

# Can Healthy Food Menus be Introduced in the Restaurants?

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## Abstract

This paper is aimed at creating awareness about healthy food and understanding people's perception on consuming healthy food at restaurants. Healthy food is a good mixture of varieties of foods that provide nutrition, wellness to the body and mind to maintain the balance and functioning for good health. Now a days', healthy food options are readily available but the perception of having it is expensive amongst most people. Establishing menu's which are focusing on wholesome food and comprising of balanced diet is making new-way in the world of restaurant business. The study concludes that, launching Healthy food menus could be the opportunity for restaurants to catch the light in upcoming time. The purpose of this paper was to understand the relationship between healthy eating foods and increase in customer numbers requiring healthier menus. Healthy menus should include traditional, gluten free, sugar free, vegetarian, vegan and seafood products. The study also aims to reveal factors that attract customers to restaurants offering healthy menu. The survey is conducted in the form of questionnaire to find out the opinions of various people from Pune city. The survey is backed by multiple theoretical researches which have been taken from various articles, journals and research papers.

**Keywords:** Healthy Food, Nutrients, Human Health

## INTRODUCTION

Healthy food is one of the most important factors in human health and helps preserve health. Our body needs many nutrients to gain the energy for its growth and to perform various daily routine tasks. Nutrients like proteins, vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates and fats can only be provided externally in the form of various foods.

The absorption and utilization of essential nutrients called digestion. Plants are the primary food source.

Hunting and gathering and development of agriculture are the main components by which humans have found out about food. Food influences culture in human societies and has been a driving force for globalization. Healthy food is any food that we eat like fruits, vegetables, whole grains and should not contain or in very less amount of sweetness or processed food. The need for the healthy diet can be provide by the both plant - based foods and animal- based foods. Healthy foods are also the ones that have minimum processing done & are eaten as fresh as possible to ensure maximum nutrients are utilized.

*New Concept of Organic Food:* Organic refers to an overall system of farm management and food production that aims at sustainable agriculture, high- quality products and the use of processes that do not harm the environment, human, plant or animal health and welfare.

Organic food is very healthy for a better lifestyle; as it does not contains any chemical products during production, which prevents soil from side effects and maintain its quality.

*Essential Nutrients:* There are 6 essential nutrients that the body needs to function properly. Nutrients are compounds in foods essential to life and health, providing with energy, the building blocks for repair and growth and substances necessary to regulate chemical processes. The two types of the nutrients including water are macronutrients and micronutrients.

Macronutrients are eaten in large amounts and include the primary building blocks of diet i.e. protein, carbohydrates

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and fat. They provide body with energy. Vitamins and minerals are micronutrients and are eaten in small amount.

### Increasing Demand of Healthy Food

- The last decade witnessed a major shift in the food and beverage industry in terms of consumer demand for healthy food. Unlike earlier generations, current generation takes health and lifestyle to be their priority. People track their daily steps and activity through their gadgets and take deep notes on what they are eating. The recent shift towards healthy food trends made us inquisitive to research how restaurants are catering to this new trend.
- Governments around the world have implemented taxes, campaigns, labeling and advertising reforms to help consumers make healthier food choices. COVID-19 has made us realize urgent need to shift to healthier snacking. People are becoming mindful snackers and are also looking for clean labels. "People have realized the importance of a balanced diet and regular physical activity. Healthy nutritional diets have been linked with emotional, physical, and cognitive health; their lack can lead to poor health and various lifestyle-related diseases." According to a senior analyst at Technavio for research on life science research tools.
- Dining out has always been synonymous with indulging the taste buds and not worrying about those extra calories. But consumers today are concerned about more than just the taste of a food item. An increasing number of health problems and a fresh wave of health and wellness consciousness in the consumers has resulted in a demand for substituting outside food with healthier alternatives. Neuro-nutrition is gaining popularity. Sometimes referred as 'brain food', it is food that could help the brain remain healthy if taken regularly.
- Restaurateurs and chefs of the Indian F&B industry are trying to adapt to the shifting trend by either introducing newer and healthier cuisines or by innovating the already existing menu. Introducing plant-based dishes, using lesser oil and spices for the same dish, and trying to maintain the health quotient. Many restaurants have also incorporated organic, vegan and many healthier dishes on their menu.

### The Growing Popularity of Health Cafes

- A sudden rise in the number of Organic Diet, Vegetarian Diet, Low Carb Diet Keto Diet restau-

rants can be attributed to several reasons such as unhealthy lifestyle, hectic and stressful working hours. With an increasing awareness about the effect of poor food habits on health and wellness, consumers want to switch to a healthier lifestyle that includes eating healthy as well.

- So what is exactly the healthy food Restaurant? A Healthy Food Restaurant is a restaurant that serves primarily, or exclusively, health foods, which may include vegetarian, vegan, raw, macrobiotic, organic, and low-fat menu options.
- The increasing number of healthy restaurants and cafes are telling that eating out no longer means eating unhealthy. They offer menus that are a perfect combination of health and taste. They will serve a customer, a fresh, crunchy and fulfilling salad instead of the butter chicken and also replace your sugary glass of coke with a lip-smacking smoothie.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Many restaurants are participating in various healthy sustainable projects as a result of expanding demand for healthy sustainable foods and rising interest in health and well-being. The major goal is to create an environment that encourages customers to select healthier and more environmentally friendly food choices (Garnett, 2020). Scholars have claimed that the foodservice business (e.g., restaurants and retail food establishments) has a significant impact on consumer diets by affecting food sourcing, marketing, price, and the availability of healthy sustainable food options and nutrition information. Increased accessibility and availability of sustainable and healthy meals (e.g., local/organic food, low-calorie options, and fair-trade products), nutritional information presentation, and promotion of a healthy labeled menu are among the initiatives.

To investigate current healthy sustainable restaurant initiatives, this article analyzed the literature on healthy food qualities, sustainable food, healthy and sustainable restaurants, and restaurant food healthiness. According to extant research on healthy food attributes, food healthiness entails nutrient types/amounts, food types, and food quality. A healthy menu (entrees) was defined as fewer than 800 calories, less than 30% fat calories, and less than 10% saturated fat calories in a study analyzing the nutrition environment for restaurants (Saelens, Glanz, Sallis & Frank, 2007).

Furthermore, rather of focusing on low-fat and low-sugar foods, US government agencies expanded the definition of healthy eating to include entire, fresh items, vegetables, and fruits (USDA, 2015). One of the most essential aspects for identifying healthy food from the standpoint of customers is the quality of the food and ingredients (e.g., freshness and organic/natural) (Oakes & Slotterback, 2002).

This study (Saelens, Glanz, Sallis & Frank, Nutrition Environment Measures Study in Restaurants, 2007) measured the availability of healthy options (e.g., light and low-fat) and health-promoting pricing (e.g., encourages the choosing of healthier options or consumption of less food) and conducted a promotion strategy to assess the restaurant health environment (e.g., highlighting healthy options). The study looked at the following restaurant sector facilitators of healthy eating: (a) nutrition information on the menu, (b) menus designated as healthier, (c) smaller portions, (d) specific requests for menu modifications, and (e) information advocating healthy eating. In the restaurant context, (Kim, Park, Kim & Ryu, 2013) reviewed and created multi-attributes of food healthiness as follows: (a) the presence of light meal options; (b) the availability of a nutritionally balanced meal, (c) the utilization of fresh and natural/organic ingredients, (d) weight loss, (e) healthy cooking methods, and (f) nutritional information display. The US Food and Drug Administration mandates restaurants to display nutritional information on their menus in order to establish a healthy restaurant atmosphere. The nutrition labeling encourages establishments to join the healthy eating movement. Restaurants created new menu recipes with reduced portion sizes, healthier cooking methods (Obbagy, Condrasky, Roe, Sharp & Rolls, 2011), and healthier children's selections (Anzman-Frasca et al., 2015). After nutrition labeling was implemented in 2012 several studies discovered that various largest U.S. chain restaurants adopted new menu items with fewer calories.

Scholars proposed that, in addition to displaying the nutrition profile of meals in restaurants, the provision of general healthy eating information, the use of signage, and the promotion of healthy food should be examined to assess the restaurant's eating environment. Restaurant-oriented sustainable food efforts have paralleled the trends of sustainability and sustainable agriculture (Hu, Parsa & Self, 2010), as consumers want businesses to engage in greener and more socially responsible practices. Although sustainability is a multifaceted concept with

environmental, economic, and social dimensions, the concept of sustainable food/diet is frequently narrowed down to environmental and social sustainability, which will be the focal meaning of sustainability in the context of sustainable foods as covered in this study.

This study (Maloni & Brown, 2006) constructed a framework for the food sector that highlights the industry's diverse and relatively unique collection of sustainability concerns, which includes both environmental and social aspects. They advised that sustainable food practices be investigated further in order to better understand how the sector may address and implement these practices, which could provide a competitive edge.

The strategies include buying locally grown food, using energy- and water-efficient devices and equipment, reducing food waste, implementing recycling initiatives, and organizing local community assistance programs. Furthermore, a restaurant's measures to assist the environment and society's well-being include employing sustainable cuisine with low environmental impact and acquiring supplies from animal welfare, ecologically friendly, or fair-trade suppliers. Starbucks is an excellent example of a restaurant that stresses its duties and roles in farmworker and environmental protection (Starbucks., July 2020). Chipotle has prioritized investments in local supplier development, which has a positive impact on the local economy as well as production standards (Bleich, Wolfson & Jarlenski, 2015).

As a result, restaurants are more likely to adopt environmentally and socially sustainable practices as a marketing strategy to attract consumers and develop a good green restaurant image (Namkung & Jang, 2013). In conclusion, healthy sustainable eating initiatives in the restaurant context are described as activities that promote healthy and sustainable food consumption while also addressing the health and well-being of customers. According to the literature, restaurant healthy sustainable efforts include any actions that (a) improve food-focused characteristics, (b) promote the accessibility and availability of sustainable and healthy food, and (c) give information that helps consumers eat healthy and sustainably.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

- To understand the reasons for growing demand for healthy food menus in restaurants.

- To identify challenges to incorporate healthy food in the restaurant menu.
- To identify the motives for choosing healthy food options in restaurants.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- *Primary Data*
  - ‘A well designed Questionnaire’ was drafted and circulated to people in the Pune city to obtain the data.
- *Secondary Data*
  - Secondary data was collected through various Articles and Research Papers on the same topics.
  - Some information was also gathered through various journals, newsletters, internet etc. on the same topic.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND DATA INTERPRETATION

### Age of Participants

Out of all the respondents majority 75% were in age group 18-25 , 10% fall in age group 25-35 and 5% in age group of 35-45 while only 5% with age group 45 and above.

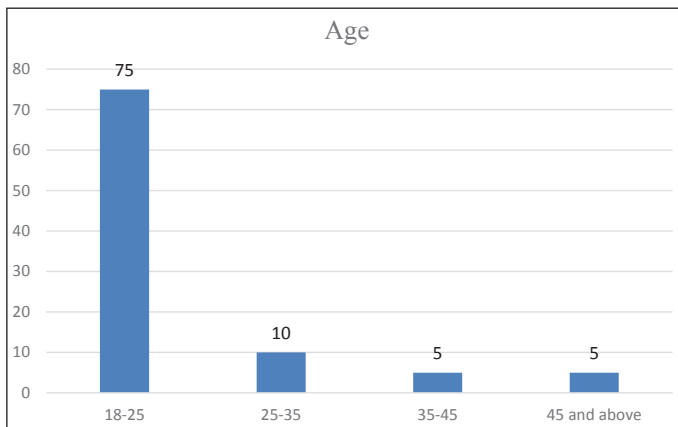


Fig. 1

### Gender of Participants

Out of the entire respondents majority 60% were male while 40% were female.

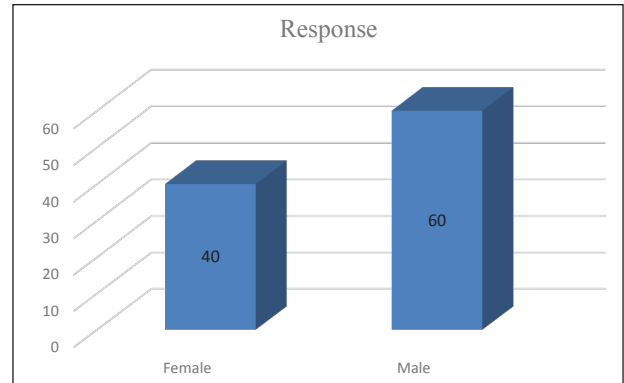


Fig. 2

### Preference of Healthy Food Option in Menu

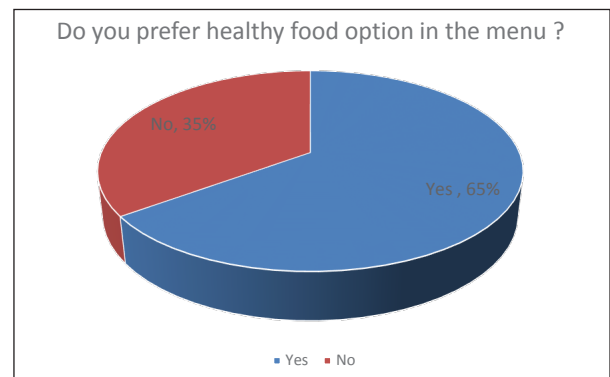


Fig. 3

The majority of the participants (65%) when asked about preference on healthy food menu options said they would prefer that while the rest (35%) felt they didnt care about healthy food options in the menu.

### Primary Reasons for Growing Demand of Healthy Food Menus in Restaurants

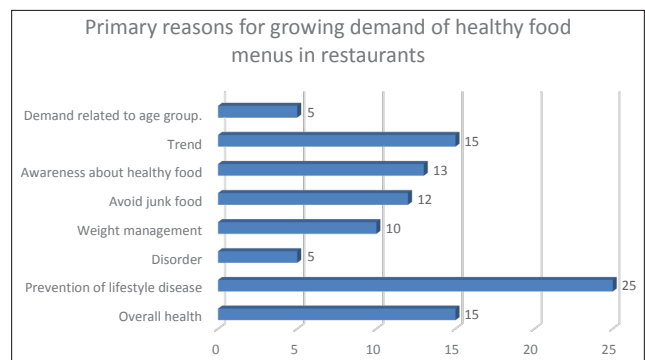
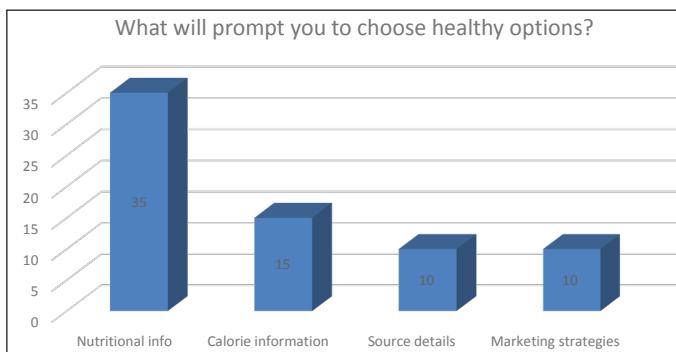


Fig. 4

When asked about the primary reason for growing demand of healthy food menus in restaurant 25% respondents felt that Prevention of lifestyle disease is the main reason however 15% believed overall health is the main driver and next 15% believed Trend was the main factor. 13% respondent felt that Awareness about healthy food is the reason for the growing demand while 12% felt that Avoid junk food is the main reason. Weight management is the next main reason with 10% respondents whereas least two categories at 5% were Disorder and Demand related to age group.

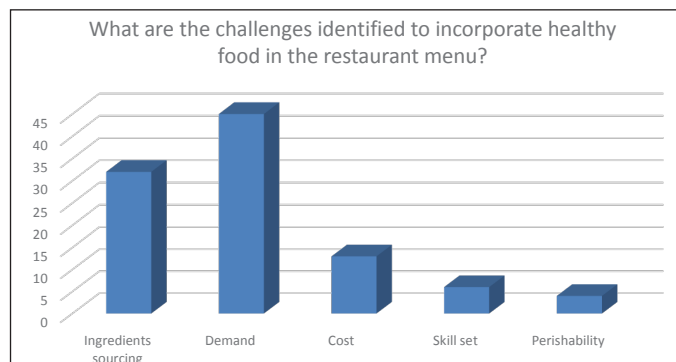
### Motivators for Choosing Healthy Foods



**Fig. 5**

When asked about what will prompt the respondents to choose healthy options 35% believed Nutritional info will move the needle while 15% Calorie information. While 10% gave importance to Source details and last 10% felt that Marketing strategies will motivate them to choose healthy options.

### Hurdles Identified to Incorporate Healthy Food in the Restaurant Menu



**Fig. 6**

Respondents were questioned about the challenges identified to incorporate healthy food in the restaurant menu and 45% felt that Demand was the biggest challenge however 32% responded with Ingredients sourcing as the main challenge and 13% thought cost was the biggest challenge followed by 6% believing Skill set and only 4% believing Perishability as the primary challenge.

### CONCLUSION

- Restaurants and public health policymakers are growing more interested in learning how to create a healthy, sustainable eating environment. Within the restaurant industry, however, there is a lack of thorough understanding of healthy sustainable food programs. The purpose of this study was to use a value chain approach to discover healthy sustainable food initiatives by restaurant chains, and then compare the practices by restaurant type to provide practical applications to foodservice professionals. The research has a number of theoretical ramifications. First, the study expanded on the small number of healthy sustainable restaurant practices already known in the literature by integrating new ones.
- Second, the research adds to the theoretical underpinning for future research into restaurant practices for promoting healthy and sustainable eating. In contrast to previous research, this study used a value chain method to gain a comprehensive understanding of restaurant healthy and sustainable eating programs. The value chain framework is important to consider since it may illustrate how and where healthy, sustainable restaurant initiatives have been implemented. The study allows academics and practitioners to explore the distinct effects of the restaurant's healthy sustainable initiatives by distinguishing multiple practices with the value chain dimensions of healthy sustainable initiatives.
- Furthermore, insights gained from restaurant healthy sustainable initiatives might be used to construct a multi-attribute item or variable of healthy sustainable eating initiatives, providing a more complete and accurate picture. This study has important managerial implications for foodservice practitioners and policymakers. The study's findings help managers understand and evaluate their present implementation status of health and sustainable eating strategies across several value chain parameters.

- Managers and practitioners can use the framework as a diagnostic tool to assess their present programs and determine which elements are strong and which are weak. Our findings can assist restaurant businesses in better designing and implementing health and sustainability-related programs. Furthermore, the findings of the disparities in healthy sustainable restaurant practices by restaurant type suggest that sit-down restaurants are more actively participating in these programs than fast-food restaurants. Sit-down and up-scale restaurants were more actively involved in healthy and environmentally sustainable food projects than fast-food restaurants as more consumers placed a high importance on healthy and sustainable foods.
- When restaurant executives and marketing managers want to get involved in the healthy sustainable foods movement, this study can help them figure out what types of healthy sustainable food practices are available per restaurant type. As a result, restaurant executives should be aware that healthy sustainable eating practices in the sourcing, production, and marketing dimensions are more appropriate to the implementation of healthy sustainable initiatives than service-related practices in sit-down restaurants. The study's findings provide information that can be used to create and implement a sustainable and healthy eating policy.
- Because eating out more frequently is linked to obesity, authorities are attempting to implement campaigns, public education, menu labeling, and other communication tools to urge consumers to adopt healthier and more sustainable eating habits. The findings imply that diverse aspects of healthy, long-term projects could be used to achieve the goal of public health promotion. A health emblem, sign, or symbol, for example, as an add-on to calorie information, which is now mandated for many restaurants, is proposed as an effective alternative for improving consumer awareness of healthy options and inspiring healthy dining.

## LIMITATIONS

- The study relied on self-reported data found on the websites of the restaurant businesses. Information about healthy sustainable initiatives may not reflect each restaurant's actual practices.

- The use of a convenience sample of 93 websites from American restaurant brands.

## SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- More efforts need to be taken to create awareness about Healthy food done more on various platforms.
- Restaurants should conduct proper study of Healthy food market and the new, creative ideas should be introduced in planning of food menus.
- Extensive and widespread marketing of the Healthy Food Restaurants should be done by the establishments.

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