

Food Choice Motives of Guardians of Trilok Academy Kathmandu with reference to Gender

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the food choice motives of consumers from Kathmandu city with reference to gender. Pen and paper test self-employed cross sectional survey was designed to collect data. Census method was for data collection. There were 196 questionnaires distributed to guardians of grade 6 to 9, however, 155 well filled up questionnaires were accepted for data analysis. Food choice motives were measured using Steptoe et al.'s (1995) Food Choice Questionnaire (FCQ). The rank of motives for food choice has been found health, natural content, mood, familiarity, convenience, sensory appeal, price, ethical concern and weight control respectively. There is no significant difference between gender and food choice motives. This study is limited to only guardians of Trilok Academy Kathmandu. Future studies should explore motives of other adults other than above mentioned respondents. In case of practical implication, suppliers and marketers of the food industry should consider the important aspects of food choice motives to improve the marketing strategies of their products. Products should be reasonably healthy.

Keywords: Food choice motives, gender, Kathmandu

1. Introduction

Nepal has distinctly two groups: rural and urban, in case of food consumption pattern. Moreover, industrialization and urbanization has changed consumption pattern. The rural setting has its own pattern of food consumption based on availability of food according to season, find in the consumers' own farmland. However, urban people have more choices in food items. Thus, this research has selected Kathmandu city as its research area to explore motives of food choices. There are different motives of food choices: health, mood, weight control, natural content, sensory appeal, etc. At the same time, other factors also influence choice of food, for instance, sex, age, ethnicity, religion, profession, etc.

Food choice is, nevertheless, a complex function of preferences for sensory characteristics, combined with the influence of non-sensory factors, including food-related expectations and attitudes, health claims, price, ethical concerns and mood (Rozin & Rozin, 1981; Shepherd, 1989; Vickers, 1993; Sparks, Shepherd, & Frewer, 1995). "Food choices are determined by a multitude of individual, social and environmental factors (Rankin, et al., 2018, p. 2607)". There are many studies that have attempted to identify factors that have influence on people's food choice judgments (Rankin, et al., 2018; Chen, 2017; Wilson, Matthews, Seabrook, & Dworatzek, 2017; Keller & Siegrist, 2015). What these studies found was that people's life course

experiences such as ideals, personal factors, resources, social contexts and the food context have major influences on food selection. Therefore, people develop a framework for food choice that fits their personal values. The first multidimensional scale for motivational factors related to food choice was designed by Steptoe and Pollard (1995). The scale, called the Food Choice Questionnaire, assesses a wide range of considerations that might be taken into account by individuals when choosing what to eat.

Eating manner is an interaction between inspiration, self-regulation, and social environment (LaCaille, Dauner, Krambeer, & Pedersen, 2011). The decision of the food choice is a process of conceding factors such as health, mood, convenience, sensory appeal, natural content, price, weight control, familiarity, ethical concern, and social network (Steptoe, Pollard, & Wardle, 1995; Chen, 2017; Wilson, Matthews, Seabrook, & Dworatzek, 2017). “Knowing the motivating factors of the food choice is critical while designing the healthy food promotion program for the target population. Identifying the most influential factor that drives the target population to consume healthy foods could increase the effectiveness of the promotion program (Chen, 2017, p. 6)”. In the context of present study, it is important to explore motives for food choice of guardians or parents of grade 6-10 from Trilok Academy, Kathmandu, Nepal.

2. Methods and Materials

Quantitative approach was assessed as a suitable method to conform the study purpose. A qualitative method would have generated a deeper understanding of food choices and factors that affect food choices among the studied group. Though, the aim of the study was to obtain a general description, which is possible by using a quantitative method. In addition to that, to investigate differences in food choices between groups a quantitative method was considered more appropriate. Likert scales with five points were used to evaluate food choices. A Likert scale measures attitudes and behaviour by determining extend which people agree or disagree with a particular statement (Allen & Seaman, 2007).

The study is a self-reported, questionnaire-based research of food choices among parents and guardians of grade 6-10 students from Trilok Academy, Kathmandu, Nepal. The English version Food Choice Questionnaire (FCQ) was translated into Nepali version. The questionnaire was sent to 198 respondents, but, only 155 were found well filled up. Census method was applied to collect data because population was limited only defined group. Table 1 shows the demographic information. Out of 155 respondents, 23 (14.8%) were male and 132 (85.2%) were female. For the age groups, 132 (85.2%) were of 40 & below, and 23 (14.8%) were of 41 years and above. There were two types of ethnic groups: Brahmin/Chhetri and Indigenous. There were 110 (71%) Brahmin/Chhetri and 45 (29%) Indigenous. Out of 155, there were 123 (79.4%) Hindu, 25 (16.1%) Buddhist and 7 (4.5%) Christian respondents. Similarly, the details of education level, profession and mother tongue of respondents are given in Table 1.

Table 1 Demographic Information

n=155		Count	Column N %
Gender	Male	23	14.8%
	Female	132	85.2%
Age	40 & below	132	85.2%
	41-55	23	14.8%
Ethnic group	Brahmin / Chhetri	110	71.0%
	Indigenous	45	29.0%
Religion	Hindu	123	79.4%
	Buddhist	25	16.1%
	Christian	7	4.5%
Education level	Primary Level	13	8.4%
	Secondary Level	37	23.9%
	SLC Pass	34	21.9%
	College Level	47	30.3%
	University	19	12.3%
	Illiterate	5	3.2%
Profession	Own Business	61	39.4%
	Employee	50	32.3%
	Working in a wage	8	5.2%
	Unemployed	36	23.2%
Mother tongue	Nepali	122	78.7%
	Newari	6	3.9%
	Gurung	3	1.9%
	Magar	5	3.2%
	Tamang	17	11.0%
	Tharu	2	1.3%

Subjects in all respondents completed the FCQ (Steptoe, Pollard, & Wardle, 1995). The questionnaire contains 36 statements, each prefaced by: “It is important to me that the food I eat on a typical day...”. The statements, shown in Table 2, relate to the following nine factors: Health, Mood, Convenience, Sensory Appeal, Natural Content, Price, Weight Control, Familiarity and Ethical Concern.

Table 2 Food choice questionnaire items

Factor 1 Health

It is important to me that the food I eat on a typical day...

contains a lot of vitamins and minerals

keeps me healthy

is nutritious

is high in protein

is good for my skin/teeth/nails, etc.

is high in fibre and roughage

Factor 3 Convenience

is easy to prepare

can be cooked very simply

takes no time to prepare

can be bought in shops close to where I live or work

is easily available in shops and supermarkets

Factor 5 Natural Content

contains no additives

contains natural ingredients

contains no artificial ingredients

Factor 7 Weight Control

is low in calories

helps me control my weight

is low in fat

Factor 9 Ethical Concern

comes from countries I approve of politically

has the country of origin clearly marked

is packaged in an environmentally friendly way

Factor 2 Mood

helps me cope with stress

helps me cope with life

helps me relax

keeps me awake/alert

cheers me up

makes me feel good

Factor 4 Sensory Appeal

smells nice

looks nice

has a pleasant texture

tastes good

Factor 6 Price

is not expensive

is cheap

is good value for money

Factor 8 Familiarity

is what I usually eat

is familiar

is like the food I ate when I was a child

3. Results

The following table shows means of food choice motives. It also shows rank of food choice motives among the respondents.

Table 3 Means of food choice motives

Food Choice Factors	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank
Health Factor	2.98	.56	1st
Natural Content Factor	2.91	.63	2nd
Mood Factor	2.89	.57	3rd
Familiarity Factor	2.78	.64	4th
Convenience Factor	2.78	.68	5th
Sensory Appeal Factor	2.56	.59	6th
Price Factor	2.44	.71	7th
Ethical Concern Factor	2.35	.69	8th
Weight Control Factor	2.32	.61	9th

The results from Table 3 show that health factor has been displayed 1st rank among food choice motive among the respondents. Natural content has been displayed as 2nd, mood 3rd, familiarity 4th, convenience 5th, sensory appeal 6th, price 7th, ethical concern 8th and weight control 9th.

Food choice motivations: Taking an initial look at the Food Choice Questionnaire, item “keeps me healthy” elicited the highest mean: 3.2 (Table 4). Other items with means above three were items “contains natural ingredients” (3.1355), “is nutritious” (3.1161), “contains lots of vitamins and minerals” (3.0581), “keeps me awake and alert” (3.0452), “helps me to cope with life” (3.0194) and “contains no artificial ingredients” (3.0065). The items with the lowest means were items “is good value for money” (2.2452), “comes from countries I approve of politically” (1.9548) and “is low in calories” (1.8645).

Table 4 Food Choice Questionnaire: Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
keeps me healthy	3.2000	.95618	-.908	-.301
contains natural ingredients	3.1355	.91933	-.832	-.187
is nutritious	3.1161	.93249	-.721	-.502
contains lots of vitamins and minerals	3.0581	.86218	-.421	-.833
keeps me awake and alert	3.0452	.93518	-.573	-.709
helps me to cope with life	3.0194	.92210	-.542	-.671
contains no artificial ingredients	3.0065	1.01608	-.577	-.897
is easily available in shops and supermarkets	2.9742	1.82674	7.336	76.566

is what i usually eat	2.9613	.97290	-.436	-.955
cheers me up	2.9548	.96256	-.440	-.901
is familiar to me	2.9419	.92047	-.390	-.824
tastes good	2.8968	.87664	-.207	-.914
is high in protein	2.8645	.96751	-.160	-1.217
is good for my skin/teeth/hair/nails etc	2.8581	.92187	-.318	-.810
takes no time to prepare	2.8516	.91021	-.067	-1.156
can be bought in shops close to where I live or work	2.8387	.97690	-.220	-1.104
helps me relax	2.8129	.99862	-.170	-1.191
helps me cope with stress	2.7935	.99150	-.262	-1.027
is high in fibre and roughage	2.7548	.94210	.038	-1.166
is low in fat	2.7484	1.07264	-.185	-1.284
is packaged in an environmentally friendly way	2.7290	.98896	-.248	-.975
makes me feel good	2.6968	.94919	-.050	-1.002
can be cooked very simply	2.6839	.92410	.022	-.968
smells nice	2.5806	1.03114	.015	-1.163
is not expensive	2.5742	1.03163	-.076	-1.134
contains no additives	2.5742	1.05035	-.097	-1.178
is easy to prepare	2.5290	.96906	.329	-1.002
is cheap	2.4903	1.07128	.106	-1.238
is like the food I ate when I was a child	2.4323	.95359	.219	-.866
looks nice	2.4258	.95990	.259	-.870
has the country of origin clearly marked	2.3613	1.08642	.224	-1.228
has a pleasant texture	2.3484	.98425	.411	-.828
helps me control my weight	2.3419	1.00930	.268	-.993
is good value for money	2.2452	.89980	.578	-.323

comes from countries I approve of politically	1.9548	.99572	.691	-.656
is low in calories	1.8645	.98744	.932	-.202

The absolute value of the skewness and kurtosis of all variables except item “is easily available in shops and supermarkets” were lower than or close to |1|. Item “is easily available in shops and supermarkets” had a skewness of 7.336 and kurtosis of 76.566.

Table 5 Means of motives for food choice with reference to gender

Factors	Gender					
	Male		Female		Total	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Health Factor	3.04	1 st	2.96	1 st	2.98	1 st
Natural Content Factor	2.94	2 nd	2.90	2 nd	2.91	2 nd
Mood Factor	2.85	3 rd	2.89	3 rd	2.89	3 rd
Familiarity Factor	2.75	4 th	2.78	5 th	2.78	4 th
Convenience Factor	2.58	6 th	2.81	4 th	2.78	5 th
Sensory Appeal Factor	2.61	5 th	2.55	6 th	2.56	6 th
Price Factor	2.57	7 th	2.41	7 th	2.44	7 th
Ethical Concern Factor	2.36	8 th	2.35	8 th	2.35	8 th
Weight Control Factor	2.35	9 th	2.31	9 th	2.32	9 th

The above Table 5 shows results of food choice motives with reference to gender. There are similarities on first three ranks (health factor, natural content factor and mood factor) and lowest three factors (price factor, ethical concern factor and weight control factor) between male and female respondents. Male respondents have slightly higher mean scores on health, natural content, sensory appeal, price, ethical concern and weight control factors than female respondents.

Table 6 Pearson chi-square tests of food choice motives with reference to gender

Factors	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Health	15.367	14	.354
Natural content	11.087	8	.197
Mood	12.164	14	.593
Familiarity	2.260	9	.987
Convenience	16.687	14	.273
Sensory appeal	10.152	10	.427
Price	6.929	9	.644
Ethical concern	4.309	9	.890
Weight control	5.445	9	.794

The observed significances (0.354, 0.197, 0.593, 0.987, 0.273, 0.427, 0.644, 0.890 and 0.794) are larger than 0.05. It shows that food choice motives are not dependent with gender.

4. Conclusion

Internationally, many studies have examined various aspects of food choice. However, this study has been new for Nepalese context. This exploratory research has shown that Nepalese adults living in Kathmandu city are aware of health rather than price while choosing foods. There is no gender difference in food choice. Both male and female respondents were found to be aware in health consciousness rather than price. This study was carried out only among guardians of Trilok Academy. It does not represent whole population of the nation. It is recommended that same type of research should be conducted in larger population as well as in other aspects like ethnicity, age, education level, profession, etc.

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