

## A STUDY ON JUNK FOOD CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOR AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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**Abstract** - The aim of this paper is to examine the associations between personal, social and environmental factors among young college students consumption of fast foods and normal foods. The younger generation is seen to be the most attracted to junk foods and this also has been observed by several studies in the past. This study is made on the same category of individuals. The population for the study restricts itself to the under and post graduate student population of RIT to understand about the practices and perceptions of the younger generation, aged around 17-25. The relevance of choosing RIT is that it is institute of National repute in India. Further, students from all parts of the country are represented, making it a population of individuals from diverse cultural, geographical and financial backgrounds from across the country. This heterogeneity in population might provide results that could be relevant for common trends in India. Most of the population being resident students, and hence their practices and choices are assumed to be more independent. The reasons for their choices of food habits can be a good indicator of the food habits of college students in the country. Previous research further suggested that as more married women experience higher opportunity cost of time from participating in labor force, then more food will be consumed at fast food as opposite to eating at home. 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.

**Key Words:** Consumption Behaviour, Junk foods, food habits, Student Perception

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Junk Food is defined by Centre for Science and Environment as –any food, which is low in essential nutrients and high in everything else—in particular calories and sodium. The common perception about junk food and its consumption is negative, since it happens to be a misfit in any good diet plan due to lack of nutritional value and high calorie content. But over the years, several studies have observed that the consumers are opting for junk food in several instances. It has also been proven as a profitable business sector to invest. The need for this study is this scenario, to find reasons for people opting to pay

and consume junk food and to know how much is their consumption rates and awareness levels on what they are consuming. Past studies done world over have suggested many reasons for this trend and through our study we try to see about the same in a different context. The goal of this article is to provide a better understanding of student's consumption behavior with regard to fast food and home food. 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 Impact on future health. Despite the advent of college meal plans, many students continue to consume a lot of meals at fast food restaurants. The purpose of the quantitative study was to determine the perception of risk factors related to increased fast food consumption and the eating habits of college students. Two research questions used to lead this study were: What are college students' perception of fast food consumption? What are college students' fast food eating habits? 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.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Fast food is a food that is prepared and served quickly which was first popularised in 1950s in the United States. Many a times consumption of fast food has its several effects on the health of the the people who consume it in higher intake leading to problems like overweight, obesity etc. Many studies have identified the various driving factors affecting the health of the person consuming it and especially found in the youngsters. There are disadvantages of fast food on people's health, reveals common people's average fast food consumption.

There are different types of Fast food like hamburgers, sandwich, fried chicken pizza, or fries, or the kind of food that can be served quickly at low price. Since then fast food was penetrating the food market and it started becoming more popular. People started their increased consumption from then. Even though people were aware about the harmful effects of fast food consumption, we still can see customers come and order in an endless stream. Many scholars have found that students having excess consumption of fast food were more at risk for containing higher amounts of fat, sugar, sodium. Additionally it was proved that there is direct relation with obesity and consuming more fast food calories. College students spend more money on fast food, which results in obesity than students with a meal plan.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- 1) To understand the influence of the of junk foods into the regular food habits of students
- 2) To study influence of taste and flavor of junk foods on students.
- 3) To access the influence of brand value and attractiveness on consumption of junk food
- 4) To study the impact of accessibility and secondary services of junk food outlets on Consumption behavior

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research methodology is a scientific study of research. Primary data was collected through questionnaire from various people according to their personal opinion. This information used for specific purposes of study helped to run the analysis. Questions were asked and tailored to make the data more helpful for study. The questionnaire data was helpful to understand their experience and preference towards their loyal company. In order to analyze the students behavior in accordance with Junk food of these two companies, for the purpose I used customer survey, which consists of 15 questions regarding customer satisfaction and their selection of online shopping websites through Google survey tool. I received 204 responses and performed cross tabulation and frequency through SPSS.

**LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

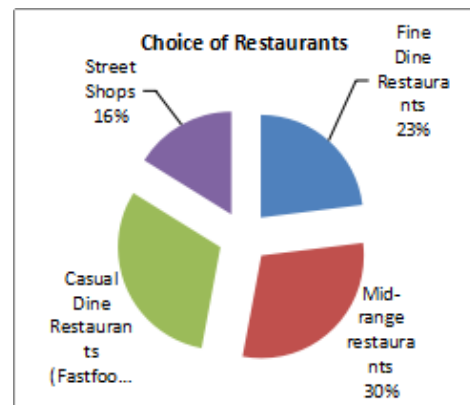
1. Study is limited to the junk food consumption behavior among college students only
2. Study is limited to Kopargaoon taluka.
3. Data analysis is done with help of responses given by respondents.

**SCOPE OF STUDY**

1. This study covers the factors that influence the junk food consumption behavior
2. This study finds out the factors considered while eating outside
3. This study will help to analyze the overall behavior of students related to junk food

**DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

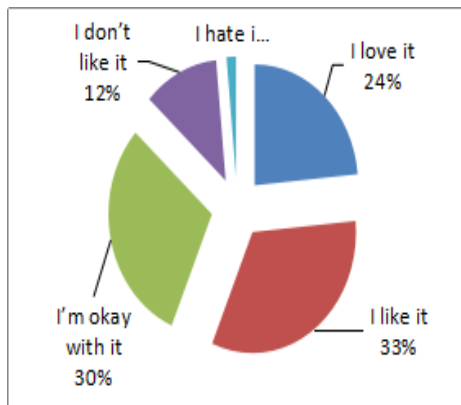
1) Where do you prefer dining while having food from outside?



**INTERPRETATION:**

The above pie diagram shows the preferred place to eat outside with 23% of respondents choose to go in Fine Dining restaurants, 29.9 of respondents while eating outside choose to go to midrange restaurants, 31% of respondents while eating outside choose to go to casual dine restaurants and 16% of respondents while eating outside choose to go to street shops

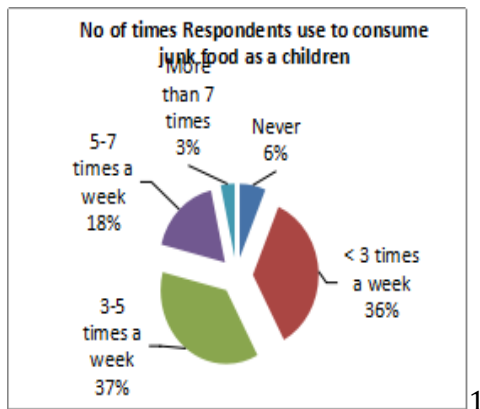
2) What is your personal opinion about junk foods?



**INTERPRETATION**

The above pie diagram shows the 24% of respondents love junk food als 33% of respondents said they like junk food 30% of respondents said they are okay with consuming junk food food .Only 1% of people said they hate junk food

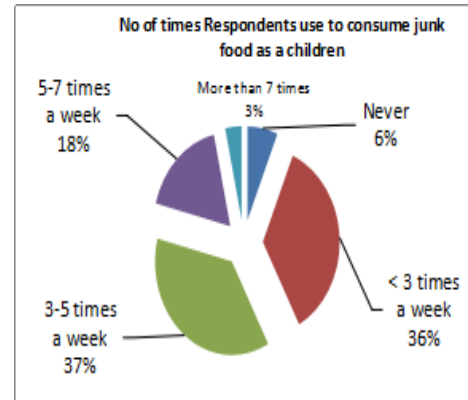
3) As a child how often were you having junk foods?



**INTERPRETATION**

The above pie diagram shows that as a children 6% of respondents use to never consume Junk food and 36% of respondents use to consume junk food less than three times a week There were 37% of respondents who use to consume junk food 3-5 times a week, 18% of respondents use to consume junk food 5-7 times a week.

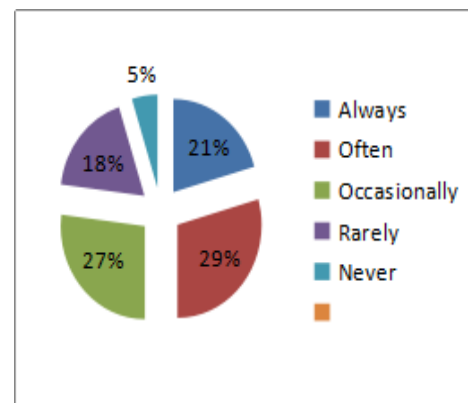
4)How often do you eat junk foods now?



**INTERPRETATION**

The above pie diagram shows that Now 26% of respondents consume junk food less than three times a week and almost 70% of the respondents eat junk food more than 3 times a week which is certainly more that when they were children.

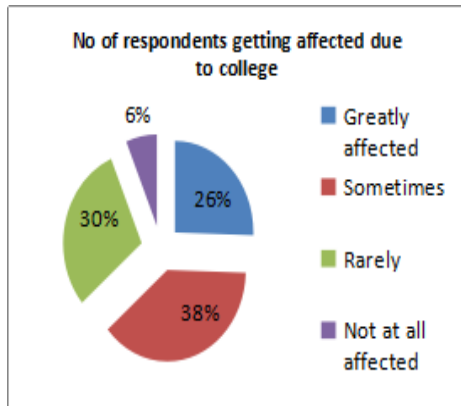
5) Do you ever replace a regular meal (breakfast/lunch/dinner) with a packet/plate of junk food?



**INTERPRETATION**

The above pie diagram shows that 20.6% respondents Always replace their meal with junk food also the no of respondents replacing their meals often and occasionally are 60%

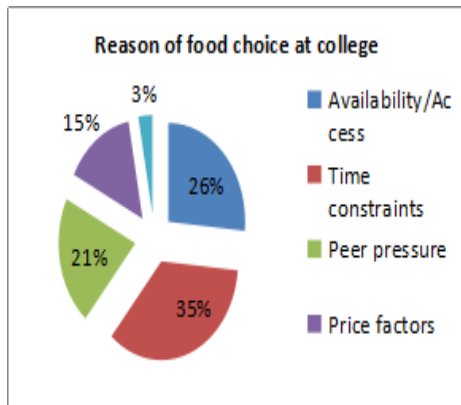
6) How does being in college affect your food choices compared to being at home?



**INTERPRETATION**

The above pie diagram shows that 65% of respondents are Greatly affected in their food choices due to being in college with almost 130 respondents saying the same and there were 30% respondents who are rarely affected due to being in college

7) What all reasons do you feel; affect your eating choices at your college?

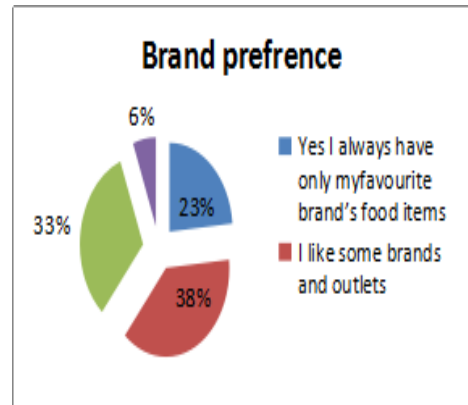


**INTERPRETATION**

Availability/Access was been selected as the reason for their food choice by 26% of respondents. Time constraints was been selected as the reason for their food choice by 34.8% of respondents. Peer pressure was been selected as the reason for their food choice by 21.1 % of respondents. Price factor was been selected as the reason for their food choice by 14.7 %

of respondents, Others was been selected as the reason for their food choice by 2.9 % of respondents

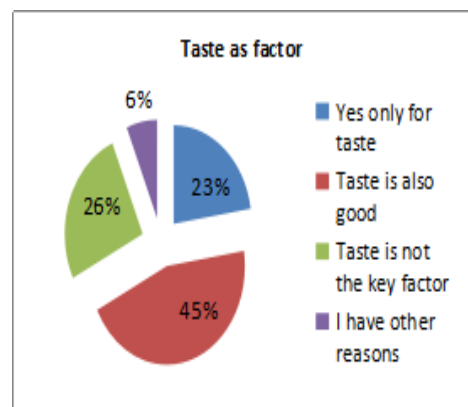
8) Do you have any brand specifications or loyalties with regard to food items and outlets?



**INTERPRETATION**

The above pie diagram shows that 23.5% of respondents said they Yes I always have only my favorite brand's food items also the percent of people saying they I like some brands and outlets was 37.7% and almost 32.8% of respondents said they I have no such compulsions of brands while eating

9) Does the taste of junk food items draw you towards consuming them?

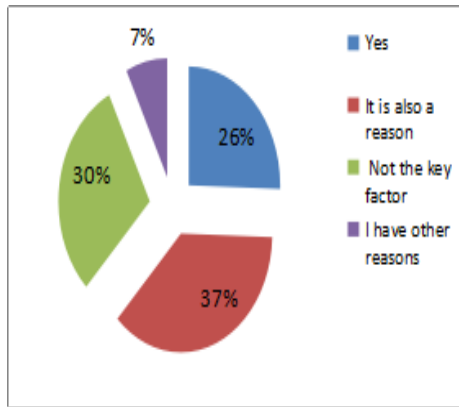


**Interpretation**

The above pie diagram shows that 23% of respondents eat junk food only for taste and 45% of respondents eat junk food because Taste is also good

and 26% of respondents eat junk food not only because of Taste as it is not the key factor for them

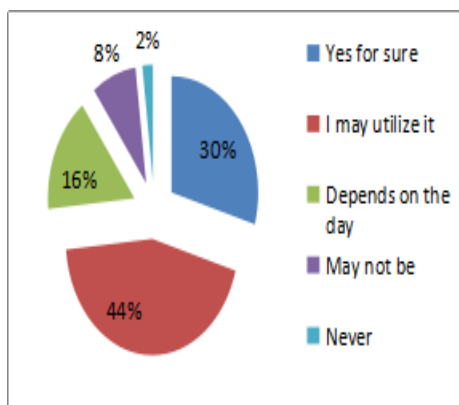
10 )Do you choose junk food items since they are readily available to you



**Interpretation**

The above pie diagram shows that 25.5% of respondents said Yes to the reason that they choose junk food as it is readily available, 36.8% of respondents said It is also a reason to the reason that they choose junk food as it is readily available, 30.4% of respondents said It is Not a key reason to the reason that they choose junk food as it is readily available, 7.4% of respondents said It is I have other reasons to the reason that they choose junk food as it is readily available

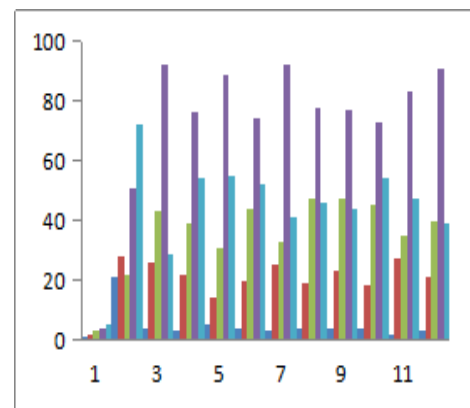
11)Will you buy/consume more of junk food items when they are offered with attractive discount prices (like Buy one Get one, Unlimited meals etc)



**Interpretation**

The above pie diagram shows that 30% of respondents said Yes for sure when offered discount prices on Junk Food they will but it with 44.1% of respondents said I may utilize it when offered discount prices on Junk Food and 16.2% of respondents said Depends on the day when offered discount prices on Junk Food. The number of respondents who said that they may not utilize discount was less than 10%

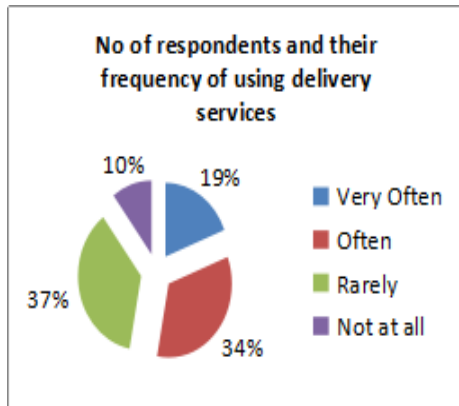
12)Which of the factors do you consider most while choosing an eat-out place? Rate each option with a number rating from 1 to 5



**Interpretation**

Quality is been most importance with 73 people rating it five, Hygiene is been considered to be 4 rated importance with 82 people rating it 4, Brand Reputation is been considered important factor as 130 people have rated it with either 4 or 5 rating, Taste is been considered important factor as 143 people have rated it with either 4 or 5 rating, Ambience is been considered important factor a a 130 people have rated it with either 4 or 5 rating, Service, Add on Facilities, Variety in menu offerings, Discount Schemes ,Nutritional Value And Hours of operations scores a middle ground hence making them Second important factors.

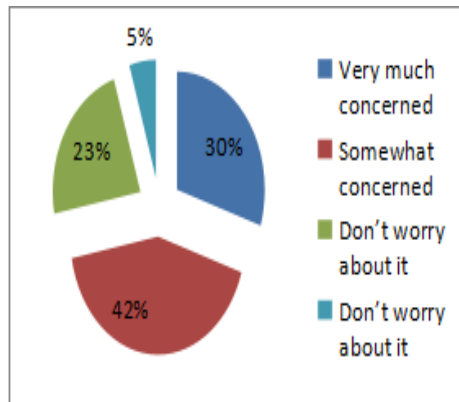
13) Do you use door delivery service provided by fast food outlets?



**Interpretation**

The above pie diagram shows that 19% of respondents Very often use door step delivery service while 34% of respondents using these services often also 19% of respondents Rarely use door step delivery service and 10.3% of respondents do not use door step delivery service at all

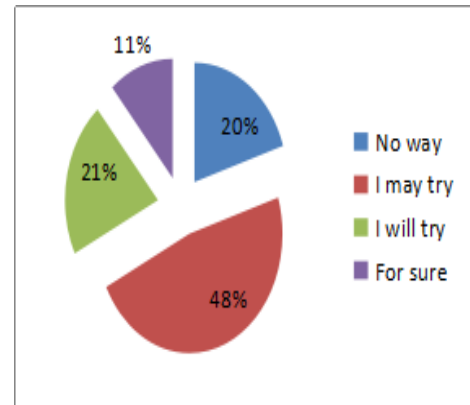
14) How concerned are you regarding the effects that junk food can have on your health?



**Interpretation**

The above pie diagram shows that 30% of respondents are very much concerned about the effects of Junk food and a large percent 42.2% of respondents who are Somewhat concerned about the effects of Junk food . 23% of respondents Don't worry about the effects of Junk food and 4.9% are not concerned of their health while eating Junk Food at all.

15) If you are offered a readily available, good quality, easily accessible and healthy alternative for your usual junk meals, would you compromise upon the taste and price aspects?



**Interpretation**

The above pie diagram shows that 20% respondents are not ready to adopt healthy alternative for Junk food but most of them are ready with 47.5% respondents say I may try to adopt healthy alternative for Junk food and 21.1% respondents say I will try to adopt healthy alternative for Junk food.

**FINDINGS**

1) Students today prefer to eat outside specially in Fine Dine Restaurants ,Mid-range restaurants Casual Dine Restaurants (Fast food franchisee outlets ) and a very less prefer street shops .With casual dine being the most preferred among the three with 30% of respondents opting for it as their go to option

2) Most of the people like Junk Food with more than 80% of responses indicating the same only

Less than 20 people said that they don't like junk food hence it shows how much the student of today's age like Junk food

3) There is a quite a difference in the number of times People used to eat junk food when they were children versus today when they are in a college

4) There is a quite a lot of students who replace their regular meal with the Junk food and this tendency to skip a proper meal for junk food is mostly seen in College Students. With more than 50% of students skipping their meals

5) Being in college affects the eating behavior of the students on different level depending on student. More than 25% of Students are greatly affected and also 40% sometimes get agitated due to being in college

6) It is found that due to easy Availability/Access of junk food in colleges, students tend to opt junk food. Also due to Time constraints, Peer pressure and Price factors students consider consuming Junk food

6) Taste is the most Important factor for students for which they buy Junk food

7) Quality, Hygiene, Brand Reputation, Taste, Ambience, Service, Add on facilities, Variety in menu offerings, Discount Schemes, Nutritional Value and Hours of operations are been considered the most when deciding a place to eat outside. All these factors influence the decision of eating outside

8) Students are somewhat concerned about their health when they opt for Junk food and only some percent are Completely concerned as well a very less number are not at all concerned.

Hence we find that junk food is being consumed even after knowing its ill effects on health

9) It was found that many of the students are ready to opt to healthy food items if they are readily available as Junk food is. Also 20% of students are not at all ready to change their behavior towards Junk food

## CONCLUSION

The main findings from the research confirms to the findings from literature. The independent variables that influence the consumption behavior were also found to vary with certain aspects of gender and level of education.

It was observed that students tend to replace regular meals with junk food occasionally, and in this aspect the female students were showing a greater tendency compared to male students.

Both the gender and level of education were observed to have an impact on the various factors that they consider while choosing a place to eat out.

Male students are found to be more concerned about the quality and hygiene of the eat out places than female. Female students have more compulsions and loyalties with regard to brands than males.

Both male and female students consider taste as an important factor while eating out place. Ambience and secondary factors were rated low by both genders.

Variety of menu, nutritional value and accessibility has impact on both male and female students. About discount schemes and hours of operation of junk food outlets, male students are giving more importance.

It was also observed that the post graduate students had a greater concern about health impacts of junk foods compared to undergraduates.

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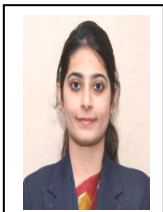
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## BIOGRAPHIES



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