

Contemporary Food consumption behaviour in Haryana

by Dr Kiran Mor^[a] & Savneet Sethia^[b]

Abstract

The present paper highlights increased consumption of convenience food in rural and urban areas of Haryana. The objective of this research paper is to identify the factors that determine the attitudes of consumers in rural and urban towards the consumption convenience food products. For this purpose the present study has been conducted with a sample of 1421 consumers from both rural and urban areas of Haryana and their responses were gauged through a structured questionnaire, administered personally. Data have been analyzed with help of weighted average scores, standard deviations and independent T test. The results from the present study investigating factors influencing the attitudes consumers in rural and urban areas towards convenience food products indicate that sensory appeal in meal preparation is the major factor which influences the attitudes of consumers in rural and urban areas towards these food products. The findings of the study can be useful for marketers of convenience food products as they can use these factors as an effective promotional tool to target consumers and to escalate the sale of these food items in the time to come.

Keywords: convenience food products, rural, urban , attitudes

^[a] Dr Kiran Mor Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, NIT, Kurukshetra.	^[b] Savneet Sethia, Research Scholar, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences NIT, Kurukshetra.
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1. Introduction

The word food choice is very multiplex process in which everything from the food production facet to the consumer dietary intakes as it ascertains which food products the consumers are willing to buy and eat. As a human being, we all come across with food on a daily basis, and this interaction is designed by a variety of factors such as personality, school, work, personal health, family and friends – the products of our “life contexts.” In Western societies there is a huge variety of food from which the consumer can choose is increasing at very fast pace and that a consumer make around 200 food decisions in one day. All the antecedent research has identified many different factors that influence our food choice, including physiological, cultural, social, situational, and cognitive aspects. In its underpinning the food choice is influenced by various food-related belief and attitudes, lifestyles and both sensory and non-sensory factors. These factors have been conveyed by enormous number of studies that have flourished to understand similarities and dissimilarities in consumer food choice motives. However, too less attention has been stated to the understanding of the relationship between consumer food preferences and specific food choice motives. The food choice questionnaire (FCQ) is an instrument to measure the motives underlying consumer’s food selection. It consists

of 36 questions stated in a systematic way in order to examine the health-related and non-health related food choice motives. The nine usually found factors appear as groups of statements related to *Health, Mood, Convenience, Sensory Appeal, Natural Content, Price, Weight Control, Familiarity and Ethical Concern*.

2. Review of Literature:

The FCQ was developed and genteel in two phases (Steptoe, Pollard & Wardle, 1995). In the first phase, a preliminary questionnaire consisting of 68 items was designed and generated through a survey of the present literature and discussions with nutritionists and health psychologists. Thereafter, this questionnaire was given to a small sample population of 358 subjects comprised of students, university library employees, and London residents etc. Factor analysis was performed on it, and then finally the scale was refined, and a 36-item questionnaire exhibiting nine factors was developed. In the next phase of their study, the 36-item FCQ was given to a sample of 358 students and London residents to demonstrate its applicability. CFA, the statistical analytical method demonstrated that the *Nine-Factor Model* was a *good fit*. The internal consistency and Test-retest reliability of the items was also manifested by examining the correlations between the different scores at the two administrations of the scale and Cronbach's α scores thereafter for each of the nine factors were drawn respectively. These different determinants agitating the food choice could be adhesive by inspecting the consumer's personal beliefs, attitudes and lifestyles. FCQ has been successfully tested in many different continents, countries and even cities etc (*British (Steptoe et al., 1995), Finnish (Lindeman & Vaananen, 2000) and Uruguayan (Ares & Gambaro, 2007), Belgium (Eertmans, Victoir, Vansant, & Van den Bergh, 2005)*)

Therefore, research field lies within the understanding and frame of consumer behavior, and paramount to the whole discipline of consumer behavior which is the theory of motives underlying positive or negative behavior towards different categorization of the products. In consumer research for food, *health and environmental issues* have been considered as one of the important determinant involved in food choice of a consumer. Now after extensive literature review studied an attempt has been made to study the effect of various demographics on Food choice motives of selected food items in rural and urban areas.

Hitherto, still for the majority of consumer sensory appeal such as tastes seems to be the most predominant determinant determining the food choice behaviour, which was superseded by concerns about *health, weight control, nutritional value, and price*.

Enormous studies reveals that there are also personal differences in the considering the importance product or the basic attributes which can be depended on the different demographics such as age, gender, education, race, socioeconomic status, lifestyle and cultural background.

It is important to me that the food I eat on a typical day:

Factor 1- Health

1. Contains a lot a vitamins and minerals
2. Keeps me healthy
3. Is nutritious
4. Is high in protein
5. Is good for my skin/teeth/hair/nails etc
6. Is high in fiber and roughage

Factor 2- Mood

1. Helps me cope with stress
2. Helps me cope with life
3. Helps me relax
4. Keeps me awake/alert
5. Cheers me up
6. Makes me feel good

Factor 3- Convenience

1. Is easy to prepare
2. Can be cooked very simply
3. Take no time to prepare
4. Can be bought in shops close to where I live or work
5. Is easily available in shops and supermarkets

Factor 4- Sensory Appeal

1. Smells nice
2. Looks nice
3. Has a pleasant texture
4. Tastes good

Factor 5- Natural Content

1. Contains no additives
2. Contains natural ingredients
3. Contains no artificial ingredient

Factor 6- Price

1. Is not expensive
2. Is cheap
3. Is good value for money

Factor 7- Weight Control

1. Is low in calories
2. Helps me control my weight
3. Is low in fat

Factor 8- Familiarity

1. Is what I usually eat
2. Is familiar
3. Is like the food I ate when I was a child

Factor 9- Ethical Concern

1. Comes from countries I approve of politically
2. Has the country of origin clearly marked
3. Is packaged in an environmentally friendly way

It has been over the time that this scale which was developed demonstrated to be more reliable, suitable for individuals and internally consistent. The primeval model gauged the food related attitudes with respect to the consumption of food in general. And it does not particularize a specific situation of the consumption. Thus, all the items in the introductory FCQ were initiated with the subsequent statements: *‘It is important to me that the food I eat on a typical day’*. In addition to there are various other such as sensory and non-sensory factors that also ascendancy the food choice motives that were not seized by the original model. Despite the fact that FCQ could be a successful apparatus for calibrating the food choice within a given population, preceding study’s findings theorize the key issues which needed to be consider. Eertmans et al. (2006), reviewed that there is the probability that certain items on the scale may get different connotative meanings if they were not translated. Although both **Eertmans et al. (2006)** and **Fotopoulos et al. (2008)** changed and translated again their surveys to ensure the comparability of the questionnaires to the original English FCQ, the reliability and factor loadings for various items still differed from those obtained by *Steptoe, Pollard, and Wardle (1995)*.

The food consumption was affected by a number of factors. Some researchers in their research work have used food as to maintain a desirable weight and to have charming looks; while the other had comprehended it as a symbol of status and prestige etc. FCQ has been successfully applied to numerous world’s countries’ populations such as British (Steptoe et al., 1995), Finnish (Lindeman and Vaananen, 2000), Uruguayan (Ares and Gambaro, 2007), Belgian (Eertmans et al., 2005; Pieniak et al., 2009), Russian (Honkanen, Frewer, 2009), French, Italian, Norwegian, Polish and Spanish (Pieniak et al., 2009), Thai (Sun, 2008), Western Balkan Countries population (Milosevic et al., 2012), Hungarian, Romanian, Philippine (Januszewska et al., 2011), Japanese, Malaysian and New Zealand (Prescott, et al., 2002) and many other studies. Several studies pursued on food and families had a great focus on the households, investigating their shopping and cooking behaviour instead of their food choice activities especially engaging their spouses. Moreover, studies regarding food choices are very scarce in India especially those involving in rural and urban areas. The present study deals with food consumption pattern and food choice motives a comparative analysis of food choice motives and consumption pattern of rural and urban households in Haryana.

4. Objectives

To analyze the various factors which influences the food choice motives in selecting the food in rural and urban areas.

5. Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between various factors which influences the food choice motives in selecting the food in rural and urban areas.

6. Sampling procedure

Five representative districts have been selected on the basis of per capita income from the total districts of Haryana (Source: Statistical Abstract of Haryana, 2011-12). All the districts were arranged in the descending order as per high to low per capita income. Then 5 districts were randomly selected for the research study. Gurugram, formerly named as Gurgaon is the first district to be selected from the state which has the highest rank among the others. Thereafter, in order to select the area for collecting data – the total numbers of blocks were indicated in the respective district, and then it was decided to choose four blocks from each selected district on the basis of random sampling. In order to make the study more representatives, it was pursued that the samples were collected groups based on their residential status, gender, age, and income. In order to make the study reliable and comparable, it was ensured that a balance is maintained between the rural and urban respondents. The representation of the same is presented in the table underneath.

Selected Districts

1. Gurugram (Formerly named as Gurgaon)
2. Kurukshetra
3. Jind
4. Ambala
5. Hissar

Table 6.1 showing District wise Selection of Area

Sr. no	Districts	Blocks
1	Gurugram	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gurugoaan • Sohna • Farukh Nagar • Pataudi
2	Ambala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambala • Saha • Shahzadpur • Barara
3	Kurukshetra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thanesar • Shahbad • Pehowa • Ladwa
4	Hissar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adampur • Hansi I • Barwala • Hisar - II
5	Jind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jind • Narwana • Safidon • Uchana

Source: Primary data

Selection of variables:

Personal interviews were conducted to identify convenience food items which were used in the survey. First, a few females were contacted and provided a brief list of **food items**. Then were asked to list from 5 to 10 items they purchase and consume very often.

Sample design and sample size

In the present study multi stage sampling has been used for selecting the samples. We have deployed probability systematic random sampling for the present study in other words the Nth selection technique. The main reason of using this method was as each element in the population has an equal probability of getting selected. Further, probability random sampling

has been used for giving equal probability to every unit. In the present study, the population is the respondents who are generally highly involved in decision making in the family. The same was made certain by verbally confirming from the subjects that they actively participated in decision making process of the household.

The formula given by Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. W. (1970)¹³⁵ for calculating the sample size is followed for this study.

$$n = \frac{X^2 NP(1-P)}{d^2(N-1) + X^2 P(1-P)}$$

n= Required Sample Size

X^2 = Table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at desired confidence level

N= the population size - 16753235

P= the population proportion (assume to be .5)

d= degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion

$$n = 3.841 * 25353081.5 * (1-.5) / .0025 * 16753234 + 3.841 * .58(1-.5) = 384$$

Sample Size= 1610 respondents. And finally 1421 duly filled questionnaires were received.

7. Data Analysis

Food choice motives in Rural and Urban areas:

For the 35 items scale, in the first step factor analysis was performed to identify the characteristic of food choice motives. The mean and SD of 9 factor model of food choice motives of consumers/ households in rural and urban areas of Haryana were presented for the present study. As refer to the table 2, the result illustrated that the important food choice motives factors that were important in rural as well as urban areas. In the present study, descriptive statistical approach is used to measure the importance of all the motives. All items had scored between one and seven which can be computed by averaging (un-weighted) item ratings per scale. Thereafter, the mean rating of each motivation provides a clear picture that some determinants are rated highly by respondents, while others rated low by the same.

TABLE 7.1 showing Ranking of Mean Score of Food Choice Motives in Rural and Urban areas

Factors	Rural	Urban
Price	3 (M=5.4620)	3 (M=4.9048)
Health issues	1 (M=6.0876)	2 (M=5.3940)
Convenience	5 (M=4.3860)	4 (M=4.3689)
Mood	9 (M=1.6361)	9 (M=1.8066)
Sensory appeal	2 (M=5.8906)	1 (M=6.5028)
Natural content	7 (M=1.9666)	8 (M=1.9362)
Ethical concern	8 (M=1.7582)	7 (M=2.9219)
Familiarity	4 (M=5.4181)	5 (M=4.1579)
Weight control	6 (M=2.0452)	6 (M=3.2176)

Source: As per primary data

In the rural area it has been seen that the while consuming the convenience food product health issues is the first thing which the consumer generally consumes the convenience food. They neglect their health before consuming the convenience food having a mean value as high as 6.0876. The second factor is considered to be the sensory appeal for the rural consumer. Sensory appeal includes the smell of the convenience food, the looks of the convenience food and the foremost the taste of the convenience food for which consumer in rural areas often the convenience food product having a mean value of 5.890. The next ranking was given price (M=5.4620). The consumers are ready to spend more if the food is available at a convenient place and if it tastes, smells and tastes good. The least ranking was given mood, ethical concern and natural content having the mean value of 1.6361, 1.7582 and 1.9666 respectively.

In the urban area it has been seen that the while consuming the convenience food product sensory appeal is the first thing which the consumer generally looks forward before consuming the convenience food with a mean value as high as 6.5028. They neglect their health before consuming the convenience food which has been ranked 2 having a mean value as high as 5.3940. The next factor is price with a mean value of 4.9048 followed by convenience (M= 4.3689) of the product. In the urban areas convenience which easy availability, takes less time for preparation etc. also plays a vital role before consuming the convenience food products. The least ranking was given mood, ethical concern and natural content having the mean value of 1.8066, 2.9219 and 1.9362 respectively.

TABLE 7.2 showing MEAN and S.D. of food choice motives in Rural and Urban Areas

	Residence Type								
	Urban			Rural			Total		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Price	708	4.9048	2.32880	713	5.4620	1.43910	1421	5.1844	1.95353
Health issues and negligence	708	5.3940	2.14639	713	6.0876	.90712	1421	5.7420	1.68128
Convenience	708	4.3689	1.63472	713	4.3860	1.11129	1421	4.3775	1.39635
Mood	708	1.8066	1.50155	713	1.6361	.36778	1421	1.7210	1.09438
Sensory appeal	708	6.5028	.25919	713	5.8906	.59311	1421	6.1956	.55100
Natural content	708	1.9362	1.26510	713	1.9666	.96154	1421	1.9515	1.12280
Ethical	708	2.9219	2.33054	713	1.7582	.49644	1421	2.3380	1.77951
Familiarity	708	4.1579	2.54071	713	5.4181	1.39790	1421	4.7902	2.14269
Weight Control	708	3.2176	2.32288	713	2.0452	.91497	1421	2.6293	1.85745

Source: As per primary data

Independent T- test on resident type (Rural/ Urban areas):

Independent t- test of each of the dependent variables was performed in order to identify the different food choice motives for purchasing convenience food products in rural and urban areas. The interpreted data was based on analyzing the significance value of 0.05. If there were significant differences between the consumers in rural and urban areas in each factor then the significant result ($p < 0.05$) would be rejected. Referring to the result of the independent sample t-

test shown in Table- 4, it has been understood that majority of the factors (food choice motives) are having the sig-2 tailed 'p' value is less than 0.05 i.e. at 5% level of significance or 95% confident interval . Hence, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the food choice motives of consumers in rural and urban areas. The interpreted data was based on analyzing the significance value of 0.05. So, there is a significant difference in the decision making styles between the consumers in rural and urban areas of Haryana.

The result indicated that there is a significant difference between the factors of consumer decision making styles and resident type i.e. the rural and urban areas except two factors convenience (sig= 0.818) and natural content (sig=0.609). After finding the significant differences in the resident type comparison, the mean comparison was performed.

8. Findings

The main findings are as follows:

- 1) In the urban areas the highest importance of individual sub scales measured through mean scores is recorded for 'sensory appeal'. The same was confirmed by results of the many qualitative interviews (Magnusson et al., 2001; Wandel, Bugge, 1997; Honkanen, Voldnes, 2006; Januszewska, Pieniak, Verbeke, 2011). Health is also second important factor followed by price and convenience and 'Availability' of the convenience food products. The result is in accordance with the theory of contradictions in food consumption (health vs. indulgence) developed by Leipamaa-Leskinen (2007) and it supports the whole theoretical knowledge that health is an important motivating factor in food consumption.
- 2) In the rural areas, this factor indicates that the attitude of consumers is not only influenced by sensory variables and price, but health attributes that are also important for them. With regard to the health value of convenience food, De Boer et al. (2004) found out that health is one of the most significant driving forces behind consumption of any food product. Health claims appearing on most of the products than ever before as consumers now a day's demand foods that are not only more convenient, but are healthier as well (Carlson and Grould, 1994). Most of the population neglects this criterion before choosing for the convenience or the processed food.
- 3) Consumer's attitudes tend to be highly influenced by sensory variables like taste, appearance and aroma etc. of any convenience food product. All these statements disclose that sensory attributes such as appearance of food, its texture, taste, flavor and smell, etc. are critical to the consumer and influence not only the choice but also the consumption of these food products. Sensory variables are rated as very important factor in the selection of convenience food products for consumption by consumers in both rural and urban areas.

- 4) Price is the third important factor both in rural as well as urban areas. All of these statements determine the ability of the consumer to purchase convenience food products at a reasonable price.
- 5) Convenience factor: In the urban areas this factor holds an important place while the purchasing or consuming the convenience food products. This may be due to their increasing participation in the labor force and their work timings may not provide them sufficient time to do all the activities fall in the process of cooking. Therefore, they often look for the option through which they can reduce their cooking time, be it for breakfast, lunch or dinner (Srinivasan and Shende, 2015). Saving time and mental and physical efforts are the most important features of convenience food products due to which these food products are highly demanded (Nickols and Fox, 1983).
- 6) Additionally, our findings shed some light on the difference between rural and urban food choice motives. Even findings developed by Prescott et al., 2002 are in line with our findings and reported that mood factor did not have a score both in the rural as well as urban areas.
- 7) Our research also shows that health, convenience, sensory appeal, price and familiarity are among the five most important factors shaping food choice for consumers in rural and urban areas. Therefore, we confirm the previous study where sensory appeal, convenience and price were principal food choice motives (Eertmans et al., 2005).

9. Conclusion

The present study has been carried out to find out the factors influencing the attitudes of consumer in rural and urban areas towards the consumption of convenience food products. The results of the study reveals that in the urban areas 'sensory appeal' is the most important factor which influences the attitudes of consumers towards convenience food products while in the rural area consumer neglect the health and consumes these convenience food products. The consumers in the urban areas have stated that they prefer convenience foods due to their busy and hectic lifestyle. All these factors collectively symbolize that increased time pressures, stresses and work-life balance problems. In the urban areas as the more female are getting into the work culture and therefore do not have enough time to prepare a meal from the scratch by follow the traditional recipes and would prefer to buy packed, clean, and reasonably priced meals rather than returns home from work and do domestic chores. Such an understanding will helps the marketers in understanding the needs of the consumers and accordingly manufacture and market such food products. Overall, the convenience food market in India is currently at a very emerging stage. Demand for these products is increasing day by day. The urban consumption patterns world widely differ from their rural counterparts in terms of different variety, food product's quantity, and its quality. As an upshot to the current trend, there is an ever increasing demand for some different diet among urbanities as a collection of food products which are embellish only in the city centre's and market. As compared to its rural counterparts, a great variety of heterogeneous food products are available in the cities. And also the lifestyle of the

urbanities is more compatible for this transformation and changes in their diets. The preference of urbanities for variety, quality and convenience is urging the shift from traditional staple diet to a rich in wheat, rice , milk etc and these preferences of the urbanities have enhanced the demand of branded and processed food items whereas the rural people are not shifting with that much pace but still are moving in the same direction. The people in urban areas have begun to substitute their present diet with the value added food items. As a next shift in the lifestyle of urban people as compared to their rural counterpart is that they began to spend more heavily on food away from home in order to save time, and also coddle to the need for variety especially for a change and for pleasure.

TABLE 9.4
INDEPENDENT T TEST

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Price	Equal variances assumed	480.138	.000	-5.429	1419	.000	-.55716	.10262	-.75847	-.35585
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.421	1176.815	.000	-.55716	.10278	-.75882	-.35550
Health negligence	Equal variances assumed	567.544	.000	-7.944	1419	.000	-.69360	.08731	-.86488	-.52233
	Equal variances not assumed			-7.924	950.341	.000	-.69360	.08753	-.86537	-.52183
Convenience	Equal variances assumed	154.525	.000	-.230	1419	.818	-.01705	.07411	-.16242	.12833
	Equal variances not assumed			-.230	1244.525	.818	-.01705	.07421	-.16263	.12853
Mood	Equal variances assumed	351.056	.000	2.945	1419	.003	.17054	.05791	.05694	.28413
	Equal variances not assumed			2.936	790.958	.003	.17054	.05809	.05651	.28456
Sensory appeal	Equal variances assumed	455.593	.000	25.182	1419	.000	.61222	.02431	.56453	.65991
	Equal variances not assumed			25.242	975.840	.000	.61222	.02425	.56463	.65982
Natural content	Equal variances assumed	14.074	.000	-.512	1419	.609	-.03049	.05959	-.14738	.08640
	Equal variances not assumed			-.511	1319.590	.609	-.03049	.05964	-.14750	.08652
Ethical	Equal variances assumed	1.75013	.000	13.039	1419	.000	1.16377	.08925	.98869	1.33885
	Equal variances not assumed			12.997	770.592	.000	1.16377	.08954	.98800	1.33954

Familiarity	Equal variances assumed	1.70113	.000	-	1419	.000	-	.10869	-	-
	Equal variances not assumed			11.595	1097.4	.000	1.26027	.10890	1.47348	1.04706
Weight Control	Equal variances assumed	1.466E3	.000	12.534	1419	.000	1.17241	.09354	.98891	1.35591
	Equal variances not assumed			12.501	919.94	.000	1.17241	.09378	.98836	1.35646

Source: As per primary data

TABLE 9.5
MEAN AND S.D. OF FOOD CHOICE MOTIVES
IN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS

	Residence Type								
	Urban			Rural			Total		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
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Weight Control	708	3.2176	2.32288	713	2.0452	.91497	1421	2.6293	1.85745

Source: As per primary data

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