Group 12 - Perceptions of Beef Consumptions Between Two Populations

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The librarian who helped us was: Kim Hoffman

Where is the abstract and the other subsections that the assignment requires? This was all clearly described in the assignment description.

Abstract?? We were given a topic on the consumption of beef in two different populations. Our group compared the perceptions of Americans and Indians and their thoughts on the amount of beef each population consumes. Our group found multiple articles that displayed both thoughts as well as statistics of the beef consumption in the two populations. We gave out a survey to students at SUNY Geneseo to gather their perception on the amount of beef Americans and Indians eat. Of the students surveyed, 79% of them said that they eat beef while the other 21% don’t eat beef. For general comparison, we asked the Geneseo students what types of meats they favored and the results showed that beef was the second most preferred behind chicken. We found that the majority of the meat eaters surveyed consume beef 1-3 times a week and most students overestimated the amount of beef the average American consumes per year. Our surveyed population correctly answered that Americans are consuming more beef now than we have ever before. When asked whether higher or lower income households eat more beef, students were incorrect in their thoughts that wealthier families consume more. Prior to our research on the consumption of beef in America and India, we assumed that our survey results would show that Americans perceive that we consume more beef than Indians. Our assumption was in fact true, although more people than we predicted thought that Indians eat more. The survey that we took helped us to see the perceptions that Americans have on the beef consumption in both America and India.

Introduction? In general, we investigated the perceptions of two different populations on the consumption of beef. We found, as most would assume, that Americans rightly perceive that we eat, on average, more beef than Indians do. Contrary to popular belief, we actually consume less beef than we think we do. As researchers on this topic, we believe that Americans have these perceptions because beef is advertised all around us every day. You can’t drive anywhere without seeing either a fast food restaurant like McDonalds advertising their Big Mac or seeing your favorite chain restaurant having a special on their steak. Although Americans are right in assuming that we eat more beef than Indians, statistics show that we eat less than we think we do.

Ethnographic Methods? In order to obtain American perceptions, our group distributed a survey which asked general questions about beef consumption (Appendix A). Our survey showed that of the 79% that do consume beef, only 68% of them actually prefer to eat it. Most people prefer chicken (75%), while few answered that they prefer other meats like pork, fish, and lamb. A high 86% of beef eaters say that they consume beef 1-3 times a week and unsurprisingly, none of those surveyed eat beef every day of the week. A low 14% of those surveyed eat beef 4-6 times a week. When given the choices of 35.7 pounds, 64.4 pounds, 100.2 pounds, and 150.9 pounds, 54% of the students chose 100.2 pounds as the amount of beef consumed by the average American per year. This is incorrect since our research showed that the average American eats 64.4 pounds of beef per year. interesting..., but you are mixing the methods with the results. Only 32% answered this survey question correctly. Our results also displayed that 86% of those surveyed were correct in thinking that Americans consume more beef than Indians. As one of our questions, we gave a list of consequences associated with the consumption of beef and asked the student to check off all that they thought were true. The consequences we listed were: cancer, obesity, mistreatment of animals, pollution, and few negative effects. The fact that beef consumption causes pollution was the most popular choice, with 46%. Beef consumption causes obesity and beef consumption has few negative effects were the next two top choices with 32% choosing them. Only 29% thought that animals are mistreated and 14% believe that beef consumption causes cancer. To see if students think that beef consumption in America has increased or decreased, we asked the question: do you think Americans eat more beef now or in previous decades? Our results showed that 82% said that they think that we eat more beef now. The Geneseo students seemed to be torn when asked if higher income or lower income households consume more beef, with 57% answering higher income and 43% answering lower income. Unlike the previous survey question, when asked which region of the United States consumes the most beef, the students seemed to agree. The majority (64%) answered that the Midwest eats the most meat followed by the southwest with 21% and the northeast with 14%. interesting investigation of perceptions

In order to compare the perceptions of beef consumption we discovered through our survey, we found scholarly and peer-reviewed articles. Some of the articles addressed the health effects and concerns associated with beef consumption while others show the perceptions of the beef consumption in India.

Now, people consume about 530 more calories than in 1970, or 24.5% more now that your are into the published sources, you need to cite them, usually by author and date. This means that more people are eating higher calorie foods, such as meats. On average, consumers are eating 7 more pounds of beef than they had in the 1970s, at about 64.4 pounds of beef per year (needs source as this is not common knowledge). Americans have been able to eat more beef than previous decades because meat prices have been generally low while consumer incomes have risen. The proportion of fat in beef has even decreased by 9% (needs source as this is not common knowledge), increasing consumers’ incentive to eat more beef and not feel as guilty about eating it because it’s leaner. Preparing meat for consumption is definitely not an easy process. The meat has to be slaughtered, gutted, sliced, packaged, distributed, and marketed. Now everything is done with machines which have led to pollution. America is also polluted by feedlots, where animals live in houses that are not like nature. Animals are also mistreated, since workers just want to get the job done quickly and easily. A lot of our evidence is based off of statistics on the amount of beef consumed by Americans and Indians each year. But, those numbers may be off because of the way they calculate the amount of meat we eat. When a person goes to the store to buy meat, the weight is printed on the label and that’s the weight they use in the statistics. We really don’t eat that weight because meat shrinks when it’s cooked and people usually remove the fat, in addition to the fat that comes off during the cooking.

The article “Colorectal Cancer and Consumption of Beef and Fat” (Enstrom 1975) (sources should be cited by author and date to make them easier to find in the References Cited) disproves the previous hypothesis that beef consumption causes colorectal cancer. Their study showed that “During the period 1940-70 per capita beef consumption has risen over 100% in the United States.” “By comparison, the age-adjusted colorectal cancer mortality for the entire United States has decreased 10% during the same time period” (Enstrom 1975: page number)(direct quotes need page numbers in American Antiquity style; see style guidelines in MyCourses). This shows that even though beef consumption increased, at the same time colorectal cancer deaths decreased. The results from our survey show that people have the right perception in that beef consumption doesn’t cause cancer. In contrast, researchers found that the people who are at a high risk for prostate cancer are men who consume high amounts of beef and proves that aggressive prostate cancer is connected to the amount of beef you eat. When scientific studies like this reach the public, people’s perspective of beef will certainly turn sour. The perception of beef will become negative and consumption of that beef will decrease.
Another article (cite author and date) talks about discusses the effects of the Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE: mad cow disease) crisis on consumers purchasing of beef. The US’s low level of concern with BSE is linked to how much they trust the information they receive about BSE: “in the US, 83% trust the FDA” (cite source with date and page number) Also, 47.3% of Americans said they would reduce their beef consumption if it were true that the chances of getting BSE by eating beef were 1 in 1 million per year (As I’ve told you in class, through the plagiarism quiz, and in various documents, statements that are not common knowledge need sources, and quotations need page numbers. Disappointing that the group overlooked this essential practice. Since it appears you are not going to identify your sources throughout I’m going to stop noting it over and over). When animals are not fed proper feed, are not raised in the right conditions, then there are more diseases among them. One would think the consumption of beef would decrease because the public has gained a negative perception of beef; but this has not happened in the U.S. Salmonella is another thing that is commonly feared in the United States. When people hear that salmonella is involved with their beef they have negative perceptions towards it. Americans have many reasons for having negative perceptions of beef. There are many reasons for people to prefer other meats like chicken over beef, which was shown in our survey.

Results of a study done by Zey and McIntosh (year) showed that women who are concerned with using beef to “entertain” (why is this in quotation marks?) family/friends and give them a filling, good tasting meal don’t think beef is unhealthy or unsafe. The women who are worried about health/diet problems associated with beef aren’t concerned with sociability and taste. This proves that beef is sometimes perceived as a luxury and is important to our culture. A according to Meg Major’s (year) article, she found that behind after location, Americans think the quality of meat is the most important thing they look for in a grocery store. This shows how important meat really is to Americans. Glad to see some citation of sources here, even if incomplete

It seems that India has a harsh environment to live in. There is an unbalanced economic system and environmental problems (in broad terms this could be said about the US as well). The perception that Indians do not eat beef has a deeper, more spiritual meaning. Cattle have proven to significantly help the environment and economy of India. This is an important factor in why the cow has been protected in India for many years.

The issue of the sacred cow controversy has been going on for years. I’m not sure its a controversy, but it did take a while for non-Indians to fully understand the benefits of the sacred cow taboo in India.. In the article by Korom (year), describes the controversy as not being something that can be solved investigated? in a “scientific spirit.” Many articles describe the sacred nature of the cow to be an unusual phenomenon. There is nowhere else in the world that holds one particular animal on such a high status. The origins of the sacred cow come from ancient India and the origins of the Vedas (the oldest scripture of Hindu religion). Over time the religion has changed views on the way cows are treated, but and the protection of cows is a more recent practice. Popular leaders such as Gandhi, remove comma use the cow in poems to promote respect for the cow. One can argue that the cow unifies India, a country that is very separated by caste systems. This is the same way that countries like to United States are unified by the sense of food culture that people share.

The products of the cow are widely used in India. Except for actually eating Although they do not usually eat the meat, they use cows for milk, dung, and working fields. Products of the cow are viewed as pure, while in other countries some products are seen as polluting. It is hard to understand the sacredness of the cow to other countries because the consumption of the cow is so acceptable in most countries. There were a series of photographs that came out in the 60’s of people in India who appear starving while healthy cows roam around in the background. The problem of starvation could have easily been solved if Indians ate the surplus of cows in the country. In the article by Harris (year), he describes religion as “somewhat good for the soul, even if it fails the body”.

Harris (year: page number) stated that the cow in India is seen as a symbol of “health and abundance.” The perception of the cow in the United States is seeing the cow as unhealthy and bad treatment of the animals sentence does not make sense: reword.. There are some groups in India, called the Untouchables, who do eat meat. These people were traditionally ignored in Indian culture. Simoons (year: page number) said wrote that Indians perceive the consumption of beef religiously, and “even the mention of the word ‘beef’ while traditional Indian’s are eating is said to cause them to stop and get up.” Indians have a very different perception of beef than we do in America. Though it is socially acceptable to consume beef in America, we have to be aware of other cultures and be culturally accepting.

Overall, the beef consumption in America has increased and Americans rightly perceive this. However, Indians have religious reasons as to why they don’t eat beef which contrasts to the American culture. For future research, it would be helpful to narrow down the topic into perceptions of beef consumption in males versus females in the United States.

There are some interesting observations here and evidence of some good research. Unfortunately, those are compromised by incomplete referencing which made it impossible to identify your sources in many cases and thus it was hard for me to assess the quality of your information. The entry does not read as a particularly coherent whole due to inconsistencies in the text of the entry and the References Cited. Its also disappointing that you didn’t really follow the very clear structure laid out in the assignment description. Closer attention to that document alone would have resulted in a stronger entry.
Table 2-1

In 2000, Americans consumed an average 57 pounds more meat than they did annually in the 1950s, and a third fewer eggs

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<td>Total meats</td>
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<td>80.9</td>
<td>71.7</td>
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<td>285</td>
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Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.
Source: USDA's Economic Research Service

Figure 2: Average Consumption of Beef per American (USDA: 2001-2002: Fig. 2)


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USDA

Willett, Walter C.

Zey, M., & McIntosh, W.

Appendix A

Survey Questions:
Group 12 Survey “Perceptions of Beef Consumption Between 2 Populations”

ANTH 100
1. Are you male or female?

Male        Female

2. Do you eat beef? If no, skip to question 5.

Yes        No

3. Which types of meat do you prefer (Choose as many as you want)?

Beef    Chicken    Pork    Fish (if you consider fish a meat)    Lamb

4. How many times a week do you eat beef?

None      1-3      4-6      7+

5. How many pounds of beef do you think the average American consumes per year?

~64.4 lbs.    ~35.7 lbs.    ~100.2 lbs.    ~150.9 lbs.

6. Do you think Indians eat, on average, more or less beef than Americans?

More        Less

7. Check next to which statement you think is true.

___ beef consumption causes cancer
___ beef consumption causes obesity
___ beef consumption supports mistreatment of animals
___ beef consumption leads to pollution
___ beef consumption has very few negative effects

8. Do you think Americans eat more beef now or in previous decades?

Now        Previous Decades

9. Do you think higher income populations or lower income populations consume more beef?

Higher Income       Lower Income

10. What part of the U.S. consumes the most beef?

Midwest        Northeast        Southwest