

From the Pages to the Plate: A Comprehensive Study on How Food Articles in Print Media Influence College Girls' Food Preferences

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Abstract - This research paper delves into the intriguing realm of how food articles featured in print media impact the food preferences of college girls. The study's unique focus extends to understanding the nuances of this influence across varying demographics, namely undergraduate and postgraduate students, attendees of government and private colleges, and of rural and urban areas. Through a comprehensive analysis of survey data, this study aims to shed light on the extent of influence exerted by print media on food preferences while uncovering potential variations within the specified demographic groups. By examining the interplay between media exposure and dietary decisions, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the multifaceted factors shaping college girls' eating habits. It was found that girls of rural and urban area as well as girls studying in government and private colleges do not have significant difference in opinion regarding 'Food related articles in print media influence food preference', whereas girls studying in undergraduate and postgraduate classes have significant difference in opinion.

1. INTRODUCTION

The pervasive influence of print media within contemporary society cannot be overstated. With its widespread availability and accessibility, print media has firmly established itself as a central conduit for disseminating information, offering entertainment, and shaping public opinion. In a world where information is readily accessible at one's fingertips, print media continues to occupy a significant space in our daily lives, contributing to the shaping of perspectives, attitudes, and choices.

In the context of food preferences, print media plays a substantial role in steering individuals' culinary decisions. Magazines and newspapers, as trusted sources of information and entertainment, frequently feature articles and sections dedicated to a myriad of gastronomic aspects. These pieces not only illuminate prevailing culinary trends but also provide insights into nutritional content, cooking techniques, and diverse culinary experiences. Consequently, readers are exposed to a mosaic of food-related narratives that span from delectable recipes and restaurant reviews to explorations of cultural cuisines.

Amidst this backdrop, this study embarks on a quest to delve into the realm of college girls' food preferences and the role that food-related content within print media plays in shaping these choices. By venturing into this arena, the research endeavours to uncover the degree to which these articles and features impact the food preferences of young women pursuing higher education.

However, the exploration does not stop here. Recognizing the intricate tapestry of society's demographics, this study adopts a comparative framework. In doing so, it aspires to unveil potential differentials in the influence exerted by print media on food preferences across a spectrum of demographic categories. This comparative approach takes into account the varying contexts within which college girls navigate their food preferences, including academic levels (undergraduate and postgraduate), types of institutions (government and private colleges), and belongingness (rural and urban areas).

By interrogating these distinctions, the research aims to cast a nuanced light on the intricate interplay between print media and college girls' food preferences. The comparative lens not only acknowledges the diverse backgrounds of these young women but also acknowledges the multifaceted factors that can potentially moderate the impact of media content on their culinary decisions. This study aspires to unravel insights that not only enrich our understanding of media's role but also contribute to informed strategies for promoting healthier and more conscious dietary choices among college girls from various walks of life.

2. METHODOLOGY

A diverse group of college girls, including both undergraduate and postgraduate students, hailing from government and private colleges, and of rural and urban areas, were randomly selected from Girls' Colleges of Udaipur city of Rajasthan state as

participants for this study. Selection were made in such a manner that out of total 360 samples there were 180 urban college girls and 180 rural college girls. Further, out of 180 urban college girls, 90 girls were selected from Government College and 90 girls were selected from Private College. In the sample group of 90 Government College girls as well as of 90 Private College girls there were 45 girls from under graduate courses and 45 from post graduate courses in both the urban and rural category. Same criteria were followed for selecting sample for group of 180 rural college girls. The researchers had to assume that the individuals who participated in the quantitative survey understood the question and answered honestly and accurately.

A structured questionnaire was designed to elicit insights into participants' exposure to food articles in print media, the subsequent influence on their food preferences. Surveys were administered to the chosen participants, yielding a comprehensive dataset that facilitated a comparative analysis. Five point rating scale (Likert method of scaling) was used. Reason for using this tool was it increases the response rate and response quality along with reducing respondent confusion about statements. The suitable statistical techniques were applied. The level of significance was as curtailed at 0.05 level. All the calculations were done with SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science, Ver 21.0).

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Association between opinions about 'Food related articles in print media influence food preference' and study groups (Urban Girls Vs Rural Girls, Government College Girls Vs Private Government College Girls and UG Girls Vs PG Girls) is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Association between opinions about Food related articles in print media influence food preference and study groups (Urban Vs Rural, Govt. Vs Private and UG Vs PG)

		Food related articles in magazine / Newspaper influence food preference					Total	Chi-Square (p value)
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Indecisive	Agree	Strongly Agree		
Total Urban Girls	F	17	15	18	35	95	180	1.082
	%	9.4%	8.3%	10.0%	19.4%	52.8%	100.0%	(0.897)

Out of total girls 9.7% were strongly disagree, 9.4 % were disagree, 10.8 % were indecisive, 19.4% were agree and 50.6 % were strongly agree on the aspect 'Food related articles in print media influence food preference'

Out of total urban girls, 9.4 % were strongly disagree, 8.3 % were disagree, 10.0 % were indecisive, 19.4 % were agree and 52.8 % were strongly agree regarding 'Food related articles in print media influence food preference' while out of total rural girls, 10.0 % strongly disagree, 10.6 % disagree, 11.7 % indecisive, 19.4 % agree and 48.3 % were strongly agree with regard to 'Food related articles in print media influence food preference'. The Chi Square value was found to be 1.082 which is insignificant ($p > 0.05$). It infers that rural and urban girls do not have significant difference in opinion regarding 'Food related articles in print media influence food preference'.

Out of total girls studying in Govt colleges, 10.0 % were strongly disagree, 8.3 % were disagree, 9.4 % were indecisive, 20.6 % were agree and 51.7 % were strongly agree regarding 'Food related articles in print media influence food preference' while out of total girls studying in private colleges, 9.4 % were strongly disagree, 10.6 % were disagree, 12.2 % were indecisive, 18.3 % were agree and 49.4 % were strongly agree on the aspect '. The Chi Square value was found to be 1.457 which is insignificant ($p > 0.05$). It infers that the girls studying in government and private colleges do not have significant difference in opinion regarding 'Food related articles in print media influence food preference'.

Total Rural Girls	F	18	19	21	35	87	180	1.457 (0.834)	
	%	10.0%	10.6%	11.7%	19.4%	48.3%	100.0%		
Total Govt. College Girls	F	18	15	17	37	93	180		
	%	10.0%	8.3%	9.4%	20.6%	51.7%	100.0%		
Total Private College Girls	F	17	19	22	33	89	180		
	%	9.4%	10.6%	12.2%	18.3%	49.4%	100.0%		
Total UG Girls	F	25	17	23	32	83	180		9.606 (0.048)
	%	13.9%	9.4%	12.8%	17.8%	46.1%	100.0%		
Total PG Girls	F	10	17	16	38	99	180		
	%	5.6%	9.4%	8.9%	21.1%	55.0%	100.0%		
TOTAL	F	35	34	39	70	182	360		
	%	9.7%	9.4%	10.8%	19.4%	50.6%	100.0%		

Out of total girls studying in undergraduate classes, 13.9 % strongly disagree, 9.4 % disagree, 12.8 % indecisive, 17.8 % agree and 46.1 % were strongly agree on the aspect 'Food related articles in print media influence food preference' while out of total girls studying in postgraduate classes, 5.6 % were strongly disagree, 9.4 % were disagree, 8.9 % were indecisive, 21.1 % were agree and 55.0 % were strongly agree regarding 'Food related articles in print media influence food preference'. The Chi Square value was found to be 9.606 which is significant ($p > 0.05$). It infers that the girls studying in undergraduate and postgraduate classes have significant difference in opinion regarding 'Food related articles in print media influence food preference'.

This may be due to girls studying in postgraduate classes are in general more mature, the education level and age make them more sensible, they are more concern for their looks, figure, style. To attain these desirable features they choose food accordingly and they follow media (print) for nutritious recipes, online shopping of food products etc, which straight away exerts effect on their food preferences.

In a study Heinz found that adolescents, who reported exposure to newspaper and magazine articles as nutrition information, were more likely to eat fruits daily [1]. The results obtained in the present study are also aligned with the studies conducted by Kelly & Chapman [2], Cowburn & Boxer [3] and Jones & Reid [4].

4. CONCLUSION

In the pursuit of understanding the intricate interplay between print media and college girls' food preferences, this comprehensive study has yielded valuable insights that contribute to the discourse on food preferences and media influence. The investigation set out to unravel the extent to which food-related articles in print media shape the food preferences of college girls.

The findings of this study unveil compelling patterns and disparities in the perceptions of college girls regarding the influence of food articles in print media on their dietary preferences. Notably, it emerged that girls from rural and urban areas, as well as those studying in government and private colleges, exhibit a notable alignment in their opinions on the impact of food-related print media. Conversely, a significant distinction in opinion surfaced between undergraduate and postgraduate students, underscoring the role of maturity, education level, and age in shaping the relationship between media exposure and dietary choices.

The observed variance between undergraduate and postgraduate students resonates with the notion that more mature and informed individuals tend to be more discerning and health-conscious in their food preferences. Postgraduate students' penchant for nutritious recipes, online shopping of food products, and a desire to cultivate desirable physical attributes is indicative of their heightened awareness and proactive approach to food preferences, underpinned by media influence.

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BIOGRAPHY



Dr. Rashmi Manoj, Assistant Professor and Head at Guru Nanak Girls' P G College in Udaipur, Rajasthan, is a prolific writer with numerous research papers and four authored books. Her expertise spans community health in rural areas, nutrition, and sustainable development, showcased through presentations at national/international conferences.