



Ready-to-Eat Food Consumption Behavior



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Abstract

A proliferation of women in the workforce, single households, longer commuting hours, and technological innovations drive new and different food consumption behaviors. For example, consumers increasingly demand ready to eat foods. Marketers need a better understanding of the drivers that specify food consumption behavior. We found that the most important driver to consume ready to eat foods is convenience; on the other hand, health-conscious consumers avoid consuming ready to eat food products.

Keywords: Ready to eat foods; Health-consciousness; Convenience

Introduction

As consumers work longer hours, spend more time commuting, and aspire to use their time effectively, they demand products and services to ease and support their busy lifestyles [1,2]. Ready to eat foods economic importance is increasing with respect to demand, sales and export values [3]. Food retailers have expanded their product assortments of ready to eat food options to react to this increasing demand [4].

Increased female workforce participation, time pressures brought by jobs [5] single and households [6] and lack of cooking skills [7] motivate consumers to purchase ready to eat foods [8]. Ready to eat foods can be defined as complete meals that require little efforts and quickly replace with home-made food [9,10].

Employment status, household size, income level, perceived time pressure, and female workforce participation influence ready to eat food consumption [11,13]. The Theory of Planned Behavior [14] explained consumers' ready to eat food behaviors. According to this, although attitudes and subjective norms influence the intention to consume ready to eat products, perceived behavioral control had no significant effect. Several psychological factors also affect food choice, including convenience orientation [15-19], food-related lifestyles, and food choice orientation [16, 20-22].

Price also takes an important place in ready to eat food consumption behavior. Swoboda & Morschett (2001) found that convenience food consumers were less price-sensitive than non-convenience-oriented ones. As a result, consumers of ready to eat foods were willing to pay extra for the meals. Affective attitudes such as satisfaction, pleasure, and excitement appear to influence

the intention to consume ready to eat foods [23-25], including investigations of intention to consume ready to eat foods [10]. In determining consumers' behaviors towards ready to eat foods, taste [26,27] and price [16] is a critical element on ready to eat food choices.

Buckley et al., [20], Geeroms et al., [4], Costa et al., [8] analyzed the relationship between health-related motive orientations and ready to eat food consumption. Consumers who are concerned with their health usually try to avoid consuming ready to eat foods. Ready to eat food has traditionally been associated with unhealthy ingredients [7] and perceived as being of lower quality and less healthy than home-made foods [8,19].

Mandelkar et al., [28] have found that convenience is the most affecting intrinsic factor for the purchase behavior of ready to eat foods, followed by extrinsic factors such as availability and product advertisement. The remaining factors, including price, product quality, health consciousness, and the taste did not affect the purchase intention of consumers in Bangkok for ready to eat foods. However, Buckley et al., [20] and De Boer et al., [19] found that health consciousness negatively affects consumers' ready to eat food purchase decisions.

Conclusion

Attitudes toward ready to eat foods stem from different beliefs, lifestyle orientations, or socio-demographic characteristics. It has found that convenience is a significant motivator for the ready to eat foods purchase behavior [29-32].

On the other hand, health consciousness negatively affects ready to eat food purchase behavior [19,20,33]. However, sociodemographic characteristics such as gender, age, or education level influence individuals' perception of the meaning of health [34,35]. As a result, some consumers may experience greater guilt regarding ready to eat food consumption. Costa et al., [8] studied the importance of feelings of social responsibility and guilt in consumer decision-making toward convenience foods. According to their study, ready to eat foods might be associated with feelings of guilt, regret, and neglect of one's duty. Buying organic foods may spark a sense of doing the right thing, whereas ready to eat foods appear to be associated with a negative feeling of the virtuously wrong thing to do [23]. Since current literature does not focus on the role of altruism in purchase of ready to eat foods. This issue can be considered in detail for future study.

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