent were female participants in the study. The ratio of female is more than male students.

Type of Food Preferred

Table No. 2

Food Type	Preferred By (Out of 50)	Percentage (%)
Traditional Food	20	40 %
Modern Food	30	60 %

As per the survey, with a sample size of 50 students of Starex University, Gurugram for their preference of food type between Traditional and Modern food, Spicy and Non – Spicy food and Vegetarian and Non – Vegetarian food. It was found that only 40 percent preferred traditional food, whereas, 60 percent of the respondents surveyed showed their likings towards the Modern food types. Therefore, it may be asserted that the there is a paradigm shift in the liking of the respondents from traditional to modern food.

Table No. 3

Food Type	Preferred By (Out of 50)	Percentage (%)
Spicy Food	39	78 %
Non - Spicy Food	11	22 %

The table shows that only 22 percent preferred non - spicy food, whereas, 78 percent of the population surveyed showed their likings towards the spicy food types.

Table No. 4

Food Type	Preferred By (Out of 50)	Percentage (%)
Vegetarian Food	20	40 %
Non - Vegetarian Food	30	60 %

The table shows that only 40 percent respondents preferred vegetarian food, whereas, 60 percent of the respondents surveyed showed their likings towards the non - vegetarian food types.

Determinates of Food Choices

Table No. 5

Determinates	Very Important		Important		Not at All	
	N = 50	%	N = 50	%	N = 50	%
Good Taste	41	82 %	9	18 %	0	0 %
Convince	36	72 %	14	28 %	0	0 %
Low Cost	36	72 %	12	24 %	2	4 %
Good Nutrition	42	84 %	5	10 %	3	6 %
Good Quality	39	78 %	5	10 %	6	12 %
Healthful Food	39	78 %	5	10 %	6	12 %
Hygiene	39	78 %	7	14 %	4	8 %



As the table shows that a majority of students found all the determinates very important for choosing a food. Good taste and good nutrition food respectively 82 % & 84 % found very important amongst the all factors. Only 4, 6, 12, 12 and 8 percent of students said that low cost, good nutrition, good quality, healthful food, and hygiene have not affected their food choices.

Conclusion and Significance

The findings of study concluded that most of students preferred to modern food. Their preference of modern food may be because of transformation of cuisine and development of food market. Good taste, nutritive food, society, culture, healthful food, hygiene, good quality, and cost of food are the important factors to food choices. The present study is significant for the caterers to cater the students of colleges and university. It will be helpful for them decided their menu to serve in their cafeteria.

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