



# Consumer Behaviour and Nutrition Trends in Dining at Restaurants, Cafes, and Kiosks: A Systematic Review

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#### **Abstract**

Background: The informality of eating out has been steadily increasing, and with consumers spending significantly, there's a heightened demand for value. Beyond just the food, consumers now seek additional features, including efficient service, appealing decor, a pleasant ambiance, and high-quality, varied food options. Consequently, many food outlets are actively observing current dining trends to better serve their clientele. Objectives: The broad objective of this review article is to highlight the factors that influence consumer behaviour while dining at a food outlet. Specifically, this study aims to explore consumer behavior, prevailing nutrition trends, and the factors affecting consumer choices when selecting an eating establishment. Methodology: A comprehensive search using different databases was conducted for relevant literature on the topic. A final pool of 40 studies of the food establishment business was analyzed and discussed. Results: The reviewed studies indicate that due to increasingly busy lifestyles and a rise in per capita income, dining out has become a more casual and frequent occurrence. Consumers select food outlets based on various factors, including their lifestyle, income, age, location, and occupation. Therefore, an eating establishment can be effectively designed and planned by considering the lifestyle and income demographics of the population within a specific

**Keywords** - consumer behaviour, kiosks, consumer preferences, nutrition trends, hospitality, food court.

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#### 1. Introduction

Restaurants and cafes are places where people pay to sit and consume meals that are cooked on the premises. Modernization and globalization have brought numerous multinational companies and start-ups to the Indian and global markets. Also, with the introduction of Globalization and liberalization of the economy, significant changes are seen in terms of education level, employment, savings and GDP of the economy. This has led to more purchasing power in consumers, resulting in an increased number of food outlets in metro cities and towns (Kamal and Agarwal, 2017).

Previously, dining out was typically reserved for specific occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries, and similar celebrations; however, this trend is now undergoing a significant shift Nowadays, dining out has become a routine (Mintel, 2009). Ramanathan and Ramanathan (2011) opined that the face of dining out has changed; it is less planned, more often, and at irregular times, which has propelled the increase of Restaurants. If the first two places for a consumer are home and work, the 'third place' is being taken up by cafe and restaurants (Wang et al., 2017).

The choice of dining venue is primarily influenced by the amenities it provides, which may include a tempting menu or a location strategically aligned with the intended audience. Within restaurants and cafes, distinct consumer types can be observed. One segment of consumers primarily selects an establishment based on its menu offerings, while another prioritizes the venue's characteristics, such as ambiance or location. Typically, this latter group consists of younger individuals, whereas the former often comprises families. Therefore, food outlet nowadays is not just a place to eat, it performs many other functions as well, such as socialisation, waiting, party, work, meetings and discussion (Sabnavis, 2008; Astuti and Hanan, 2011).

Another famous food outlet is a kiosk. It is described as an area inside a mall or at public concourses that provides prepared food items. Kiosks come in a variety of forms such as booths, cubicles, huts, or carts, from which the food is served at public locations (Rowley and Slack, 2002; Rowley, 1995). Kiosks can be utilized by consumers as they pass through stores or public concourses such as railway stations, airports, malls, and shopping centres (Nicholas et al., 2001). Quick service restaurants have adopted Self Service Kiosk (SSK) technology because it reduces labour cost, improves speed of service, and is generally an attractive option for millennial customers and their younger counterparts (Beatson et al, 2007; Kincaid & Baloglu, 2005).

With the changing times and lifestyle, the nutrition trends among consumers are also undergoing transformation. These trends and consumer choices have a great effect on the fast food industry, as this industry is sensitive to the desires and needs of people. To gain the competitive edge, organizations are implementing a holistic approach that integrates all the significant

aspects that could aid in serving according to the desires of consumers. For this, analysing consumer behaviour has become an inevitable and critical part of the overall planning and decision-making in the organization (Kamal and Agarwal, 2017). So, this review aims to outline consumer behavior and nutrition trends observed during dining experiences at diverse food outlets. Furthermore, it seeks to identify the key factors influencing such consumer choices, with the ultimate goal of providing actionable insights for menu development tailored to specific target populations.

## 2. Methodology

A systematic review of literature was conducted to cognize the behaviour of consumers in dining at restaurants, cafes and kiosks. Studies published in various databases such as Research Gate, Google Scholar and PubMed were examined for appropriate literature on the topic. Studies were searched using keywords like consumer behaviour, food kiosks, self-service kiosks, consumer preferences, nutrition trends, hospitality, food court, and restaurant service. The available literature was vast, so articles relevant to the study were screened. The articles published during the period of 1995-2021 were chosen. The articles were selected if they met the following inclusion criteria: (a) the research was conducted for a food outlet like restaurant, cafe or kiosk, (b) the study evaluated the nutrition trends or consumer behaviour or factors influencing consumer in selecting the consuming place, (c) accessibility of full-text article in English. Eighty-five studies were downloaded, and after the screening process, forty-five articles were excluded, as they did not meet the inclusion criteria. Thus, forty articles were selected that fulfilled the goal of this research. The research articles were categorized on the basis of themes like factors impacting consumer behaviour, factors influencing consumers in selecting the consuming place, and nutrition trends. After the extraction and organization of data, they were summarized under the designated subtopics.

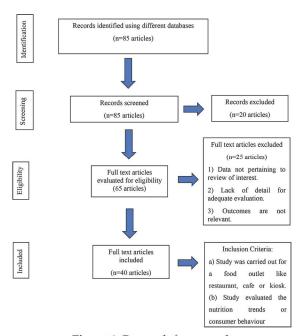


Figure 1: Research framework

## 3. Results

Food consumption was originally a domestic activity, but gradually it is shifting outside the house and is becoming a leisure activity with a need to spend time for pleasure with loved ones (Astuti and Hanan, 2011). According to the findings, India ranks seventh place, for weekly fast food consumption among the Asian countries (Sloan, 2004). Shifting of an indoor basic activity to outdoors has given momentum to the hospitality sector.

Food is becoming a medium for consumers to relax and enjoy with their family and/or friends. This is supported by a study conducted by Goyal and Singh (2007) in India, who found that consumers now wish to have a more expedient place where they can enjoy with their family while having good food and relish other features such as basic amenities, entertainment, customer services, and other physical environmental features. Studies indicate that consuming food outside the house is a human behaviour for getting rid of boredom (Sloan, 2004;Astuti and Hanan, 2011). Additionally, restaurants and cafes also serve as social spaces, facilitating gatherings and relaxation among family and friends. Kiosks, however, present a different dynamic. Consumers typically visit malls for primary objectives like shopping, entertainment, or other services, often frequenting kiosks as an incidental activity or an afterthought.

# 3.1. Factors Influencing the Selection of a Consuming Place

Given that visits to food outlets are becoming an increasingly frequent phenomenon, hospitality professionals are striving to comprehend the underlying psychological drivers of consumer needs. Within a country, consumers of varied desires exist and hence it becomes very important for hospitality professionals to understand the desires of consumers residing in that particular region, in order to provide them the best experience. The choice of eating place is strongly influenced by the physical and social conditions of the consumer society (Urry, 1995).

**Table 1:** Factors Affecting the Selection of Consuming Place

Author	Year of Research	Highest Rated Attribute by Consumers	Remarks
Upadhyay et al.	2007		Highest rated attribute by
Kokko & Andersson	2005	Quality of Food	the consumers in choosing a food outlet is its core
Andersson & Mossberg	2004		product i.e., the 'quality of food'
Kamal & Agarwal	2017	Variety in the menu	The most important quality is variety, followed by the taste of food, decoration, location, efficient services, polite staff, seating capacity, staff appearance, and waiting time for the order.
Ali et al.	2010	Variety and Price	Consumers who come with their families are highly influenced by the variety, price, entertainment features, and intangible traits, such as hygiene, food quality, cleanliness, and efficient customer service.
Kishore et al.	2014	Price, Service, Taste and Location.	Reasonably priced menu, service quality, taste &location proximity are imperative factors that make the young consumers prefer a restaurant.

Akintunde	2017		A roadside kiosk offering
Nyerere et al.	2017	Price	food at an affordable price is the choice of technicians and labourers who do manual jobs to survive.
Astuti & Hanan	2010	Personal attributes- Social status and Age	Consuming place and our choice of dishes are affected by personal attributes like status and age.
Goyal and Singh	2007	Personal attribute- Age	Kiosks of different food chains situated in one place are preferred by members of different age groups of one family.
Bernson	2011		The attractive aesthetics of a cafe, like wall decor,
Krishnapillai &Abuthahir	2018	Aesthetics	furniture, paintings& carpeting, increase customer satisfaction & their intention of revisiting
Barber et al.	2011	Cleanliness	People feel comfortable in a hygienic environment, which eventually impacts
Akinyele	2010		the amount of time they spend in a food outlet.
Hussain	2015		Consumers usually predict the hygiene maintained in
Ryu and Jang	2008	Cleanliness	the kitchen based on the surroundings of the dining
Nyerere et al.	2017		area and the personal hygiene maintained by the employees.

## 3.1.1. Variety and Quality of Food

Table 1 depicts the findings of various research. It shows the factors that influence the decision of consumers in selecting a consumption place. According to many researchers, the heart of any food outlet is the 'food', which is a major deciding factor in selecting a food outlet.

Variety in the menu is another aspect that consumers expect in a food outlet, because a family consists of people of different age groups, hence they have varied preferences. For accommodating different preferences of all the members of a family, kiosks are used very affectively in the form of

food courts. Malls have used this idea of food courts, where people come to relax and enjoy. The presence of kiosk, whether in the form of stand-alone or food court, increases the footfall of the shopping outlets of mall. So, variety in menu, quality and taste of food are the major determinants and food outlets shall focus on the same.

#### 3.1.2. Price

Kiosks are also preferred by people who want to have food at very affordable rates and can't manage to go to restaurant or cafe every day. In the regions, where majority of the people are manual labourers, the demand for roadside kiosks is notably elevated. An additional factor driving low-income earners to choose roadside kiosks is their widespread availability in convenient locations such as bus stations, markets, street corners, and railway stations.

## 3.1.3. Hygiene and Cleanliness

With increasing health consciousness of the consumers, there is a heightened focus on hygiene maintained during food handling. Consequently, the cleanliness of the outlet and staff uniforms are also crucial factors influencing consumer perception. Therefore, hospitality professionals must prioritize and adhere to the food safety and hygiene practices recommended by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India.

#### 3.1.4. Aesthetics

Dining out is highly affected by age. Krishnapillai and Abuthahir (2018) in their study, unfolded that the rising young population is the main contributor to the popularisation and expansion of cafes, where the youngsters are willing to spend their time and money. Young consumers are driven by social media, so they get attracted to outlets that offer them scenic aesthetics, where they can click pictures and post them online. This indicates the importance of an aesthetic environment for increasing the footfall of the cafe. Attractive facilities like decor, carpets, paintings and furniture affect the customers' satisfaction and revisit intention. Due to creative theme and calming ambience of cafe, they are generally considered more elite & dishes are premium priced than an ordinary restaurant. Cafe is also preferred by employees who want to have professional meetings and want a calm environment, and can sit for hours to discuss.

On the other hand, consumers who are in their middle age and come with their family, look for entertainment features and attractions for children, to engage their children in activities. So, they generally prefer restaurants.

# 3.2. Nutrition Trends Among Consumers

Food as a basic requirement will continue to exist as it is required for survival and performing daily activities (Sloan, 2004). However, it is associated with culture and lifestyle. In any kind of event, whether official or unofficial, food is the central part. From conferences to celebrations, food is an essential component, and it becomes very important for hospitality professionals to be updated with the latest trends, likes, and dislikes of the target population, to cater to them.

Table 2: Common Nutrition Trends Among Consumers

Author	Year	Nutrition Trend	Remarks	
Euromonitor	2010	Health	Consumers are not ready to sacrifice their health. Sales of pre-prepared	
Hotel and Restaurant times	2010	conscious	vegetables and ready to eat food with healthy ingredients are constantly observed to be high.	
Melia	2011	Customised diet	Consumers want diverse options to customise dishes according to their diet and individual needs.	
Pitta	2010	Weight loss	Consumers are showing positive attitudes towards healthy snacking to suppress hunger.	
Hartwell & Edwards	2009	Local &	Customers are paying more attention to the local ingredients. There is a list	
Alonso & O'Neill	2010	Organic ingredients	of descriptors which is attractive to consumers, like local, home-made,	
Judkis	2009		natural, seasonal, and organic.	
Rousham et al.	2020	Varied dietary patterns	Both conventional and modern dietary patterns co-exist, which is characterised by widespread intake of food products like processed meat, sweets, cakes, soft drinks, and juices.	

Table 2 shows the current nutrition trends among consumers. Researchers have opined that consumers these days are concerned about the food they are ingesting. Consumers are always following some diet, like weight loss, ketogenic, dairy-free, gluten-free, or detox. Many consumers are continually dieting and are striving to lose weight. They prefer low-calorie food alternatives. Observing these diet-related trends is very important for the hospitality sector, as consumers want customization according to their specific diet. Consumers are also inclined towards seasonal, locally produced and organic products. Including these products in the menu can increase customer revisit attention, and it might attract new customers. It also increases their dependence on the local food kiosks situated in the

market place. While shopping or after shopping, they tend to linger on the local snacks sold by the kiosks in the market (Hartwell and Edwards, 2009).

The hospitality industry can improve its menu by including such dietfriendly food products, which give consumers a wide array of options to choose from.

#### 3.3. Consumer Behaviour at Food Outlets

Food markets are becoming complex and competitive throughout the world (Gupta, 2009). To gain a competitive edge, it is crucial for the hospitality sector to understand the consumer behaviour at food outlets.

# 3.3.1. Comfortable and Relaxing Atmosphere

As restaurants are becoming a third place for consumers, it is very important for food outlets to provide a relaxing atmosphere. Kellerjohn et al., (2018) in their study in Canada revealed that the restaurants appear to provide casual hominess, in which customers treat the space as a home away from home. As customers are dining out more frequently to relax from their stressful lives, they want a nice environment and ambience in addition to good food. This is supported by a study conducted by Hussain and Ali (2015). Researchers disclosed that consumers nowadays are demanding supplementary features, like a nice environment, along with quality and taste.

Similarly, a cafe is a place for people to meet their clients or go online with their laptop, so it is expected to provide a calm environment where people can focus on their work. Further, Kaltcheva and Weiltz (2006), in their study in U.S.A. also specified that a cafe with a pleasant environment is more likely to fascinate the walk-in customers, which triggers their revisit intention. In agreement with that, food outlet owners are ready to pay a considerable amount of resources for their store design.

## 3.3.2. Exploration of Cuisines

Due to globalization and increased movement of people in other countries/ states, consumers want to try new cuisines. Consumers are experimental and want to explore other options. This is supported by Da Browska (2011) in his study in four European countries. Researcher revealed that curiosity in the customs and traditions of other countries has intensified in recent years. This indicates the need for restaurants and cafes to provide a menu that covers a wide range of cuisines with a broad range of ethnic diversity.

## 3.4. Factors Influencing Consumer Behaviour

Restaurants and cafes are not just places to have food; they are also spaces for entertainment and relaxation. Consumers' needs and expectations must be scanned by the hospitality sector to ensure customer satisfaction, because customer satisfaction leads to retention of customers, and retaining current customers is comparatively easier and cost-effective than attracting new consumers. The importance of consumer satisfaction in business has been highlighted in the Theory of Buyer Behaviour and the Consumer Decision Model. According to the theories, a consumer evaluates the satisfaction gained from the services received at the food outlet, which influences his/her future decisions. Consequently, if consumers are happy with the services provided at the food outlet, their revisit intentions increase.

**Table 3:** Factors Influencing Consumer Behaviour

S. No.	Author Year of Publicati		Influencing Factor	Remarks
1.	Shashikala and Suresh	2013	14001	Emotions and mood are influenced by music.
2.	Brattico and Jacobsen	2009		J
3.	Rea et al.	2012	Music	Mood can be influenced by the kind of music played. Music might calm the listener and decrease the tension.
4.	Oakes and North	2006		Music also influences the
5.	Berman and Evans	2007		customer's views about waiting time for food service at restaurant & cafe.
6.	Morin et al.	2007	Lighting	Intimate environment created by dimmed lighting helps in attracting consumers who visit the restaurant or cafe for
7	Custers et al.	2010		relaxing with their family.
8.	Jang and Namkung	2009	Decoration	Decoration & artifacts are essential components for grabbing the attention of young customers, towards the pleasant cafe settings, which influence the overall consumer satisfaction.
9.	Chang	2012		The beautification of a cafe increases consumer satisfaction and may increase their intention to revisit the cafe.

As consumers eat out of home to break the monotony and get a break from their busy schedule. So, along with good food, they demand other factors like decor and ambience. This is more profound among the young consumers, as they are influenced by social media. According to the researchers, good music and lighting complement the food. Music, lighting, and artifacts might help in alleviating the consumers' mood, which might help them pass

the waiting time for service. Along with that, good music creates a calming effect in the mind, helping in relaxing, which ultimately might promote customer satisfaction.

#### 4. Conclusion

Consuming food is not only a basic need now, but a medium to socialize and relax, making this activity a commodity (Astuti and Hanan, 2011). With a growing number of nuclear families, increasing per-capita income, globalization, and exposure to global urban culture and western cuisine, the trend of eating food at home has changed to more frequent dining out events (Bernson, 2011).

Secondly, people want to relax in an environment that is away from their busy and stressful schedule, in order to get rid of the monotony, resulting in the emergence of more food outlets and more frequent visits to these outlets (Goyal and Singh, 2007). Research has revealed that there are many factors that influence a customer in selecting a consumption place. It depends on their lifestyle, age, income, and occupation. Workers who want to have low-priced food usually go for roadside kiosks that are easily available near their workplaces. Whereas if someone wants to spend quality time with their family, they can choose a restaurant, cafe, or food court.

Studies have shown that consumer behaviour strongly affects the hospitality industry. People are affected by the ambience, decor, and entertainment provided by the restaurant or cafe. This highlights the importance of lighting, music, decor, and other factors like ambience and entertainment factor to increase the footfall.

Researchers have also emphasized that consumers are concerned about their health nowadays, resulting in a change in the trend. They are influenced by some famous diets followed by influential personalities. People are trying to follow health-enhancing customized diets, resulting in the restriction of some food products. Also, they do not want to compromise on their health. People want fresh food due to which they choose local and seasonal food. So, if food outlet owners observe this trend and plan their menu accordingly, it might help them to cater to the consumers' needs, eventually helping their outlet to grow. Keeping this in view, some food joints like Subway have embraced this trend of healthy and nutritious food in their marketing and communication campaigns. It has included a variety of healthy exotic salads that cater to the needs of health enthusiasts who want to eat outside but do not want to consume junk food (Pitta, 2010).

Food service industry is highly competitive due to the increasing number of new entrants offering inventive food products and services (Nyerere, 2017). To increase the customer revisit intention, food outlets should focus

on their services to improve the consumer satisfaction levels. According to the theory of Buyer behaviour, satisfaction is a feedback mechanism that has been associated with future decisions. If consumers are satisfied with the services of a food outlet, their revisit intention might increase.

To excel in the highly competitive food industry, owners of food outlets can strategically plan their menu, pricing, decor, and other operational elements to align with the target population and ensure customer satisfaction. When establishing a new food venture, a thorough observation of the local demographic is crucial. Factors such as age, occupation, and income within the target area should directly inform decisions regarding interior design, menu offerings, and pricing strategies. Furthermore, continuous study of consumer behavior is essential for sustained business enhancement and adaptation

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