

Theme: Democratising and decolonising food and nutrition: from science to society.

Title: Does Economic Status Drive Hedonic Hunger in College going Students?

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Background: Hunger is a natural physiological need for food, in contrast hedonic hunger is the desire to eat for pleasure which is influenced by both internal hormones and external environment. Money is an important factor for accessing the food when a person is hungry. In the recent scenario, people have easy access to food and often consumes hedonic foods to satisfy their delightful eating. This study has been conducted to explore the association of hedonic hunger with economic status of the undergraduate girls.

Methods: A quantitative study was conducted in 200 Undergraduate girls of Gokhale Memorial Girls' College, Kolkata. Convenience sampling with structured interview schedule was prepared for understanding the economic status of the participants. A Power of food scale (PFS), a 15 questions methodology was used for hedonic hunger scoring. Chi square test has also been assessed for analysing the association among the data.

Results: The data collected through the PFS were analysed and interpreted that 18.5% had high levels of hedonic hunger scores. 96% participants were financially stable and among them, 17.7% were in high risk of hedonic hunger. The rest 4% were financially weak and 37.5% among them were both financially distress as well as in higher risk at hedonic hunger scores. The Chi square test (p value > 0.05) explained that the hedonic hunger has no association with economic status of the participants.

Conclusion: The comprehensive study showed that the interviewees has wide diversity of food yet they consumed the hedonic foods to satisfy their hedonic hunger. We can infer that hedonic hunger prevalence is independent of the economic stability of the students in our study. The reason behind hedonic hunger prevalence among college girls can be coping in new environment, exposure into social world, stress and difficulty in time management. Further studies on the emerging food environment in young adults including both men and women with economic balance can help to build a healthy society.