

## **A Comparative Study on Eating Habits and Body Health Among Adolescents in China and Nepal**

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### **Abstract**

**This article aims to find the eating habits's difference between China and Nepal. The participants of the study are adolescents in China and Nepal. The study are mainly using questionnaires to determine the results. It will compare with their food bans, eating habits, emotional responses and religions. Most of the teenagers are having a anxious on their body shape, this article will help them find out how to change their mind about their body shape and help with their diet in daily. The two groups of teenagers also form completely different attitudes toward their body shape. Students in Nepal want be stronger, but students in China wants thin legs and white skin so most Chinese teenagers are fear at gaining weight and always controlling their diet to keep a low weight. In Nepal, their limitations on diet and religious food restrictions result teenagers in a extreme physical state. The results shows that teenagers in China and Nepal don't have restrictive diet in daily, but they do have different dietary. In China, there are more kinds of foods for them to choose. Instead, in Nepal the food they consume are simple everyday. In China, teenagers eat meat almost every meal, but the meat for Nepal is luxury for them, they can only eat it once a month. In contrast, this will lead students have different types of body shapes and what they expect are also different too. The results shows that different environments can tend towards different shapes of body, the routine and the habits of eating are totally different too. The habits for eating can lead to different behaviors and thoughts on their body. This study will provide useful ideas for health education and at the same time helps young people around the world to form a right view of their body and try to change their bad habits.**

### **Keywords**

**Adolescents; cultural differences, health issues, eating habits.**

### **1. Significances of the Article**

This article overcomes the drawbacks of the article in the past. It is not like the article that is only for one single country, instead, it collects two countries data and compares them. One is adolescents from China, another is adolescents from Nepal. This study compares by crossing cultural studies in different regions in cultures to the diet and their physiological effects on their mind to body shape. This article will also help for future research. Furthermore, there is no evidence for comparison between Nepal and China for eating habits and body health so this article will talk about this. In practical, this study reveals the benefits and drawbacks of eating habits in Chinese food and Nepal food. The findings suggest that children from both countries gain a clearer and correct understanding of the body shape. After that, they can learn to identify whether they should eat or not, what food fits them and so on. Meanwhile, the data from this study can also help young people in both countries to awareness about the impact of body shape. The government should also be aware of this and design guidelines to ensure adolescents can have a better and healthier daily diet.

In a deeper perspective, from this cross culture comparison survey, with the the complex relationship between food, environments and adolescent body health. It shows how different eating habits and resources. It demonstrates that "healthy eating" and "body shape" cannot be defined without local culture and realities. These findings not only encourage future research to move on, also provide an explanation for education. Therefore, this study supports the development of more sensitive information, contributing to the promotion of healthy diets and positive thoughts about body shape among adolescents all over the world.

## 2. Questionnaire Summary

The questionnaire survey focuses on the differences in eating habits and body health between Chinese and Nepalese adolescents. The questionnaire covers basic personal information, dietary habits and the impact of religion on food selection. Question types include single-choice questions, open-ended fill-in questions and evaluation questions. A total valid questionnaires were retrieved from both China and Nepal. The results data and findings are analyzed in details below.

## 3. Statistical Data in Genders Analysis

In terms of gender distribution, in China females constituted the majority in the participants, in Nepal, there are more males than females.

## 4. Influence of the Religion in There Eating Habits

Based on the collected data from religious beliefs, this study further analyzes the restrictive effects of religious in Nepal. In both China and Nepal teenagers there are twenty-five percent of the teenagers felt slightly unrestrained, and seventy-five percent were completely free from religious beliefs in eating. Religious beliefs did not affect daily food selection even for religious, but actually, most of them do not have the mind about eating meat also they don't want to try, so this is why most of them choose slightly unrestrained. It is also because meat is generally unaffordable and seldomly included in Nepal daily meals, religious prohibitions on meat do not change their eating habits or bring additional constraints in eating.

Open-ended questions were designed to collect information about adolescents' eating habits in both countries. According to the report of the survey, both countries teenagers have a wide range of food choices and a variety diet. In both countries traditional grain foods such as rice and noodles are considered as the staple foods. In China, the vegetables are more common to be garlic, cabbage, broccoli. Instead, the teenagers in Nepal they always have potatoes and onions. In both countries but more in Nepal, vegetables are account for a large part of teenagers daily meals. In addition, fried chicken, barbecue and fast food are well received in teenagers in China. As this we can see there are some differences between Chinese and Nepalese foods. In Nepal, there are not so many choices for adolescence but there are plenty of options for Chinese children, so this is why the adolescents in China are not as thin as adolescents in Nepal. On the whole, the surveyed adolescents in China can easily obtain all kinds of ingredients, but for Nepal, adolescents can only eat what they have planted or cheap ingredients such as potatoes. In China their diets are rich and diverse, with no signs of lack of food or even no shortage of food supplies.

## 5. Current Trends and Body Shape Anxiety

According to the data from the survey, the anxiety among Chinese adolescents, there are only 8.33% of teenagers frequently experienced body anxiety, while there are 66.67% reported in occasional body anxiety which accounted for the largest proportion of the sample. In addition, there are 16.67% of teenagers rarely felt anxious about their body shape, and 8.33% have never

ever had body-related concerns. In this analysis, most of the Chinese teenagers face body-related anxiety and depression about their own bodies. Based on opening questions the analysis is based on the primary causes of body anxiety among Chinese teenagers include excessive weight gain, also overweight and thick skin for example too much fat on the stomach or arms. Only a few teenagers in China mentioned that they are too thin, or they have body proportion problems and other physical concerns. These findings reflect the reality of “fat phobia” among Chinese teenagers under the influence of mainstream media. The body anxiety is mainly caused by the fear of gaining weight, while worries about being underweight or slender are extremely common among them.

In contrast, Nepalese adolescents show completely different body anxiety characteristics with China. For the whole survey, there are only fewer than ten participants reported that they have no body anxiety at all. Most of the participants of Nepalese teenagers rarely experience and or occasional experience body concerns. Unlike Chinese adolescents, they are not fear with the fatness, instead, most Nepalese teenagers feel dissatisfied because they are too thin, short, or physically underdeveloped. Only a small number of them are worrying about being overweight. But their overweight is not traditional fat, is a kind of disorder which have fat collections because lack of protein intake.

The low level of body anxiety among Nepalese adolescents is because they have an unique living environment and limited social conditions. Many Nepalese teenagers live in small and closed social communities, where their social everyday are range of people. Also, there are fake Indian people to ask for food and money, so they usually do not talk to the people who they are unfamiliar with. Without diverse body references, adolescents are less likely to develop negative body evaluation. Moreover, most of the Nepalese teenagers have no mobile phones or internet platforms, they have no chance to see the world outside so they are not influenced by online trends or negative stereotypes about the body shape.

## 6. Eating Habits and Body Health for Chinese Adolescents

In contrast, adolescents in Nepal there is a sharp difference. For one part of adolescents, they are acutely underweight and others have severely overweight. To compare with China, in China, the adolescents have steadily physical development. They generally have more choice for food, so that there are better nutrition for Chinese children than Nepal children. A good thing in China is that most of the families let their children eat fruits and vegetables everyday and they always say protein is important. In China, adolescents always eat a lot of staple foods such as rice and noodles so that they can get a lot of energy to keep themselves full of energy. A wealth of modern food choices has led to varied physical characteristics among Chinese adolescents, so they can receive proper nutrition and maintain normal growth progress (Lü, 2024; Yu et al., 2026).

Nevertheless, children in China have balanced nutrition and dietary, but they are still struggling with their body weight. They suffer from thin shaped, which greatly affects their body weight and their body shape. They are plagued by strong anxiety about conforming to the thin body size imposed by society, which exerts a greater influence on their body image and food-related decisions (Wang, 2022; Yeromiyani, 2024). The mainstream standards in contemporary China is extreme thinness, and for girl they want fair skin and even A4 waist line. Under such social trends, teenagers constantly assess and judge their own figures against unrealistic public beauty standards (Yeromiyani, 2024). Numerous teenagers in China has already had very thin body shape but still perceive themselves into overweight and want slender legs and fear of gaining weight (Wang, 2022). This type of “fear of fat” is widespread among adolescents, its letting them having an unhealthy weight-control behaviors and anxiety about their bodies among Chinese adolescents. To pursue slim figures that they think are beautiful, many teenagers deliberately reduce their meals, for example, cut staple carbohydrates, avoid meat,

or even stop dieting only take in water and excessive exercise (Lü, 2024; Lü, 2025). Peer pressure and social impacts on diet worsen unhealthy eating behaviors among Chinese adolescents (Yu et al., 2026). Such negative body cognition severely harms adolescents' physical health, psychological well-being, and dietary happiness, potentially leading to long-term eating disorders, low self-esteem, and chronic sub-health conditions (Lü, 2025; UNICEF, n.d.). Therefore, building positive attitudes towards their body and change the stereotype of them is the most important thing for teenagers. Responsible and encouraging reasonable eating habits are key factors for health education among Chinese teenagers today (U.S. HHS, 2024).

## 7. Eating Habits and Body Health for Nepal Adolescents

Nepalese adolescents show a distinctive polarized body distribution as the result mentioned before, differing sharply from Chinese teenagers on eating habits and body health. This is jointly shaped by cultural differences and religious beliefs. These two countries have totally different regional food and in Nepal it is ongoing urban food globalization (Banskota et al., 2011; ChefNepal, n.d.). National survey data on adolescent health demonstrates that underweight status affects 9.1% of young people in Nepal, and the proportion of overweight and obese individuals reaches 23.7%. It forms a data that has never showed in China (Singh et al., 2021). Teenagers living in Nepal are normally tend to be thin and under developed. The teenagers in Nepal are usually very short, boys are about 1.60 to 1.70 meters, and girls are usually about 1.50 to 1.55. This is largely due to their religious and limited food resources. Hinduism and Buddhism are two major local religions in Nepal, this prohibit them from eating beef and discourage pork, because in their culture cow is the god, they cannot eat them.

Meat and eggs are unaffordable for most local families and meats are only served merely on big festivals (Banskota et al., 2011; ChefNepal, n.d.; Zhang, 2023). Most of the families prepare ingredients by themselves, they usually plant vegetables by themselves and cook. In Nepal the water they drink is used for everything, for example they drink, and take shower by using same water. This will cause them have different immune system and they won't get sick, but if Chinese children go there and drink they will usually get sick and have a stomach ache, so this cause these two countries have a different body shape and eating habits. Adolescents in Nepal mainly eat grains and rarely take in high-protein foods. This cause in persistent protein shortage, slow bone growth, slender limbs and lower height. Around 20 percent of rural students face growth retardation due to long-term lack of nutrition (Singh et al., 2021). Nepal adolescents commonly suffer from kwashiorkor, it is a form of protein malnutrition. They have thin limbs but big stomach, it is not fat, this kind of disorder is usually because they have low protein intake but enough energy. Nepalese adolescents face two types of physical disorders and develop complex body worries. This is totally different from Chinese teenagers who are deeply influenced by the idea of thinness is beautiful (Yeromiyana, 2024; Wang, 2022). However, Nepalese teenagers carry double psychological burdens: underweight children constantly worry about their weight and the slowing physical growth, while overweight adolescents feel anxious about excess body fat and out of shape body (U.S. HHS, 2024; UNICEF, n.d.). For the health interventional side, standardized education is effective in correcting the problems in eating habits and wrong perceptions about body shape. Teaching adolescents about balanced nutrition and positive body attitudes can stop them from taking extreme actions on eating due to body anxiety (Lü, 2024; Lü, 2025; U.S. HHS, 2024). Guided by the health recommendations from UNICEF and U.S. schools and families should reject the bias judgments on body shapes. They also need to help teenagers and tell misleading beauty ideas and encourage them to continue the trend which is healthy (UNICEF, n.d.; U.S. HHS, 2024).

## 8. Comparative Analysis of Eating Habits and Body Health Between Chinese and Nepalese Adolescents

In general, adolescents in China and Nepal show completely different eating habits and body shape stress.

In contrast, Nepalese adolescents face a polarized body distribution shaped by religious dietary restrictions, rural food scarcity, and urbanized high-calorie diets (Zhang, 2023; ChefNepal, n.d.). Nepalese adolescents rely on single diets for daily with insufficient protein intake. This will lead them to have an slim body mass and limiting growth. In comparison, children in China face a growing risk of overweight problems due to the excessive consumption of intake of carbohydrates and factoring snacks(Singh et al., 2021; Lü, 2025). Accordingly, adolescents in both countries, they developed completely different types of body anxiety. Chinese teenagers body dissatisfaction is from the negative social beauty standard that teaches them extreme thinness is beauty, resulting in a widespread and a strange sense of fear of gaining weight (Yeromiyani, 2024).

Even teenagers with healthy body shapes also conduct unhealthy dieting and strict with their weight and control their behaviors due to media attention pressure and peer comparisons(Wang, 2022; UNICEF, n.d.). On the other hand, Nepalese teenagers develop two types of body anxiety based on their different experiences states. Those who are underweight worry about their body mass and slow body development, while overweight adolescents feel unconfident about their weight.(U.S. HHS, 2024). Chinese teenagers always wants to achieve slender body shape. By comparison, most Nepalese young teenagers do not have chance to control their body perceptions freely; instead, these perceptions are shaped by limit nutrition surroundings and resource gaps (Banskota et al., 2011; Zhang, 2023). Moreover, two groups of countries show a totally different in eating habits and behaviors related to body shape anxiety. Chinese adolescents often change their dietary on their own to conform to follow the incorrect standards. So they even cut down the nutritious food intake and just eat vegetables or only drink water to pursue a better appearance (Yu et al., 2026; Lü, 2024). However, teenagers in Nepal are different. They struggle with the balanced nutrition and no matter how they feel about their body shape in daily, because they do not have chance to eat more in normal(ChefNepal, n.d.; Singh et al., 2021).

## 9. Conclusion

Based on the above comparative, adolescents in China and Nepal all pay attention to their body shape, and it is all according to the eating habits. Differences in thier dietary structure and local cultures have resulted in the formation of tendencies and physical problems between the two groups.

This study shows a long-term observation and a comparison of the questionnaire, after analysis the data from adolescents in China and the adolescents in Nepal. It compares the daily intake of food, freedom of their food choices, eating habits and also their body shape they desire and how they feel about now, as well as they have an different formation a nd behavior of body anxiety among teenagers in the two regions. According to all the research findings, adolescents from both countries are in the stage which is still developing, the adolescence are paying too much attention to their figures and their weight. Nevertheless, great differences can change to different results especially in social environment and internet access. Also from the food resources, economic development, their religious dietary and the culture. These can all led to completely opposite outcomes and problems related to body image physiologically. All of the datafrom the questionnaires indicates that Chinese teenagers have unlimited p food choices and enough nutrition, so food scarcity is never being concerned. Nevertheless, convenient to

eat plenty of foods and widespread of high-calorie processed products, and the effects of the social platforms, also the tendency of the beauty standards and intense body shape competition, have made most teenagers in China chasing the biased view that slimness is the best standard of beauty. Most of them struggle with body anxiety, worrying about their weight gained or not and unsatisfied with their body shapes. There are number of adolescents in China with healthy or even underweight bodies still chase an excessively slim body and wish a over weight loss.

Due to concern that are unnecessary about some external opinions and unscientific information about lossing weight or even harmful behavior in weight-loss. Such as excessive dieting, food restrictio, only drink liquids for the diets. These practices merely help teenagers to achieve the slim look by cutting down body weight. Also, these extreme behaviors will lead to poor performance of their body,even eating disorders! The fact is that this will slow down their metabolism and even make them in disorders. The method also damage their bone development because they are adolescent, they are still be able to grow. Also damage the organ function during adolescence. In the long run, these behaviors may trigger disorders, and illnesses no matter in physical or psychological terms. These will all harm to teenagers physical and mental health. Overall, the eating habits and body health problems among Chinese adolescents do not result from malnutrition, but instead, it is usually from human made health damage which caused by online pressure and misgendering of body management.

By comparison, teenagers in Nepal seldom use mobile phones, they do not have a chance to context online so they are unaffected by internet. They usually live in closed communities with narrow social networks, so they do not have stress from online things or others people's opinions. They are much more relaxed and less anxiety or harmful ways for dieting than Chinese adolescents. Most of them feel they are too thin, short and slender, and they all hope to put on weight to achieve a normal and healthy body weight. Unfortunately, local economy and strict religious keep their diets simple and with no animal meat and small amount of protein intake. In Nepal, their daily diet mainly contains cereals, vegetable and curries. Since meat is scarce and hardly afford, the teenagers gain weight in Nepal is an difficulty. Most people think that vegetarians are usually thin and healthy, although in fact, low-protein vegetarian diet will trigger some problems. Such as stunted muscle, low height and muscle loss, as well as general weakness. It may also lead to latent obesity which is caused by nutritional disorders.

In conclusion, body shape does not determine adolescents value. Healthy development and physical strength are the key things that adolescents should consider. Positive guidance is necessary to all the Chinese and Nepal adolescents. Teenagers should accept their body shape and keep an healthy lifestyle, reject extreme diets and so on. All the adolescents should develop balanced eating habits and abandoning unhealthy habits and stereotypes, so that adolescents can focus on self-growth. Also, parent and teachers should make teenagers confident and keep them in an healthy mental states.

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