

# **1. Introduction**

Our team is working on developing healthy and sustainable food options off campus mainly focusing on the smart purchase and effective usage of raw ingredients.

We are targeting four self catered university accommodations and identifying irrational food habits across the participants by analysing their consumption patterns and purchasing decisions. We are also innovating how these habits can be positively modified.

## **2. What do you know about your problem area?**

### **Stakeholders**

The students across these self catered accommodations for the majority of our data collected and various retail and food organisations for general information about purchasing patterns are most relevant to the problem area.

### **Engagement**

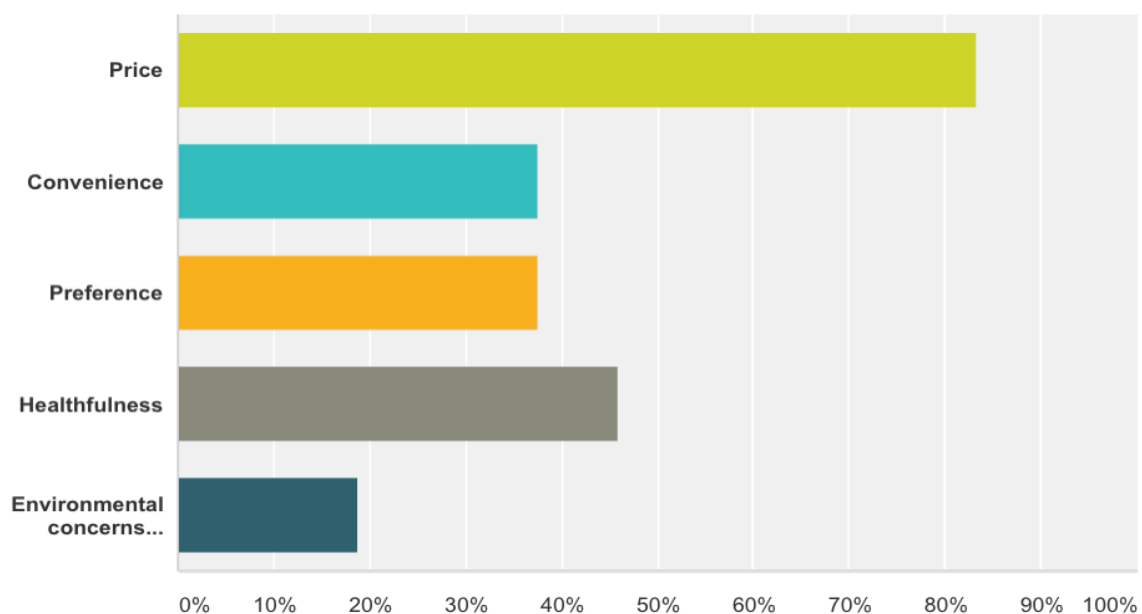
We presented the students of these accommodations with a survey asking them ten simple questions examining their food preferences, food finding factors and how often they cooked/ate out. I also had a brief interaction with the managers of retail stores located in the close proximity of these accommodations about the number of students they roughly estimated in a day, through the number of student discounts and student deals offered and active student club-cards.

# Data

Almost all of the data we collected during the fast hack was information about the personal food and purchasing habits of these students. We used a protected online survey site (surveymonkey.co.uk) for gathering and storing this information. We were using the drive services from google to store our data before we started using the more private DataStore offered by the university.

## 3. Initial Interpretation

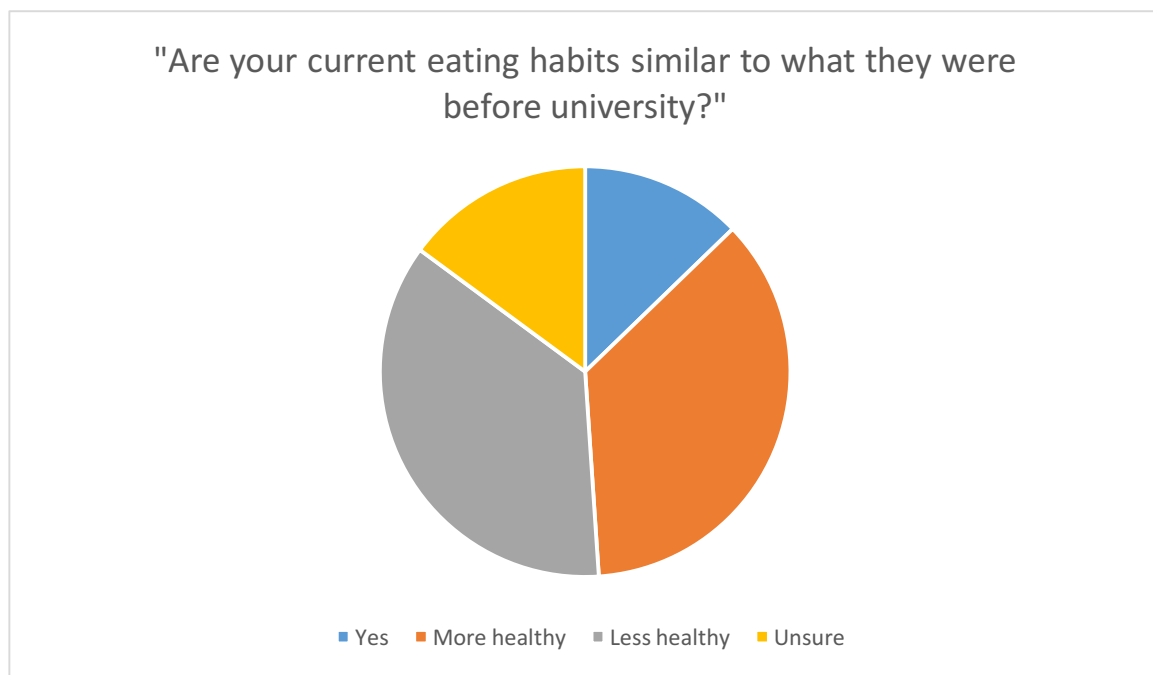
1. A huge majority of people (over 80%) simply used price as a key factor while making their purchase decisions. Less than 20% of the people surveyed were concerned with the environmental impact of the food they were purchasing. Not even half the people cited 'healthy' as a reason to buy the product. More than 60% of students also choose Tesco and Lidl each as brand preferences for their competitive pricing and attractive deals (as inferred through the brief interactions with store managers). This shows that a lot of university students are financially constrained and do not choose healthier and sustainable alternatives like organic food due to the high cost of affordability.



2. Almost 50% of all people said that buying fresh ingredients and

cooking at home was important to them, while only 10% did not care about preparing food. Over 35% of contributors said that they cooked on all seven days of the week. This establishes the extensive dependence of self catered students on basic consumables, and how critical it is to make sure that they are provided the cheapest green supplies.

3. Participants were almost equally divided (roughly 40% each) on agreeing to change and needing more information concerning the question, if the university agreed to provide resources on healthy and sustainable consumption practices. Moreover, 34 out of the 47 surveyed claimed an increase/decrease in healthy eating habits after having joined university. This shows that a lot of students are susceptible to change and this change can be made beneficial for them and the environment if we channelise our efforts in developing an effective model providing better viable food options.



## 4. Evaluation

The information that we have gathered so far offers a basic understanding of how undergraduates deal with their food. This data has helped us identify the choices of the participants generally, however most of our understanding is based on inferences and needs to be backed up with an examination of larger self catered student datasets and a detailed study of specifically asking what contributed to students choosing a certain option over the other in each of the survey questions.

## **5. Next Steps**

I would like to

- Interview colleagues from my accommodation and analyse how dissimilar the responses of people are when interviewed personally as compared to when filling a survey, to provide a rough estimate of the flexibility required when building a food management model.
- Explore the different green food initiatives and identify the main healthy, cheap, sustainable and convenient consumable options available around our accommodations.
- Collaborate with my group members to effectively carry out a focused group discussion and investigate the thought processes of students while purchasing, cooking and consuming food.

## **6. Reflections**

**What has been your personal experience of working on this project to date?**

My experience of working in a team has been challenging until now. It has been exciting to collaborate and improve the same documents

together, and share common opinions on various topics. However, I do feel that we could communicate better as a group and even conduct an experiment where we buy the raw materials, cook the food and consume it to experience the decision making process as a team. The course has been great for me as it perfectly goes with my own long term dream of improving the hygiene and healthiness of food back in my home town.

## **Your contribution**

I was primarily responsible for developing part of the group presentation after being provided data through the survey. I also communicated with the retail managers and contributed to establishing a common time for our group to meet by documenting the daily schedules of all members.

## **7. Conclusions**

Working together on this project, we have

- Collected and analysed food related data about 47 students in four self catered accommodations.
- Interacted with multiple people apart from the survey and gathered general information about consumption and purchasing patterns.
- Learnt about the importance of green food and its global impact, effective design and the ethics of research.
- Networked as a team on working towards improving the food situation off campus for students not living in the halls, and bringing about a change