

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Habit of Eating Out by Professionals of Bangladesh- A Way to Save Time & Efforts for More Productive Works

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## Abstract

This study is to investigate the habits of eating out by the professionals of Sylhet city in Bangladesh along with the compelling and motivating factors behind this habit. This descriptive analytical research is carried out by collecting primary data from professionals selected by stratified sampling methods. Different professionals of both genders in different age group was given due weights for collecting data by a well designed questionnaire after testing the reliability and validity of the study in appropriate manner. The secondary data were collected from books, articles, newspapers and other reading materials with internet and other electronic media. The study inferred that there is a great prospects of restaurants and other eating out industries as the busy professionals have to depend on it due to more involvement in professional lives. The increasing number of participating women in outward activities intensifies the prospects as comparatively larger portion of professional women are found to take food outside the home that makes the other members depends on restaurants for their need. The selection of low priced restaurants is dominants among the respondents for their regular food, so industries of eating out must consider other factors along with quality and price of food to exploit the opportunities of utilizing the prospects.

**Keywords:** *Habit and frequency of eating out, Professionals, Selection of restaurants.*

## Introduction

Eating is the most important basic need of human beings. Some eat for life; some eat for taking tastes of various foods. There are various habits of eating among human beings. Cooked food is most commonly used food habits of people though some people like to eat non-cooked items. Home is the most favorite and commonly used place to take cooked foods. But it needs sufficient arrangement to prepare food- the tools and the people with cooking knowledge, practices and times. Homemade foods are available in cost price even without the labor cost in many houses where house members are involved in cooking. Another most popular way to fulfill the demand of eating is by Eating out. People have to practice eating out for several reasons such as lacking of

time, preparing persons, tools, intention of preparing persons, to take different taste and to respond to invitations. Generally, in time of shopping people need to fulfill their desire by taking food outside the home. Professional people take food from restaurants, catering houses due to lack of time and other reasons.

Every country has its own tradition of taking foods. Bangladesh has also the same in the sense of food habits. Generally Bangladeshi take meal in three time a day called Breakfast around 8.00 am, Lunch around 2.00 pm and dinner around 10.00 pm . Besides, in evening they take snacks. In special occasions like weeding or any other social festival, special menus are prepared.

Different types of pickles, juices, snacks, deserts along with Chinese, Thai and Western foods are available at the restaurants [1].

It is very tough to assess consumer's perception and attitude toward food properly [2] because consumers demand more and diversified products and have specific style of taking food. According to their specific need, habit and social customs, consumers evaluate the quality of food. The choice depends on personal taste, value perception and functional need and on different social and cultural factors [3]. With the increasing standard of living, people spending more to get their desired products to consume. To consume the desired food, people tend to spend more recently. Studies in many countries proved the same [4]. In Bangladesh, the tendency to consume food supposed to be similar because of people's earning and involvement in earning process is increasing. The increasing amount of spendable money and lack of time to prepare food make the people bound to take food outside home. It is important to know the motivating and compelling factors to take food outside the home and styles of spending for that purpose.

### Literature Review

It is found that choice of restaurants have impacts on pattern of food taking and the weight of young adults of universities [5]. The high priced restaurants are used by the resourceful individuals for birth day party, wedding ceremony, and/or engagement party etc. The low priced restaurants are used for regular lunch, dinner and breakfast by the middle and lower income people.

Restaurant & Hotel business has increasingly become popular in Bangladesh with the effect of more involvement in employment or entrepreneurial works by the individuals. Young generation prefer to take food outside to save time, have different taste and get together with friends. Different factors such as quality, variation, location, price, environment, and many more aspects are considered on the selection of restaurants. It is also important to know the reasons for frequent visits of customers to a particular restaurant [6].

Habit of food taking depends on different cultural, social, environmental and socio-economic elements of individuals but pattern of food consumption may vary due to the differences in culture, climate, and socioeconomic status etc. In fact, the habit of taking food among the citizens of a country may change due to involvement in money making activities. Thus growth in economy and individual income along with involvement more money making activities by the spouses due to more scopes created by globalization may lead to increased amount of fast food consumption in Bangladesh and other Asian countries. Thus one of the ways of eating out fast food restaurant industry becomes highly growing sector in Bangladesh [7].

Competition in one of the growing eating out businesses fast food industry leads to emphasize on efficiency to retain and attract customers by their hospitality, fair pricing, qualities and services, environment and varieties of food. Other factors can also be included in the hospitality issue to attract the customers are: greetings, sitting arrangement, quality of food, speedy service, staffs behavior, security and decoration etc. [8].

Facilities to fulfill the need of food by restaurants facilitate the professionals who are suffering from time constraints. First selection of restaurants to taste the quality of food is considered by cleanliness, better smell and sufficient gathering of customers. The perception of restaurants by observing small number of customers may be attributed by inferior quality food, highly priced and poor quality of service. The other factors for choosing a restaurant includes price range, food variety, added value, parking and reservation facilities, and facilities to get special menus etc [9].

Huda & Hussain [10] includes the factors for selection a restaurant are atmosphere, varieties in menu, different taste, better service, attractive price, better quality, attitudes of staffs, nearest location, quick delivery, better outlook and interior design, car parking facility, and reputation of the restaurant.

Food quality and value are the most significant factors of restaurant attributes [11]. Other identified five factors of restaurant selection as most important among others. These are: range of food, quality, price, speed of service and atmosphere [12]. Auty [13] mentioned food type and quality along with image and atmosphere as most frequently mentioned factors for selecting restaurants while Lewis [14] considered five factors; quality, variety, price, atmosphere and convenience.

It is important to identify the features of professionals' habit in eating out by their demographic factors, professional factors and their selection and reason of selecting specific type of restaurants.

### Objectives

The main objective of the study is to find out the compelling and motivating factors of professionals towards eating out. The specific objectives are:

- To find out the frequencies of eating out by professionals distributed by gender and ages
- To find out the frequencies of eating out by the professionals distributed by different types.
- To find out the choice of different types of restaurants in respect of quality and price by different types of professionals
- To find out the reasons of selecting high priced restaurants by different professionals and
- To find out the reasons for selecting low priced restaurants by different professionals.

### Research Methodology

The present study was conducted to analyze the eating out behavior of different professionals at sylhet city in Bangladesh. To conduct the study both primary and secondary data have been used. The primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire. The copies of questionnaire were given to the respondents individually. Different professionals with different restaurants have been selected for the research purpose and the secondary data was collected using research articles, publications, websites, books, and other articles regarding the relevant issue. Data

were collected from 300 respondent customers from different restaurants. The questionnaire contained question relating to respondent habit of professional in eating out. The sampling technique used in this research was simple random sampling. Results are discussed with the help of chi square test, Linear-by-Linear Association, likelihood ratio, frequencies using statistical software SPSS 16 based on the collected data.

Hypothesis of the study:

To study the research questions following null and alternative hypothesis were developed.

Hypothesis 1:

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between professional's age, gender and frequencies of eating out.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is significant relationship between professional's age, gender and frequencies of eating out.

Hypothesis 2:

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between different professions and frequencies of eating out.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is significant relationship between different professions and frequencies of eating out.

Hypothesis 3:

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between professionals and types of restaurants for eating out.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is significant relationship between professionals and types of restaurants for eating out.

Hypothesis 4:

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between professionals and reasons for selecting high priced restaurants for eating out.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is significant relationship between professionals and reasons for selecting high

priced restaurants for eating out.

Hypothesis 5:

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between professionals and reasons for selecting low priced restaurants for eating out.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is significant relationship between professionals and reasons for selecting low priced restaurants for eating out.

### Findings

The frequency of eating out by the professionals of different ages is shown at the following table:

**Table 1: Frequency of taking food outside distributed by ages of respondents**

Gender	Age	Des.	Frequency of eating out					Total	
			Seldom	Once Monthly	2 or 3 monthly	Once Weekly	2 or 3 Weekly		Once daily
Male	Up to 20	Count	11	17	19	8	21	0	76
		Percent	14.5%	22.4%	25.0%	10.5%	27.6%	.0%	100.0%
	20-40	Count	47	0	13	32	7	36	135
		Percent	34.8%	.0%	9.6%	23.7%	5.2%	26.7%	100.0%
	Above 40	Count	0	15	0	0	0	0	15
		Percent	.0%	100.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	58	32	32	40	28	36	226	
	Percent	25.7%	14.2%	14.2%	17.7%	12.4%	15.9%	100.0%	
Female	Up to 20	Count	26		0			0	26
		Percent	100.0%		.0%			.0%	100.0%
	20-40	Count	0		15			30	45
		Percent	.0%		33.3%			66.7%	100.0%
	Total	Count	26		15			30	71
Percent		36.6%		21.1%			42.3%	100.0%	
Total	Total	Count	84	32	47	40	28	66	297
		Percent	28.3%	10.8%	15.8%	13.5%	9.4%	22.2%	100.0%

Source: SPSS Outputs from Field Survey Conducted on Sep.-Dec., 2014

The age of respondents is grouped by below 20, 20-40 and above 40. The below 20 is the dependency age where the respondents have no financial supports and independence to take decision of eating out. So at that age male respondents can take the taste of eating out with their guardians and friends more frequently than the female respondents in a conservative society like Bangladesh. The 20-40 age is the age of struggle and be in outside the home because of educational and professional need. So the respondents have to take food outside the home more frequently than the others. The necessary financial support is also available at that age for eating out. At that age, females are found as more frequent in taking food outside than male (66.7% are taking daily once against 26.7%). It may be because of professional need. In Bangladesh, females are in charge of preparing food at home. If they have to stay outside for professional need then it is not possible for them to back home at the lunch hour frequently like men counterpart. Most of the respondents are found to take food outside home infrequently (28.3%) that is

followed by the respondents who have to take food outside at least once in a day because of their need of staying outside. But more females have to take food at least once in a day at restaurants than the infrequently food takers (42.3% against 36.6%). The most probable causes are mentioned earlier. No female respondents of above 40 is found to take food outside home because of their non availability of female respondents in sample but all of the male respondents of that age are found in eating out once in a month to take the taste of varieties of food.

The Chi-square test verifies whether there is a significant relationship between professionals' age and frequency of eating out or not. The null hypothesis of no relationship between age and frequency of eating out by the male professionals is rejected ( $\chi^2 = 170.812$ ,  $df=10$  and  $p\text{-value} = .000 < .05$ ). So it is found that professionals' age has significant relationship with the habit of eating out. In case of females it is found that ( $\chi^2 = 93.280$ ,  $df=2$  and  $p\text{-value} = .000 < .05$ ) the age is significantly related

with the frequency of eating out. The Chi-square test on total respondents rejects the null hypothesis ( $\chi^2=193.440$ ,  $df=10$  and  $p$ -

value= .000<.05) and established a significant relationship between age and frequency of eating out.

**Table 2: Frequency of eating out by different professionals**

Profession	Des	Frequency of eating out						Total
		Seldom	Once Monthly	2 or 3 monthly	Once Weekly	2 or 3 Weekly	Once daily	
Student	Count	30	8	27	8	12	13	98
	Percent	30.6%	8.2%	27.6%	8.2%	12.2%	13.3%	100.0%
High Skilled	Count	0	0	13	0	0	9	22
	Percent	.0%	.0%	59.1%	.0%	.0%	40.9%	100.0%
Employee	Count	4	0	0	13	7	24	48
	Percent	8.3%	.0%	.0%	27.1%	14.6%	50.0%	100.0%
Businessmen	Count	2	19	2	0	4	0	27
	Percent	7.4%	70.4%	7.4%	.0%	14.8%	.0%	100.0%
Travelling person	Count	48	5	5	19	5	20	102
	Percent	47.1%	4.9%	4.9%	18.6%	4.9%	19.6%	100.0%
Total	Count	84	32	47	40	28	66	297
	Percent	28.3%	10.8%	15.8%	13.5%	9.4%	22.2%	100.0%

Source: SPSS Outputs from Field Survey Conducted on Sep.-Dec., 2014

For professional need of staying outside home, people have to take food at restaurants or other places. Professional involvement and financial supports along with desire to take different menus make them bound and able in eating out. The high skilled professionals and employees (40.9% and 50%) are found to take food outside home at least once in a day. Among the infrequent consumers, the travelling professionals and students (47.1% and 30.6%) are found to lead others.

The Chi-square test verifies whether there is a significant relationship between different profession and frequency of eating out or not. The null hypothesis of no relationship between professions and frequency of eating out is rejected by this test ( $\chi^2 =137.452$ ,  $df=8$  and  $p$ -value= .000<.05) and thus a significant relationship between different professions and frequency of eating out is established.

**Table 3: Selection of restaurants for eating out by different professionals**

Profession	Des	Frequency of eating out			Total
		Low priced restaurant	High priced restaurant	Both	
Student	Count	57	33	8	98
	Percent	58.2%	33.7%	8.2%	100.0%
High Skilled	Count	0	22	0	22
	Percent	.0%	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
Employee	Count	48	0	0	48
	Percent	100.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
Businessmen	Count	9	16	2	27
	Percent	33.3%	59.3%	7.4%	100.0%
Travelling person	Count	92	5	5	102
	Percent	90.2%	4.9%	4.9%	100.0%
Total	Count	206	76	15	297
	Percent	69.4%	25.6%	5.1%	100.0%

Source: SPSS Outputs from Field Survey Conducted on Sep.-Dec., 2014

Taking quality food is found in the priority list of every human because of their desire to live with healthy body along with to take the taste of various foods. But the financial ability and time constraints limits that desire. Naturally, the high priced shops serve better food than the low priced restaurants. Professionals who have sufficient ability choose the high quality restaurants and the rests have to select the

low priced restaurants. Thus there is a clear divisions among the respondents. The cent percent of high skilled professionals mentioned their preference on high priced restaurants and all of the general employees are found to select low priced restaurants as their ability debar them in consuming the quality foods. Majority of the travelling persons (90.2%) and students (58,2%) prefer

the low priced food houses but the businessmen. Most of the businessmen (59.3%) prefer high priced restaurants because of their desire and financial ability.

The Chi-square test rejects the null hypothesis of significant relationship

between professions and selection of restaurants by price and quality ( $\chi^2 = 147.547$ ,  $df=8$  and  $p\text{-value} = .000 < .05$ ) and establish the notion that there is a significant effect of the profession on selection of restaurants on the basis of quality.

**Table 4: Selection of high priced restaurants for eating out by different professionals**

Profession	Des	Reason for Selecting High priced Quality Restaurants				Total
		No	Taste	Time Constraints	Failure to Prepare	
Student	Count	71	9	5	13	98
	Percent	72.4%	9.2%	5.1%	13.3%	100.0%
High Skilled	Count	17	1	2	2	22
	Percent	77.3%	4.5%	9.1%	9.1%	100.0%
Employee	Count	36	3	4	5	48
	Percent	75.0%	6.3%	8.3%	10.4%	100.0%
Businessmen	Count	24	1	1	1	27
	Percent	88.9%	3.7%	3.7%	3.7%	100.0%
Travelling person	Count	86	8	3	5	102
	Percent	84.3%	7.8%	2.9%	4.9%	100.0%
Total	Count	234	22	15	26	297
	Percent	78.8%	7.4%	5.1%	8.8%	100.0%

Source: SPSS Outputs from Field Survey Conducted on Sep.-Dec., 2014

As mentioned earlier, ability to spend more money for quality food in better environment is the main determinant in selecting high priced food houses. A small portion of respondents (21.2%) is found to select such restaurants to fulfill their need. The reason for choosing high priced restaurants as mentioned by the respondents are; failure to prepare food at home (8.8%), taste of different foods (7.4%) and to meet the time constraints (5.1%). Most of the students are going to select eating out because of their failure in preparing food at home, high professionals for their time constraints and

students are to take the taste of better foods. But the distinction is not so clear among different professions.

To find out whether there is any significant relationship between the reasons for selection of high priced restaurants and types of profession, the Chi-Square test was done. The result of Chi-Square test verifies that there is no relationship between them ( $\chi^2 = 10.503$ ,  $df=12$  and  $p\text{-value} = .572 > .05$ ) in 5% significance level. Thus the null hypothesis is accepted.

**Table 5: Selection of low priced restaurants for eating out by different professionals**

Profession	Des	Frequency of eating out			Total
		Not going	Taste	Budget Constraints	
Student	Count	22	11	60	93
	Percent	23.7%	11.8%	64.5%	100.0%
High Skilled	Count	5	4	13	22
	Percent	22.7%	18.2%	59.1%	100.0%
Employee	Count	11	7	29	47
	Percent	23.4%	14.9%	61.7%	100.0%
Businessmen	Count	2	5	19	26
	Percent	7.7%	19.2%	73.1%	100.0%
Travelling person	Count	9	12	74	95
	Percent	9.5%	12.6%	77.9%	100.0%
Total	Count	49	39	195	283
	Percent	17.3%	13.8%	68.9%	100.0%

Source: SPSS Outputs from Field Survey Conducted on Sep.-Dec., 2014

Most of the respondents (82.7%) are found to select low priced restaurants because of taste and financial constraints. Actually failure to prepare food at home and job

constraint (smaller lunch break) are the reasons for eating out and the financial constraint and taste are the factor that plays a significant role in selecting between high



priced and low priced restaurants. The highest proportion of travelling persons (77.9%) and lowest proportion of high skilled professionals (59.1%) are found to select low priced restaurants because of their lower financial ability and willingness to spend. On an average 68.9% of the respondents are found to select such restaurants because of their lower ability and willingness. A small portion (13.8%) of respondents mentioned better taste of some low priced restaurants is the reason to select them.

To find out whether there is any significant relationship between the reasons for

selection of high priced restaurants and types of profession, the Chi-Square test was done. The result of Chi-Square test verifies that there is significant relationship between them ( $\chi^2 = 7.245$ ,  $df=1$  and  $p\text{-value} = .007 < .05$ ) in 5% significance level. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. So, different professional has specific reason in selecting the low priced restaurants for eating out.

**Interpretations:** The results of hypothesis testing for that study are mentioned as follows:

**Table 6: Results of Hypothesis testing**

Number	Hypothesis	Result
#1	There is no significant relationship between professional's age, gender and frequencies of eating out.	Reject
#2	There is no significant relationship between different professions and frequencies of eating out.	Reject
#3	There is no significant relationship between professionals and types of restaurants for eating out.	Reject
#4	There is no significant relationship between professionals and reasons for selecting high priced restaurants for eating out.	Accept
#5	There is no significant relationship between professionals and reasons for selecting low priced restaurants for eating out.	Reject

Failure in preparation of food at home compels the professionals in taking food outside the home frequently. This is established by the women respondents as most of them are found in eating out more frequently than their male counterpart. The age group 20-40 is the most active among others and has to stay outside more than the others, so they are the modal group in the habit of eating out on both male and female groups. So the requirement of professions is found as the determining factors of eating out among others (Table 1). This is also established by the study of the habit of eating out by different professionals. It is found that general employees and high skilled professionals are found to take food at least once in a day in outside home. Other frequencies are fulfilled by the professionals in almost equal proportions. Urgencies and willingness may be the determining reasons of eating out by the professionals (Table 2). Taking better quality food is the need of every persons but the spending ability and willingness is the limiting factor in this respect. The general perception of better quality food is served by the high priced restaurants is found in the selection between high and low priced restaurants by different professionals. The able persons are found to

select high priced restaurants while the comparatively less resourceful are to select low priced restaurants for eating out (Table 3). To finding out the specific reasons of selecting high priced restaurants other than better food, it is found that the taste, time constraints and failure to prepare at home are playing the roles in almost equal proportions (Table 4). Most of the respondents are found to select low priced restaurants because of their comparatively lower ability to pay though a small proportion mentioned better taste of such restaurants as the reason of their selection (Table 5). Thus it is found that compelling factors are dominant in eating out and selection of restaurants for that purpose though taking the taste of food is playing the role of motivating among the respondents.

## Conclusions

Availability of restaurant has a great impact on customers' mind. Basically low priced restaurant with good environment, food quality, good service, sitting arrangement etc. has more demand by customers now a day. Though the compelling factors are dominant in taking the decision of eating out, the motivating factors are working behind such decision that leads to habits.

Thus there is a great prospect of cooked food business as increasingly both the spouses have to work outside for their livelihood in many families and ability and intention of spending for food is also increasing among professionals. The opportunity cost of low-fat, low-calorie and low-cost hygienic foods of homes along with family bondage should be considered properly by the food serving businesses.

### Managerial Implications

Both the compelling and motivating factors are found as playing roles in the decisions of professionals in eating out. The dominance of compelling factors may convert such decision in habitual matter of the professionals. As it is found that increasing numbers of female professionals have to take food outside in almost regular basis, this indicates a great prospect of restaurant business in near future. The more involvement of professionals in outside the

homes is intensifying the prospects. So, the businesses have to consider the opportunity cost of homemade hygienic foods in lower cost to exploit the opportunities.

### Limitations and Future Research

Limiting the sampling frame in Sylhet only with 298 respondents for primary data collection is the main limitation of the study. The factors considered in this study is also limited to age, gender, professions, and types of restaurants only. The other factors of selecting the restaurants are not considered in this study.

Further research can be done by removing the limiting factors of the study. The sample size and frame could be enlarged to include non-professionals of different areas to generalize the findings. The other factors of restaurant selection like menu, quality, location and ambience etc. could be included in further studies.

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