

EXPLORING MALAY GENERATIONAL WORKING WOMEN HOMEMADE DINNER COOKING PRACTICES

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Abstract: *This paper delves into the culinary habits across Malays generational working women in Malaysia, focusing on their preparation of homemade dinners. To gather insights, a purposive sampling strategy was employed to select participants for semi-structured interviews in this qualitative study. The recorded interview data underwent thorough analysis aligned with the research objectives. The findings highlight the impact of modernization, a fast-paced lifestyle, work demands, and career aspirations on how working women from different generations manage the task of preparing homemade dinners for their families. Notably, Generation X working women underscored the influence of growing up during a period when traditional gender roles were more prominent, emphasizing societal expectations regarding women's roles in domestic responsibilities. In contrast, Generation Y working women exhibit a less committed approach to homemade dinner cooking, opting for convenience foods, delivery services, and dining out. These study outcomes contribute valuable insights to the expanding body of literature on homemade cooking practices among working women, shedding light on a crucial aspect of contemporary Asian family structures.*

Keywords: *Malays generational, Malay Women, Working women, Homemade dinner, Cooking Practices*

Introduction

In the contemporary era, family life has become exceedingly hectic, intricate, and more challenging than ever before. This heightened complexity is particularly evident as family expenditures and the cost of living, whether in rural or urban settings, have experienced significant increases alongside other essential provisions for family needs (Nomaguchi, 2020; Anderson, 2014; Kuddus, 2020). Faced with these challenges, every family is earnestly grappling to meet their requirements and improve their quality of life. Scholars contend that this complexity is inevitable, given the transformative impact of the modern environment on every aspect of the world, including lifestyles, propelled by advancements in the economy, education, and technology (Tavares, 2022; Tuomi, 2018; Vale, et al. 2022).

As Morris and Madsen (2007) and Sear (2021) accentuated the processes of modernization and technological advancement exert a profound influence on family life, leading to a continuous escalation in various aspects such as commodities, utilities, and apparel. These overarching phenomena have directly precipitated changes in the structures and compositions of households, with men no longer exclusively serving as the sole breadwinners for their families. A surge in the number of women entering the workforce, driven by the imperative to address the demands of the family economy (Akitoby, et al, 2019; Cubas, 2016). USDL (2023) reported that approximately more than sixty percent of American women with children under the age of six were part of the workforce in 2022, a trend mirrored in many other countries worldwide. Women's participation in the workforce not only contributes to the family economy but also enhances national incomes and productivity (Winkler, 2022; Appelbaum, 2017; Kinoshita, 2015).

In Malaysia, the observable rise in the participation of women in the workforce during the past three decades correlates with global economic development and export-oriented industrialization (Cassey, 2019). This surge in female workforce participation is attributed to three main factors. Firstly, the expansion of the economy through the implementation of the New Economic Policy (NEP) since 1970 has generated a diverse array of job opportunities for women (Hao, 2014; Jomo, 2004). The NEP aimed to eradicate the association of race with occupation, and subsequent diversification and industrialization strategies facilitated the integration of women into modern sectors of the economy. Secondly, the promotion of equal access to education for both genders, particularly in rural areas through educational reforms, has led to an increase in the educational attainment of women. The third factor is economic demand, especially concerning rising family expenditures and the cost of living. Based on Twelfth Malaysia Plan (EMP, 2021), women constitute one-third of the Malaysian labor force (Mokhtar, 2020).

Numerous researchers argue that the increased participation of women in the workforce has not significantly shifted their household responsibilities (Cerrata, 2008; Sayer, 2005; Matteazzi, 2021; Ferrant, et al, 2015). Women are still perceived as primarily responsible for shaping their family's food habits. Wand, et al (2014) asserts that women, even those employed full-time, continue to play a central role in caregiving and food preparation. As contextual setting of the study, Generation X working women grew up during a period where gender roles were still deeply ingrained, and societal expectations often placed a heavier burden on women for domestic responsibilities (Lucas, 2015). Many women of Generation X may have been raised with a strong emphasis on cooking at home, considering it a significant aspect of their

role within the family. This generation often faced fewer alternatives or challenges to traditional gender norms, and their approach to cooking may reflect the values of that era. On the other hand, Generation Y, also known as millennials, came of age during a time of rapid technological advancements and cultural changes. This generation witnessed a greater emphasis on gender equality, with more opportunities for women in education and the workforce (Lucas, 2015). Consequently, working women of Generation Y may have different perspectives on domestic responsibilities, including homemade dinner cooking.

Considering this, it prompts critical questions about whether similar trends exist among the Malay generational working women (generation X and Y) in Malaysia with regard to homemade dinner cooking. While there has been considerable research on the changing dynamics of home cooking practices, there are still notable gaps in studies specifically focusing on working women of Generation X and Generation Y. Existing research often provides insights into broader societal shifts and changing gender roles but may not delve deeply into the nuanced experiences and perspectives of these two generations in the context of homemade cooking. One significant gap lies in the exploration of the cultural and generational influences that shape the home cooking habits of working women (Saito, et al, 2019; famer, at el, 2021; Lyon, et.al, 2011). Understanding how the cultural values of Generation X, influenced by the societal norms prevalent during their formative years, differ from the more digitally connected and culturally diverse experiences of Generation Y can provide valuable insights into their respective approaches to cooking. Another gap is the exploration of the intersectionality of factors such as socioeconomic status, cultural background, and geographical location within each generation. These factors can significantly influence the time, resources, and skills available for homemade dinner cooking. Research that considers the diverse experiences within Generation X and Generation Y can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities working women face in balancing their professional and domestic responsibilities.

Having highlighted the issue and gaps study, this research aims to investigate the homemade dinner cooking practices among generation X and Generation Y of Malay working women. This main objective is further supported with immediate objectives.

- RO 1: Compare the frequency of homemade dinner cooking between the two generations
- RO 2: Identify factors influencing homemade dinner cooking practices and meal planning decisions from both generations
- RO 3: Identify the preferred cuisines and cooking styles of both generations.
- RO4: Explore unique challenges experienced by each generation and potential coping mechanisms.

Literature Review

Food and Family

The intricate and multifaceted connection between food and family goes beyond the fundamental act of nourishment. Food emerges as a potent medium that shapes and sustains family dynamics, traditions, and identities (Erdem & Safi, 2018; Savage, et. al, 2007). Families, functioning as influential agents of socialization, wield a crucial role in shaping how individuals learn and decide on food choices. Food acts as a conduit for passing down cultural traditions, unique family dishes, and recipes, contributing significantly to the continuity of family identity

across generations (Yu, et al, 2015; Partarakis, et.al, 2012). It seamlessly integrates into daily routines and rituals, actively enacting the family, with negotiations and discussions about food forming essential components of this process. Every individual in a family assumes distinct roles in the enactment of family life related to food. This dynamic interplay of cultural, social, and personal factors weaves the intricate tapestry of familial life, highlighting the profound relationship between food and family (Perry, 2015). Despite this, the process of providing and preparing meals has long become a vehicle for strengthening familial bonds, fostering shared experiences and moments of togetherness. In various societies even in unstoppable modernity, the responsibility of feeding the family not to exaggerate still fallen on women (Anne, 2018).

Homemade Cooking and Working Women

Homemade cooking encompasses the preparation of meals from scratch, utilizing raw ingredients, and employing cooking methods and seasoning (Mill, et.al 2020; Mill, et al.2017; Costa, 2007; Wolfson, et.al. 2016). Polak, et al (2023) posited that home cooking may signify a strong engagement with the process of cooking and consuming meals within the home environment. The attributes associated with home cooking can be categorized into two groups: those linked to the act of cooking itself and those associated with the meal, such as fulfilling duties, maintaining eating habits, deriving pleasure, saving money, fostering social connections, a sense of belonging, and exercising control (Polak, et al (2023). Some scholars view homemade cooking as authentic, traditional, and reliant on individual culinary skills (Lavelle, 2016; Almansouri, 2022; Reicks · 2014) and may provide benefits for diet and health (Mills', 2017) and meals from out of home sources have been identified as a risk factor for higher energy and fat consumption, and lower micronutrient intake Lachat, 2012). Homemade cooking offers a multitude of benefits that contribute to both physical and emotional well-being. One of the primary advantages is the ability to have control over the ingredients used in meals. Home cooks can choose high-quality, fresh, and wholesome ingredients, thereby promoting a healthier diet. Additionally, home-cooked meals allow individuals to customize recipes to meet specific dietary needs, preferences, or restrictions, supporting overall nutrition (Farmer, 2021; Güler, 2021).

In line with the development of the world of all angles, homemade cooking and the challenges faced by working women are intricately connected in the modern context (Leach, 2020). According to Samad et al (2021), the expectation of societal standards regarding traditional gender roles can add to the pressure. The perception that women should excel both in their careers and homemaking can create stress and a sense of inadequacy. Many women today to balance careers alongside domestic responsibilities, including preparing meals (Cerrato, 2018). While homemade cooking offers numerous benefits, the time and energy demands it imposes can present challenges for working women. One key challenge is time constraints (Oláh, 2018; Adisa, 2021; Working women often find themselves juggling professional commitments, household chores, and family responsibilities. The time required for planning, shopping, and preparing meals at home can become a significant concern (Sarda, 2022; Reicks, 2014). This pressure may influence choices related to homemade cooking, with some women opting for quicker meal solutions or even relying on takeout to manage their busy schedules (Farmer, 2021; Wang · 2014). As a result, there is a tendency to opt for convenience foods or dining or buying out, which, while timesaving, may not always align with health and nutrition goals (Srinivasan and Shende, 2015). Samad et al (2021) deduced that due time constraints, reducing

cooking time and minimizing preparation processes, working women used food enhancers to enhance the flavor and taste of the home cooking dishes for the family dinner.

Cooking and Malay Women

In Malay culture, the art of cooking is deeply embedded in the daily lives of women, making it a prevalent and cherished norm (Sharif, et. al,2021). Cooking transcends the practicality of nourishment, evolving into a cultural cornerstone where Malay women showcase their culinary skills with pride and passion (Perry, 2015). Rooted in tradition, the kitchen becomes a symbolic space for the preservation of cultural identity, as recipes and cooking techniques are handed down through generations (Sharif, et. al,2021). This transfer of culinary knowledge is not merely a practical exchange but a profound form of connection, fostering a sense of continuity and shared heritage within the family. While societal dynamics are evolving, with increasing recognition of men's participation in culinary activities, the role of Malay women in the kitchen remains prominent. Cooking is regarded as a labor of love, a means through which women express care, creativity, and tradition. The kitchen is a vibrant arena where the aromas of spices and the sizzle of ingredients tell stories of familial bonds and shared experiences. Malay women take pride in mastering traditional recipes, often passed down from grandmothers and mothers, contributing to the richness of the community's gastronomic tapestry (Ishak, et, 2019). Despite this, the wave of modernization not only significantly influenced the employment landscape for Malay women but in the realm of cooking as well. Traditionally confined to domestic kitchens, Malay women are now seizing opportunities beyond traditional roles (Rahman, et al, 2018).

Methodology

Sample and population

In this exploratory investigation, a grounded theory or inductive approach is employed, emphasizing the construction of a framework derived from gathered data rather than the validation of existing theories. The study adopts a qualitative interview methodology and focuses on a specific population—working women spanning two generations in Malaysia, namely Generation X and Y. To be eligible for participation in the interview, respondents must be a full-time working woman. For generation X, they should be aged between 41 to 60 years old, while for generation Y, individuals aged between 27 to 40 with both at least one child living in the household and residing in the Klang Valley area. The age criteria align with the parameters defined by Kraus (2017).

The interview employed a purposive sampling strategy, and theoretical saturation served as a method to ensure the adequacy of collected data from the sample. Potential respondents were identified through personal contacts and assistance from friends. To capture the characteristics of the Klang Valley population, seven respondents from various areas, including Kuala Lumpur, Shah Alam, Petaling Jaya, Subang Jaya, Cheras, Kajang, and Kelang, were selected. Given the seven locations in the Klang Valley, a predetermined sample of 35 respondents in each generational group of working women was established. This means that 70 working women were involved in this study. Subsequently, these individuals were contacted via telephone, seeking, and obtaining permission for interviews. The scheduling of interview dates and times accommodated the convenience and preferences of the working women, necessitating a high degree of flexibility on the part of the researcher.

Interview questions

Semi-structured interview questions were employed to gather comprehensive data and gain insight into the research phenomenon. These open-ended inquiries were chosen to prevent potential bias in responses and to explore rather than dictate information. The formulation of the research guide was guided by the study specifications and relevant literature review. In Table I, a compilation of primary questions derived from the research guide is presented. The interview questions cover a range of topics, including respondents' demographic profiles, the frequency of engaging in homemade cooking, preferred cuisine, and cooking styles, and the differences in how each generation values homemade dinner cooking. Due to variations in educational levels among participants, the Malay language version of the semi-structured questions was utilized, having been translated from the English version provided by a language expert.

Table 1. Primary Questions from the Research Guide.

Topic	Primary Questions
Compare The Frequency Of Homemade Dinner Cooking Between The Two Generational Of Working Women	1. Do You Daily Perform Homemade Dinner Cooking And What Factors Influencing Your Decision?
Identify The Preferred Cuisines And Cooking Styles Of Both Generations.	1. Are There Specific Dishes Or Cuisines That Hold Cultural Significance In Your Meal Planning Decision? 2. How Elaborate Is Your Cooking?
Explore The Differences In How Your Generation Values Homemade Dinner Cooking Compared To The Other Generation?	1. Do You Believe There Are Differences In How Your Generation Values Home Cooking Compared To The Other Generation? 2. What Are The Unique Challenges Experienced In Your Generation In Coping With The Homemade Cooking?

Information Gathering and Analysis

Conducting face-to-face interviews set the stage for a rigorous exploration. Prior to each session, participants were explicitly informed of the voluntary nature of their involvement, assuring them of strict confidentiality and anonymity. Written consent was diligently obtained. The interviews, meticulously tape-recorded and averaging one and a half hours each, underwent immediate transcription upon conclusion. Generation X respondents aged 41 to 60, and Generation Y participants, aged 27 to 40, spanned both government and private sectors, predominantly operating in the Klang Valley with a daily commute of 20km to 30km. Aligning with Bryman's (2016) imperative regarding the timeliness of transcription, the recorded data were promptly transcribed post in-depth interviews. Beyond capturing the exact words of core respondents, crucial contextual elements like hesitation, ambient noise, and linguistic nuances were meticulously documented to preclude data outliers, biased judgments, and other potential impacts on findings. The subsequent manual coding process, coupled with qualitative analysis using ATLAS.ti version 8, followed both inductive and deductive approaches. Narrative

analysis is used where understanding subjective experiences and the complexity of human behavior is essential. Ensuring content validity involves thorough verification procedures encompassing generational respondents, well-documented processes, and meticulous documentation. Inter-rate reliability tests were scrutinized and deemed acceptable.

Results

Recognizing the indispensability of flexibility in comprehending how individuals present themselves and articulate experiences, this qualitative research purposefully embraced flexibility. This approach was crafted to unearth unforeseen insights, intricate patterns, and nuanced meanings that might elude a more rigid analytical framework. Throughout the analysis, the name of those who participated is not disclosed to preserve confidentiality; however, they are known as “Gen X Women and Gen Y Women”.

Frequency of homemade Dinner cooking between the two generations

Performing a Homemade Dinner cooking and factors influencing the decision.

From the gathered answers, both X and Y Malay generational working women generally admitted the decision to engage homemade dinner cooking every day varied among individuals. Most generation X of working women however, emphasized being grew up in a time when traditional gender roles were more pronounced, and societal expectations placed a greater emphasis on women's involvement in domestic duties, homemade dinner cooking habit somewhat intact with their generation. In general, homemade cooking outweighs the other convenient cooking or cooking using convenience food products or eating out. On the other hand, many of generation Y working women, declared that they were influenced by societal changes and a shift toward more egalitarian views, may not feel bound by traditional gender roles. Their generation commonly witnessed an increased focus on individualism, career pursuits, and a fast-paced lifestyle. As a result, in addition to homemade dinner cooking they also inclined to seek convenient alternatives such as takeout, meal delivery services, or pre-packaged meals. In other words, they are not regularly engaging in homemade dinner cooking as part of their domestic duties.

".... experienced traditional gender roles where women were expected to handle domestic responsibilities, I have developed my skills and habits related to homemade cooking thus, used to performing dinner cooking after work. No doubt tiring after being more than eight hours in the office as age catching up, but things disappear and happy when even a simple homemade food is eaten by my husband and teenager children. My daughter often assists me. In short, besides work, homemade dinner cooking is part of my responsibility and routine. I would say 90 percent of the homemade dinner cooking perform per month....." Gen X Women 2

".... Honestly, being busy with work and career, I had to maintain a life balance between work and household tasks. So, even though I engage with homemade dinner cooking, it doesn't become a routine. It is in actual fact depends on mood and on average, besides homemade cooking, I am likely also prioritizing convenience and time efficiency thus, turning into alternatives meal for family and children....." Gen Y Women 6

Factors influencing generational working women decision to engage homemade dinner cooking are multifaceted and vary based on individual cultural background, personal preferences, the pursuit of a balanced, socioeconomic status and lifestyle choices. Both generational working women stressed that the desire to maintain a healthy and personalized diet for themselves, and children motivates homemade daily cooking. They view it as a means of ensuring nutritional well-being and fostering a sense of connection through shared meals and found satisfaction in providing nutritious, homemade meals for their families, viewing it as a way to contribute to the well-being of their loved ones. It serves as a means of expressing creativity and maintaining a sense of tradition in an ever-changing world. Some of both generational working women posited that homemade dinner cooking allowing them to have control over ingredients and nutritional content. In addition, economic considerations, and the desire to save money also play a role, as home cooked meals can be more cost-effective than other means or dining out. It is interesting to note despite the increased participation of women in the workforce, many particularly generation X of working women find joy, satisfaction in preparing meals, homemade cooking can be a source of stress relief and a way to unwind from the demands of a busy workday. On the other hand, generation Y of working women claimed that career demands, time constraints, and familial obligations (small children) found it impractical to perform homemade cooking every day thus, led some to opt for alternative solutions, such as shared responsibilities with husband or relying on convenient meal options. Few respondents of generation Y deduced that their generation has been characterized by certain trends, valuing experiences, embracing technology, and seeking work-life balance. They are known to appreciate convenience and may use technology to facilitate various aspects of their lives, including food choices. Some working women in this generation may prioritize quick and convenient meal options due to busy schedules or may engage in meal-prep strategies that align with their lifestyle. The prevalence of dual-income households and the rise of convenience-oriented food options contribute to a more flexible attitude towards meal preparation. Factors like busier lifestyles, dual-income households, and a greater acceptance of diverse family structures contribute to a decreased emphasis on regular homemade cooking among Generation Y working women. Below are the few responses given by the informants.

".... Juggling office responsibilities, the preparation of a homemade dinner is a non-negotiable commitment in my household. Guided by my late mother's wisdom, I've embraced the idea that, despite a busy schedule, providing nourishment through my own cooking is an indispensable duty. As a working woman and mother, the inability to cook for my husband and children brings about a sense of frustration. I firmly assert that my culinary efforts serve as a vital link, fortifying the bonds within my family. Beyond practical considerations such as cost savings and personal preferences, it is commitment to family unity that propels me to undertake homemade dinner cooking..." Gen X Women 20

".... Recognizing the manifold advantages of homemade cooking, spanning familial well-being, economic prudence, and nutritional richness, I proactively shoulder the responsibility of crafting homemade dinners at least twice a week after work. This commitment is driven primarily by my dedication to ensuring the well-being of my children. However, when confronted with the demands of a frenetic work schedule and time constraints, I adopt a pragmatic approach, opting for quick and convenient meals that, importantly, steer clear of unhealthy junk food. This

adaptive approach reflects the prevailing mindset and practices of today's generation Y working women..." Gen Y women 12

The preferred cuisines and cooking styles of both generations

Specific dishes or cuisines in meal planning decisions

In response to this question, both X and Y generational working women sharing almost an identical view. In the dinner homemade meal planning decisions, dishes prepared often reflect a blend of tradition and modernity. Both generations working women admitted they were shaped by a diverse cultural landscape, thus, frequently integrate the traditional and modern elements into their homemade meals. As rice is a fundamental component for almost every meal in Malay culture, it is served for dinner and accompanied by simple and easy sides dishes but nutritious. Due to cultural significance and flavorful profiles, a simple combination either *sambal tumis* (sauteed chilies paste) or fried fish, or fried chicken, gravy (*gulai*) and vegetables are a few examples. As an alternative, fried rice with fried eggs and noodles either mee or meehon and soup are sometimes prepared. However, aligned with the influence of global cuisines, making them open to experimenting with diverse flavors of international dishes in which both generation of working women, generation X in particular claimed that the modern elements are strongly integrated. Spaghetti, pizza, lasagna are examples of popular global cuisine. Besides, fish ball, breaded fish, chicken wing, crab meat are also the option.

".... When managing teenage children's food preferences, I simply go along with their choices, emphasizing simplicity and speed using the available stock. Our dinner usually revolves around rice and straightforward side dishes, establishing a consistent routine. Options like noodles, fried rice, and contemporary dishes also make the cut, often prepared with enthusiasm by my daughter. I believe women of my age, need a balancing work responsibilities, share a parallel pattern of opting for homemade dinner meals....." Gen X Women 22

".... Honestly, when it comes to my family dinner menu, simplicity is a key. It largely depends on the fridge contents, following our weekly plan. I've instilled the habit in my children to avoid heavy meals during dinner. Typically, we opt for fried fish or chicken with vegetables, which proves to be satisfying. When time is limited, my go-to options include fried rice, noodles, or fried meehoon. I can confidently say that we also incorporate convenient and straightforward western dishes into our repertoire..... " Gen X Women 13

Intricacies of Homemade cooking

Driven by a combination of practicality, time constraints, and the desire to balance work and family responsibilities, both generational working women commonly opt for simple homemade dinner cooking. The culinary practices of these women reflect a pragmatic and time-conscious approach, acknowledging the demands of their professional lives, thus, the preparation of homemade dinner meals is notably emphasis on simplicity and efficiency. Simple homemade cooking allows for quicker and more efficient meal planning, ensuring that their family is well-fed without compromising on nutritional value and sacrificing precious time needed for other responsibilities. Some claimed to adopt convenience foods or meal kit services to streamline the cooking process, finding a balance between the ease of preparation and the desire for home-

cooked meals. Weekday cooking may involve batch cooking allowing for reheated meals during the work week. While elaborate homemade dinners may be reserved for weekends or special occasions, the pragmatic approach during the workweek reflects a balance between the desire for wholesome, home-cooked meals and the practical realities of a busy professional life.

".... Quick and easy-to-cook meals may become go-to choices to accommodate time constraints. For me, dinner is a complementary nutrient that is insufficient during the day such as the consumption of light food such as vegetables, fruits and dairy. Many working mothers that having teenagers' children may involve them in meal preparation, turning it into a collaborative and educational experience. This not only helps in sharing the workload but also imparts valuable cooking skills to the younger generation....." Gen X Women 35

".....For me and most working women of my generation, work conditions and time spent going back and forth from home and children do not allow much time to prepare an elaborate homemade dinner cooking for the family. To me, dinner serves as a concluding the day, providing nutritional needs and maintaining energy levels for the evening hours. Moreover, dinner often serves as a communal or familial gathering, fostering social connections and providing an opportunity for kids to share their day or school experiences.....Thus, simple food is sufficient ..."
Gen X Women 26

Generational working women value homemade cooking

Values of homemade cooking: Generation X Versus Generation Y of working Women

Based on the information gathered, there are discernible differences in how Generation X and Generation Y working women value the homemade cooking. Generation X, born roughly between 1965 and 1980, feel they are more attached to traditional approach, appreciating the significance of homemade cooked meals as a symbol of family and stability. Many individuals from this generation grew up in households where homemade meals were the norm, thus in a way carrying these values into their own families despite as well embracing convenience cooking and others equivalent with it. Additionally, they slightly place a higher emphasis on health and wellness, leading to preferences for fresh ingredients. On the other hand, Generation Y, or Millennials, born between 1981 and 1996, strongly claimed it is not that they do not espousal with the homemade dinner cooking, but not practice it as often as the generation Y or fulltime housewife and due to various reasons often prioritizes convenience and flexibility. Growing up in the digital age, this generation has easier access to food delivery services and a plethora of online recipes, influencing a more tech-savvy and time-efficient approach to meal preparation. In sum, these generational distinctions can be attributed to evolving societal norms, technological advancements, and changing perspectives on work-life balance. However, it's crucial to note that individual variations and unique circumstances significantly shape the attitudes of working women within each generation.

".... Mind you, homemade cooking has become part of my life routine. I have been brought up that way. Shame if I don't prepare homemade dinner cooking for my

family even with simple ones. This does not mean I reject convenience cooking. What I can say convenience cooking just as a relief....."Gen X Women 10

".....I do not deny on the benefits of homemade cooking from various angles, but due to some insistence, I cannot often practice them. With work demand and small kids, the continuity in preparing homemade dinner cooking is quite limited. Thus, I value the convenience cooking as well ... " Gen X Women 18

The unique challenges experienced in your generation in coping with homemade cooking?

Related to this question, both generations share a common struggle in balancing time and priorities, but the nature of their challenges is shaped by the unique socio-cultural contexts in which they have matured. Some of Generation X women admitted that they often grapple with the pressures of the sandwich generation, where they are simultaneously caring for their own families and supporting the aging parents. This dual responsibility although creates time constraints and adds to the challenges but still dedicates time to homemade dinner cooking. Additionally, lingering traditional gender roles from their upbringing in a way influence household responsibilities and cooking. On the other hand, Generation Y claimed that one significant factor is the fast-paced lifestyle that many millennial leads, often marked by demanding work schedules, social commitments, and a constant need for connectivity. This leaves limited time for planning and preparing meals at home, dinner cooking in particular. The prevalence of convenience foods and fast-food culture has influenced their generation's eating habits, making the transition to homemade cooking seem more cumbersome. Moreover, the rise of food delivery apps and pre-packaged meal options provides quick alternatives, discouraging them from investing time and effort in preparing their own meals. As a result, the challenge for Generation Y lies not only in finding time to cook but also in redefining their relationship with food to prioritize health and sustainability over convenience.

".... Although managing children may be a little less compared to when we were in the mid-30's, taking care of the housework including preparing the homemade dinner cooking is not cut off just like that. Balancing work with being a mother is a challenge for one. My family, especially my husband, does not really embrace convenient food products. He too adores with homemade cooking. Thus, how busy I am but still perform the homemade dinner cooking"Gen X Women 23

"..... For me as a young mother, there are a lot of challenges facing in regard to homemade dinner cooking, in particular. Work schedule, career, children are the obvious ones. Although having maid, integrating all these factors to me little bit hard which limits the room for homemade dinner cooking preparation"Gen Y Women 7

Discussion

Few important things can be learned from the findings of this study. The wave of modernization to some extent affects how generational working women deal with the process of preparing homemade cooking for the family. Growing up in a transitional period, generation X of working women despite modernity, tied with work matters but due traditional gender roles during their upbringing continue to practice homemade dinner cooking after the working hours. This finding

supports Lyon (2011) and Cerrato (2018) that experiences of older women in earlier years have significantly influenced their attitudes and practices related to cooking. These women, often shouldering the responsibilities of managing household budgets and making ends meet during challenging economic times, developed a strong emphasis on frugality and resourcefulness. This is contrary to the view of generation Y working women in which a fast-paced lifestyle, working demand, career pursuits, distance from the office, small children make them less committed towards homemade cooking practices. As noted by Cerrato & Cifre (2018); Plickert & Sterling (2017) and Schaner & Das (2016) the increase of young women in the workforce had resulted in a considerable shift in household responsibilities including cooking. Samad et.al (2021) and Zhong et al., (2018) in fact noted that there is a changing attitudes and motives among young working women regarding food preparation.

It is interesting to note that the intersection of convenience food, delivery services, and the trend of buying meals out has significantly impacted the lives of working women (Jun, 2021; Srinivasan and Shende, 2015; Gupta, 2016). In today's fast-paced world, where time is a precious commodity, convenience has become a key factor in daily decision-making. The rise of ready-to-eat meals, home delivery options, and the popularity of buying out have provided a practical solution for busy working women who often juggle multiple responsibilities. These services not only offer a time-saving alternative to traditional home-cooked meals but also cater to the evolving preferences and demands of modern lifestyles. Although conveniences enhance efficiency and flexibility, high in preservatives, unhealthy fats, sodium, and added sugars, contributing to potential health concerns such as obesity, cardiovascular issues, and other lifestyle-related diseases (Clemente-Suárez · 2023; Lichtenstein, 2021; de Deus Mendonça, 2016). Indeed, result of this study indicated that generation X of working women appears to exhibit a greater inclination towards embracing convenience food, home delivery services, and buying out as an alternative for homemade cooking. The demands of modern careers and hectic schedules often leave limited time for meal preparation, prompting a reliance on readily available options compared to generation Y working women. This study revealed that this generation tends to prioritize personalization and control over their diets, recognizing the health benefits associated with preparing meals at home. The shift towards conscious and mindful eating has led many in Generation Y to view home cooking not only as a means of ensuring healthier food choices but also as a way to foster connections, explore culinary creativity, and align with a more sustainable and mindful lifestyle. Finally, the study's insights contribute significantly to our understanding of the intricate interplay between societal changes, gender roles, and culinary practices within the context of modern Asian families.

Conclusion

The advent of modernization and the technological era has undeniably reshaped the roles and priorities of generational working women, notably influencing their engagement with household tasks, including cooking. As we transition into an age defined by advanced technology and evolving career pursuits, the traditional division of labor within households has undergone a significant transformation. The accessibility of time-saving appliances, online resources, and innovative cooking technologies not only adjusting domestic responsibilities but require working women to balance career pursuits with household duties more effectively. A hectic pace of life, job requirements, professional ambitions, work situations, and kids in a way destruct working women to manage their time efficiently in dealing with daily homemade dinner cooking routines. Consequently, generational working women find it challenging to

navigate the intricate balance between professional aspirations and domestic responsibilities in this contemporary landscape.

Authors' contributions

SKAB contributed 40% of the work, MSMZ contributed 30% of the work, NMSNMN contributed 10% of the work, MNAA contributed 10% of the work and FF contributed 10% of the work. Moreover, all authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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