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Criteria of Importance influencing food choice in workplace canteens

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Abstract: Workplace canteens are an example of a public sector foodservice setting where meals are taken on a consistent basis, contributing to people`s daily calorie intake. Despite growing demand, little information is available and time pressure when making food choices alongside problems of understanding information provided not only act as barriers for healthy choices but also decrease confidence in the food system. Consumers are aware of their inactive role in the food system and are looking for information in order to choose food that meets their needs. This study used focus groups to explore criteria of importance that motivate peoples` food choices in a worksite canteen. Thematic analysis was applied to categorise data according to frequently occurring responses. Data was collected from four focus groups in Germany and the UK with a total of 23 participants. Although there is little expectation in the quality of food served in workplace canteens, food is purchased in order to socialise with other work colleagues. Criteria of importance influencing food choices made at work are: Value for Money, Variety, Naturalness, Nutrition, Portion Size, Taste & Visual Appearance, Origin, Animal Welfare, Environmental Impact, Fair Trade and Organic. Gaining insight into these criteria can enable operators to meet the needs and expectations of their customers in order to increase confidence in food provision.

Keywords: Food choice, information, consumer, foodservice, workplace canteens

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