

RESEARCH PROPOSAL TEMPLATE

Student Details

Institution/Centre of Study	University of Wales Trinity Saint David
Student Family / Surname:	
Student Given / First name:	
Student Number	
Faculty and School	

Proposed Research

Current Proposed Title (20 / 30 words)
Research questionnaire on food and mood – does food affect mood positively or negatively, does this matter when eating and are there any other reasons for food choices? A comparison between male and female students.
Background & Context – Rationale and Literature Review (approx. 500 words)
With every individual having their own relationship and experiences with food, there are many reasons for food consumption. Some people eat only to ward off hunger while others find it a much more pleasurable experience, some using it as a form of social interaction (Lean and Combat, 2017). Regardless of the reasons, food is undoubtedly needed for a healthy life as it plays a major role in many functions of the body (Buttriss et al., 2018). Not only is food essential for many physical bodily functions but it has also an impact on the psychological processes of the body (Langley-Evans 2015). This can be seen by the way in which the body responds when it is deprived of adequate nutrition. For example, the lack of certain vitamins and minerals can cause a change in mood and impair brain function. Low levels of the B vitamins in the body can cause depressive states, irritability and tiredness. The lack of selenium can result in negative mood states and often, especially for the elderly, an inadequate amount of folate can result in depression (British Dieticians Association, 2017). Neurotransmitters are chemicals that are produced in the brain which can influence one's mood. Dopamine and noradrenaline can increase feelings of being alert and energised, whereas serotonin helps the feeling of happiness (Blades, 2009). It is thought that carbohydrate rich foods help more serotonin to be produced by the brain, thus resulting in a happy feeling being related to eating carbohydrates (British Dieticians Association, 2017). However, there is not enough significant research on this. On the other hand, underconsumption of carbohydrates may lead to decreased energy levels resulting in low mood. Therefore, when enough carbohydrates are consumed the "feeling of happiness" could be due to the fact that the body is receiving an adequate energy source (British Dieticians Association, 2017). A study carried out Steptoe and Pollard (1995) showed that the present mood state of an individual plays a key role in the choice of food. Stress, for example, can influence the amount of food consumed and is often linked to emotional eating, especially in woman more so than men. However, in men, it has been found that those who are more anxiety-prone are more likely to try to maintain their emotional well-being through food, therefore eat for emotional satisfaction. Woman have also been found to be more restrictive with food for health and diet reasons than men, often eating more natural foods for this reason (Steptoe and Pollard, 1995). , as many students move out of the family home and therefore have more of a choice of the foods they consume (Ansari, Stock and Mikolajczyk, 2012). With all the current research on food, mood and the influences both play on each other many different questions can be asked, such as are the main moods

associated with food consumption positive or negative? Do social factors and a change in living conditions have an impact on food choices? Are people only eating certain foods for health benefits? Do men and women differ in these results? Is food only eaten for its sensory appeal or is there in fact no reason why people eat the foods they choose?

Aims and Objectives (approx. 150 words)

The aim of this research study is to find out what the main motivations for eating are and if there is any difference between males and females. In doing so, it is hoped that more information will be found on factors such as:

- Is food consumption seen to have a positive or negative impact on mood? Answers to this question are hoped to show how people relate to food and if certain foods have different impacts on their mood. And is food choice more geared towards feeling a certain way?
- Are people influenced by others when it comes to food choices? Results of this are hoped to outline how much of an impact social factors have on food choice.
- Is health the main priority when choosing food? This is hoped to show whether food is chosen only because of its contribution to health or whether in fact the general population are not too concerned about this influence.
- Is taste all that matters? Do people eat certain foods because they know they should or do they only eat foods that appeal to them.

Proposed Methodology Including Data Analysis (approx. 500 words):

For this research study a questionnaire will be filled out by approximately 10-15 male students and 10-15 female students. The students will be students at the University of Wales Trinity St. David Carmarthen campus who are not part of the School of Sport, Health and Outdoor Education. The reason of choosing students outside this School is to use participants who do not have an extended knowledge in nutrition in the hope of receiving more accurate results regarding the general student population. Before the questionnaires are filled out the aim of the research will be explained to each individual and a consent form will be completed.

The questionnaires will be handed out to students on campus. The choice to fill them out there and then will be optional, students may also fill the questionnaire out in private if they feel more comfortable doing so. Age and gender will be recorded on the questionnaire sheets, no other personal details will be required.

The questionnaire layout will follow a similar structure to the Exercise Regulations Questionnaire – 3 (BREQ-3) (Markland and Tobin, 2004). Participants will read 24 statements and evaluate each statement on a scale of 0-4 to determine how true the statement is for them. 0 being not true to them and 4 being very true. The statements will be put together by the research group. Each statement will relate to six different foods and reason correlations: negative correlation, positive correlation, social correlation, health correlation, sensory correlation and impartial/no correlation. Four statements will relate to each correlation. The score of each statement will be recorded under their correlation group. The scores in each group will be added together and a mean will be calculated. The mean recorded on each questionnaire will be added together to get an overall mean for each correlation group for males and females.

Results for correlation will be displayed on a graph showing any differences between male and females. The standard deviation of the results will be shown in a table. The standard deviation will show the difference of mean scores compared to participants' answers. The statistics software SPSS will be used to calculate the standard deviation for each correlation group showing any differences between male and females.

The results will be discussed with regard to current literature and research. The findings will be linked to current theories on what motivates people to eat and how positive or negative moods impact choice. A conclusion will be given for all findings.

Participants will not be given follow up feedback regarding results, however, if they would like to know the study's findings, they could get in contact with a member of the research group.

Facilities and resources available for the investigation (e.g. dietary analysis software / laboratory equipment): please indicate if you expect to need any special resources

SPSS data analysis software.

Introductory Bibliography

Ansari, Stock and Mikolajczyk (2012) "Relationships between food consumption and living arrangements among university students in four European countries – a cross sectional study" *Nutrition Journal*, vol.11, issue.28.

Blade (2009) "Food and Happiness" *Nutrition and Food Science*, vol.39, issue.4, pp.449-454.

Buttriss et al. (2018) *Public Health Nutrition*, 2nd ed, pp.3-5. West Sussex, UK: John Wiley and Sons

Langley-Evans (2009) *Nutrition, Health and Disease, A LifeSpan Approach*, 2nd ed, pp.1-6. West Sussex, UK: John Wiley and Sons

Lean and Combet (2017) *Barasi's Human Nutrition, A Health Perspective*, 3rd ed, pp.3-4. Boca Raton, Florida, USA: Taylor & Francis Group

Markland and Tobin (2004) *The Behavioural Regulation in Exercise Questionnaire* – 3. Exercise Motivation Measurement. http://pages.bangor.ac.uk/~pes004/exercise_motivation/breq/breq.htm (Accessed 10/01/19)

Steptoe and Pollard (1995) "Development of a Measure of the Motives Underlying the Selection of Food: the Food Choice Questionnaire" *Appetite*, vol.25, pp.267-284.

The Association of UK Dietitians (2017) "Food and Mood" available at https://www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/food_mood