

A study on inclination of people towards super foods to sustain good health during pandemic.

Un estudio sobre la inclinación de las personas hacia los súper alimentos para mantener una buena salud durante la pandemia.

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ABSTRACT

At present, Super foods is promoted by most of the countries in the world aiming at sustainable health to fight the Covid 19 pandemic. This is a additional nutrient supplement taken in the natural form by Identifying the Highly Nutritious Ingredients. This research intents to show various factors affecting the growth in consumption of Super foods and spreading its awareness due to experiences better health benefits. This inclusion in the diet helps in Sustaining, environment, reducing carbon footprints, uplifting the individuals Health and eventually improving local economy by promoting Indian affordable locally grown Nutritious Ingredients which can be consumed as Super foods. This Research is descriptive form of Qualitative research and the Analysis of received data is done by Implementation Value added method, the respondents were selected from various age groups to identify the awareness of the concept and impact of super food intake daily within in the different age group for Covid 19 pandemic. The Sampling technique undertaken is stratified sampling and random sampling also the data is collected. Through specially carved questionnaire and distributed to 100 respondents and then the secondary data was gathered to support the findings through articles and newsletters. The findings are listed in the Manuscript but inclusion of these Super foods should be a habit for sustaining good health and better lifestyle.

Keywords- Supper foods, Sustainability, Nutrition, Awareness, Health, Pandemic.

RESUMEN

En la actualidad, los superalimentos es promovido por la mayoría de los países del mundo con el objetivo de una salud sostenible para combatir la pandemia de Covid 19. Este es un suplemento nutritivo adicional que se toma en forma natural identificando los ingredientes altamente nutritivos. Esta investigación intenta mostrar varios factores que afectan el crecimiento en el consumo de Súper alimentos y difundir su conciencia debido a que experimenta mejores beneficios para la salud. Esta inclusión en la dieta ayuda a mantener el medio ambiente, reducir las huellas de carbono, mejorar la salud de las personas y, finalmente, mejorar la economía local mediante la promoción de ingredientes nutritivos cultivados localmente y asequibles en la India que se pueden consumir como súper alimentos. Esta investigación es una forma descriptiva de investigación cualitativa

y el análisis de los datos recibidos se realiza mediante el método de valor agregado de implementación, los encuestados fueron seleccionados de varios grupos de edad para identificar la conciencia del concepto y el impacto de la ingesta diaria de súper alimentos dentro de los diferentes grupos de edad. para la pandemia de Covid 19. La técnica de muestreo que se lleva a cabo es el muestreo estratificado y el muestreo aleatorio también se recolectan los datos. A través de un cuestionario especialmente tallado y distribuido a 100 encuestados y luego se recopilaron los datos secundarios para respaldar los hallazgos a través de artículos y boletines. Los hallazgos se enumeran en el Manuscrito, pero la inclusión de estos súper alimentos debería ser un hábito para mantener una buena salud y un mejor estilo de vida.

Palabras clave- Cenas, Sostenibilidad, Nutrición, Concienciación, Salud, Pandemia.

INTRODUCTION

We all have experienced a drastic change in our lifestyle, compelled due to recent pandemic situation. This change was not for a particular sector, the impact was worldwide. Our professional and personal life took a massive 360 degree turn. The first wave scared us and we started taking utmost care about touch, cleanliness and hygiene and also changed our food habits, naturally we all were consuming homemade food. But the second wave was even more devastating leading to fatal conditions. This lead people to be more cautious about their survival and hence bringing in major change in what they were eating.

People preferred home cooked food due to hygiene and cleanliness factor. But at the same time they also were more cautious about eating healthy. We all were looking for something which will boost our immunity and help us sustain any ailments. We witnessed a shift to organic food available online and also consuming super food available either at home or made available online. This paper aims at studying the awareness about superfoods and its consumption resulting in sustaining good health.

The origin of the term superfood in fact appeared in the early part of the 20th Century as a strategy to market bananas. Developed by The United Fruit Company, the company used the term to promote the practicality of bananas as a daily source of cheap, easily digestible nutrition. (1).

In the early 1990s, a cookbook called Superfoods was published. It was co-authored by the alternative medicine practitioner, Michael Van Straten, who is one of those people said to have coined this name super food. (2). As definition of superfoods it considerate:

1. As per the definition given in an article of Medical News Today (3). Superfoods are Foods that offers maximum nutritive benefits for minimum calories. They are packed with vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.
2. As per Wikipedia, "Superfood is a marketing term for food claimed to confer health benefits resulting from an exceptional nutrient density."
3. Christopher Wanjek (2019) describes super food as foods — mostly plant-based but also some fish and dairy — that are thought to be nutritionally dense and thus good for one's health.

There are several

Benefits of super foods – Super foods have several benefits and also is the reason for its increasing consumption. The high vitamin and mineral content found in superfoods helps us to protect us against several diseases and keep us healthier. By incorporating them into a well-balanced diet, these foods can guard us against heart health, weight loss, boost energy levels and even reduce the effects of aging.

Antioxidants found in many superfoods may help prevent cancer, while healthy fats can reduce your risk of heart disease. Fiber, present in many superfoods, can help prevent diabetes and digestive problems while phytochemicals have numerous other health benefits including reducing risk of developing cardiovascular diseases. Superfoods are also known to protect your organs from toxins, help lower cholesterol, regulate metabolism and reduce inflammation. (4).

The concept of super foods is not new for us Indians technically. We have been consuming superfoods as Ginger, Amla, Turmeric ghee etc which as per Auyrveda are considered as superfood. Dr Rahul Dogra of the Kairali Ayurvedic Group says our AHAR (Diet) has to be right as the right foods promote *sattva* (purity), detox the body, and rejuvenate it as well, leading to an overall increase in immunity, physical and mental strength, and digestion.

Therefore people with the sudden eruption of Covid pandemic and of course closing down of restaurants during this time, shifted to not only home cooked food, but also made sure that the food included healthy ingredients and diet to get ready to face this toughest situation. Turmeric milk or consuming it with warm water, Ginger tea, amla juice, veggies as beetroot, were common remedies adopted by most of us during this Pandemic..

One of the article suggested five super foods that helps in maintaining good Lungs health and includes Broccoli, Carrots, Greens, Citrus and berries(5), whereas some other article also suggest, Nuts, Blue berries, Dark Chocolate, Avocado and turmeric to be best to boost your immunity. (6) Whatever said and done the consumption of many of these super foods did increase during pandemic and surely had a positive impact on the people of all the age groups irrespective of gender. One aspect in the study cannot be overlooked that many of the respondents were consuming these food for taste or for health benefits, but were not aware the terminology as Super Food applicable to it.

Superfoods are foods that have an extremely high nutritional density. This means that they provide a substantial amount of nutrients and very few calories for the body to support the daily dietary needs.

They contain a high volume of minerals, vitamins, and antioxidants. Antioxidants are natural molecules that occur in certain foods. They help neutralize free radicals of hazardous nutrients or viruses in our bodies.

Antioxidant molecules reduce and rectifies the effects of free radicals that have close links with the following health problems such as heart disease, cancer arthritis, stroke, respiratory diseases, immune deficiency, emphysema or Parkinson's disease

The objectives of the present study are: 1) to study the awareness of super foods amongst local population; 2) to find the factors influencing inclusion of superfoods in diet, and 3) to analyses the impact of super foods on sustainability of health during pandemic

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Scope- Super foods has gained popularity and has become a trend to include in day to day diet plans, due to its health benefit. Today people are shifting to healthy food especially during this pandemic period to boost their immunity and lead a healthy life. The scope of the study is to find out awareness about super foods and its consumption by the local population of different age groups in Pune city. The study also includes analyzing the sources of super foods, its availability and consumption pattern.

Data collection-the primary data is collected through the random survey based on a specially carved questionnaire filled by the local people of age group between 0 – 60 years of age, to understand their awareness and consumption of super foods through random and stratified data collection method.

Primary data-The primary data is collected through the questionnaire feedback of local residents belonging to varied age group of Pune city.

Secondary Data – it is collected through the websites and online published articles, research papers and thesis on the relevant topics associated with the same research or any of the objectives.

Sample size- 100 respondents belonging to 0 – 20, 20 – 40 and 40 – 60 age group. Sampling Techniques- Stratified random sampling with the age group of people from 0 – 20, 20 – 40 and 40 – 60 age group.

Literature review: Rujuta Diwekar in her book "Indian Super Foods" (2017), mentions that the secret foods for health, vitality and weight loss lie in your own kitchens and backyards. According to this famous Indian nutritionist Super Foods are foods that grow naturally in the same land that we live, rich in micronutrients and taste, every part of the plant can be used in unique ways, encourage diversity in your diet leading to a sustainable lifestyle, help local economy and make sound ecological sense. There are no set criteria for determining what is and what is not a super food, neither do they belong to any particular food group. In the Thesis, "The social lives of super foods", Loyer, J. (2016) defines super food as food with extraordinary nutritional as well as medicinal values, exotic in nature and having history of traditional use of the product.

Gossard, Crystal m., and Elizabeth Lipski published a research paper "Super foods for Digestive Health." *Integrative Gastroenterology* 141 (2019), the researcher insists that Food is our best medicine. He says that the average consumer may not be aware of the potential health benefits of food. He also emphasizes on the fact that consumption of healthy diet is the main determinant of sustainable health and then comes the role of super foods. When we do not consume the essential micro and macro nutrients, our body fails to function optimally. The study also found out that people who consumed lesser processed foods, have better nutrient balance in their bodies and can sustain healthy bodies during their lifetime.

Ali, Sharique A., Naima Parveen, and Ayesha S. Ali in their research paper "Links between the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) recommended foods and disease management: A review in the light of modern super foods" (2018), have linked the use of the super foods to the era of Prophet Muhammad who had prescribed the use of herbal foods such as pomegranates, olives, dates, figs, grapes, and black seeds. These recently have become super foods with their powerful healing properties and act as favorable dietary interventions for disease prevention as well as for the good maintenance of health.

Azzurra Stefanucci and Adriano Mollica in their research paper "Mediterranean Edible Plants: An Assessment of Their Antioxidant, Radical Scavenger Properties and Their Use as Super Foods, Nutraceuticals, Functional Foods, Antioxidants"(2021), throws light on the fact that in the survey it was found that the heart disease was much lower in the Mediterranean countries than in the other countries. It was observed that the

Mediterranean diet mainly consist of a majority of vegetable products. The food helped in protecting against many chronic degenerative diseases. The Mediterranean diet involves the consumption of food whilst respecting the rhythms of nature. This facilitates in reduction in greenhouse crops and related environmental impact. Local food is consumed, which saves the transport costs from distant countries and at the same time cutting down on the carbon foot print leading to sustainability.

Magrath, Ainhoa, and María José Sanz in the research paper "Environmental and social consequences of the increase in the demand for 'Super Foods' world-wide." (2020) have discussed that awareness regarding healthy diets among the middle and high-income groups of the society in developed regions of the world has impacted the demand for Super Foods. Super foods' are predominantly consumed far from their centers of origin. It may not be part of the traditional food consumed by the people with different environmental and social effects. While describing the food habits of people during Covid-19 pandemic in the research paper, "The Impact of COVID-19 on Healthy Eating Habits", (2020), the authors, Esobi,

Ikechukwu C., M. K. Lasode, and MO Flores Barriguete have concluded that quarantine measures have triggered the habit of binge eating and other eating disorders in people. The eating habits of most people have also been compromised resulting in increased consumption of packaged foods and unhealthy foods combined with a decreased consumption of healthy foods rich in fruits and vegetables.

The researchers, Abukabda, Alaeddin B., and Mohammed S. Razzaque in their research paper "COVID-19 pandemic: Impacts of social lockdown on nutritional health and beyond" (2021), describes that during Covid-19, people had less access to healthy fresh foods for maintaining a healthy immune system to provide a shield against the ongoing viral pandemic with added stress, sedentary lifestyle, a higher under nutrition rate and obesity-associated complications due to the food chain supply disruption. It led to the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, processed foods with high fat and sugar. Consuming nutritionally deficient food and being physically inactive are directly linked to numerous chronic diseases. Of note, combating nutritional impairment is challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic for people. Rowan, Neil J., and Charis M. Galanakis in the recently released paper "Unlocking challenges and opportunities presented by COVID-19 pandemic for cross-cutting disruption in agri-food and green deal innovations: Quo Vadis?" (2020) offers an innovative approach to producing alternative nutritious and healthy food ingredients, which are favored by the Millennials with changes in eating habits and personalized nutrition. This approach or innovations in food ingredients may also complement growing consumer demand for eco-sustainable food sources like burgers made of soya than meat which also reflects changing eating habits, diets, and the new role of personalized nutrition.

The findings presented by the author, Valeria Borsellino in her research paper, "COVID-19 Drives Consumer Behavior and Agro-Food Markets towards Healthier and More Sustainable Patterns" has emphasized that considerations for health have the potential to support behavioral change leading to sustainable diets and sustainable agro patterns. As the economic crisis and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic have affected the food availability, many have addressed this departure from normality by modifying the reactions and behavior regarding their choice of food turning it into habit. This change in behavior will continue in proportion to the lasting benefits enjoyed by customers. Thus from the study it can be said that the need to consume healthier foods to boost immune

system has emerged during Covid-2019. Data relating to Latin America has shown that there is a tendency to consume foodstuffs with less salt, sugar and calories. The desire to maintain newly acquired, healthier dietary habits after the easing of the lockdown restrictions is encouraging consumers to increase their intake of fruit and vegetables, compared to the period before confinement, while fast food intake was dramatically reduced. The governments can increase access to healthy food and decrease access to unhealthy food by enacting laws or regulations. In contrast to it, because of boredom and stress produced by COVID-19 confinement, surveyed people also reported a higher consumption of fried and sweet food as part of emotional eating.

Observations and Findings-

Following are the observation which proves the importance of super foods in the meals considering the pandemic situation for the sustainability of better health, the observation are analyzed and understood by the responses received and also with the help of secondary data collected.

- Although the respondents are not aware of the scientific term to be called as definition of ingredients in the super foods is consumed in the diet.
- The traditional Indian home cooked food has inclusion of most of the super foods.
- The scientific definition of super foods is not well understood by the respondents.
- The Local grown, staple food is highly popular owing to its suitability to geographical conditions and also suits the body requirement for that specific region.
- In addition to the above mention observation the locally grown staple diet inclusion as a super food also reduces the carbon footprints leading to environmental sustainability.
- As the ingredients are locally grown the transport and import and holding costs is not incurred and hence they can be availed at an affordable price.
- The geographical conditions are suits the growth of the local crop / food and hence they can be produced in abundance leading to its easy availability and consumption
- This food is rich in micro nutrients, encourage diversity in the diet results in innovative recipes and therefore help in high consumption leading to strengthening local economy.
- Even as per the media publications in the local newspaper also supports the fact that the age group between 13 – 30 years for age can sustain for longer time, the small effects of covid – 19 because of their healthy diets.
- Covid – 19 pandemic has affected the food availability and hence many respondents have shifted healthier dietary habits. Due to the regular consumption of healthy diet a positive impact has been observed by most of the respondents on their health and therefore it has turned into a habit rather than a trial.

Recommendations and Suggestions

- It is being suggested by the researchers that access to healthy food should be increased by the local farmers and distributors by encouraging the production of local crops / foods.
- To sustain the above mention point the government should encourage the local growers by giving them incentives and subsidies for the super foods.
- The dietitians and doctors would play a major role in enhancing the awareness about super foods and recommending its consumption and health benefits amongst the people who may or may not have health issues.
- The need of the hour is to promote super foods as other not so healthy food items are commercially promoted on various platforms, this will help in increase

awareness, its health benefits and eventually its consumption.

- A lot of these super foods have travelled their way from different parts of the world and in the process have become expensive and difficult to procure. There are several Indian alternatives to these super foods, which can be easily substituted and should be promoted.
- Restaurant menus should highlight the usage of super foods in their recipes and should be suggested to the guests.

CONCLUSION

- People are aware of the Super foods, although not by its term and also include them in their routine diet.
- Home cooked food is preferred due to hygienic conditions especially during pandemic period and this includes many local ingredients which has numerous health benefits. It also helps in sustainability of good health.
- The local super food has high nutritive value and used in diverse way in the meals either cooked or raw.
- Super foods are available in abundance and therefore its consumption should be encouraged. At the same time Indian super foods should be preferred over those imported as they may be expensive or may not be available widely.
- Super foods should be recommended for all the age groups depending on their health conditions and lifestyle pattern.
- Although the awareness about super food is observed more in the age group of 13 – 30, but other age groups also had some idea about the concept of super food.
- During the pandemic suddenly the outburst of healthy food in the market was observed and many big brands launched renewed products during this time highlighting its positive impact on Covid symptoms and other health benefits.
- The study therefore concludes that the promotion and consumption of super foods should not be situational based but should be offered genuinely for sustaining good health permanently and not only for a specific period and hence it should be a habit and not a fad.

DATA ANALYSIS

Frequency Data Analysis is done based on feedbacks received from target sample population to prove and justify the goals of the research city.

Observations: This study intends to find out the level of awareness amongst the selected population in the city of Pune. The study intends to find the inclusion of super foods consciously and deliberately in the meals by consumers during pandemic.

Illustration: According to the study it can be stated that majority of the respondents i.e. 75% were aware about super foods, whereas the remaining 25% of the respondents are consuming high nutritive and energy foods, to combat the health issues during pandemic but were unaware to be termed them as super foods.

Observation: The research intends to relate the inclusion of superfoods in Indian meals for better health benefits to sustain any adverse impacts of environment and diseases. The research confirms that majority of the respondents were aware about their health and required dietary supplements but it also finds out that their daily meal mostly consists of one of the super food ingredient like Banana, Chickpeas, Eggs, Rice and

Coconut.

Illustration: According to the study it can be stated that majority of respondents i.e. 92% had considered inclusion of superfoods is necessary for better health sustenance.

Observation: The research revealed surprising facts that most of the Indian locally grown ingredient which is consumed as staple diet are ideally super foods and has better results only when consumed in appropriate quantity and of good quality. Also the agro market needs to create an awareness regarding the ingredients to encourage consumers for the inclusion of these super foods in their daily diet.

Illustration: According to the responses received 92% of the locally grown ingredients are 50% times affordable during the season but 75% times found expensive off season. The fact is unaware to 60% of the respondents though it is included in everyday meals.

Observation: As already discussed in the findings above, the resulted benefits of super foods inclusion can be consciously measured only during the situations like pandemic where people becomes more conscious about their health.

Illustration: The research shows that the first wave of Covid – 19 pandemic was affecting the 15% of the respondents' population between then age groups 40 – 60 years of age. Whereas the young age group between 20 – 40 years of age who had regular intake of these superfoods due to awareness could sustain consequences and bear with the physical and mental side effects of Covid – 19, the percentage of these respondent population was 55%, the remaining 30% respondents were between the age group below 20 years of age who naturally had higher immunity and resistance.

Observation: As per the findings the consumers have become more aware about their preferences in convenience products considering the nutrient content and addition of special ingredients for boosting immunity.

Illustration: According to the responses received 88% were found to be more cautious while they are buying commercial products specially manufactured for immunity boosting and compare it with the regular ones where 12% respondents ignored the fact completely as all commercially produced convenience foods have lesser percentage of nutrients required for the body.

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DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

The data collected was analyzed using basic and advanced analytical tools. This also includes the detailed analysis of the data which was conducted with the purpose of attaining the set objectives of the research. Mentioned below is the analysis which is presented graphically and in tabulated form for better interpretation. The Interpretation

of the collected data was done by drawing inferences from the collected facts after the analysis of the study.

Table I – Frequency Analysis – Awareness about super foods

Frequency			Total
Yes	No	Maybe	
75	25	0	100%

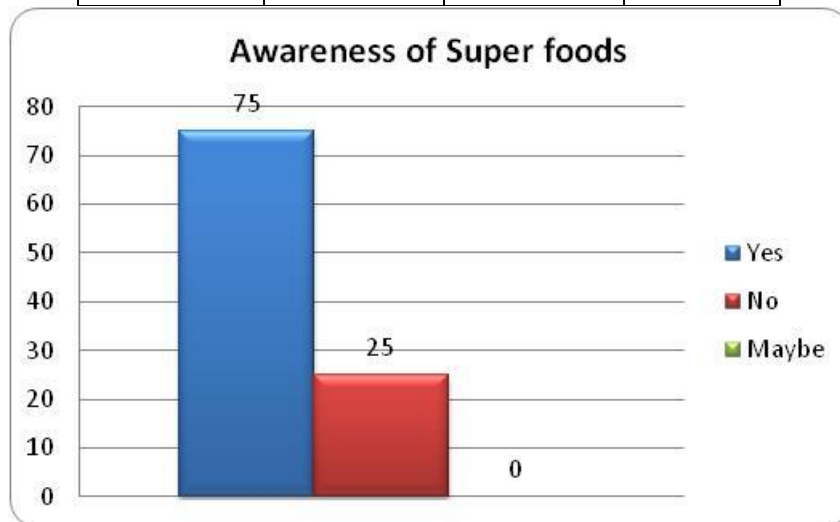


Table II – Frequency Analysis – Which is your favorite super food

Frequency									Total
Spinach	Apple	Rice	Chick peas	Cauliflower	Coconut	Salmon	Oats	Eggs	
11	20	9	8	2	12	2	9	27	100%

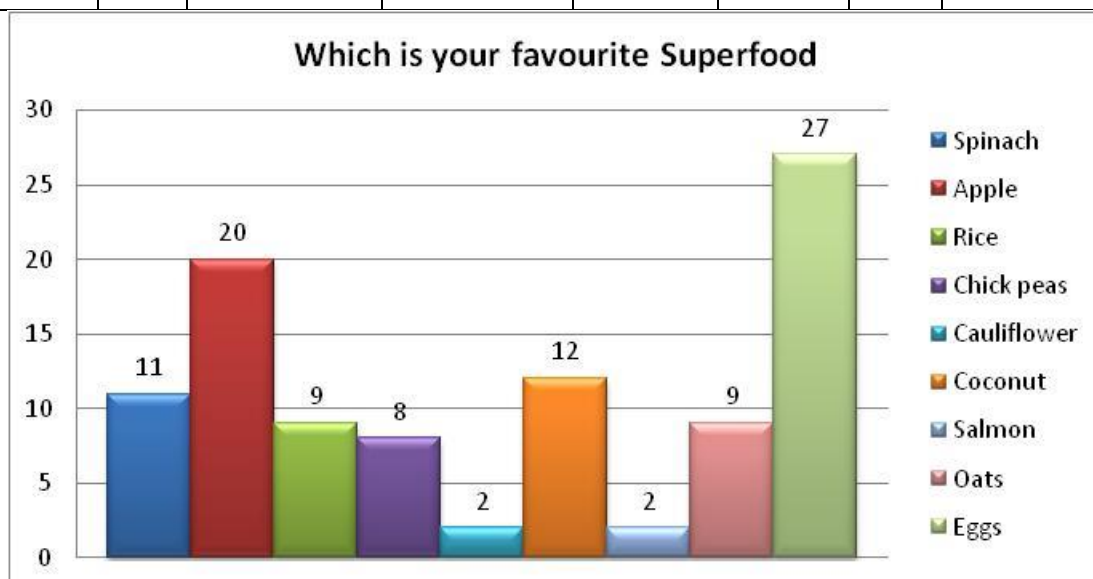


Table III – Frequency Analysis – Super foods for better health sustenance

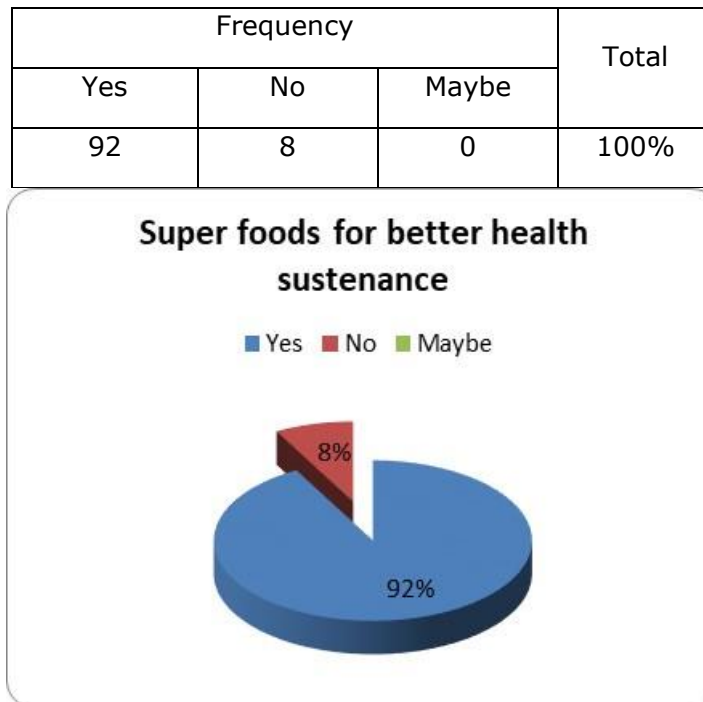


Table IV – Frequency Analysis – Effect of Covid – 19 as per the age group

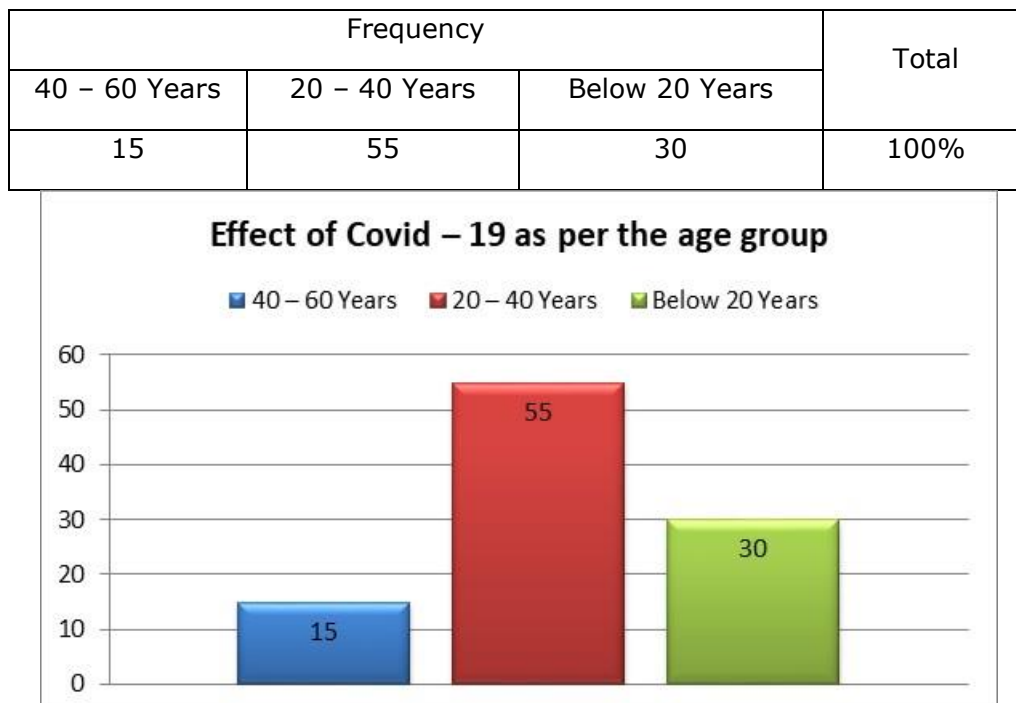


Table V – Frequency Analysis – Commercial inclusion of Super foods for health benefits and convenience

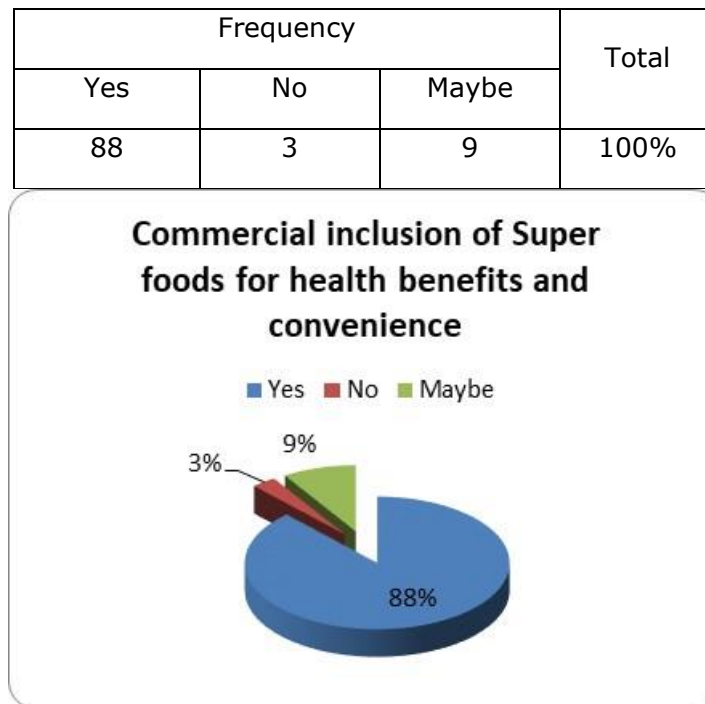
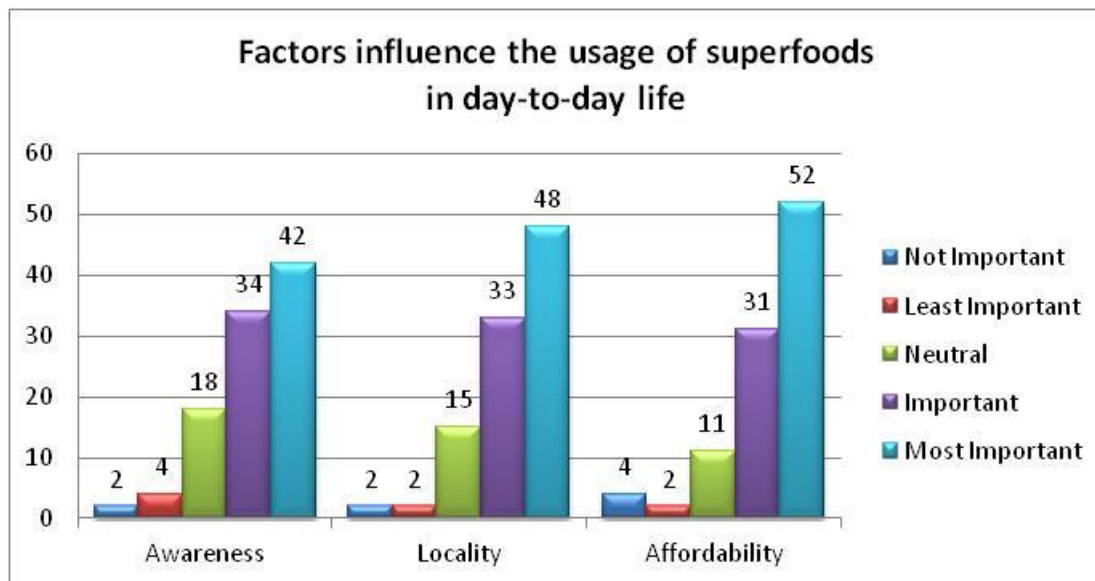


Table VI – Frequency Analysis – Factors influencing the usage of super foods in day-to-day life

Factor	Frequency					Total
	Not Important	Least Important	Neutral	Important	Most Important	
Awareness	2	4	18	34	42	100%
Locality	2	2	15	33	48	100%
Affordability	4	2	11	31	52	100%



Literature review:

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7. The researchers, Abukabda, Alaeddin B., and Mohammed S. Razzaque in their research paper "COVID-19 pandemic: Impacts of social lockdown on nutritional health and beyond" (2021), describes that during Covid-19, people had less access to healthy fresh foods for maintaining a healthy immune system to provide a shield against the ongoing viral pandemic with added stress, sedentary lifestyle, a higher under nutrition rate and obesity-associated complications due to the food chain supply disruption. It led to the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, processed foods with high fat and sugar. Consuming nutritionally deficient food and being physically inactive are directly linked to numerous chronic diseases. Of note, combating nutritional impairment is challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic for people. Rowan, Neil J., and Charis M. Galanakis in the recently released paper "Unlocking challenges and opportunities presented by COVID-19 pandemic for cross-cutting disruption in agri-food and green deal innovations: Quo Vadis?" (2020) offers an innovative approach to producing alternative nutritious and healthy food ingredients, which are favored by the Millennials with changes in eating habits and personalized nutrition. This approach or innovations in food ingredients may also complement growing consumer demand for eco-sustainable food sources like burgers made of soya than meat which also reflects changing

eating habits, diets, and the new role of personalized nutrition.

8. The findings presented by the author, Valeria Borsellino in her research paper, "COVID-19 Drives Consumer Behavior and Agro-Food Markets towards Healthier and More Sustainable Patterns" has emphasized that considerations for health have the potential to support behavioral change leading to sustainable diets and sustainable agro patterns. As the economic crisis and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic have affected the food availability, many have addressed this departure from normality by modifying the reactions and behavior regarding their choice of food turning it into habit. This change in behavior will continue in proportion to the lasting benefits enjoyed by customers. Thus from the study it can be said that the need to consume healthier foods to boost immune system has emerged during Covid-2019. Data relating to Latin America has shown that there is a tendency to consume foodstuffs with less salt, sugar and calories. The desire to maintain newly acquired, healthier dietary habits after the easing of the lockdown restrictions is encouraging consumers to increase their intake of fruit and vegetables, compared to the period before confinement, while fast food intake was dramatically reduced. The governments can increase access to healthy food and decrease access to unhealthy food by enacting laws or regulations. In contrast to it, because of boredom and stress produced by COVID-19 confinement, surveyed people also reported a higher consumption of fried and sweet food as part of emotional eating.

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