



JUNK FOOD CONSUMPTION AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS IN MYSORE CITY

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ABSTRACT

Consuming junk food is increasing in a very rapid way nowadays. Junk food represents food which is quickly prepared and eaten outside the home. This type of food is easily and quickly prepared, however, it refers mainly to the food that is prepared from precooked or preheated ingredients then packed and sold in stores or restaurants. The adolescents prefer to have junk food rather homemade cooked food, because it is available readily, in their fingertips (online), and it is been served quickly, tasty and deliciously prepared were available within fraction of seconds. Therefore the youngsters are fond of junk food consumption without knowing its impact on health. The present study attempted to know the perception on junk food consumption among college students in Mysore city. The convenient sampling method was adopted to collect data from six colleges covering 128 students. Descriptive research design has been chosen to examine the knowledge and perception on junk food. In the result it is found that 93% respondents prefer to consume junk food, 64% respondents preferred evening, and 74% respondents favoured street food.

KEYWORDS : Consumption, Junk food, Homemade, Perception, Knowledge.

INTRODUCTION:

Habits start at young and depend on the environment (home and school primarily) to cultivate healthy habits in children, the school being the next-best home of learning and nurturing. With the rights in the incidence of obesity and overweight amongst youngster and adults, the dark-side of 'junk food' cannot be over looked (Goyal & Singh, 2007). Junk food represents food which is quickly prepared and eaten outside the home (Afolabi et. al., 2013). The term 'Junk Food' was coined as a slang in the public interest in 1972 by Michael Jacobson, Director of the centre for science, Washington D.C. Junk food is energy dense food with high amount of refined sugar, white flour, trans-fat, polyunsaturated fat, salt numerous additives and low nutrient value in terms of protein, fibre, vitamins, and mineral content (Kausik et. al., 2011).

Adolescence is commonly regarded as a relatively healthy period of the life cycle. During this period there are various physical, psychological and behavioral transitions occurs which affects their life style and influence their eating patterns. Eating patterns of adolescents are influenced by many factors including peer influences, parental modeling, food availability, food preferences, cost, convenience, personal and cultural beliefs, mass media and body image (Thiruselvakumar et. al., 2014). According to leading websites, junk food is the term given to food that can be prepared and served very quickly, while Habib et. al. (2011) described junk food as quickly prepared, reasonably priced and readily available alternatives to home cooked food. Junk food refers to food that is easily and quickly prepared, however, it refers mainly to the food that is prepared from precooked or preheated ingredients then packed and sold in stores or restaurants. In 1951 the word 'junk food' was first introduced in the Merriam-Webster dictionary. Junk foods taste good and are rich in calories but they are of a very low nutritional value, Junk foods are usually rich in sugar, rich in fats or rich in salt.

There are many examples of junk food such as Pizza, French Fries, Burgers, hotdogs, fried food, candy, ice cream, and soda pop. Other kinds of junk food are just like the imitation juice that is available in most of the markets, that we may think it is healthy but the truth is that it has loads and loads of sugar, artificial flavors, and so little of the pure natural juice. Junk food has appeared in the world during Ancient Rome age, they sold wine and bread in the streets of the cities, also in the Far East, noodles were prepared and sold while in the Middle

East there were the flafel and the flatbread. Indians introduced dahi vada, vada pav and panipuri.

Although junk food is tasty and delicious, it has many disadvantages. It is estimated that around 16 million (1.0%) disability adjusted life years (DALYs) lost and 1.7 million (2.8%) of worldwide mortality have been attributed to inadequate consumption of vegetables and fruits (WHO, 2020). Despite the socio-economic condition of the family, junk food consumption has been on the raise worldwide due to its quick availability as ready to eat, inexpensive, and of good taste. Such foods have been found prepared using low quality ingredients such as refined grains, added sugar, and fats, despite nutritious ingredients (Gulati & Misra, 2017). Junk or fast foods have high sodium salt, which is often used as a preservative to make the foods more flavourful and satisfying. Such foods attract more people especially children and adolescents (Health guides, 2020). People must be aware of those disadvantages, because frequent consumption of junk food has real damage on the human health, and the most important bad effects that the junk food may cause are obesity, high cholesterol level, cardiovascular disorders, and nutritional deficiencies. Actually junk food may not contain any nutritional benefits to the body because it usually contains harmful fats, carbohydrates, and cholesterol that does not provide the body with any useful energy.

Adolescents who are being apart from their home for studies, have to adapt to new environment and have to depend on other or have to be self-reliant. The adolescents prefer to have junk food rather homemade cooked food, because it is available readily. Therefore, the present study attempted to know the perception on junk/junk food consumption among college students in Mysore city to examine their knowledge on junk food.

Research Methodology:

The study aims to know the perception on consumption of junk food among college students in Mysore city and the objectives were to:

- To know the socio-demographic details of college students.
- To explore the preference towards junk food.
- To examine the awareness about junk/junk food consumption.
- To suggest measures to encourage home cooked food over junk food consumption.

The universe comprises aggregate of 53,000 students studying at 122 affiliated colleges. The convenient sampling method was adopted to collect the data from six colleges covering 128 students, from different colleges in Mysore city. Descriptive research design has been chosen to examine the knowledge and perception on junk food. A self structured questionnaire consisting socio-demographic details and variables related to junk food consumption were prepared. Data were collected through questionnaire as well as through google forms.

RESULTS:

Table No. 1 Cross tabulation of socio-demographic profile of the respondents.

Age (in years)	N = 128 (Percent)	
	Male	Female
19-22	29 (23)	52 (41)
23-26	30 (23)	17 (13)
Residence and Education		
Education	Urban	Rural
PG	57 (44)	26 (21)
UG	28 (22)	17 (13)
Religion and Type of family		
Religion	Nuclear	Extended
Buddhism	20 (16)	3 (2)
Christian	28 (22)	2 (2)
Hindu	50 (39)	12 (9)
Jain	1 (1)	0 (0)
Muslim	9 (7)	3 (2)

The table 1 shows the cross tabulation of demographic details of the respondents. Among the gender, female respondents were high i.e., 69 (54%) compared to male respondents i.e., 59 (46%) were interviewed in the study. With regard to age, respondents between 19-22years were found to be more i.e., 81 (64%) compared to other later age groups, i.e., 47 (36). With regard to cross tabulation of Residence and Education, students hailed from Urban areas, studying in Post graduation level responded more i.e., 57 (44) compared to students from rural areas i.e., 26 (21) respondents. Further students studying in Undergraduate level, hailed from urban areas were 28 (22) respondents and 17 (13) respondents from rural areas. The last row of the table depicts the cross tabulation of religion and type of family. Among the religion students from Hindu religion are found to be more, hailed from nuclear families and extended families i.e., 50 (39) and 12 (9) respondents respectively, followed by respondents from Christian religion i.e., 28 (22) and two (2) respondents from nuclear and extended families respectively. There were respondents from Buddhism, Muslim and Jains i.e., 23 (18), 12 (9) and one (1), respondents respectively.

Table 2 Respondents' Preference on Junk Food

Junk food preferences	N = 128 (%)	
Consumption of junk food	Yes	128 (100)
	No	00
Time preferred for junk food the most	Evening	90 (70)
	Night	16 (13)
	Afternoon	15 (12)
	Morning	7 (5)
Frequency of junk food preference	Daily	38 (30)
	Weekly	38 (30)
	Once in 2/3 days	35 (27)
	Monthly	17 (13)
Place preferred for eating	Streets	101 (79)
	Branded food center	27 (21)
Order food online	Yes	102 (80)
	No	26 (20)
Preference of soft drinks with junk food	Yes	99 (77)
	No	29 (23)

Preferred mode of junk food consumption	With friends	80 (62)
	With family	27 (21)
	Alone	21 (17)
Reasons for preferring junk food	It tastes better	59 (46)
	It is cheaper	16 (12)
	It is junk	25 (20)
	Cannot prepared by self	19 (15)
	Other reasons	9 (7)

All the respondents have consumed junk food i.e., 100 percent, among them 70% respondents preferred to have junk food in the evening time.

A few of 38 (30%) each respondents, preferred to consume junk food on daily and weekly basis, and similar to that 35 (27%) respondents consumed junk food once in 2/3 days. A few of 27 (21%) favored to eat junk food at branded junk food center, whereas 101 (79%) preferred eating on the streets. About 102 (80%) respondents preferred ordering food online such as Zomato, Uber eats and Swiggy users, less than half of 46% respondents preferred junk food because it tastes better over a healthier food. More than half of 99 (77%) respondents favored to have soft drinks while having junk food, whereas 80 (62%) respondents goes out with friends to have junk food. Further it was asked on the reasons for fond of junk food. Less than half i.e., 59 (46%) respondents felt it as better taste, 16 (12%) said it is cheaper, 25 (20%) fond of because of the name junk food, and 19 (15%) respondents are staying in the hostel, hence they cannot prepare by themselves, therefore they are fond of having junk food and nine (9%) respondents said that they live near the street junk food centre, they have enough money to spend on junk food hence they are fond of it and consume it often.

Table No. 3 Perception on Junk Food Consumption

Perception	N = 128 (%)	
Feels junk food eating is healthy	Yes	65 (51)
	No	63 (49)
Thinks junk food is hygienic	Yes	60 (47)
	No	68 (53)
Water you drank at junk food center is safe and secured	Yes	52 (41)
	No	76 (59)
Undergone health issues after having junk food during last 3 month	Yes	69 (54)
	No	59 (46)
Junk food advertisement influence the eating habit.	Yes	75 (58)
	No	53 (42)
Attended class on Nutrition and health	Yes	71 (55)
	No	57 (45)
Schools and colleges should provide nutrition education to develop healthy eating pattern	Agree	102 (80)
	Disagree	12 (9)
	Not necessarily	14 (11)

Table 3 depicts that 51% respondents felt eating junk food is healthy, whereas 53% respondents opined that junk food is unhygienic, 59% respondents said that the water they drank at junk food center is not safe and secured. Furthermore, 54% respondents had undergone health issues after having junk food during last three months such as loose motion and vomiting after having junk food. Even after undergoing such issues they are fond of junk food.

More than half of 58% respondents agreed that junk food advertisement influences their eating habits. Again more than half of 55% respondents had attended an awareness program or class on nutrition and health. Additionally, a majority of 80% respondents opined that schools and colleges should provide nutrition and health education to develop healthy eating patterns among children and adolescents in schools and colleges.

Table 4 Cross tabulation of Perception and Education

Cross tabulation of Perception and Education		PG 83 (%)	UG 45 (%)
Consumption of junk food	Yes	77 (93)	42 (93)
	No	6 (7)	3 (7)
Place preferred for eating	Branded fast food center	21 (25)	6 (13)
	Streets	56 (68)	39 (87)
	Multiple response	6 (7)	0
Order food online	Yes	62 (75)	40 (89)
	No	21 (25)	5(11)
Attended class on nutrition and health	Yes	43 (53)	28(62)
	No	40 (47)	17 (38)

It is depicted in the table 4 that, equal percentage of respondents from UG and PG (93%) are fond and consume junk food. Among them 68% PG students and 87% UG students prefer having junk food on the street rather than branded food centre, may be because they aren't afford to pay it as the prices have been increased because of the loss during lockdown. With regard to ordering food online describes that 75% PG and 89% UG students prefer ordering food online, even after attending classes on nutrition and health i.e., 53% PG and 62% UG students. From the cross tabulation it is clear that among the students it is the Under graduate students who are more inclined to buy, order food online compared to PG students. However, it can be attributed that younger the age, higher the consumption of junk food.

Table 5 Association between variables

Between variables	Consumption of Junk food				
	df	Chi-square	P value	Result	Test of hypothesis
Frequency of Junk food preference	3	15.26	.002**	There is association	Null hypo. Rejected
Influence of advertisement on eating Junk food	1	5.27	.022*	There is association	Null hypo. Rejected
Health issues due to consumption of Junk food	2	.193	.908	There is no association	Null hypo. accepted
Attended Nutrition and health class	1	.000	.996	There is no association	Null hypo. accepted

Level of Significance: 0.05*

Null hypotheses: There is no significant association between consumption of junk food and other dependent variables.

Alternative hypotheses: There is significant association between consumption of junk food and other dependent variables.

RESULT:

The chi-square test was applied between dependent variables and the result revealed that there is association between consumption of junk food with other variables such as frequency of junk food preference (.002) and influence of advertisement on eating junk food (.022) have shown association and high association between variables, attributes towards fondness of having junk food over influence of mass medias of communication via frequent advertisement in social medias have been the reason behind consumption of junk food among young adults. Hence the null hypotheses are rejected, and alternative hypotheses are accepted i.e., there is association between dependent variables. Further association reveals that there is no association between

consumption of junk food and effect on health over consumption of junk food (.908) and attended class on health and nutrition (.996) have shown no association between the variables, hence the null hypotheses are accepted.

DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTION:

In the study female respondents were found to be 54% compared to male respondents, similar results were found in Kumar (2013) study that girls (51.5%) were found to more compared to boys, further the study has considered age group between 21-23years, well in the present study the respondents age ranged between 19-22years were 64%. In the study most of the respondents were undergoing Post graduation degree i.e., 65%, studying at different colleges in Mysore city. With regard to religion as much as 48% respondents belonged to Hindu religion. Further the description explains that all the respondents fond of consumption of junk food according to the study. The increased fondness is the influence of advertisements with the images of attractive models linked with junk food consumption. Here mass media plays a significant role in attracting most of young minds towards consumption of junk food. The websites displays various advertisements on eateries to drag the attention of food lovers, followed by food discounts has also encouraged them to buy junk food.

In the study most of the respondents preferred time for junk food consumption was during evening 70%, and 30% would want to have junk food daily as they can sit, relax and enjoy junk food along with friends, i.e., social factors, so that they eat more while hearing gossips. As much as 79% respondents preferred place of eating was on the street, as they felt good taste, easy availability of fast foods such as fried rice/noodles similar results found in Neupane (2014) & Bipasha & Goon (2013) study that good taste, advertisement, easy availability of fast food are found to be associated. Further, the respondents felt junk food is tastier and cheaper in street than in restaurants. More than half of 77% respondents favored to have soft drinks while having junk food, similar results were found in Bohara (2021) study that sweetened beverages along with junk food consumption was common among respondents. In the study as much as 80% respondents order food online, with a preferred food delivery app i.e., Zomato because the internet has made it easier for the consumers to order food online more cheaper and easier than earlier. More than half of 51% respondents felt consumption of junk food is healthy, as these respondents felt this food is more tastier and easier to avail from anywhere. There is a misconception that the young adolescents feel that the junk food is healthy. Instead of having junk food, the respondents could prefer fruits, vegetable salads, sprouts, fresh juice as an alternative to junk food which are healthier option and in nutrition dense. People are unaware of unhealthy eateries, its causes and effects. So there is need of education or awareness with regard to nutrition and healthy eating practices.

CONCLUSION

Junk food has become a part of life for all ages of people as it is convenient and tasty though prepared with low nutritional value. The study on junk/junk food consumption among college students in Mysore revealed that almost every student consume junk/junk food on their daily or weekly basis. It also showed that students preferred to eat junk food at streets during evening time with friends at most. A more number of student feels that the junk food eating is healthy and the advertisements on junk/junk food influences their eating habits. Besides, a higher number of students had undergone health issues due to junk food consumption. Furthermore, the students agrees that the schools and colleges should provide education on nutrition to develop a healthy eating pattern. Thus it is important and necessary for schools to organise

class on nutrition and build a healthy eating pattern from a root level to develop a habit of healthy eating so that the students won't miss a class due to a reason of health issues.

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