

Chapter 13

Determinants of Consumer Preference for Traditional Indian Cooking Practices: A Perspective Towards Healthy Food

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ABSTRACT

Food plays a vital role in the growth and development of human beings and helps fight many diseases, shaping consumers' intentions and actual behaviour. Consumers prefer a healthy lifestyle in the current COVID-19 situation, where immunity is one of the most critical factors in fighting the deadly coronavirus. The constructs of the health belief model (HBM) and the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) plays an essential role in shaping consumers' preferences for food. To identify the determinants of consumers' choice for traditional Indian cooking practices, a mixed-method approach was followed in the study. Qualitative research prepared the base for quantitative research. First, an open-ended personal interview of 12 respondents was conducted to develop a questionnaire used for the quantitative survey. Exploratory factor analysis results helped identify the seven factors, i.e., behaviour, cues in action, social influence, perceived benefits, self-efficacy, perceived susceptibility, and readiness, as determinants of consumers' preference for traditional Indian cooking practices.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Consumers prefer a healthy lifestyle in the current COVID-19 situation, where immunity is one of the most critical factors in fighting the deadly coronavirus; healthy food is at the core of the healthy lifestyle concept in traditional Indian cooking practices. (Kone & Samayamanthula, 2021) found that detox drink keeps a person refreshed and active, and protein-rich food in breakfast increases the basal metabolic rate in the context of traditional Indian food as an immune booster. Also, local and seasonal food has a better influence on health. The stock of spices with medicinal benefits has been an important section of the Indian kitchen pantry. However, the presence of the fast-food industry across India serving foods with hedonic attributes cannot be denied. Hedonic hunger leads to increased overeating, snacking frequency, and palatable food intake without less self-control (Horwath et al., 2020). According to (Bakaloudi et al., 2021), lockdowns imposed during COVID-19 have increased snacking habits. Food in which the amount of salt, sugar, or fat is high is considered harmful to health (Ares et al., 2015).

(Barrett et al., 2020) reported that there needs to be more awareness about the benefits of whole grains among consumers, resulting in less fibre intake. Some food items like fruits, vegetables, milk, and milk products are considered suitable for health. Non-vegetarians feel fish, shellfish, and some meat products are good (Ares et al., 2015). Well-being about eating healthy food is linked with good physical health (Ares et al., 2014). Health-conscious eating behaviour emphasises local and regional foods, includes seasonal fruits and vegetables in their diet, takes a balanced diet, and avoids processed items (Jung et al., 2020; Kokkoris & Stavrova, 2021).

We have not found any research highlighting the psychological factors associated with diners for Indian Traditional food. Hence, we took the present study to explore the psychological factors of consumers' preference for traditional Indian cooking and food.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Food plays a vital role in the growth and development of human beings and helps fight many diseases, shaping consumers' intentions and actual behaviour. The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) establishes the relationship between consumers' preferences and food habits. The variables of TPB, i.e., attitude, perceived behaviour control, and subjective norms, have a strong to medium association with intention and behaviour of dietary patterns (McDermott et al., 2015; Yadav & Pathak, 2016). Perceived behavioural control has the strongest predictive power of purchasing healthy or well-being food (Ates, 2019; Lim & An, 2021).

The strength of relationships of variables of TPB with intention may vary in other geographical locations. (Boobalan et al., 2021) noted attitude as a predictor of intent to adopt organic food in the United States, whereas subjective norms in India. Further, (Voon et al., 2011) explained that attitude and subjective norms are positively related to willingness to pay in the case of organic food, and affordability has no impact. The choice of healthy food behaviour largely depends on friends' and family members' opinions (Samoggia & Riedel, 2020).

The health belief model (HBM) is used to predict health-related intention and behaviour of consumers by using the six constructs - perceived susceptibility (PSc), perceived severity (PS), perceived benefits (PB), perceived barriers (PBa), cues to actions (CA), and self-efficacy (CE) (Champion & Skinner, 2008; Le et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021). TPB and HBM are good theories for predicting consumer preference,

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