

Written report

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**¹ EXPLORING THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE
EATING BEHAVIOR AMONG POSTGRADUATE
STUDENTS IN A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY: A FOCUS
GROUP DISCUSSION**

Assignment title :Written report

**Module name and code: Practise Based Research
(LCHS7001)**

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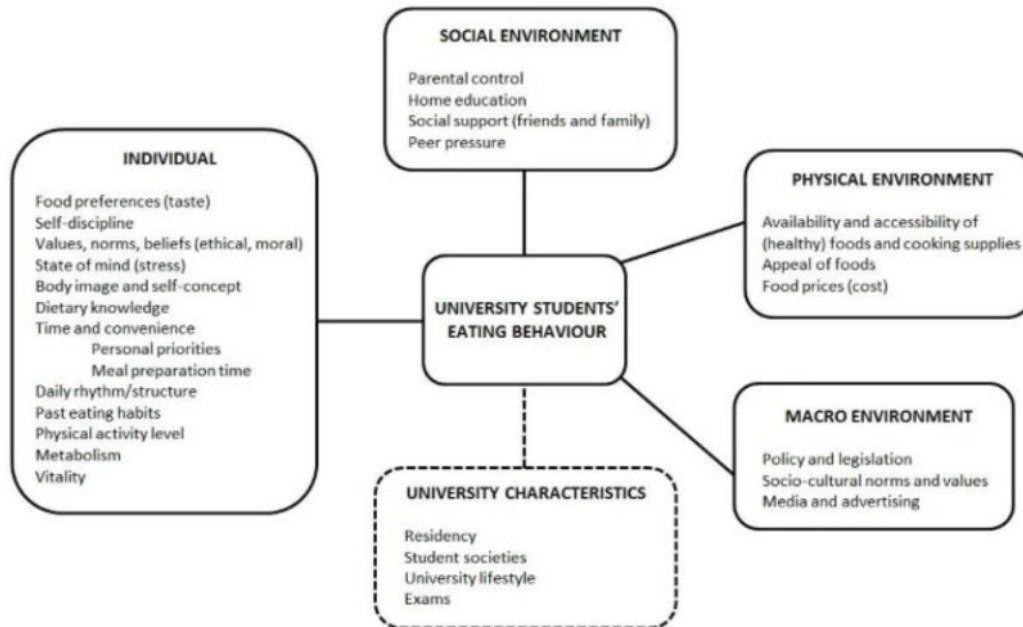
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Introduction

According to Huang, Yang, and Chiang (2020), the Habit of eating healthy is usually considered to be the most essential process for mental and physical growth. In addition to this, eating habits also show a huge and important role in playing academic performance among postgraduate students in a public university. However, from recent international students, it has been reported and analyzed that the eating health of postgraduate students in a public university majorly established the requirements to develop and improve understanding the healthy eating habits among postgraduate students (Flaudias *et al.* 2020). Moreover, this research study majorly reports the different factors which influence eating behaviour among postgraduate students in a public university that focus on different group discussions. This study also aimed at various questions in which individuals show the various factors influencing healthy habits of eating among postgraduate students in the country. The findings of this research study will also focus on and show various factors such as the cost of different foods, social media, peers and friends, insufficient income, and many more. Compulsory healthy eating habit among postgraduate students increase the income of the students and also help them maximize the nutritional knowledge that promotes or influence eating behaviour among postgraduate students in public universities.

Literature background to the research



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Figure 1: Factors influencing the eating behaviour of the student

Source: (Deliens, 2018)

As per the research of Parker and Harriger (2020), Healthy Eating behaviour is generally described as normal behaviour, which is related to the habits of eating and also in selecting the food that postgraduate students require in their public university. However, healthy eating behaviour is an important aspect of their life that majorly affects the long-term outcome of their health. Also, a completely balanced diet and also the complete consumption of different quality food contribute to the sustainability of the physical and mental well-being of the individual. In addition to this, to illustrate the postgraduate students' eating habits, the public university found that the students may skip their meals due to various academic activities. Moreover, findings from different studies by Radwan *et al.* (2019), it is reported that a healthy eating breakfast shows regularity essentiality to preserve and prevent tiredness which is caused by learning from various healthy consumption.

Furthermore, it is also revealed that many postgraduate students are majorly obese in the public university. Therefore, to highlight various ideas for reducing obesity among the students of public universities. Many public universities show the major impact of different physical activities, which was based on body weight and also in maintaining the fat gain during the initial years of the public university of public students. The study by Elsalem *et al.* (2020) also pointed out that postgraduate students in the public university follow a healthy lifestyle as they have more knowledge about eating healthy as compared to other university students. Therefore, the result indicates that many postgraduate students need to follow healthy eating habits. Also, the result showed that 65% of the postgraduate students seen in the science department and other faculties had less healthy eating habits in their daily lives. On the other hand, this research study also shows the major effects of eating healthy among postgraduate students that focus on different implications on eating habits.

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Research aim and objectives

Aim

The primary aim of the research is to focus on the eating habits of postgraduate students in a public university. The research further aims to analyze the factors which influence the eating behaviour of the postgraduate student in a public library.

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Objectives

The main objectives of the research are-

- To analyze the eating habits of postgraduate students in a public university.
- To identify the factors that influence the changing of the eating habits of postgraduate students.
- To identify the impact of changing the eating habits of postgraduate students on their health.
- To analyze the challenges faced by the postgraduate student to maintain a healthy eating habit.

Research question

- What are the eating habits of postgraduate students in a public university?

- Which factors influence the changing of the eating habits of postgraduate students?
- What is the impact of changing the eating habits of postgraduate students on their health?
- What are the challenges faced by the postgraduate student to maintain a healthy eating habit?

Rationale

The rationale of this research study is to focus on the factors that influence the eating behaviours of postgraduate students in a public university. This study is important as it identifies the challenges that postgraduate students face to maintain healthy eating habits. The research study has a significant motive to describe the meaning of a healthy person. College and university students lack nutrition, proteins, and vitamins due to the reason for not getting healthy food (Sogari *et al.*, 2018). Many students gain low self-esteem and a high perception of stress because of their busy schedules, which impacts the student eating habit. This study is significantly essential as it showcases the impact of changing eating habits of postgraduate students on their health from the perspective of three postgraduate students. It includes the concept of unhealthy dietary habits that postgraduate students learn because of the expensive health items and difficulty of meal preparation alone.

Research Method

As per the opinion of Snyder (2019), research methods indicate the research techniques and methods that the authors and the researcher use to perform the research operations. Qualitative and quantitative are the two types of research methods that the researchers prefer the most for their research work. In this study, the qualitative research method has been preferred over the quantitative research method as it helped the researcher to understand the subject matter of this present topic. A focus group discussion has been done for this study based on the qualitative research method. Based on the opinion of Nyumba *et al.* (2018), focus group discussion is a significantly unique method or technique of qualitative research that includes the discussion of a particular set of

problems and issues with a group of people who are predetermined. This study has followed this technique which has helped the researcher to get different opinions of three postgraduate students regarding the eating habits of college students.

Research design

As per the opinion of Ranganathan and Aggarwal (2018), research design refers to the entire strategy or planning of the research study. It generally outlines the procedures and techniques that are used in the data collection and data analysis process. In this research study, the researcher followed a focus group discussion which is based on the qualitative research method. According to the opinion of Barrett and Twycross (2018), focus group discussion includes gathering people from similar experiences and backgrounds so that a discussion can be conducted related to a specific topic or subject. The focus group discussion has helped the researcher to understand the different opinions of different postgraduate students who are facing issues with their unhealthy eating habits. The strength of the focus group discussion includes offering a hands-on approach which has allowed the presence of the researcher. It also increases the likelihood regarding the subject matter with a broad range of knowledge, experience, and attitudes that have been helpful for the researcher to capture in the group discussion. The main limitation of the focus group discussion is it does not provide much time to a person's perspective; also, it does not offer any objective information or data, and no anonymity or confidentiality as the personal details are completely open to the discussion group.

Sampling process

Based on the opinion of Andrade (2021), purposive sampling indicates a group sampling of no profitability techniques where several units get selected because of their characteristics which are required in the sample. Here, the units get selected on purpose. In this research, the researcher focused on the depth of the samples that were collected through the focus group discussion. The researcher took three samples of the participants who participated in the group discussion with the moderator between the age group of 24 to 27. With this sampling process, primary data was collected, which helped the researcher to develop this research. Through purposive sampling, the researcher gets to identify the individual's perspective regarding the subject matter.

Research material

For developing this research study, appropriate and relevant research materials were needed for the researcher. For that reason, ³ the researcher conducted a focus group discussion where three participants joined where the participants were given a total of eight questions to discuss. The participants shared their opinion based on the asked question one by one.

Data collection

As per the opinion of HR and Aithal (2022), data collection ¹⁶ is a valuable method that is used by the researcher to collect relevant data and information so that the researcher can have the answers to the research problems and make a conclusion. In this research study, the researchers have collected data regarding the eating behaviour of college students through ¹² primary data collection. The researcher conducted a focus group discussion which helped the researcher to collect qualitative or non-numerical data and information. In the primary data collection through the group discussion, three participants or speakers were present who shared their perspectives on unhealthy eating behaviour, the reason behind this, and the challenges that the postgraduate students are facing. It has helped the researcher to develop this study with proper knowledge.

Research procedure

The researcher conducted a focus group discussion through which many related data and information were collected that helped this research to be developed efficiently. The ¹⁰ focus group discussion is a method of qualitative research where participants join in a group discussion who generally have similar experiences or from similar backgrounds (Korstjens and Moser, 2018). Three postgraduate students participated in the group discussion, where each student shared their perspectives ¹⁷ regarding the unhealthy eating behaviour of college students. In the group discussion, the participants were asked a total of eight questions by the moderator, and every participant shared their opinion on each question.

Data analysis

The researchers employ a data analysis strategy in a series of investigations to extract valuable insights from the gathered data. The data analysis approach entails several steps, such as carefully inspecting, cleaning, changing, and analyzing the obtained data. Making educated decisions and identifying pertinent patterns and themes ¹³ that emerge from the data are both aided by the data analysis process (Hameed and Naumann, 2020). Researchers employ statistical methodologies, visualization techniques, and analytical tools during the data analysis process to find correlations, patterns, and linkages within the obtained data. Data analysis can help with decision-making and the resolution of research issues. In the present research work, the researcher followed the thematic data analysis process. Thematic data analysis, a qualitative data analysis technique, assists in the discovery, examination, and interpretation of the patterns and concepts connected to the qualitative data (Lochmiller, 2021). The thematic analysis makes it easier to employ coding, categorization, and organization of the data to find themes and ³ gain useful insights into the qualitative data. With the help of this technique, it is possible to acquire a thorough grasp of the problem and research topic at hand. In the present research work, information related to the eating habits of postgraduate students has been gathered, and it was analyzed properly with the perfect implementation of thematic data analysis.

Ethical consideration

According to Arifin (2018), taking ethical considerations into account when conducting research indicates a useful set of guidelines and principles that should be incorporated into research practices and designs to ensure that the researcher has adhered to confidentiality, safety, and honesty when disclosing the procedures, results, methods, and information. The ¹⁵ ethical issue in qualitative research depends on the pre-existing data and information that was already employed in the current study. For the current study, the researcher has taken into account the fact that participants must give their informed agreement before their information may be utilized. Additionally, no participants were forced to share their personal information. Researchers also did not indulge any biases for providing equal opportunity to each participant. All the collected information was kept

safe to maintain the privacy of the participants. Moreover, the researcher maintains all the ethical issues properly to get an authentic research result.

Findings

The diet of college students extends to their immediate needs. Lack of finances, a limited amount of healthy foods, changing lifestyle, and peer pressure all of these contribute to the patterns of erratic eating among college students (Wattick, Hagedorn, and Olfert, 2018). The lack of variety of diets makes the students expedient to snacks with high fat, which has a lack of important macronutrients. As per the opinion of Parker and Harriger (2020) in the literature background of this present research, healthy eating behaviour is normal behaviour that relates to the Habit of eating and selecting the food that postgraduate students need in their public university. Most of the time, postgraduate students skip their meals because of several reasons, and their handled food intake is nonexistent or disordered. The research conducted a focus group discussion where three students, aged 24 to 27, participated; where they discussed the eating behaviour of postgraduate students in public universities and what are the challenges they are facing.

In the focus group discussion, when the moderator asked the participant to describe the meaning of a healthy person, the third participant started the discussion by saying an individual who is completely free from any disease, whereas the first participant stated that an individual who is physically and mentally fit and does not have any symptoms of the disease. The second participant then expressed her opinion by stating that a healthy person follows strict fitness, maintains good physically, has a correct BMI, and consumes healthy and nutritious food. When the moderator asked about the health of the students of the universities, every participant pointed out the eating habits of the college students. In their opinion, it can be concluded that many students forget to have their meals because of their tight-packed schedules and have unhealthy food whenever they get free time. Also, the students don't get enough time to cook for themselves, whereas unhealthy and junk foods are available everywhere. Based on the opinion of Parker and Harriger (2020), many students get stressed out and lose weight because of their unhealthy eating habits and skipping proper meals. When the participants were asked about the

suggestion regarding the influence of healthy eating behaviours, the first participant stated that having some cornflakes or oatmeal can help the students a little as it is easy to cook as it, takes very little time for cooking, and is healthy for the body. The second participant completely agreed with the opinion of the first participant. However, the third participant brought up her opinion on the cost of healthy food, which is not suitable for every student as they come from different financial backgrounds, and along with that, she suggested intaking more fluids like some fresh juices and vitamin tablets can help college students. ³ The participants believe that the universities can help the students by providing healthy food items in the cafeteria where the students can get healthy and nutritious foods.

Discussion

Analysis of ¹ the eating habits of postgraduate students in a public university.

² According to the opinion of Wattick, Hagedorn, and Olfert (2018), college students' diets cover all of their immediate demands. Lack of resources, a scarcity of wholesome foods, a change in lifestyle, and peer pressure are all factors in college students' unpredictable eating patterns. Besides that, Parker and Harriger (2020) also stated that regular behaviour that has to do with the Habit of eating and choosing the food that postgraduate students in their public university need is healthy eating behaviour. Due to a variety of factors, postgraduate students frequently skip meals, and their food handling is either nonexistent or disordered. In supporting this opinion, the first and second participants of the group discussion stated that postgraduate students frequently changed their eating habits which is not good for their health. Moreover, it can be said that postgraduate students change their food habits due to changing their atmosphere and lifestyle.

Identification of the factors that influence the changing of the eating habits of postgraduate students.

According to the opinion of Parker and Harriger (2020), many students get stressed out and lose weight because of their unhealthy eating habits and skipping proper meals. In supporting their opinion, participants in the group discussion also stated that stress is the main factor that influences the student to skip their meals and change their food habits.

The first participant said that having some cornflakes or muesli can benefit the students a little because it is easy to cook because it takes very little time to cook and is nutritious for the body; when the participants were questioned about the proposal regarding the influence of healthy eating behaviours. The second person wholeheartedly shared the first participant's point of view. The third participant, however, voiced her concern about the cost of healthy food, saying that because students come from a variety of financial situations, it is not appropriate for all of them. She also suggested that students benefit from consuming more fluids, such as some fresh juices and vitamin supplements. Considering these factors, it can be said that lack of resources, lack of time, new atmosphere, and changing lifestyle are the main factors that are related to the eating habits of postgraduate students.

Conclusion

Considering all the above-mentioned factors, it can be said that Healthy eating practices are typically regarded as the most crucial factor in both mental and physical development. Additionally, eating habits exhibit a massive and significant impact on how well postgraduate students perform academically at a public university. However, it has been stated and examined that contemporary international students' eating habits have significantly established the need to advance and enhance our knowledge of postgraduate students' healthy eating practices. Additionally, this research study focuses on diverse group discussions and primarily reports the various elements that ¹ affect the eating habits of postgraduate students at a public institution. This study also sought to answer several concerns about the variables influencing postgraduate students nationwide in terms of developing healthy eating habits. The results of this research study will also highlight and demonstrate several other aspects, including the price of various foods, social media, colleagues and friends, a lack of income, and many others. Postgraduate students at public universities who are required to maintain good eating habits earn more money and make the most of their nutritional knowledge, which influences their eating habits.

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