



A STUDY ON CONSUMER AWARENESS AND PERCEPTION OF STREET FOOD USAGE BY YOUNGSTERS WITH REFERENCE TO COIMBATORE CITY.

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ABSTRACT :

This research analyzes the perception and awareness of street food among youth in Coimbatore. It is based on aspects such as hygiene, taste, price, and health hazards. Even though it is popular for being tasty and affordable, issues regarding cleanliness and food safety are still there. Based on data from 120 respondents, the study identifies the concerns and preferences of youth and proposes measures to enhance street food hygiene without compromising its cultural and economic significance.

KEYWORDS : Street Food , Consumer Awareness, Perception, Hygiene, Food Safety, Youngsters, Affordability, Taste, Preference, Health Concerns, Urban Food Culture, Street Food Vendors

1.1 INTRODUCTION :

Street food is commonly eaten by young people in Coimbatore because of its flavor, affordability, and ease of access. Although it is well-liked, issues of hygiene and food safety persist. This research seeks to evaluate the perception and awareness of young people towards eating street food and the determinants of their preferences.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

This study aims to investigate the increasing popularity of street food among young people in Coimbatore is a cause of serious concern for hygiene, food safety, and health risks. Though cheap and convenient, most street food vendors lack proper sanitation and regulatory checks, which can result in the spread of foodborne diseases. Young consumers tend to give more importance to taste and price than to safety, reflecting a lack of awareness about the health risks involved. This research will attempt to identify the gap in perception and awareness among the youth when it comes to street food consumption and establish the urgency for improved food safety measures and consumer awareness.

1.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY :

1. To analyse the perception of street food in terms of taste, affordability, and convenience.
2. To evaluate the health concerns associated with street food consumption among youngsters.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY :

Research methodology refers to the systematic process used to collect, analyze, and interpret data to achieve the objectives of a study. It outlines the research design, data collection methods, sampling techniques, and analysis procedures to ensure reliable and valid results. The methodology helps researchers structure their study, ensuring it follows a logical approach and produces meaningful insights.

CONSUMER AWARENESS OF PERCEPTION OF STREET FOOD:

TASTE, AFFORDABILITY, AND CONVENIENCE:

1. Taste:

Taste is one of the primary factors that influence the popularity of street food.

Vendors often use local spices and flavors that appeal to the regional palate.

Young consumers are especially fond of the unique, bold flavors that are often unavailable in restaurant or home-cooked meals.

For many, street food provides a sense of cultural connection and nostalgia.

2. Affordability :

Affordability is a major advantage of street food. Many young people, such as students or those in entry-level jobs, operate on limited budgets. Street food offers a variety of meals at low prices, making it a practical choice. Compared to restaurants or fast food chains, street food provides value for money without compromising on portion size or flavor.

3. Convenience:

Street food is often sold at easily accessible locations such as bus stops, markets, and college campuses. This makes it a convenient option for people on the go. The quick service and takeaway packaging cater perfectly to the fast-paced lifestyle of youngsters who prefer to eat while traveling or between classes and work.

1.6 HEALTH CONCERNS AMONG YOUNG CONSUMERS:

1. Hygiene and Sanitation:

Many street food vendors operate without formal licenses and may not follow standard food safety guidelines. This can lead to contamination through improper handling, unclean cooking utensils, or exposure to pollutants. Young consumers may overlook these risks in favor of taste and cost.

2. Use of Low-Quality Ingredients:

To cut costs, some vendors use substandard ingredients, expired products, or unhygienic water, all of which can be harmful to health. Regular consumption of such food increases the risk of foodborne illnesses, digestive problems, and nutrient deficiencies..

3. High Fat and Sugar Content:

Street food is often deep-fried and loaded with fats, salts, and sugars to enhance flavor. Regular consumption may contribute to obesity, high blood pressure, and other lifestyle diseases, especially among young people who lack a balanced diet..

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- Nakul and Deshmukh (2018) “have targeted in Bharat is especially an agricultural country, where agriculture contributes to regarding 14.6 % in gross domestic product (GDP) and support over fifty eight percent of the nation’. population for bread and butter (GOI, 2010). The recent economic and trade liberalization is exerting significant pressure on India’s land resource partitioning in sectors adore forestry, agriculture, pasture lands, human settlements and industries. The coupled impact of meeting food demand beneath restricted tillable space and toxin-free agricultural turn out became a very important forcing issue for countries like ours to explore prospects for opting ‘conventional agriculture’. the dominant farming approach promoted by most government and business enterprise teams throughout the globe or ‘organic agriculture’ a holistic production management system that is supportive to environment, health and sustainability”
- Nayana Sharma and Ritu Singhvi (2018) “in their study Food consumption follow is changing worldwide among the shoppers and currently they require to prefer food that is free from artificial chemicals, fertilizers, and pesticides, i.e., they want to consume for organic food which isn't solely property for health however additionally environment- friendly. Organic merchandise doesn't seem to be such a lot standard among consumers attributable to lower productivity of organic turn out by farmers, which in result cause the high market value of organic food. There's a requirement to form awareness regarding the benefits of organic 11 food products among folks, and promote its use, whereas on the opposite hand, there is the foremost need to encourage the farmers to pick organic farming. A study of client perception relating to organic food might add insight to rising organic food business in Bharat and worldwide. The review of connected literature within the space of the organic foodstuff and consumer perception studied has provided several insights for the study. It's additionally provided direction in coming up with the current study. A variety of researchers have known the demand of organic food merchandise worldwide and in India. Any the assorted factors that influence consumer perception of organic food products have also been identified. Some studies have also been undertaken preference, knowledge, and satisfaction relating to organic food merchandise. Having reviewed many studies and having known the gap, the investigator felt a foremost have to be compelled to undertake the current investigation”.
- Renuka Devi and Ramya (2018) “have predictable that increasing demand for organic food and rising health consciousness among the folks within the present situation junction rectifier the research worker to find out regarding the behavior of purchaser towards the organic products, its evaluating, awareness of shoppers towards organic products then forth in a very a lot of intensive manner. Tamil Nādu, is one among the potential states for organic products, larger a part of the farm in the state develop the standard path while not or least utilization of composts and plant assurance chemicals. Some of the \$64000 food crops created organically in Tamil Nādu and having sensible market demand are ginger, jackfruit, fenugreek, mango, tamarind and Emilia then on. Shoppers are to boot most well-liked to buy various organic food merchandise items, particularly in Brobdingnagian cities. In any case, attributed to shameful market linkage, absence of awareness of the folks about organic produce, no item separations amongst organic and inorganic products and so on occurred into a value advantage (premium price) to the organic foods produced in the state. The current paper investigations the client behavior towards organic merchandise as well as readiness to purchase the item, inclination for various items, for example, fruits, vegetables, cereals, then on to understand the perception of the patrons towards organic products higher way”.

3. PROFILE – AN OVERVIEW

3.1 INTRODUCTION :

Street food has become a part of urban culture, providing a variety of cheap and accessible food to the consumers. Street food is a major contributor to fulfilling the dietary requirements of individuals from all socio-economic strata in the world. In India, where food culture is strongly rooted in tradition, street food is both culturally and economically important. Urban centers such as Coimbatore have experienced a sudden surge in street food consumption, especially among youth who opt for convenient and affordable meal alternatives.

The growing popularity of street food brings significant questions regarding consumer awareness, perceptions of hygiene, and health issues related to such food sources. Street food vendors tend to operate in unorganized environments, sans regulatory control, which can prove hazardous because of unhygienic handling of foods, contamination, and inadequate storage.

Street food may be tasty and inexpensive, but safety is always a top concern.

A number of studies have noted that consumers, particularly youth, are more concerned with taste and price than with hygiene and nutrition. While there are sporadic concerns regarding food safety, the demand for street food is still increasing because of its distinct taste and social glamour. Young consumers in Coimbatore, students and working professionals in particular, often choose for street food because of their hectic life, affordability, and convenience. Nevertheless, consciousness regarding the quality and safety of street food is uneven among consumers.

The objective of this research is to determine the awareness and perception of street food among young people in Coimbatore City. It will ascertain their awareness regarding food safety, food hygiene practices, and the reasons behind their purchase decisions. Besides, the research will evaluate whether regulatory actions and awareness campaigns have influenced consumer decisions. Through the examination of consumer behavior and preference, this research will offer insightful information on enhancing food safety standards while ensuring the dynamism of street food culture in Coimbatore.

4. ANALYSIS & DATA INTERPRETATION

Analysis and interpretation of data is the process of assigning meaning to collected information and determining the conclusions, significance and implication of the findings. It is an important and exciting step in the process of research. In all research studies, analysis follows data collection.

TABLE 4.2.1

Table showing for what kind of street food do you prefer most

Particulars	Not likely	Somewhat likely	Neutral	Likely	Very Likely	Total	Weighted	Rank
Snacks and finger	63	14	10	7	26	279	2.3	3
Meals and full dishes	5	57	22	30	6	275	2.2	4
Sweet and desserts	4	14	81	15	6	365	3.04	2
Beverages	21	17	3	54	25	405	3.3	1

INTERPRETATION :

The weighted ranking analysis shows that beverages are the most preferred street food among respondents, with the highest score of 3.3. Sweet and desserts follow closely with a weighted score of 3.04, indicating significant popularity. Snacks and finger foods rank third with a score of 2.3, showing moderate preference. Meals and full dishes are the least preferred, with a weighted score of 2.2, suggesting they are not a popular street food choice.

5. FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 FINDINGS :

The goal of this research is to study the awareness and perception of Coimbatore City youngsters in consuming street foods. It focuses on determining the primary factors in their preference of street food as taste, hygiene, price, convenience, and accessibility. Moreover, the research aims to learn about the levels of satisfaction of consumers and their views regarding several factors such as quality, variety, safety standards, and how social influence plays a role in their decision-making. Statistical methods like percentage analysis, rank analysis to arrive at meaningful conclusions have been used for conducting the research. The research also delves into the health implications of consuming street food and the awareness level among youth regarding food safety laws. The last chapter is a detailed summary of the findings, along with practical suggestions for enhancing the standards of street food and raising customer satisfaction.

5.2 SUGGESTIONS :

- Given With the enormous social media usage among youth, authorities, and food digital awareness campaigns on platforms should be undertaken by safety organizations such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. Entertaining content, such as short videos, reels, and infographics, can teach young consumers about food safety, hygiene, and possible health hazards.
- Working with Food Bloggers and Influencers and Collaborating with local food influencers and bloggers in Coimbatore can be used to create awareness regarding hygienic street food options. Influencers can highlight vendors maintaining cleanliness, share their life experiences, and counsel young people on making safer food decisions.
- Enlist Street Vendors to Follow Hygiene Norms. Local governments should organize training sessions for street food vendors on food safety, hygiene, and waste disposal habits. Issuing official hygiene certification can increase consumer confidence and encourage vendors to uphold higher standards of cleanliness..

5.3 CONCLUSION :

The study on consumer awareness and perception of street food usage among youngsters in Coimbatore reveals valuable insights into their eating habits, preferences, and concerns. Street food remains a popular choice among young consumers due to its affordability, taste, and convenience. However, awareness regarding hygiene, food safety, and health risks is still moderate to low, highlighting the need for more effective consumer education and vendor regulation. While many youngsters prioritize taste and cost-effectiveness over hygiene, there is a growing demand for clean, safe, and healthier street food alternatives. The influence of social media, peer recommendations, and food bloggers plays a significant role in shaping perceptions, indicating that digital campaigns can be an effective tool for spreading awareness about safe street food consumption. To improve the overall street food experience, collaborative efforts between government authorities, food vendors, and consumers are essential. Implementing hygiene certifications, digital rating systems, regular inspections, and awareness campaigns can encourage both vendors and consumers to prioritize.

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