

# Cooking Self-Efficacy, Perceived Health Status, and Fresh Produce Purchasing Criteria among Faculty and Staff

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## Background

- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans supports a diet rich in fruits and vegetables<sup>1</sup>
- Associations between diet and cooking skills has been noted<sup>2</sup>
- Generally, women tend to be more health conscious than men<sup>3</sup>
- University faculty and staff are a diverse group of individuals, where little research has examined health behaviors among them

## Methods

- A survey was developed based on previous work<sup>4</sup>
- Questions included cooking skills, perceived health status, benefits of produce consumption, produce purchasing criteria, and demographic data.
- Survey was online in spring of 2018
- A random representative sample of faculty and staff at a large southern university (n=175)
- Associations between cooking skills, self-health assessment, and fresh produce buying preferences were evaluated
- Independent t-tests were used to determine differences by gender

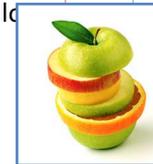


## Objective

To explore the relationship between cooking skills, health perceptions, importance of fruit and vegetable consumption, and produce purchase criteria among university faculty and staff by gender.

## Results

- The majority of respondents were female (62%), full-time university employees (91%), held a terminal degree (68%), and were on campus 5 days per week (64%)
- The importance of maintaining good health was positively correlated with the importance of eating fruits and vegetables
- Cooking skills were positively associated with grocery shopping responsibilities ( $p < 0.01$ ), shopping at the farmer's market ( $p < 0.01$ ), home gardens ( $p < 0.05$ ), and gender ( $p < 0.001$ )
- Female participants reported higher cooking skill levels, where 52% of females noted they did not need to follow a recipe to cook, with only 30% of males reporting they did not need a recipe



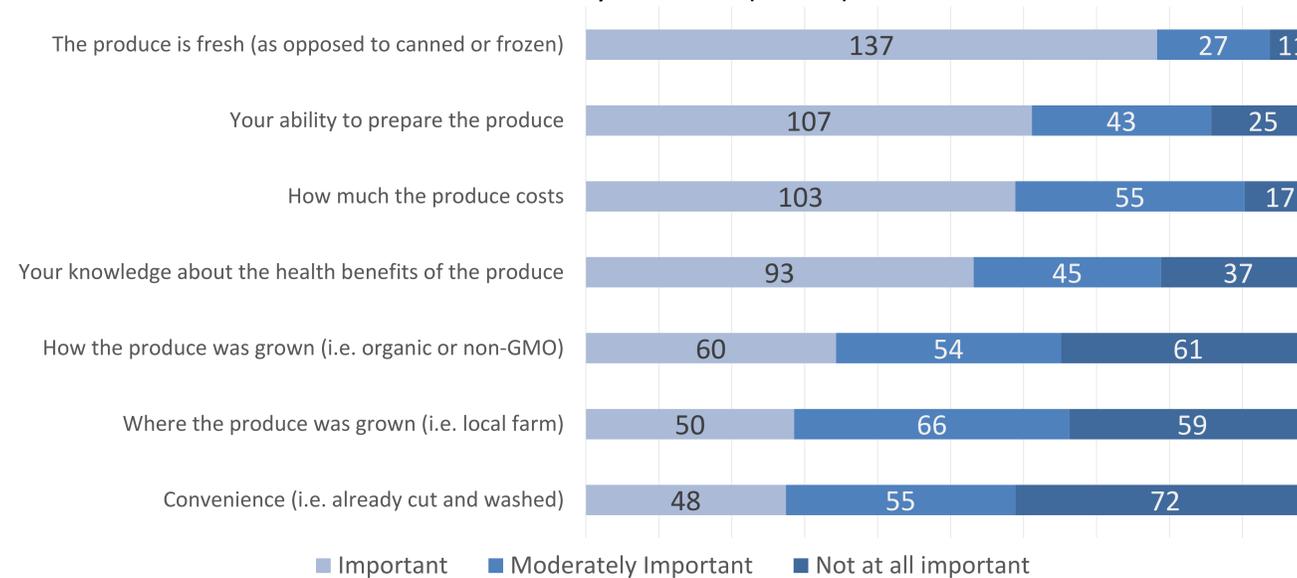
## Discussion

- Most respondents perceived themselves to be in good health
- Cooking practices correspond with home gardens and farmers markets
- The majority of females identified as having high level cooking skills which positively correlated with importance placed on fresh produce, specific purchasing preferences, and self-perceived health status
- Overall cooking skill level in this sample was high, it is likely that those interested in healthy eating were more likely to complete the survey
- Targeted culinary programming for men may be helpful

## Conclusions

- Universities could play an important role in improving fresh produce consumption among faculty and staff by providing support and resources in the form of cooking classes through university programs such as nutrition departments, university dining, and university wellness programs
- Campus sustainability programs can support community gardens and bringing farmer's markets to campus

Table. Importance Placed on Produce Purchasing Criteria as Perceived by Faculty and Staff (n=175)



## References

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