

EXPLORING FAST FOOD CONSUMPTION PATTERNS AND PREFERENCES AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

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Abstract: This study investigates the fast-food consumption behaviors, attitudes, and preferences of students in a Vocational University, Colombo, Sri Lanka. The research focuses on the weekday cohort, consisting of 450 students, with a convenient sample of 100 students. Data was collected through an online questionnaire, covering demographics, fast food consumption patterns, and attitudes toward fast food. The analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics. The respondents were principally male (62%), with mean BMI values of 21.9 for males and 20.5 for females, and average waist measurements of 81 cm for males and 76 cm for females. The findings reveal that 54% of students consume fast food daily, with 21% indulging in fast foods more than once a day. An additional 46% reported occasional fast-food consumption. The study highlights the significant role of fast food in the daily lives of students, with 69% maintaining normal BMI. Gender differences were observed, underscoring the need for targeted interventions. The study highlights taste as the primary driver of fast-food consumption, with convenience and affordability also emerging as significant factors. Notably, 86% of respondents strongly agreed that fast food is more economical than restaurant meals. These findings offer valuable insights into fast food consumption patterns, attitudes, and their implications for nutritional status enabling suitable interventions to promote healthier dietary choices among university students.

Keywords: Fast food consumption, University students, Dietary habits, Sri Lanka.