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Food choice motives of adults from Kathmandu city with reference to ethnicity

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Abstract

This study is carried out to explore the food choice motives of consumers from Kathmandu with reference to ethnicity. Pen and paper test self-employed cross sectional survey was designed to collect data. Census method was applied for data collection. There were 196 questionnaires distributed to guardians of grade 6 to 10, however, 155 were well filled up; 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. This study shows that there is no distinct difference between Brahmin/Chhetri and indigenous group in case of food choice motives. Rather than ethnicity, it might be affected by their socio-economic status. This study is limited to only guardians of Trilok Academy Kathmandu. Future studies should explore motives of other adults other than above mentioned respondents.

Keywords: ethnicity, food choice motives, Kathmandu

1. Introduction

It is commonly stated that food choice is a very complicated process along with we make several food choices every day based on more or less conscious decisions. In fact, it might seem that most food choices are based on intuitive thinking, resulting in effortless and fast decisions often based on habits that are not consciously monitored (Vabø & Hansen, 2014, p. 152). 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.

There is no single factor which affects choice of food. 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) [14, 15, 19, 16]. "Food choices are determined by a multitude of individual, social and environmental factors (Rankin, et al., 2018, p. 2607)" [13]. 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) [13, 3, 20, 4]. 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) [17]. 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.

There are different elements influencing consumers' attitude on food choice. Eating manner is an interaction between inspiration, self-regulation, and social environment

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(LaCaille, Dauner, Krambeer, & Pedersen, 2011) [5]. the social network (Steptoe, Pollard, & Wardle, 1995; Chen, 2017; Wilson, Matthews, Seabrook, & Dworatzek, 2017) [17, 3, 20]. “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)” [3]. 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. This study explores food choice motives with reference to ethnicity. There are 125 ethnic groups are existing in Nepal. Among them two major ethnic groups are Brahmin/Chhetri and Indigenous (Janajati Adibasi): Brahmin/Chhetri (Hill groups) 31.2% and Janajati (Hill Adibasi) 27.3% (CBS, 2014, p. 2) [2].

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) [1].

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 41years 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) [17]. 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	Factor 2 Mood
It is important to me that the food I eat on a typical day...	
contains a lot of vitamins and minerals	helps me cope with stress
keeps me healthy	helps me cope with life
is nutritious	helps me relax
is high in protein	keeps me awake/alert

is good for my skin/teeth/nails, etc.	cheers me up
is high in fibre and roughage	makes me feel good
Factor 3 Convenience	Factor 4 Sensory Appeal
is easy to prepare	smells nice
can be cooked very simply	looks nice
takes no time to prepare	has a pleasant texture
can be bought in shops close to where I live or work	tastes good
is easily available in shops and supermarkets	
Factor 5 Natural Content	Factor 6 Price
contains no additives	is not expensive
contains natural ingredients	is cheap
contains no artificial ingredients	is good value for money
Factor 7 Weight Control	Factor 8 Familiarity
is low in calories	is what I usually eat
helps me control my weight	is familiar
is low in fat	is like the food I ate when I was a child
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	

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

The results from Table 3 show that health factor has been displayed 1st rank ($\mu=2.98$) among food choice motive among the respondents. Natural content has been displayed as 2nd ($\mu=2.91$), mood 3rd ($\mu=2.89$), familiarity 4th ($\mu=2.78$), convenience 5th ($\mu=2.78$), sensory appeal 6th ($\mu=2.56$), price 7th ($\mu=2.44$), ethical concern 8th ($\mu=2.35$) and weight control 9th ($\mu=2.32$). This finding, health factor as 1st rank in case of food choice motive, is supported with Prescott *et al.*'s (2002, p. 492) [6] finding with reference to Malaysia. However, in the same study, price as ranked 1st in Japan, sensory appeal in New Zealand and natural content in Taiwan.

Table 4: Means of motives for food choice with reference to ethnicity

N=155	Ethnic group			
	Brahmin / Chhetri		Indigenous	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Health Factor	2.96	1 st	3.00	1 st
Natural Content Factor	2.91	2 nd	2.90	3 rd
Mood Factor	2.84	3 rd	2.99	2 nd
Familiarity Factor	2.78	4 th	2.76	5 th
Convenience Factor	2.76	5 th	2.82	4 th
Sensory Appeal Factor	2.56	6 th	2.57	6 th
Price Factor	2.45	7 th	2.40	7 th
Ethical Concern Factor	2.37	8 th	2.30	8 th
Weight Control Factor	2.34	9 th	2.26	9 th

This study also analyzed food choice motives between Brahmin/Chhetri and indigenous groups. Health, natural content and mood factors have been found in first three ranks in both Brahmin/Chhetri and indigenous groups. While comparing mean scores of health factor, indigenous group is more conscious than Brahmin/Chhetri. But, there are no distinct differences between the groups in case of food choice motives. It might be happened because guardians of Trilok Academy are almost from socio-economically middle class group. At the same time, they have been influencing from almost same types of media.

4. Conclusion

The research focused on exploring affecting factors (motives) for food choice among adults in Kathmandu city with reference to ethnicity. Two major ethnic groups of Nepal, Brahmin/Chhetri and indigenous groups were selected as respondents. Because of their same type of socio-economic status and influence of media, there are no distinct differences on food choice motives. This study was carried out only among guardians of Trilok Academy. It does not represent whole population of those ethnic groups. It is recommended that same type of research should be conducted in larger population as well as among other ethnic groups.

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