

A PROJECT WORK ON
UNDERSTANDING THE PERCEIVED VALUE AND LIVED
MEANING OF CONVENIENCE FOOD ADOPTION IN
POKHARA'S INDUSTRY

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project work report entitled “**Understanding the perceived value and lived meaning of convenience food adoption in Pokhara’s industry**” submitted for the BHM is my original work report has not formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or other similar titles.

Nikita Budathoki

July, 2026

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the Project Work titled “**Understanding the perceived value and lived meaning of convenience food adoption in Pokhara industry**” submitted by (**Nikita budathoki**) (23150237) for the partial fulfillment of the requirement of BHM embodies the Bonafide work done by her under my supervision.

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Suresh Raj Adhikari

Supervisor, PW

July, 2026

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NTHMC

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Industrialization, urbanisation, globalisation, and advances in food technology are all factors that link with the development of convenience food. According to Popkin (2019), Global Dietary Patterns have significantly changed due to an increase in the production of processed and ready-to-eat foods. Historically, people predominantly consumed freshly prepared foods made from natural ingredients in their homes. More recently, however, due to lifestyle changes, increased workforce participation, and busy daily schedules; many consumers have come to depend increasingly on packaged, frozen and instant food products. The development of modern food processing technologies, advanced transportation systems, and new food preservation methods have contributed to the rapid growth of the global convenience food market. According to Mintel (2022) the global market for convenience foods has experienced considerable growth because more consumers prefer quick meal solutions that save time and effort. Ares and Giménez (2016) reported that improvements in taste, quality, packaging, shelf life, and variety have contributed to increased acceptance of convenience food amongst consumers. Today, convenience food products are available in various forms such as: frozen, canned, instant noodles, fully cooked, convenience snacks/drinks and microwaveable ready meals. Students, office workers, travellers, and families consume the majority of these products because they take less time to prepare.

Convenience Food is an important part of modern lifestyle, according to Ares and Giménez (2016). It has become increasingly popular with consumers due to their preference for prepared food products that require little preparation time and are therefore easily prepared (e.g., ready-to-eat meals, frozen foods, canned products, instant noodle soup, snacks and drinks). Drewnowski (2018) indicated, that most demand for convenience food, is due to busy working schedules, increased urbanisation, and changes to food and/or eating patterns. Both Guthrie and Lin, (2019) described how Convenience food is integral to current diets as they allow people to save on both the time and effort of preparing meals. Although Convenience foods provide several benefits, such as accessibility and convenience; many

researchers have expressed concerns regarding their nutrient quality, health risk and long-term effects on dietary habits. Therefore, greater understanding of the role of Convenience food in the lives and society of individuals is important.

However, despite the growing popularity of convenience food, several health-related concerns have also been raised. According to the WHO (2021), excessive consumption of processed and convenience foods may increase the risk of obesity, diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, and other lifestyle-related illnesses because many products contain high amounts of salt, sugar, unhealthy fats, preservatives, and artificial additives. In addition, environmental concerns have also emerged due to the excessive use of plastic packaging and non-biodegradable materials in convenience food products. Therefore, it is important to study convenience food to understand both its positive contributions and negative impacts on health, nutrition, environment, and consumer lifestyles.

In Pokhara today, many types of convenience food are being used in hotels, restaurants, and homes. These types of foods include, for example, frozen Momo, French fries, boneless chicken wings, sausages, noodles/pasta, ketchup, canned foods, mayonnaise, packaged cheese, frozen vegetables, frozen meat, and seafood. Because of the many benefits (easy to prepare, easy to store, easy/quick to serve), convenience food plays an important role in the hotel industry of Pokhara. The application of convenience food has enabled hoteliers/restaurateurs to assist in improving their operational efficiency, reducing food preparation time, reducing the number of highly skilled employees needed, and providing quicker service to customers, thereby enhancing customer satisfaction. With the increase in tourism to Pokhara, the demand for quick, high-quality food service has also increased, which has pushed businesses to integrate convenience food items into their operations. However, there has been a considerable amount of criticism directed toward convenience food by health and environmental professionals. Numerous convenience foods have high fat contents, high preservatives, artificial flavourings, and sodium, and when they are consumed on a regular basis may be harmful to the health of people. Additionally, due to the volume of plastic and disposable packaging used in convenience foods, there are many environmental pollution and waste management issues. Therefore, even though convenience foods provide economic and practical uses, the consumer should be aware of other issues.

To provide the customer with the best service while staying competitive, it is essential for Pokhara's hotels to understand the consumption patterns of convenience food. Convenience food can benefit hotels through decreased food preparation costs, fast delivery of food, uniform food quality, and increased profits. As Pokhara continues to be an increasingly popular tourist destination for both domestic and international visitors, there is an increased demand for quality, reliable and fast service of food. Convenience food can provide the solution to meet these needs. In addition to fulfilling the demand for convenience food, hotels must also consider issues related to the nutritional value of food, the health impact of food on guests, food safety standards, the environmental impact of food production and processing, and the awareness of customers regarding food. An understanding of the consumption trends of convenience food will allow for greater understanding of the growing importance and role of convenience food today and within the hospitality industry as a whole.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As more people are busy with their jobs, the amount of convenience food that can be produced quickly has gone up. This means that people are choosing to eat convenience foods, which are easy to prepare and require less time than making a meal from scratch. This helps them save time in an economy where time is money. The availability of convenience food has changed the way guests eat at hotels as they are more likely to choose a hotel that has convenience foods available than one that does not. Because of this trend, hotels in Pokhara are aware of this change in how guests want to eat and have begun offering convenience foods to their guests when they come to eat at their hotel. While there are many positive benefits to offering convenience foods to your guests at hotels in Pokhara, there are also many negative impacts on both groups of people because of this type of food service. Therefore, this study will help to identify the gap between the use of convenience foods at hotels in Pokhara and how this impacts guest satisfaction. Additionally, this study will seek answers to questions such as, "How do hotels benefit from using convenience foods?" or, "How do guests view the hotel's use of convenience foods?" Finally, this study will identify the pros and cons regarding the use of convenience foods in the hotel industry in Pokhara.

1.3 Research questions

1. How do hospitality professionals in Pokhara understand that convenience foods have a perceived value?
2. What has been the lived experience of those working in the hospitality industry with regard to convenience foods?
3. What impact does convenience food have on both the efficiency of operations and the quality of services at hotels and restaurants?

1.4 Objectives of the study

- Examine how the value of convenience food is viewed by hotels/restaurants in Pokhara.
- Explore what the hospitality industry has experienced related to the use of convenience foods.
- Analyze the impact of convenience foods on hotel and restaurant operations and their service quality.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The project titled "Understanding the Perceived Value and Lived Meaning of Convenience Food Adoption in Pokhara's Hotel Industry" is significant because it explores the use of convenience foods in hotels and examines their impact on customer satisfaction, health perceptions, and dining experiences. As convenience foods are increasingly used to improve operational efficiency, this study provides valuable insights into their role in the hospitality industry of Pokhara. The findings will benefit hotel owners, managers, chefs, and food and beverage departments by helping them understand customer perceptions of convenience foods. The results can support menu planning, improve service quality, enhance customer satisfaction, and increase operational efficiency. The study will also benefit customers by increasing awareness of the advantages and disadvantages of convenience foods, including their effects on health, food quality, and value. It may encourage hotels to provide healthier and higher-quality convenience food options.

In addition, the research will be useful for hospitality students, educators, policymakers, tourism authorities, and food suppliers by providing practical information on the use of convenience foods in hotel operations. It may also support

the development of better food quality standards and healthier food practices. Finally, this study will contribute to the existing literature on convenience foods in the hospitality industry. As limited research has been conducted in Pokhara, the findings will serve as a valuable reference for future researchers and provide a foundation for further studies in Nepal.

1.6 Literature Review

This chapter presents an analysis of the published literature produced by other scholars and experts involved in the study of convenience foods. In this section, the data has been collected from secondary sources, mainly from literatures such as books, journal articles, and other literature relating to the findings of previous research and literature that meet any other identified criteria. The researcher has completed an extensive literature review of the use of convenience foods and their effects on customers food consumption in the hotel sector of Pokhara, Nepal, which is the object of study for this paper. The literature will be assembled in accordance with the aims of the study and will serve as the guiding framework for outlining the information. Convenience foods are considered prepared foods that require little preparation or cooking time; they may also be consumed in their unprepared state without requiring any form of preparation or cooking.

Convenience food is an important contributor to the hospitality industry because it is portable and eliminates added costs associated with preparing food in the hospitality industry. Convenience food is any type of prepared (packaged) food that contains preservatives, so customers are becoming more health conscious each day. This behavioural change is important for the hospitality industry to address, and hoteliers need to create a strategy to meet customer's needs and wants, which ultimately result in the upselling and profit growth of the organization. Convenience foods help consumers save time and effort in food-related tasks such as grocery shopping, preparing and cooking meals, eating meals and cleaning up after meals. Today, our culture has changed how we live on a daily basis, and there is a much different lifestyle than there was 20 years ago or even 10 years ago. The demand for all types of consumer goods has been affected by technology, changes in family structures, multicultural communities and changes in the way we think about food as a society. This has been true for food as well; a broad definition of domestic outsourcing provides a description of food planning, food preparation and/or cooking,

which can include any type of food that is not cooked at home. To analyze demand requires consideration of the demographics but also of the lifestyles and other elements that influence lifestyles. This is demonstrated by the surge in demand for convenience food and the play on changing lifestyles with how they influence demand. The quality of convenience-related convenience food is about more than the time spent in the kitchen, but also encompasses the total amount of time and effort (mental and physical) spent on food from the time of purchase until consumed.

Numerous researchers have provided a definition for convenience food. “Food that has had preparation work done to it away from the home [...] can be referred to as convenience food” (Charles & Kerr 1988, p. 131). This is a simplified and clearly explained definition which describes the most basic aspect of convenience food is to make life easier for individuals that prepare and those consume meals (not constrained by distance, time, etc. of who is there to prepare or eat). Similarly, convenience food allows consumers to reduce the amount of time, physical and mental effort required to prepare, consume and clean up after food (Brunner et al. 2000, p. 498). The economic concept of subcontracting will also be discussed by Dixon et al., (2006) in reference to convenience food.

1.6.1 Convenience food and efficiency in hotel

Convenience food plays a significant role in improving operational efficiency within the hotel industry. Convenience foods are pre-prepared, partially cooked, or ready-to-use food products that require minimal preparation before serving. Hotels increasingly use these products to save time, reduce Labor costs, maintain food consistency, and improve service quality, especially during peak business hours.

According to Candel (2001), convenience foods are designed to reduce food preparation time while maintaining acceptable quality and safety standards. In hotels, the use of frozen vegetables, pre-cut ingredients, ready-made sauces, and partially cooked meat products enables kitchen staff to prepare meals more quickly, resulting in faster customer service.

Jones (2007) noted that convenience foods improve kitchen productivity by reducing manual food preparation tasks. This allows chefs to focus more on food presentation, menu innovation, and quality control rather than routine preparation. As

a result, hotels can increase operational efficiency and serve a larger number of guests within a shorter period.

Furthermore, Walker (2021) emphasized that convenience foods help hotels reduce food waste and ensure portion consistency. Standardized food products minimize errors in preparation and improve inventory management, which contributes to better cost control and profitability.

However, some researchers argue that excessive reliance on convenience foods may affect the freshness, nutritional value, and authenticity of meals. Kivela (1997) suggested that while convenience foods increase efficiency, hotels should balance their use with freshly prepared ingredients to maintain customer satisfaction and preserve culinary quality.

Overall, the literature indicates that convenience foods positively contribute to hotel efficiency by reducing preparation time, lowering Labor requirements, improving consistency, and supporting cost-effective operations. Nevertheless, successful implementation requires maintaining a balance between operational efficiency and food quality to meet customer expectations.

1.6.2 Convenience food and its impact on the customer health

Convenience foods have become increasingly popular because they save time and require minimal preparation. However, their impact on customer health has been widely discussed in the literature. While these foods offer convenience, frequent consumption may have both positive and negative health effects depending on their nutritional composition.

Many of the ways that food products affect health are difficult to measure directly. Mela (2006) explained that the health effects of food are often long-term and probabilistic rather than immediate. For example, consuming a healthier food product may reduce an individual's risk of developing a chronic disease by a small percentage, such as **5%**, but this reduction may only become evident after many years and across large populations. Therefore, the health benefits or risks associated with convenience foods are often challenging to observe in everyday life.

Research by **Monteiro et al. (2019)** found that frequent consumption of ultra-processed convenience foods is associated with an increased risk of obesity, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and other non-communicable diseases. These products often contain high levels of salt, sugar, saturated fats, and preservatives, which may negatively affect long-term health when consumed regularly.

Similarly, **World Health Organization (WHO, 2020)** recommends limiting the intake of foods high in sodium, added sugars, and unhealthy fats to reduce the risk of chronic diseases. Hotels and food service establishments are therefore encouraged to offer healthier convenience food options, including products with lower sodium content, whole grains, and fresh ingredients.

On the other hand, not all convenience foods are unhealthy. **Candel (2001)** noted that many modern convenience foods are developed to meet consumers' nutritional needs while maintaining convenience. Healthier ready-to-eat salads, frozen vegetables, low-fat dairy products, and fortified meals provide balanced nutrition without requiring extensive preparation.

Overall, the literature suggests that convenience foods can positively or negatively affect customer health depending on their nutritional quality. Hotels should therefore prioritize healthier convenience food options to improve customer well-being while maintaining operational efficiency.

1.6.3 Financial Management

Financial management is one of the most significant factors contributing to the adoption of convenience foods by hospitality operators. By using convenience food items, operators are able to lower their operating costs related to Labor, food preparation time, inventory and food waste. According to Davis and Lockwood (2002), a financial advantage of convenience food products is Labor cost savings. Because many of the ingredients used in convenience foods are prepared beforehand, there are less staff needed to operate the kitchen and less time required for them to prepare the food, thereby giving the business control over its payroll expense, while allowing them to improve productivity. Another financial benefit of convenience food product is food waste management. Pre-portioning and processing of ingredients helps to reduce spoilage and to improve the control of inventory; hospitality

businesses will be able to better estimate food costs and thus reduce unnecessary waste through standardized portioning (Kinton et.al, 1995).

Research also indicates that operational efficiency and profitability can be improved through the use of convenience food products. Harrington and Ottenbacher (2013) suggested that controlling food costs will directly benefit the profitability of a restaurant. The use of convenience food products will simplify the purchasing and storage practices for managers and allow them to maintain budget efficiency. In tourism-based cities such as Pokhara, there can be considerable uncertainty in terms of the financial viability of hospitality businesses due to seasonal changes. Therefore, the use of convenience food products can also reduce financial risk because managers can quickly modify menu production based upon customer demand. Additionally, business managers will not need to depend upon the availability of skilled chefs, meaning that recruitment and training costs should be reduced.

Although there are many potential benefits of using convenience food products, some researchers have suggested that purchasing prices of convenience food products can be higher than those of fresh raw materials. Thus, in order to decide whether to use convenience food products or fresh raw materials, a business must weigh the trade-off between the increased price of the product with the savings that are realized as a result of Labour expense and operational efficiency. Convenience foods can offer many benefits, but there are also a number of challenges faced by the hospitality industry when using these types of products. A major issue is food quality (based on customer perception). Many customers believe that fresh foods taste better and may provide more value in terms of nutrition and authenticity (Poulain, 2002). Therefore, a restaurant using large quantities of processed food may receive lots of complaints about freshness and originality.

Another difficulty is cultural acceptance. In some parts of the world, cultural traditions placed high importance on traditional cooking methods, and therefore convenience food may be perceived negatively. In addition, hospitality operators who provide their customers with locally produced foods may find it difficult to reconcile operational efficiencies with culturally authentic culinary experiences. Food safety and nutrition are also key factors in the adoption of convenience foods. According to Buckley et al. (2007), there is a strong trend among consumers in paying attention to

food quality including the ingredients and preservatives present in food and the health effects of foods consumed. For this reason, hospitality operators must ensure proper storage and handling of convenience foods and have an effective system for monitoring quality control. In addition, a significant operational challenge for hospitality businesses using convenience foods is their reliance on their supply chains. Many hotels and restaurants depend upon imported food products to provide their customers with convenience foods. As a result, any interruption in the supply chain will negatively impact customer service by impacting the availability of menu items and the ability to maintain efficient operations.

Many employees will likely be reluctant to embrace the use of convenience foods, as the use of these products will result in changing roles within the kitchen and in many ways eliminate some of the creativity associated with culinary practices. Many skilled chefs view the use of convenience foods as detrimental to their professional identity and craftsmanship. Sustainability in hospitality is further challenged by environmental issues related to packaging waste and production of convenience food products. There is an increase in the use of convenience food which means an increased demand for plastic packaging contributing to environmental pressure.

1.6.4 Research Gaps

Numerous studies have analyzed the different aspects of convenience foods; such as types; cooking competencies; development of convenience food industry; and reasons for the growth of convenience foods. However, there has been little investigation into how convenience foods have influenced customer eating habits within hotels located in Pokhara. Little is known about how much convenience foods cost compared to fresh locally-grown food, or how much farming has decreased and the amount of convenience food being used has increased. The widespread rise in health problems can primarily be attributed to the introduction of convenience foods. This research paper is an attempt to determine how much convenience food is being used within hotels located in Pokhara; then determine if hotels are making a profit from selling convenience food; and finally, to examine the health effects of convenience food on hotel guests.

1.6.5 Summary

The literature on convenience foods indicates that their consumption has increased significantly due to changing lifestyles, urbanization, rising incomes, and the growing demand for quick and easy meal solutions. Convenience foods are designed to reduce the time, effort, and skills required for food preparation, making them popular among both households and food service establishments. Studies have identified various types of convenience foods, ranging from minimally processed ingredients to ready-to-eat and ready-to-cook products. Previous research has highlighted several factors contributing to the growth of the convenience food industry, including technological advancements in food processing, changing consumer preferences, increased workforce participation, and the expansion of the hospitality sector. Convenience foods offer benefits such as reduced preparation time, consistency in product quality, lower labor requirements, and improved operational efficiency, which make them attractive to hotels and restaurants. However, the literature also points to concerns regarding the nutritional quality and health implications of convenience foods. Frequent consumption of highly processed foods has been associated with health issues such as obesity, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and other diet-related illnesses. In addition, some studies suggest that the growing reliance on convenience foods may reduce the demand for fresh and locally produced food products.

1.7 Research Methodology

Research methodology refers to the systematic process used to collect, analyse, and interpret data to address a research problem. It provides a structured approach that ensures the validity and reliability of the research findings.

This study aims to investigate the use of convenience food in the hotel industry in Pokhara, with a focus on its contribution to hotel profitability and its perceived effects on consumers' eating habits and health. Since there is limited research on this topic in the local context, a qualitative research approach will be adopted to gain a deeper understanding of the issue.

Qualitative research is appropriate because it allows the researcher to explore participants' experiences, opinions, and decision-making processes in detail. It is particularly useful for understanding why hotels use convenience food, how it

influences daily operations, and how customers perceive its quality and health impacts.

Data will be collected through interviews and open-ended questionnaires with hotel managers, chefs, and customers. These participants are directly involved in food preparation, management, and consumption, making them valuable sources of information. The collected data will be analysed to identify common themes and patterns related to convenience food use, profitability, customer satisfaction, and health perceptions.

The qualitative approach will provide rich and detailed information that cannot be captured through numerical data alone. It will also help explain the economic and operational reasons behind the use of convenience food while considering the cultural and tourism context of Pokhara. The findings are expected to provide useful insights for hotel managers and contribute to a better understanding of convenience food practices in the local hotel industry.

1.7.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore the relationship between the availability and use of convenience food in the hotel industry, its impact on profitability, and consumer health. The aim is to gain deeper insights into how hotels perceive and use convenience food, and how this practice influences customer satisfaction, health awareness, and business outcomes. Qualitative methods are appropriate for this research as they allow the exploration of perceptions, motivations, and experiences of hotel professionals and consumers in rich, detailed narratives.

1.7.2 Study Area

This research study will take place in the hotel of Pokhara valley of Nepal. This will help to properly get me on the track. I have chosen this area because there are lots of hotels in Pokhara ranging from small hotels to 5-star level hotel. I can easily get access to the particular hotel as well as it is the famous destination around the world so at the same time, I will be able to have access with the guest who stay at hotel of Pokhara.

1.7.3 Sampling and research population

Population represent the total number of people who are relevant for the study. The target population consist of hotel management officials or the professional like chefs, food and beverage manager, purchase manager etc. similarly I will target on the customer who are the regular of the hotel or who often visits the hotel of Pokhara. Sampling is a technique by which I select a smaller subset of that population to speak with or interview to obtain data. I won't choose participants at random because I am conducting qualitative research, which emphasizes in-depth comprehension rather than numerical data for statistics. This will include 10 hotels members and 10 regular customers of the hotels.

1.7.4 Data collection methods

a.In-Depth Interviews

Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews with both hotel professionals and customers. Hotel staff will be asked about their reasons for using convenience food, its cost-effectiveness, supply chain factors, and its effect on kitchen operations and profitability. Consumer will be asked about their awareness of convenience food in hotel meals, perceptions of taste, quality, and health impact. Each interview will last approximately 30–45 minutes and will be conducted either face-to-face or through video conferencing, depending on participant availability.

b. Questionnaire

data will also be collected from the questionnaire methods as it will have the multiple-choice question it will help the participants to easily fill the form. Structured question will be asked to the participant so that they can easily understand the question and don't have to think for the longer period of time. This will allow to collect the data in a very economical way with efficiency.

c. Focus group

The focus group for my study will be the staffs and the regular customer of a hotel. By studying them it will help me to gather the collective data which will help me to understand what is the present need and the wants of the staff and the customer.

d.Document review

Menus, supplier invoices, or internal food cost reports (if available) may be reviewed to supplement interview findings and provide additional context on the types of convenience food used.

1.7. 5 Data analysis

Data will be analysed in thematic analysis; Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data like interview transcripts, focus group discussions, or open-ended survey responses. This process will include following.

- a) **Transcribing interviews:** In this data analysis I will record the video or the audio of the participants then I will be listening again and translating into the word. It's a key step in qualitative research because it allows you to carefully analyse what participants have said.
- b) **Coding:** In the manual coding procedure, you go over your qualitative data (such as interview transcripts) and mark significant words, phrases, or sentences. Then, you give codes that correspond to the concepts being conveyed. key phrases, patterns, and themes will be manually highlighted.
- c) **Categorizing the major themes:** The themes will be categorizing into the different key points, and it will help to bring the general understating of the current's status in the use of convenience food in the hotel of Pokhara. This approach allows interpretation of how convenience food use is perceived in terms of business strategy and health trade-offs.

1.7.6 Ethical Considerations

- All participants will be informed about the purpose of the research and their right to withdraw at any time.
- Written or recorded informed consent will be obtained.
- Anonymity and confidentiality will be strictly maintained.
- Data will be stored securely and used solely for academic purposes.

1.7.7 Limitation of the study

- The small sample size may limit generalizability to all hotels.

- Responses may be influenced by social desirability bias, especially from hotel staff concerned about public image.
- Access to internal financial or operational documents may be limited

CHAPTER II

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the study entitled *Understanding the Perceived Value and Lived Meaning of Convenience Food Adoption in Pokhara's Hospitality Industry*. The findings are based on qualitative data collected through interviews with hotel managers, chefs, kitchen helpers, waiters, and customers in selected hotels in Pokhara. The interview responses were analysed using thematic analysis to identify recurring ideas, experiences, and perceptions related to the use of convenience food. Three major themes emerged from the analysis: (1) Convenience Food as an Operational Advantage, (2) Perceived Impact on Profitability, and (3) Consumer Perceptions of Food Quality and Health.

Participant Description

A total of thirty participants took part in this study. The participants included hotel managers, chefs, kitchen helpers, waiters, and customers from different hotels in Pokhara. They were selected using purposive sampling because they had direct experience with the preparation, management, or consumption of convenience food in the hotel industry. Their diverse roles provided valuable insights into operational practices, business decisions, and customer experiences.

2.1 Convenience Food as an Operational Advantage

Most participants stated that convenience food helps reduce preparation time and improves kitchen efficiency, especially during busy hours. Hotel managers and chefs from the participating hotels explained that ready-to-use ingredients allow them to serve customers more quickly while reducing labour requirements. Mr. Ramesh Shrestha, Hotel Manager at Hotel temple tree, commented "Convenience food helps us serve guests faster, especially during peak tourist seasons." Similarly, Chef Suman Gurung, Head Chef at Hotel silver oaks, stated "Using pre-prepared ingredients saves time and allows us to maintain consistency in food preparation."

These responses suggest that convenience food plays an important role in improving operational efficiency within hotels.

2.2 Perceived Impact on Profitability

Participants generally believed that convenience food contributes to business profitability by reducing food preparation time, minimizing waste, and lowering labour costs. Hotel managers explained that these factors help improve operational efficiency and customer service. For instance, Ms. Anita Thapa, Operations Manager at Hotel DEF, stated "It reduces wastage and helps us manage costs better, which increases our profit." However, some participants noted that excessive reliance on convenience food may affect food quality, which could influence customer satisfaction over time.

2.3 Consumer Perceptions of Food Quality and Health

Customers expressed mixed opinions regarding convenience food. Some appreciated the quick service and consistent quality, while others preferred freshly prepared meals and believed they were healthier. Mr. Bikash Rai, customer at Hotel Bar peepal, explained "Convenience food is useful when I'm travelling because it saves time, but I still prefer freshly cooked food whenever possible." Another customer, Ms. Pooja Sharma, customer at hotel cliff lake, added "Fresh food tastes better and feels healthier than processed food."

Respondents revealed that although convenience food offers practical benefits, health concerns and preferences for fresh meals continue to influence consumer choices.

2.4 Major findings

2.4.1 Convenience Food's Perception and Use

Convenience food is generally defined by Pokhara's hotel operators as processed foods that take little time or effort to prepare. Pre-packaged goods like frozen meat, noodles, and sauces fall under this category. Increasing operational efficiency and achieving organizational objectives like profitability are the main reasons for using such food. Convenience food is seen by hoteliers as a means of managing scarce resources, lowering reliance on skilled Labor, and expediting guest service in a competitive hospitality environment. Convenience food is therefore a strategic business tool created to meet contemporary demands, not just a culinary preference. One hotel manager in Pokhara said, we use convenience food like frozen

meat and ready-made sauces mainly to save time and reduce dependency on skilled Labor. It's not just about food—it's a business strategy to stay efficient and competitive.

2.4.2 Customer preference and attitude

According to data, most hotel visitors have a strong preference for fresh food over convenience food. Many patrons, especially frequent diners, stated that they avoid processed food when dining out because they can easily make comparable dishes at home. Their health consciousness and worries about chemical preservatives, which are frequently present in convenience foods, are the main reasons behind their preference for fresh food. Only a small number of respondents expressed a willingness to consume convenience food, and even then, it was primarily due to time limitations rather than preference. This illustrates the widening gap between hotel operations procedures and customer expectations for freshness. A regular hotel guest shared,

"I prefer fresh food when I eat out—why would I pay for something processed that I can cook at home? I'm careful about preservatives and health. 'Another added, 'Sometimes I'll go for convenience food, but only when I'm in a rush—not because I like it."

2.4.3 Guest Suspicion and Trust Issues

All most all of the guests felt that the hotel of the Pokhara is using the convenience food like frozen meat, frozen momo, sausage, etc this has led to the dissatisfaction to the guest. When customers discover processed ingredients in their meals, they feel deceived or let down, leading to a breakdown in guest trust brought on by the lack of transparency in food preparation. This theme suggests that in the hospitality industry, authenticity and trust are important determinants of guest satisfaction. One guest remarked:

"I was disappointed to find out the momo was frozen. It feels dishonest when hotels aren't upfront about what they're serving.' This kind of reaction shows how lack of transparency can damage trust and lead to dissatisfaction guests value authenticity in their meals."

2.4.4 Health Concerns Associated with Convenience Food

Convenience food consumption in hotels was linked by many visitors to negative health effects. Common complaints included diarrhea, constipation, vomiting, and abdominal discomfort. Even though there is no scientific proof that convenience food is the direct cause of these health problems, the perception alone has a big impact on consumer confidence. This theme underscores the perceived health risks of processed food and highlights the importance of offering food options that guests consider safe and wholesome. Ignoring these concerns may result in long-term reputational damage for hotels. A guest shared:

"After eating at the hotel, I had stomach issues maybe it was the frozen food. Even if it's not proven, it just feels unsafe. 'Perceptions like this show how concerns about health risks from convenience foods can seriously affect guest trust and hotel reputation."

2.4.5 Hotel Practices and Types of Convenience Food Used

Convenience food has become more integrated into Pokhara hotels everyday operations as a result of modernization, pressure from competitors, and customer volume. These products help standardize food quality, are quicker to prepare, and are easier to store. Commonly used items include ketchup, mayonnaise, canned corn, frozen momo, noodles, and similar products. Since Pokhara lacks direct access to seafood and heavily relies on imports from India and China, most hotels emphasize locally available processed foods. This theme highlights the pragmatic choices hotels make to balance accessibility, cost, and consumer demand. A hotel chef explained:

"We use items like frozen momo, canned corn, and sauces because they save time and help us keep food quality consistent especially when it's busy."

He added, *"Since fresh seafood is hard to get in Pokhara, we rely more on local and imported processed options."*

2.4.6 Economic Benefits of Convenience Food Use

Hoteliers are generally in Favor of the use of convenience food from an economic perspective. By reducing the need for trained chefs, food preparation time, and ingredient waste, it enables significant cost savings. Faster service is made possible by convenience food, which is essential in busy restaurants and during busy

times of the year. Hotel operators claim that these efficiencies have increased their profitability, making the decision to serve convenience food a wise financial move. The possible loss of visitor satisfaction and trust must be balanced against the financial gain, though. “One hotel manager noted,

‘Using convenience food cuts down on Labor costs and prep time it really boosts our profits, especially during peak season.’ But he also admitted, We have to balance that with guest satisfaction. If they feel disappointed, it could hurt us in the long run.”

2.4.7 Operational Challenges in Managing Convenience Food

Convenience food has advantages, but there are drawbacks as well. Because these items are perishable, storage is a significant problem. Hotels must invest in refrigeration and maintain strict storage conditions, which can increase costs. Furthermore, guest complaints about non-fresh food are frequent, reflecting a disconnect between operational decisions and consumer expectations. Another challenge is the fluctuating prices of convenience food products, especially in Nepal, where imports are heavily influenced by the economies of neighbouring countries. These issues highlight the fragility of over-dependence on convenience food in the local hotel industry. A hotel operator shared:

"While convenience food saves time, storing it properly is expensive we need good refrigeration. And guests often complain it's not fresh enough."

He added, *"Prices keep changing too, since we import a lot from India and China. It's not always stable."*

Summary

Convenience food is widely used by Pokhara hoteliers to save time, lower Labor costs, and increase profitability, according to the study. However, because of quality expectations and health concerns, the majority of hotel guests strongly prefer fresh food. Many patrons expressed dissatisfaction due to their suspicions regarding the use of processed or frozen foods like momo, sauces, and meats. Health-related complaints such as vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain were commonly linked to the consumption of convenience food. Despite these concerns, hotels continue to rely on convenience food for operational efficiency. While it offers economic benefits,

such as lower production costs and faster service, challenges like storage issues, guest complaints, and fluctuating prices persist.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Conclusion

This study investigated the use of convenience food in Pokhara's hotel sector, concentrating on its effects on patrons' health and profitability. The results show that although convenience food greatly boosts hotel profitability and operational effectiveness, it also poses issues with food quality and patron perceptions of health.

Convenience food is frequently used in Pokhara hotels because it saves time, is less expensive, and can be served in portions and with consistent flavour. Many hotels have been able to increase their profit margins and successfully compete in a changing market thanks to these benefits. Consumer feedback, however, shows a definite preference for fresh food due to health concerns and worries about the chemicals and preservatives found in processed foods. Some guests reported adverse health effects, highlighting the need for careful quality control.

Notwithstanding the financial advantages, difficulties like the need for storage, price swings, and unfavourable visitor opinions highlight how difficult it is to rely too much on convenience food. In the hotel industry, maintaining customer satisfaction requires striking a balance between profitability and upholding high food quality.

In order to reduce health hazards and visitor complaints, hotels should try to serve convenience food with fresh ingredients, be open and honest with their patrons, and make the necessary storage facility investments. Future studies could look into Pokhara consumers' willingness to pay for fresher options as well as the long-term health effects of consuming convenience food.

3.2 Recommendations

Hotels in Pokhara should strive to increase the use of fresh ingredients in their meal preparation to enhance food quality, taste, and customer satisfaction, as guests place high importance on freshness.

Hotel management should provide regular training and awareness programs for kitchen staff on the safe and effective use of convenience foods, ensuring that quality and health standards are maintained.

Hotels should improve transparency about the use of convenience foods by informing guests, which can help build trust and address concerns related to food healthiness and safety.

It is recommended that hotel operators conduct regular customer feedback surveys to understand guests' perceptions and preferences regarding convenience foods and adapt their menus accordingly.

Hotel owners should consider the cost-benefit balance of convenience versus fresh foods, aiming to optimize expenses while maintaining food quality to meet consumer expectations.

Health authorities and hotel associations in Pokhara should develop guidelines or policies regarding the use of convenience foods in hotel kitchens to ensure consistent food safety and nutritional standards.

Further research should be conducted to explore innovative ways to integrate convenience foods without compromising health, taste, and customer satisfaction.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview Questions for Hotel Guests

The following questions were used to gather data from hotel guests in Pokhara regarding their perceptions, preferences, and health concerns related to the use of convenience food in hotels.

1. When you eat at hotels in Pokhara, what factors influence your food choices?
2. Are you aware of the use of convenience or pre-prepared food in the meals served at hotels? If yes, what are your thoughts on it?
3. How do you perceive the quality and taste of food prepared with convenience food compared to freshly made meals?
4. Have you ever had concerns about the healthiness or safety of food served at hotels in Pokhara? If so, can you describe your experience?
5. How important is food freshness and preparation method to you when dining at a hotel?
6. Have you noticed any health-related issues after eating at hotels that might be linked to food quality? Please elaborate.
7. Would you be willing to pay more for meals prepared with fresh ingredients? Why or why not?
8. What changes would you like to see in how food is prepared and served in hotels?

Appendix B: Interview Questions for Hoteliers

The following questions were used to gather data from hotel operators and kitchen staff in Pokhara to understand the use, impact, and challenges of convenience food in hotel operations.

1. What is convenience food?
2. Which department of the hotel mostly uses convenience food?

3. Why do hotels choose to use convenience food?
4. What are the benefits of using convenience food in hotel kitchens?
5. How does the use of convenience food affect your cost?
6. How does the use of convenience food affect staff efficiency and time management?
7. What are the challenges in using convenience food in hotels?
8. How does convenience food impact the overall food quality served in hotels?