

# Millennials' Health Related Practices Related Food Habits and Preferences

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**Abstract** – The main purpose of the study was to promote healthy food habits and preferences among Millennials. It made use of the descriptive survey methods. Findings revealed that majority of Millennial respondents have a poor health related which includes eating junk foods, fast-foods, chicken and pork, drinking soft-drinks, not eating vegetables and less walking. They practiced unhealthy eating habits such as not eating fruits, vegetables and did not try to have healthy diet. Favorite viand, eating fruits and fast-food were highly significant with food habits. Food preferences related to health related practices show that there were highly significant relationship between vegetable preferences and favorite viand and fruit preferences and eating breakfast practices were negative significant..

**Index Terms** – health related practices, food habits, food preferences, Millennials

## I. INTRODUCTION

Philippines is a blessed nation where foods are always available anytime and anywhere. The availability of foods among Filipinos makes us picky and diverse lifestyles. Filipinos are fun of foods; we consume at least five small-plate meals a day. Despite of being food lovers, the country is still fronting with both consequences: the malnutrition and obesity which is the catalytic effects of incorrect food preferences, and habits.

Food preference or choice investigates how people select the [food](#) they eat. It comprises psychological, sociological, economic, and sensory aspects. Factors that guide food choice include taste preference, sensory attributes, cost, availability, convenience, cognitive restraint, and cultural familiarity. In addition, environmental cues and increased portion sizes play a role in the choice and amount of foods consumed (Wikipedia).

Food habits or eating habits refers to why and how people eat, which foods they eat, and with whom they eat, as well as the ways people obtain, store, use, and discard food. Individual, social, cultural, religious, economic, environmental, and political factors all influence people's eating habits (diet.com).

Food preferences and habits are innate to every individual. We all know the pleasures are related to eating. Selecting good food is enjoyable, habit of dining with friends and family multiplies the enjoyment, this demonstrates God's goodness. As the Bible says:

“God created [food] to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. ...[He]

richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment” ([1 Timothy 4:3](#); [6:17](#)).

The consequences of incorrect food preferences and habits are manifested in the issues of health. Some of us can't tolerate certain foods and we should avoid them. More often, however, we lack self-control and eat poorly or in excess, turning God's gifts into an expression of selfishness and even a means of personal suffering.

Filipino youth today as considered millennial is endangered of malpractice of foods preferences and habits. This life stage as adolescence is characterized body changes into that of an adult – thus it is essential for them to increased nutrient needed by the body. It is also a period when teenagers may decide to start dieting and skipping meals caused by peer pressure can affect their eating behaviour and result in either over-eating or under-eating which is the cause of obesity and malnutrition.

FAO figures also reportedly show that about three million (19.8 %) adolescents are underweight and chronically energy-deficient. The Filipino Times (2014).

Malnutrition and obesity are rooted by incorrect foods preferences and habits, which are the root causes of diseases, increase health risks and reduce life expectancy. Potentially fatal conditions associated with obesity include Type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, cancers and gall bladder disease,” reported by Senator Villar, (The Filipino Times, 2014).

“Health is wealth” a simple vital quotation we need to value. The researcher was a victim of a fatal disease caused by incorrect food preferences and habits resulted to “type 2 diabetes” which end to a very expensive and delicate operation “kidney transplant”, thus this research was realized for the advocacy and awareness on the effect of foods on health and wellness.

## II. OBJECTIVES

The main purpose of the study was to determine the health related practices related to food habits and preferences of Millennials I Angelcare Science Academy in Baler, Aurora. Specifically, it sought to find-out the following:

1. Health related practices of Millennials;
2. Food habits and preferences of Millennials; and
3. Relationship of health related practices with the food habits and preferences.

## III. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The literature sought develops a Millennials' health related practices related with their food habits and preferences.

**Breakfast Eating Practices.** A typical Filipino breakfast is usually eggs, sunny side up; fried rice and any or all of the favorite Filipino breakfast staples: tocino or sweetened pork strips; tapa, a kind of beef jerky or tuyo, dried salted fish. These dishes are fairly easy to cook. They require only minimal cooking skills. [http://www.streetdirectory.com/food\\_editorials/meals/br eakfast\\_meals/a\\_typical\\_filipino\\_breakfast.html](http://www.streetdirectory.com/food_editorials/meals/br eakfast_meals/a_typical_filipino_breakfast.html). July 8, 2018

Young and Fors (2009) stated that students consuming healthy breakfasts and healthy lunches were more likely to be White or Asian, better able to communicate with parents or guardians on serious issues, closely monitored by their parents, living with one or both parents, spending less time at home without adults, perceiving themselves at about the right weight or underweight (lunch/breakfast only), male (lunch/breakfast only), and in 9th or 10th grade (breakfast only).

**Junk-foods Eating Practices.** Shi, Z., et.al., (2005) found out that about 53% of the students from China were snacking while watching TV. The types of snack foods were mainly crisps, huamei (dried fruit snacks), soft drinks, and seeds (pumpkin, sun flower etc).

**Drinking Soft-drink Practices.** Goloso-Gubat, M.J. et.al., (2015) revealed that beverages contributed 17% and 3% to mean energy intake per day of pre-school children, and schoolchildren and adolescents, respectively.

Shi, Z.et.al., (2005) claimed that intake of soft drinks were positively and significantly associated with SES. About 10% of the boys from high SES families drink soft drinks (sodas and cola), the corresponding figures were 21.5 and 4.2% ( $P < 0.05$ ). In the lowest SES group, only one-third as many as in the highest SES group consumed soft drinks that often.

**Absent/Present of Illness.** NIH News in Health (2017) claimed that things you eat can influence your risk of dying from heart disease, stroke, or type 2 diabetes. The findings suggest ways to change your eating habits to improve your health.

Realbuzz (N.D) reported that our eating habits have changed dramatically in modern times. The foods we eat are far less nutritious than they appear due to intensive farming methods, pesticides, additives and preservatives. Furthermore, Health and disease are directly linked to what we eat and as all disease originates at the cellular level, healthy cells create healthy tissues, healthy organs, healthy heart and healthy skin.

**Favorite Viands.** Barra, L.I. (2004) claimed that Grade 1 pupils from University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City have a favorite foods which included chicken, fruits, vegetables, sinigang, fish, chocolate, adobo, kalabasa (squash), kanin (rice), kare-kare, ice cream and mansanas (apple). Since most of the foods students considered delicious were also their favorites.

NSCB secretary general Jose Ramon Albert said that Filipinos ate an average of 58 grams of meat products a day in 2008, up by 152% from 23 grams in 1978. Filipinos are also eating more chicken at an average of 25 grams per day in 2008, up from 7 grams in 1978. (Cabacungan, 2012)

**Fruit Eating Practices.** Young and Fors (2009) claimed that high schools in a suburban county near Atlanta, Georgia consuming more fruits and vegetables were more likely to be White or Asian.

“There are lots of factors why Filipinos eat less fruits and vegetables and more meat and poultry and one of them is the mass migration to urban centers and the stress of a city lifestyle during the last three decades. Furthermore, the same report showed Filipinos munching fewer vegetables (down 24% to 110 grams in 2008 from 145 grams in 1978) and fruits (down 485% to 54 grams in 2008 from 104 grams in 1978), (Cabacungan, 2012).

Almost half of the subjects did not at all eat fruits in school during snack time. However, more than 40% of the adolescent's ate fruits in school and at home sometimes. Only 6.5% claimed they ate fruit as snack in school most of the time while 42.2% said they ate fruits as snack at home. (Gonzales JT, et.al., 2016).

**Fast-food Eating Practices.** Shi, Z.et.al. (2005) stated that the intake of fast food was positively and significantly associated with SES. The intake of fast food and soft drinks were positively and significantly associated with SES. About 10% of the boys from high SES families ate hamburgers daily compared with 2.8% of the boys from the low SES families ( $P < 0.05$ ), while the lowest SES group, only one-third as many as in the highest SES group consumed hamburgers that often.

Majabadi, H.A, et.al., (2016) claimed that the following factors that influenced their major reasons for consuming fast food: 1) fast food is delicious; 2) fast-food eateries and restaurants are easily accessible; 3) a greater variety of fast-food options than home-cooked food options is available, providing people with numerous choices; 4) the affordability of fast foods and the fact that they are readily available provide adolescents with a sense of independence; 5) finally, going out to eat fast foods with friends is a way of entertainment, particularly for adolescents.

**Walking Habit/Practices.** Florentino, R.F. et.al., (2002 ) claimed that children from private schools were apparently less physically active, were more likely to be driven to school instead of walking, and were more likely to prefer television and computer games over outdoor games. These differences agree with an earlier report on the nutritional status of the children as determined by anthropometry, which showed a higher proportion of overnutrition and a lower proportion of undernutrition among private schoolchildren than among public schoolchildren.

The Philippine Star (2016) reported that Philippines one of Asia's most unhealthy countries, adults are overweight due mainly to insufficient exercise and poor food habits, 30% of Filipino parents admit their children don't get enough exercise.

#### IV. METHODOLOGY

The study made use of the descriptive method of research utilizing a survey checklist patterned to the London's Global University, Institute of Epidemiology and Health Care Research Department of Behavioural Science and Health, with some modification to suite for Filipinos respondents.

The subject of the study were 82 Junior high school students from Angelcare Science Academy, Suclayin, Baler, Aurora during the School Year 2017-2018. Participants were selected using purposive and simple random sampling.

The respondents were purposively selected based on their concerned on their nutritional status and highest for age. Lists of participants without concerned nutritional status and height for age were selected using simple random sampling using lottery method. Consent was presented to the participants before the administration of the questionnaire.

The data gathered were treated statistically in accordance with the sequence of the problems. Frequency, percentage, weighted mean and correlation were used.

V. RESULTS

Health related practices, food habits and preferences of Millennials

Table 1. Health Related Practices

Health Related Practices	Frequency	Percent
Breakfast Eating Practices		
Eat breakfast regularly	78	96.3
Not Eating breakfast	3	3.7
Junk Food Eating Practices		
Eat Junk Foods regularly	73	90.1
Not Eating Junk Foods	8	9.9
Drinking Soft-drinks Habit		
Drinking Soft-drinks regularly	72	88.9
Not Drinking Soft-drinks	9	11.1
Frequency of Drinking Soft-drinks		
Not drinking soft-drinks	9	11.1
Once a week	4	4.9
Once a day	50	61.7
Twice a Day	13	16
Three Times a day	3	3.7
Four Times a Day	1	1.2
Five Times a Day	1	1.2
Absence/Presence of Illness		
Absence of Illness	59	72.8
With Illnesses	21	27.1
Favorite Viand		
Chicken	30	37.0
Pork	26	32.1
Fish	4	4.9
Vegetables	21	25.9
Vegetables Eating Practices		
Eat Vegetables regularly	21	25.6
Not Eating Vegetables	61	74.4
Fruits Eating Practices		
Eat Fruits regularly	42	51.9
Not Eating fruits	39	48.1
Fast-foods Eating Practices		
Eat Fast-foods regularly	52	64.2
Not Eating Fast-foods	29	35.8
Walking Practices		
Walking at least 1 hour a Day	43	53.1
No walking everyday	38	46.9

Table 2. Eating Habits

Food Habits	WM	VD	R
1. If I am having lunch away from home, I often choose a low-fat option.	1.59	Unh	9
2. I usually avoid eating fried foods.	1.70	H	3
3. I usually eat a dessert or pudding if there is one available.	1.21	Unh	22.5
4. I make sure I eat at least one serving of fruit a day.	1.44	Unh	17

5. I try to keep my overall fat intake down.	1.51	Unh	11.5
6. If I am buying crisps, I often choose a low-fat brand.	2.01	H	1
7. I avoid eating lots of hotdogs and burgers.	1.60	Unh	7
8. I often buy pastries or cakes.	1.40	Unh	18
9. I try to keep my overall sugar intake down.	1.50	Unh	14
10. I make sure I eat at least one serving of vegetables or salad a day.	1.48	Unh	16
11. If I am having a dessert at home, I try to have something low in fat.	1.51	Unh	11.5
12. I rarely eat takeaway meals.	1.33	Unh	20
13. I try to ensure that I eat plenty of fruit and vegetables.	1.38	Unh	19
14. I often eat sweet snacks between meals.	1.51	Unh	11.5
15. I usually eat at least one serving of vegetables (excluding potatoes) or salad with my evening meal.	1.51	Unh	11.5
16. When I am buying a soft drink, I usually choose a diet drink.	1.65	H	4
17. When I put butter or margarine on bread, I usually spread it on thinly.	1.60	Unh	7
18. If I have a packed lunch, I usually include some chocolate and/or biscuits.	1.80	H	2
19. When I have a snack between meals, I often choose fruit.	1.61	H	5
20. If I am having a dessert or pudding in a restaurant, I usually choose the healthiest one.	1.60	Unh	7
21. I often have cream on desserts.	1.49	Unh	15
22. I eat at least 3 servings of fruit most days.	1.22	Unh	21
23. I generally try to have healthy diet.	1.21	Unh	22.5
Overall Weighted Mean	1.52	UNH	

**Table 3. Food Preferences**

Food Preferences	WM	Verbal Description	Rank
Meat /Fish	3.52	Like a Little	4
Starches	3.62	Like a Little	3
Dairy	3.33	Neither like nor dislike	5
Fruits	3.99	Like a Little	2
Vegetables	3.10	Neither like nor dislike	6
Snacks	4.00	Like a Little	1

**Relationship of health related practices and food habits and preferences using Pearson r**

**Table 4. Relationship of Health Related Practices and Food Habits**

Health Related Practices	Pearson's r Value	Approx. Sig.	Verbal Interpretation
Breakfast Eating Practices	-0.010	0.929	Not Significant
Junk-foods Eating Practices	-0.075	0.508	Not Significant
Soft-drinks Drinking Practices	-0.018	0.872	Not Significant
Frequency of Drinking Soft-drink	0.054	0.634	Not Significant
Absence/Presence of Illness	-0.126	0.254	Not Significant
Favorite Viand	-0.297	0.007	Highly Significant
Fruits Eating Practices	0.363	0.001	Highly Significant
Fast-food Eating Practices	0.302	.006	Highly Significant
Daily Walking Practices	0.227	0.041	Significant

**Table 5. Summary of Relationships between Health Related Practices and Food Preferences**

Health Related Practices	Food Preferences					
	Meat/Fish	Starches	Dairy	Fruits	Veggie	Snack
Breakfast Eating Practices	-0.050ns	.045ns	-.009ns	-.229*	-.082ns	.023ns
Junk-foods Eating Practices	0.058ns	.166ns	.036ns	.067	.055ns	-.164ns
Soft-drinks Drinking Practices	-0.172ns	-.010ns	-.016ns	-.100	-.018ns	.041ns
Frequency of Drinking Soft-drink	0.092ns	.186ns	.104ns	.002	.129ns	-.090ns
Absence/Presence of Illness	-0.142ns	-.171ns	-.112ns	.135	.093ns	-.178ns
Favorite Viand	-0.014ns	.038ns	.163ns	.023	.284**	-.090ns
Fruits Eating Practices	0.112ns	-.038ns	-.137ns	-.141	-.096ns	.060ns

Fast-foods Eating Practices	-0.049ns	-.008ns	-.170ns	-.180	-.191ns	-.012ns
Daily Walking Practices	-0.155ns	.073ns	-.013ns	.011	.090ns	-.167ns

Legend: \*\* - highly significant  
\* - significant  
ns - not significant

## VI. DISCUSSION

As presented in Table 1, majority eat breakfast (96.3%), less than one third eat junk foods (90.1%), 88% drink soft-drinks and 61.7% drink once a day, not eating vegetables (74.4%), 72.8% were no illness, 64.2% eating junk-foods. 64.2% eating fast-foods regularly, 53.1% walking at least 1 hour a day. Chicken and pork were their favourite viand. This result indicates that majority of Millennial respondents have a poor health related practices.

Healthy eating habits includes were choosing low-fat brand crisps (2.01), pack lunch included chocolate and biscuits, (1.80), they avoid eating fried foods (1.70), and they choose fruit in their snack. Unhealthy eating habits were they did not eat 3 servings of fruit most days (1.22), generally they did not try to have healthy diet (1.21) and they did not eat a dessert if there is available (1.21). The overall weighted mean of 1.52 implied that millennial respondents possessed unhealthy food habits.

Millennials preferred snacks (4.00), fruits (3.99), starches (3.62), meat/fishes (3.52). This results show that millennial respondents did not want eats vegetables and dairy products which is the source of nutrients needed by the body.

The relationship of health related practices and food habits indicate that favourite viand, fruit eating, fast-food eating were found highly significant, only daily walking have a significant relationship. This result implies that millennial respondents with unhealthy food habits respondents were preferred chicken and pork, not eating fruits, eat fast-foods and not walking one hour a day.

Highly significant relationship was observed between vegetable preferences and favourite viand while negative significant relationship on fruit preferences and eating breakfast practices. No significant relationships were observed on other variables. This results show that respondents whose vegetable as their favourite viand preferred or like vegetables more, while those eating breakfast they didn't preferred fruits.

## VII. CONCLUSIONS

Majority of Millennial respondents have a poor health related which includes eating junk foods, fast-foods, chicken and pork, drinking soft-drinks and less walking.

Millennial respondents practiced unhealthy eating habits such as not eating fruits, vegetables and did not try to have healthy diet.

Favorite viand, eating fruits and fast-food were found highly significant with food habits.

There is highly significant relationship between vegetable preferences and favorite viand while negative significant relationship on fruit preferences and eating breakfast practices.

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