

**Studying the Relation between Seeking Distinction and Nutrition Knowledge, and Takeaway Food Consumption Pattern  
(Case Study: Citizens Over 15 Years of Age in Tabriz City)**

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**Extended Abstract**

**1. Introduction**

Every living being requires food, energy, and nutrition to survive and preserve their life and health. Experiences related to food and nutrition along with its biological role have gained economic, social, and cultural dimensions within the contemporary urban life. Studying food-related experiences within its social dimension is so significant that it has led to the formation of a new area of study called *sociology of food and nutrition* during the last few years. The present evidence in Iran shows that Tabrizi citizens are also increasing the share of takeaway food in their consumption pattern, which is parallel to the general course of changes occurring in this area across the world or metropolitan cities of the country. The present study was conducted with the purpose of examining certain social dimensions related to takeaway food consumption pattern among Tabrizi citizens.

**2. Theoretical framework**

the processes and experiences related to food can be influenced by a large number of economic, political, social, and cultural factors. By focusing on existing social approaches regarding food consumption practices, the theories presented by Thorstein Veblen and Pierre Bourdieu were used in this study to explain the individuals' food-related experiences from the economic-social dimension. By introducing the concept of exhibitiv consumption (which could also be used for food consumption), Veblen regards the economic and social position of individuals as related to their food-related experiences. In his general theory of distinction,

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Bourdieu also believes that individuals use food in various quantities and qualities as a tool to offer a distinction between themselves and others, which is similar to other consumer experiences they might have. In fact, they use this tool to form various dimensions of their identity and character.

### **3. Methodology**

The present study was conducted using the survey method among the entire citizens of Tabriz city over the age of 15. Approximately 409 people were selected as the sample of population using Cochran's formula as well as multi-stage stratified sampling (among ten districts of Tabriz city). The required data were collected using the questionnaires developed by the authors based on the previous literature related to notions under examination. The assessment of validity and reliability of the study was respectively carried out according to content validity (formal) and Cronbach's alpha along with the KMO index, the results of which demonstrated the appropriateness of indices used in this study. The dependent variable in this study included takeaway food consumption pattern (entailing the extent of use and outlook towards the quality and safety of food), while the independent variables included seeking distinction, nutrition literacy, socioeconomic position, and gender.

### **4. Results**

According to the findings of the study, seeking distinction (positively), nutrition literacy (negatively), socioeconomic position (positively) and gender (in favor of men) showed significant correlation with the amount of takeaway food consumption. Of the employed independent variables, only the socioeconomic position variable showed a negative and significant statistical relationship with the outlook towards the quality and safety of takeaway food. The results obtained from related path models fitness demonstrate that all four independent variables (i.e. seeking distinction, nutrition literacy, socioeconomic position, and gender) had a significant effect on the extent of takeaway food consumption, explaining almost 22% of the variance in the dependent variable. Regarding the outlook towards quality and safety of takeaway food, only the socioeconomic position variable had a general significant effect on the related final model, explaining a small, yet significant part of the variance in the dependent variable.

Given the theoretical framework and experimental backgrounds reviewed in the study, the results showed a significant relationship between seeking distinction and the extent of takeaway food consumption. Respondents who showed high levels of seeking distinction also consumed more amounts of takeaway food. Along with its primary and biological role, it appears that food also involves social and identity-related implications. According to the results, the individuals belonging to high-

level socioeconomic positions also consumed higher amounts of takeaway food. As was expected, nutrition literacy affected the amount of takeaway food consumption negatively and significantly through providing nutritional information on the various types of foods. In general, men consumed higher amounts of takeaway food as compared to women.

## **5. Conclusion**

As takeaway foods (esp. their consumption), at least among the investigated individuals, are formed under the influence of a number of variables, including seeking distinction, nutrition literacy, socioeconomic position, and gender, a set of general points could be presented as conclusion. First of all, considering the relatively high consumption of takeaway food among a portion of respondents, attention to the quality and safety of these foods should be considered in the interventions related to food and nutrition in Tabriz city so that effective steps can be taken to improve the quality of takeaway foods using various control and supervision mechanisms with regards to the production and distribution of these foods. People with high socioeconomic positions showing a more intense desire towards distinction consumed takeaway foods to a higher extent. Presumably, paying attention to the role of this experience in the lives of these people is essential. It can also be pointed out that raising public's awareness and sensitivity in line with reducing takeaway food consumption might decrease the possibly undesirable impacts of such foods which are often classified as serious concerns within the area of nutrition and health. In addition, given their high consumption of takeaway food, men indeed require special attention in this regard.

**Keywords:** Takeaway Food consumption pattern, Seeking distinction, Nutrition literacy, Socioeconomic position.

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