

AN ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS AND BEHAVIOUR IN THE JUNK FOOD MARKET IN HYDERABAD

AUTHOR : Dr. K. SHARATH BABU

PROFESSOR & HEAD

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

VIGNANA BHARATHI INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY,

GHATKESAR, HYDERABAD, TELANGANA, INDIA.

Abstract:

Background: Urbanization and current food industry development have resulted in a significant increase in junk food production, making it readily available, accessible, and affordable. The fundamental issue with junk food is that it has a low satiation value. People don't feel as full after eating them, which can contribute to overeating. Junk food often takes the place of more healthful items. It is regarded as one of the primary causes of the obesity pandemic. **Aims:** The study's goal is to discover the perceptions and factors that influence junk food consumption in Hyderabad City. **Methods:** To acquire samples, systematic random sampling was used. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. The Chi-square (2) test was used to determine the consumer behavior factors associated with junk food consumption.

Keywords: consumer behaviour, consumer perception, junk food, Hyderabad City

1. Introduction:

At the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago, two brothers, Frederick and Louis Rueckheim, created a famous blend of popcorn, peanuts, and molasses. This was the beginning of junk food. In 1896, their sweets became well-known. In 1972, Michael Jacobson, the director of the Centre for Science in the Public Interest, coined the phrase. On the other hand, the majority of terrible food was created in the twentieth century. A lot of fast food is bad for you. Junk food is defined as foods heavy in fat, salt, and sugar. Junk food is defined as food that comes in a packet or is prepared quickly and easily. Saturated fats, which are abundant in fast food, are extremely harmful to your health. Everyone eats terrible food most of the time (Hardy-Johnson, 2021). In India, you might see a lot and nothing at the same time. Undernutrition used to be a major public health issue, but obesity is increasingly becoming a bigger issue in nutrition. Because more people live in cities,

Literature Review:

Consumer behaviour towards junk food:

Both can be visible at the same time (Masthi & Jahan, 2020). Because the country's economy has been performing so well, millennials have shifted from eating what appeared to be healthy food to mindlessly eating unhealthy food (Sriraksha, Kotian, & Maiya, 2019).

People in India are increasingly replacing a nutritious diet with junk food. This is a trend that is visible in people of all ages, not just the young. Junk foods are foods that are quickly prepared and delivered, however not all of them are junk foods. According to Masthi and Jahan (2020), some junk foods can be healthful. What was once a lousy habit of eating junk food has now become a full-fledged addiction. High-calorie junk food is increasingly being marketed as a cheaper and speedier alternative to healthier snacks. Everywhere, from small towns to huge cities, there are more and more fast food restaurants providing junk food. Since the release of mobile apps such as Zomato and Swiggy, the lives of Indian cuisine enthusiasts have been made easier. These apps deliver food to their doorstep (Masthi & Jahan, 2020). Addiction to junk food, other diets, or meal substitutes is bad for your health. These extremes in eating habits can be detrimental to your health, resulting in obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, poor diet, and other issues. We don't know much about how people develop a junk food addiction. In this situation, an attempt was made to determine the likelihood of someone being addicted to junk food by utilising a unique scale established with the following purposes in mind: To describe the sociodemographic characteristics of the study participants; to investigate the health issues associated with the subjects' junk food habits; to determine the severity of junk food addiction using a special scale; and to determine what other diets the people were following (Masthi & Jahan, 2020). People's bodies and health surroundings are largely influenced by the foods they eat and how frequently they eat them. Personal, family, societal, cultural, and economic circumstances all influence a person's food habits and choices. People's eating habits are influenced by both environmental and social influences. People's eating habits are influenced by their culture and clothing these days. Furthermore, changes in the family system, such as earning two salaries, spending more time together, and changing tastes and preferences, have influenced both young people and adults to shift how much, what sort, how often, and how they eat (Vanitha, 2015). Because of the emergence of branded items in the market economy, our culture's food habits have altered dramatically. In this way, people's eating habits alter dramatically from childhood through old age. Young people's culture and relationship traits, their emphasis on spending, their love of variety and flavour, and ultimately, their belief in benefit and value for money all affect their modern purchasing patterns when it comes to food and food items. The majority of food and food accessories purchased by young people are based on brand

value, market supply, fashion, and their social image (Vanitha, 2015). According to Nitin et al. (2015), the number of times a week that school-aged children consume junk food is associated with being overweight or obese. Eating junk food has also been connected to diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure (Arya & Mishra, 2018). This suggests that eating junk food is unhealthy (Biswas & Nayak, 2021). Consumer behaviour, according to Arnould, Price, and Zinkhan (2004, p. 9), is "how people or groups buy, use, and get rid of goods, services, ideas, or experiences" (Wong, 2013). In educated households, ingesting edible oil is associated with eating healthily and avoiding saturated fats. It also improves the flavour of cooked and fried foods, as well as salads, although people are not required to consume these types of oils (Thompson, Haziris, & Alekos, 1994) (Gaanyesh & Rajesh, 2018). Keshari et al. discovered in their research that the way people act while purchasing edible oil is dependent on their level of participation. A client who is highly involved, for example, will carefully select a brand and become loyal to that brand, whereas a customer who is less involved will purchase junk food less deliberately and with less loyalty (Gaanyesh & Rajesh, 2018). Anand Goyal and N.P. Singh (2007) investigated the many factors that influenced the eating habits of young people in Punjab City. Many factors, including the environment at home, the stress of school, the number and convenience of access to fast food places, and social factors such as family and peer groups, were shown to influence what young people ate and, ultimately, what they bought, according to this study. In 2015, Chakraborty S. studied how people behave and what they buy in the Indian junk food market. It figured out the things that could affect what people buy, which could then be used to help shops reach their business goals. In order to get closer to their customers, junk food companies have spent a lot of time and money making their customer loyalty programmes more comprehensive and setting up effective marketing contact channels. Studies have shown that sharing information through traditional and media communication channels, such as word-of-mouth advertising, entertainment sources like movies, music, and TV, the internet, education, moving, and travel, as well as other communication channels from the company like direct selling and ads, has a big effect on people's attitudes, personalities, and perceptions. Consumer perception towards junk food For marketers, "customer perception" means what people think about a brand, a business, or its goods. It is possible for a client to have bad ideas, feelings, fears, habits, plans, or events happen. (Gopinath & Kalpana, 2019). As per Rajul Bhardwaj (2011), the study concentrated on consumers' perceptions of junk food restaurants. As in any junk food restaurant, the atmosphere draws and induces people. The study's impact revealed that customer anticipation should be followed by a plan to boost business expansion towards junk food while also ensuring that food is healthful. Furthermore, customers want to eat high-quality food in a peaceful and comfortable setting. Unless it is, quick food should not be entertained. The study by Simone French and Mary Story (2020) reveals that the relationship between junk food consumption and personal, familial, and societal variables in Iranian high school students. Junk food consumption was discovered to be considerably greater in students whose fathers are graduates. According to the study, junk food consumption is a harmful adolescent

nutritional habit that is heavily influenced by family structure, peer groups, and socioeconomic level. According to the study, there is no significant association between the median frequency of junk food and education level, gender, birth order, method of living with family, or parents (Sekher, Manorselvi, Maran, & Venkatesh., 2021). According to Dr. C. G. E. Salami & Dr. R. T. Ajobo (2012), service quality is increasingly seen as an important aspect in the success of any firm (parasuraman et al, 1988), and the junk food industry is no different. Service quality has become a popular metric for assessing the performance of banking services (Cowling and Newman, 1995). Banks, for example (a service company), realize that if they can provide higher value than competitors, customers will be loyal (Dawes and Siwailles, 1999). Customers, according to Chaoprasert and Elsey (2004), can sense changes in the level of service they receive. The study discovered that the tangibility dimension, which includes the variety of products supplied and the cleanliness of the atmosphere, influences consumer evaluations of an FFR's service quality (Salami & Ajobo, 2012). Junk Food: In 1972, Michael Jacobson invented the phrase junk food as slang for low- nutritional-value meals, often known as HFSS (High fat, sugar, or salt). Junk food advertising also has an impact on its attraction. However, it should be avoided owing to a lack of energy, high cholesterol, and poor focus. Obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and a variety of skin cancers are just a few of the side effects it has on the body. Eliminating junk food temptations and raising fitness awareness can help keep junk food out of a balanced eating pattern. They provide minimal nutritional value and are frequently high in fat, salt, sugar, and calories (Ayushree & Tarai, 2021)

3: SCOPE OF STUDY

To investigate the demographic characteristics impacting junk food consumption:

The goal of this project is to investigate how age, income, education, and other demographic characteristics influence Hyderabad's junk food consumption trends. Understanding these elements can help you better understand your target consumer segments.

Evaluating the Impact of Marketing Strategies on Consumer Behaviour:

The goal of this purpose is to evaluate the effectiveness of junk food merchants' and producers' marketing methods in Hyderabad. It will investigate how branding, promotions, and advertising influence customer decisions.

To explore the perceived health implications of junk food consumption:

The goal of this aim is to determine the level of consumer awareness about the health risks associated with junk food consumption among Hyderabad residents. It will assess how people perceive illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and other related health issues.

To Discover Which Other, Healthier Food Options Customers Prefer:

The goal of this project is to determine whether Hyderabad City clients choose healthy food options over junk food. It will investigate what motivates people to choose nutrient-dense choices as well as the barriers that stand in their way (Joshi, 2019).

To assess public awareness and response to law enforcement directives:

The purpose of this survey is to find out how much Hyderabad residents know about any present or proposed junk food-related government policies (Manimoy & Bhanot, 2021). It will also investigate how these rules may influence their purchasing decisions.

The research will provide a full understanding of customer behavior and perception in Hyderabad's junk food sector by pursuing these objectives. It will provide useful information to public health campaigners, politicians, and businesses seeking to promote healthier eating habits in urban areas.

4: RESEARCH METHONOLOGY

Research and questions

How do these factors influence eating habits and food preferences?" What are the primary elements influencing how people in Hyderabad's city market act and think about junk food?

This study core idea is strongly related to this research issue, which is about determining the factors that influence how people in Hyderabad act and think about terrible food. It allows us to examine the junk food industry and how it influences how people eat in the city.

Research approach

This study on how customers behave and think about the junk food sector in Hyderabad employs both quantitative and qualitative methods. This strategy works because the research question has multiple sides. Quantitative surveys may tell you what your customers desire, how much they spend, and how their demographics are evolving. Trends and relationships can then be discovered using statistical analysis. Meanwhile, qualitative methods such as focus groups and dialogues will delve deeper into the attitudes, beliefs, and motivations that drive people's junk eating behaviour (Shende & Thorat, 2019). By providing more complicated contextual information, these qualitative insights will help make the quantitative data more useful. They will also aid in understanding the "why" underlying customer decisions. We seek to completely grasp how consumer behaviour and opinions in Hyderabad's junk food sector are connected and affect each

other using this mixed-method approach.

Sampling collection

The study's focus group consists of Hyderabad residents. These people represent the diverse demographics that may be found in cities. To obtain a group that is representative of the entire population and to make selection objective, random sampling will be used. Respondents are chosen from various sections of Hyderabad in this manner to account for how customers' attitudes and actions fluctuate across the city. Structured surveys will be distributed to a statistically significant sample of people as the primary method of data collection (Singh & Kapur, 2021). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews and focus groups will be used to get more detailed qualitative information regarding how Hyderabad residents feel about terrible food.

Data analysis

For quantitative data acquired through surveys, a two-sample assuming unequal variance t-test will be utilized to evaluate specific consumer behavior indicators between various demographic groups. This statistical analysis will aid in discovering notable differences in junk food eating habits and preferences (Srivastava & Wagh, 2017a). In addition, thematic analysis will be performed on the qualitative data collected through focus groups and interviews. This will allow the discovery of recurring themes and trends in consumer attitudes and perceptions of Hyderabad's junk food market. This combination approach ensures a complete understanding of both quantitative and qualitative aspects of consumer behavior and perception.

Timeframe and Resource Allocation

The study process began on August 18, 2023, and has proceeded ever since. Considering the timeframe, which extends over several days, a comprehensive data collection process is recommended in order to provide a representative sample. Setting aside time is crucial for conducting in-depth focus groups, interviews, and surveys that offer a thorough understanding of customer behavior and perception within Hyderabad's junk food industry. It should be noted that precise resource allocation would gain from a detailed analysis of the exact amount of time allocated for every phase of the research.

4: ANALYSIS OF DATA

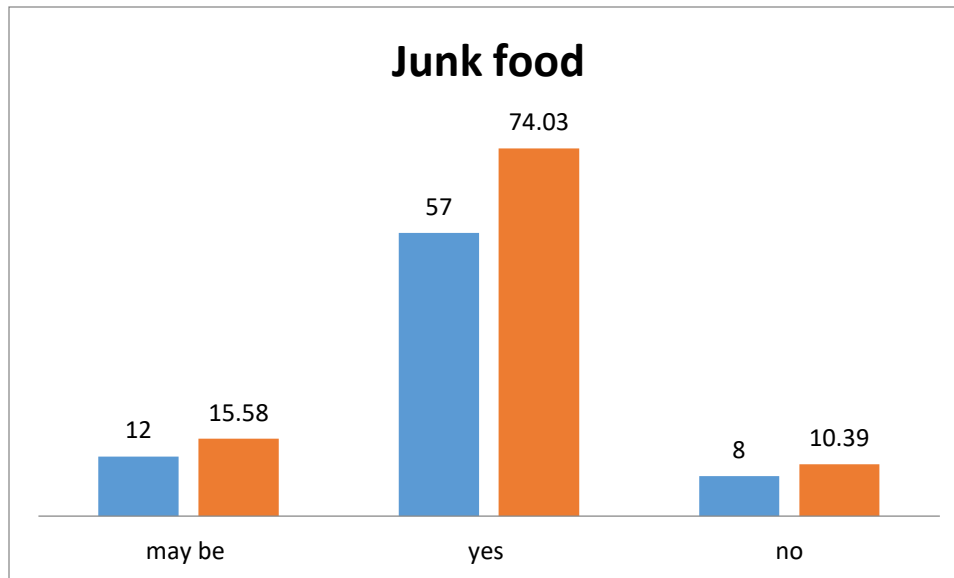


Table 1 is showing

Two –sample assuming Unequal variance

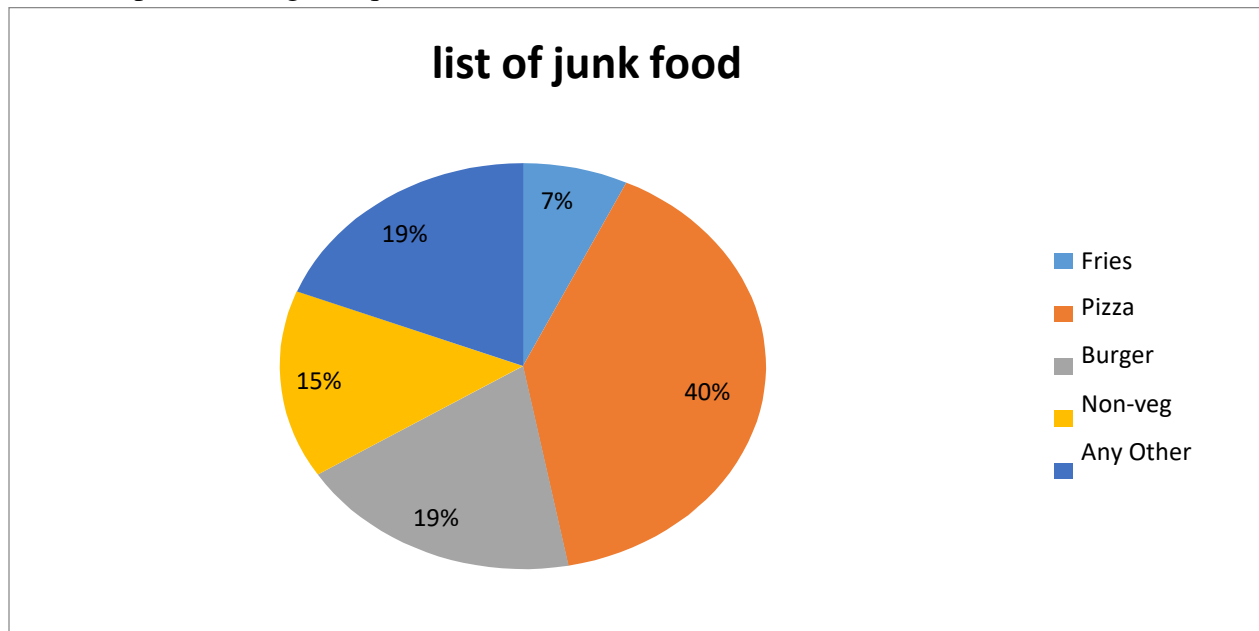
Variable	junk food eaters	junk food hater
Mean	15.58	10.39
Variance	404.99	118.03
Observations	57	8
Hypothesized Mean Difference	5.19	
Degrees of Freedom	5	
t-statistic	2.176	
p(T <=) One-Tail	0.03	
t Critical (One-Tail)	1.833	
p(T <= t) Two-Tail	0.06	
t Critical (Two-Tail)	2.571	

A study of consumer attitudes and actions in the Hyderabad junk food market revealed a statistically significant difference in the mean weekly intake of junk food between junk food consumers (mean = 15.58) and non-consumers (mean = 10.39). Both the one-tail and two-tail p-values for this test are less than the predefined significance level of 0.05. The amount of junk food consumed by the two groups is significantly different, and there is strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis. There are five independent variables in this test. At the 5% level of significance, the critical t-value for a one-tail sample is 1.833, whereas for a two-tail sample it is 2.571. Thus, differences in junk food consumption among people cannot be attributed to chance.

What type of junk food you prefer?

Variable	Fries	Pizza	Burger	Non-veg	Any Other
Frequency	7	40	19	15	19
Percentage (%)	7	40	19	15	19
Cumulative Percentage (%)	7	47	66	81	100

Two –sample assuming Unequal variance



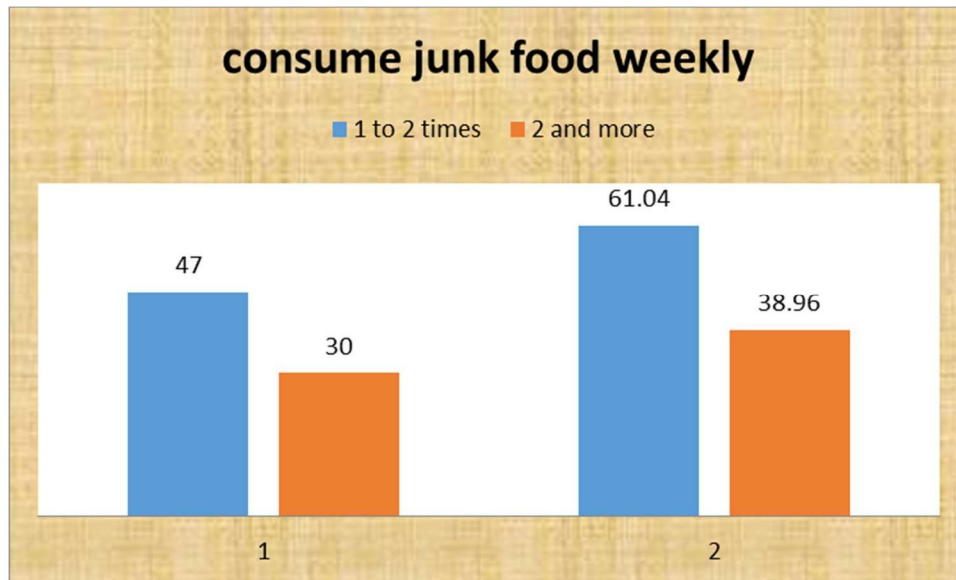
ANOVA TABLE

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Mean Square (MS)	F-statistic
Between Groups	4722.13	4	1180.53	1975.56
Within Groups	56.73	95	0.597	
Total	4778.86	99		

The analysis of variance results reveal substantial variation in the preferences of participants for different types of junk food in Hyderabad. The "Between Groups" variation, which displays the preferences across the five groups (Fries, Pizza, Burger, Non-vegetarian, and Any Other), is statistically significant, with an F-statistic of 1975.56. That people's preferences for junk food differ significantly from one another is implied here. The differences between the categories appear to account for the bulk of the variation, whereas the "Within Groups" variation, which

accounts for individual changes within each group, is much smaller. This result reveals interesting facts about the selection and buying habits of junk food in Hyderabad.

How often do you consume junk food on a weekly basis?



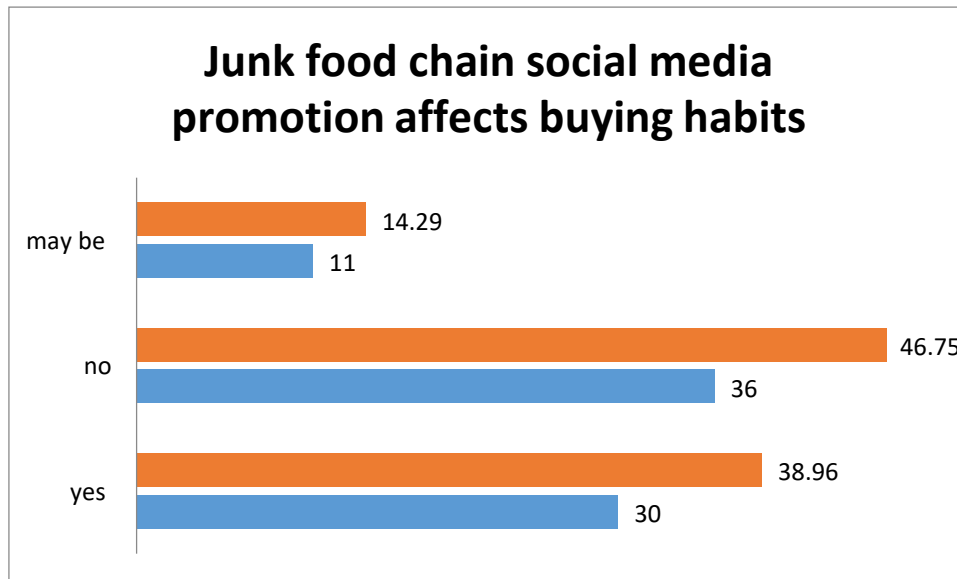
Two –sample assuming Unequal variance

Variable	1 to 2 times	2 and more
Mean	61.04	38.96
Variance	18.69	18.69
Observations	47	30
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	0
Degrees of Freedom	22.08	
t-statistic		
p(T <=) One-Tail		
t Critical (One-Tail)		1.668
p(T <= t) Two-Tail		
t Critical (Two-Tail)		1.995

The majority of respondents (61.04%) said they ate junk food once or twice per week, while a substantial percentage (38.96%) said they did so more than twice per week. The average preference for junk food is comparable between the two categories, and there is no discernible difference in how frequently they consume it. Additionally, the differences between the two categories are identical, indicating that each area is uniform. Due to the absence of the t-statistic, it is impossible to determine the significance of the mean difference. On the basis of the critical t-values for the one-tailed (1,668) and two-tailed (1,995) tests, it appears that the study was conducted with a

significance level of 0.05. The t-statistic should be compared to the critical t-values to determine the significance of the mean difference.

7) Has your purchasing habit ever been influenced by promotion of junk food chains on social media?



Two –sample assuming Unequal variance

	Yes	No
Mean	38.96	46.75
Variance	0	0
Observations	30	36
Hypothesized Mean Difference		
Degrees of Freedom	6	
t-statistic		
p(T <=) One-Tail	-7.79	
t Critical (One-Tail)	-1.67	
p(T <= t) Two-Tail		
t Critical (Two-Tail)	±1.997	

ANOVA Table

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Mean Square (MS)	F-statistic
Age Groups	4082.8	4	1020.7	
Residual (Within Groups)	748.8	65	11.5	88.7
Total	4831.6	69		

$F = MS(\text{Age Groups}) / MS(\text{Residual}) = 1020.7 / 11.5 \approx 88.7$ is the method for finding the F-statistic for Age Groups. This F-statistic will be used to test the null hypothesis (H_0), which says that there isn't a big difference in how the age groups eat junk food. It looks like there is a big difference because the F-statistic is high. By comparing how much junk food people of different ages consume, a substantial difference was discovered, with an F-statistic of around 88.7. This indicates that older residents of Hyderabad City have different attitudes towards unhealthy foods. This finding highlights the need for targeted marketing strategies and interventions aimed at certain age groups in the effort to reduce the consumption of unhealthy foods. Rejecting H_0 indicates that older adults are less likely to like eating certain types of junk food and less likely to consume them frequently.

RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

- In the marketplace, encourage the selling and promotion of healthier food options. Some approaches include teaching people about nutrition, giving low-calorie alternatives, and supporting local companies that produce nutritional snacks.
- Clearly identifying foods and informing customers about them: Encourage the use of plain, intelligible labeling for processed foods. In this section, list the nutritional value of the meal, the recommended serving size, and any potential health risks connected with eating too much of the food.
- Participate in public awareness efforts such as: Spread the word that junk food is harmful and that eating too much of it might have severe consequences (Srivastava & Wagh, 2017b). These advertisements could appear on social media, television and radio, and at community events.
- Advertising and marketing practices must be regulated. Junk food promotion and sales, particularly to children and teenagers, should be rigorously monitored. To make these adverts less appealing, restrictions limiting the use of appealing images and content could be enforced.
- Encourage the growth of local food markets and programmers dedicated to the long-term viability of their communities and the supply of fresh, healthy food options (Turton & Sokal-Gutierrez, 2020). To attain this goal, they may need to work with regional farmers, support community gardens, and encourage companies to purchase local food.

These ideas aim to change people's perceptions of the junk food sector in Hyderabad by promoting healthier options, raising awareness, and creating restrictions to limit deceptive advertising. Combining these tactics can encourage people to choose healthier, more diverse eating choices.

Conclusion

Finally, observing how people behave and think about the Hyderabad City poor food market provides us with vital knowledge on what people enjoy and dislike about this industry. Junk food definitely has a large market due to factors such as ease of availability, fantastic taste, and low cost. There is no doubt, however, that individuals are becoming increasingly aware of the health hazards associated with utilizing these products (Turton & Sokal-Gutierrez, 2020). The study demonstrates the importance of educating and increasing information about healthy eating in order to influence people's habits. It also emphasizes the importance of the junk food industry changing with the times and coming up with new ideas, such as healthier options and clear labeling, to keep up with what customers want. Furthermore, understanding how individuals act and think about the junk food market can assist politicians, health organizations, and companies in developing strategies to promote healthier eating habits and general health in Hyderabad (Turton & Sokal-Gutierrez, 2020). By addressing these concerns and striving towards a more balanced diet, we can assist the community have a healthier and more stable future.

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