

Study on Social and Demographic Factors Association with Food Choice in Gujarat

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Abstract — Food is an important for human life and source to growth and activities. The food choice and food buying behaviour is complex. There are varieties of factors affects to the food choice such as social, demographic, economic, personal etc. The present study aims to understand the social and demographic association with food choice. To fulfill the objectives descriptive research design was employed and cross sectional data from the Gujarat regions were obtained through questionnaire. The 200 respondents were surveyed and the collected data were analysed with descriptive statistics, independent sample t-test, one way ANOVA. The study found that freshness is most influencing factor followed by price for food choice. There is significant difference found for rural and urban for freshness, availability, occasion, and tradition. The significant difference found for freshness and taste across age groups. For price, freshness, taste and status significant difference were found across education groups.

Keywords — Food Choice; Food Preference; Social and Demographic Factors; Association with Food Choice; Factors Affecting Food Choice

1. Introduction

Food is essential for everyone's life. Being a basic need of the humankind food and food related purchase decisions are important for marketer. The food choice is regular activity yet there is complex buying behavior observed. It is meaningful in developing country like India where large portion of household income spends on foods. Consumer preference greatly influenced by the factors such as economic, demographic, psychological, sociological, etc. consumer preferences are reflected in terms of product benefit, functions, characteristics and performance criteria. (Rajakumari, 2010). There have been tremendous changes occurring in the pattern of consumers' food choice behaviour, visible in the way they go about food shopping and seeking etery options (Nair, 2014).

The consumption of different food items varies among socio-economic groups and regions (Abha Gupta, 2014). Food choice is a complex process which depends on culture and can be influenced by other factors like personal, social, economic and emotional (Alexandra Bargiota, 2013). Socio-Demographic variables include gender, age, level of education, employment status, profession, marital status, and total number of persons living in the house and living arrangements (S.Koukouli, 2002). The measures of socioeconomic position classify individuals in groups of similar status or prestige, power, knowledge and resources. (Liberatos P, 1988). The present study tries to investigate Social and Demographic factors association with food choice in Gujarat.

2. Review of Literature

J De Irala-EsteÁvez, (2000) found positive association between a higher level of education or occupation and a greater consumption of both fruit and vegetables. Education level has an important influence on socio-economic status. Higher level of education may also increase the ability to obtain or to understand health related information and behaviour. Education needed in develop health promoting behaviour and beliefs.

Jabir Ali, (2010) stated that Indian consumers are still price conservative and adopt "cheap and best" strategy while purchasing a quality product. The preference of the consumers indicates the priority for cleanliness/freshness of food products followed by price, quality, variety, packaging and non-seasonal availability. Further he found that males and females differ significantly on the frequency of purchase and preferred market distance for grocery items and monthly expenditure and preference on packing of vegetables. The age of consumers also plays role in frequency of purchase. The higher income consumer groups purchase fruits and vegetables frequently and also spend higher on them.

Oti, (2018) found that gender did not affect adolescent students perception of the factors influencing their food choice further he added that age does not matter in the discussion of the factors that affect adolescent students food choices. Elena Horska (2011) found that price and quality are important parameters of consumer food choice.

The food hygiene is also important qualitative factor in food choice; he also added that country’s specific habits, traditions influence consumer decision.

The factors considered were Price, Freshness, Availability, Advertisement, Taste, Season, Status, Neighbour Influence, Occasion, Traditions and Festivals.

3. Research Methodology

The present study focuses on the factors affecting food item purchase. To achieve the objectives descriptive research design was employed. The data were collected from the south Gujarat region. The 200 respondents were surveyed by adopting quota sampling technique of non-probability sampling method. The structured questionnaire was used as research instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was containing questions related to demographic profile of respondents and research questions. The various factors influence food item purchase been identified by reviewing related literatures. These factors were exposed to respondents on five point rating scale based on importance. The collected data were coded and feed in computer software further the data were analyse with the help of computer software. The descriptive statistics, independent sample t-test and one way ANOVA was used to analyse the data.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

For present study 200 respondents were surveyed out of 200 respondents, 140 (70 percent) were male and 60 (30 percent) were female. In case of age of respondents it was found that out of 200 respondents 89 (44.5 percent) were below 25 years, 105 (52.5 percent) has age between 26 to 50 years and 6 (3 percent) respondents had age between 50-75 years. In case of education of respondents it was found that out of 200 respondents 66 (33 percent) respondents studied up to post graduate level, 41 (20.5 percent) respondents studied up to SSC/ITI level, 39 (19.5 percent) studied up to under graduate level, 27 (18.5 percent) respondents studied up to HSC/Diploma level and 3 (1.5 percent) were illiterate. In case of occupation it was found that out of 200 respondents 68 (34 percent) respondents were students followed by 61 respondents (30.5 percent) engaged with private job, 42 (31 percent) respondents engaged in business, 17 (8.5 percent) respondents engaged with agriculture and allied activities and 11 (5.5 percent) respondents engaged with government job.

5. Food choice

To understand factors affecting food choice 5 point rating scale was used (1-Not important at all, 2-Not Important, 3 - Neutral, 4 – Important, 5- Very Important.

Table 1: Factors considered during Food Choice

Parameters	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Deviation
Price	8	13	14	57	108	4.22	1.090
Freshness	2	9	10	78	101	4.34	.846
Availability	4	8	42	87	59	3.95	.920
Advertisements	21	38	50	69	22	3.17	1.172
Taste	2	13	28	61	96	4.18	.971
Season	4	20	25	79	72	3.98	1.034
Status	17	35	58	63	27	3.24	1.148
Neighbor influence	21	44	51	64	20	3.09	1.166
Occasion	19	24	31	77	49	3.57	1.246
Traditions	19	24	39	73	45	3.51	1.232
Festivals	17	18	29	69	67	3.76	1.246

The above table shows frequency of responses for factors affecting food choice and mean for each factors based on responses. The freshness is the most important factor influencing food choice in study area followed by price, taste, season, availability, festivals, occasions, traditions, status, advertisements and neighbour influence.

5.1 Independent Sample t-test

The research try to investigate the differences among rural and urban for food consumption factors and independent sample t-test was employed for the comparison and hypothesis design as under:

Ho: There is no significant difference between rural and urban for factors affecting food choice

Ha: There is significant difference between rural and urban for factors affecting food choice

Table 2: Comparison between rural and urban for food choice

		Independent Samples Test				
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Price	Equal variances assumed	.003	.953	-.326	198	.745

	Equal variances not assumed			-.327	143.370	.744
Freshness	Equal variances assumed	1.333	.250	-3.694	198	.000*
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.340	107.072	.001
Availability	Equal variances assumed	8.793	.003	-2.305	198	.022*
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.108	110.217	.037
Advertisements	Equal variances assumed	.002	.960	.057	198	.955
	Equal variances not assumed			.057	140.785	.955
Taste	Equal variances assumed	.003	.957	-1.626	198	.106
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.552	124.034	.123
Season	Equal variances assumed	.003	.956	-1.039	198	.300
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.014	131.764	.312
Status	Equal variances assumed	2.007	.158	.541	198	.589
	Equal variances not assumed			.524	128.772	.601
Neighbour influence	Equal variances assumed	2.755	.099	-1.441	198	.151
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.488	154.946	.139
Occasion	Equal variances assumed	1.129	.289	-2.352	198	.020*
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.324	136.633	.022
Traditions	Equal variances assumed	1.550	.215	-2.230	198	.027*

	Equal variances not assumed			-2.171	130.971	.032
Festivals	Equal variances assumed	.947	.332	-1.776	198	.077
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.748	135.115	.083

*Significant at 5 percent level **Significant at 1 percent level

As above table depicts the null hypothesis rejected for the factors freshness at 1 percent significance level and for availability, occasion and tradition at 5 percent significance level. So, it can be infer that there is significant difference found for rural and urban for freshness (p=0.000), availability (p= 0.022), occasion (p= 0.20) , tradition (0.027). There were no significant differences found for price, advertisements, taste, season, social status, neighbour influence and festivals between rural and urban.

5.2 One Way ANOVA

An attempt was made to identify, Was there any differences across age groups, education groups and occupation groups for food items choice? The hypothesis designed as follow:

- H1₀: There is no significant difference for factors affecting food item choice across age groups
- H1₁: There is significant difference for factors affecting food item choice across age groups
- H2₀: There is no significant difference for factors affecting food choice and education groups
- H2₁: There is significant difference for factors affecting food choice and education groups
- H3₀: There is no significant difference for factors affecting food item choice and occupation groups
- H3₁: There is significant difference for factors affecting food item choice and occupation groups

The results of one way ANOVA for the age groups, education groups and occupation groups shown in below table.

Table-3: One way ANOVA

Parameters	Age		Education		Occupation	
	F	Sig.	F	Sig.	F	Sig.
Price	2.357	.097	3.416	.006***	1.555	.175
Freshness	3.473	.033**	3.617	.004***	1.518	.186
Availability	2.145	.120	.573	.720	2.082	.069*

Advertisements	.021	.979	2.110	.066	1.720	.132
Taste	3.142	.045**	3.121	.010**	.852	.515
Season	1.732	.180	1.037	.397	.238	.945
Status	2.035	.133	3.222	.008***	.572	.721
Neighbour influence	.906	.406	1.051	.389	.852	.514
Occasion	.438	.646	.938	.458	.180	.970
Traditions	.554	.575	2.232	.053*	.342	.887
Festivals	.376	.687	.645	.665	.847	.518

*Significant at 10 % level, **Significant at 5% level,
***Significant at 1 % level

As above table depicts the differences for factors affecting food item purchase across various groups and it was found that in case of age groups significant differences found for freshness of food products and taste of food products at 5 percent significance level for various age groups where as there were no significant differences found for price, availability, advertisements, season, social status, neighbour influence, occasion, traditions and festivals across age groups. In case of education groups, there were significant differences found for price of products, freshness of products and social status at 1 percent significant level across education groups and there were significant difference found for taste across education groups at 5 percent significance level. Further there was significant difference found for tradition across education groups at 10 percent significance level and there were no significant difference found for availability, advertisements, season, neighbour influence, occasion, and festivals. In case of occupation there were significant difference found for availability as factors affecting food choice across education groups. There were no significant differences found for price, freshness, advertisements, taste, season, social status, neighbour influence, occasion, tradition and festivals across education groups.

6. Conclusion

Food buying behaviour is becoming complex with urbanization, convenience and modernization. The present study was conducted to understand the social and demographic factors association for food choice. The study found that freshness is most influencing factor followed by price for food choice. There is significant difference found for rural and urban for freshness, availability, occasion, and tradition. The significant difference found for freshness and taste across age groups. For price, freshness taste and status significant difference were found across education groups. For availability the significant difference was found across occupation groups. The present study will helpful to marketers in segmentation, targeting and position strategies by keeping in mind demographic profile of consumers. It is

also further helpful in designing the communication strategies and communicating products to consumers by focusing on freshness, price factors.

7. Future Research

The future research can be carried out in detailed segmentation of food items like snacking behaviour, fast food consumption behaviour, eating out behaviour. The comparative studied can also be carried out among age groups (older people and young) for new food trends like foreign foods (e.g pizza, burger etc..) further comparative studied based on education, occupation rural-urban can also be carried out which may help companies in designing marketing strategies playing in this segment.

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