

FOOD CONSUMPTION PATTERNS OF THE UNDERGRADUATES: A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SABARAGAMUWA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA

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Introduction

Food is an essential thing for human being. It plays an important role for the healthy life. The modern food system is complex, dynamic and international. Foods are parts of the daily lives and that affects to healthy, safety environment. Food consumption patterns in any county are generally considered to be an important indicator of development changes. People need various kinds of foods to fulfill their nutritional requirements. Therefore they consume vegetables, fruits, meat, fish and beverage for healthy life. Food demand can be change from country to country as well as individually. There are different food consumption patterns in different groups. Considering food consumption pattern of the under graduates, different food consumption pattern can be identified.

The highest and lowest change in food patterns of students after entering university was seen in vegetable consumption (70.6% decrease) and the consumption of nuts (54.3% unchanged), respectively Data analysis also showed a decrease in consumption of vegetables, fruits, dairy products and nuts while an increase in consumption of junk food and fast food among exotic students was found which was statistically meaningful (The Change in Food Consumption Pattern of Male and Female Students of Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, after Entering University, 2008). As food purchasing power increased among most consumers in the world during the past few decades, consumers shifted to more expensive forms of nutrients (James Seale, et al, October 2003).

Accordingly, in the evaluation of university student's consumption, it is necessary to consider meeting their own needs, but also consider meeting the social interaction needs and the social sustainable development needs on the basis of the principle of difference and objectivity. This is of great significance for university students to improve their quality of life, and promote their full physical and mental development and even to construct the "conservation-oriented society" (GONG Yun, School of Economics, Yunnan Normal University).

Diet diversification and increasing demand for better quality and labor-saving products have increased imports of high-value and processed food products in developed countries. Consumer groups in developed countries have also brought attention to organic production of food and the topic of animal welfare. One way in which the public and private sectors have responded to consumer demand for these quality attributes has been by developing and implementing mandatory and voluntary quality control, management, and assurance schemes (Anita Regmi, 111 pp, May 2001).

The college environment may exacerbate the psychological, biological, and socio-cultural causes for the development of faulty eating patterns or, in extreme cases, an eating disorder. Students faced with new independence as well as separation from home and family can

struggle with finding their balance. This transition can be hard, and the feelings created by stress can then be projected on one's body, thus creating a challenging relationship with food and body image (American College Counseling Association, 2007)

The study highlights the role that university food services need to take in providing healthier, taste satisfying food choices for students on campus and promoting healthy eating behaviors', specifically to individuals who have moved away from their family home and potentially lack support and advice to engage in healthier food choices.

(Rebecca et al., 2009) In general, we have found that fast food consumption is linked to money spent on campus which begs the question that if there were healthier food choices on campus would this relationship change. (Rebecca et al., 2009)

Therefore the main objective of the study is to identify the food consumption patterns of undergraduates while sub Objectives are, to identify the expenditure differences among undergraduates related to the food consumption, to identify the effect of food consumption pattern and health condition and to identify the nature of fast food consumption among undergraduates.

Find the reasons changing the food consumption in undergraduates was research problem of the study. Because nutrition level among the undergraduates is not in a satisfactory level. Majority of the students are suffering from different nutritional problems and diseases.

Methodology

Primary data collected through a questionnaire survey collected by 80 undergraduates in Sabaragamuwa University was mainly used by the study. Simple random sampling was used to select the sample. It included 40 male and 40 female undergraduates. To collect secondary data Department of Census and Statistics was supported as well as magazines, journals, books etc.

Multiply regression model was used to analysis the dataset. And also correlation, chi-square method was used to find the relationships between food expenditure and socio economic determinants. Two multiple regression models were used to analysis the monthly consumption expenditure and monthly short eat consumption expenditure. The dependent variable was monthly expenditure for food consumption. Independent variables were age, sex, monthly earning, short eats expenditure etc. Considering the regression output expenditure pattern of the male is higher than female. As well as when their age increase by year expenditure also increase. Considering the correlation between monthly short eat expenditure and gastritis, the value was recorded as 0.08. As well as according to the lecture times their consumption pattern change. The short eat consumption increased when they participate morning lectures. The positive correlation value was recorded with the monthly income and their expenditure as 0.085. In addition to that there was a relationship between the gap of their meal with gastritis.

Discussion and Conclusion

According to the findings, more than 80 % male students consume rice for their main meals than female and more than 60% of undergraduates' consume meat once or twice per month. As well as nearly 40% of the students used to consume short eats to quickly participation for the lectures and more than 75% of students had rice for their main diets. And also as the research finding a poor consumption of fish and meat was recorded among them and 90% of students consume short eats such as noodles, roles, and biscuits in addition to their main

three diets to avoid the monotonous consumption pattern and to fill the lack of insufficient of main diet and taste of meals. Considering the health condition of the under graduates more than 40% of the students were suffering from severe gastritis and study established a strong association between consuming short eats and having gastritis. As well as more than 80% undergraduates were used to eat short eats such as roles, buns etc. Considering at the hostel and away short eats consumption at the hostel short eats consumption was higher than the away the hostel consumption. And also considering the majority of the female student used to eat short eats in the tea time with friends. In addition to nearly 40% of the students used to consume short eats to quickly participation for the lectures. When considering the relationship between short eat and health condition there is a direct relationship. Majority of the students' health condition is very bad as inappropriate food consumption pattern. As a result majority of undergraduates are suffering from gastritis as fast food consumption. And also at hostel fast food consumption was higher than the away the hostel. However undergraduates spend more than 75% from their income for food consumption.

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