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**THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE EATING BEHAVIOUR
AMONG MASTERS STUDENTS IN A UNIVERSITY OF
WALES TRINITY SAINT DAVID: A FOCUS GROUP
DISCUSSION**

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Introduction

Background to the study

Eating behaviour is an important aspect as they developed overall human health and it is characterised as human well-being. Eating behaviour is influenced by a variety of factors, including personal, social, environmental, and cultural factors (Chen and Antonelli, 2020). With regards to postgraduate understudies in a UWTSD, a few elements can assume a part by the way they eat. From the start, postgraduate understudies have a requesting nature which essentially affects their eating ways of behaving. They frequently have occupied plans with classes, research work and cutoff times that can prompt eating designs as well as skipping feasts. The strain to perform can likewise bring about pressure eating or depending on unfortunate comfort food sources. Monetary limitations are one of the main elements of effect eating ways of behaving among postgraduate students (Di Renzo *et al.* 2020). Most postgraduate understudies have restricted monetary assets which drive them to pick less expensive quality and less nutritious food choices. This can prompt higher handled food varieties that are high in calories, fat, and sugar, which can adversely affect their general wellbeing.

Cultural factors are also another leading factor impacting the eating behaviours of postgraduate students. They come from different backgrounds and they have different dietary traditions as well as preferences. In this aspect, they continue to want foods which are familiar to them and also available in their home countries or cultural communities. In addition, personal factors such as individual preferences, beliefs, as well as knowledge about nutrition can influence eating behaviour. A few postgraduate understudies might have explicit dietary inclinations, for example, vegetarianism or allergen limitations, which can influence their food decisions and accessibility. Understudies who have a decent comprehension of sustenance might focus on better decisions, while others might miss the mark on information or inspiration to settle on informed decisions. Healthy eating behaviour is most important for ensuring well bring thus postgraduate students need to know the effects of consuming unhealthy foods which harm their well-being and push them towards facing different kinds of diseases (Gonçalves *et al.* 2021). Due to their busy schedules many students skipped their breakfast and were attracted to the snacks

which are highly rich with calories, and fat. Due to all these reasons or factors, the frequency of visits to fast food restaurants is increasing day by day.

Research Aim and Objectives

Aims

The research aims to explore the potential aspects, which can influence the eating behaviours of postgraduate students in university of wales trinity saint david, in the United Kingdom.

Objectives

- To explore the eating behaviour among postgraduate students in UWTSD
- To find out the dominating aspects influencing eating behaviour among postgraduate students at UWTSD in the UK.
- To demonstrate the consequences of eating behaviour on the health of the postgraduate students.

Research Questions

The significant research questions, which help in fostering the exploration of the chosen phenomenon, are as per the following:

RQ1. What is the existing situation related to eating behaviour among postgraduate pupils studying in UWTSD?

RQ2. What are the dominating aspects that impact eating behaviour among postgraduate students at UWTSD in the UK?

RQ3. What effects does eating conduct have on the well-being of postgraduate students at UWTSD in the UK?

Research Rationale

Now in this current competitive world students focuses on making themselves advanced by competing with others. In this aspect they are under a busy schedule and for which they are unable to take food at the right time and also they are more likely to have fast food which is mostly available in the street. Postgraduate students have busy schedules due to various reasons as they are bound to go to their colleges and attend classes at the right time which creates barriers to take them

healthy food earlier attending the classes (Contreras-Mendez and Cruse, 2021). There are also various reasons which are to be explored in this study. The research rationale shows the factors which are influencing the eating behaviour of postgraduate students in University of Wales Trinity Saint David. This research information can help in delivering a detailed context of different factors which include stress, anxiety and time constraints. Eating behaviour is a complicated aspect as it is associated with the psychological, social, physiologic and genetic factors which influence students' meal timing food preferences and quantity of food intake as well as food selection (Zwierczyk *et al.* 2022). Understanding these factors can help universities develop strategies to promote healthy eating among postgraduate students, such as providing affordable nutritious options on campus, promoting nutrition education and creating a supportive social environment that encourages healthy eating habits.

Research Methodology

The research methodology refers to the techniques which have been used by the researcher to collect data based on the research topic in this paper (Newman and Gough, 2020). To make informative this research paper the researcher has used various techniques as the researcher conducted the primary research work. By collecting data from the participants the researcher has added effective information in this research work. The study utilized the interpretivism research philosophy in the time of collecting information the researcher consulted interviews with postgraduate students of public universities in the United Kingdom. The philosophical concepts in this research work say about the collection as well as analysis of data based on this research phenomena (Groenland and Dana, 2020). The research phenomena of this research work are an influential aspect in the eating behaviour of university students. By utilizing the descriptive research design approach the researcher has effectively conducted this research outline which allows readers to find out the key objectives of this research phenomena.

Research Design

Research Design is another important aspect of the research substructure, since it describes the research methods and techniques which have been used. It helps

researchers develop success factors for their studies (Dada *et al.* 2021). Depending on the study topics, the researcher has selected the most appropriate research methods. A descriptive research design can be implemented, which has estimated the eating practices of postgraduate students and the factors which have influenced them (Cerqueira Sousa *et al.* 2023). Sufficient information is possible to be gathered with this process in use, and the researcher is able to gain gradual advantages. Thus, they are able to conduct significant research and implement the research results for their significance.

Recruitment, sampling, and study participants

The research is based on important factors which influence eating aspects of postgraduate students in the University of Wales trinity saint david. Sampling is a process which estimates a group of people representing an entire population, and provides significant insights on the selected topic. It is not possible to select all the postgraduate students representing the institution (Sadia *et al.* 2021). Thus, the researcher has used a random sampling method, by which 6 female students have been selected for an interview process. With this method, it is possible that the students are provided equal chances for getting chosen, and be able to discuss the provided subject with the researcher.

Data Collection Methods

A data collection method represents the process by which information on a selected topic is collected. It is primarily of two types, primary and secondary data collection methods. While the primary process is done through empirical sources like recording in the mobile phone or voice recorder, the secondary data collection method is carried out through articles, websites, and other incidental sources (MSOGA and Anasel, 2020). In this instance, a primary data collection method has been used by the researcher, where interviews are conducted with six female postgraduate students. This process has been carried out to determine the eating behaviours, along with their demographic backgrounds to ensure that sufficient information is collected on the resultant topic.

Data Analysis Technique

Efficient data analysis techniques should be implemented by the researcher to ensure that sufficient research is carried out on the study topic. It is possible that the resultant information is interpreted later on for research purposes, and they are able to address the issues in the future (Vishwakarma *et al.* 2022). A primary qualitative analysis process is used by the researcher through a sample interview process, and the information can be implemented efficiently in the future. The sample interview process is used by the researcher to determine the factors for estimating the food habits and by which their demographic backgrounds play an important role in this respect.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher should focus on the maintenance of ethics while carrying out their studies. Ethical considerations are a cluster of processes which are helpful for the researchers to perform ethical practices during the time of conducting research works (Garrido-Fernández *et al.* 2020). A primary research method has been used by interviewing six postgraduate female students of the University of Wales trinity saint david, and they have been granted permission via recorder prior to the interview. It has been ensured that the interview results are used purely for research purposes, and confidentiality has been ensured. It is possible that the students are allowed to quit if they face discomfort in any way (Razak and Vanoh, 2022). The research questions are designed in such a way that the participants face no problems in the interview process. The feedback can be useful for the researcher for study purposes, and by which the consent of the students is acquired in the interview in the long run.

Results

Interview Results

Q1: What influences your food choices?

Interviewee 1 has described that health consciousness is the aspect which has been efficient for their food choices, and the health factor is a nurturing aspect for them.

The person is trying to maintain a healthy life throughout, and it has been influential for healthy food choices.

Participant 2 considers veg healthy food, but more often consumes junk food according to their choice.

Interviewee 3 has given importance to health consciousness, since they have a heart disease, and prefers healthy and organic food, also preparing them by estimating the carbohydrate levels, and more often indulges in junk food also.

Participant 4 is a vegetarian, consuming eggs at times. They are helpful for balancing their weight, and they sometimes eat unhealthy food when bored, lazy, and hungry.

Participant 5 is well-aware of their food habits, and they have a food disorder, which serves as a potential barrier to their eating habits. They consume high-sugar food throughout, and they are not bothered by their food habits. They know their residing place, and consume food according to the availability there. At times, their eating behaviour is changed.

Interviewee 6 has no health considerations, and no specific eating patterns. Her food behaviour changes according to their mood.

Q2: Would you participate in a university meal program? Why or why not?

Participant 1 has agreed to participate in this initiative, since it would be helpful to gain information on healthy food habits.

Participant 2 has expressed their desire to get involved, since they should contribute to the educational institute.

Participant 3 should take part to know about the types of food provided by the University of Wales.

Participant 4 should play a part in this program to know about food and its significance for the human body.

Interviewee 5 can cooperate to gain knowledge about healthy food.

Participant 6 should partake to know about the importance of consuming nutritious food.

Q3. When you think about eating healthy, what kind of foods do you think about? Which are available in your university? What is missing that you wish were available?

Participant 1 fish, meat, soybean. A wide variety of vegetables such as raw banana is missing in the University

Participant 2 Vegetables, which are mostly unavailable

Interviewee 3 focuses on making choices depending on the availability in the University

Interviewee 4 has made a list of consuming healthy foods.

Participant 5 prioritizes organic and fat-free foods.

Q4. How often do you make less healthy choices when they are available in your university vending machines/cafeteria?

Participant 1 has emphasised on frequent unhealthy food choices.

Participant 2 described making unhealthy food choices more often.

Interviewee 3 makes unhealthy food choices depending on availability.

Interviewee 4 makes rare unhealthy food choices, with eggs as potential choices.

Participant 5 has stated about making general unhealthy food choices.

Interviewee 6 states about making unhealthy choices always.

Q5. How often do you make these healthy choices when they are/or would be available in your university?

Participant 1 pointed out foods containing sugar.

Participant 2 has regarded non-fresh foods which have been prepared earlier.

Interviewee 3 has estimated chocolate and sugar.

Interviewee 4 has emphasised on sugar.

Participant 5 has stated junk food.

Participant 6 has also stated about food containing sugar.

Q6. What university food changes in the past year do you like? What changes don't you like?

Participant 1 has stated about similarities from the past.

Interviewee 2 has demonstrated making less changes.

Participant 3 prefers healthy food choices.

Interviewee 4 has stated about remaining static to old food habits.

Participant 5 described bringing no changes in food habits.

Interviewee 6 has stated encouraging healthy food items.

Q7. Have your eating habits changed at university since last fall? In what ways have they changed?

Participant 1 has ceased purchasing from the automated machine.

Participant 2 has started buying food from the vending machine.

Interviewee 3 has started a healthy diet recently.

Interviewee 4 consumes homemade healthy food only.

Participant 5 always tries to make unhealthy food choices.

Participant 6 purchases food from the vending machine.

Q8. Where do you get your nutrition information from?

Participant 1 acquires information from online healthcare sources.

Interviewee 2 gets nutrition information from NHS websites.

Interviewee 3 acquires information from health-related applications.

Participant 4 gathers facts from friends and health-conscious people.

Participant 5 gathers information from friends.

Interviewee 6 acquires information from experience.

Q9. What kind of information do you need to make healthy food choices?

Participant 1 has stated about levels of calories, sugar and health benefits.

Interviewee 2 has stated about every aspect except health advantages.

Participant 3 mentioned salt, sugar, and allergies.

Interviewee 4 has stated about chips, chocolates, and other types of food causing excess sugar and carbohydrates.

Participant 5 demonstrated food items which contain extra sugar.

Interviewee 6 has stated about foods containing excess sugar and carbohydrates.

Q10. Would the availability of information in the kitchen area/ cafeteria influence your food choices?

Participant 1 should not prefer this option.

Participant 2 has stated in the case of healthy foods.

Participant 3 has stated about organic and healthy food items.

Participant 4 has stated about healthy and gluten-free food items.

Interviewee 5 has demonstrated the significance of healthy food.

Interviewee 6 has demonstrated the significance of healthy and organic food.

Q11. What can your university do to promote healthy eating?

Participant 1 has stated that the educational institution can promote healthy and organic food.

Interviewee 2 has suggested that the university can host an awareness programme.

Participant 3 has agreed on educational ventures.

Interviewee 4 has stated about vegetables and veg food items.

Participant 5 has stated on bringing academic balance besides introducing healthy food initiatives.

Interviewee 6 has stated that pictures of healthy food should be distributed throughout the university.

Q12 What university food changes in the past year do you like? What changes don't you like?

Participant 1 Increased the consumption of organic foods. The increased consumption of meat is something that is not liked

Participant 3 has reduced the consumption of junk food and does not like this

Participant 5 has stated about the regulated timings that are being followed during the consumption of foods

Q13 What time do you go to lunch? What time would you prefer to take your lunch?

Participant 1 12pm, suggested time is 1pm

Participant 3 4pm, the suggested time is 12pm

Participant 5 3pm, the suggested time is 12pm to 1pm

Q14 Do you feel like you have enough time to finish your food during lunch?

Participant 1 Yes

Participant 2 Yes

Participant 3 Yes

Participant 4: Yes

Participant 5 Moderate

Q15 Do you feel like you spend too much time standing in lines to prepare your food?

Participant 1 No

Participant 2 No

Participant 3 No

Participant 4: No

Participant 5 No

Q16 How many times in a day do you use the vending machines? Where is the vending machine located? Does the location influence how often you use it?

Participant 1 does not use the vending machine

Participant does not use the vending machine

Participant 3 does not use the vending machine

Participant 4: does not use the vending machine

Participant 5 does not use the vending machine

Q17 Where do you get your nutrition information from?

Participant 1 gets information from the chart in the canteen

Participant 2 from the university app

Participant 3 from the university app

Participant 4 has downloaded a separate app

Participant 5 from the canteen chart

Q18 What kinds of information do you need to make healthy food choices?

Participant 1 calories taken

Participant 2 calories burnt

Participant 3 calories burnt and calories taken

Participant 4 what are the different kinds of nutrients and proteins that are being consumed in the diet

Participant 5 calories taken

Discussion

From the above-mentioned interview questions, the primary factors influencing the eating habits of the postgraduate students of the University of Wales are health consciousness, mood, eating disorder, and the type of foods which they consume. Moreover, the availability of foods available at the vending machine of the educational institution has also played an important role, along with the awareness program concerning healthy foods. Health consciousness has been a primary factor, and it is dependent on the food choices which they make to live a healthy life. These aspects influence their daily choices, and most of the students prefer consuming unhealthy food items presently. Moreover, a few of the participants have stated about introducing significant changes in their food habits, which can be possible through efficient research and analysis. Thus, the students ensure that the changes are sufficient to provide nutritional information on the healthcare strategies which are adopted by consuming healthy food items efficiently.

The postgraduate students have managed to know about the importance of consuming unhealthy foods, and they are trying to introduce changes in their food habits also. They have taken initiatives to take part in health awareness campaign programs, which should be significant for them in the long run. Considering the types of food which should be essential for them, a few of the students are listing down the items which should be efficient to introduce changes in their food habits. It should be impactful on their decision-making process of consuming healthy foods, and ensure that they are living a healthy and active life in the long run. Moreover, they should be able to address the issues which are caused by consuming unhealthy foods, and replace them with healthy habits. These aspects should reflect on their food behaviour and ensure that they are having no health concerns in the future efficiently.

Many of the students have preferred staying to their traditional way of consuming unhealthy and junk food. It can create a major impact on their health, and they should try to switch to organic and healthy food, which should be significant for them in the future. Moreover, it can ensure that the postgraduate students are able to demonstrate the health factors which play a major role in their food categorization. thus, they can identify the issues, and look for solutions to address them. The students making healthy choices prefer eggs as unhealthy food, which they consume at times, and it generally does not reflect on their actions. Moreover, the students are able to acquire information on consuming healthy foods from different health websites, which ensure that there is much significance of consuming healthy foods. Moreover, it is ensured that the students are able to make significant changes in the consumption of healthy food items, which can ensure that they can take care of their body in the long run. Thus, the issues are addressed, and the students look to improve their lives.

Conclusion

This research paper has described the importance of eating habits of postgraduate students, and the ways by which these habits influence their lives efficiently. Research aims and objectives have been addressed about this subject, along with research questions have been addressed. It is important to know that ways by which the actions reflect physical health, and they can stay healthy in this tough

environment. Moreover, the issues are addressed, and they look for health factors which influence their health. An interview outcome has been addressed, stating the significance of consuming healthy foods and retaining their old habits of consuming unhealthy food. It is possible that they are able to adopt healthy habits to determine the healthcare factors which influence their food habits. Thus, they should address the issues, and try to introduce changes in their healthcare strategies. Thus, the possibilities of having a healthy life can be ensured, and they are able to address the issues which are raised while consuming unhealthy food in the long run.

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