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CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS ON A HEALTHY DIET AMONG GEN Z CONSUMERS

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Abstract: *Perceptions of a healthy diet combine food preferences with judgments about nutrition, ingredient quality and convenience. This study examines these perceptions among respondents aged 18–25, using questionnaire data on consumption habits, purchase factors, willingness to pay more and motivations for healthy eating. Results show that 62.5% were willing to pay more for healthier products. Convenience was rated important or very important by 93.8%, ingredient quality by 87.5%, and nutritional value by 75.0%. Fruit and vegetables were the most frequently selected food category (37.5%). The findings suggest that product communication should consider practical convenience and affordability alongside nutritional and sensory attributes. Results describe the surveyed age group and remain exploratory.*

Introduction

Perceptions of a healthy diet concern both the foods consumers prefer and the features they use to judge them. Nutritional value, taste, ingredient quality and convenience may contribute to the way healthy eating is understood in everyday choices. The questionnaire examines these dimensions through respondents’ own reported preferences.

A preference for a food category is distinct from how often a person reports eating foods they consider healthy. Willingness to pay more is also distinct from an actual purchase or a measured price premium. Examining these dimensions together helps describe how respondents evaluate healthy food options.

The study focuses on the recorded 18–25 age group. It compares preferred foods with selected purchase factors and importance ratings. It also describes motivations for healthy eating, texture preferences and the importance assigned to food contrast.

The objective is a descriptive account of this surveyed group. Respondents’ interpretation of “healthy foods” frames the consumption question. The analysis concerns perceptions and stated preferences, without measuring dietary intake or clinical health outcomes.

Material and method

The analysis uses individual questionnaire records and selects participants in the recorded 18–25 age category. Older respondents and records without an age category are excluded.

Each percentage uses this age group as its denominator. All reported items had complete answers and one recorded category per participant. Each respondent is included once. Data are analysed descriptively and rounded to one decimal place.

The attribute summary combines “important” and “very important” for each item. These percentages are separate ratings and should not be summed across attributes. Food contrast is reported separately using the original response categories.

Rural participants accounted for 75.0% and urban participants for 25.0%.

Results and discussions

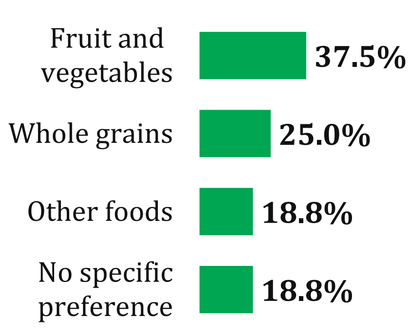


Figure 1. Preferred food groups

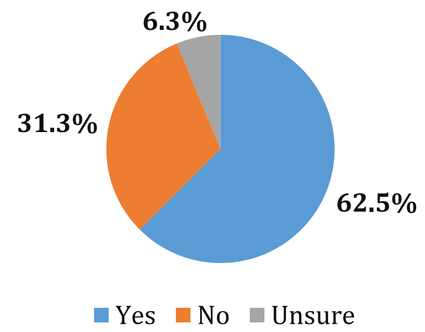


Figure 2. Willingness to pay more

Fruit and vegetables were the most frequently selected food group (37.5%), followed by whole grains (25.0%). Other foods and no specific preference each represented 18.8% (Figure 1).

Willingness to pay more for healthier products reached 62.5%, while 31.3% declined and 6.3% were unsure (Figure 2). Healthy-food consumption was daily for 37.5%, one to three times weekly for 56.3%, and never for 6.3%.

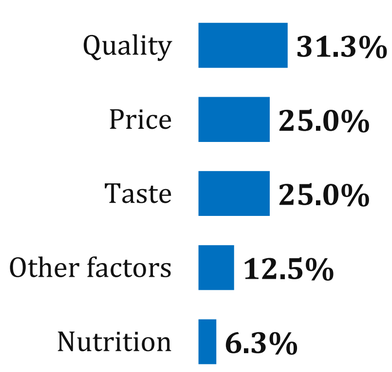


Figure 3. Purchase factors

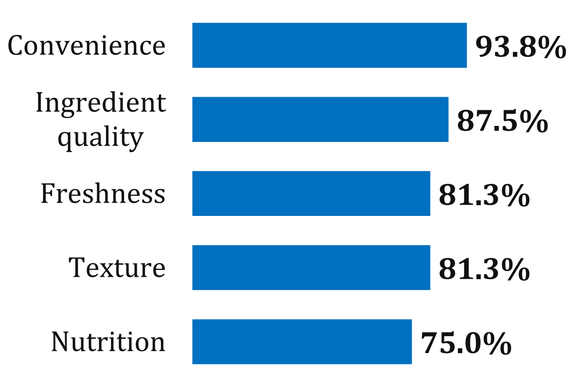


Figure 4. Attribute importance

Quality led purchase factors (31.3%), followed by price and taste (25.0% each), other factors (12.5%) and nutritional value (6.3%) (Figure 3).

Important/very important ratings were 93.8% for convenience, 87.5% for ingredient quality, 81.3% for freshness and texture, and 75.0% for nutrition (Figure 4). Motivations were health (43.8%), desired weight (31.3%), energy/well-being (12.5%) and others (12.5%). Food contrast was very important for 43.8%, slightly important for 43.8% and unimportant for 12.5%.

Conclusions

Convenience and ingredient quality received high importance ratings. Retailers could explore accessible options with clear product information. Willingness to pay more reflects stated intentions. Findings remain exploratory and specific to the surveyed age group.