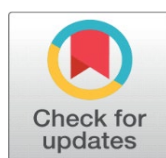
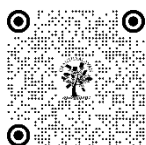


PARENTAL INFLUENCE ON CHILDREN'S FAST-FOOD CHOICES: A STUDY OF FAMILY DECISION-MAKING

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ABSTRACT

Concerns about obesity and lifestyle diseases have increased as children eat more fast food. Parents influence children's eating patterns, especially fast-food selections. This study explores family decision-making processes to determine parental influence on children's fast-food habits. We surveyed 5–15-year-old families to determine how parental supervision, socioeconomic conditions, and family dynamics affect children's diets. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics in this quantitative study. While parental influence is significant, children's preferences and external effects like peer pressure and marketing can influence fast food choices. The study found that parental supervision and public health programs can help kids eat healthier. Parents, schools, and legislators are advised to help youngsters make healthier eating choices.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Fast food dominates the global food market after decades of change. Fast food franchises and ready-to-eat meals have changed urban diets. Recent worries about childhood obesity and related health issues have highlighted fast food eating among children. Children, previously passive beneficiaries of their family's food choices, now actively participate in food decisions and often favour fast food. This increased inclination and fast food firms' aggressive marketing pose critical problems about children's food choices. Child nutrition is heavily influenced by the family, especially parents. Parents shape children's food preferences, diets, and long-term health. Parents set mealtime schedules, control food varieties, and model eating habits from early childhood. As children get older and more independent, they are exposed to peer pressure, media ads, and social trends, which might contradict parental instruction. This relationship makes food decisions complicated, balancing parental authority and children's preferences. The literature has shown that parents impact children's diets, but less is known about how they influence fast food choices. Fast food appeals to busy families due to its convenience, price, and availability. Frequent fast food consumption is linked to poor nutrition, which increases childhood obesity and other health risks. Given these hazards, it's important to study how parents affect their children's fast food consumption and what factors influence family decision-making.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(Parikh, 2020) studied “Social contextual influences on unhealthy food consumption: A psychological approach” Despite the fact that the social, economic, and physical contexts have a significant impact on what individuals eat, the manner in which, the reason why, and the conditions under which these contextual variables drive individual food intake are largely understood. In this thesis, psychological explanations are sought for the ways in which the “physical food environment and the socioeconomic setting may guide unhealthy food intake”. The emphasis of the thesis is on psychological and interpretive processes and how they may impact eating behaviour. This is done in recognition of the need of having a better understanding of individual processes within these settings.

(Labrecque & Ricard, 2001) studied “Children’s influence on family decision-making: a restaurant study” This study aims to examine the impact of various home kinds on parents' and children's views of the role of children in family meal decisions, and whether or not these views differ by house type. The findings of this study run counter to previous research that has found children significantly underreport their impact on their parents' choice to dine out. about the other hand, they share their parents' views about the extent to which they can sway restaurant preferences.

(Kümpel Nrgaard et al., 2007) studied “Children’s influence on and participation in the family decision process during food buying Children now make up a sizable portion of the consumer market and have a significant impact on the kinds of things their families buy across a variety of categories. In light of this recognition of children as a primary market, an influential market, and a future market, children of today are regarded as being distinct from children of previous generations. This is especially true of children aged 8 to 14 years old, who are referred to as tweens because they are neither children nor teenagers but rather something in between.

(Goyal & Singh, 2007) studied Consumer perception about fast food in India: an exploratory study Indian cuisine reflects the rich cultural diversity of the country, which is a result of the many different regions and states that comprise it. Traditional Indian cooking has deep cultural and religious roots, and for generations, Indians have preferred to dine on home-cooked meals. Despite this, because to increased awareness of western culture and its influence, there has been a little shift in the eating habits of urban Indian households. The practice evolved from eating outdoors to embracing a diverse range of cuisines from across the world.

(Delormier et al., 2009) studied Food and eating as social practice – understanding eating patterns as social phenomena and implications for public health It is a priority for public health organisations all over the world to recognise the increase of obesity among people. Obesogenic environments and cultural trends that promote unhealthy eating habits and insufficient physical activity are likely the root causes of obesity in communities. However, changing eating habits on a personal level is the main focus of nutrition intervention and obesity prevention efforts. Efforts to alter people's diets through behavior-based nutrition education have had regrettably mixed outcomes thus far. In order to comprehend population eating patterns, sociological perspectives propose looking at the sociocultural context and assuming that underlying social links could help explain collective food and eating behaviors.

(Czudec et al., 2022) studied supporting local economic development as a motive for purchasing organic food This research aims to assess the significance of organic food purchases made by Polish customers with a desire to boost their local economy. Other factors that influence customer behavior will serve as a backdrop for this assessment. The empirical evidence is derived from a survey that was distributed to eight hundred fifty organic food consumers in Poland. For this empirical data, we used two non-parametric tests: the Mann-Whitney U test and Pearson's chi-squared test of independence. Findings from the poll indicate that many individuals who purchase organic food do so with the goal of making a positive impact on their neighborhoods' economy.

(Chandarakesan et al., 2018) studied Study on consumption of fast food and its association with BMI among medical students in a tertiary care center of eastern India The term fast food is shorthand for the quick preparation and serving of food in restaurants. Many delicious foods are included in it, like pizza, ice cream, chicken nuggets, French fries, fried chicken, sandwiches, and chips. The current youth culture's obsession with fast food is pervasive and trendy, and medical students are no different. Working in a stressful atmosphere is something that medical professionals have to deal with, and it can definitely affect their eating habits and how they behave. This study set out to answer many questions about medical students' fast food habits, including how often they eat it, what kinds of foods they eat, and what factors contribute to their eating habits.

(Udurawana, 2015) studied a study on factors affecting on consumers’ fast foods buying behaviour: reference to pizza hut in the Anuradhapura city area, sri lank With a focus on Pizza Hut locations in the Anuradhapura metropolitan district,

this exploratory study aimed to identify the factors that impact consumers' decisions to buy fast food. The research population consists of pizza eaters, which includes all customers in the Anuradhapura city zone. People of all ages and backgrounds, from students to entrepreneurs, were selected at random from this pool of international residents. Using demographic variables and data collected through structured questionnaires, the researcher examined nine variables—including location, atmosphere, salesperson behavior, awareness, price, quality, image, promotion, and fast service—and 114 out of 120 members responded.

(Mansoor & Kumar, 2020) studied Sectional Study Among Rural Children in Managluru, Karntaka" Worldwide, fast food consumption is on the rise, especially among the younger generation. Fast food's widespread availability across the world has contributed to a host of health problems, the most serious of which are the epidemics of overweight and obesity that it has helped to create. Multiple studies have found that factors that raise the risk of childhood obesity include poor dietary habits, insufficient physical activity, and a family history of the disease.

(Fatikhani & Setiawan, 2019) studied The relationship between the level of knowledge regarding fast food and the dietary habits among adolescents in Jakarta, Indonesia The study's overarching goal is to find out how much knowledge teens have about junk food and how it relates to their eating habits. Since this study was descriptive and correlative in nature, a cross-sectional design was appropriate for its approach. Stratified random sampling was used by researchers at a Jakarta junior high school to choose 190 students from the combined seventh and eighth levels. This study's research tool was a questionnaire.

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study examines parental influence on children's fast food choices in family decision-making. Given the health risks of fast food for children, understanding this association is crucial. This study will illuminate how parental control, children's preferences, and environmental circumstances affect family fast food choices. This finding could inform public health policies to reduce childhood obesity and promote healthy eating. Interventions to educate and empower parents to make healthy food choices for their children may be helpful if parental influence is a major factor in fast food intake. This study may also reveal ways to use family decision-making to improve healthier food choices in children, informing neighbourhood and national policies.

4. PARENTAL INFLUENCE ON CHILDREN'S DIETARY HABITS

Early in life, parents are the primary gatekeepers of their children's diet. Parents' food choices, cooking methods, and meal times shape children's diets. Parental feeding techniques include regulating portion sizes, encouraging or discouraging certain meals, and modelling good eating habits have been demonstrated to greatly effect children's eating habits. According to research, children whose parents offer a range of healthy foods and model healthy eating habits are more likely to favour healthy foods. Conversely, parents who eat quick meals or high-calorie snacks may unintentionally teach their kids similar habits. Parental food attitudes, such as perceiving fast food as a treat or reward, might also affect children's fast-food consumption. As children get older and become more independent, parents may have less impact on their eating choices. Peer influence, fast food media, and taste preferences may trump parental guidance for adolescents. This trend raises critical questions concerning parental authority's influence on children's fast food choices during adolescence, a time of increasing autonomy and identity discovery.

5. THE ROLE OF FAMILY DECISION-MAKING

Family decision-making is complicated since stakeholders have different beliefs, preferences, and priorities. Parents and children may disagree on what makes a good dinner, especially fast food. Parents may value health and nutrition, but kids may like fast food's taste, convenience, and marketing. These clashing priorities can cause family debates, concessions, and conflict.

Socioeconomic position, cultural values, time constraints, and family dynamics affect dietary choices. Fast food is convenient and affordable, so families with hectic schedules or limited access to fresh, nutritious meals may choose it. Families with more time and resources may prefer home-cooked meals and minimise fast food. Some cultures value home-cooked meals, while others value fast food as part of a fast-paced lifestyle, which might influence family decisions. Food choices also depend on family relationships. Research suggests that authoritarian parenting, which restricts children's eating choices, may cause disobedience, especially in adolescence. Authoritative parenting, which sets strict rules but gives kids some food choice, promotes healthy eating. This implies that parents' eating decisions can influence their children's diets.

6. FAST FOOD CONSUMPTION AMONG CHILDREN

Fast food consumption among children has increased globally due to aggressive marketing, the development of fast food establishments, and the growing desire for convenience in modern lifestyles. Fast food has many calories, minimal nutritional value, and additives like sugar, salt, and harmful fats. Fast food's taste, availability, and affiliation with fun and entertainment are attracting children despite these negatives, according to advertising initiatives targeting younger audiences. Health problems arise from children's growing fast food consumption. Fast food consumption is associated to obesity, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease in many studies. Low consumption of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and high intake of processed, high-calorie foods are also common in fast food-eating children. Given these health dangers, knowing why kids eat fast food is crucial. Advertising and peer influence influence children's eating choices, but parental influence is crucial. This study examines how family decision-making processes affect children's fast food consumption to help parents promote healthier eating habits and lower fast food's health risks.

7. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Despite the plethora of research on parental effect on children's diets, few studies have examined fast food consumption in family decision-making. This study addresses this gap by examining how parental influence and family decision-making processes affect children's fast food choices. Family food decision-making will be examined in terms of parental control, children's autonomy, and external influences including peer pressure and media advertising.

8. OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the level of parental influence on children's fast food consumption.
2. To analyze family decision-making patterns regarding food choices.
3. To explore the relationship between parental guidance and children's eating behavior.

SAMPLING FRAME

The total size of the sample will be 500 fast food consumers across various families in New Delhi, The fast food outlets that will be included in the study are McDonald's, KFC, Subway, Domino's, Wow! Momo, Taco Bell, Wendy's, Dunkin Donuts, and Lapino's Pizzeria

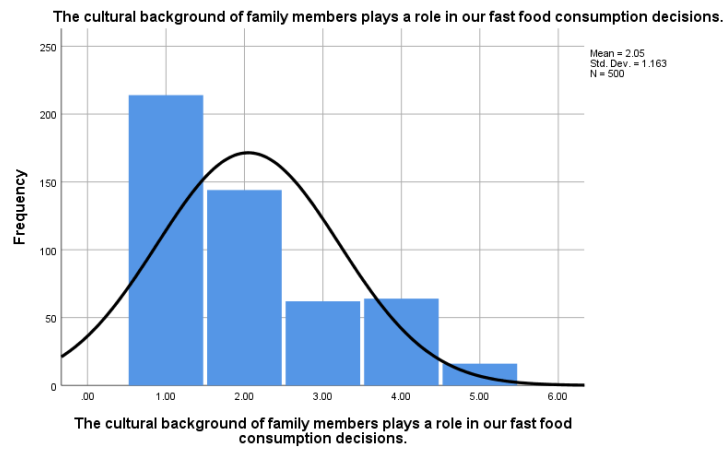
SAMPLING UNIT

The respondents will be fast food consumers across various families in New Delhi.

The sample size will be 500.

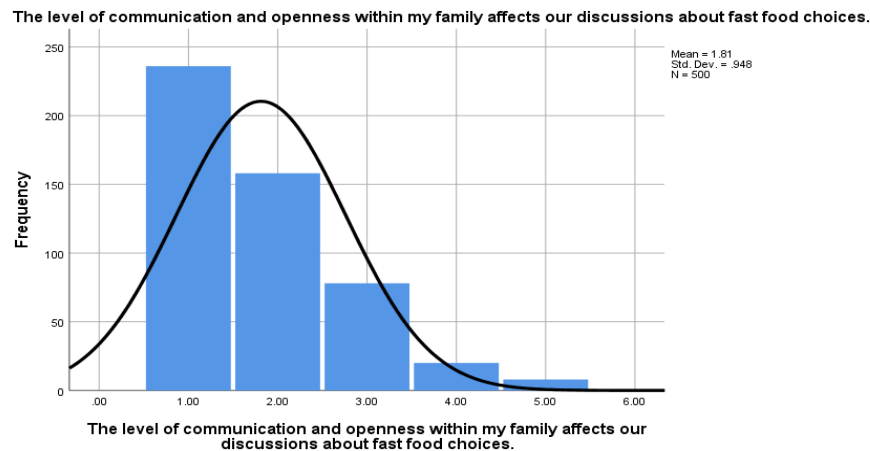
DATA ANALYSIS

The cultural background of family members plays a role in our <u>fast food</u> consumption decisions.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	214	42.8	42.8	42.8
	Agree	144	28.8	28.8	71.6
	Neutral	62	12.4	12.4	84.0
	Disagree	64	12.8	12.8	96.8
	Strongly Disagree	16	3.2	3.2	100.0
	Total	500	100.0	100.0	



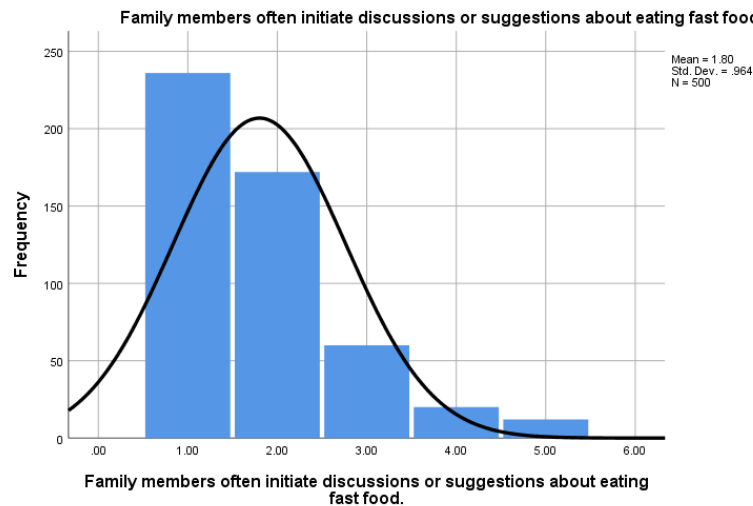
From the analysis we have found the details mentioned in the above graph and table and it states that the sample data is concerned about 500 respondents The cultural background of family members plays a role in our fast food consumption decisions. 214(42.8%) respondents responded Strongly Agree, 144(28.8%) respondents responded Agree, 62(12.4%) respondents responded Neutral and 64(12.8%) respondents responded Disagree and 16(3.2%) respondents responded Strongly Disagree.

The level of communication and openness within my family affects our discussions about fast food choices.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	236	47.2	47.2	47.2
	Agree	158	31.6	31.6	78.8
	Neutral	78	15.6	15.6	94.4
	Disagree	20	4.0	4.0	98.4
	Strongly Disagree	8	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	500	100.0	100.0	



From the analysis we have found the details mentioned in the above graph and table and it states that the sample data is concerned about 500 respondents The level of communication and openness within my family affects our discussions about fast food choices. 236(47.2%) respondents responded Strongly Agree, 158(31.6%) respondents responded Agree, 78(15.6%) respondents responded Neutral and 20(4%) respondents responded Disagree and 8(1.6%) respondents responded Strongly Disagree.

Family members often initiate discussions or suggestions about eating fast food.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	236	47.2	47.2	47.2
	Agree	172	34.4	34.4	81.6
	Neutral	60	12.0	12.0	93.6
	Disagree	20	4.0	4.0	97.6
	Strongly Disagree	12	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	500	100.0	100.0	



From the analysis we have found the details mentioned in the above graph and table and it states that the sample data is concerned about 500 respondents Family members often initiate discussions or suggestions about eating fast food. 236(47.2%) respondents responded Strongly Agree, 172(34.4%) respondents responded Agree, 60(12%) respondents responded Neutral and 20(4%) respondents responded Disagree and 12(2.4%) respondents responded Strongly Disagree.

The decision-making process for fast food consumption in my household is mostly determined by one person.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	244	48.8	48.8	48.8
	Agree	158	31.6	31.6	80.4
	Neutral	54	10.8	10.8	91.2
	Disagree	34	6.8	6.8	98.0
	Strongly Disagree	10	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	500	100.0	100.0	

The decision-making process for fast food consumption in my household is mostly determined by one person.



From the analysis we have found the details mentioned in the above graph and table and it states that the sample data is concerned about 500 respondents. "The decision-making process for fast food consumption in my household is mostly determined by one person." 244(48.8%) respondents responded Strongly Agree, 158(31.6%) respondents responded Agree, 54(10.8%) respondents responded Neutral and 34(6.8%) respondents responded Disagree and 10(2%) respondents responded Strongly Disagree.

9. DISCUSSION

Parental impact on children's fast-food choices decreases as they get older and more independent, according to one study. When parents model healthy eating, set boundaries, and provide regulated meal conditions, their children tend to eat healthier. However, peer pressure, media marketing, and children's independence influence fast food consumption, especially during adolescence. Modern life's complexities—socioeconomic considerations, time restrictions, and quick food—influence family meal decisions. Fast food intake is higher in families with more shared or flexible decision-making, underlining the necessity for continuous parental participation in food decisions as children become more independent. The study concludes that while parents are important, public health initiatives are needed to fight fast food marketing and promote better choices. School and community contexts must also encourage healthy eating.

10. CONCLUSION

This study shows how parents influence their children's fast-food preferences, especially in early infancy. Setting meal patterns, modelling good eating, and discussing nutrition with children substantially affect their diets. As youngsters get older, peer pressure, media marketing, and personal autonomy influence their eating habits, especially fast food. The data imply that parental influence is important, but external influences require broader strategies. Public health campaigns for parents and children and fast-food advertising restrictions could reduce unhealthy food intake. Education and access to healthy foods in schools and communities can create healthier eating situations. Parents, policymakers, and public health efforts must work together to encourage healthy eating in children and reduce the detrimental consequences of fast food.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None

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None

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