A Behavioural Study from South Bengaluru on Gen Z and the Sustainable Food Habit

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Lokeshwari CK
Anupama G
Dayananda Sagar University
(lokeshwarick@dsu.edu.in)
(dranupama.g@dsu.edu.in)

Sustainability has become a universal importance Knowing the consumption behaviour of emerging generations is critical Explores the financial and Attitudinal factors influencing sustainable food choices among Generation Z in South Bengaluru Karnataka India Gen Z known for its digital fluency and social awareness is raising urban food trends through its preferences for health-conscious ethically sourced and affordable food options Using a structured survey method the research captures perceptions from Gen Z individuals aged between 18- 25 Highlighting on three dimensions Affordability Health consciousness and Perceptual sensitivity Gen Z exhibits strong attitudinal support for sustainable consumption.

Keywords: Food habits, Sustainability, Financial Perception, Attitudinal, Healthy Food Habits.

1. Introduction

A study investigates the Financial and attitudinal factors influencing sustainable healthy food choices among Generation Z (Gen Z) consumers aged between 18 to 24 in south Bengaluru, India. Gen Z comprises individuals born during 1997-2012 (BCG, 2024) – is the first fully digital generation, figured with constant connectivity, tech friendliness. Their food preferences show a growing sensitivity to affordability, health consciousness, and ethical values, placing them as evolving drivers of change in urban food systems.

Using a constructed survey methodology, the research captures insights from undergraduate and Graduates postgraduates focusing on three key dimensions like affordability health consciousness and perceptual sensitivity, Generation Z exhibits strong attitudinal view for sustainable consumption, financial constraints and taste preferences influence actual purchasing behavior.

In urban India Generation Z is highly shaping consumption patterns through their preferences for health conscious ethically sourced and affordable food options in a city like Bengaluru where it is known for its technological innovation and youth driven culture it offers a unique context to study these evolving behaviors behavior. This research focuses on how financial and attitudinal factors influence genesis sustainable food choice in South Bengaluru with a focus on affordability, health consciousness and perceptual sensitivity

2. Literature Review

Gen Z's are increasingly working out their food preferences with sustainable values. According to Kumar & Rao (2023), this group is more likely to consider environmental impact, ethical consideration and health benefits while selecting food products. Their interests are influenced by social media, cultural, Peer influence and educational exposure. Attitudinal drivers such as health consciousness and ethical concerns motivate preferences for sustainable options (Gupta & Mehta, 2021). Research by Novelli (2021) further identifies the role of knowledge exchange in tuning sustainable behaviours among youth.

3. Methodology

In this research we have adopted A descriptive and exploration research method primarily data primary data were collected through a structured online questionnaire administered via Google form. The survey targeted undergraduates and postgraduate students aged between 18 to 24 in South Bengaluru a total of 80 responses were retained for analysis.

3.1 Survey Instrument

The Questionnaires were designed with both closed-ended and open-ended items to capture:

- Frequency of outside meal consumption.
- Plant based meal habits
- Environmental awareness and sustainability consciousness.
- Influencing factors (example taste, cost, with, availability)
- Motivations and barriers to sustainable choices
- Grocery purchase frequency and processed food intake habits.
- Self-assessed sustainability of current food habits.

3.2 Analytical Framework

The study employs no parameter test (like Regression, ANOVA) however the framework allows for future interventional analysis using logistic regression or chi square test, but this study employs descriptive statistics to summarize the distribution of responses frequency analysis to identify dominant behavioral patterns thematic coding for qualitative insights from open-ended responses.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

Voluntary participation was initiated and obtained digital consent. No identifiable information was used in the analysis. This study holds on ethical standards for research involving participants.

4. Data Specification

The sample collected from 80 Gen Z respondents aged between 18-24, primarily enrolled in under graduation. Responses were cleaned and taken into Excel. The data includes both behavioral displays and Attitudinal responses related to food choices and sustainability.

Variables

- Outside the home meal frequency
- Plant-based meal habits
- Sustainability awareness and label reading
- Influencing factors (Taste, cost, health, availability)
- Adoption of sustainable practices
- Inspirations and barriers
- Grocery frequency and processes food consumption
- Self-assessed sustainability of current food habits

5. Results and Discussions

5.1 Consumption Behaviour

Variable	Response	% of Respondents
Outside the home meal frequency	3–5 times/week	42%
Plant-based meal habits	Often	38%
Fruit & vegetable servings/day	1–2 servings	72%
Grocery frequency	Weekly	65%
Processed food intake	Some of it	68%
Self-rated sustainability	Somewhat sustainable	60%

These results suggest that moderate engagement with healthy eating, but frequently outside consumption and reliance on processed foods indicate gaps in sustainable practice.

5.2 Influencing Factors

Table 1 *Key Influencing Factors in Food Choices*

Factor	% of Respondents
Taste	91%
Cost	76%
Health & Nutrition	68%
Availability	54%
Convenience	32%
Cultural/Religious Beliefs	18%

Taste emerged as the dominant driver, followed closely by cost and health considerations.

5.3 Sustainability Awareness and Label Engagement

Indicator	% of Respondents
Very familiar with sustainability	22%
Somewhat familiar	58%
Not familiar	20%
Regularly read food labels	32%

Moderate awareness but low engagement with product-level sustainability was observed.

5.4 Adoption of Sustainable Practices

Table 2 *Adoption of Sustainable Food Practices*

Practice Adopted	% of Respondents
Avoiding single-use plastic packaging	44%
Reducing food waste	39%
Purchasing organic or eco-labeled products	33%
Reducing meat consumption	18%
Choosing locally sourced foods	15%

Packaging and waste reduction were the most widely adopted behaviors.

5.5 Motivations and Barriers

Table 3 *Motivations for Choosing Sustainable Food*

Motivation	% of Respondents
Health benefits	83%
Environmental impact	48%
Cost savings	32%
Social responsibility	28%
Peer influence	12%

Table 4 *Barriers to Sustainable Food Choices*

Barrier	% of Respondents
Higher cost of sustainable products	61%
Lack of information or awareness	54%
Taste preference	42%
Limited availability	38%
Convenience	26%

Affordability and awareness gaps were the most cited barriers.

5.6 Qualitative Insights

Open-ended responses:

- Interest in sustainability but limited access to affordable options
- Taste as a recurring barrier
- Suggestions for institutional support (e.g., greener canteen menus)
- Mixed perceptions of sustainability as a priority at this age

These insights reinforce the need for targeted interventions that align with Gen Z's values and lifestyle constraints.

6. Conclusion

This research explored the financial and attitudinal factors influencing sustainable food choices among Generation Z consumers aged 18–24 in South Bengaluru. The result reveals that while Gen Z demonstrates growing awareness of

sustainability and health-conscious behaviors, their actual food choices are predominantly shaped by taste, cost, and convenience. Packaging reduction and food waste minimization emerged as the most adopted sustainable practices, while deeper engagements such as sourcing locally or choosing eco-labeled products—remains limited.

Affordability and lack of information were identified as the most significant barriers, suggesting that sustainability is often perceived as aspirational rather than accessible. Despite this, the cohort expressed a willingness to adopt sustainable habits when aligned with their values and lifestyle, indicating strong potential for behavior change through targeted interventions.

The study contributes to the broader discourse on sustainable consumption by offering a localized, youth-centered perspective. It underscores the need for collaborative efforts among policymakers, educators, and businesses to make sustainable food options more affordable, visible, and culturally resonant. Future research may extend this work through inferential analysis, longitudinal tracking, or comparative studies across urban regions.

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