



## Restaurants Health Measures and Customers' Dining Preferences during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Evidence from Egypt and Jordan

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### **ABSTRACT**

The influences of COVID-19 on dining activities varied from a country to country. The influences included a wide array of impacts, starting from the complete shutdown of restaurants dining-in to only adopt strict new norms to re-open. Researchers around the globe afforded trials to explore customers' post COVID- 19 preferences. The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) pointed to existing differences between people, afforded a justification for this, and pointed to the necessity of differentiation between nations during pandemics and the lavish increase in health risks. This added importance to this research, as it investigated new geographical areas, and compared between two countries, i.e., Jordan and Egypt. These two countries were selected, as they were considered as examples for key tourism destinations in the middle east, they host two of the seven wonders of the world, and there was no evidence that previous research tried to bridge this gap of knowledge in this geographical area. The research aimed to investigate the influences of geographical boundaries on customers' dining preferences and its related health practices with an implication on Egypt & Jordan in the post COVID-19 world. This aim was achieved via answering research questions. Stratified and snowballing sampling technics were used to generate 411 valid online survey forms. Statistical tools were used to analyze the collected data. A list of recommendations was developed for restaurateurs to help in handling the customer's preferences in the post COVID-19 era. The research findings will help in understanding dining industry customers' priorities, perceptions, and intentions. It also will contribute in developing restaurateurs performance to attract customers, and to handle their fears at different geographical regions.

## Introduction

Starting from 2020, the world suffered from the nightmare of COVID-19 that destroyed the world economy in a few weeks and its deterioration results continued up to the time of writing this paper (Algassim and Abuelhassan, 2021). These negative impacts highly pressurized industry, and its enterprises were targeted by governments as potential spot to spread COVID-19 (Gossling *et al.*, 2020; Gursoy *et al.*, 2020; McKinsey and Company, 2020). Dining industry severely suffered (Song *et al.*, 2021), e.g. Pizza Hut announced its bankruptcy. This pandemic (as defined by World Health Organisation) was considered the most dangerous crisis after the Second World War. The international and domestic tourism and hospitality businesses were highly influenced by this pandemic, due to the closing of borders, new health and hygiene regulations, and other containment measures (UNWTO, 2020a).

The COVID-19 pandemic devastated the global hospitality industry and hospitality-based countries' income and economy, with more than 4.3% contraction in the international economy and more than 130 people living in extreme poverty due to this crisis (UNCTD, 2020; Jung *et al.*, 2021). This pandemic forced the hospitality industry to lose billions of dollars in 2020 resulting in millions of hospitality employees forfeited their jobs permanently or temporarily (Chadee, *et al.*, 2021; Jung *et al.*, 2021). Restaurants companies and the hospitality stock market was another disaster that needs many researchers to disclose the strategies that let many companies survive and others collapse (Song *et al.*, 2021).

The restaurant industry rapidly handled this disaster by redesigning its activities (e.g. focusing on delivery) and strictly implement safety and preventive health precautions to meet the new norms and customers' novel needs (Brizek *et al.*, 2021). This led to two important questions: "Will these changes in customers' needs be temporary or permanent? Do restaurant customers' preferences towards these new norms are equal at different geographic destinations?" (Sigala, 2020; Boguszewicz-Kreft *et al.*, 2020; Chadee *et al.*, 2021; Jung *et al.*, 2021).

Geography played a role in figuring the perception of consumers towards risks and health practices' priorities that successfully handled their fears (Westcott *et al.*, 2017; Boguszewicz-Kreft *et al.*, 2020; Elsayed *et al.*, 2021). The intention of customers to consume tourism and hospitality products and services was deeply affected by their perception and aversion to risk (Pizam *et al.*, 2004; Wang *et al.*, 2019), which was confirmed during the COVID-19 pandemic (Pappas & Glyptou, 2021). Gössling *et al.* (2020) stressed on the massive need for researchers to contribute in figuring out the future of the tourism industry after COVID-19. This research tried to contribute to this area. Based on the researchers' best of knowledge, there was no evidence for any related work that investigated the perceptions of dining customers in comparison between Egypt and Jordan. The selection of countries for the subject study was based on the fact that those countries were always considered as key tourism destinations in the Middle East, which have two from the original and newly announced world seven wonders (Tikkanen, 2020).

## Literature Review

Geography was highlighted as a key factor affecting restaurant customers' preferences (Smith, 1983). Boguszewicz-Kreft, (2020) added to what Smith highlighted by connecting between the geographical influences and the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) by examining this in the hospitality industry at three countries (two Asians and one European country). Elsayed et al. (2021) confirmed this in their research sample at two Middle Eastern countries but both recent types of research worked on tourism, not the dining context.

COVID-19 added further challenges and several researchers around the globe worked day and night to bridge the new gaps of knowledge. New Norms were announced in many countries with a dynamic nature that varied from country to country and from day to day (Brito, 2020; NRA, 2020; Reidy, 2020; Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2020; Jordanian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2020). The reason behind these variances can be justified by the theory of planned behaviour; full protection motivation theory, political reasons, economical reasons, and numbers of COVID-19 infected cases, which pressurized governments and affected their decisions (Ajzen, 199; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011; Wang et al., 2019; OECD, 2020; UNCTAD, 2020).

Understanding the conscious and unconscious drivers or stimuli at the hospitality customers' decision-making process can boost and accelerate the recovery of the hospitality business and its resilience (Pappas & Glyptou, 2021). Byrd et al. (2021) confirmed this as significant changes were reported in dining consumer behaviour due to COVID-19 pandemic. The theories of planned behaviour (TPB) and the protection motivation theory (PMT) highlighted the need to investigate people's preferences, attitudes, and behaviours during the health risk periods, especially in tourism and hospitality industries to develop successful practices (Westcott et al., 2017; Cheng, 2019; Wang et al., 2019; Ulker-Demirel and Ciftci, 2020).

Implementing TPB in the dining and restaurant industry – at post-COVID-19 world- was important for understanding the dining industry customers' preferences and desires regarding dealing with the dining industry, this should include: restaurants' outlets, health practices, and indoor and outdoor services at restaurants. Theory of planned behaviour (TPB) was marked as one of the most widely adopted social-psychological models for understanding people's behaviour (Yuriev et al., 2020). The theory -during history- contributed to predicting the intentions and behaviours, especially the healthy eating behaviour (Conner et al., 2002). In this theory, individuals were described as rational. They form their knowledge and beliefs based on systematic information gathering coming from several different sources, such as interaction with relatives and friends, media, formal education, and personal experiences that they are exposed to (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). TPB was developed to be a comprehensive model for linking and explain three significant factors that were responsible for managing people's behaviours during the perception of risks (Ulker-Demirel & Ciftci, 2020; Yuriev et al., 2020). The theory mainly concerned with: 1) attitudes, 2) subjective norms, 3) perceived behavioural control, which handled several aspects related to positive or negative participation or elements

affecting customers decisions and preferences (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen, 1991; Madden et al., 1992; Yuzhanin & Fisher, 2016; Ulker-Demirel & Ciftci, 2020; Yuriev et al., 2020).

Protection motivation theory (PMT) supported the efforts of researchers to investigate the preferences of tourists during health risks and pandemics (Wang et al., 2019). The theory pointed to people as they were always more likely to protect themselves against any expected negative consequences and their desire to avoid them and having preventive actions (Rogers, 1975; Wescott et al., 2017). Chiu et al. (2019) pointed to the existing differences between nationalities regarding their perceptions towards risks which influenced their motivations, especially when they travel or interact at a risky destination or during health risks and disasters. For instance, certain nationalities took extra precautions during health disasters or risks, or even they cancelled their travel plans. This increased the necessity of investigating different nations' dining customers' preferences and COVID-19 preventive health precautions.

COVID-19 forced restaurants to adopt the new norms, which led dining industry employees to strictly follow new health precautions (new norms). Any failure in following the new norms simply will cause severe penalties or contributing by a fault in spreading the infection (Lu et al., 2020; Ahram, 2020; Egyptindependent, 2020). The most repeated and common precautions were wearing masks and gloves. Generally – especially in our industry- face masks and gloves can be considered as symbolic social distancing actions. Many researchers investigated the emotional consequence of covering the face, banning handshakes, and wearing gloves, but under the attack of COVID-19 these actions became mandatory (Capraro and Barcelo, 2020; Fred, 2015). Huang et al. (2020) highlighted the need for post-COVID-19 customers to notice the sanitization process at the hospitality and tourism enterprises to handle their fears and to increase their level of satisfaction. This was confirmed by various governmental bodies and association who requested the sanitization process to be continuously engaged in action, to be seen in place, and to spread hand sanitization dispensers, e.g. Alcoholic Jill Dispensers at public spaces (UNWTO, 2020b; National Restaurant Association, 2020; Arabian Business, 2020; ONA, 2020).

Social distancing was another influence of COVID-19 that changed the well-known formulas for restaurants' dining spaces (Katsigris and Thomas, 2008). The social distancing limited the occupancy up to 25%- in some countries-, which affected the entire tourism, travel, and hospitality sectors. The reason can be found in this reported example, where a customer with COVID-19 passed the virus to his tablemates and other customers sitting close to him within a 1-meter space at a Chinese restaurant (Lu *et al.*, 2020). Thus, social distancing was presented worldwide as a necessary precaution to stop the spread of COVID-19 (Zhao *et al.*, 2020). Guidelines for social distancing vary based on authorities (Ölcer *et al.*, 2020; Arabian Business, 2020; ONA, 2020; Ministry of Tourism, 2020 & Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2020; Reopening Miami Beach, 2020). According to the WHO, a minimum social distancing was identified as 1 meter, and the safe distance was recommended to be 1.83 meters (Zhao et al., 2020).

Social distancing, face coverage, wearing gloves, spreading sterilizers at public spaces and continuous sanitization actions were the most repeated recommended guidelines by various organizations, e.g. NRA (2020) Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (2020); Jordanian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (2020), and by UNWTO (2020b).

Dining delivery mode was another aspect that was heavily influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some countries allowed only for delivery and take away at certain periods of time since the beginning of the pandemic (Arabian Business, 2020; Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2020; Jordanian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2020, ONA, 2020). Home delivery was reported as the surviving solution for American restaurants and the most preferred mode of delivery for selected samples in the USA (Brizek et al., 2021). Byed et al. (2021) went further and pointed to the severe need for more research and cooperation to understand consumer perceptions towards the restaurant's products packaging delivered, by all means, i.e. home delivery, dine-in and take away (Byed et al., 2021). This finding raised another point to be investigated in this research, to examine customers' preferences towards home delivery, take away or dine in. Kim and Lee (2020) highlighted another psychological factor (contagion effect) and theories, i.e. behavioral inhibition system theory and crisis management theory which pushed many dining customers to prefer to dine in a private room. Open-air dining was another option that needed to be examined, due to the risks and fears from COVID-19 air transmission at closed space restaurants (Morawski, et al., 2020). All these findings -related to food delivery/service mode- will lead the research team to examine the effects of geography on them and if the different nationalities will have the same preferences or they will have a significant difference.

A limited number of researches investigated dining customers' preferences' towards the new health practices, precautions, and dining products delivery mode. Despite hospitality or restaurant consumer behaviour was distinguished as one of the important research examination areas. In more details, understanding hospitality and restaurant's customers to know how customers feel, think and behave were the foundation to help in analyzing, describing, predicting, understanding the consumption environment, managing the impact of customers, and generating revenues (Crouch et al., 2004; Pearce and Packer, 2013; Ulker-Demirel and Ciftci, 2020; Song et al., 2021). Based on the best of researchers' knowledge, there was no evidence that previous research investigated the dining preferences of Egyptian and Jordanian customers and their priorities at the related COVID-19 preventive health precautions.

The research aimed to investigate the influence of geographical boundaries on customers dining preferences and its related health practices with an implication on Egypt & Jordan in the post-COVID-19 world. The critical review of the literature led to finding certain gaps of knowledge, which can be summarized in two major questions:

1. Do the geographical boundaries play a role in differentiating between dining industry customers' preferences in the -post-COVID-19 world?
2. What are the degrees of preferences of dining customers' towards the key new norms, preventive health precautions, dining delivery mode, or style?

### **Methodology**

The research followed a comparative case study approach to compare Egyptian and Jordanian dining customers' preferences about COVID-19 related preventive health precautions and customers' dining delivery mode. The results were presented via cross-case analysis technique using quantitative tools. The research went through the following phases: 1) Define and design; 2) Prepare, collect and analyze; 3) Analyze and conclude (COSMOS Corporation, 1983; Yin, 2018). All these phases were adopted using a dynamic research design approach (Maxwell, 1998; Saunders et al., 2016). Following this research approach was helpful to achieve the research aim and to answer the research questions, as will be illustrated in the following parts of this research.

### ***Participants and sample***

Stratified sampling and snowballing sampling techniques were adopted in this research (Corbetta, 2003; Lovric, 2011). The field study was undertaken at Egypt and Jordan between the 1<sup>st</sup> of January to the 15<sup>th</sup> of February 2021, on customers who intend to dine out or to enjoy restaurant meals via different delivery modes or service styles. To comply with the COVID-19 measurements and the governments' regulations at the targeted two countries, an online survey was developed via Google forms. The researchers used Google forms' features and added the following filters: 1) nationality/ place of residency, i.e. Jordan or Egypt were only permitted to continue and 2) intention to dine out or to order delivery food. Egypt and Jordan were selected for the following reasons: both of them were considered as examples for key tourism destinations in the Middle East (same geographical area); Each of Egypt and Jordan hosts one of the Seven Wonders of the World (Tikkanen, 2020). The study collected its data by distributing an online survey to a stratified sample, who was only Egyptians, Jordanians, living in Egypt or living in Jordan, who has an intention to dine out or to have their dining using any of the well-known dining delivery modes or styles. A snowballing technique was adopted via contacting a professional network of restaurateurs, tourism and hospitality colleges' alumni in the selected countries, friends, and colleagues to help in distributing the survey via WhatsApp, Facebook, and LinkedIn. The participants of this study survey were 411 restaurant customers. This number of participants can be considered as an optimum number for a sample to reflect any population number, because it exceeded the number of 385 (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016).

### ***Measurements***

The online survey questions were developed using mainly 5 points Likert scale namely Strongly don't prefer (1), Don't prefer (2), Neutral (3), Prefer (4) and Strongly prefer (5). It included five sections and fifteen questions to answer the research two main questions, i.e., do the geographical boundaries play a role in differentiating

between dining industry customers preferences in the post-COVID-19 world?; what are the degree of preferences of dining customers' towards the key new norms, preventive health precautions, dining delivery mode or style? These two questions were the core of the online survey.

The first research question led to developing questions about participants' profile information to differentiate in the analysis between each of the two investigated countries' dining customers, i.e. Egyptians and Jordanians, and to identify their demographics. The second research question generated a list of points based on the literature. These points were: dining delivery mode preferences, whether they prefer to dine in their private rooms, a regular restaurant at their stayed hotel, home delivery, take away, to dine in at a restaurant, to dine in at the open-air or a regular closed space restaurant (Morawski, et al., 2020; Kim and Lee, 2020; Byed et al., 2021; Brizek, et al., 2021). The second main points were the key preventive health precautions related to COVID-19 adopted in restaurants, which were selected based on Gursoy et al series of researches between May (2020) and January (2021). The selected main four preventive health precautions related to COVID-19 adopted in restaurants were: wearing masks and gloves; social distance, sanitizing around the clock, and spreading of sanitizing materials' dispensers at public areas. These main four COVID-19 preventive health precautions were also stated at various declared new norms and references, e.g. Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2020; Jordanian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2020; Zhao et al., 2020.

### ***Data analysis***

The present study adopted the means, to describe the participants' perspectives and standard deviations to indicate to what extent these perspectives deviated from their means. Moreover, a one-Sample t-Test was used to evaluate the impact of COVID-19. T-Test was adopted to measure the differences and similarities between the Egyptians and Jordanians.

### **Results & Discussion**

The valid online forms were 411 forms. The collected sample was mainly distinguished using the geographical boundary factor. A cross-case analysis technique was used via adopting statistical tools, e.g., standard deviation, mean, and t-test.

**Table 1**

The Profile of The Sample

N= 411	Egyptian		Jordanian	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	168	62.0	74	52.9
Female	103	38.0	66	47.1
<b>Age</b>				
Less than 18 years	5	1.8	2	1.4
From 18 to less than 30 years	97	35.8	92	65.7
From 30 to less than 40 years	105	38.7	17	12.1
From 40 to less than 50 years	54	19.9	14	10.0
50 years and above	10	3.7	15	10.7
<b>Total</b>	271	65.9	140	34.1

The findings of Table 1 presented the profile of the sample. The participants of this study were 271 Egyptians (65.9%) and 140 Jordanians (34.1%), 242 males (58.9%) and 169 females (41.1%), and 7 participants (1.7%) less than 18 years old, 189 (46%) ranging from 18 to 30 years, 122 (29.7%) ranging from 31 to 40 years, 68 (16.5) ranging from 41 to 50 years and 25 (6.1) over than 50 years old.

**Table 2**

Having my Meals During My Travel (Out of My Home)

N= 411	The Two countries		Comparison between the two countries		
	Mean/SD	<i>p</i>	Egypt Mean/SD	Jordan Mean/SD	<i>p</i>
I prefer to have my meals at my lodging private room.	3.83/1.08	0.000	3.94/0.96	3.61/1.26	0.007
I prefer to have my meals at restaurants.	2.93/1.20	0.235	2.94/1.21	2.90/1.19	0.787

Table 2 highlighted that the COVID-19 had a significant effect on customers dining preference about having their meals during travel. At the two investigated countries, the desire to have their meals at their private rooms was high (mean = 3.83) and significant ( $p < 0.05$ ), while the desire to have their meals at restaurants was medium (mean = 2.93), and this desire was not significant ( $p (0.235) > 0.05$ ). This result indicated that the COVID-19 changed people's preferences and attitudes regarding having meals during travel. People currently preferred to have their meal in their lodging private rooms -during their travel- more than eating out. This finding confirmed -in some-how- Kim and Lee (2020) findings, as their sample in the USA preferred dining in private rooms inside the restaurant. Dining consumers presented evidence in these two studies, as their preferences at post-COVID-19 pandemic were different than before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Geography impact was presented in the second half of table 2, as it revealed that there were no significant differences ( $p (0.787) > 0.05$ ) between Egyptians (mean = 2.94) and Jordanians (mean = 2.90), as they did not prefer to dine in a restaurant during their travel. However, the two nationalities supported having their meals at their lodging private rooms. There were significant differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) between Egyptians and Jordanians. The Egyptians preferred to have their meals at their lodging private rooms (mean = 3.94) more than the Jordanians (mean = 3.61).

**Table 3**

Customers' Preferences Towards their Preferred Dining Style

The Dining Style	The Two countries		The Two countries		
	Mean/SD	<i>p</i>	Egypt Mean/SD	Egypt Mean/SD	<i>p</i>
Dine-in Restaurant	2.66/1.18	0.000	2.67/1.15	2.64/1.25	0.777
Takeaway	3.52/1.11	0.000	3.40/1.12	3.76/1.05	0.001
Home Delivery	3.69/1.16	0.000	3.64/1.13	3.80/1.21	0.179

The results in table 3 revealed that the COVID-19 outbreak had significant impacts on the dining style preferences (dine-in restaurant, takeaway, home delivery). The entire  $p$  values were less than 0.05. For dining in the restaurant, it was less than 3, as it achieved 2.66 (mean). This result indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak significantly decreased dining customers' preferences and desires to have their meals inside the restaurants. On other hand, the COVID-19 outbreak significantly increased restaurant customers' preferences and desires to have their meals via home delivery (mean = 3.69). This finding coincided with Brizek et al.'s (2021) research outcome, which pointed to home delivery as the most preferred style for post-covid-19 customers. The second preference was takeaway (mean = 3.52). According to the results of table 3, geography had a limited role in this aspect. The differences among the dining customers of the two countries existed ( $p < 0.05$ ) only in takeaway services. The Jordanians' customers had higher preferences and desires to enjoy takeaway services (mean = 3.76) than the Egyptians (mean = 3.40).

**Table 4**

Dining Health Main Practices and Precautions

Items	The Two countries		The Two countries		
	Mean/SD	$p$	Egypt Mean/SD	Egypt Mean/SD	$p$
A- Restaurants' employees adhere to precautionary measures such as wearing gloves and masks.	4.79/0.59	0.000	4.82/0.47	4.73/0.77	0.198
B- Social distancing should be at least one meter at restaurants.	4.76/0.57	0.000	4.82/0.39	4.66/0.80	0.025
C- Installing hand sanitizers at all restaurants public areas.	4.80/0.52	0.000	4.83/0.37	4.74/0.72	0.120
D- Adopt a continuous sanitizing process at restaurants	4.81/0.53	0.000	4.84/0.37	4.76/0.74	0.141

The COVID-19 outbreak had a great influence on the main restaurants' COVID-19 related health Practices, i.e. "restaurants' employees adhere to precautionary measures such as wearing gloves and masks" [mean = 4.79,  $p < 0.05$ ]; "Social distancing should be at least one meter at restaurants" [mean = 4.76,  $p < 0.05$ ]; "Installing hand sanitizers at all restaurants public areas" [mean = 4.80,  $p < 0.05$ ]; and "Adopt a continuous sanitizing process at restaurants" [mean = 4.81,  $p < 0.05$ ], as illustrated in table 4. It was observed that the COVID-19 outbreak had a very great impact on these practices, because the entire means' values were higher than 4.76 (very close to being 5) and the whole  $p$  values were far less than 0.05. The differences between the two nationalities existed only at one health practice item ( $p$  [0.025]  $< 0.05$ ); the Egyptian customers significantly had greater preferences (mean = 4.82) than the Jordanians (mean = 4.66) to keep at least one meter of social distancing at restaurants.

**Table 5**

Customers' Preferences of Receiving Services at Outdoor or Indoor Places

Restaurant Services to be afforded at	The Two countries		Comparison between Egypt and Jordan		
	Mean/SD	<i>p</i>	Egypt Mean/SD	Egypt Mean/SD	<i>p</i>
Open-air restaurant facility	4.30/0.88	0.000	4.44/0.68	4.04/1.12	0.000
Closed space restaurant facility	2.27/1.13	0.000	2.20/1.06	2.42/1.24	0.059

Serving customers at open-air facilities or closed spaces was another area of examination in this research. Table 5 highlighted that the COVID-19 outbreak had significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) impacts on dining customers' preferences at this point. The sample had great preferences (mean = 4.30) to have restaurants' services at an open-air facility, meanwhile, their intention to have these services at a closed space facility was declined (mean = 2.27). Morawskis et al. (2020) justified this finding, due to the existing fear of COVID-19 air transmission abilities. Geographical factors had an impact on this point of investigation. Affording restaurant services at an open-air facility received a significant difference between the two nations ( $p < 0.05$ ), the Egyptians had higher preferences (mean = 4.44) towards receiving these services outdoors than the Jordanians (mean = 4.04).

Geography had influences on post-COVID-19 dining customers. There were significant differences between the two investigated dining customers at different points presented above. The results confirmed the state of fear, that played its role in announcing the significant impact of COVID-19 on customers' preferences. The theory of planned behaviour and protection motivation theory justified these findings and presented a continuous need for further researches to identify the dining customers and their perceptions towards dining styles and COVID-19 preventive health precautions, which should help restaurateurs to fully recover from this disaster.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

COVID-19 pandemic and geography influenced dining customers' preferences toward dining styles and main preventive health precautions. Theory of planned behaviour and protection motivation theory justified this finding. The research investigated 411 online survey forms sample, which was selected using stratified and snowballing sampling techniques. The survey itself was built on previous – mainly modern- studies findings related to COVID-19. The collected sample was analyzed using quantitative statistical tools.

The current research findings found that Egyptians and Jordanians had certain significant differences in dining styles and main preventive health precautions. Egyptians highly preferred the following aspects more than the Jordanian customers, i.e. to keep at least 1 meter social distance at restaurants; preference to have their meals at their lodging private rooms; receiving dining products at open door restaurants facilities. On the other hand, the Jordanians' dining customers were different than Egyptians in one point, as they had higher preferences and desires to

enjoy takeaway services than the Egyptians. But both of the two nationalities' preferred to receive their dining meals at their private lodging rooms during travel; at home delivery when they will decide to order food from restaurants; and at open-air restaurant facilities if they have the choice between open-air and closed space restaurants. Both Nationalities did not prefer to dine in closed areas; restaurants in hotels or at regular restaurants. The main preventive health precautions were highly preferred and were remarked at the most highly important aspects that influenced post COVID-19 dining customers' preferences in the two countries.

The research highlighted the desperate need of restaurateurs to understand the new customer's preferences. The research findings and previous studies outcomes helped to develop the following list of recommendations: 1) The adoption of COVID-19 preventive health precautions were emphasized at mandatory and restaurants should use them to deliver marketing messages for reducing existed dining customers fears; 2) Restaurateurs need to adopt successful and fast home delivery strategies; 3) Hotels should develop room service menus and service to meet the new need of customers to dine in at their rooms ; 4) Open-air restaurant facilities were encouraged to be activated and marketed for customers, as a competitive advantage during these days (this recommendation is applicable for restaurants who has an open-air dining facilities).

### **Managerial Implications and Limitation of the Study**

The research aimed to investigate the influence of geographical boundaries on customers dining preferences and its related health practices with an implication on Egypt & Jordan in the post-COVID-19 world. The research findings and previous investigated studies could lead to various profitable implications for restaurateurs, hoteliers, and travel agencies. There was a need to understand the post-COVID-19 dining consumers' preferences. The hotels and restaurants can use these research findings to develop enjoyable dining experiences for their customers. Hotels need to assure affording room service in their accommodation services and open-air dining experience, if they will afford meals for their customers. Restaurateurs can develop new marketing campaigns focusing on their preventive health precautions, home delivery excellence, and open-air dining facilities (if applicable). Hoteliers can also benefit from this study by enriching their room service dining options, menus, and open-air dining facilities (if applicable at their hotel) and by focusing on preventive health precautions in their marketing campaigns.

The final thought of this research was that restaurateurs should develop their operational strategies and marketing tactics to succeed in satisfying post-COVID-19 pandemic dining customers, who changed their preferences. Even geography was approved as a factor affecting dining preferences. In brief, to succeed in the dining industry in the post-COVID-19 world, you need to keep yourself updated with research, reports and to continuously investigate your customers' preferences and desires.

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## تفضيلات المستهلكين تجاه تدابير المطاعم الصحية ومنهجيات تناول الطعام خلال جائحة

### كورونا: دليل من مصر والأردن

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### الملخص

تنوعت تأثيرات جائحة كورونا، وكان التأثير الأكبر في صناعة المطاعم، واختلفت هذه التأثيرات من دولة إلى أخرى. فمن الإغلاق التام للمطاعم إلى تطبيق قواعد تشغيل جديدة للحصول على التصريح بإعادة الفتح مع تباين تفضيلات المستهلكين. حاول الباحثون حول العالم تقديم محاولات لفهم تفضيلات المستهلكين في عالم ما بعد كورونا. ففرضية تخطيط السلوك أشارت لوجود اختلافات بين الأمم خلال الجوائح وعند زيادة حدة المخاطر الصحية. مما أضاف أهمية لهذا البحث، حيث أنه يدرس منطقة جغرافية جديدة من خلال مقارنة دولتين (مصر والأردن) لم تتم دراستهما من قبل في هذه النقطة لسد هذه الفجوة المعرفية. وقد تم اختيارهما لهذا السبب ولكونهما دولتين يعتبران كمثالين رئيسيين ضمن المناطق السياحية الرئيسية في منطقة الشرق الأوسط ولوجود عجائب من عجائب الدنيا السبع على أرضهما. ويهدف البحث إلى دراسة تأثير الحدود الجغرافية على تفضيلات المستهلكين تجاه تناول الطعام والتطبيقات الصحية المتعلقة بعد جائحة كورونا بالتطبيق على مصر والأردن في عالم ما بعد كورونا. وقد تم تحقيق هذا الهدف من خلال تطوير أسئلة البحث والإجابة عنها. ولتحقيق ذلك تم استخدام تقنيات العينة المحددة وكرة الثلج ليتم جمع 411 استمارة استبيان إلكتروني. ثم تم التحليل لهذه البيانات باستخدام أدوات إحصائية. حيث أظهرت النتائج تأثير الاختلافات الجغرافية على التفضيلات وكذلك أولويات المستهلكين المختلفة فيما يتعلق بتفضيلاتهم فيما يخص منهجيات تناول الطعام مثل تفضيلهم لخدمة التوصيل وتناول الطعام في غرفهم عند السفر ومحبتهم لتناول الطعام في الأماكن المفتوحة عند الاضطرار لتناول الطعام خارج المنزل. وكذلك مدى تفضيلهم للاشتراطات الصحية المتعلقة بجائحة كورونا وصناعة المطاعم. وبناء على النتائج والمراجعات النقدية للدراسات السابقة تم بناء قائمة بالتوصيات لمساعدة العاملين بقطاع المطاعم للتعامل مع تفضيلات المستهلكين الجديدة في حقبة ما بعد كورونا، مما يساهم في تطوير أداء صناعة تقديم الطعام والعاملين في المطاعم ومعالجة مخاوف المستهلكين في المناطق الجغرافية المختلفة.

### معلومات المقالة

#### الكلمات المفتاحية

جائحة كورونا؛ صناعة تقديم الطعام؛ المطاعم؛ تفضيلات المستهلكين؛ مصر؛ الأردن.

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