

“A crisis like no other”: A practice theory approach to young adults’ food practices in times of crisis

by

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Abstract

As Sorokin (1943) remarkably maintained, crises ‘offer an opportunity to examine many aspects of social life which in normal times are hidden’. Disrupting the unreflective, habitual everyday life, crises make embedded routines and practices perceptible and thus open to explicit observations and discussions. The Covid-19 pandemic has been one such crisis that has not only challenged the resilient, taken-for-granted nature of practices and ‘routinized types of behavior’, but has shifted the focus from explicit and conspicuous consumption to the dynamics of mostly inconspicuous habits.

Extant literature suggests that as young adults start to live independently, their everyday food and eating practices are disrupted. The processes associated with personal food production being complex and time-consuming, are further constrained by their living arrangements, access to food options, and budgetary constraints. Thus, their food behavior is largely comprised of out-of-home food service options, convenience eating, and episodic cooking at home. In this light, the present research investigates what happens when the invisible dynamics of everyday food practices and routines are disrupted, and how do young consumers reconfigure their food practices as they transition through uncertainty and crisis situations.

The study adopts a practice-theoretical lens to examine the misalignments that arise in young people’s food practice configurations, and how do they negotiate possible tensions to realign the practice-constituting elements: materials, meanings, and competencies for the smooth performance of their food consumption practices. The study uses the research methodology of digital ethnography combined with interactive online food diaries and semi-structured interviews employing projective techniques with 22 participants.

The findings of the study highlight the centrality of materials due to deficient materiality and ensuing practice misalignments in the wake of the crisis and lockdown mandates (e.g., social distancing, mobility restrictions, deroutinization, etc.). The results also shed light on how participants realign their practices within new material configurations and readjust their meanings and competences to resolve tensions resulting from misaligned food practices. Overall, this study contributes to a burgeoning body of literature on consumer research in social theory, crisis consumption, disruption, and studies on dietary practices of young adults. It also responds to the demand for empirical applications of practice theory, as well as practice (mis)alignment and reconfiguration. These findings provide both conceptual insights and practical implications for policymakers, consumer researchers, and social marketers, and present perspectives that can lead to sustainable, practice-oriented consumption interventions promoting healthy eating behaviors among

young people, not only during exogenous events like a crisis or natural disaster but also in their later lives.

Attestation of authorship

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgments), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.”

Divya Tewari

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Ethics approval

Ethics approval from AUT University Ethics Committee (AUTEC) was granted on 11th August 2021, for a period of three years until 11 August 2024. The ethics application number is 21/269 (see Appendix A for Ethics Approval Letter).

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to study how the outbreak of the Covid-19 crisis and associated lockdown restrictions have disrupted the food practices of young adults. The first part provides a background review of the emerging literature exploring the changing routines and relations in lifestyle, diet, and consumption practices, during this ongoing crisis. Next, the problem statement is discussed in detail to stress the theoretical gaps and to set the scene for the research. This is followed by the research aim and research question together with the theoretical approach and overall direction of the research including the application of practice theory. Subsequently, I discuss the significant contributions of the study. Lastly, this chapter concludes with specifics of the organization of this dissertation.

1.2 Background

W. I. Thomas famously defined “crisis” as an event that “interrupts the flow of habit and gives rise to changed conditions of consciousness and practice” (quoted in Schütz (1944, p. 502). Extreme events and natural disasters, such as earthquakes and tsunamis, financial meltdowns, and health crises like SARS and Ebola, carry a long tail behind them, demanding a re-ordering of the rhythm of social life and protracted adjustment to habitualized routines. In broad terms, a crisis has been recognized as an unanticipated development leading to uncertainty, threatening day-to-day routines, and putting at risk the accomplishment of tasks (Kutak, 1938). Thus, crises disrupt the unreflective, habitual everyday life, and instigate change. The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has been one such crisis that has precipitously overthrown what Nicolini (2012, p. 3) calls “the natural order of things”. Given its scale, dynamic and effect, this unprecedented global disaster has not only challenged the resilient, ‘taken for granted’ nature of practices and “routinized types of behavior” (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 249) but has to a point, halted “the production/reproduction of ongoing lives and the contexts in which they proceed” (Schatzki, 2016, p. 19).

Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, described Covid-19 as “a crisis like no other” (Hassan et al., 2022). In 2020, as Covid-19 evolved from an isolated virus in the Wuhan city of China to a global health crisis, it dramatically changed the world, reshaped social interactions, and impacted the dynamics of consumption in lasting ways. The Covid-19 pandemic has imposed a serious threat to public health across the world (World Health

Organization, 2020). To prevent the spread of the virus, many countries adopted unprecedented measures such as lockdowns that consisted of quarantines, self-isolation and confinement, and mobility restrictions such as working/studying from home, border blockades, closure or restrained functioning of non-essential commercial activities, limitations on personal freedom, and social distancing rules (Sims et al., 2022). While these actions have been effective in reducing the number of cases, they disrupted every aspect of life, including people's consumption patterns and culinary behaviors (Eftimov et al., 2020; Filimonau et al., 2021; Güney & Sangün, 2021). Changes in disposable income, structural variations in time availability due to sheltering at home, altered ways of food shopping and procurement, and the closure of many restaurants, takeaway shops, and online food service options – compelled most individuals to prep, cook, and consume all their meals at home.

Academic research has been undertaken to shed light on the changes in the rapidly emerging food paradigm during this ongoing crisis and how people buy, prepare and store food (Ben Hassen et al., 2021; Ellison et al., 2021; Marinković & Lazarević, 2021). Studies have also examined changes in consumer preferences, mode of shopping, and the composition of the shopping basket (Csiszárík-Kocsir et al., 2021; Grashuis et al., 2020; Pollak et al., 2022). As with any crisis, wide-ranging uncertainty about the implications of the pandemic was prevalent. Vis-à-vis food, people had limited or uncertain access to adequate food supply, resulting in short-term panic buying and stockpiling behavior (Hall et al., 2021; Lehberger et al., 2021; Loxton et al., 2020). Various practices of consumption like the noon-time meal at the workplace or college cafeteria were displaced from their instituted settings and channeled into homes (Holmes et al., 2021). People also adjusted their eating routines to fit their work requirements and other commitments while working or studying from home online. With restrictions on movement and apprehensions about proximity to other people in stores effected change in shopping habits, such as reduced number of supermarket visits, buying food in larger quantities, and switching to online grocery shopping (Alaimo et al., 2020; Gerritsen et al., 2021; Skotnicka et al., 2021).

Even though external restrictions precipitated changes in consumer behavior, the fear of contagion and the general perception of the pandemic situation (Goolsbee & Syverson, 2021; Immordino et al., 2022), social alienation, and the barrage of stories about the spread of the virus on social media (Arslan et al., 2021; Di Renzo et al., 2020) further contributed to it. Specific stressors, like poor sleep quality, and symptoms of depression and anxiety were reported, especially among young people (Emery et al., 2021; Yıldırım & Arslan, 2020). Extant literature has established that eating behavior can get affected by stress and negative emotions, fluctuating both the choice of food, and the increase or decrease in the amount of food intake (Macht & Simons, 2000; Reichenberger et al., 2018; Scott & Johnstone, 2012). Both favorable and unfavourable consumption changes were recorded, including increases in the frequency of meal consumption, and processed food and snacks consumption, whereas on the contrary, more home cooking, culinary experimentation, and greater

consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables were found (Aksoy et al., 2021; Caso et al., 2022; Esobi et al., 2020; Gordon-Wilson, 2021; Werneck et al., 2021) Weight changes were also observed during lockdown due to stress (Bhutani & Cooper, 2020; Sadler et al., 2021) other than changes in consumption of food types, or snacking behavior (Scarmozzino & Visioli, 2020; Trofholz et al., 2021; Zachary et al., 2020).

Although, as detailed above, the research in the context of the pandemic crisis has investigated changes in the food environment – the studies are primarily focused on consumption in terms of “good” or “bad” foods, often equating food with nutrition and assessing its impact on mood, behavior, weight, and related health outcomes. However, understandings of these emerging food environments and behaviors based on recent studies are often static and overlook how foodscapes are produced and how social interactions, dietary patterns, and food routines are coordinated around them (Southerton et al., 2012; Yates & Warde, 2017). Therefore, more research is needed to understand the dynamics of everyday food practices as a routinized activity engrained in the course of activities, events, and relations.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Given the complexity and fundamental nature of food, it is an interesting subject for studying the dynamics of routinized actions and consumption practices. Food plays a central role in shaping consumers' daily lives and routines and furthering social relationships. Several studies have shown how different food practices, including shopping, cooking, eating, and waste management – are well coordinated in blocks or chains and are usually tightly interwoven, one dependent on the other (Halkier & Jensen, 2011; Sahakian & Wilhite, 2014; Spurling et al., 2013). Yet, while food consumption as a routinized activity is well understood, little is known about these interconnected factors impacting these everyday habits surrounding food and thereby changing the dynamics of routines.

Previous studies have explored how individuals cope with a variety of factors that dynamically and complicatedly influence food decision-making and behaviors identified with family mealtimes. In a study by Jastran et al. (2009), the research participants coordinated their eating routines, including when and how family meals were carried out, what, where, and how often they ate, who was responsible for preparing meals, and who all participated in meals, e.g., children, extended kin, based on school, work plans, household responsibilities, and leisure activities. Participants' food routine decisions were rooted in personal food choice values, such as saving time, eating healthy, mealtime as family time and their eating routines were flexible and adjustable considering the situations, curtailments, and opportunities that presented in different contexts.

In a recent study, Dyen et al. (2018) discuss the organization of daily food practices, and how a change can be brought in the routines that develop and via which factors. Based on qualitative research of the food practices of a household, employing a practice theoretical lens, this study demonstrates that practices are systematized to varying extents. The degree of systematization of practices, in turn, refers to concerns related to time, commitment, social connections, and materiality. The food activities entangled in routinely constructed lives are particularly difficult to change. To understand how to change these habitual routines produced every day, for example, to address societal challenges, like sustainable eating, food waste, etc., an understanding of the dynamics of food routines is critical.

While the majority of literature in the field of the sociology of food focuses on the general population, parent-child relationships, and family meals (Dyen et al., 2018; Fiese et al., 2006; Jastran et al., 2009), the studies focused on the young adult cohort is sparse. Bosco et al. (2017) argue for a more nuanced approach to how young consumers experience their foodscapes and respond to their environments, especially if food supplies are deficient (e.g. in ‘food deserts’). The study places a relational focus on the role that food-specific sites (e.g., grocery stores, local fruit and vegetable markets, restaurants, and street food venues in the neighborhood) play in reproducing or challenging the sociospatial disparity of local food landscapes and accentuates how material constraints and social relations structure these connections.

As is evident, existing work has examined consumption practices and food behaviors within a framework of ongoing routines, engagements, and performances constituting social life. However, the above-mentioned literature does not give much consideration to what happens when the organization of practices contributing to food gets disrupted. Consumer-level scrutiny of how disruptions related to the practices of food consumption are managed is under-theorized, specifically where disruptions stem from natural disasters as seen in the case of the Covid-19 pandemic crisis.

Most everyday behaviors are considered part of “practices” – perceived as the performance of adaptable actions and the use of objects and materiality, interconnected by competences and practical understandings and the conception of meanings (Arsel & Bean, 2013; Schatzki, 2001). It is through repeated performances that a practice is ‘habituated’ (Thomas & Epp, 2019) when the interconnections between the three practice elements: meanings, materials, and competences become stable (Shove & Pantzar, 2005; Shove et al., 2012a). Practice configurations are based on recurrent reproduction of identical materials, meanings, and competences (Shove et al., 2012a). Conversely, practices are dynamic, capable of evolving and changing. Alterations in any of these practice-constituting elements also bring about changes in the performance of the practice (Hand et al., 2005; Shove et al., 2012a). A practice configuration sustains so long as meanings, materials, and competences are aligned. However, practices can be disrupted, causing a misalignment of the practice

elements (Phipps & Ozanne, 2017). A misaligned element needs to be paid attention to as it can hinder the smooth performance of practices (Woermann & Rokka, 2015). When misalignment occurs, Thomas and Epp (2019, p. 566) point out that consideration must be given to bring “practice elements back into alignment with one another”.

For example, Arsel and Bean (2013) conceptualize taste as an everyday practice, that is performed reflexively and affirms meaningful boundaries, creating a social distinction. Through the notion of taste regime, they capture the connection between aesthetic and action - measures that portray consuming homes, in particular. This conception of taste regime demonstrates the alignment of objects, meanings, and doings in an aesthetic set-up, and engages consumers in pursuits of problematizing (enquiring the relations of material objects with the meanings of taste regime), ritualizing (implementing behaviors to align materials and doings) and instrumentalizing (engaging materials and doings to actualize meanings).

In contrast, Canniford and Shankar (2013) investigated the disruptions in surfing practices caused due to dualism between nature and culture and recognized that the contradictions in consumers’ embodied and sensorial processes in surfing were overcome through purifying practices that were incorporated using material technologies. Woermann and Rokka (2015) consider temporality as a characteristic feature of consumption. In their examination of how consumers’ temporal experiences are shaped by day-to-day consumption practices, they determine that misalignment of practice elements prompts feelings of temporal drag or rush closely related to experiences of boredom or stress. Thus, past studies (Canniford & Shankar, 2013; Woermann & Rokka, 2015) have foregrounded that within consumer practices – the body must also align.

Further, past research outlines that consumers’ practices are oftentimes destabilized, when routines are disrupted. Phipps and Ozanne (2017) studied how consumers sought to reinstate new dynamics of gardening practices to overcome disruptions caused by water scarcity during a drought, to regain a sense of security in water usage. However, many consumption practices were blocked by obdurate materialities, for instance, the ability to conserve water was limited by outmoded washing machines. As a means to re-establish stability within their domestic practices, consumers were often impelled to readjust or create new routines. This points to the fact that consumer practices may get destabilized due to material inefficiencies, and that consumers will find a way around so as to realign their practices. In a recent study, Thomas and Epp (2019) discuss how possible misalignments and tactics to realign meanings, competences and materialities need to be considered while planning and adopting new parenting practices. As shown in other studies (Magaudha, 2011; Phipps & Ozanne, 2017; Shove & Pantzar, 2005; Woermann & Rokka, 2015), it is through a process of altering, adjusting, incorporating, or eliminating elements in such a way that practices are reconfigured and ‘(re)habitualized’.

While it is acknowledged that practices change in due course and that in the process of changing, a crucial role is played by practice constituting elements, “little research examines the attunement of practices as they stabilize” (Phipps & Ozanne, 2017, p. 377). In view of this gap, scholars (e.g., Phipps & Ozanne, 2017; Thomas & Epp, 2019) have time and again called for more research on understanding how practices are adapted in the changing organization of everyday lives.

Next, the practices studied in extant work were, in most cases, well established; or in Thomas and Epp (2019), it is a newly adopted practice. Nevertheless, in both cases, consumers had clarity of perception of what the practice should be, which guided and informed their reconfiguration process. Following a disruption and misalignment in their practices, all of these consumers strove to reorganize their practices in consonance with either their previous form or their envisioned form. However, not all misaligned practices can be smoothly placed in one of these two brackets. In the case of young adults, transitioning the state of liminality that Turner (1977, p. 37) characterizes as “between and betwixt”, a blurry boundary between adolescence and adulthood — their practices are still a work in progress, neither here nor there. Speaking of food, although anchored in parental practices, young people are inclined to actively develop their ‘own’ food practices and habits (Blichfeldt & Gram, 2013). What happens when these young people experience misalignments in their free-floating practices due to the crisis posed by the pandemic?

Additionally, unlike the Phipps and Ozanne (2017) study, the disruptions in food practices of young consumers due to the pandemic have not sprung from appeals for voluntary restraint. Therefore, realignment efforts in the performance of food consumption could be significant to understanding practice transitions and ways of reconfiguring routines (Hand et al., 2005; Spaargaren et al., 2016).

Thus far, global research explaining the effects of Covid-19 on food-related consumer behavior has typically focused on cross-sectional studies and convenience samples of the general adult population. Most initial attention has been on the fundamental impacts of the pandemic lockdown on consumer food security, food buying, and management, changes in perceived nutritional quality, dietary patterns, and choices concerning key health indicators like weight, mental wellbeing, etc. However, studies employing a qualitative research approach to capture a deeper understanding of consumers’ food-related practices and experiences in response to Covid-19 associated lockdown periods are greatly limited. With the exception of some recent studies based on interview data, such as investigating the changes to the family food environment (Hammons & Robart, 2021; Isaacs et al., 2021), culinary behaviors of food gatekeepers in Australian households (Ronto et al., 2021), parents’ feeding practices around child snacking (Trofholz et al., 2021), disordered eating behavior (Brown et al., 2021; Nutley et al., 2021) together with some other qualitative studies focused on understanding the food choices of university students (Powell et al., 2021) and exploring food insecurity among the

young adult population (McPherson, 2020) during the Covid-19 pandemic – the extant literature acquiring qualitative perspective is exceptionally sparse. Most of these studies lean heavily on preventive and health aspects of food-related behavior and feature in the disciplines of health, food, emerging adulthood, higher education, social work, and medical research, etc.

The current body of research has a narrow focus of food behavior, i.e., focus on a single practice, such as lunching practices (Pfeiffer et al., 2017), eating out practices (Hertzler & Frary, 1992; Mu et al., 2019), snacking practices (Twine, 2015), fast food practices (Seo et al., 2011) and commensality practices (Danesi, 2018). There is a need to capture a more comprehensive aspect of food routine rather than a single aspect to understand the food practices and consumption behavior of young adults during the Covid crisis. Therefore, this study aims to explore how young people in their transition through uncertainty and crisis situations adjust to the disruption in their everyday food consumption practices. It provides detailed insights into the anxieties of young people about being confined at home with their daily routines unsettled, the challenges they face in meal planning and procuring material supplies and cooking and managing food during this unprecedented crisis, and how they confront and continue to perform food practices in light of these obstacles.

1.4 Research aim and research question

While the pandemic and the ensuing lockdowns have affected everyone, this research focuses on young adults to study their food access and provisioning practices together with their consumption dynamics for several reasons. To begin with, they are going through a transitionary phase, a period associated with social and lifestyle changes (Lenz, 2001) that may disrupt their habits and bring about changes in their dietary behavior (Lake et al., 2004; Von Post-Skagegård et al., 2002). Having left their parents' home, not long ago, with its lifestyle, habits, tastes, and meanings, these young people are confronted with the tasks of building their own perspectives and routines in an environment of temporal, spatial, and financial constraints.

Next, students and young adults also form an interesting cohort with respect to their monetary resources, as oftentimes they have to live on a small budget, especially in the context of this study. Notably, Auckland has been recognized as the world's 27th most expensive city (*Worldwide Cost of Living Report*, 2021) with regard to high costs of living and expensive groceries. In general, students will have small rooms with expensive rentals and poorly equipped kitchen space that may not have refrigerators, ovens or dishwashers at their disposal. Additionally, in view of this, pursuance of convenience has been explained as an important motivation behind the food choices of young people and students (Deliens et al., 2014; Shah et al., 2014; Thorpe et al., 2014) in several studies. Given

their personal and professional undertakings, young adults are usually time-constrained, and devise strategies to free up their time from conducting responsibilities perceived as time-consuming, such as cooking, and are more enthusiastic about pre-prepared meals and convenience food that are quick and easy to prepare (Deliens et al., 2014; Mallinson et al., 2016). Interestingly, a segmentation analysis conducted in the Canadian context on consumers aged between 18 and 24, suggests that a large proportion of this cluster were flagged as ‘too young to care’, indicating members who seemingly take their health for granted (Marquis, 2005). Therefore, university students and young people, in general, are an important population to consider as experiences during a life stage transition turn out to have an enduring effect on health trajectories (Christoph et al., 2019; Harris, 2010).

These aforementioned challenges germane to young food provisioners pre-pandemic are now compounded with the sudden crisis of the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, which has further disrupted the routines, and increased anxiety and frustration among young adults. Young people are predominantly prone to food insecurity among all population groups impacted by the pandemic lockdown. Research has revealed that households with college students have higher food insecurity rates than those that do not (Hagedorn & Olfert, 2018; Owens et al., 2020). However, the prevalence of food insecurity has intensified, as 34.5% of university students reported suffering from food insecurity since the pandemic began to affect, in a study by Owens et al. (2020). University students should also constitute an important cohort for scrutinizing lifestyle and dietary pattern changes (Bagordo et al., 2013; Poobalan et al., 2014). Limited availability and variety of food during the lockdown may restrict overall diet quality and affect the eating patterns of young consumers (Bennett et al., 2021; Peng Jia et al., 2021). Current research in student cohorts manifested a greater incidence of problematic eating, dietary restriction, and binge drinking (Flaudias et al., 2020) banded together with low financial security and augmented stress makes them particularly vulnerable to weight, lifestyle, and behavior changes (Owens et al., 2020; Perry et al., 2021) during the Covid lockdown and confinement. As a result of the unhealthy changes in food consumption in the youths during this protracted health crisis and subsequent episodes of lockdown, medium to long term eating habits or preferences, and health status that of their own, their partners and children could get adversely affected (Poobalan et al., 2014; Shepherd et al., 2006).

Though college presents unique intervention opportunities, the after-effects of the pandemic crisis and ensuing lockdowns on the circumstantial differences and potential repercussions on food behavior of young consumers remain limited. Against this background, my study aims at achieving a more nuanced understanding of the pivotal shift in many everyday food-related practices of young adults during the lockdown, rather than merely equating food with its nutritional value. The everyday ‘food-related practices’ here have been interpreted from a wider perspective considering all the links

of the food provisioning chain, i.e., meal planning, shopping, cooking, cleaning eating, managing leftovers, and waste disposal, rather than one-off practices like shopping or cooking.

Many food-related behaviors and practices are subject to habits, which fare well in stable environments (Gram-Hanssen, 2010; Verplanken & Aarts, 1999). The pandemic is a disruptive event that has unsettled the environments supporting food-related behaviors, adversely influencing the shopping conditions, availability and affordability, shopping mode and choice of locations, eating venues and occasions to eat, at-home food preparation, and how and with whom to eat. Considering the sparse collection of qualitative studies that have investigated the changes in dietary behaviors of students and young adults during the pandemic lockdown, none of them have engaged social practice as an analytic unit in the performance of food behavior.

This dissertation analyses food practices at a critical juncture of the aforementioned happenings, addressing the research question: what happens when food routine is disrupted, and how do young consumers reconfigure their food practices as they transition through uncertainty and crisis situations — against the backdrop of the pandemic as a disruptive event.

To address this question, I engaged in an intensive iterative process of digital ethnography, recruiting 22 young adult food provisioners to participate in my study. Three major data collection methods were utilized: online food diary, my observatory practices during co-participation in food diary activity, combined with online semi-structured interviews on zoom employing projective techniques, to generate systematic and deeply engaging first-hand insights.

I use a practice theoretical lens (Giddens, 1986; Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki, 2002; Shove & Pantzar, 2005) to explore how disruption generates changes in young consumers' food practices. The increasing volume of research on practice theories (Halkier et al., 2011; Röpke, 2009; Southerton, 2006; Spaargaren & Van Vliet, 2000; Warde, 2005), which, largely by virtue of their appreciation of routines and habits are especially germane for consumption research. Specifically, I examine the misalignments that arise in young people's consumption practice configurations during the Covid lockdown restrictions, and how they address these threats and uncertainties to bring back the practice elements into alignment with one another for the smooth performance of their practice. The application of practice theory is especially relevant in developing an understanding of the dynamics between each of the three elements, and how this informs and organizes the practice of food provisioning and consumption.

I build on the three-element social practice framework of Shove et al. (2012a, p. 14) involving meanings (images, ideas, and aspirations), materiality (things, objects, and stuff), and competence (skills, know-how, and technique) to comprehend and explain changes in the configuration of food production and consumption practice from the standpoint of the young consumers who perform these practices. Even though all three elements are required for the stable performance of a practice, each

element can flow disjointedly, stay latent, and be singularly integrated into a given social structure. This framework facilitates the analysis of the established or ‘habituated’ practices (Thomas & Epp, 2019) performed through interconnected practice elements, their mutual influence if one of these elements misaligns, ensuing instability in the pattern of practice.

1.5 Significance of the study

The present research contributes to consumer research in numerous ways. First, by situating the study of young people’s food consumption behavior in the domain of practice theory, this research has addressed Neuman’s (2019) call for food studies to ‘become more theoretically engaged’. Using practice theoretical lens offers the possibility to overcome the dichotomy in the studies of food, of stressing either the physical health-relevant practices (like a healthy diet and nutrient intake or drinking and smoking) or establishing the significance of the socio-cultural influences in food choices (pertaining to social values, meanings, and beliefs), together with developing a holistic understanding of consumption practices (Domaneschi, 2019) of young adults during a time of crisis.

Second, it extends the literature on practice (mis)alignment as a critical consideration for the reconfiguration of a practice by detailing how these arrangements are renegotiated within crisis situations. In this context, the function of realignment capabilities in practice reconfiguration is recognized. It outlines how consumers build these capabilities through the orchestration of practice elements involving meanings, materials and competences.

Third, although prior studies (Arsel & Bean, 2013; Canniford & Shankar, 2013; Phipps & Ozanne, 2017; Thomas & Epp, 2019; Woermann & Rokka, 2015) point toward reconfiguration of elements as essential for practice alignment when routines are disrupted – this study extend these past research by explicating how this realignment process unfolds in the face of sudden crises, such as the current pandemic disaster, necessitating rapid changes and realignment strategies to respond to the misalignments and associated tensions in consumption practices.

Finally, at a practical level, this research has implications for practitioners, policymakers, and social marketers. For young consumers, the influence of the Covid-19 pandemic on food practices has shaken up embedded habits and unhealthy dietary practices, making them conspicuous and subject to overt decision-making, enabling a more thoughtful process and sustainable behavior in the acquisition, production, and consumption of food. Responding to this super crisis could have triggered reflexivity, conscious deliberation, and revision of ethical and environmental attitudes. As for the policymakers and the marketers, this may generate more insights into the dynamics of daily practices of young consumers, their food behavior and the ways in which they respond to food accessibility and

sustainability. Taken together, this simultaneously extends the literature on consumption among young adults.

1.6 Organisation of the dissertation

This research is organized as follows. Chapter 1 provides an introduction and conceptual basis to the study. It includes the research context, research aims and research question, basic research design, and arguments linked to differentiate this study from other studies, the theoretical contributions of this study, and the structure of this dissertation.

Chapter 2 offers theoretical perspectives and conceptual foundations from the literature on crisis consumption, including the consumption practices during the Covid-19 crisis. It also reviews the existing literature on consumption among young adults and examines the change in their food practices during the pandemic lockdown. A summary of the theoretical foundations that inform this research, detailing social practices, misalignments, and practice reconfigurations, is also integrated into this chapter.

Chapter 3 discusses the philosophical perspective and methodology of this study. Adopting practice theoretic research methodology to study routine food provisioning, together with digital ethnography and key methods like online food diaries and interview, this chapter delineates the methods endeavored in this research. It also outlines how credibility and trustworthiness at the stages of data gathering and analysis were ensured.

Chapter 4 presents the research findings. I describe the three themes that emerged from the emic accounts of the study's participants, corroborated by relevant literature, and trace how these young consumers reconfigure practices after misalignments.

Chapter 5 offers an analysis of contributions, together with the theoretical, methodological, and practical implications of the study for the body of consumer research. I complete this dissertation by sharing the limitations of the study and opportunities for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Crises can lead to a lack of resources, which can severely impact the consumption patterns and lifestyles of people, their belief systems, and their sense of well-being (Koos et al., 2017), together with a change in their diet during and following crises (Foscolou et al., 2017; Kaytaz & Gul, 2014). While everybody has been affected by the pandemic, the study focuses primarily on young adults because they are undergoing a critical life-stage transition that can have an enduring impact on health trajectories (Halfon & Hochstein, 2002; Wengreen & Moncur, 2009). In the first stream of this literature review, I discuss the differences between crisis and disaster, followed by a discussion on the relationship between consumer behavior and crisis. Subsequently, I focus specifically on the Covid-19 crisis and the ensuing lockdowns and social distancing measures to combat the spread of the pandemic, which though necessary has generated significant disruptions in consumer behavior (Sheth, 2020) – both from food shopping, preparation, and consumption practices involving food intake, eating behaviors, and diet quality. Next, I study the young adult population in the context of the pandemic crisis to understand how the virus outbreak and lockdowns have affected their food practices. A summary of the theoretical foundations that inform this research, detailing social practices, misalignments, and practice reconfigurations are also integrated into this chapter. Lastly, a summary is outlined for the reader to receive an overview.

2.2 Consumer behavior amid crisis and disaster

2.2.1. Defining the concepts of crisis and disaster

Unexpected, unpredictable, and undesired are some of the most common characteristics of crises in ongoing life. A great number of authors have endeavored to define a crisis to help enhance their knowledge of this conception. Kutak (1938) defines crisis as unexpected situations and uncertainties, threatening routines and affecting the realization of tasks and goals. Pauchant et al. (1992, p. 15) describe the phenomenon of crisis as a “disruption that physically affects a system as a whole and threatens its basic assumptions, its subjective sense of self, its existential core.”

Although there is potential value in studying crises, not much has been done to distinguish between conceptions of crisis and multiple supposedly related terms, such as disaster (Faulkner, 2001;

Kennett-Hensel et al., 2012), disturbance (Abramson et al., 2010; Norris et al., 2008), disruptive event (Tierney & Bruneau, 2007; Vugrin et al., 2010), shock (Linden, 2021; Meyer, 1982), turbulent times (Giousmpasoglou et al., 2021; Gunderson & Folke, 2005), or critical incident (Everly et al., 2002; Oster & Doyle, 2000), etc.

Based on their root causes, some scholars have differentiated crises from disasters (Pennings & Grossman, 2008; Prideaux et al., 2003; Ritchie, 2004). Fundamentally, crises are self-inflicted via anthropogenic activities and failures in internal management, indicating that a crisis is ‘predictable’ to a certain degree and can be prevented (Hart et al., 2001; Reddy et al., 2020). For instance, consider the case of an oil spill, terrorism, political unrest, transportation accidents or global financial crises, etc. (Prideaux et al., 2003). Conversely, a disaster, originating from an external environment (Faulkner, 2001), is an “unpredictable catastrophic change that can normally only be responded to after the event, either by deploying contingency plans already in place or through reactive response” (Prideaux et al., 2003, p. 478). Natural disruptions, for example, tsunamis, hurricanes, earthquakes, pandemics, and infectious diseases caused by bacteria, and viruses are considered disasters.

Prideaux et al. (2003) argue that despite different definitions, crises and disasters frequently induce a sequence of effects that intensify chaos and complexity for people involved to grapple with. Marked by low probability and high impacts, both crisis and disaster have ambiguous effects and means of resolution and necessitate urgent decision making (Alan et al., 2006; Doyle et al., 2014). Furthermore, both crises and disasters can be inextricably linked in precipitating internal failures and exacerbating their accumulated effects (Mair et al., 2016; Novelli et al., 2018). Along similar lines, some crisis scholars believe that Covid-19, more than a natural disaster, is a public health crisis, together with being an ecological crisis (Brown, 2020; Tabari et al., 2021), which might cause other crises, for example, a social crisis (Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020; Yang & Wong, 2020) or a financial and economic crisis (Baker et al., 2020; Borio, 2020) in its wake. Hence, based on the aforementioned argument, I consider covid pandemic a crisis. So, from here onwards, I use the term crisis in reference to the global pandemic of Covid-19.

2.2.2 Consumer behavior and crisis

Despite notable research on crisis and disaster management in business and organizational studies (Altay & Ramirez, 2010; Chang & Falit-Baiamonte, 2002; Chowdhury, 2011), specifically on resilience (Kuckertz et al., 2020; Macfadyen et al., 2015) and recovery (Corey & Deitch, 2011; Tierney, 2007; Webb et al., 2002), there is alarmingly minuscule research explaining in what way crises and disasters serve to shift the consumption practices and shopping routines of individuals. Crises can severely impact the lifestyles and consumption patterns of people, their belief systems, and

their sense of well-being (Koos et al., 2017). In prior literature, consumption has been studied in the context of economic crises (De Goeij et al., 2015; Kaytaz & Gul, 2014) and natural disasters (Hallegatte & Vogt-Schilb, 2019; Liu & Black, 2011; Sneath et al., 2009). While the findings of these investigations are wide-ranging and divergent, they are unanimous in suggesting the negative emotions and sufferings that people undergo as a result of these diverse crises. In order to regulate and mitigate these negative emotional responses, individuals enlist consumption coping strategies (Baumeister, 2002; Kemp et al., 2014; Mick & DeMoss, 1990; Yuen et al., 2020), and in turn, consumers adapt to buying differently and more judiciously during crises (Sarmiento et al., 2019).

The extant literature on crises within consumer research is predominantly on economic crises by way of financial or economic recessions. Consumers juggle with resources within a budget and adjust their consumption practices by either putting an end to the consumption of certain items, moderating purchases, or buying alternative or cheaper products (Foscolou et al., 2017; Kaytaz & Gul, 2014; Yoshimura et al., 2016), delay certain purchases and extend the shelf life of certain products (Koos et al., 2017). As a cost-reduction strategy, priority is also accorded to the procurement of essential products by renouncing secondary, luxury, or inessential purchases (Alonso et al., 2017; Boost & Meier, 2017; Castilhos et al., 2017; Koos, 2017; McKenzie et al., 2011). Consumers also tend to reduce their food consumption expenditures by modifying their diet by procuring cheaper food items and less meat (Boost & Meier, 2017). During an economic crisis, consumers also alter their shopping behavior, and make more frequent visits to stores in pursuit of better bargains and variety (McKenzie et al., 2011), and to compare and find the best prices (Castilhos et al., 2017). Eventually, their routine sites of shopping are also rerouted to flea markets and second-hand stores, discount goods, food banks, clothing banks, etc. (Boost & Meier, 2017).

Responding to disruptive events and crises depends on the impact and scale of the event, level of control, and time pressure (Ritchie, 2004). Health-related crises like the SARS, Ebola, and the current Covid-19 pandemic crises can interrupt the normal pace of life by exacerbating people's fear of uncertainty and perceived risk of the virus, thereby causing a shift in consumer behavior.

No pandemic in recent history has had such profound implications for food environment and consumer food provisioning behaviors as the Covid-19 pandemic. Yet there has been scant research concerning the broad and deep effect of this kind of crisis on consumption. In contrast to economic crises, such crises have a counter effect on consumption. In a study by Sneath et al. (2009), consumers were found to engage in impulsive and compulsive buying behaviors when recovering from Hurricane Katrina in the USA, as such purchases were associated with consumers' increased levels of stress and feelings of loss of control in the aftermath of the storm. A similar reaction was found in research by Kennett-Hensel et al. (2012), looking at the pattern of increased levels of consumption by surveying victims of Hurricane Katrina. In times of crisis, asymmetric change in consumer behavior is also

observed across different categories of goods. Forbes (2017) analyzed the immediate and direct changes in consumer behavior from the 2011 earthquake in Christchurch, New Zealand. In the days that followed immediately after the disaster, an increased purchase of essential and utilitarian goods, such as water, non-perishable food, and cleaning products was reported. However, no evidence of consumers' spending increased money on hedonic or potentially harmful products was recorded until weeks after the disaster.

In these uncertain and volatile situations, the consumers express a lack of control over their environment, being susceptible to systemic stress and tension (Botti & McGill, 2011). Following extraordinary circumstances like chaos, disasters, and health emergencies, survival psychology diagnoses that many people can experience behavioral adjustments. During and following exogenic crises and disruptive events, like conflicts, economic downturns, natural disasters, etc., consumers alter, adjust, or initiate new consumption patterns in order to cope with their stress (Mathur et al., 2003). Confinements and lockdowns, studying online from home, teleworking, furloughs and reduced wages, more perceived time at hand, and mobility restrictions and social distancing – all caused a sharp and broad shift in attitudes and behaviors of customers. These behavioral shifts on the part of consumers are likely to influence their attitudes and behaviors concerning food consumption (Loxton et al., 2020). However, the crisis consumption literature has not dealt in depth with behavioral and dietary changes in response to disasters such as the current coronavirus crisis.

2.3 Impact of Covid-19 on food practices

Completely unprecedented in modern history – the Covid-19 pandemic is among the worst global health crises that have disrupted every aspect of life. During the ongoing crisis with variable severity, a host of strict measures have been taken by several countries, such as public lockdowns, stay-at-home orders, and social distancing orders to mitigate the spread of the virus (Agusto et al., 2022; Sen-Crowe et al., 2020; Suppawittaya et al., 2020). This has significantly altered people's routine food consumption behavior (Chenarides et al., 2021; Huber et al., 2021; Janssen et al., 2021), restricting their ability to shop, dine-in restaurants, modifying their culinary behaviors (Bracale & Vaccaro, 2020; Cohen, 2020; Di Renzo et al., 2020; Phillipou et al., 2020; Principato et al., 2020) and introducing changes in diet quality and patterns (P. Jia et al., 2021; Palmer et al., 2021) compared with before the lockdown situation.

2.3.1 Change to food environments

The disruption caused by the pandemic and subsequent regulatory measures resulted in major behavioral changes, especially in connection with food accessibility, meal planning, shopping, food preparation, and disposal (Ellison et al., 2021; Faour-Klingbeil et al., 2021; Güney & Sangün, 2021; Hesham et al., 2021), mobilizing the consumers to become accustomed to regular meal planning, and cooking and eating most meals at home. Research studies with a view to comprehending these effects and outcomes are quickly emerging (Chenarides et al., 2021; Seale et al., 2020; Vindrola-Padros et al., 2020).

Factors such as mobility restrictions, rules dictating which grocery stores to go to and how often, clinical procedures for entrance and staying in shops, and their perceived risk of exposure to the virus – grossly impacted the practice of shopping for food. Simply put, the routine patterns in the way consumers buy food changed during the lockdown, as shopping in person at a supermarket presents an apparent risk of contracting the virus (Ellison et al., 2021; Grashuis et al., 2020). Consumers limited the frequency of shopping trips (Laguna et al., 2020; Rossolov et al., 2021) along with buying less than usual volume, increased their spending per grocery trip to reduce store visits, thereby managing their concerns about catching potential infection (Cranfield, 2020; Hobbs, 2020). On the contrary, in a cross-sectional study on eating behavior and food purchases among adult samples in the Netherlands (n = 1030) during the Covid-19 lockdown, Poelman et al. (2021) found no changes in the food purchases or eating behaviors of most participants. Nevertheless, for those who did report changes, socio-demographic differences were observed, recognizing that the lockdown had a serious impact on healthy dietary choices, particularly for those who were obese and overweight. Also, as extensive lockdowns came into force, changes in consumer preferences towards online or hybrid shopping vis-à-vis click and collect models were also reported because of physical distancing and apprehensions about proximity to other consumers in indoor store environments (Dannenberg et al., 2020; Gerritsen et al., 2021; Koch et al., 2020). eCommerce sales of groceries have recorded tremendous growth the world over from the outset of the pandemic (Accenture, 2020; Dannenberg et al., 2020; Deloitte, 2020).

There have been academic investigations discussing food shortages, poverty, and food insecurity (Fitzpatrick et al., 2021; Pereira & Oliveira, 2020) against the backdrop of panic-buying and stockpiling (Brizi & Biraglia, 2021; Lehberger et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2020; Wang & Na, 2020) as a consequence of the lockdown orders. With the ongoing crisis uncertainty and long-term outlook, consumers globally, are engaged in stockpiling behaviors to mitigate the potential risk of food shortages (Beard-Knowland, 2020; Vautier, 2020). Several episodes of panic buying were observed in countries all around the world, especially staple raw ingredients like rice, flour, and food items with longer shelf life, such as pasta, canned goods, frozen foods, etc. (Aday & Aday, 2020; Bakalis et al., 2020). Employing a multi-country survey, Jafri et al. (2021) investigated the coping mechanisms of participants to counter the perceived effects on food availability, accessibility, and dietary practices as

a result of the pandemic lockdown measures. In conformity with previous findings, the results indicated that the participants stockpiled food, largely cereals and legumes. The study also reported on the escalating food prices, particularly of cereals and legumes.

Given the fact that food is one of the most basic and essential items, panic buying is probably a psychological mechanism to respond to the fear and uncertainty of crisis, led not by reasons of food shortage but more by a fear of running out of food (Prentice et al., 2022; Yuen et al., 2020) based on previous experiences of scarcity and food system vulnerabilities during the crisis and natural disasters. There is a strong likelihood that some consumers may hoard material provisions to limit their number of shopping trips in the recent future, purchase greater quantities on each trip to reduce store visits, as precautionary measures to reduce their chances of being infected by Covid-19 (Cranfield, 2020). This food stockpiling behavior during the pandemic crisis may have escalated the food prices, food waste, shortages on the supply side, inequality in food and nutrition security, and exacerbated overconsumption (Cranfield, 2020; Jaspal et al., 2020; Nicola et al., 2020). In an online cross-sectional study, Bin Zarah et al. (2020) revealed a significant correlation between food security status and food attitudes among adults living in the U.S. within 3-months of the post-mandated quarantine period.

In New Zealand, where this study is set – stockpiling behavior of non-perishable food and consumption displacement (Hall et al., 2021; Hall et al., 2020; Martin-Neuninger & Ruby, 2020) were reported in food retail research concerning grocery purchasing habits. Gerritsen et al. (2021) noted changes in New Zealanders' behavior and perceptions of grocery shopping, cooking, and eating during the lockdown. With a general shift to unhealthy food patterns, consumers perceived grocery shopping as a chore and there were increased instances of home cooking and baking from scratch.

Lockdown appears to have a positive influence on cooking, as adults and young people reported cooking homemade meals more frequently in studies across Europe, the United States, Asia, and South America (Deschasaux-Tanguy et al., 2021; Di Renzo et al., 2020; Ghosh et al., 2020; Robinson et al., 2021; Ruiz-Roso et al., 2020). Cooking food at home-made was also motivated by the closure of takeaway restaurants, online food delivery, and other foodservice operations and the restricted access to superstores for ready-made foods and snacks. Before the pandemic, lack of time was a blockade to cooking from raw ingredients (Gatley et al., 2014; Lavelle et al., 2016). However, with prolonged sheltering at home, the dynamics of home cooking and eating seemingly changed, with meal planning and cooking skills becoming more significant, coupled with increased opportunities for more family meals, experimenting with new recipes, and selecting and preparing healthy food (Bracale & Vaccaro, 2020; Di Renzo et al., 2020; Evans, 2020; Gerritsen et al., 2021). Even though culinary skills had been on a decline pre-Covid (Halkier, 2021; Meah & Watson, 2011;

Short, 2003), the lockdown and its accompanying restrictions on people's lifestyles have opened new possibilities to revive home cooking and healthy experimentation with food.

Investigating the culinary behaviors of primary food gatekeepers, in the Australian food supply context, Ronto et al. (2021) considered food buying, preparation, and consumption behaviors of Australian residents during the Covid-19 lockdown. Most study participants reported enhancing their food literacy in terms of grocery shopping, meal planning, and cooking skills and enjoying family meals more than before. Though, unfavorable effects like increased intake of unhealthy foods, snacks, and alcohol were also reported. This pandemic induced transformation in culinary behavior was further substantiated in another qualitative study by Menon et al. (2022) in the context of urban India, and another in Turkey by Güngördü Belbağ (2021) using the stimulus-organism-response framework.

Past research on the nexus between food consumption and crisis revealed key insights such as increased household food wastage due to higher frequency and variety of cooking during sheltering at home (Filimonau et al., 2021), changes in food priorities of young adults due to changes in availability and accessibility of food, meal planning, and family food decision-makings together with changes in food choice motivations with increased prominence on health, weight-control and mood after lockdown compared to before (Snuggs & McGregor, 2021), changes in the parental feeding practices and the shifts in food environment at home, and how issues of food security increase obesity risk among children, especially on the part of those facing health disparities (Adams et al., 2020). Isaacs et al. (2021) add to this stream of research by showing how families' engagement with food environments and practices related to food go on changing since the onset of Covid-19 through their longitudinal qualitative study. In another qualitative study on the family food environment during the pandemic, Hammons and Robart (2021) identified how eating habits and mealtime frequency of families had changed together with an increase in device usage at mealtimes. In a similar vein, Murphy et al. (2021) in a cross-continental comparison, observed significant changes within and between regions in the framework of diet quality while in a cross-national comparison of the US and China, Dou et al. (2021) that both cohorts spent more time cooking and eating together, had improved efficiency, with less waste in the use of food.

While these studies have produced valuable insights on household food wastage, food priorities and food choice motivation, and overall changes in the family food environment, some limitations are observed. First, the majority of the studies do not elaborate on the social norm of food consumption during a crisis as lockdown restrictions made grocery shopping and eating out progressively difficult. Second, they employ a heterogeneous sample, limiting the validity of these

findings and failing to account for the patterns and drivers behind the stated food consumption behaviors. They also lack future implications for the behavioral intentions of the consumers.

Based on previous research, lockdown associated restrictions and mandates not only altered the dynamics of food access, meal planning, shopping, preparation, and food waste but also triggered changes in dietary patterns of people – both favorable and unfavorable, which are reviewed in the following section.

2.3.2 Changes in food intake and dietary behaviors quality

A significant change in the eating behavior of people was recorded in countries throughout the world during the Covid-19 pandemic (Ammar et al., 2020; Di Renzo et al., 2020; C. Rodríguez-Pérez et al., 2020). An increase in the consumption of unhealthy foods was reported by most survey-based studies (Butler & Barrientos, 2020; Mattioli et al., 2020; Sánchez-Sánchez et al., 2020). In several parts of the world, extended sheltering at home afforded disproportionate consumption of unhealthy foods, including processed and fast foods (Cicero et al., 2021; Marty et al., 2021; Pietrobelli et al., 2020).

Weighing the effects of pandemic-induced quarantine on dietary habits in an Italian sample, Scarmozzino and Visioli (2020) reported an increase in "comfort food" consumption by participants, particularly chocolates, ice creams, sweet courses, and briny snacks to alleviate lockdown anxiety. Furthermore, Philippe et al. (2021) assessed possible changes in parental feeding practices, and their motivations in food shopping during the lockdown, together with the behavioral changes in children's eating habits, and reported that children tended to snack more compared to the period before the lockdown to overcome boredom, which led to weight gain.

Górnicka et al. (2020), in their cross-sectional online survey with a pool of 2381 Polish adults, reported that 34% of participants consumed more during the pandemic, while another study by Sidor and Rzymiski (2020) recording the experiences of 1097 participants from Poland recognized that 30% of the participants gained weight based on their dietary choices and habits during the lockdown. Scarmozzino and Visioli (2020) determined that the dietary habits of almost half the population in a sample of 3533 Italian respondents had modified in terms of increased food consumption and approximately 20% had gained weight.

Pellegrini et al. (2020) assess the changes in weight and dietary habits in individuals with obesity in Northern Italy and note significant weight gain after one month of enforced lockdown. According to Robinson et al. (2020), a large proportion (79%) of the participants from the United Kingdom in a cross-sectional survey also reported a decline in a minimum of one of the factors instrumental in weight gain protective lifestyle behaviors, including healthy eating, sleep, exercise,

bingeing on food, alcohol consumption. Specifically, participants diagnosed with psychiatric illness or obesity showed an increased tendency to be at risk of weight gain during the health crisis of Covid-19. A web-based survey conducted in France by Rolland et al. (2020) found that an increase in addictive behaviors like higher intake of caloric or salty food, substance use, and extended screen time could contribute to weight gain during the lockdown. Through his qualitative study from Ghana, Ansah et al. (2020) further corroborated how physical inactivity in addition to poor eating habits led to weight gain during the lockdown. This weight gain was stronger in people, as per Robinson et al. (2021), who had pre-existing conditions of obesity or overweight. In their study of UK adults living with obesity and lifestyle behaviors associated with eating and physical activity, the authors demonstrated that a higher BMI was prognostic of more overeating and less physical activity during the lockdown.

Self-perceived stress and negative emotions may have significantly contributed to food habits during the pandemic, as Bemanian et al. (2021) found through a population-based study, of 24,968 Norwegian inhabitants that psychological distress and pandemic-related worries were strongly associated with emotional eating, which was reported in 54% of the population with a higher frequency in female participants. Likewise, a cross-sectional Spanish study by López-Moreno et al. (2020) observed a rise in emotional eating and weight gain among 38.8% of a total of 675 participants to compensate for boredom or anxiety caused by the Covid confinement. By the same token, pandemic and mandatory quarantine increased the prevalence of ‘emotional eating’ among a sample of 638 healthy young Saudi Arabian women between the ages of 18 and 39 (Al-Musharaf, 2020). These results were in accordance with the existing literature, viz., a study on emotional eating behavior in the wake of an earthquake in 2010 in Christchurch, New Zealand by Kuijer and Boyce (2012), in which the participants who were already prone to emotional eating and perceived high levels of post-earthquake distress, showed increased over-eating.

In another crowdsourced survey on eating and drinking behaviors in response to Covid-19 stress during the early stages of the pandemic in the USA, Cummings et al. (2021) brought to the fore the pandemic-related situational stress-eating and drinking to cope, alongside increased sugars intake and food addiction symptoms. Another assessment of the pandemic-induced stress on eating practices by Khubchandani et al. (2020), employing a national random sample of American adults, determined that over 10% of the participants reported having more unhealthy food consumption practices during Covid restrictions. Investigating the changes in dietary intake, before and during the Covid-19 period of adults in New York City, Poskute et al. (2021) revealed a change in total daily kilocalories of food and beverages, specifically an increase in energy density was recorded for females while it decreased for males. Being home-bound, stress, and food shortages could likely be attributed to the changes in consumption of energy-dense foods. These results paralleled the findings of other studies on “natural disasters” in which it has been determined that stress has a direct correlation with reduced fruit and vegetable intake (Ji et al., 2020). In the study by Matsungu and Chopera (2020), over the 4-week

lockdown period in Zimbabwe, it was found that a reduction in the intake of fresh produce was associated with higher anxiety.

Nevertheless, a small proportion of research underscored a higher intake of healthy foods (Ben Hassen et al., 2021; Celorio-Sardà et al., 2021; C. Rodríguez-Pérez et al., 2020). The pandemic made people reassess their food perspective and food consumption routines, and people have grown more conscious of their eating habits (Alhusseini & Alqahtani, 2020; Arshad et al., 2020; Güney & Sangün, 2021). In their study on Covid-19 disruption as an impetus for change in eating habits, Jaeger et al. (2021) obtained data from ~900 USA adults, 44% of who reportedly made positive changes to their dietary profile. The majority of the respondents who used it as a catalyst for positive change were comparatively younger and with higher educational qualifications. Another two-wave longitudinal study performed on 728 Italian adults by Caso et al. (2022) during and after the first lockdown in Italy revealed an increased involvement in home-cooking and healthy food consumption together with decreased consumption of foods high in sugar, fat, and calories. Although the newly acquired consumption pattern was somewhat discontinued in the post-lockdown period, the reduced intake of junk food continued.

A limited set of research also pointed to a shifting preference between healthy and unhealthy foods, such as the one from Spain with 1036 participants (Pérez-Rodrigo et al., 2021). Similarly, based on a sample of 37,252 French adults, Deschasaux-Tanguy et al. (2021) analyzed both favorable (increased home cooking and physical activity) and unfavorable (increased snacking and sugary foods, decreased consumption of fresh produce) changes related to diet and nutrition. In a study on food choice motives using a convenience sample of 938 French adults during the lockdown period, Marty et al. (2021) found that an individual's mood was a crucial factor in determining food choice. A decrease in the average nutritional quality of diet was related to mood as a food choice motive in the case of approximately half of the participants. Coulthard et al. (2021) investigated the changes in eating behavior, and how it relates to BMI, eating style, coping, and health anxiety. Some studies noticed a change in the frequency of meals during lockdown (Bennett et al., 2021; Bhutani et al., 2021; Di Renzo et al., 2020), while some others focused on cohorts skipping breakfast during quarantine (Hu et al., 2020; Husain & Ashkanani, 2020; Yang et al., 2021). Janssen et al. (2021), in their analysis of consumer survey data comprising 2,680 residents of Denmark, Germany, and Slovenia, showed a change in the consumption frequency of participants regarding frozen, canned, and comfort foods.

In my review, I identified a dearth of qualitative literature on food provisioning and eating practices during the lockdown. I used the Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science as databases and found extremely limited articles on qualitative explorations of the impact of lockdown orders on the food dynamics, changes in the food environment, and individual food practices. A qualitative

study by Brown et al. (2021) conducted in-depth interviews with adults with self-reported eating disorders in the UK during the pandemic and found that the influence of the lockdown was experienced in both directions, subject to individual circumstances – including a positive direction for recovery, or in a negative direction as an increase in disordered eating behavior. The findings were in line with the results of a national survey in Australia that studied the changes in eating and exercise behaviors in an Australian sample with an eating disorder by Phillipou et al. (2020).

In another qualitative research by McCombie et al. (2020) in which the majority of the participants with current or lifetime eating disorders reported that their eating disorder either deteriorated or reemerged as a result of disrupted routines, loss of structure, anxiety and isolation, and negative effects of social media on weight and exercise. One more qualitative analysis of social media posts by Nutley et al. (2021) revealed how a therapeutic community on Reddit discussion forums provided peer support for disordered eating behavior during the pandemic a period of increased psychiatric distress. Other survey-based investigations also examined the influence of Covid-19 and associated public health measures on eating disorders (Branley-Bell & Talbot, 2020), including changes in the consumption of alcohol (Rehm et al., 2020).

In the comprehensive review of the literature above, though a few of the studies have employed qualitative research methods, the majority of the papers have used quantitative techniques. As with the majority nutritional research, the assessment of food and dietary intake in the studies reviewed was through self-reported data, making it possible for misreporting or underreporting in some cases. Studies in this review were also primarily cross-sectional in design, which bears the risk of bias and makes it difficult to assess the quality of each study.

While quantitative research allows for a large sample size and variables, making the test results trustworthy, the high prevalence of quantitative research techniques also potentially restricts our ability to gain a more nuanced understanding of the “how” and “why” behind changes in consumer behavior and may bring to the fore the underlying human motives, values, and attitudes in a given context. Certainly, there are important insights to be gained from the extant literature on the impact of Covid-19 and associated lockdowns on dietary practices; it has been recognized that the massive quantitative focus from previous research has resulted in a thin understanding of the social issues surrounding the food consumption practices in a crisis situation, such as the current pandemic crisis, and a new research agenda based on developing understanding through the use of ethnography is proposed. Also, there is sparse research on food consumption practices of young adults in crises situations. More research is needed to understand the influence of such disruptions on young people and their food practices, who are transitioning through a critical phase of life.

2.4 Food practices of young adults

A “time of exploration and instability, a self-focused age, and an age of possibilities” (Arnett, 2014, p. 21), young adulthood is the transition from adolescence to settled adulthood (Arnett, 2007; Coyne et al., 2013; Nanney et al., 2015; Tanner et al., 2009; Vadeboncoeur et al., 2015). During this period, these young consumers are inclined to continue with the consumption behaviors learned from past experiences, mostly from their family (Gentina, 2014; Schouten, 1991), but not all consumption behaviors transition as easily as others. Students commonly assume unsuitable eating habits and behaviors (Heiman & Olenik-Shemesh, 2019; Kemp et al., 2013), especially those living away from home as against those still living in their parents’ homes (Lupi et al., 2015; Papadaki et al., 2007). A variety of new experiences, for example, changes in the living and food environment, level of strain from academics or work, dietary habits, exercise, and financial burden could have implications on their health behavior and body weight (Ferrara, 2009; Winpenny et al., 2020). On that account, transitioning to an environment distant from the home is often linked with weight gain (Laska, Pelletier, et al., 2012; Niemeier et al., 2006) and usually poor dietary choices (Lee et al., 2009; Sprake et al., 2018), the effect of transition between parental homes and living on their own can bring about an ‘in-between-ness’ (Palmer et al., 2009) and feelings of displacement (Chow & Healey, 2008; McAndrew, 1998). Therefore, it becomes important to fully realize the underlying motivations and challenges that may affect the culinary practices of this consumer cohort of young people as they turn to a new chapter in their lives (i.e., independent living).

For many emerging young adults, this transitional phase is characterized by making independent decisions about their lifestyles for the first time in their lives (Dinger & Waigandt, 1997; Lowe et al., 2013; Nelson et al., 2008), and provides the context and motivation to undertake everyday activities and responsibility for “their own food choices, planning, and preparation” (Sharma et al., 2009, p. 440). However, the processes associated with personal food production such as provisioning, budgeting, shopping, cooking, storing, and disposal can be somewhat intense for young adults with limited experience in accomplishing these household chores (Murray et al., 2016). As a matter of fact, many of these young people prepare meals not even once every week (Wilson et al., 2017). All of these factors can trigger a shift in their food consumption behavior and practices (El Ansari et al., 2012; Kourouniotis et al., 2016).

It has been identified in extant literature that young adults differ in their lifestyles and dietary habits frequently banking on foods that they can readily access (Morse & Driskell, 2009). In addition to taste, the other most significant motivator for food choices is convenience (Marquis, 2005; Morse & Driskell, 2009). Therefore, a high intake of fast foods is a common dietary practice among college students (Deshpande et al., 2009; Driskell et al., 2005; Nicklas et al., 2001), but a low intake of fruits and vegetables (Bernardo et al., 2017; Mello Rodrigues et al., 2019) as most of these young

consumers overlook the food group recommendations (Dinger & Waigandt, 1997; Mello Rodrigues et al., 2019), regularly skip meals, and consume excessive amounts of snacks, and sweets (Liu et al., 2021; Vatanparast et al., 2019). Several factors such as low availability of fresh produce and whole foods, menu based on such natural foods, and prevalence of ultra-processed food can negatively influence dietary practices (Brownbill et al., 2020; Franco et al., 2020).

Young adults report numerous barriers that act as deterrence in following healthy food practices, including time available to cook (Gatley et al., 2014; Lang & Caraher, 2001), the high perceived cost of healthy food, poor knowledge of requirements, and/or the easy access to cheap and convenient takeaway options (Barnes et al., 2016; Hilger et al., 2017; Molenaar et al., 2020; Wolfson et al., 2016). Additionally, young people also report poor culinary skills (Murray et al., 2016), cooking attitude (Byrd-Bredbenner, 2004; Ternier, 2010), living arrangements and access to home kitchen equipment (Kabir et al., 2018; Wilson et al., 2017), and a lack of self-efficacy (confidence) to make their own meals (Hartman et al., 2013). Given their limited know-how about how to store food or manage leftovers, these young consumers are less mindful of optimizing their food consumption (Burlea-Schiopoiu et al., 2021a; Yui & Biltekoff, 2021). Accompany that with deficient culinary savviness of young people who do not know how to prepare a variety of dishes from the same ingredients, or estimate just the right amount of ingredients for meal preparation (Caraher et al., 1999; Gustafson et al., 2013), and the outcomes of which, most often are leftovers. These leftovers, in turn, get pushed to the back of the fridge, where they are simply forgotten and eventually disposed of (Hebrok & Boks, 2017; Roodhuyzen et al., 2017).

Young consumers often fail to check their food stocks prior to shopping (Chandon & Wansink, 2006; Principato et al., 2015), neglect creating a shopping list (Lyndhurst, 2009; Principato et al., 2015), and allocate a rather small share of their budget on food purchases (Parfitt et al., 2010). Young people also fail to keep up with their shopping list in the food purchasing phase and are hence susceptible to buying wasteful amounts of food or buying things on impulse that they do not necessarily require, while missing out on advance meal planning in most cases (Lyndhurst, 2009). Another factor contributing to inadequate food practices of young adults is that they lack a food storage routine (Romani et al., 2018) in place (including improper storage of cooked food, poor knowledge of what kind of foods can be stored in cupboards, refrigerators or freezers, insufficient allocation of space for foods, etc.) (Wrap, 2007). For this reason, the majority of their meal consumption is out-of-home compared to other social groups (Marquis, 2005; Pelletier & Laska, 2012; Pinho et al., 2018; Wilson et al., 2017).

It is common knowledge that cooking skills have been declining (Brooks & Begley, 2014; Thorpe et al., 2014), and a study by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) suggests that millennial consumers devote a larger percentage of their grocery expenditure on “prepared foods”

and cook less of “home-prepared food” compared to the previous generations (Kuhns & Saksena, 2017). Convenience strikes as the most powerful food motivation after price, pleasure, health, and worries regarding weight (Marquis, 2005). However, putting together meals through the instrumentality of convenience food is viewed as driving the de-skilling of food provisioning in young consumers (Braun & Beckie, 2014; Halkier, 2017). Researchers claim that low cooking skills and confidence relates to inadequate food choices and increased consumption of convenience foods (Chen & Gazmararian, 2014; Reicks et al., 2014). On the contrary, higher levels of culinary competence and consumption of home-cooked meals show a positive correlation with emotional well-being (Colatruglio & Slater, 2014; Utter et al., 2016; Winefield et al., 1992) and healthier eating patterns (Laska, Larson, et al., 2012; Nicklas et al., 2001; Smith et al., 2010), including greater purchase and consumption of vegetables and fresh produce (Conner et al., 2017; Winkler & Turrell, 2009).

2.4.1 Food consumption practices during crisis

In the current context of the study, the disruptions in everyday life as a result of the pandemic lockdown are remarkably salient for young adults. Moreover, young adults and students are at particular risk of aberrant eating behaviors and eating disorders (Fitzsimmons-Craft et al., 2019; Tavoracci et al., 2015; Volpe et al., 2016). In a sample of French university students by Flaudias et al. (2020), it was found that the bigger the stress associated with Covid-19 and the subsequent confinement, the more severe the risk of problematic eating behaviors, including binge eating and dietary restriction, etc., among students, specifically those diagnosed with eating disorder. Another study assessing the factors related to disordered eating during pandemic lockdown by Simone et al. (2021) in a population-based sample of emerging adults revealed a significant association between large measures of unhealthy weight control behaviors and low-stress management. Psychological distress, stress management, financial worries, and sudden changes in schedule may have played a role in precipitating disordered eating behaviors during the pandemic. Another similar cross-sectional study examined the influence of psychological distress on emotional eating in a sample of 437 young Italian adults and discovered that psychological distress and emotional dysregulation were significantly associated with emotional eating. Besides, increased emotional eating was observed in females compared to males (Usubini et al., 2021).

Pandemic threatened food security, especially among college students (Jones et al., 2021; Larson et al., 2021; Owens et al., 2020). In a longitudinal, observational study using phone-survey methods, approximately 9000 participants of a 20-year cohort were interviewed in two consecutive sessions in four low-and-middle-income-country (Ethiopia, India, Peru, and Vietnam) by Porter et al. (2022). The authors evidenced that food insecurity during the progression of the pandemic is

negatively associated with the mental health of young people. Perceptions of food shortage also led young people to exhibit more responsible behavior towards food waste during the pandemic. Findings of research by Burlea-Schiopoiu et al. (2021b) on a sample of 375 Romanian university students showed an increased food waste reduction behavior, heightened awareness of the environmental consequences of food waste, and a deep understanding of ethical aspects related to food waste among young people.

A multi-country study of 820 adolescents from Italy, Brazil, Spain, Colombia, and Chile via an anonymous online questionnaire by Ruiz-Roso et al. (2020) demonstrated that Covid-19 lockdown influenced dietary habits and specially modified consumption on both sides, including wholefoods and fresh produce as well as processed foods. Scrutinizing the effects of quarantine measures of Covid-19 on Australian university students, Gallo et al. (2020) reported an increased intake of energy-dense snacks together with a higher frequency of snacking. Moreover, higher levels of energy intake were found in females and not in males.

In a large retrospective study of 10,000 Chinese students, Yang et al. (2020) noted an increased body mass index in the majority of the respondents. Along the same lines, Mason et al. (2021) surveyed the association of unhealthy eating behavior as a coping strategy for the pandemic in a diverse sample of young adult participants (N = 1,820) with an increase in body weight before versus after the outbreak of Covid-19. Interestingly, a research recording changes in dietary behaviors of 7514 young, university-educated Spanish females by Celia Rodríguez-Pérez et al. (2020) during the confinement of the Covid-19 outbreak — observed increased consumption of fruits, vegetables, or legumes compared to the pre-pandemic times. In a qualitative study investigating the changes in food choice for US university students, displaced from their typical residences, such as living on campus, to having returned to their family homes due to the pandemic, Powell et al. (2021) found substantial, and frequently negative, changes in food choices, mainly attributable to food availability and food-related roles in the household. The majority of the students limited themselves to a passive role in food shaping activities, such as grocery shopping, and consumed foods made available to them by their parents. Though a few students with improved culinary skills and focus used the additional free time afforded by stay-at-home orders to plan and prepare meals, in the case of most other students, it contributed to boredom and snacking. These are important phenomena, and a better understanding is needed to clarify both the diversity and similarity in how young consumers actually follow through at the practice level.

In the context of the pandemic crisis, how do these young consumers experience misalignments in their routinized food behaviors embedded in their daily schedules for work, studies, and socialization, and how do they negotiate the tensions and realign the performance of their food practices, are under-theorized and warrants consumer-level scrutiny. A lack of practice-based research

to understand and describe changes in practice transitions and how routines are reconfigured during crisis represents a significant gap in the literature and should be addressed given the sharp emphasis of social practice theories on routines and continuity.

2.5 Theoretical foundations

2.5.1 Practice theories

Practice theories favor an alternative approach to consumer studies, one that is not subject to consumers' rationality but focuses on practices rather than on individuals (Halkier & Jensen, 2011). The social practice theory, perceived as a nexus of 'doings' and 'sayings' (Schatzki, 2001, p. 53), focuses on the analysis of everyday, routinized practices (Southerton et al., 2012), organized in coordination with collective understandings, procedures, and engagements. In practice theory, while consumers are 'the carriers or hosts of a practice' (Shove et al., 2012a, p. 7), the focus of analysis is on practices (Halkier & Jensen, 2011) that are reproduced, stabilized, adapted, and embedded in the form of recognizable everyday activities, such as driving, cooking, shopping washing, etc. (Reckwitz, 2002; Shove et al., 2012a; Warde, 2005).

In one of the most adopted definitions, Reckwitz (2002, pp. 249-250) defines practices as a configuration of interconnected dynamics of practice elements:

"A practice ... is a routinized type of behavior which consists of several elements, interconnected to one other: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, things and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, knowhow, states of emotion and motivational knowledge. A practice – a way of cooking, of consuming, of working, of investigating, of taking care of oneself or of other etc. – forms so to speak a 'block' whose existence necessarily depends on the existence and specific interconnectedness of these elements, and which cannot be reduced to any one of these single elements."

At the outset, practice theories seek to understand and explain the structural analysis of production and reproduction of social life by analyzing how people live within their social worlds through repetitive practices in daily life (Bourdieu, 1977; Giddens, 1986). Hence the primary focus of practice theories is on the routinization and stability of practices. The rhythmic repetition of daily routines provides a sense of place, continuity, and ontological security to people, as Shove et al. (2012, 12) proffers: "stability is the emergent and always provisional outcome of successively faithful reproductions of practice".

2.5.2 Practice-as-entity and practice-as-performance

Practices work in two planes: practices-as-entities and practices-as-performances (Shove & Pantzar, 2005; Shove et al., 2012a). This analytical differentiation between practices as performances and as entities is especially pertinent in understanding change (Schatzki, 1996, 2002; Shove et al., 2012a; Warde, 2005). From this perspective, practice-as-an-entity exists as a “block” or “a pattern” (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 250) across variegated moments of enactment (Shove & Pantzar, 2007). The practice entity alludes to a nexus of sayings and doings that divulge and disperse spatially and temporally, for instance, practices of food shopping, cooking, eating, and storage (Schatzki, 1996). It discusses the meaning and cultural understandings, skills and competencies, objects and artifacts, and socially observable behavior as performances (Spurling et al., 2013). Practices entities have historical accounts and practice trajectories, or a course of advancement, but on the other hand, they are reproduced, sustained, or altered only through their performance (Shove et al., 2012a).

It is important to understand the distinction between entity and performance as it facilitates practice scholars to theorize about practice change, considering that practices can be seen to endure and evolve or dwindle and disappear only through repeated performances (Shove & Pantzar, 2007; Shove et al., 2012a; Warde, 2005). This extension of practice theory also makes provisions for performances to be empirically studied while they are being organized and conducted, or portrayed in the past, as well as for making historical investigations into broad stroke practice change and making predictions about their future pathways.

For example, when we think of cooking-as-an-entity, we see that it has existed as a set of socially established culinary procedures embedded within systems of provision throughout history and cultural civilization. In contrast, cooking-as-a-performance exists through the observable actions of individuals, involving immediacy and routinization of ‘doing’ a dish that can be enacted in various ways (Warde, 2014). By so doing, individuals assume the role of “active and creative practitioners” (Reckwitz, 2002; Shove & Pantzar, 2005, p. 45), who integrate practice elements, instead of merely being “users” of a practice.

Against this background, practice elements encompass 1) meanings – images, conceptions, interpretations, and emotions that people ascribe to practices; 2) materials – the objects, things, resources, infrastructures, and bodies that make it possible for practices to be performed; and 3) competencies – the skills, know-how, techniques and procedures essential to enable the performance of the practices (Blue et al., 2016; Shove et al., 2012a, p. 14). Elements characterize the basic units of practice entities and are fundamental to the constitution of practices (Shove et al., 2012a). Practices as entities depict how links are made between and within practice elements. Through repetitive

performances, together with elements interacting in a range of combinations, practices alter and advance across time and space (Shove & Pantzar, 2007; Shove et al., 2015; Warde, 2005).

As Warde (2005, p. 141) explicates, practices “contain the seeds of constant change ... as people in myriad situations adapt, improvise and experiment”. Thereby, practices are considered to have trajectories (Shove & Pantzar, 2005; Shove et al., 2012a; Warde, 2005) formed of minor variations in past performances and varying compositions of elements:

The concept of practice inherently combines a capacity to account for both reproduction and innovation. At any given point in time a practice has a set of established understandings, procedures and objectives However, performances in the same practice are not always the same (Warde 2005: 140).

Thus, I focus on studying food practices as an entity (composed of myriad elements) and a performance (rendered by myriad actors). I adhere to Shove et al.’s (2012, pg. 7) argument that it is by virtue of performance, by the immediacy of doing, that the “pattern” presented by the practice-as-an-entity is completed and reproduced. It is only through uninterrupted, continuous ‘performance’ that the interdependencies between practice constituting elements as ‘entity’ are sustained in due course.

Consumers produce varied and recurrent enactments of social practices through their individual behavior by integrating practice elements (Reckwitz, 2002; Shove et al., 2012a). “Persons in different situations do the same activity differently”, as carriers or performers adapt and enact a practice in their given circumstances (Warde 2005, 146). A practice becomes habitual when the elements of practice are organized in “configurations that work” and the social practice is reproduced in a consistent and routinized manner (Rip & Kemp, 1998, p. 330; Shove et al., 2012a). However, as elements do not always work in tandem, holding practices stable requires considerable effort. Shove et al. (2012, pg. 21) articulate these dynamics as: “practices emerge, persist and disappear as links between their defining elements are made and broken”. Therefore, understanding how practices emerge and change over time asks for “paying attention to the trajectories of elements, and to the making and breaking of links between them” (Shove et al. 2012, pg. 22).

2.5.3 Routine disruption & practice misalignments

Practice theories focus on ‘habituated’ (Thomas & Epp, 2019) and routinized performances, examining how links between materials, meanings, and competences are made stable and reproduced at a social level (Shove & Pantzar, 2005; Shove et al., 2012a). Within a given material environment, internalization of meanings and competences related to a practice naturalizes habits into routines (Warde, 2014), instilling stability and a sense of order and security (Ehn & Löfgren, 2009; Phipps &

Ozanne, 2017). Disruption to established practices can lead to misalignment of practice elements (Phipps & Ozanne, 2017; Woermann & Rokka, 2015), which can hinder the proper performance of practices (Magaudda, 2011; Reckwitz, 2002; Shove et al., 2012a; Warde, 2005).

Food practices – shopping, cooking, eating, and waste disposal – are largely governed by cultural notions of appropriateness (Paddock, 2017; Twine, 2015). Though influenced to some degree by consumer cooperatives, food safety advocacy groups, policymakers, health insurances, and other such agents and organizations, food practices are otherwise not excessively policed or regulated (Warde, 2016). However, in a public health crisis situation like that of the Covid-19 lockdown, dynamics such as government rules and guidelines, changes to the construal of practice meanings, and other practice elements can severely disrupt practices (Epp et al., 2014; Reckwitz, 2002; Shove et al., 2012a; Warde, 2005). When there is a disruption in practices, the interlinking between the constituent elements of a practice as well as the linkage between practices is fractured, and these “disruptions challenge practice routines and continuity” (Epp et al., 2014, p. 83; Phipps & Ozanne, 2017).

Misalignment of practice elements can threaten practice habituation due to inter and intra-elemental discrepancies, conflicts, and tensions (Epp et al., 2014; Shove et al., 2012a). The practices in such a situation are destabilized and necessitate modification, or else they will face dissolution (Canniford & Shankar, 2013; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015). When misalignments arise due to clashes between practice elements, there is an attempt to adapt and refine the performances and reinstate the practice elements in mutual conformity for practices to continue. For example, Canniford and Shankar (2013) bring to the fore the mismatch between the meanings related to the practice of surfing and the technological materials used by surfers and how they address the misalignments by adopting purifying practices. In like manner, Epp et al. (2014) advance the conceptualizations of realignment “to creatively envision components interacting in a reassembly” and bridging family separation by introducing new materialities for long-distance engagement. In a similar fashion, newly introduced kitchen gadgets in Truninger’s (2011) research describes how the appropriation of such gadgets affects the family’s cooking and eating and how they transform the practices by requiring the practitioners to acquire new skills and redraw the images of ‘proper’ meals.

Seregina and Weiyo (2017) offer a lens to scrutinize the interactions and conflicts between the practices of cosplay and practices in other domains, like work and family life, and how they reconstruct the nuances of their understandings of crafting and showcasing costumes. Again, some of the participant households in Phipps and Ozanne’s (2017) academic exploration, on account of their new material reality of deficient water supply “reflected on the problem of maintaining a garden and then ‘retooled’ to expand their water supply by investing in new materials and creating new rainwater management practices” (p.372). In another study, Thomas and Epp (2019) note how new parents in order to habituate their recently adopted practices counter the misalignments “by finding ways to

make practices work; they problem-solve, trouble-shoot and try to realign elements” (p.569). In a more recent study, Gonzalez-Arcos et al. (2021) investigate consumer resistance in the wake of the 2019 countrywide ban on plastic bags in Chile and describe the significance of ‘sensemaking’ in the commencement of the practice adaptation process where consumers weigh the possibilities of replacing and alternating any or all of the three elements. In yet another study by Godfrey et al. (2021), consumers attempt to adjust object capacities of worn or damaged goods through repair interventions to realign disrupted practices, and thereby sustainably maintain consumer practices.

Through processes of change, addition, exclusion, or ‘micro-adjustments’ to meanings, materials, or competences – practitioners reconfigure their practice elements to habituate new routines (Kadibadiba et al., 2018; Magaudda, 2011; Phipps & Ozanne, 2017; Shove & Pantzar, 2005; Woermann & Rokka, 2015). While extant literature suggests that the obstinacy of social practices pivots on how deeply ingrained the habits and routines align with the three practice elements, “little research examines the attunement of practices as they stabilize” (Phipps & Ozanne, 2017, p. 377). Bearing that in mind, my study is situated within these calls (e.g. (Godfrey et al., 2021; Phipps & Ozanne, 2017; Thomas & Epp, 2019)) for further exploration of the disruptions that may occur as a result of the change in rules and regulations which threat established norms, routines, and daily activities and thereby require reconfiguring systems of practices by reconciling practice elements. Hence, my research question asks, what happens when the food routine of young consumers is disrupted, and how do they reconfigure their food practices as they transition through uncertainty and crisis situations. In addressing this call, I take a distinct approach to prior studies.

The above-mentioned studies are focused on realignment strategies of discrete practices that consumers employ to stabilize their practice configurations. In contrast, my study looks at integrative practices, like food practices that are ‘more complex practices found in and constitutive of particular domains of social life’ (Schatzki, 1996, p. 98). These ‘complexes of practices’ (Shove et al., 2012a) are “embedded in wider nexuses, networks or chains of practices” (Spaargaren et al., 2016, p. 21) and are liable to wider social contexts (covering institutional arrangements as in the case of a crisis situation) that regulate rules, norms and conventions (Rouse, 2007; Schatzki, 1996, 2010).

2.5.4 Everyday food consumption as practice

The ‘practice turn’ (Schatzki, 2001) in social sciences involved new ways to analyze day-to-day consumption (Warde 2005). Considering that food consumption is produced in combination with a number of factors, including rules and regulations, mechanisms for the provision of materials and infrastructural resources, and social and cultural norms together with habits and routines led to the

emanation of social practice lens for scrutinizing the performance of food practices (Devaney & Davies, 2017; Kurz et al., 2015; Warde, 2014).

The literature on food consumption has been extensively theorized as a socio-cultural phenomenon. Food provisioning, shopping, cooking, and eating has been a topic of socio-cultural investigation in marketing and sociology (Cappellini & Yen, 2016; Marshall, 1995; Warde, 2016), and anthropology (Goody & Goody, 1982). Even though not essentially conceptualized as practice, socio-cultural research on food provisioning and other associated practices is generally occupied with how these activities are carried out. However, oftentimes it ends up understating or neglecting several of the practical, material, measurable and analytical attributes of these practices. The ‘purely’ cultural focus fails to take into account the socio-material constructs engaged in everyday food practices of young people as they are linked to the material infrastructures (e.g., shopping, kitchen, and dining out facilities) and resources (e.g., provisions, instruments to prepare food, etc.) (Shove, 2016), nor do they concern with the calculative mechanisms working on performing these practices (Cochoy, 2008).

I respond to these limitations by taking an alternative approach to conceptualizing the food practices of young adults in a crisis situation. Treating food consumption and provisioning as a social practice has several implications. It means attending to the practicalities of a crisis situation involved. Exploring the food practices as a set of practices reveals that practices are not constituted solely, but are interconnected with other co-dependent practices, and are performed as integrative bundles (Schatzki, 2001), and practice elements intersect with one another across the bundle (Nicolini, 2017; Scheurenbrand et al., 2018; Shove et al., 2012a). Examining food practices as a bundle indicates, for example, how various combinations of practice elements around food shopping have a bearing on other practices like cooking, eating, and managing waste. Therefore, adopting a practice approach to food provisioning recognizes the heterogeneity of food practices. Existing studies on food consumption have established the potential benefits of implementing a practice-theoretical lens to shopping, cooking, and other integrated practices.

My study underscores the importance of practice realignment in the event of disruption by bringing practice elements in alignment with each other and other systems of practices, and the need to examine how materials, competences, and meanings that form the building blocks of a practice are integrated with other practices and systems of practices. The reproduction of a practice is influenced by the strength of alignment, and it is established that practice misalignment can result in possible variations in meanings, materials, and competences that flow back into changes in the fundamental elements of the practice itself.

2.6 Summary

With the aim of understanding routinized food consumption among young adults during times of crisis, this part of the literature review chapter has analyzed the research on crisis consumption, and specifically the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on culinary and dietary practices. Next, the literature on the young adult population is reviewed in the context of the pandemic crisis to understand how the virus outbreak and lockdowns have affected their food practices. The literature suggested that compared with other conceptualizations, the theoretical approach of social practice theory could accommodate the misalignments in food practices, and subsequent practice reconfigurations to develop an understanding of the way practices are coordinated, disrupted, and realigned.

The next chapter outlining research methods presents my positioning as a researcher, the research methods and describes the digital ethnographic study undertaken to answer the research aims and questions.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to explore the dynamics of food consumption among young adults during a crisis situation, as a complex combination of routines and challenges. The focus was on developing an in-depth understanding of their food provisioning practices with regards to grocery shopping and cooking, and how they adapted their practices in times of social distancing and challenged consumption during this period. To do this with thematic and analytic openness (Halkier, 2010), practice theoretical perspective and routinized practice-based approach to empirical research was adopted in this study. Given both the context and objective of my research – to study the food practices of young adults during a crisis situation like lockdown – the intensive iterative process of digital ethnography combined with online qualitative interviews on zoom seemed to be a natural choice to generate systematic and deeply engaging first-hand insights (Góralaska, 2020).

This chapter delineates this study's methodological background, its approach, situates and portrays the research field and population, and the methods of data collection. Therefore I begin my discussions with the socio-constructionist paradigm and relativist ontology and subjectivist epistemology together with the methodological background of practice theoretical approach that the research is based on. Next, I explain the population and sampling process. In the following step, I depict the three major data collection methods that my study utilizes: interactive online food diary, my observatory practices during co-participation in food diary activity, and semi-structured interviews employing projective techniques. Subsequently, I explain the process of data analysis and discuss my positionality vis-à-vis the study. Lastly, I consider the ethical dimensions related to this study.

3.2 Socio-constructionist paradigm

Ontologically, the research paradigm of this dissertation is focused on the relativist, socio-constructionist paradigm (see Figure 3.1 for an analysis of the study's framework). Social constructionism, as a major form of interpretive research, attempts to view how the understandings of

the social world as are nestled in and revealed through people's lived embodied experiences of their everyday lives and practices (Andrews, 2012). Social constructionism contends that the ways we understand the seemingly objective features of the living world are through 'social artifacts, products of historically situated interchanges among people' (Gergen, 1985, p. 267). This means that the way these young consumers (caught in the current restrictive environment of the most stringent lockdown in the city of Auckland, NZ) make sense of food provisioning, cooking and consumption cannot be directly applied to other young consumers elsewhere. This perspective of constructivism was compatible with the aims of this research, which sought to explore the way social actors develop realities through meanings and understandings (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2012).

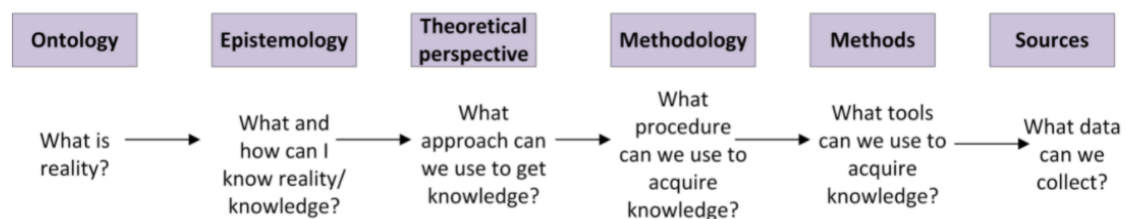


Figure 3. 1: Social constructionist philosophical paradigm (Source: Adapted from Hay (2002, p. 64))

3.3 Relativist ontology and subjectivist epistemology

Relativist ontology is the belief that nothing exists outside of our thoughts, and that reality is a socially constructed finite subjective experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Given that reality from a relativist perspective is subjectively experienced and unique for each person in their specified context (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008), this study pursued its aims by exploring the thoughts, feelings and behaviour of young food provisioners regarding their everyday food practices in a crisis situation like lockdown. The knowledge in subjectivist epistemology is "always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 21). Therefore, despite the shared external reality, the participants in this study would have their own interpretations of food provisioning experiences during the lockdown and the subjective reality of their food practices. Thus, there could be as many different realities as there were people, including that of myself as the observer and the researcher and those described by the provisioners (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

To ensure that subjective experience of reality and multiplicity of co-constructed interpretations of the meanings be taken into account (Burr, 2015), necessitated a strong research design and a compatible theoretical framework. To meet this objective, I adopted practice theory-oriented digital ethnography (Postill & Pink, 2012) as a methodological tool to study the implications of Covid lockdown on food purchasing, preparation and consumption practices of young adults. Digital or virtual ethnography, where the internet is considered as a “site of interaction” (Hine, 2000, p. 30) was a well thought out strategy given both the objective of this study as well as the context of the lockdown, which made traditional ethnographic fieldwork temporarily impossible to conduct.

Digital ethnography, in the current study, facilitated being a part of the food world of the participants in the rich digital space, and afforded opportunities to observe and engage in a dialogue through participation in online food diary using Facebook’s private group setting. With the researcher being the binding force of the fieldwork (Burrell, 2009), digital field sites comprised of frequent posts in the form of texts, images and videos for the creation of food diary. Further engagement included semi-structured interviews, analysis of symbols in observations (e.g., texts and emoticons of language, pictures, temporality of food behavior via timestamps on social media posts), and textual analysis of the transcripts (Wolcott, 2008).

3.4 Practice theory approach

With the purpose of examining what happens when consumption practices are disrupted, the current study adopted practice theory both as a theoretical lens and a methodological tool to empirically study the enactment of realignment practices as engaged in by young consumers in their food routines and behaviour during the time of uncertainty and crisis (Nicolini, 2017). Given the ontological assumptions of social constructionism of this study, practice theory was an apt methodological consideration. This is because, within a constructionist enquiry, the focus is on the social practices people engage in and interact with each other (Burr, 2015). Moreover, the methodology of practice theory enabled the understanding of consumption as being entangled within webs of interlinked routinized social practices and relationships in everyday life as opposed to a stand-alone phenomenon (Halkier & Jensen, 2011; Warde, 2015). Additionally, the social practice theoretical methodology offered a more robust account of the way social and behavioral change takes place compared with conventional methods in the study of consumption (Welch, 2020). I particularly build on three-element social practice framework of Shove et al. (2012a, p. 14) involving meanings (images, ideas and aspirations), materiality (things, objects, and stuff) and competence (skills, know-how and technique) to explain changes in the food practices of young adults during the lockdown crisis.

In the empirical application of practice theory, contemporary theorists distinguish between practice as ‘entity’ and practice as ‘performance’ (see the depiction in Figure 3.2). It not only supports the design of an analytical praxiography based methodology but also provides a theoretical perspective for understanding the history and future trajectories of practices (Schatzki, 1996; Shove & Pantzar, 2007). A practice entity refers to meaning and cultural understandings, skills and competencies, objects and artifacts, and socially observable behavior as performances (Spurling et al., 2013) via ‘the interrelated elements of a practice’: materials, meanings, and competencies (Shove & Pantzar, 2005). Consider the practices of shopping, cooking, cleaning, or eating as such entities as discussed in this dissertation. In contrast, the performance aspect of practice ‘describes the carrying out or performing of a practice in a precise moment in time’ (Maller, 2015). Practice as ‘performance’ has relevance to the observable actions of individuals, such as chopping vegetables, boiling water and using pre-mixed spices, air frying chips and chicken nuggets, etc. (Spurling et al., 2013). Understanding the distinction between entity and performance of practices reveals how practices change and modify over time, as in this case, in a crisis situation.

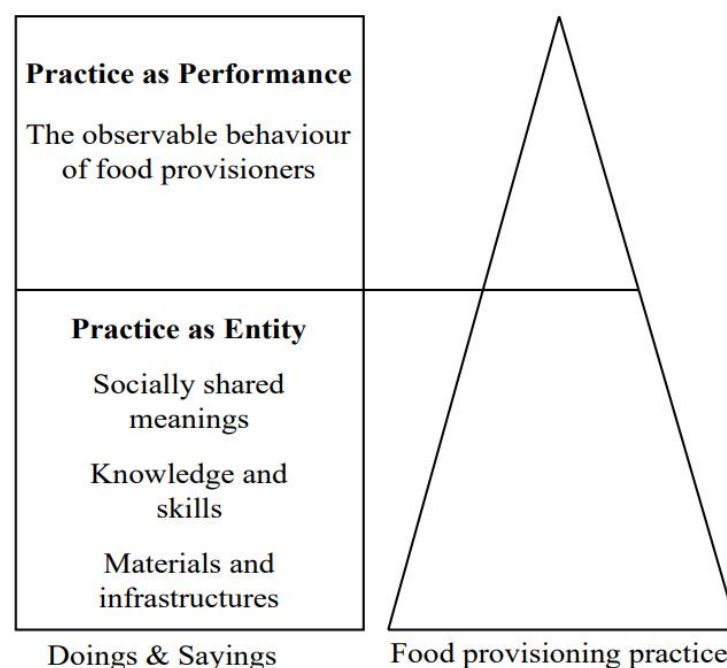


Figure 3. 2: Practice as entity or performance (Source: Adapted from Spurling et al. (2013))

A change in practice evolves from both outside the practice as well as inside it via reorganization or making and breaking links within practice constituting elements, i.e., meanings, materials, and competencies (Warde, 2005). A crisis situation, such as Covid lockdown can trigger changes in the organization of food practices in the lives of young adults from the outside, by virtue of their relationship with other practices, for instance, rules for practicing social distancing, heightened health concerns, interrupted mobility practices, inaccessibility to outside food, perceived greater

availability of time as a material resource, etc. As carriers of practices improvise new ‘doings’ and ‘sayings’ in their emergent social situations, practices change from the inside. In terms of food practices, developing this understanding of change is beneficial, as it suggests that there are opportunities to intervene to facilitate the reproduction of, and/or to instigate changes in the existing practices. As regards to this study’s focus on the elemental composition of food practices in a crisis situation, these concepts are helpful for addressing questions about how young adults in the study, reconfigure their misaligned food practices in a restricted food environment.

3.5 Research context: COVID-19 Delta Level 4 lockdown in New Zealand

New Zealand had been acknowledged as a shining example of managing the coronavirus health crisis by primarily determining and following a course of elimination, sanctioning some of the world’s toughest restrictions (Megget, 2022). A community case of the COVID Delta variant infection was reported in Auckland on August 17, 2021 (Rangiwai et al., 2022). The figure of reported cases experienced rapid growth, straining the Government’s capacity of the health system, testing and contact tracing, and quarantine facilities (Rangiwai et al., 2022). This virus outbreak stirred up a rapid escalation to a Level 4 lockdown for the entire country of New Zealand to eliminate community transmission (Crothers, 2021; Rangiwai et al., 2022). The stringent lockdown continued for several months for the country as a whole, while Auckland stayed in lockdown for approximately four months.

Level 4 lockdown rules mandated that people stay home except when shopping for basic necessities, or emergencies and medical-related problems, restricting their ability to socialize, eat in restaurants or order takeaways, do normal grocery shopping, go to the gym, office, or school (Hunt & Forrester, 2021). This sheltering at home led to disruption, transformation, and reorganization of various consumption practices in New Zealand (Stanley, 2021). Such extraordinary crisis and reformation of normality may have long-term effects on food planning, preparation, and dietary patterns, especially among young adults. Therefore, there is a need to study the perceptions and responses of these young food provisioners related to their food shopping, procurement, cooking, and eating during the Covid crisis and associated lockdown to develop strategies to safeguard the health and well-being of young adults during and beyond such natural disasters and crisis situations.

3.6 The population and sampling process

In qualitative research, identification and selection of individuals who fit certain criteria or possess rich information or insights related to the phenomenon of interest (Creswell et al., 2011) is essential. In order to ensure that the selected cases were likely to make valuable contributions to this study, criterion purposeful sampling strategy was applied (Patton, 2002).

As the focus of this study was on young adults' food provisioning experiences, improvisations and consumption practices during a crisis situation like the lockdown, the participant eligibility criteria included young people in the age range of 21–33 years. This age range is in line with existing literature on young adults (Magaudha, 2011; Weinberger et al., 2017). It was also required of them to be in Auckland as for the rest of the country, the conditions of lockdown were slightly relaxed after the initial weeks. Another critical eligibility criterion included that they be responsible for provisioning their own food and grocery shopping. Defining the food-provisioner role was important because the conception of 'system of provision' forms a basic premise in consumer behaviour studies predicated on social consumption practices (Fine et al., 2018; Spaargaren & Van Vliet, 2000).

In the context of the current research, the system of food provisioning (Spaargaren & Van Vliet, 2000) refers to such understandings as 'access' and 'use' pertaining to the production, processing and preparation, as well as the sourcing and procurement of the food that is consumed by these young consumers. Hence, the role of food provisioner in this study was determined as one becoming involved with the infrastructures of food provisioning, including routes and routines, logistics of transportation, supermarkets and grocery stores, etc., food provisioning networks like restaurants and delivery companies, as well as the competencies and motivations required for food provisioning. Therefore, this study invited the participation of young adults aged 21–33 living independently in Auckland during Covid-19 Delta 4 lockdown in August 2021 in a self-catering role. The criteria of the study did not specify the gender or religion of the participants.

3.6.1 Sampling Procedure

The use of qualitative, interpretivist research by practice theorists is primarily to develop an understanding of subjective meanings of a certain phenomenon or development and to generalize to theoretical propositions instead of to populations (Carrigan et al., 2011; Moraes et al., 2017). Using such an approach (Fossey et al., 2002; Spiggle, 1994), I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with 22 young adults. This small number of interviews is consistent with recommended approaches to fine-grained, in-depth inquiry (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006; Guest et al., 2006).

The young food provisioners were invited to participate in the study by placing advertisements on social media (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn) and through personal networks. The strategy of snowball sampling technique (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981) was also applied. This sampling strategy involves asking existing participants if they could refer someone who fit the criteria and would also be interested in partaking in the research, to increase the sample size (Wilson, 2014). That said, an associated disadvantage of this chain-referral sampling technique is that respondents are likely to refer those people whom they know and have similar traits, which could lead to a potential sampling bias and margin of error. However, the strategy of purposive sampling was employed because of the feasibility and the intention to study a real-life phenomenon instead of creating a representative sample of the general young population. Once the potential respondents had expressed their interest in taking part in the research, an informed consent form, and the participant information sheets, which provided a broad description of the proposed study were sent out by the researcher via email. The returned signed consent forms of the participants were stored in a safe and secure manner. All participants were gifted with a food/grocery voucher worth NZ\$ 60, as a show of appreciation for their time. Appendix A presents the details of the approval from the Ethics Committee of the Auckland University of Technology, while Appendix B outlines interview guide, observation protocol, participant information and consent forms, and social media invitation to recruit participants.

Table 3.1 presents an overview of the contextual, demographic details of the research participants together with their living situation in their current accommodations. Each participant has been given a pseudonym for research ethical reasons.

Table 3. 1: A Summary of participants' information

Pseudonym	Age range	Gender	Occupation	Living situation
Madeline	20-24	Female	Student/working part-time	In a granny flat with her partner
Mariana	30-33	Female	Not working at the time	In an apartment with her partner
Talia	20-24	Female	Student/ out of work due to lockdown	In an apartment with her partner
Parla	20-24	Female	Student	Shares a tiny apartment with a small kitchen area with two other flatmates
Claire	20-24	Female	Student	In an apartment with three other flat mates
Helena	25-29	Female	Working full-time	In house with her father and sister
Sylvie	20-24	Female	Student	In a noisy apartment near the road with her partner

Barabara	20-24	Female	Student / started a part-time job around the time of interview	In an apartment with another flat mate
Vivien	20-24	Female	Student	In an apartment with another flat mate
Aanav	25-29	Male	Student/working part-time	In university accommodation for families and young couples
Mark	20-24	Male	Student/working part-time	In a noisy apartment in the city with another flat mate
Ariana	20-24	Female	Not working at the time due to lockdown	In an old house with partner and other flatmates
Shayne	20-24	Male	Not working at the time due to lockdown	In an old house with partner and other flatmates
Sophie	25-29	Female	Student	In university accommodation; however, her fridge malfunctions
Andrew	25-29	Male	Student	In University accommodation, with detached kitchen facility shared among several hundred students
Marie	20-24	Female	Student	In an ill-maintained apartment with her partner
Kira	20-24	Female	Student/working part-time	In an apartment in downtown with her sister & cousin
Sidney	25-29	Male	Working full-time	In an apartment with two other flatmates
Udeep	25-29	Male	Student/working part-time	In a hostel with dormitory-style accommodation and shared kitchen facility
Vandan	25-29	Male	Working full-time	In an apartment with a host family
Ian	20-24	Male	Student/working part-time	In an apartment with four other flatmates
Nicole	20-24	Female	Out of work due to lockdown	In an old flat with four other flatmates

3.7 Data collection

Past studies using a practice theoretical approach have used diverse qualitative techniques to understand the how and why of everyday practices, including in-depth interviews (Magaudda, 2011), filmed observation and interviews (Truninger, 2011), interviews, auto-photography and participant

observation at individual, family and group levels (Halkier & Jensen, 2011), and photographic food diaries (Zepeda & Deal, 2008). Consistent with the social practices approach, this study uses digital ethnography, utilizing interactive online food diaries, combined with semi-structured interview method to grasp the practical reality of food provisioning and consumption within the context of lockdown.

3.7.1 Interactive online food diary

All the participants were asked to take photographs of all meals and snacks consumed daily and post it in the online food diary hosted on the Facebook private group platform, together with a short description of the related item. These were unsolicited diaries given that no structured templates were provided by the researcher, and were written without external motives and effort to represent participants' constructions of social reality or events (Cohen et al., 2006).

In addition to recording their meal intake, they could also share other facets of their everyday living that constituted and contributed to their food experience – their food shopping, cooking, visual data of the kitchen area, storage section in the fridge or pantry, their dining place, etc. Besides getting a snapshot of what and how of the food worlds of the participants, the food diary also allowed to capture the way their eating related to their other practices. This not only helped in 'situating' the discussion, letting the participants indicate the matters important to their food practices (e.g., a broken oven or some exotic food ingredients, etc.), but also eased the problems of retrieving the specifics of mundane practices from memory (Martens, 2012). Diaries have been used successfully in diverse settings to gather data when recollecting from memory would prejudice reporting or make it incomplete (Bolger et al., 2003; Hoppe et al., 2000). For example, while conducting the interviews I did not have to count on their retrospective recall, but could instead project the pictures that they had shared in the online food diary for elicitation during the interview.

The purpose of using private Facebook group as the platform for creating online food diaries was to ensure that all the contents posted were end-to-end encrypted, meaning that nobody could see or access any part of the discussion unless they were part of the research. Unlike public groups, where anyone on or off Facebook can view the group's contents, closed or private groups are more exclusive and the access to group content and membership information is limited to the group members. The interested participants who were concerned about their privacy within the group were offered to create their food diaries using WhatsApp, or Google doc. Online diaries hosted on the mixed media platform comprising textual and visual interface (Highfield & Leaver, 2016) helped communicate the rich nuances of participant's food-related consumption experiences and everyday practices. Additionally, as a mobile social networking site, Facebook enabled the researcher and the participants with the flexibility of 'anytime, anywhere' posts and interactions.

As the researcher and the digital ethnographer, I was the organizer and the administrator of the interactive diary activity, and I co-participated with my participants. Being a participant-as-observer meant that I actively participated in all the activities as my participants, for example, posting my daily food-related photos and comments. While this was not to influence what they posted, it helped me be a part of their world, and establish an on-going social interaction with them. There were no specific instructions on what to post except that it related to their everyday meal (breakfast, lunch, snack, dinner and extra meals) and their food world in general – its motivations and challenges during the lockdown. All participants were asked to complete a self-reporting period of at least 2 weeks, while the majority of the members participated for 3 weeks. Thus, in my research, these young consumers' posts in online food diary in near-real-time allowed me to make sense of their culinary behaviour during the lockdown, and how they negotiated their way around with meal planning, shopping, cooking, storing and eating, while being completely cut off from outside food catering. A total of 945 posts, 1048 images and 3 videos were posted by way of online diary entries. The interactive food diary was an effective method in my study as it engaged the participants as equal partners and afforded them greater control in the data-gathering process.

3.7.2 Observing while co-participating

Being a participant-as-observer, data collection also involved interactions and observations (Aktinson & Hammersley, 1998) made while co-participating in the online food diary activity process. These informal, embedded observations included spending time to build rapport with the participants in their food related environments, grasp their experiences, and break into conversations. Engaging and taking part in the participants' food activities, observing and paying close attention to the things they do in the normal course of their everyday lives, materialities and practical procedures, relevant values, routine actions, taken-for-granted rules and norms. Embedding into the scene as a participant also helped me understand the multiple facets of their personality and lifestyle, not simply those of interest from the research aspect. For example, in this case, Saturday ritual of one participant – spending the morning digging and doing some timberwork to make the frame for her vertical garden, and therefore having a late lunch. These digital interactions plotted the peculiar cooking and eating patterns of these young people, besides other associated lifestyle practices like the new sleep schedule and the displaced 'lunch at Uni' or 'working lunch' (Holmes et al., 2021) during the lockdown. "Being there", both in the physical and digital sense of the word, allowed me to recognize the thoughts and acts that generally get missed or are hard to uncover as part of the mainstream "story".

3.7.3 Semi-structured interviews

Diary keeping is usually supplemented by interviews as a valuable method to expand on and clarify diary entries (Gable et al., 2000). The interactive food diary activity operated for 24 days from 27th August to 19th September 2020; at the end of this period, the food diaries were analyzed. The diary entries were instrumental in allowing me to explore in more detail specific food experiences, events, posts, comments, etc., through a semi-structured interview, in which though the questions were not fully scripted, a basic interview guide was developed (see Appendix B (i)) to focus on ‘everyday’ living in the lockdown, and draw out the diverse and complex ways of food provisioning among young consumers (Bueger, 2014; Halkier & Jensen, 2011).

Keeping in mind the research objective, a series of open-ended questions were developed with reference to the literature on food-related behaviour in a crisis situation (Duquenne & Vlontzos, 2014; Laguna et al., 2020; Taché & Carpentier, 2014). After conducting the two pilot interviews, additional amendments were made to the interview guide (see Appendix B (i)) to encourage the participants to discuss how the lockdown and associative factors had influenced their food consumption practices with regards to shopping, cooking eating and storing.

Overall, 22 online interviews were conducted, with the sessions lasting between 1 to over 2 hours. A total of 31 hours of interview data was collected. Since all interviewees were fluent English speakers, the interviews were conducted in English. Zoom, a secure and reliable digital communication platform, was used for conducting all semi-structured interviews between September and October 2021. I met on a regular basis with my dissertation supervisor to discuss the collected data and assess saturation (Dickson-Swift et al., 2009; Patton, 1990). Given the uncertainty on the continuity of lockdown, I ensured my availability for the interviewees at all times, and made a conscious effort to complete all the interviews (except one) before a decision in change on alert level settings from level 4 to Level 3 came into effect, so that the ‘lived’ experiences remained fresh in memory and the conditions uniform for all the participants.

At the beginning of each interview, the objective of this study was discussed briefly, following which, the participant’s consent to audio-record the interactions was sought. They were assured that any identifying information would be anonymized (King, 2004), and that their participation was voluntary, and they reserved unconditional rights to withdraw from the research at any time. Subsequently, grand tour questions (McCracken, 1988, p. 38) relating to participant’s personal backgrounds, occupation and living situations were asked to understand the rhythms of their daily lives and how they perceived them in the context of their culinary behaviour.

Prior to the interview, the participants were asked to share (i) three photographs of their most favorite meals, and (ii) three of the foods that they perceived to be the healthiest from their food

consumption pictures they had shared earlier. Participants were asked to share their perceived healthy foods as there were Covid-specific health anxieties among people. Scholarly work on consumption coping strategies during Covid indicated an increase in healthy food behaviors, for example eating more home-cooked meals, fruits, and vegetables, etc. In the same vein, increased free time also contributed to boredom and snacking in some cases, while in some others, the newly found extra time was used to plan and prepare meals contributing to increased culinary competence and/or agency. These photographs functioned to trigger memory and visualization (Epstein et al., 2006) and were used for elicitation purposes during the interview, as well as to gauge changes in food consumption behavior and coping strategies of these participants in the lockdown period.

3.7.3.1 Application of projective techniques

To enable the young participants in the study to express their underlying needs, beliefs, feelings and motivations beyond the rational, and triangulate their ‘sayings’ and ‘doings’ in other instances, I applied projective techniques in the interviews (Gambaro, 2018; Vidal et al., 2013). Projective techniques are defined as those that take advantage of unstructured and ambiguous stimuli that allow interviewees to project their deep attitudes and emotions, which may be unconscious (Boddy, 2005; Catterall & Ibbotson, 2000; Donoghue, 2000).

In past research, projective methods have been used to uncover consumer perceptions by innovatively using three different projective techniques to compare results (Vidal et al., 2013), word association technique to assess consumer expectations about pizza (Pontual et al., 2017) or cultural effects on consumers' perceptions (Soares et al., 2017), or employing pictures of couples in the supermarket with incomplete dialogues as stimuli for an online completion test to discover consumer choice attributes (Viana et al., 2016) and to explore the dynamics of food routines (Dyen et al., 2018).

In this study, projective technique is used to answer the ‘what’, ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions related to the performance of the food practices in the lives of young adults. For instance, I used word association tasks to ask the respondents to indicate the first words or images that triggered when they thought about grocery shopping or cooking during lockdown, or sentence completion stimulus to draw out their perception of eating out, takeaways, or ordering food online, etc. Some questions like, ‘how would you describe those people who like to eat out’, utilized third person projective approach, where the interviewee could attribute the information to others – in that way revealing non-conscious motivations in their response. I also made good use of photo-based projective techniques, like showing the participants the images of their kitchen area, grocery shopping, or specific images from their online food diary to allow them to remember and hence ease and advance the discussions. The projective technique of choice ordering allowed the respondents to number-order their choice among

three of their favorite or healthy foods, explaining why certain factors were less or more important. Appendix C exhibits the projective task as presented to the participants.

3.8 Data analysis

The interview data collected for this study comprised approximately 31 hours of audio material, around 596 pages of interview transcription, together with additional data generated through online food diary and my field notes during everyday encounters with my participants while co-participating in the diary process.

All audio recordings were transcribed verbatim. While I transcribed 13 of the interviews using Microsoft's transcription tool, the remaining 9 were transcribed by external transcription service providers. To cross reference and validate the accuracy of the transcripts, as well as to immerse myself in the data and become very familiar with it as part of the study's iterative approach, I listened to the interview recordings several times. The interviews and co-participation in the online food diary allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the respondents' point of views and narratives as their emic perspectives (Pike, 2015). Following my immersive familiarity with the data enabled me to analyze, synthesize and filter the data using an etic perspective to unlock novel interpretations (Spiggle, 1994).

The interview data was analyzed via Thematic Analysis, applying the guidelines laid by Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic Analysis is beneficial as it can lead to trustworthy and insightful findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This analytic method also suited the nature of this study as it was both iterative as well as afforded the flexibility to move between the data set, identify and analyze codes and themes, organize, re-code and build the themes and subthemes. Using an inductive approach for analysis, let the codes and themes sprout from the data-set itself. Given that I was studying food practices during lockdown, I also used a contextualist framework to analyze how young people make sense of their experience, and social environment in which those meanings shape.

To execute thematic analysis, all the data was hand coded using Microsoft Excel. I opted not to employ NVivo, a popular qualitative data analysis software, as I believed these programs were too rigid in the abstraction of the constructs and did not consider the hierarchical, nested levels of context (Ekiz et al., 2012). Moreover, in keeping with the interpretive research paradigm, hand coding the data allowed to code it in a language akin to that used by the young food practitioners (Burr, 2015). For instance, categories such as 'lockdown blues' or 'fakeaways' were constructed, employing the participants' own words.

Following Braun and Clarke (2006) six-stage thematic analysis process, I started by creating a familiarity with the data, followed by finding the initial codes and categorizing. At this point, codes were transferred to the Excel spreadsheet to be sorted into broader themes using the previously generated codes. Tables 3.2 & 3.3 demonstrate a sample of the step-by-step process of the thematic analysis. Further coding involved investigating the relationships between initial themes like ‘mobile app for grocery planning’ and ‘lockdown protective gear hindering access to the app’ generating insights such as: challenged material provision. Refining the codes and grouping them based on their resemblance or differences led to the emergence of subthemes. The subthemes were revisited and discussed with the dissertation supervisor and an independent researcher to establish more clarity, and work towards an emerging thematic framework (Cho & Lee, 2014; Levac et al., 2010). To ensure that the analysis was grounded in empirical evidence, codes were verified against the data throughout the process of thematic analysis.

Table 3. 2: Example of the coding process from extracting the data to arriving at the theme.

Data extract	Codes	Sub-theme	Theme
<i>With lockdown, the list didn't actually work. when you wear the gloves and then touch the phone, and you're thinking, why am I touching my phone with gloves?[...] I buy a lot of unnecessary stuff during lockdown; but before lockdown, I can actually have access to my app, and I can go through it properly.</i>	Mobile app for grocery planning Lockdown protective gear hindering access to the app	New rules causing material “rearrangements” in food provisioning practices	Practice misalignments due to material interruptions

Table 3. 3: Result of the thematic analysis presenting key themes and associated subthemes.

Theme	Practice misalignments due to material interruptions	Disruption in material properties
Sub-themes	New rules causing material “rearrangements” in food provisioning practices	The physical environment of shopping and material procurement affected by rules of lockdown and social distancing
	New strains on existing material infrastructures	Pre-existing material deficiencies accentuated during lockdown

3.8.1 Issues with data trustworthiness

To ensure that the findings are credible, firstly, I employed a method of data triangulation (Y. S. Lincoln & E. G. Guba, 1985) by asking the participants to share their favorite dishes and the foods that they perceived to be the healthiest (see Appendix C for some examples) and talk about why they perceived so. Secondly, another triangulation practice was verifying participants' sayings and stories with the posts that they had shared in the interactive online food diary. Thirdly, employing an interactive method of participation, allowed the participants to integrate more fully into the overall research process. Along with giving them a chance to co-analyze and co-interpret, add and rectify information, it also increased trustworthiness (Belk et al., 1988).

To further improve the credibility of the findings, two independent coders (not involved in the study) were included in the coding process. This was to verify the logic and consistency of the interpretations and emergent themes of the main coder. The idea was not to arrive at similar insights but instead to enhance insights through debate and discussion (Malterud, 2001). This method was adopted to validate and solidify the findings to improve the standards of trustworthiness and generalizability of the conclusions. In interpretivist research, since the researcher is instrumental in data collection and analysis, it is, therefore, crucial to eliminate biases that may not be evident in other methods of study. It is assumed and expected that no two independent coders would have identical interpretations and insights from the viewpoint of the participants. Additionally, this comparative and iterative method of analysis made me review the data recurrently, thus increasing the rigour of the coding process ((Marques & McCall, 2005; Service, 2009; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

3.9 The researcher position

Like the majority of the participants in this study, I am a student at a tertiary education in Auckland, NZ and a food provisioner, which positioned me in the role of the 'insider' (Berger, 2015), and allowed for a better understanding of the participants. Not only this, it also facilitated the recruitment of participants. Having substantial work experience also allowed me to get along with working participants, and they were very receptive and cooperative in sharing their everyday experiences and stories regarding food in lockdown. Additionally, being a participant-as-an-observer in the online food diary activity and ongoing interactions with the participants made it easy to construct an informal setting. I could mirror several elements of the participants' 'sayings' and 'doings' on my own daily experience.

Having a shared social experience fostered a researcher–participant relationship based on trust, collaboration, tacit knowledge sharing, and mutuality of purpose, which allowed for meaningful co-analysis of food practices and lived experiences during lockdown (Burr, 2015; Manning, 1997). It also furnished me with insights and understandings of the implied aspects of their food behaviour.

I am a vegetarian, and my knowledge, outlook and positive and negative associations in relation to certain food types and ingredients are molded by my familial, geographical and cultural background. I perceive myself to have a good relationship with food, and strived not to let my possible aversions or surprises in relation to certain food items show. Nonetheless, I am aware that my prior beliefs and limited knowledge about different food cultures, rituals, and practices had a bearing on my interpretations and analysis in the data collection process. This also brings me to examine my position in the research narrative from emic and etic perspectives. Based on Kenneth Pike’s (1954) work on emic and etic approaches where he views them as two complementary research perspectives to qualitative inquiry, I endeavored to articulate an ‘in-between’ position, trying to integrate the two perspectives. While the emic researcher takes the cultural insiders’ perspective to study the particulars of human behaviour with a dedicated sociocultural focus, the etic researcher examines behaviour from an objective outsider position using common cultural constructs apposite to other cultures as well (Bergman & Lindgren, 2018). Pike contends that the two approaches, emic and etic, complement each other, and therefore in my study, I tried to bridge the divergence between the two perspectives. Instead of ‘going native’, which could have unduly influenced my data gathering and analysis procedures, I looked both inward and outward to bridge the divergence between the two perspectives (Beals et al., 2020; Y. S. Lincoln & E. G. Guba, 1985). It helped me maintain objectivity in my observation, analysis and construal of the social practices of young consumers surrounding food in a crisis situation.

3.10 Ethical considerations

The study was conducted consistent with the guidelines established by the ethics committee at Auckland University of Technology (AUTEC Reference number: 21/269 on 11 August 2021). The general aim of the study was shared and discussed with all the participants. Prior to the commencement of the study, they were sent the participant information sheet detailing the motivation and procedures of the study (see Appendix B (iii)). The participants were explicitly informed that their participation was voluntary and of their right to withdraw from participation at any time and with no explanations required. Informed consent to participate in the study, involving the food diary through closed group social media participation and interviews, as well as the right to use the media files was obtained from all the participants (see Appendix B (iv)). To ensure confidentiality of the

participants, their identities were thoroughly anonymized by giving them pseudonyms. I maintained full transparency and disclosed my identity as a researcher right from the time I started with participant recruitment to while co-participating in the food diary activity, and conducting interviews.

3.11 Summary

Beginning with a justification for taking the constructionist philosophical paradigm, and then discussing the methodological challenges in adopting practice theory to study routine food provisioning, cooking and eating practices in a crisis situation, followed by outlining the key methods like online food diary and interview, this chapter delineates the methods endeavored in this research. It also outlines how credibility and trustworthiness at the stages of data gathering and analysis was ensured. In the following chapter, I discuss my findings and conceptual developments elicited from the data and emergent themes produced throughout the research process.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the emerging findings from the analysis and interpretations of the interactive online food diaries together with semi-structured interviews of 22 participants who took part in this study. The fieldwork began right after a community case of a highly contagious Delta variant of coronavirus had been detected in New Zealand, necessitating a swift transition to a Level 4 lockdown from 17th August to 4th October 2021, introducing some of the strictest restrictions in the world (Hunt & Forrester, 2021). This has sparked some strong, disparate reactions from the consumption perspective, disrupting the routines of everyday food practices. In this light, the focal aim of the current study is to explore:

Research question: What happens when food routine is disrupted, and how do young consumers reconfigure their food practices as they transition through uncertainty and crisis situations?

The practice-theoretical framework has been adopted to structure and guide the analysis. Drawing upon the works of Shove and colleagues (Shove et al., 2012b; Shove & Walker, 2014), I present the data using the interlinked categories of material elements, meanings, and competencies. Practices are in that way, materially shaped, provide meaning to social action, and call for competences for their proper enactment. Hence, the approach to the categorization of elements here should be seen as fluid rather than stand-alone or distinct. Furthermore, given the context of crisis and associated lockdown, there are ‘rules’ governing everyday practices, which Schatzki defines as “explicit formulations that prescribe, require, or instruct that such and such be done” (2005, p. 471). These ‘rules’ both inform and direct practices. While this conceptualization makes it possible to gather empirical insights into the integrative food practices of young people, it also opens up the possibility to capture real-life tensions and complexities arising in their daily routines. The enactment of food provisioning practices among these young participants varies in accordance with the contexts and circumstances of their day-to-day living. Quotations from the interview transcripts depict the engagement of participants in food practices with reflexivity in response to the dramatic disruption caused by lockdown and their attempts at deliberate restructuring and renegotiation of the everyday food provisioning, culinary, and eating practices.

The findings are presented in two broad sections addressing the research question around practice misalignments in young adults' patterns of food practices in a crisis situation, and their

attempts to subsequently realign practice elements in order to carry on. Each of these sections represents the key themes that were identified through the analyses of the interactive online food diary and subsequent semi-structured interviews using projective techniques of the 22 participants associated with their meal planning, grocery shopping, cooking, and eating practices. The findings highlight the primacy of materials, and therefore the first section deals with material interruptions and ensuing practice misalignments in the wake of the crisis and lockdown mandates (e.g., mobility restrictions, deroutinization, loss of consumption sociality, etc.). The second part looks at how participants realign their practices within new material configurations and readjust their meanings and competences to resolve tensions resulting from misaligned food practices. Taken together, they support the research objective of understanding the dynamics of everyday food practices and routines among young adults during a period of crisis and uncertainty.

4.2 Material interruptions and misaligned food practices

Practices are embedded in structures of materiality and social contexts and situations (cf. Schatzki 2002). Due to external interventions brought in the shape of lockdown, the infrastructural relations for the bundle of practices like going out, working, leisure, shopping, traveling, socialization, sleep routine, etc., all changed at once (Adey et al., 2021). This also brought in the challenges of ‘material arrangements’ like those involved in the provision of ingredients, food supply, kitchen set-ups and tools, consumption of food items, and dining out infrastructure, etc. The findings in this section detail the impaired links to the material (and in some cases missing materials), along with the existing basic materialities – the things in the background, like the poorly outfitted kitchen infrastructure and unmaintained appliances, etc.

4.2.1 Punctuated practices of material procurement

Even outside of lockdown situations, food practices among young adults have been perceived as poor based on factors, such as their living arrangement and kitchen facilities, the requisite culinary skills, access to healthy food options, time poverty, and other lifestyle factors (Murray et al., 2016).

Research suggests that these factors play a significant role in constraining their ability to prepare and consume healthy meals (Bagordo et al., 2013; Poobalan et al., 2014). Level 4 Delta lockdown restrictions in Auckland meant further compounding these limitations, especially in the context of young adults, enduring mobility restrictions, and surviving without takeaways, or Uber eats. Controls

and measures were put in place to regulate people's entrance and staying in shops. The number of customers was limited in stores as well as the maximum limit was set on buying certain grocery items like flour, bags of rice, dry pasta, UHT milk, frozen vegetables, etc., for Auckland shoppers (Preston, 2021). These factors coupled with persistent anxiety of contamination grossly impacted the provisioning of materials for everyday food practices. Table 4.1 summarizes the effect of impaired materiality on misaligned food practices of young adults during lockdown.

4.2.1.1 Food shopping practices in a disarray

The lockdown put into sharp focus the vulnerabilities in the way our food system and infrastructure are organized – right from growing and processing to consumption of food and the distribution networks, grocery stores and the supply chains in between. It demonstrated how 'constantly changing networks of interdependencies' (Elias, 1978, p. 132) as part of social practices can have implications for food security and availability at both the household and community level. To buy grocery and food materials from the supermarket can represent something completely logical, mundane and taken for granted, but not in lockdown, as can be seen in this matter-of-fact statement by Sidney:

Sidney: The first day that lockdown was announced, and I went to Pak N Save the next day, everything was empty. There was nothing.

Mark and Udeep also shared similar experiences of being impacted by not being able to access their preferred foods, at least temporarily, during the lockdown.

Mark: In terms of produce, there was a lot less [...] I couldn't get garlic for 3 weeks.

Udeep: I eat Indian food, and they (grocery stores) have a lot of food shortages [...] there are no spices available [...] So, I have to rely more on packaged food.

In broad alignment with previous literature, social distancing measures and perceived risk of possible infection from going out, shopping, or coming in close contact with people during lockdown (Ronto et al., 2021; Snuggs & McGregor, 2021) gave way to perceptions of grocery shopping as an unsafe activity and was apparently the greatest deterrent for many of the respondents in this study.

In the light of increased transmissibility of the Delta variant, the Government had mandated wearing facemasks for everyone over the age of 12 when accessing essential services, such as grocery stores or bus stations, etc. Even though this was not the first lockdown, and in previous lockdowns, people had grown accustomed to maintaining hand hygiene and wearing masks, yet some of the participants found the experience annoying as Mariana states, "*wear the mask and stay in the queue for an hour. It has been irritating*". Socio-historically, masks, disinfectant wipes, or other protective

shields have not been part of routinized grocery shopping practices, and therefore some people can find it interrupting their shopping experience.

Mariana defined grocery shopping during the lockdown as “*chaos, nightmare and uncomfortable*”; Mark recollected the feeling as “*hectic, tiring and not very enjoyable*”, while Talia found it a “*painful process*”. This reflects the participants’ attitudes toward shopping for food during the lockdown and in particular shopping from supermarkets, affecting their access to material:

Aanav: Before lockdown [...] we've been going to Pak'nSave as opposed to Countdown just because we wanted to save money, but we completely avoid it now because the rush in Pak'nSave I can imagine is going to be outrageous. It's highly likely that it becomes a place of interest.

Andrew: With lockdown, I avoided going (grocery shopping) and I did it once a week sort of thing [...] I feel that (supermarket) might be a place with higher chances of COVID-19 if I keep on going shopping every day. That's why, even though the fridges are small, I wouldn't want to risk myself going there. I like to try to manage with that.

Helena: I really hesitate to go grocery shopping during lockdown [...] I try to find a place that people would rarely visit compared to bigger Pak'nSave or Countdown.

Here, the provision of materials for consumption practices was irrevocably linked to the perceptions of risk and safety. Several interviewees shared their concerns about the number of people in grocery stores at any one time and their struggle with material procurement. Parla, Ian and Barbara shared their disappointment at supermarkets not regulating the inflow of people.

Parla: There were so many people in. I was just kind of disappointed in how the supermarkets didn't really kind of monitor that. It demotivates me to go grocery shopping. If there were more measurements in place, I would feel safer to go grocery shopping and I would go more often.

Ian: Supermarkets don't really care about how many people are inside [...] you basically want to get something and there's a bunch of people in front of it. That might change my mind, and I might say, "I don't really need that thing", and then just walk away.

Barbara: Once you're actually inside, there's not much of a system in place to ensure the distance between you and the other person [...] it makes me feel a little uncomfortable.

Waiting for long hours in the queue and braving crowded aisles, the logistics of grocery shopping during lockdown was “*a bit scary*” as Udeep puts it, and seemed to induce nervousness and fear among participants. Another participant recalled her in-store experience, and how her relationship

with grocery shopping changed given the increased anxiety about coming in close contact with people:

Madeline: Especially in the fruit and veggie section, because I don't like to buy stuff that's already pre-packaged, I like to try and pick my own items, because that reduces the amount of plastic that I bring in. But then you've got like five other people that are also trying to pick the same fruit and veggies as you, and you are all in close contact... and you see someone touch a piece of fruit that they then don't want. And then you're like, "well... now I must avoid those ones... because they've touched it". I often find that lots of people, despite the fact that we've constantly been reminded not to panic buy... people do panic buy. You see people taking like 5 kilos of apples instead of just like the two that they would usually take for their snacks. So then, I have less choice. And it does really stress me out because I know that I'm not panic buying. I'm just buying my normal grocery shop. But I'm competing with everybody else at the same time.

Respondents expressed their feelings of a tense atmosphere of uncertainty and distrust where people perceived each other as a potential threat contributing to negative feelings around the act of shopping. Such concerns naturally affected food accessibility immediately.

Talia: Usually, I'd stop at everything I'm buying... "What's the cheapest?" Weigh up the odds of them. "Am I better to get the quality? Am I better to get the cheaper brand?" But now, I just grab it and get out, like "I don't want to be here anymore", because you've got 10 people in the aisles that are just wandering, and I'm like, "Oh no! I can't do this". So, I think that's where a lot more of my spending has actually come from, because I'm just grabbing anything rather than figuring out if it's more expensive or not.

On top of the mandatory use of face masks, some of the participants adopted additional precautions, like wearing gloves, which hindered them from smoothly accessing their touchscreen on their mobile device – in particular grocery list app in Andrew's case. This additionally challenged his food provisioning activity, resulting in redundant purchases due to restricted access to the app.

Andrew: With lockdown, the list didn't actually work. when you wear the gloves and then touch the phone, and you're thinking, why am I touching my phone with gloves?[...] I buy a lot of unnecessary stuff during lockdown; but before lockdown, I can actually have access to my app, and I can go through it properly.

The introduction of stringent physical distancing rules coupled with the fear of contracting the virus led not only to reduced time spent in the supermarket, but also frequency of visits to stores for purchasing groceries and fresh produce were delimited. The impact on material accessibility can be easily gauged through Vandan's statement wherein he suggests, "during this period, I went shopping

only once", which amounts to a little over 5 weeks from the time lockdown rules were enforced to his interview.

Sylvie: *I don't go to the supermarket frequently. I think it's good to decrease my risk*

Sophie: *Before COVID, three or four times a week. During lockdown, once or twice a week.*

Majority of the respondents who wanted to avoid supermarkets were further challenged by closure of several small-scale food retailers, like butchers, bakeries, and farmers' markets during the Delta 4 lockdown period as they were deemed 'non-essential' by the Government, as similar products were readily available in supermarkets. This additionally strained their everyday material consumption while on lockdown.

Madeline: *Prior to lockdown I had begun shopping at a refillery, buying my meat at a butcher and fruit and vege, well, from fruit and vege shops [...] I live close to several fruit and veggie stores [...] It's been quite disappointing in lockdown that I haven't had those options [...] I haven't been to a fruit and veggie shop or a butcher since lockdown. I didn't think that they were open.*

Talia: *I also shopped more locally for our veggies and stuff. So, I used to go to the Avondale market on Sundays and would just get fresh veggies and a bit cheaper usually. But we can't do that.*

Ariana: *If I want to make Indian food, my local grocery stores don't have everything I need, so I would normally go to an Indian grocer or go to an Asian one, but since they are close during level four, it was kind of difficult to meet all those cravings.*

Some other participants like Mariana, lament over not being able to incorporate more greens into their food. She says, "*I would add more greens after lockdown*", and postpones it to normal times when she can access fresh produce and other small stuff perhaps as easily as before.

In addition to having concerns about crowding, and bare store shelves, several of these young consumers were also worried about the "*escalated*" prices since the lockdown as Kira mentioned in her interview; and groceries being "*more expensive*" as both Sylvie and Nicole expressed. Mark realized "*a really solid direct increase*" in the amount he and his roommate were paying for food items. In accordance with local news reports suggesting how high grocery bills had spiked during Auckland lockdown (Dickinson, 2021) – nearly two-thirds of the participants bemoaned about supermarket prices rising during this period.

Mariana: *It's increased because the price has gone up. During the lockdown, I haven't been buying more than usual. But the prices are higher, that's what I noticed.*

Ariana: *During the lockdown, I would go and buy sometimes \$60 worth of groceries whereas normally I wouldn't spend more than \$10.*

Madeline: *I spend a lot more at the supermarket now. Sort of averaging between \$200 to \$250 a fortnight, whereas out of lockdown I would usually be spending about \$150 by Fortnite [...] I don't necessarily know how it might impact my spending. Meaning, you know, \$250 a fortnight on groceries is a substantial part of my budget. ()*

Consequently, due to price hikes, it is important to consider how food goals and motivations might have changed for these young consumers, impacting their food practices and eating behaviour. Some of the participants revealed that they could not buy their usual quantities of fruits and vegetables, or had to make do with alternatives, obviously bringing in more material hardship.

4.2.1.2 Disintegrated out-of-home foodservice options

Even though people wanted to reduce their grocery visits to lower the chances of contamination, several participants like Sidney, Ian and Claire, had to increase the frequency of their grocery trips as due to restrictions they were not being able to visit restaurants, or order food, which in turn led to increased consumption of food at home.

Sidney: *We used to go out for the lunch in the restaurant, I needed to prepare food only for dinner.*

Ian: *I've had to go a bit more frequently, because I eat food at home, and can't do any takeaways at the moment.*

Claire: *We're all at home, all the time. We're consuming more food at home, having every single meal here. Obviously there's just a higher quantity of food [...] I've definitely been going more often than I would outside of lockdown. Outside of lockdown, I go strictly once a week, typically on the same day, like probably every Sunday, I would do my groceries. But in lockdown, it's probably slightly more frequent.*

Apparently, all external relationships and practices normally occurring outside the boundaries of home, like shopping or eating out, were severely affected by the restrictions of lockdown, as with the closure of foodservice options and the fear of contracting the virus. A missing sense of autonomy and control pervade through the statements of participants. Pre-lockdown, Andrew massively relied on takeaways and eating out to obtain food every so often, “*if it was not lockdown, I would have ordered Uber Eats. I would have gone out and eaten*”. However, grossly constrained by his kitchen facility, combined with the unavailability of meal delivery services during the lockdown, his number of meals

has come down to just a single meal, as he shares: *“at the beginning of lockdown, I have noticed I just go for one huge dinner”*.

Even other participants express a feeling of restriction due to the unavailability of eating out facilities, as Shayne who used to eat out around three times a week, and now when that is not available, he feels, *“a little bit limited”*, or Vivien, for whom meals defaulted to eating out, *“just go to restaurants, get takeaways”* or Sophie who associates takeaways with saving time, *“I do miss the takeaways because they save a lot of time”*. To Sylvie, eating out afforded the freedom of choice, *“before lockdown, I didn't cook at home frequently. I chose eating outside, takeaways”*, whereas Barbara takes this as an opportunity for her culinary getaway, *“Out of lockdown, on the weekends is primarily when I would take that opportunity to eat out”*.

Both Aanav and Sylvie miss their normal life from before the lockdown restrictions. The acts of cooking, eating, or going out are forms of socialization and entertainment for them. Through lockdown restrictions and isolation at home, the norms of social eating have clearly been affected.

Aanav: *We usually have friends coming over [...] we either cook stuff or we get takeaways when they come over [...] we've got few friends who we usually end up going with outside to different restaurants to eat*

Sylvie: *Before lockdown, on the weekend we celebrate drinking outside, or eating food in the restaurant [...] try something we never tried.*

Another participant, Mariana said that *“with lockdown for five weeks”*, she missed going to *“a cafe and have someone to cook”* for her. From being at a café or restaurant, she gets the feeling like *“people are there with them”*, and draws the comforts of sociability and relaxation.

Mariana: *Going to cafes is a kind of learning experience, apart from feeling like being taken care of [...] the overall experience, the vibes that people are there with them (.) In general, you know like there is relaxation.*

Thus, the lack of opportunities to socialize during the lockdown, and a disconnect from social life, adversely affected the performance of food practices among young adults.

However, the closure of the dine-in channels, and the absence of online ordering immaterial facilities, not only disrupted the anytime, anywhere consumption patterns, it essentially changed the meaning and the relationship between the actor and matter (Gibson, 2014). Before lockdown, *‘even though it was a task’*, Mark *‘really quite enjoyed’* cooking. He reveals his plans of cooking a special meal every week that he earlier shared with his roommate, *“there would be one meal a week that I told my roommate, I'm going to spend a little bit more money on this meal because I want it to be*

something nicer”. But given the obligation and unavoidability of cooking all the meals, all the time, during the lockdown, it became just another chore. He speaks of his culinary burnout:

Mark: About cooking, I guess it's fun, good tasting. But after lockdown, it was less so. I had to plan more in priority. Prior, it would be a lot of eyeballing things and experimenting, because it doesn't matter. We could just go to the supermarket anytime if I wanted one extra thing to put in something. But I think after lockdown it was like the extra element had to be planned carefully, and it's like I can't use this because I need this in two days when I want to cook this. So, yeah, all the meals became a little bit more limited and yeah, a little less experimental [...] I hadn't really enjoyed cooking as much during lockdown.

For Mark, cooking did not remain as meaningful and intrinsically rewarding as it was before the lockdown. This is in agreement with the findings of recent literature that suggests that the higher the frequency of cooking, the lower is the sense of pleasure derived from the performance of the act (Namin et al., 2020). The underlying reason could be that culinary practices are perceived to demand a substantial amount of time, effort, and call for the exact measurements, particularly for those who enjoy doing it.

4.2.1.3 Transportation challenges affecting grocery shopping

Logistical challenges in the shape of transportation further restricted the abilities of these young consumers to purchase food. Even though public transport still operated, it was with both reduced timetable and capabilities and limited for essential services (Auckland Transport, 2021). Before lockdown, the mobility needs of these people were covered either via pooling rides with friends, or living close to shopping centers, meaning that they could frequent the stores and carry small amounts of material as and when. While Claire narrates the loss of her shared mobility resource, Parla shares her difficulties in carrying groceries without a car, and how she needs to trim down her grocery list to make it lighter. On one hand, Vivien’s hardships have increased because her neighborhood store has been flagged location of interest, and on the other, given the shortages and scant availability of food items in nearby supermarkets, Mark now has to trudge carrying his shopped material from one supermarket to another.

Claire: Outside of lockdown I go with one of my other flat mates [...] she has a car and I do not so we normally coordinate to do our groceries at the same time each weekend.

Parla: [...] carrying (grocery) ... If I had my car, it would just be easier, just drive up. But just carrying them... Whenever I make a grocery shopping list, I always try to cut down the things that are heavier, because it's just harder to carry it.

Mark: *Because we live in town, we don't drive out to the supermarket [...] When there was a lot missing, I'd have to go to another supermarket or grocery store [...] So we just lug all our stuff over there and see if they've got it. Basically do it like that, yeah!*

Vivien: *I changed actually, because supermarket in my neighborhood has been tested, like there are several positive COVID-19 carrying carriers [...] because I don't drive, I just go to the supermarket near my place, but now I have to ask my flatmate to take me to the far away one, so it's different.*

Thus, decreased access to transport systems during the lockdown had visible repercussions on material procurement for everyday food practices.

4.2.2 Obstructions imposed by obdurate materiality

When objects obstruct habituated practices, it is then that people are impelled to become more consciously aware of their relationship with materials (Godfrey et al., 2021), and it is in those precise time periods the significance of those materials are realized and they start “to matter”. In a similar fashion, by assessing the participants’ narratives, it came to the fore that their existing material frameworks on which their food practices hinged, were structured in large part via access to outside catering and food delivery services. Cafeterias, takeaways and eating out formed a major part of their food infrastructure. Before lockdown, even if these participants cooked, it was only a fraction of their meals. As can be expected, for quite a few, the material dimensions of their residences, including both the size and the organization of the kitchen, availability of kitchen tools and gadgets and cooking supplies further strained their ability to prepare and have all their meals at home during the lockdown.

One of the participants, Udeep, lives in a hostel with dormitory-style accommodation and shared spaces such as bathrooms, kitchen, and lounge areas with other residents. He describes the challenges of using a communal kitchen facility, where there is no defined system or ‘*fixed rule to share*’ the fridge space, due to which he admits buying “*fewer refrigerated items... because I know if I leave it in the refrigerator, it might get stolen*”. Then, there are always some occupants who don’t clean up after themselves, “*people would usually not clean their utensils and leave them*”. Living in a group situation with nominal kitchen opportunities, he feels constrained and alienated at the prospect of cooking during Delta lockdown, as he says, “*because I have a shared kitchen, so I tend to avoid (cooking) right now*”. While he indirectly refers to the social distancing rules of the lockdown, it also highlights the inadequacy of the current kitchen infrastructure of these participants in the context of disrupted accessibility to outside food – meaning that the pandemic has placed a new strain on the

existing material resources of young people, with demand for rapid changes in production and preparation of all meals at home.

Andrew, who lives in University accommodation, revealed that they had no kitchen on the individual floors where they lived. Instead, they had two floors of massive, shared kitchen space (see Figure 4.1). To make it worse, this university residence had 15 floors, and each floor had 43 rooms, accommodating several hundred students at a time. Therefore, to practice social distancing during the lockdown and avoid people as much as possible, Andrew limited himself to “just one cooking per day”, mostly at night.

Andrew: It is a bit hectic to cook, the fridges are small... there's no space to keep stuff [...] Everyone has lockers [...] I keep all my pots, pans, cooking equipment, dishwasher liquids, oil, all my curry powders, everything in that (lockers), and carry them from there to the kitchen area. You still got to go up and down to carry them back and forth... after that wash everything up, before you start eating [...] The food tends to get cold sometimes because you have to clean up everything before you eat, as someone else might be waiting for that location to cook something.



Figure 4. 1: Pictures of the kitchen area, as shared by Andrew. The middle picture in the second row demonstrates the fridge space allocated to individual students

In the excerpt below, Andrew further shares the story of one of his kitchen ordeals. This comes from using the visual projective technique in which, upon projecting the images of his kitchen facility, he realized he had forgotten to share the picture of his kitchen locker in the interactive online food diary: *“Oh, I couldn't send a picture of the lockers!”* . Reflecting on the space in the lockers triggered him to talk about why he does not *“feel like going to the kitchen and cooking, because it's a lot of hassle to cook in the kitchen”*. Hassles – such as in the excerpt below:

Andrew: The lockers aren't that big [...] Sometimes there might not be space there, and some non-perishable items might be kept in the room [...] that has happened to me multiple times. I'm like looking for my onions, and onions are not there because that's still upstairs (in the room). Then you have to take the lift, go back upstairs, get the onions, come back down, and then you realize, ‘Oh shoot! the garlic is also there’. So, you got to go back again to pick up the garlic and come back. So, that's why cooking takes a long time, even the smallest thing takes a very long time.

This elicited valuable insights into the ‘material relations in combination and in sequence’ (Hui et al., 2016, p. 160) related to everyday food practices – that is, taking into account things that have a resource-based or infrastructural relation to practice – for the purpose of detailing connections between using the lift for moving to and fro between the kitchen and the room, transporting onion and garlic to the kitchen area, and cooking. This specific ‘locker space’ story was relevant as it clearly showed the material negotiations and ebb and flow in the everyday food practices of these young adults.

Parla is another student who lives in a private rented apartment and shares a small kitchen (see Figure 4.2) and mini fridge with two of her other flatmates. She pledges to move somewhere with *‘a big kitchen and a big fridge’* in the coming year, as she believes her cooking has been constrained by the size of her kitchen, *“lack of space, maybe that's something, that also has demotivated me”*.

Parla: It's 3 people with 1 mini fridge, you can imagine [...] I think because of the small fridge and cooking area and since my other flatmates taking a long time cooking this year, I haven't been very active in the kitchen.



Figure 4. 2: Picture of the kitchen area as shared by Parla, depicting the limited countertop space and mini fridge.

The basic, everyday materialities involved in food practices, like the microwave, refrigerator, or dishwasher, which mostly remain understated or easily forgotten somewhere in the background – in crisis situations, such as these – the lockdown – remind the participants of their practical, functional and emotional aspects, linked to these material elements. Several participants mentioned their oven not working properly, compromising their material ability to cook things in oven.

Marie: The oven's not working, so I can't do anything that needs an oven.

Talia: I struggle a little bit as we don't have a normal oven.

Shayne: The oven isn't that great, and the sink can get clogged quite easily as well.

As a byproduct of cooking/eating, most participants found doing the dishes exhausting.

Washing dirty dishes is perhaps the most difficult part for Sophie about cooking at home, making her feel less inclined to engage with cooking practices.

Sophie: I don't dislike cooking, but I hate washing dishes [...] if I didn't have to wash my dishes, I would cook more often.

During the online interview on Zoom, Shayne pointed out the dysfunctional dishwasher (see Figure 4.3) in the image projected on the screen.

Shayne: *Yeah, we do have a dishwasher, but I don't know if you can see the out-of-order sign on the dishwasher [...] So, through the lockdown, it hasn't been working. So, there's no dishwasher through lockdown.*



Figure 4. 3: Picture of the kitchen area as shared by Shayne, with an out-of-order sign on the dishwasher.

Refrigerators and other storage spaces seemed to play an interesting role especially during the lockdown in structuring the consumption practices of these young people, as Parla constrained by her mini fridge feels that she has “*limited space to have fresh produce*”, while Sophie feels deprived of her morning smoothie as her freezer is not cooling well.

Sophie: *My freezer doesn't work that well [...] So, before the lockdown, I used to get frozen foods in small quantities [...] So, even though if it didn't work quite well, I used to be like, 'Okay, I'm going to use it anyway'. But now, if I do shop for a week, and if I buy frozen stuff, they won't last long [...] Because of this, I completely stopped drinking my smoothie because I used to make them by using a lot of berries and frozen fruits.*

The extent of material deprivations that some of these participants are experiencing can be viewed in contrast with others who have efficiently working kitchen equipment. Having a perfectly functional fridge with enough storage space not only cuts down the risk of frequent supermarket visits, but also adds a sense of comfort and security during Covid times, as Aanav, another student living in university housing accommodation for couples and families, comments:

Aanav: *The freezer section (of the fridge) is awesome. It takes a lot of stuff in and the fridge is also pretty good. So, it reduces the burden to do more frequent shopping. Instead, you can buy large quantities and save them up.*

In a similar vein, both Ian and Nicole express their feelings of enablement and exultation at having a functional kitchen with good storage and handy tools.

Ian: it's quite good because it does have a bit of a flow. You can do multiple things at the same time [...] lots of storage space, nice open kitchen.

Nicole: I feel quite convenient and comfortable with my cooking with how the kitchen is set up already [...] I'm glad that we have a dishwasher.

Next, consider the converse case of Sophie who used to live in similar housing as Andrew, and has apparently been affected by inaccessibility to outside food in similar measures, as she suggests, “*I used to eat outside a lot... and order food from Uber Eats. I can't access many foods that I usually ate*”. She has recently moved to a new place of residence with a separate kitchen all to herself. Now, she has a different story to recount:

Sophie: Initially, I lived in another accommodation where we shared a kitchen with around 400 students. But that's quite scary during the lockdown... But here since I have a kitchen to myself, I don't have to go anywhere else to cook, so I have been cooking more. I have been eating more.

It can be seen from Sophie’s statement above that she has been engaging in more instances of cooking and eating. This illustrates how more favorable access to the kitchen can positively influence cooking practices.

This reveals how material arrangements operating in the background reconcile the meanings and competences required to perform food practices, and are therefore intimately linked to the two other practice constituting elements. The effect of material disruptions on the food practices of young people has been summarized in Table 4.1.

Table 4. 1: Practice misalignment due to impaired materialities

Practice	Material	Competence	Meaning	Exemplary Quote
Grocery planning	Grocery planning app, list, gloves, phone	fractured planning due to introduction of a new material: gloves	unnecessary buying due to restricted access to the app	With lockdown, the list didn’t actually work. when you wear the gloves and touch the phone, and you're thinking, why am I touching my phone with gloves? Then you have to remove the gloves to touch your phone... I buy a lot of unnecessary stuff during lockdown; but before lockdown, I can actually have access to my app, and I can go through it properly. (Andrew)

Grocery planning	<impaired link>	more careful planning	plans to reduce number of shopping trips	I need to plan ahead... this time it's different because I try to just go, I try to minimize the number of times I'm going. (Parla)
Grocery Shopping	<impaired link>	adaptive buying from dairy shop/ convenience store	change towards unhealthy food practices	when I would run out of an ingredient, usually I would just buy it, but then this time going to a grocery store is a commitment. So instead, I just go downstairs (dairy shop). Buy something from the frozen aisle, and I just eat that. So, uhm, that's just a major change. (Parla)
Grocery Shopping	<impaired link>	reprioritizing to maximize the number of meals	Meal efficiency	prior to lockdown... there would be one meal a week that I told my roommate, "I'm going to spend a little bit more money on this meal because I want it to be something nicer or more complex..." After going into lockdown, we didn't really buy groceries with that mindset. We bought groceries with the idea of just making as many meals as possible. (Mark)
Grocery Shopping	mask, queue		Evokes negative emotions	wear mask and stay in the queue for an hour. So it has been irritating. (Mariana)
Grocery Shopping	Farmers' Market (-)		constrained in buying cheap & fresh produce	I used to go to the Avondale market (Farmers' Market) on Sundays and would just get fresh veggies and a bit cheaper usually. But we can't do that. (Talía)
Cooking	apartment stove		constrained by kitchen setup	cooking on an apartment stove like this, the heat... it takes a very long time to kind of heat up. (Mark)
Cooking	Kitchen layout, fridge		Constrained by kitchen configuration	I don't feel like going to the kitchen and cooking, because it's a lot of hassle to cook in the kitchen... fridges are not that big. (Andrew)
Cooking	freezer (-) smoothie (-) <impaired link>		affected by material constraint	my freezer doesn't work that well. Because of which, I completely stopped drinking my smoothie because I used to make them using frozen fruits. (Sophie)
Cooking	<impaired link>	low cooking competence	disrupted food practices	my cooking skill is really bad and I eat not well every day. So I'm really praying for unlock down. (Vivien)
Cleaning	time spent in doing dishes		sense of frustration in time spent clearing up afterwards	Sometimes 20 to 30 minutes, goes into doing the dishes, which is quite frustrating. (Aanav)

4.3 Realigning food practices within new material configurations

As we saw in the first section of this findings chapter, how the COVID crisis and associated Delta 4 lockdown restrictions in Auckland, NZ disrupted the established food practices of young consumers leading to a misalignment of the three practice forming elements — materials, meanings, and competences — resulting in practice instability. Given the routinized, everydayness of food practices, misaligned practices pose a significant challenge for young adults, as these practices were stable and habituated parts of day-to-day routine before the misalignment. Misalignments necessitate a reconfiguration of practices to bring “practice elements back into alignment with one another” (Thomas and Epp, 2019: pg 566).

Since, in the current context of sudden crisis, the practice misalignments were led predominantly by material interruptions, the following section discusses how these young food provisioners rework elements to rapidly re-align their food practices by introducing new materialities, micro-adjusting skills and competences, and reshaping the meaning of the home-cooked meal in relation to their new material configurations. However, given that these newly adopted food practices in the case of most young people lack an embodied history of performances that establish closely-knit materials, meanings, and competences – they still seem to be in a formative state and somewhat fragile and unstable. Hence, in the wake of the current misalignment, the findings show that these food practices, though predicated on the practices of the past, may reconfigure differently because of the absence of established routines to steer realignment efforts.

This section delineates the re-alignment strategy adopted by the informants of this study, organized into three key themes: (1) new material organizations, (2) reshaping meanings to matter, and (3) competences to counterbalance materiality. Table 4.2 summarizes how young food provisioners attempted to realign practice elements within new material configurations.

4.3.1 New material organizations

Pointing to ‘practice-arrangement’ nexuses, Schatzki (2010, p. 140) says, “Materials prefigure practices”. With a focus on adapting to materially challenging lockdown conditions, adding new materials boosted the food provisioning and culinary capacities necessary for the performance of food practices. While some struggled, the majority of participants endeavored to continue their existing familiar food routines by being strategic and practical and making minor adjustments, for example, purchasing unusual and expensive ingredients, acquiring new appliances (e.g., dishwasher, air fryer,

and coffee machines), and digital or nonmaterial artifacts (e.g., cooking app for recipe instructions, apps to manage the shopping list, budget, or track calories, and social media sites to discover and get inspiration from for new recipes), while some other participants took advantage of the online shopping and home delivery services offered by supermarkets.

4.3.1.1 New add-ons in the food mix

The lockdown affected the food access and acquisition behavior in different ways for different people. Some participants like Aanav and Claire were tempted to treat themselves for all the missed takeaways and eating out during lockdown by buying special, expensive food products to maintain the much-needed variety in their daily life, others like Talia purchased new kinds of raw ingredients and food material to be more creative in her meal planning, even if it meant paying the premium.

Aanav: [...] two to three meals spread between Friday evening to Sunday evening, are eaten outside [...] and you're trying to compensate for those meals that you eat outside. So, you're trying to buy little fancy stuff like prawns and little more chicken.

Claire: Halloumi, I don't always buy because it's expensive. So, that's quite a treat... something special that I kind of got because we're in lockdown.

Talia: [...] get more premium meat and more veggies, so that I can actually be a bit more creative with my meals. So, this week, I've bought lettuce and stuff which I usually don't buy.

Human actions are radically shaped by material conditions. The lockdown meant the easy and convenient organization of meals for young people based on a material configuration of cheap and abundant food service options, such as ordering food online through apps like UberEats or Menulog, campus cafeteria, coupled with a slew of restaurants and takeaway shops in close proximity – were gone. For a participant, like Vivien, this brought on the realization of the essentiality of sourcing essential food items for everyday living and cooking for the first time.

Vivien: Before the lockdown, I barely cook, I just buy deliveries. I just got takeaways or just dine out. But during the lockdown, I have to cook for myself. So, I buy more essential food like eggs, bacon. I buy a lot of milk.

In contrast, some other participants, like Parla, added vitamins and supplements to their staple diet to compensate for the vitamin D they were missing from sunlight as they were spending more time indoors.

Parla: I've used a lot of multivitamins and supplements that I used to not use before. Uh, because I know I'm not getting that vitamin D from going outside.

4.3.1.2 New devices and appliances

On account of restaurants, cafeterias, and takeaways not being operational in lockdown – people wanted to acquire tools and appliances that could afford them not only the opportunity to prepare delicious-tasting food but also ease the process of cooking and cleaning.

Vivien: We bought some cooking equipment like we bought an air fryer and a new coffee machine. The new machines can make cooking enjoyable, I think [...] My flatmate bought a really expensive dishwasher last month. It's really useful. I think it just unloads a lot of burden from cooking.

Another participant, Sylvie, who was missing café coffee purchased a new coffee machine during the lockdown: “during COVID-19 I bought this coffee machine [...] I bought this to imagine I'm in a café.” To brush up on her cooking skills, she also revealed downloading a cooking app: “I download the cooking app and I follow the recipe step by step.”

This appropriation of new materialities was necessitated due to the enforcement of the lockdown situation and restricted mobility to sites of grocery and eating out. Neither the accommodations of many young adults nor themselves were adequately equipped to perform full-fledged food practices when the lockdown was announced. Instances of new material acquisition like masks and disinfectants to purchasing air fryers and coffee machines signaled efforts to promptly produce a setting for performing food and eating practices at home while facing the threats of contracting the virus. Grocery materials were, for example, procured from secondary stores or eCommerce websites, if the primary supermarket failed to assure a safe shopping environment.

4.3.1.3 New modes of material provisioning

4.3.1.3.1 Online shopping

The limited capacity to maintain social distancing and other COVID-related hygiene in crowded physical stores persuaded many shoppers to enact new practical understandings and to make their grocery purchases online.

Nicole: Whenever lockdown happens, I want to do online shopping, because I think it would be safer [...] It's really hard to do physical shopping at the supermarket because they have to maintain social distance... all the preventive measurements. It's quite hard, so I rather shop online, and then they just leave it at our door.

Given the conditions of COVID-19, preferences for online shopping increased. Another participant, Mariana who found it “*a bit of a struggle*” to “*wear a mask and stay in the queue for an hour*” for shopping in a supermarket also switched to the online mode of shopping.

Mariana: I didn't do online shopping before. I was going to the physical stores [...] I thought that during the lockdown, switching to online ordering would make it easier for me because I can, you know, be at home and read the ingredients from my computer and order the list and they will deliver it to me.

In addition to mitigating the spread of the virus, ease of use and time efficiency was also observed to be instrumental in influencing consumers' attitudes towards adopting online or click and collect modes of shopping. Aanav illustrates the comparison between the ‘click and collect’ mode of shopping with his experiences of in-person shopping before in his statement below.

Aanav: So quality-wise, I think it's been pretty good [...] typically before the lockdown...it would take about an hour. Maybe an hour and a half sometimes, if it is like an extensive kind of thing. But with click and collect, it takes a little less time.

Even though these participants integrated the online modes of shopping for material provisioning, at times they struggled to establish a secure practical understanding when performing online shopping routines. The infrastructures for online grocery shopping in New Zealand did not seem to be adequate to accommodate a speedy delivery or be used for fill-in purposes. Online delivery slots or click-and-collect options were not available for days in advance, as Aanav suggests: “*for the first one and a half or two weeks, there were absolutely no slots available.*” Parla wanted to fill in her eCommerce cart, but grocery store websites were so overloaded that they failed to meet the spike in demand: “*I wanted to do online shopping from Countdown, but because there are so many people wanting to order, so the website was not working.*” Vivien also noted the uncertainties of product availability in online grocery shopping during the lockdown, emphasizing the struggle for material resources: “*A lot of uncertainties [...] you never know if they have the product you want*”. As can be seen, because of the uncertainty and variability of deliveries, the realignment of shopping practices using the online mode was still a bit fragile and unstable.

4.3.1.3.2 Secondary stores and top-up shops

Some participants tried to replenish their material provisions while practicing safe shopping by dropping some routines or implementing new ones, like purchasing from secondary or top-up shops. The top-up shops are basically the corner convenience stores or dairy shops and serve as a means of purchasing unplanned items, extras or eggs, and dairy products. However, as supermarkets got

inundated with shoppers, small dairies still operated on a one in, one out basis. Several participants preferred buying from these local dairies or gas stations because it was close at hand, convenient and flexible, and offered a slice of safety and normality compared to the supermarkets.

Parla: When I would run out of an ingredient, usually I would just buy it, but then this time going to a grocery store is a commitment. So instead, I just go downstairs (dairy shop). Buy something from the frozen aisle, and I just eat that. So, that's a major change [...] I used to not go downstairs to buy the frozen food that they have. But now I've done that a couple of times. And then when lockdown ends, I'm never going to do that again.

Andrew: But with lockdown, I would rather go to the petrol station, and get chips from there [...] That's a new addition. That did not exist before lockdown. the petrol station is open 24/7 and my sleep pattern makes it a bit weird sometimes.

Barbara: It's not that I've completely stopped myself from going to supermarkets, it's just the big ones [...] I can just go to the dairy downstairs and I feel more comfortable going there because it's smaller.

Another informant, Vivien decided to change the location of her main shop as her local supermarket had become a location of interest: *"I changed because the supermarket in my neighborhood has been tested. There are several positive COVID-19 carriers who have been going to that supermarket. So, I (was) just worried."*

Mark mentioned visiting a second store in addition to his primary supermarket because a lot of times, several items were missing in the main shop due to the lockdown.

Mark: A lot of things were missing. So, when there was a lot missing, I'd have to go to another supermarket or another grocery store. If Countdown didn't have something, there's a Chinese supermarket quite close, so we just lug all our stuff over there and see if they've got it.

Mark further explains that even though he routinely purchased at this second location, earlier it was primarily to shop for specialized items or a specific category of products, but this time around, it was for a different purpose: to supplement the missing materials.

Mark: I think I went to the Chinese place out of necessity this time around because Countdown was just missing a lot. Usually, when I go to the Asian place, I've got something in mind. I want something that only they stock, that I'm going to cook with whatever. So yeah, I go to both prior to lockdown, but for different reasons.

In the case above, Mark tries to overcome the limitations of material configurations imposed by the lockdown situation by making micro-adjustments to elements of existing shopping routines,

For example, their embodiment in “*lugging all their stuff to the secondary store to see if they've got the provisions*”, minor material changes, and changes in meaning as in from variety seeking to supplement the missing materials.

4.3.2 Reshaping meanings to matter

Pentland and Singh (2012, p. 294) posit that “materiality is not about artifacts, people, ideas, or anything...it is about all of them, but they only become material when they influence a particular course of actions or events that we value”. From this stance, how “material” a thing is, rests on “how much it matters to the situation and action at hand” (Pentland & Singh, 2012, p. 294). Given that this period of restrictive lockdown with stringent stay-at-home orders was an outcome of a severe health crisis, several participants recalibrated their views of self-provisioning and cooking at home, and home-meals began to “matter” as a healthy way to feed themselves, as Barbara notes: *Food is a reflection of how you like to treat yourself and how much you respect yourself in the sense of what you're putting in your body*. In the case of these young participants, a reflection on the evolving nature of their food practices during lockdown contributes to a better understanding of how they recognize the materiality of their body through their food preparation behaviors, meal choices, and material inputs.

4.3.2.1 Materializing health & well-being

The first and foremost human artifact is the human body itself, suggested Mauss (1979). The unfolding of human activity takes place in material environments through practices of the body, as Kira remarkably notes the shift in her consumption activity during the lockdown: “*less tins and much less spices now*”. Healthy, balanced eating through lockdown was another re-alignment strategy that the participants adopted to allay their fears and concerns about contracting the virus and making lockdown more normal. Embodying healthy food practices, Kira expresses the way her body relates to and responds to food now, calling it “*food speaks*”: “*before I just need to have it in order to keep going through my day, but now it's something that speaks to my body. My body has started responding to food differently than it used to before the lockdown. If my body isn't able to digest milk or if I have those cramps or something, then it's telling me in a way that you shouldn't consume this food because it's not healthy for you, so it's more of that food speaks*”.

Even though Claire struggled to balance her relationship with food, she made positive attempts to overcome her consumption of comfort foods: “*the first two weeks were particularly bad, and I kind of noticed that. And so in my last few grocery shops, I've kind of put in more effort to not*

buy as many treats”. Similarly, Aanav made conscious efforts to make healthy food choices with a focus on the nutritional value of food.

Aanav: [...] some conscious effort for us to incorporate greens. I used to before make chicken sandwiches without any veggies in them. But now it's always chicken plus sautéed veggies plus spinach go into the sandwich [...] I think off late, we've been looking a lot at reading the label, comparing stuff...

Most participants performed food practices with health and nutrition in mind that enabled them to sustain themselves through this crisis. These included healthy and sustainable eating, having a balanced diet and strategies to combine convenience with healthy ingredients, as Kira emphasizes, ‘make sure everything is convenient, everything healthy’.

Barbara: I want to prioritize finding more healthy meals and sustainable meals.

Talia: I've just been incorporating more veggies than usual, and obviously we've I've been making sure that we have nice full meals with lots of like protein and stuff like that. A good, balanced diet.

Kira: From the lockdown, I've started buying more healthier food. I make sure I buy things that are easily digested and something that I can consume easily [...] Wraps are like the best thing ever. They're very convenient, easy to make, delicious, and in this case, they're very healthy.

Sidney and Vandan opted for pantry staples and cooking from basic ingredients instead of ready-to-eat meals, making nutrition a priority.

Sidney: For me, grocery shopping is about vegetables, dairy and eggs. It's more about ingredients to prepare food, rather than having pre-cooked food.

Vandan: [...] buying raw materials that are healthy would automatically make your meal more healthy. so that's what I do.

However, on the health quest trajectory, Udeep enlisted as a negative case. For participants like Udeep, who relied mostly on eating out because of the hassles of cooking and storing in a severely shared kitchen facility, the perceived meaning of healthy food was compromised with restrictions on takeaways and eating out in lockdown. It required switching from simply ordering food to alternatives like packaged ready-to-eat meals, which he perceives as less healthy in comparison.

Udeep: I would usually order something. It will be much healthier to just get something from a restaurant on most days, but ready-to-eat meals usually are a bit heavy and they have a lot of preservatives. So, I would say it was a bit of an unhealthy feeling.

4.3.2.2 Meaning to make up for the material

The limited individual and social freedoms that we enjoy springs from the possibility of altering the material world from within (Heidegger, 2001). The changes in taken-for-granted everyday activities like going to a restaurant or ordering food online in lockdown disrupted the conceptualizations of familiar food environments and practical understandings around easy access to food among young consumers, and required micro-adjustments in terms of modifying or dropping out-of-home food routine. Micro-adjustments were also made to elements of existing routines, for example, corresponding to material deficiencies, changes were made in meaning to compensate for material fluctuations.

For example, while lots of young people felt deprived of foodservice options, some of the participants saw this as a much-needed break from eating out, as Ariana says, *‘this has been a good break for me to stop eating out’*. Even Marie, another participant, prefers her own recipes compared to eating out, *‘I love lockdown and eating my own recipes’*. Parla has been stressed out by the high frequency of eating out and feels saved by lockdown restrictions, allowing her to “prioritize” herself and her meals.

Parla: I would mostly eat out a lot. A week before lockdown happened, I had plans with my friends almost every single day, and I was getting really stressed about it... because it's kind of hard to say ‘no’. I do want to stay home, make my own food, but then, I keep postponing it to the next week [...] Because I think people expect you to always say ‘yes’, but then sometimes I just don't want to spend a lot of money [...] So after this, I'm going to probably try to go more with my timetable and stuff. Yeah, prioritize myself a bit [...] So lockdown was good because it kind of saved me.

In some ways, the material restriction in terms of the unavailability of cafes and dining facilities gave these young participants an opportunity to reflect on their food practices and derive new meanings out of it. By the same token, Vivien craves ‘real food’, which in her book, is a home-cooked meal from scratch as opposed to pre-processed or instant food, as she expresses, *“real foods are healthy”*.

Vivien: [...] I consume more hotpots, now. Before lockdown, I really enjoyed hotpots in a restaurant, but now I hate hotpots. I want real food. I don't want hotpot anymore.

In the new normal of Delta 4 lockdown, people's mobilities were limited mainly to food purchasing. In view of that, Shayne thinks of grocery shopping as something reminiscent of normalcy, allowing him a sense of freedom: *Being at a grocery store, it's, reminiscent of something that I used to do when it wasn't lockdown [...] It still feels like that's the ounce of freedom that I get.*

Aanav too drew novel interpretations, and a sense of accomplishment on being able to cook a frozen pizza without having to go through ‘the hassle of cooking’. He feels a sense of freedom from ‘eating out’ restrictions: *“It was a frozen pizza. But lockdown made it a special meal because now we can’t go outside to eat pizza or burgers anymore”*. He mentions other culinary success stories as well, including that of *“Thai chicken cutlets, which came as a replacement”* (as part of online delivery because of shortage of certain products), and cooked following *“the recipe on YouTube”*, and *“again, a special meal”* of which he is *“very proud of”*, drawing a *“sense of accomplishment”*.

Aanav: [...] *sense of accomplishment that you can cook this stuff that you have generally ended up eating outside. It's like you watched magic outside and you did magic at your home.*

Combining ‘doings’ and reflecting on the ‘doing’ gives rise to new meanings, allowing Aanav to construe the achievements as magical.

It is worth noting that new social environments and circumstances, such as the lockdown and changed material instruments and conveniences can modify existing food practices, forge new relationships between actors and practice constituting elements, in particular reorientation and reinterpretation of meanings.

4.3.3 Competences to counterbalance materiality

The young food provisioners in this study brought into play myriad meal-making skills, including using ready-to-eat, ready-to-heat, pre-cooked foods (e.g. frozen pizza, premixed spices) to build self-provisioning competences and add convenience to their cooking. By judiciously managing food and leftovers, and demonstrating adaptability and improvisation, they navigate the ‘subtle processes of contextually organizing and negotiating complex practitioner performances’ (Halkier, 2009, p. 373) in a restrictive crisis situation with no out-of-home food services available. Acquiring embodied knowledge through ongoing reproduction of ‘doing cooking’ (Giard, 1998) during the lockdown, enabled the young adults to develop competences through performance and with future orientation.

4.3.3.1 Planning and prioritization

The majority of the participants described an improvement in their food skills or practices, such as devising advanced meal planning, a new and optimal shopping routine, and shopping with a grocery list, over the course of the lockdown.

Since grocery shopping during lockdown is a ‘painful process’, as Talia puts it, she carefully realigns it with ‘careful planning’. Nicole too, given the vagaries of online shopping, plans her orders in advance.

Nicole: Whenever lockdown happens, I want to do online shopping, because I think it would be safer. But I can say the time that you wait to get delivery of our orders is quite long. It was past nearly one week, and I think, "Oh, I really need food, I'm hungry". So, if I'm going to do online orders, I need to plan it well, like one week in advance, before all my food starts to run out.

The young consumers also formulated new routines and habits in their shopping practices to avoid the rush in supermarkets. Udeep and Parla created their shopping list with a plan to minimize spending time in the supermarket and reduce the number of shopping trips. Aanav and his wife, who preferred the online method of click and collect shopping, were concerned about finding a possibly safe, off-peak time to collect their order in-store. By figuring out an optimum combination of the hour and day of the week, Sidney and Claire too, brought on new levels of competences in food shopping.

Udeep: during the lockdown, I was just trying to restrict my time in the supermarket. So, I would make a small list.

Parla: I need to plan ahead. This time it's different because I try to just go, I try to minimize the number of times I'm going.

Aanav: When is the least busy duration that I can go at? we kind of worked up about the fact that when do we actually go and collect. We used to make sure that we wake up early in the morning on Saturday, and go there early to avoid the rush.

Sidney: Good time to go there is to go before their closing time. I used to go for groceries on the weekend – Saturday or Sunday, and I'd arrive around 8 pm. Because if you go on Monday, then you'll find empty shelves.

Claire: I prefer to go on a weekday and probably early in the morning. It seems to be quiet.

The participants maximized their shopping efficiency through increased orientation to meal planning. Claire plans her ‘meals in advance’ and considers writing her ‘grocery lists in order of the aisles on the supermarket’ as ‘the most helpful thing’. For Madeline, planning, and organization help her stay in control (see Figure 4.4), as she says: “make the list, that's the most important”. Kira and Sylvie plan their grocery list based on their weekly meal plan. Vandan utilizes the round-robin system for generating meal ideas with his flat mates in a group brainstorming setting, while Talia does a full week meal planning to ensure food sufficiency at home.

Kira: Make a menu of what we're going to eat throughout the whole week and we buy groceries according to that.

Sylvie: According to my recipe, I will think about what food I want to eat. I will categorize what vegetables, fruit and meat, and milk, or something.

Vandan: we prepared a list of all the food items that we liked and then we went round-robin into making it, but before COVID we just ask each other "hey, what do you want to eat or what is in your mind"?

Talia: I've got like a little diary and it's got a food planner in there, so I just write down Monday to Friday what we're going to have because we can't go out and get takeaways or anything, I've been pretty full-on making sure that I've got those in place so that I've got enough food at home.

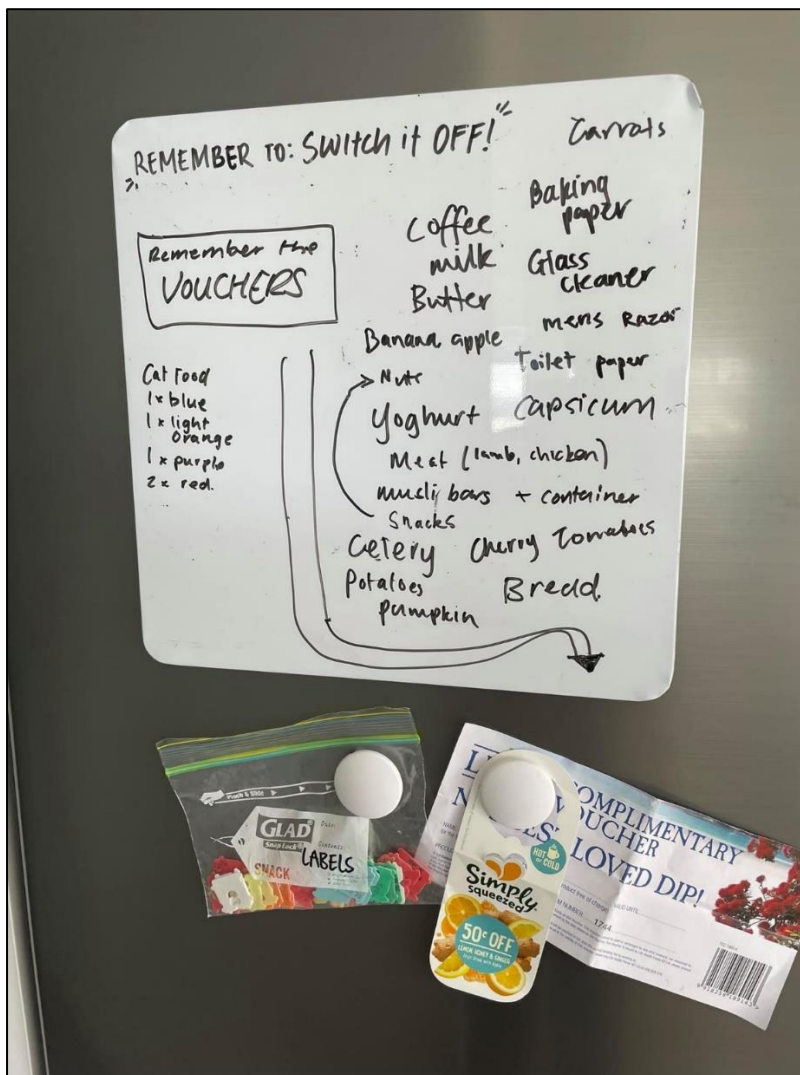


Figure 4. 4: Picture of the grocery shopping list, as shared by Madeline in the interactive online food diary.

4.3.3.1.1 Making food go further

Extant literature suggests that young consumers often fail to check their food stocks prior to shopping, and also fail to keep up with their shopping list while purchasing food, and are hence susceptible to buying wasteful amounts of food or buying things on impulse that they do not necessarily require (Chandon & Wansink, 2006; Principato et al., 2015). In a prior study on food practices of college students, it was found that even for students who know how to cook, their ‘habitualization’ of ‘proper’ food consumption was challenged by insufficiency or redundancy of food stocks in the fridge and freezer (Blichfeldt & Gram, 2013). Taking into account the lockdown anxiety of food shortage, stockpiling, overbuying groceries or multiple buying of the same ingredients was pretty standard. However, the young adults in the study tried to optimize their efficiencies around food by avoiding buying surplus food and thereby reducing food waste. They achieved this by ensuring that the current inventory in their pantry and fridge had been exhausted before going out for a shop, as well as acquiring knowledge and building competences, attitude and skills of handling food in a situation of inadequacy.

Marie: we decided to finish all the food in our fridge, and then do the grocery shopping.

Helena: Previously it was more of like impulse buying before lockdown. Now, even if I want to eat something, I would just wait for a few more days, and then just consume what I have at home first and then shop for it.

Another participant, Mark, when it comes to grocery shopping during this pandemic crisis, considers everything between what is ‘absolutely needed and what absolutely wanted’.

Mark: Prior to lockdown... there would be one meal a week that I told my roommate, I'm going to spend a little bit more money on this meal because I want it to be something nicer [...] After going into lockdown, that wasn't really the consideration, we didn't buy groceries with that mindset. We bought groceries with the idea of just making as many meals as possible ... we were mostly just focused on staying safe, going to the groceries as little as we could, and having simple meals.

There has been a conscious shift, in Mark’s case above, from viewing food as a source of delight and entertainment to a pragmatic emphasis on staying safe, with fewer visits to the supermarket. The focus is on the economical usage of materials to maximize the number of meals, which led to cooking easy and simple recipes.

4.3.3.1.2 Producing planned-overs & managing leftovers

Several participants described their efforts in preparing or cooking extra meals during the lockdown, as Aanav call it, ‘*meals that can give us leftovers*’ or planned-overs to save from cooking fatigue, thereby attempting to economize the use of resources and making the process more efficient.

Aanav: Without the lockdown, we wouldn't think about it so much [...] Sometimes we even plan our meals such that we've got leftovers that we can have for the next day. So, we don't have to cook [...] It's definitely a conscious effort This time, it's too much cooking going on anyway, so might as well try to get a little extra meal of the one time you're cooking.

Parla: It's a good thing to have planned leftovers, not accidental leftovers... It's such a relief when you are really busy and then you get up and you already have the food in the container, and just heat it up.

Many other participants embraced thriftiness and consciously cut down on food waste during the Delta lockdown, as Madeline notes, “*I try to minimize my waste and that would be my first priority for lunch*” but is also mindful of efficiently using up any fresh produce before it goes bad, as could be seen in several of her posts that she shared in the interactive online food diary (see Figure 4.5), and later reaffirmed in her interview, ‘*I do make a conscious effort to try and minimize my waste in that regard*’.

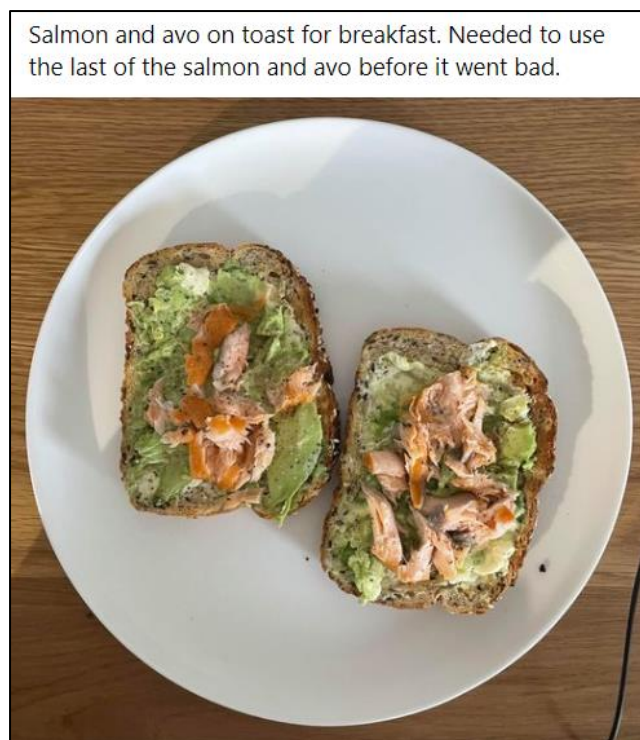


Figure 4. 5: Picture of breakfast toast with salmon and avocado topping, before they went bad, as shared by Madeline in the interactive online food diary.

Another participant, Ariana also emphasized extending the life of her vegetable scraps and getting as much use out of them as she could by not wasting anything, as she stated, *“normally with my food scraps, like if I have veggies or anything, I like to put it in a bag, and then I make them into stock so I’m not wasting anything”*.

Similarly, Mark, who finds grocery shopping *“not very enjoyable”* during lockdown, has grown to appreciate food more, compared to before: *“If there are leftovers, we always save it...we try to portion it out as much as we can [...] before lockdown, it was much easier... we just went quite frequently”* (to the supermarket). The compulsion of cooking every meal, as he puts it, *“I already did cook quite frequently at home. Now, it’s become just every meal”*, could also be instrumental in driving his focus on planning/handling leftover food. Mark shared how he used leftovers of vegetables in coming up with toast pizza for his dinner (see Figure 4.6) in the online food diary.

Mark: *The pizza toast, I think we had because we had leftovers like tomatoes from making spaghetti and then we had leftover toppings from making burgers, I think. And so, I was like we could have toast pizza or something like that, and it was really easy. There was not that much clean-up, because it was, just toppings on toast. I don’t think I would have made toast pizza for no reason. So that was just because we had a lot of leftovers.*



Figure 4. 6: Picture of toast pizza made with leftover tomatoes and toppings for dinner, as shared by Mark in the interactive online food diary.

4.3.3.1.3 Convenience food to convenient cooking

Based on the current body of literature, the quest for convenience is apparently the most important food motivation underpinning the food choices of young adults (Deliens et al., 2014; Shah et al., 2014; Thorpe et al., 2014). During lockdown, convenience foods ranging from bananas, noodles, soup, yoghurts, frozen vegetables, and casserole mixes to frozen pizza requiring little or no preparation to meal boxes with pre-measured ingredients and recipe cards for cooking a home-made meal – all formed part of the food repertoire of young people.

Barbara relies on the supermarket-bought pizza base for her takeaway quick fix during the lockdown, where she just needs to add her own cheese and toppings before conveniently tossing it in the oven.

Barbara: So, with the pizza, the reason I quite liked it was because it's something that I think is so easy to make, and if I'm feeling really lazy, but I'm hungry then I can just make it in 5-10 minutes, and It'll keep me filled. On top of that obviously, the pizza that I would spend my money on outside of lockdown. It's not necessarily healthy, but it feels like "the pizza" because I am making it myself, I have an idea of what ingredients there are. So, I am able to make it the way that obviously I would like it to taste, and I feel more comfortable knowing that it's healthier.

As distinguished from Barbara, Sophie relies on the delicious frozen fish dinners for ease and convenience it offers. She finds it easier to store this kind of food, which saved her shopping trips to the supermarket and efforts to cook.

Sophie: This is frozen fish [...] I put it into the air fryer and then work on my stuff here and then take it out after 11 minutes, turn it around and then again work. So, it really saves my time. I wish I had found it before the COVID lockdown. (h) So yeah, it's easy, tasty, and healthy if we look at its star ratings, it's like four-point-five stars.

The cooking strategy that Mark adopts is that things have to taste good, but they also have to be not overly complicated. As is typical for student accommodations, he does not have “a lot of space to make things that are super complex”, so he likes to try cooking with “premixed spices” that are “convenient to use”, and “accessible”.

Further still, Andrew and Udeep who share the kitchen facility with several other occupants prefer to maximize ease and convenience by simplifying meal preparation and clean-up as pre-packaged meals afford less effort in both cooking and cleaning.

Andrew: [...] pre-made meals, where you just have to put it in a microwave for four minutes... So, it was easy to clean, everything was pretty much easy.

Udeep: *I mainly shifted to packaged food... because it's easier to clean them*

On account of their packed calendars with personal and professional activities, young people are mostly time constrained, and therefore tend to be frugal in time-consuming activities, such as cooking and cleaning. This convenience orientation made practicing ‘food’ more doable for young people in a period of stay-at-home restrictions.

4.3.3.2 Adaptation, improvisation, and experimentation

As motivations and understandings related to routinized practices change in the ‘life course’ of practice, they also pave way for the transformation of ‘sayings’ and ‘doings’ together with the material infrastructures of such practice, where consumers may “adapt, improvise and experiment” (Warde, 2005, p. 141). Hence, to translate those embedded meanings into their everyday practices, consumers tend to experiment, alter and adjust their consumption methods (Hand & Shove, 2007; Røpke, 2009), as in the case of Ariana below.

Ariana: *I don't like normal pizzas because it's quite heavy, so what I did was I got a wrap that you wrap your sandwiches in, and I got homemade tomato sauce and cheese and just put it in the oven, and I was satisfied with that because it wasn't as heavy as a normal pizza.*

In many ways, the lockdown restrictions functioned as a kind of focal point that allowed various new understandings, procedures, and engagements to take root in it. In the above example, “pizza”, a popular dish is transformed by improvising and substituting the base material. The “new” pizza is mostly baked in consonance with what Ariana as the carrier of the practice feels like eating and with the foodstuffs that she likes to improvise with.

Another participant, Aanav too tries to adapt his food practices to the new environment. In order to make do with what he has, he tried to explore new recipes based on available ingredients in his pantry.

Aanav: *look up dishes on YouTube or Google basically and try to find recipes based on the ingredients that we have...*

However, for Madeline efficiency was largely about minimizing efforts by simplifying meal planning and cooking, as she suggests:

Madeline: *So as long as it's easy, the ingredients are sort of staples or just really basic, then that's probably the most important.*

For participants like Sidney, who lived in cohabitation with other residents – intermingling and bonding with them during lockdown, afforded opportunities for acquiring multicultural cooking skills and recipes, and competences and techniques for fusion cooking.

Sidney: On weekends before lockdown, we all were going outside. But due to lockdown, we planned that, “okay, let’s cook something”. This was a very good experience... exchanged a lot of ideas [...] One of the advantages of lockdown is that you just break your own bracket and you try to mix with other brackets [...] If you cook with different people from different cultures, you get to know other ingredients, and then you can make fusion food.

Shayne has been picking up the finer details of cooking process, “small details that are normally overlooked” from his girlfriend, speaks of the competency based task handling, how do they adapt, alter and adjust when run out of some ingredients and his improved competences in prepping and cleaning during the course of lockdown.

Shayne: I do all the cutting and all the cleaning, and then she does all the seasoning, and basically she’s the project manager when we cook [...] If we do run out of ingredients, we just make something else, or improvise on the fly [...] I can clean dishes a lot faster. I can chop onions and garlic a lot faster as well, just vegetables, in general, I can cut them very finely and quickly.

In the absence of takeaways and fast food, the majority of the participants said that they were more inclined to experiment in their kitchens, as Udeep says, ‘*I like to experiment a lot*’, while Claire is ready for taking up more complex and time-consuming cooking endeavors.

Claire: Now that I’m in a lockdown and I know that I have the time, I’m more inclined to choose meals that I know might take up a little more time or might be a little bit more complicated.

In terms of knowing her craft, Madeline demonstrates understandings of “good cooking” at several levels, especially attention to detail and creativity, knowing how to improvise and alter recipes based on pantry staples, and having a ‘feel’ for the outcome, and eventually, make it all work.

Madeline: [...] figured out ways to alter recipes to fit the stuff that I have. It just means that I’ll be able to get through these recipes quicker [...] A lot of the cookbooks that I have, they tend to have at the back, staples like pantry staples, and I always sort of make sure that I have that. I can kind of chuck it all together and make it work.

In similar fashion, Mariana also combines and remixes to turn her pantry staples into complete and different meals, while Helena personalizes the traditional recipe of *Kimbap* to her taste (see Figure 4.7).

Mariana: [...] look at what I have at home available and see what I can do with ingredients [...] I usually have the same list of items that I buy. And then I mix them in different variations.

Helena: This is the homemade kimbap and it actually contains a lot of ingredients as you can see in my description on Facebook. It's so delicious and there are so many different types of kimbap, like tuna Kimbap, kimchi kimbap, cheese Kimbap... You know it depends on what kind of ingredients you put inside the Kimbap, and because this one is homemade, we put whatever we like. So, it's a customized kind of food that we can make. We tried yesterday a very standard Kimbap[...] For traditional Kimbap there is some sort of sweet radish thing, but we didn't like it. Instead we put in some tuna, a bit more carrots because we like fried carrots... and some eggs, spam. So, we just change, and it's pretty much based on what we like.



Figure 4. 7: Picture of homemade kimbap, customized to personal taste, for dinner, as shared by Helena in the interactive online food diary.

Not settling for cooking boring or repetitive meals, Kira broadened the repertoire of her lockdown recipes on the back of visual social media sites like Pinterest, “I have been experimenting more during lockdown. I look at Pinterest recipes. I have been more creative with my food”, and works out ways to adapt home dining to fancy dining.

Kira: [...] light up candles, so that's like a different type of ambiance when you're eating...food arrangement and everything on the table so it just feels good to do that.

Ian is more experimental when he runs out of some spices or ingredients as pantry shortage is common in lockdown: “I don't really follow recipes when I'm cooking. Even if I make the same meal, I've done many times, I always change it up a bit, put a different kind of spice, and see if that works or not”.

However, unlike the example above, improv dishes were not desirable in all events. Even though Mark in the case below, improvises and substitutes ingredients from his pantry, his cooking practice is mainly coordinated by necessities. Intensifying the lockdown situation – contextual conditions, like vegetables being out of season and therefore expensive and material relations like unavailability of garlic, or specific kind of vegetables also shaped the practice of cooking.

Mark: [...] staple dishes, just like really simple dishes that you could always make with a very few ingredients, so I guess we just ate a lot more of those during lockdown[...] But, substitutes like there being no garlic, or no this kind of veggies – we had to look for a lot of substitutes and there wasn't a lot of things in season. It was winter, so veggies weren't that cheap. I think substitutes is definitely the biggest one and even though sometimes we weren't successful in making a really nice dish with substitutes, it's just what it is, I think.

The above-mentioned instances illustrate how food practices are reconstructed in routinized performances, through improvisation, new culinary experimentation and adaptive responses to disruption, as young food provisioners engage in new ways of “doing” food during lockdown. The efforts to realign food practices within new material configurations of young people has been summarized in Table 4.2.

Table 4. 2: Practice realignment within new material configurations

Practice	Material	Competence	Meaning	Quote
Grocery Shopping	premium meat, veggies	creativity in meals	less frugality	get more premium meat and more veggies so that I can actually be a bit more creative with my meals. So like this week I've bought lettuce and stuff which I usually don't buy. (Talía)
Grocery Shopping	Halloumi		Indulgence to beat the lockdown blues	Halloumi, I don't always buy just because it's expensive. so that's quite a treat. That's like something special that I kind of got because we're in lockdown. (Claire)

Grocery Shopping	grocery shop <impaired link>	reprioritizing use of available food	caring more for food	previously it was more of like impulse buying before lockdown... Now, even if I want to eat something, then I would just wait for a few more days and then just consume what I have at home first and then shop for it. (Helena)
Budgeting	price spike <impaired link>	Adaptive shopping	Keeping a check on the budget	buy alternative things... Instead of buying whole tomatoes, we just buy the tins. (Kira)
Budgeting	list online shopping portal	extra effort to keep the budget under check		You know how you can shop online? I'll usually put my list on there, and estimate how much it's going to cost kind of thing... if it's way too much, I take some stuff off. (Talía)
Meal planning	time resource	more complex cooking	creativity and experimentation	now that I'm in a lockdown and I know that I have the time, I'm more inclined to choose meals that I know might take up a little more time or might be a little bit more complicated. (Claire)
Meal planning	Available material	minimizing waste	caring more for food	look at what I have at home available and see what I can do with ingredients. (Mariana)
Meal planning	takeaway (-) <impaired link>	planned-overs	Taking a break from cooking	I try to cook bigger portions, so it will last for more than a day. So, I can skip cooking, because I don't have option to order takeaway. (Mariana)
Cooking	takeaway (-)	recreating outside food experiences	homemade burgers to ease lockdown cravings	two weeks into lockdown.... And we hadn't had a burger in a lockdown. we finally managed to get some patties and it was nice.... simple as well... I guess we wouldn't have made burgers like that frequently. It's 'cause we were really craving it in lockdown. (Mark)
Cooking	premixed spices	Adaptive cooking		I don't have a lot of space to make things that are super complex, so I try premixed spices. (Mark)
Cooking	kitchen utensils	improved cooking efficiency		got faster in terms of just making the meals... working with two different pans... aligning everything to be done at the same time. (Parla)
Cooking	eating outside (-)	improved baking skills		it's made my baking skills a lot better...from doing it more often. It's just the repetitiveness of picking out new ideas and different ways of doing things. (Talía)
Cooking	eating outside (-)	ability to make restaurant like meals	more eating at home	So making takeaway, well what they call fake away... made me realize that I could be eating at home a lot more often if I have the ability to make meals like this. (Madeline)

4.4 Summary

Through the thematic analysis of the food diary and the interview transcripts, it was found that all three practice constituting elements have an effect on the enactment of food consumption practices. It was underscored that these practice elements never occur in isolation, but instead help in conducting an integrative practice such as food as an organized bundle, e.g., food shopping, cooking, eating, cleaning, etc. The effect, therefore, an element has on the enactment of a practice rests on its relationship with other elements in that bundle. As has been demonstrated through the context of lockdown and uncertainty, the deficiencies and interruptions of one element can sometimes be neutralized by the counter-effect of another one, for example when skills and competence can compensate for inadequate and missing materialities.

In this chapter, therefore, the relationships between practice elements in a situation of sudden crisis and disruption was examined. The two basic types of relatedness are indicated as alignment and misalignment. A misaligned element, is an element experiencing performance disruption and threat, and hence demands attention and action. Misalignment can transpire at various levels, including complete breakdown of conduct, such as eating out practices due to closure of food service options during lockdown. For the overall smooth carrying out of a practice, all the elements of the practice need to be aligned. Data suggests that despite misalignments happening due to material interruptions during restrictive lockdown situation, young food provisioners can skillfully realign their food practices within new material configurations employing various degrees of improvisation, reorientation and reinterpretation of meanings, and an ongoing adaptation of embodied skills and competences to the surrounding material and the intended goal. Please see the summarized findings of this study in Tables 4.1 & 4.2 above. Example for effect of impaired materiality on misaligned food practices is shown in Table 4.1, while Table 4.2 summarizes how young food provisioners tried to realign practice elements within new material configurations.

Chapter 5: Discussion and conclusion

5.1 Introduction

As Sorokin famously argued, crises ‘offer an opportunity to examine many aspects of social life which in normal times are hidden’ (Sorokin, 1943, p. 244). The primary purpose of this study was to explore the invisible dynamics of everyday food practices and routines among young adults during a period of crisis and disaster ensuing from Covid-19 lockdown restrictions. My inquiry was motivated by my conversations and observations of my fellow students and young adults in general, many of whom do not consider cooking to be the most exciting way of spending their time, and under normal circumstances, their food behaviors are structured by the convenient and easy organization of “pre-prepared” and “out-of-home” food service options, for the most part. Even those who enjoy cooking, due to their living arrangements, constricted financial circumstances, and the ‘nature of their age’ (Namin et al., 2020), face several hurdles and predicaments as they assume the responsibilities of self-catering, because to cook is not just to cook — it is to plan and shop, to prep, boil and bake, to freeze and unfreeze, and to clean and manage the leftovers. Therefore, as Covid-19 triggered widespread disruptions and associated lockdowns, I was curious to learn the impact of this crisis on young adults’ food choices, motivations, and practices. To achieve my objective, I set out to answer the following research question:

What happens when food routine is disrupted, and how do young consumers reconfigure their food practices as they transition through uncertainty and crisis situations?

I studied the food consumption practices of young adults, using the intensive, iterative process of digital ethnography to better understand the ‘sayings’ and ‘doings’ of young food provisioners in their emergent food environments during the restrictive lockdown situation and the integration of practice-forming elements: materials, meanings and competencies (Schatzki, 2002, p. 240). The qualitative data collected through interview transcripts and interactive online food diaries of the participants led to the identification of two major themes. The first highlighted the centrality of materials and the changes in the broader food-material landscape and the ensuing practice misalignments in the food practices of young consumers. The second theme sheds light on the reconfiguration of existing meal materialities, combined with realigning meanings, and doings within new material configurations. These themes are interconnected, and together, they suggest how young people continued with their food practices, while they remained permeated by material deficiencies and disruptions that had to be continuously recalibrated and adjusted during the ongoing crisis.

This is the final chapter of this dissertation and presents the general conclusions by addressing the research question and discussing the key contributions made by the current study. These are followed by a discussion of managerial and policy implications. Subsequently, I share the limitations of this research and opportunities for future research. Finally, the chapter closes with a summary.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

Drawing from the findings of this study, I discuss the research results from the practice theoretical perspective as food practices of young adults experience misalignments during uncertainty and crisis situations, and how these young consumers attempt to negotiate the tensions and realign the performance of their food practices. Existing literature highlights the organization of daily food practices and routines, and how households cope with a variety of factors that dynamically and complicatedly influence food decision-making and behaviors identified with family meals focussed mainly on parent-child relationships (Dyen et al., 2018; Jastran et al., 2009). However, these food consumption practices have not been examined in the context of crisis and how it can disrupt the food practices of young adults, causing misalignment of practice elements. The findings of this study expand this knowledge, showing how integrative food practices are reconfigured through a complex process in which emerging food practitioners' competences, meanings, and materialities together with the interconnections between the practices play an instrumental role. Below, I draw numerous conclusions based on the empirical results presented in Chapter 4 and discuss five key and complementary theoretical contributions to social practice theory and consumer research, in general.

5.2.1 Practice (mis)alignment and reconfiguration of food practices

This study contributes to prior consumer research on practices (Schatzki, 2019; Shove & Pantzar, 2005; Warde, 2005) by investigating the alignment among practice elements and with adjacent practices. Although previous research (Arsel & Bean, 2013; Canniford & Shankar, 2013; Phipps & Ozanne, 2017; Thomas & Epp, 2019; Woermann & Rokka, 2015) acknowledges the realignment of disrupted practices – this study extends these past research by explicating how this realignment process unfolds in the face of sudden crises, such as the current pandemic disaster, necessitating rapid changes and realignment strategies to respond to the misalignments and associated tensions in consumption practices. Moreover, none of the above-mentioned studies are in the context of food practices, nor do they focus on the young adult cohort.

Misalignments during a crisis can transpire at multifarious levels, including a complete breakdown of conduct, such as eating out practices due to the closure of foodservice options during the lockdown. For the overall smooth carrying out of a practice, all the elements of the practice need to be aligned. For example, most young people's intake of fresh fruits and vegetables was constrained by disruptions in food shopping practices, which they offset by reconceptualizing the established meanings and through a renewed focus on health and well-being by preparing home-cooked meals and improving the actual nutritional value or quality of the ingredients of the meal. They also acquire new competences to counterbalance deficient materiality through advanced meal planning and grocery shopping, adapting recipes, making do with pantry staples, and minimizing waste to improve food efficiency. Aanav feels a sense of freedom from 'eating out' restrictions by being able to cook a frozen pizza without having to go through 'the hassle of cooking'. Thus, for many of the young people in my study, reconfiguring their meaning and understandings together with acquiring new competences and skillsets within the context of their emerging material organizations were simply ways of aligning the practice constituting elements and of contesting and negotiating the circumstances imposed by the ongoing pandemic crisis and associated lockdown.

This study interrogates the relationships between alignment and misalignments happening due to material interruptions in more detail. We find that in Seregina and Weijo's (2017) study, some cosplayers abandon cosplay entirely due to pervasive practice misalignments that resulted from mounting instrumental costs, thereby making ludic experiences increasingly unattainable. In contrast, young food provisioners in the current study endeavor to realign their food practices within new material configurations employing various degrees of improvisation, reorientation, and reinterpretation of meanings, and an ongoing adaptation of embodied skills and competences to the procurable material and the intended goal. The findings of this study, therefore, respond to the appeal made by Woermann and Rokka (2015), who encouraged researchers to consider closely what follows when practices are in alignment or misalignment, as they regarded these dynamics as the central component to understanding how consumption practices stay appealing to consumers.

I also build on Arsel and Bean's (2013) conception of problematization, which divulges how aberrations from normative and cultural standards of taste – question the alignment of everyday meanings, materials and doings. Taste as a reflexive, systematic practice recruits consumers in processes of problematizing (questioning material objects' relation to the taste regime's meanings), ritualizing (establishing behaviors that align objects with doings), and instrumentalizing (enrolling objects and doings to actualize meanings). By raising attention to the mismatches between different practice elements during the lockdown crisis and demonstrating how the young food provisioners rework elements to rapidly re-align their food practices by introducing new materialities (such as acquiring new coffee machines and air fryers and procuring unusual and expensive ingredients to make up for restaurant food), micro-adjusting skills and competences, and reshaping the meaning of

the home-cooked meal in relation to their existing material configurations, my study on practice alignment complements that of Arsel and Bean (2013), even though the contexts of these two studies are drastically different.

My findings also contribute to the extant literature on practice alignment (Phipps & Ozanne, 2017; Thomas & Epp, 2019) by revealing how consumers respond to misalignments through practice reconfigurations, in which practice elements reorganize and adapt to disruption, a vital understanding that diverges from the emphasis of practice theory on habituation (Warde, 2005). Even though previous literature has shown how new practices evolve (Arsel & Bean, 2013; Shove & Pantzar, 2005), studies exploring the development of practices from disruption to realignment is thin (Epp et al., 2014).

5.2.2 The primacy of materiality

In investigating the food consumption practices among young people during a period of crisis and disruption, my second contribution is to extend our understanding of how materiality is implicated in the reproduction and realignment of food practices.

Navigating the altered material landscape in the wake of the crisis and lockdown mandates and renegotiating their food practices therein, the young consumers markedly feel the missing materials influencing their consumption experiences. In the view of the empty grocery store shelves, as Sidney reports, and the lack of transportation in cases of the majority of the participants, including Parla, who has to cut down the items in her grocery list that are heavier because it is hard to carry it, Madeline making ‘fakeaways’ in the absence of takeaways or Andrew whose number of meals has come down to just “*one huge dinner*”, because of his constrained kitchen facility – the materiality takes up a central role, given the fundamental nature of food and its essentiality in the young food provisioners’ experience. In this sense, deficient materiality influenced the consumption experiences of young people in a similar or perhaps a stronger way than present materiality.

Drawing from this analytical standpoint, I argue that the interruption in the provision of material and limitations of obdurate materiality and infrastructure like kitchen layout and tools influence the performance and stability of the food practices. My analysis, therefore, extends theories of material disruption and practice reconfiguration by concentrating on the improvisational nature of human–material interactions within consumption practices.

Although prior studies on sustainable food transitions (Twine, 2018) or plant-based food consumption practices in a setting pre-configured by meat-based food practices (Fuentes & Fuentes, 2021) point toward how vegan shopping, cooking, and eating practices are modeled and supported by

material reconfigurations – the recruitment to vegan eating practices is voluntary and is driven by processes of slow adaptation. This is a point of departure from the current study. Similarly, in studies by Canniford and Shankar (2013) and Phipps and Ozanne (2017), consumers were often made to adjust practices such as surfing, cooking, or bathing in order to deal with disruptions emanating from natural objects such as waves and water supplies. However, my study departs from Canniford and Shankar (2013) wherein the “purifying practices” that surfers engage in to redress the “betrayals”, such as the use of toxic materials in surfing equipment, or the intrusion of urban technologies on a pristine beach impacting their consumption of nature are subject to deliberation. On a similar note, the reductionist practices that households adopt in response to being stymied by decade-long drought and obdurate legacy structures of water supply in Phipps and Ozanne’s (2017) study were in general based on an ideological commitment to water conservation as a core civic duty. In the current study, the disruptions in food practices of young consumers due to the pandemic have not sprung from appeals for voluntary restraint but rather emerge from the strict rules and mandates of the lockdown (e.g., social distancing, mobility restrictions, deroutinization, etc.).

All external relationships and practices normally occurring outside the boundaries of home, like shopping or eating out, were severely affected by the restrictions of lockdown. Several participants like Andrew and Vivien, for whom meals defaulted to eating out, feel constrained, and as Shayne puts it, “*a little bit limited*”. This practice instability then necessitates forms of ‘re-materialization’ – the re-articulation of the relationships between the old and the new material organizations, building capacities (e.g., adopting new grocery routines and improvisations in cooking) to manage food and eating practices in a materially challenged environment and reshaping the meaning of home-cooked meals to these young consumers and their perspective and orientation related to food and health.

These emerging practitioners work on procuring material provisions, tools, and other accessories needed for the reproduction of food and other integrated practices, for instance, appliances (e.g., dishwashers, air fryers, and coffee machines), raw materials (e.g., frozen foods, ready-to-eat packaged meals, premixed spices, expensive ingredients), and digital or nonmaterial artifacts (e.g., cooking app for recipe instructions, apps to manage the shopping list, budget, or track calories, search engines, and social media sites to discover and get inspiration from for new recipes). Moreover, the participants also employed embodied materiality to address the barriers in the performance of their food practices. For example, Mark and his flatmate used their own bodies to carry the grocery from the store to their residence due to limited transportation facilities, Shayne hand-washed the dishes due to dishwasher breakdown, and Sophie consumed raw fruits and vegetables to avoid using a food processor – thus while it underscores the primacy of materiality, it also illustrates the interdependence between the three elements – material (e.g., body used as a powerful material instrument), meaning

(e.g., self-sustenance in times of crisis), and competence (e.g., know-how to advance food practices using body parts).

For a large part, materials tend to go unnoticed or passed over as intrinsic to the backdrop for human action, but several recent studies (Domaneschi, 2019; Maller, 2015; Twine, 2018) have corroborated and specified the criticality of materials in accomplishing change in practices. In this study, the organization of food supply and culinary setup which has a structuring effect on material provisioning and cooking has been clearly demonstrated. Therefore, the current study contributes to and extends the ability of practice theory to untangle consumption-related change behavior.

5.2.3 Free-floating food practices of young adults

Prior research exploring practice reconfiguration and ‘(re)habitualization’ are generally focused on enacted practices (Canniford & Shankar, 2013; Phipps & Ozanne, 2017), or envisioned practices, as introduced by Thomas and Epp (2019), which they define as plans for enacting a practice to facilitate habituation of newly adopted practice. Nonetheless, practitioners in these cases (surfers whose consumption practices of nature are disrupted due to toxic materials and encroachment of urban technologies in Canniford and Shankar (2013), households dealing with disruptions caused by water scarcity in Phipps and Ozanne (2017); and first-time parents failing to habituate newly adopted parental practices in Thomas and Epp (2019) study) have clarity of perception in what the practice should be, which guide and inform their practice reconfiguration process. Following a disruption and misalignment in their practices, all of these consumers strive to reorganize their practices in consonance with either their previous form or their envisioned form.

However, in the case of young adults who are transitioning from adolescence to settled adulthood, what Turner (1977, p. 37) characterizes as “between and betwixt”, a blurry boundary between adolescence and adulthood — their practices are still a work in progress, and free-floating compared to envisioned or enacted practices. Many young people in this transitional phase, like Vivien in the current study, undertake the responsibility for “their own food choices, planning, and preparation” (Sharma et al., 2009, p. 440) for the first time in their lives. However, the processes associated with personal food production being complex and time-consuming, convenience appears to be the most important food motivation, with most participants, including Barbara and Sophie in the study. Consistent with the literature (Wilson et al., 2017) many of these young people prepare meals not even once every week during normal times, and a majority of their meal consumption is out-of-home, as participants like Andrew and Vandan emphatically reveal.

Although anchored in the food practices of their parents through their growing-up years, these young people are yet to develop their ‘own’ food practices and habits and become full members of the community of practice. This is similar to what Twine (2016) referred to as ‘non-practicing practitioners’ in his study on transition to vegan eating practices. They have inadvertently adopted some food-related competences and are exposed to materiality related to food provisioning and culinary infrastructure and tools, but their participation in food practices is still peripheral and free-floating. The literature is undertheorized in explicating what happens when these young people experience misalignments in their free-floating food practices, comprised largely of out-of-home food service options, convenience eating, and episodic cooking at home when threatened by crisis and uncertainty.

The current study contributes to the literature on the food practices of young adults by giving insights into how these young consumers reconfigure their interconnected routines and rituals comprising the acquisition, preparation, and consumption of foods by concentrating on the practical and material aspects of food practices. Whilst previous research on food practices of young adults suggests that cooking skills and confidence (Caraher & Lang, 1999) together with ‘habitualization’ of ‘proper’ food consumption (Blichfeldt & Gram, 2013) are important for successful food preparation behaviors – the current study complements it by propounding the centrality of materials as a more fundamental and basic explanation for the friction in food provisioning and cooking among young people. Ridden with poor kitchen infrastructure, non-functional kitchen equipment like oven or dishwasher, or freezer not working as evidenced in most cases in this study, and lack of opportunities to access, procure and store materials make the likelihood of practice reproduction extremely slim. Simultaneously, I extend the study by Bosco et al. (2017) uncovering how young consumers experience their foodscapes and respond to their environments, especially if food supplies are deficient (e.g., in ‘food deserts’). My study, in a similar vein, shows how the pandemic threatened the food security among this cohort of young people and how material constraints, both obdurate and provisional reproduce these disparities during crises.

These conclusions, highlighting the culinary material circumstances of young people in both normal and especially in a crisis situation, have a foundational and fundamental relevance in helping them step into a self-catering role.

5.2.4 Food as an integrative practice

Consumer research accentuates the complexity of integrative practices (Schatzki, 1996) as part of an extensive complex of interlinked practices together with being situated in wider sociocultural contexts. Food or meal practices, similar to several other integrative practices, are molded by a

coalition of habits, rules and regulations, social, cultural, and economic contexts, modes of provision, and material infrastructures. Any of these factors getting altered might gradually direct the performance of the practice in new directions (Warde, 2015). In the context of the current study, routinized everyday food practices were disrupted due to the lockdown, together with interruptions in interlinked practices of grocery shopping, preparing meals, and handling leftovers. However, extant literature has a narrow focus on food behavior, i.e., focus on a single practice, such as lunching practices (Pfeiffer et al., 2017), eating out practices (Hertzler & Frary, 1992; Mu et al., 2019), snacking practices (Twine, 2015), fast food practices (Seo et al., 2011) and commensality practices (Danesi, 2018).

The current study responds to the need to capture a more comprehensive aspect of integrative food practices rather than a single aspect to understand the food routine and consumption behavior of young adults during the Covid crisis. Therefore, this study provides detailed insights into how these young food practitioners respond to practice disruptions as they transition through uncertainty and crisis situations by reconfiguring practice elements and aligning adjacent practices to overcome vulnerabilities in practice reproduction.

5.2.5 Structural reorganization of food practices

While attempting to realign the trajectories of the practice elements that make up food consumption as a practice, the data suggests that young consumers also incorporated structural changes to the focal practice of food production and other associated and co-dependent practices such as shopping, cooking, managing leftovers, etc., leading to a structural reorganization of food practices. Relative to the hierarchy of dependencies among food practices during a crisis, some practices emerged as more essential or fundamental, whereas other co-dependent practices are considered more peripheral or nonessential.

Consider the example of practices like food storage and managing leftovers, considered to be peripheral in normal times, they acquired a locus closer to the center to support the main food practice. This happened because, following the lockdown restrictions, grocery shopping was pushed to a much lesser role while the practice of outside food was completely disestablished, thereby introducing changes in the interlinked structure of food production. In a critical and somewhat extreme example, one of the participants, Sophie comments, *“if there's something that you can eat raw, I try to eat raw, not complicate it and start cooking”*. In this particular instance, she pushes the practice of cooking towards the periphery so as to preserve the core practice of eating, instead of getting caught up in a sequence of practices involving food production, which she considers nonessential compared to holding other more central practices, like actual consumption of food stable.

Hence, in answering the research question, what happens when food routine is disrupted, and how do young consumers reconfigure their food practices as they transition through uncertainty and crisis situations, the present study adds a new perspective to the ‘organizing principles’ (Schatzki, 2002) in the structure of food practices, and the relations between the complex of practices by detailing how these arrangements are renegotiated within crisis situations. In this context, mapping the trajectory of associated and co-dependent practices in the emergent food environment shows how certain practices were deemed to be more central, while others were more marginal, the structural reorganization of food practices contributing to practice reconfiguration is recognized.

5.3 Managerial Implications

There are three key insights based on the findings of this study for retailers and vendors working in the food industry to help young consumers reconfigure their grocery shopping practices to tackle the misalignments and tensions they face being in a crisis situation.

5.3.1 Drawing on the link between food and health

Extant literature has indicated that purchase likelihood increases when consumers are able to touch a product (Pramudya & Seo, 2019), especially in the case of fresh, perishable food items due to subjective quality preferences. However, during Covid lockdown, touching food products was often associated with contamination and several participants reported avoiding buying such products that had been touched or held by others, particularly related to fresh produce. Retail managers should invest in the development of smart packaging technology and a non-invasive freshness index for fruit quality assessment to obviate the need for tactile input while delivering on key customer outcomes.

5.3.2 Digital engagement with food through e-commerce

Participants in the study showed increased proclivity towards digital engagement with food retailers. However, supermarkets had very few or no online delivery or pickup slots available for the general public. Ordering online through supermarkets was recommended only for priority assistance customers, including elderly people and clinically vulnerable customers who were isolating. Though some of the participants were successful in purchasing their groceries through click and collect services, they all confirmed that it was ridden with an absence of slots, severely long wait time, and uncertainty of product availability. For retailers with a physical store network in New Zealand,

supply-side investment in online delivery and fulfillment or omnichannel infrastructure can help them increase their digital accessibility and offer more choice and flexibility to these digital native consumers to order via shopping apps, mobile checkout, and in-store pickups. Online retailers can also take this opportunity to develop more effective eCommerce fulfillment systems to deliver fresh fruits and vegetables to mitigate the concerns relating to other consumers having touched these unpackaged perishables goods.

5.3.2 Out-of-home food consumption – at-home

Out-of-home food consumption prior to lockdown had been growing rapidly. Even though during the lockdown, people rediscovered cooking and enjoyed home-cooked meals, most of the participants shared their preference to be able to go to restaurants again. At this stage, it is yet to be seen how the split between grocery costs and restaurant expenditure will turn up. There is an increasing opportunity for supermarkets and grocery stores to provide ready-to-eat, home meals involving fresh food preparation that can meet local health inspection requirements.

5.4 Policy Implications

In times of disruption, what is important is not only to adapt to evolving requirements but also to proactively design the outcomes of disruption (Reeves et al., 2020). A disruptive event like the stringent Delta lockdown can be an agent of change, and policymakers can attempt to build on changes that have already been set in motion, in line with policy goals.

Understanding the relationship between young adults and their food consumption practices in a crisis situation can untangle the elements of practice that can strongly and systematically influence eating behavior, promoting overall wellness and well-being among young people. Measuring the value of food from the narrow lens of nutritional value misses aspects of food that are vital to the lives and well-being of emerging adults. Hence, consumer behavior interventions should represent the dynamics of everyday food practices instead of narrowly addressing unidimensional variables of nutrient quality and intake. The insights provided through the practice lens can help formulate policy interventions to enhance food security on one end and self-sustaining food practices on the other to mitigate the adverse health and nutrition consequences among young people.

Through the findings of this study, the centrality of material provisioning is emphasized in driving self-catering food behavior among young consumers, meaning that if policymakers plan to instill healthy and sustainable food practices among youth following the pandemic, then material

provisioning and culinary infrastructural considerations must be at the center of their attention. Viewed from a practice-theoretical perspective, it can be seen that the smooth flow of materials not only makes certain competencies less necessary but also contributes to the meaning formation of healthy eating in times of a health crisis, which subsequently has a significant influence on the continuity of food practices among young adults.

From social marketing, consumer research, and policymaking perspectives, these understandings can lead to innovative, practice-oriented consumption interventions that promote healthy eating behaviors right from making smart choices in grocery shopping to cooking up healthy and sustainable meals and storing food in ways that keep it safe to eat later, keeping up with the realities of young adults' daily lives, and support sound food consumption practices. Ultimately, this study hopes to enable young people to develop skills in food provisioning and to prepare nutritious meals, which can be rewarding in terms of psychosocial, physical, and emotional benefits, as well as instigating positive changes in their consumption behavior not only during exogenous events like a natural disaster or economic crisis but also in their later life.

5.5 Limitations and future research opportunities

Although this study contributes to key findings on the reconfiguration of food practices as they transition through uncertainty and crisis situations, this study has limitations and opportunities for future research.

First, all the young adults who participated in the study were similar in terms of socio-demographic profile and work/study and living arrangements. I acknowledge that in studying other groups, for example, young adults from vulnerable sub-groups, individuals living far away from amenities, or those students or young people who required to self-isolate (since this was a situation of health crisis) and needed extra support — in all these cases, the practice-constituting elements might play a different role in the reconfiguration process. Future research could extend this study and sample young consumers with different economic, social, and work statuses, as material constraints are significantly based on the socioeconomic status of the participants. This information could also be relevant in identifying the specific groups that need more support around diet, cooking, meals, or shopping for food during a crisis situation.

Second, the current research is centered on young consumers. Future work can concentrate on how older people (Barnhart & Peñaloza, 2013; Price et al., 2000) experience changes in their everyday life and food practices in times of crisis. Given their long cooking careers deeply entrenched within their everyday life – they might experience increased tensions in reconfiguring their

established and persistent routine practices of many years. Further academic work could examine the realignment strategies vis-à-vis consumption practices of the older consumers in response to the crisis.

Third, while social practice theories, by their appreciation of routines and habits, are especially germane for consumer research, future research could use the assemblage theory (Canniford & Shankar, 2013) or the actor-network theoretical approach (Bettany & Kerrane, 2011; Giesler, 2012; Lockie & Kitto, 2000) to focus comprehensively on particular resources or processes that figure within integrative food practices.

Fourth, though I agree with other practice scholars (Phipps & Ozanne, 2017; Thomas & Epp, 2019) in recognizing the criticality of practice alignment in the smooth enactment of practices, it will be interesting to find out as an antithesis if practice misalignment can lead to positive outcomes, for example, sustainable food practices among youth in this case. Additionally, it will also be advantageous to know if there is a way to strike the right amount of alignment and misalignment to foster practice innovation, as well as to determine if that varies across practice types and sociocultural contexts.

Fifth, existing literature on the organization of daily food practices and routines is focused mainly on parent-child relationships (Dyen et al., 2018; Jastran et al., 2009). Future research can extend the study of food practices when the consumer ensemble is formed of friends or co-habiting flatmates as in the case of the current study, and if that influences the performance of food practices in any way or leads to co-enactment of food practices.

Sixth, the insights from this study are bounded by the nature of the research context. This research was conducted during the Covid Delta lockdown period using digital ethnography (using an interactive online food diary and semi-structured online interviews on Zoom). Methodologies such as ethnographic research could have been ideal for observing the participants in their food-related environments. Yet, in the wake of the community outbreak of Covid-19 in New Zealand, any opportunities for face-to-face data gathering were ruled out. Future research should explore to gain a deeper understanding of the tensions that might arise because of practice misalignments associated with disrupted food practices in a crisis situation, employing ethnography or other more immersive research methodologies. Moreover, participant interaction and observation were only for a brief period of 3-weeks, which is a small time to distinguish between which of the emerging food practices had the potential to 'habitualize' as against the ones which could be purely situational. Therefore, a longitudinal study can assess and enrich the analysis and interpretation of the findings over time to determine the 'stickiness' of the emerging food practices.

5.6 Conclusion

The primary purpose of the present research was to investigate how young consumers negotiate possible tensions between their food practices and routines and adjust to the disruption in their everyday food consumption practices in crisis situations such as delta Covid lockdowns. The findings of this study showed how the links and interactions between elements within a practice support or restrict the way that practice proceeds.

In particular, practice alignment is revealed as an underlying dimension of the smooth reproduction of a practice. For instance, if one of the elements is conflicted, the other two elements need to be reconfigured to reach a state of equilibrium between practice constituting elements, viz. material, meaning, and competences. It also draws attention to the critical role of material things in the food practices of young people, whose free-floating food practices are also discussed. The implications of food as an integrative practice and how that affects the structural reorganization of food practices during a time of crisis have also been critically considered and analyzed.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics Approval

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

Auckland University of Technology

D-88, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, NZ

T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316

E: ethics@aut.ac.nz

www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

11 August 2021

Crystal Yap

Faculty of Business Economics and Law

Dear Crystal

Re Ethics Application: **21/269 Food practices during the transition from adolescence to adulthood**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 11 August 2024.

Non-Standard Conditions of Approval

1. Inclusion in the Information Sheet of advice to participants about selecting and posting images and audio files on the online closed group with no identifying features in order to maintain participant confidentiality.
2. Remove the template text from the last bullet point in the Consent Form.

Non-standard conditions must be completed before commencing your study. Non-standard conditions do not need to be submitted to or reviewed by AUTEC before commencing your study.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. The research is to be undertaken in accordance with the [Auckland University of Technology Code of Conduct for Research](#) and as approved by AUTECH in this application.
2. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using the EA2 form.
3. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using the EA3 form.
4. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTECH prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form.
5. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTECH Secretariat as a matter of priority.
6. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTECH Secretariat as a matter of priority.
7. It is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard and that all the dates on the documents are updated.
8. AUTECH grants ethical approval only. You are responsible for obtaining management approval for access for your research from any institution or organisation at which your research is being conducted and you need to meet all ethical, legal, public health, and locality obligations or requirements for the jurisdictions in which the research is being undertaken.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

For any enquiries please contact ethics@aut.ac.nz. The forms mentioned above are available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics>

(This is a computer-generated letter for which no signature is required)

The AUTECH Secretariat

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: qtf3985@autuni.ac.nz

Appendix B

(i) Indicative Interview Guide

Project title: Food practices during the transition from adolescence to adulthood

Project Supervisor: Dr. Crystal Yap

Researcher: Divya Tewari

Introduction

The purpose of the interview is to try to understand the everyday eating practices of young adults in the current lockdown situation. It will focus on everyday activities that relate to your food consumption practices, such as food provisioning, preparation, cooking, cleaning, eating, storage or even waste. This interview will be recorded. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin?

≠To start with, can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

(Probes: participant's hometowns, University majors, Occupation? personal interests and hobbies, career goals, future plans?)

≠Where do you currently live?

(Probes: Who do you live with? How long have you been living at your current residence? What aspects do you like or dislike the most living here? Can you describe this feeling (like/dislike)?)

≠How would you describe your routine on a typical day from the time you wake up to the time you get back to bed?

≠If you were to tell your story about lockdown and its impacts on your life, what would it be?

≠How has your daily routine changed since the lockdown?

≠How do you feel about these changes (positive / negative)? Can you please describe?

≠How has it affected your food habits?

≠What role does food play in your "life during lockdown"? OR

In what ways have your food practices changed during lockdown?

<p>≠What are the first three words that come to your mind when you think of grocery shopping during lockdown?</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>
<p><i>Show the image(s) of grocery shopping shared by participants.</i></p> <p>≠Can you tell me about how your food buying has changed during the pandemic?</p>
<p>≠Can you explain your grocery shopping process during lockdown?</p> <p>≠From planning to go grocery shopping until you get back home in terms of pre- store, in-store and after store?</p> <p>(Probes: What kind of preparation do you do before shopping? shopping list? Based on recipes? Weekly food plans? Special events?)</p> <p>(Probes: In-store experience, queues, availability of items, feelings when shopping/fear/trust)</p> <p>How do you feel about the measures brought in by supermarkets?</p> <p>How do these measures affect your accessibility to food items?</p>
<p>≠Has there been a change of location for you, given that several of grocery stores were flagged as locations of interest? How does that work for you?</p> <p>≠Has there been a change in choice of shop?</p> <p>(probe: still buying from the supermarkets like Pack 'n' save or Countdown or shifted to smaller food retailers?) If yes, why is that so?</p> <p>≠Has there been a change in frequency of grocery trips now? How often did you do grocery shopping before?)</p> <p>≠What day of the week and around what time of the day do you usually go grocery shopping now? Before?</p> <p>≠What about online shopping?</p> <p>(probes: what was the experience like? Getting a delivery slot? Quality of delivery? time taken to deliver?)</p> <p>≠How much time do you generally spend on your food related grocery shopping? What kind of change you see in the time spent on grocery during lockdown?</p> <p>≠What kind of shift you see in your overall spending on grocery shopping?</p> <p>(probes: why do you think that is so? (if not clear) how much did you typically spend per week on groceries before lockdown? after lockdown?)</p> <p>Any shopping tips that you might want to share from the learnings you've acquired?</p> <p>≠What do you do to keep your budget in check?</p> <p>≠You earlier said, you live with your ----- . How do they influence how you shop, if at all?</p>

<p>≠Have changes in how you shop for food been related to/impacted changes in other aspects of your daily life?</p> <p>(Probes: how do you get to your grocery store, adapt cooking style, substitute meals?)</p>
<p>On the screen, we see images of three of your most favourite food experiences that you shared with us on different occasions. [<i>Here, as part of the preparation for the interview, the participant would have selected and shared 3 images from the ones that they have posted in the closed group.</i>]</p> <p>≠Can you talk about the most favourite of your food experiences that you shared in last 2-3 weeks? More about it...</p> <p>≠How do you feel about each of these photos or dishes? (why do you get these feelings?)</p> <p>≠Were these prepared by you alone or with someone? for a special occasion?</p> <p>≠Where did you get the recipe or the idea for these dishes?</p> <p>≠What ingredients did you use? Where did you buy them from?</p> <p>≠In what ways you think the feelings you feel now would have been different if the pictures were from before the lockdown? What emotions does it evoke?</p>
<p>≠How often do you have a home-cooked meal?</p> <p>≠In what ways this is different from before the lockdown?</p> <p>(probes: Takeaways are closed and delivery services like Uber Eats are not allowed.)</p>
<p>≠What according to you are the important aspects of a home-cooked meal to you?</p> <p>≠Do you think it's important for you to cook your own meal? If yes, then why? If no, then why not?</p> <p>(Probes: what make you think so? convenience, safety, budget, eating healthy, inaccessibility to outside food)</p>
<p>≠When you think about cooking, what are the first three words that come to mind?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. <p>≠Would it be any different if it were prior to lockdown?</p>
<p>≠How would others describe you as a cook? (e.g., good, bad, OK, boring, confident, nervous, adventurous, safe, healthy, unhealthy).</p> <p>≠How would you describe yourself as a cook? Would it be a different description had it been before lockdown?</p>
<p><i>Show the image(s) of kitchen area shared by participants.</i></p>

Thank you very much for sharing the pictures of your Kitchen area

In what ways you feel enabled or constrained by the setup you have?

≠What cooking facilities does your current residence provide you with?

[Probes: Shared or independent kitchen? Storage/shelf space? Shared fridge? Is there a system for sharing the fridge space? What about utensils/pots/pans/appliances? Do people use each other's or is it individual? Dishwasher? Kitchen cleaning?

≠Do you cook just for yourself or for someone else as well? IMAGE

(Probes: When someone is around while you are cooking, how do you engage with that person? What kind of conversation? How does that influence your cooking? What was it like before lockdown?)

≠What do you do to make cooking more fun or enjoyable for you?

≠How do you plan your daily meals? Tell me what could influence/affect your meal planning? has your food planning behaviour changed in any way before and during lockdown?

Give you more time or less time to plan about your food?

≠**Show the image** How do you simplify your cooking process to make it a bit easier on yourself? (for example, using pre-prepared ingredients, using dried pasta and ready-made sauce? do you use any meal kits?)

≠How do you manage any barriers while preparing meals, say you have run out of some ingredient, etc., which is very common given the constrained grocery shopping these days?

≠What can facilitate you to cook more often, or put it into a routine?

≠ How much time does it usually take clearing up afterwards?

≠How do you go about managing the leftovers?

≠What about food wastage? Has there been a change in that? In which direction – increased/decreased? (Probes: quantity of food wasted; type of food wasted?)

≠In what ways you'd say you have acquired new competencies and skills around food during this period; (prompts: new recipes or re-engaging old recipes, etc.)

≠Do you actively engage in looking for information or getting inspiration about what to cook/prepare meals? How is this different from before?

≠In what ways Delta 4 lockdown restrictions have affected your lifestyle and eating habits?

Probe: Since now you are working/studying from home, in what ways, your food routine has changed? (number of daily meals / times of the meals?)

≠ Can you describe for me the eating schedules on the weekend. How do they differ from during the weekday? how was it different prior to lockdown?

<p>≠During this period, which are foods that you are consuming MORE/LESS than before? Why do you think that is so?</p> <p>≠Have you acquired any new food habits during the lockdown? Can you explain it to me?</p> <p>≠Is what you eat now similar to what you had while you were staying with your parents? In a way, are you trying to recreate your childhood experiences in some way? (Probes: In what ways, your food activities are different from then now? What do you feel about this change/if any? Why do you feel like this?)</p>
<p>≠During this period, have you observed any changes in your pattern of eating the leftover food?</p> <p>≠What was it like before the lockdown? (prompt: less time at home/ food was abundantly available any-time, any-place)?</p> <p>≠How do you feel about it?</p>
<p>≠During a typical week, how often do you skip meals or have snacks instead?</p> <p>≠What factors influence these choices?</p> <p>≠What was it like before?</p>
<p>≠Do you mostly eat by yourself or with someone? how has that changed since lockdown?</p> <p>≠How has your social eating behaviour changed since the lockdown? e.g. Sharing a meal with friends, family or work colleagues</p> <p>What about social eating or sharing of food?</p> <p>How does it feel having your meal with someone? Alone? ≠How was it different earlier? Any noticeable change during lockdown?</p>
<p>≠Now, that you spend all your time at home, where do you typically eat your meals – breakfast / lunch / dinner? Probe: considerations?</p> <p>≠Are there any other activities going on while you have your food (like watching TV/ working / reading/ online video chat while having meals and drinking)? How was it different earlier?</p>
<p>≠How do you <u>manage</u> your food when you have intense deadlines / imp work? Special occasions? Weekends?</p> <p>≠How has this changed since the lockdown?</p>
<p>≠When was the last time you ate out? What was the occasion?</p>
<p>≠How would you describe those people: (1) who like to eat out? (2) Who like take-aways or order food online?</p>

<p>≠Can you quickly complete these sentences for me without thinking too long</p> <p>To me eating out is _____</p> <p>To me take away food is _____</p> <p>To me ordering food online is _____</p>
<p>≠Prior to the lockdown, how often did you eat out/ had takeaway/ or ordered food online in a given week?</p> <p>≠How do you feel it is different now?</p> <p>≠What have you done to overcome this?</p>
<p>≠How has your consumption changed in terms of healthy eating since the lockdown restriction came into effect? What changes you see compared to before?</p> <p>≠What about packaged food? (breakfast cereals, cheese, savoury snacks, such as crisps, sausage rolls, pies and pasties, microwave meals or ready meals). Has there been a change?</p> <p>≠ Can you comment on your dietary habits?</p> <p>≠What do you think is ‘good’ about your dietary habits?</p> <p>≠How does the healthiness of foods influence your cooking and eating patterns?</p>
<p><i>Show the image(s) of healthy foods shared by participants.</i></p> <p><i>On the screen, we see images of three healthy foods that you picked out from the images you had shared earlier.</i></p> <p>≠On a scale of 1 to 3, where 1 means healthiest, can you order these food items in terms of their healthiness?</p> <p>≠Which of these you consume regularly?</p>
<p>≠Where do you usually get food information from? Mostly about what?</p> <p>Do you look for nutritional value/information of the food that you eat? Where do you get that info from?</p>
<p>what changes have you made that you would like to keep up after the restrictions are lifted? (Probes: changes in food provisioning, cooking, eating in, health aspects, commuting, leisure, relaxation; working from home, etc.)</p> <p>≠What do you definitely not want to keep once the lockdown restrictions get lifted?</p> <p>≠What aspects of your daily life from before the lockdown restrictions are you missing? What are you looking forward to changing back again to ‘normal’?</p>
<p>≠Finally, what does food mean to you and has the meaning changed in anyway during this period?</p>

(ii) Observation Protocol

Project title: *Food practices during the transition from adolescence to adulthood*

Project Supervisor: **Dr. Crystal yap**

Researcher: **Divya Tewari**

As this research project is based on ethnography, it involves observation of participants engaging in food consumption practices as part of their everyday normal life. Observation may be intrusive on people's privacy, thus an observation protocol has been put in place to ensure that the observation is sufficiently focused so as to minimise this intrusion and to adequately provide the data required to achieve the research's aims. Observation will take place at the participants' home and at the food shopping instance.

How will people be recruited?

An invitation calls for University students and other young adults living independently (from the research's social circle) interested in participating to get in touch with the primary researcher. The invitation will be disseminated through AUT's student service network. It will also be posted on the researchers' social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. The primary researcher will post a research participation invite with brief details of what the study is about. Once the interested participants get in touch with the researcher via email, the researcher would provide the eligibility for participation questionnaire. Following the validation of eligibility, further details of the research and data collection via observations and interview processes would be provided by sending the participant Information sheets.

How will people be informed about the observation?

The Participant Information Sheet (PIS) (a copy is attached) will have details of the observation process.

How will people consent to the observation?

Participation in this study is indicative of the participants' consent to take part in the observation. The participants will receive a consent form for them to sign before the observation begins (copy attached). Participants can give their consent then. The researcher will seek participant consent once again before the start of the observation and assures the participants that the observations will not take place if the participants are uncomfortable. The researcher will also be carrying Participant Information Sheets which informs participants that acceptance of the researcher's study indicates their consent to participate in the investigation.

What will be observed, what data will be collected and how will the data be collected?

Based on the type of qualitative study being conducted, methodological sequences may develop, adapt and change throughout the progress of a study depending on the researcher's continuous iterative interaction and interpretation of the data (Yvonna S. Lincoln & Egon G. Guba, 1985). Unstructured observation will be carried out, although an indicative observation guide is included in Table 1, which includes the data that will be observed and collected. Data observation should also answer the study's research questions of how young adults engage in food consumption practices of shopping, storing, cooking, cleaning and eating. Data observed includes young adults (how they behave while engaging in food practices), their food-related environment, and dialogue during the interviews. The researcher will collect the data by taking photos and handwritten field notes during events or shortly after to ensure details are not lost to memory and then transcribing them.

How any deception involved will be managed?

There is no intention for this study to involve any deception. The researcher will do her best to avoid any form of deception by not coercing, deceiving or leading people to believing the researcher's intentions are not pure. The researcher will explain the purpose of the study at all stages of the recruitment and again at the specific time of data collection and will ask for the participants' informed consent, so no concealment or covert observations are necessary for this study.

The data collection instrument

Data collection instruments include a pen, a notebook, an audio recorder, and a mobile phone for taking pictures

Table 1: Researcher's observation guide:

Date/ time	Location	Photo	Physical and material environment (cooking space, appliances, grocery, dining area)	Participants & their roles in the setting; meaning of what was observed from perspectives of participants	Observed competencies (skills and know-how)	Researcher subjectivity (i.e., reflexive ethnography: thoughts, ideas, questions, concerns; any impact I may have had on the situation observed)

Reference

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry* (Vol. 75). Sage.

(iii) Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced: 26th August 2021

Project Title: Disruption and food practices among young adults

An Invitation

My name is Divya Tewari and I am a Master's student at the Department of Marketing at Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. I am conducting a research on the disruption and food consumption practices of young adults. I would like to invite you to participate in this research. The data collected during this research will be used for the stated purpose below. Participation in this research is voluntary, and all information collected will be kept confidential. You may withdraw your participation any time before the completion of the research project without any effect on your rights.

What is the purpose of this research?

As young people start to live independently, their everyday food and eating practices are disrupted. However, this disruption is compounded by the COVID lockdown restrictions. While strict preventive measures are necessary to protect public health, they may, however, radically change individuals' daily habits, including their access to food and everyday food practices. Moreover, the situation may be worse for young people living by themselves during the pandemic as they might not be fully equipped to deal with such a situation. Given the change in their social and living situation, they are not able to carry out their daily routines around preparing, eating, and socializing around food. This disruption and vulnerability places these young adults in a state of ontological insecurity. The purpose of this study is to understand the eating patterns and behaviour of young consumers during the lockdown, and how do they negotiate possible tensions between their food practices and routines and adjust to the disruption in their everyday food-consumption practices during this non-normative transition.

This study is important because it offers an opportunity to reflect on mundane, everyday food practices to uncover the adaptive consumption coping strategies of young adults living on their own

during lockdown situations. By understanding if, how and why these young people change their food practices, those findings can be linked to opportunities for enhancing or reinforcing changes towards healthier practices during subsequent lockdown events. From social marketing, consumer research and policymaking perspective, these understandings can lead to innovative, practice-oriented consumption interventions that promote healthy eating behaviours. Ultimately, this study hopes to enable young people to develop skills in food provisioning and preparing nutritious meals, which can be rewarding in terms of psychosocial, physical, and emotional benefits, as well as instigating positive changes in their consumption behaviour not only during exogenous events like natural disaster or economic crisis, but also in their later life. I am conducting this study as part of my Master of Business program requirement at Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand as well as an opportunity to present the findings of this study at conferences and publish articles in academic journals.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

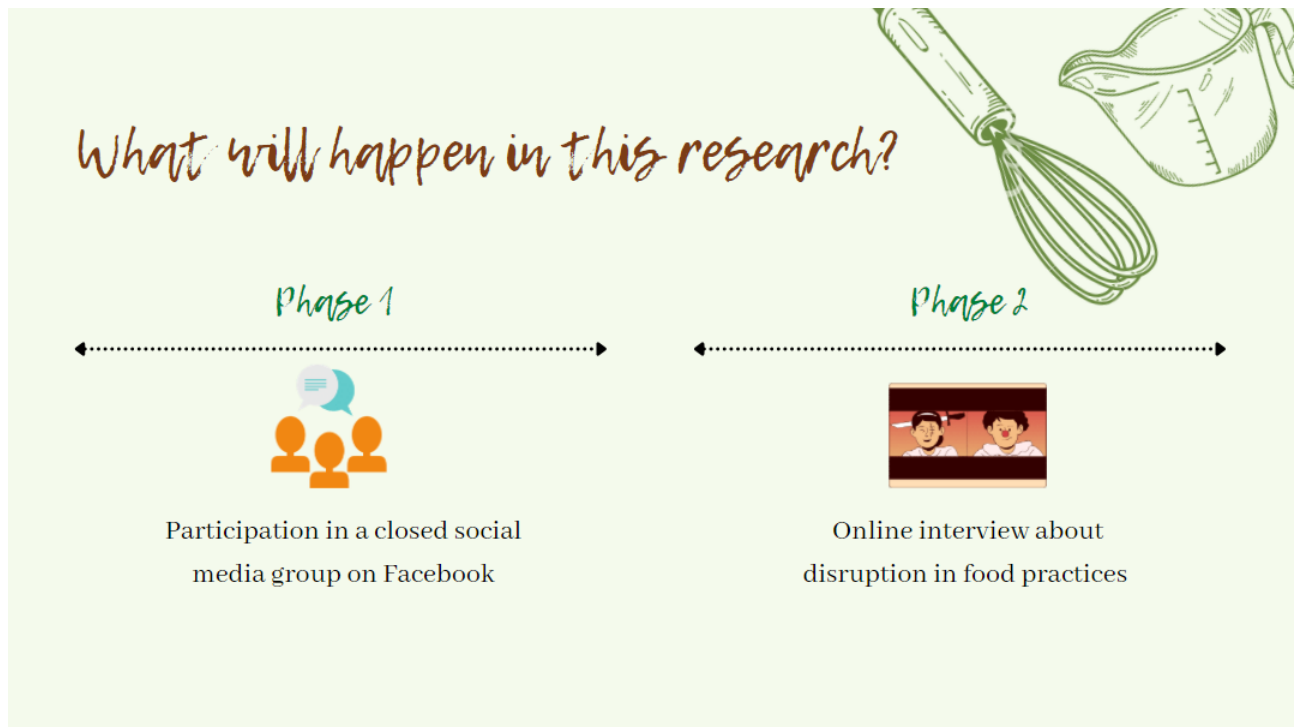
You have expressed an interest in this research via the invitation advertorial posted by me on the University's Student Service Network or a social media site. You were selected as a potential participant as you meet all the inclusion criteria for participation in this research, as mentioned in the invitation advertorial. Based on this information, I would like to request your voluntary consent to participate in the study.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

You can agree to participate in this research by emailing me your response at gtf3985@autuni.ac.nz. Attached along with this document is a copy of the participant Consent Form. If you agree to participate in this research, please sign the consent form and email it back to me at gtf3985@autuni.ac.nz. I will also have copies of the Consent Form that will be physically available for you to complete prior to the actual interviews. Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice), and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

What will happen in this research?

Below is an outline of the steps involved in this research, beginning with the participant's informed consent.



There are 2 phases to the study

Phase 1 involves **participating in a closed social media group on Facebook**. You will be requested to participate in a closed social media group to facilitate peer/community-based learning and sharing of food practices. Here, you can simply write, audio record or include pictures, short clips, etc., of everyday food items. You are encouraged to share the pictures of anything that constitutes and contributes to your food experience – your breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, grocery items, fridge, pantry, etc., or even if you have something funny to share around food on a daily basis. Facebook is used to form this group, to ensure that all the contents posted are end-to-end encrypted, meaning that nobody can see or access any part of the discussion unless they are part of the research. The primary researcher is the organizer and the administrator of this group. If any of the participants are concerned about their privacy, they can share their pictures and videos individually with the primary researcher using WhatsApp, or email.

Phase 2 includes conducting an **online semi-structured interview with individual members** on Zoom, which will be recorded. This will ideally take place after 2 weeks of activities in phase 1. This interview is expected to last for about 60-90 minutes. Questions will relate to how you deal with disruptions caused by Covid 19 lockdown in your cooking, shopping and in eating practices. Any personal information, for example age, gender and general information which may be revealed in final

reporting will not enable your identification. The interviews will be transcribed by the primary researcher. You will receive a copy of the transcript for you to check (which should not take longer than 30 minutes to review) to ensure you are satisfied with the information provided as well as an opportunity for you to add further details if you wish to do so.

Overall, phases 1 and 2 combined are likely to take a total of 2 – 2.5 hours of participant's time.

What are the discomforts and risks?

There is a very minimal chance of any discomfort. For the interviews, I can assure you that the questions are non-invasive and will be conducted in a very sensitive as well as a friendly manner. We are not seeking a level of detail that may identify you or create any discomfort. The timings of the interviews are able to be adjusted based on your convenience.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

Participation is voluntary and if for any reason you feel uncomfortable, you are able to decline answering certain questions, or even withdraw from the research project at any time prior to the study's completion without any consequences.

Additionally, if and when required, AUT Student Counselling and Mental Health is able to offer three free sessions of confidential counselling support for adult participants in an AUT research project. These sessions are only available for issues that have arisen directly as a result of participation in the research and are not for other general counselling needs. To access these services, you will need to:

- drop into our centre at WB203 City Campus, email counselling@aut.ac.nz or call 921 9998.
- let the receptionist know that you are a research participant and provide the title of my research and my name and contact details as given in this Information Sheet.
- You can find out more information about AUT counsellors and counselling on <https://www.aut.ac.nz/student-life/student-support/counselling-and-mental-health>

What are the benefits?

While being participants in the current research, you are also consumers of different types of foods. Engagement in routine everyday food practices generally becomes a default action without much cognitive thought. Going through the process of interviews about your food practices may allow reflexive thought and action that may prove beneficial to you because research informs us that poor food practices developed at this stage frequently persist into adulthood. Further, post-completion, the

results of this study will be provided to the participants, which may further prompt thought and action in terms of engaging in food and health-related practices.

For the wider community, this study will provide both academics and practitioners with beneficial information regarding how young adults adjust to the disruption in their everyday food-consumption practices due to COVID lockdown restrictions. This research will also allow me as the primary researcher, to fulfil the requirement for successful completion of Master of Business degree from Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand.

What compensation is available for injury or negligence?

In the unlikely event of a physical injury as a result of your participation in this study, rehabilitation and compensation for injury by accident may be available from the Accident Compensation Corporation, providing the incident details satisfy the requirements of the law and the Corporation's regulations.

How will my privacy be protected?

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Your identity will remain confidential and will not be disclosed to anyone except the primary researcher and the project supervisor. To ensure that privacy and the suggested limited confidentiality are respected, your name will be changed to pseudonyms and contact information will not be disclosed in final reporting. Any data that the researcher extracts from the interview is for academic use only and all reports or published findings will not, under any circumstance, contain names or identifying characteristics. All data will be stored on a password-protected memory stick and consent forms will be stored in a password-protected cabinet with the project supervisor after the project is completed. Data and consent forms will be deleted after a period of six years. Contact details of the researcher are provided in case of any concerns or complaints that need to be lodged.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There are no costs to you other than your time to participate in the study. Overall, steps 1 and 2 combined are likely to take a total of 2 – 2.5 hours of your time.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You can take your time to decide if you wish to participate in the research. However, it would be appreciated for you to respond within two weeks' time from the date the invitation is sent.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

On the Consent Form you may tick the box showing your interest in receiving feedback on the research's results. A result synopsis will be emailed to you once the study is complete.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

- Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Crystal Yap, crystal.yap@aut.ac.nz , (+649) 921 9999 ext 5800.
- Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTECH, ethics@aut.ac.nz , (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the primary researcher for any further information. Contact details are as listed below:

Researcher Contact Details:

Project Researcher: Dr Crystal Yap crystal.yap@aut.ac.nz, +64 9 921 9999 ext 5800

(iv) Participant Consent Form

Consent form for use when interviews and observations are involved

Project title: Disruption and food practices among young adults

Researcher: Divya Tewari

1. I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 26th August 2021.
2. I understand that the research will require 2 – 2.5 hours of my time in terms of interviews and social media participation.
3. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
4. I understand that I am required to participate in a closed social media group, where I will share my experiences with and around food – including text, images or short clips of my breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, grocery items, fridge, pantry, etc.
5. The researcher will conduct interviews in relation to my food consumption practices and will be taking notes. The interviews will also be recorded and transcribed.
6. I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
7. I understand that for presenting the findings of this study, the researcher will offer me the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me allowed to be used as is or presented in a way that does not identify me.
8. I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. Additionally, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
9. I agree to take part in this research.
10. I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): ☐ Yes ☐ No

Participant's signature :

Participant's name:

Date.....

Participant's Contact Details :

Phone.....

Email.....

Physical Address

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 11 August 2021

AUTEC Reference number: 21/269

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Consent form for use when personal photographs & video are involved.

Project title: Disruption and food practices among young adults

Researcher: Divya Tewari

Dear Participant,

I request the use of your photograph/s as a data collection instrument for my research study as part of my Master of Business program requirement at Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. The photograph/s would only be used as a projective technique tool to explore the meanings and priorities that young adults attach to food and food practices. I assure you that confidentiality and privacy would be maintained at all times during and after the research process. Your name or any other detail would not be disclosed at any point during or after this research. If you agree with the use of your photograph/s as per the information below, please indicate your consent by signing this form.

1. I agree to let the researcher use my photograph/audio/video/ for her research.
2. I permit the researcher to use the photographs that are part of this project, either complete or in part, alone or in conjunction with any wordings solely and exclusively for (a) the researcher's dissertation; and (b) articles, presentation material and examination purposes.
3. I understand that the photographs will be used for academic purposes only and will not be published in any form other than those listed above without my written permission.
4. I understand that any copyright material created by the photographs is deemed to be owned by the researcher and that I do not own copyright of any of the photographs.

Participant's Signature :

Participant's Name:

Date.....

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 11 August 2021

AUTEC Reference number: 21/269

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

(v) Invitation for participant recruitment

Are you responsible for managing your own food and grocery shopping?

Hello! My name is Divya Tewari (she/her). For my research project, I am exploring the food consumption practices of young adults in the 20-29 age range, living on their own.

If that sounds like you, you are invited to participate in my research.



THE STUDY IS DESIGNED IN 2 PHASES:

- A short interview following accompaniment to a grocery trip (to a store of your choice)
- Another interview during home visit, to understand your everyday food consumption practices.



GIFT VOUCHER

You will be given a gift voucher as a token of appreciation for your time after each interview. Please share this information with anybody you think would be interested.



GET IN TOUCH

To participate, or for more information, please:

Email: qtf3985@autuni.ac.nz

/ divya.tewari@gmail.com

Phone: 021 621 832

NOTE: This is an academic research project and there are no commercial interests involved. If you have any issues or concerns, please let me know. No private information or names will be shared in my research outputs. Your consent is voluntary.

Appendix C: Visual projective technique choice ordering task

C(i): Favorite food experiences as shared by individual participants



C(ii): Healthiest food experiences as shared by individual participants



Appendix D: Qualitative coding process

Sr. N	Practice	Material/ Object/ Embodiment	Competence/ Doing	Meaning	Quote	Participant
			precise planning	same meaning with added precision & planning	write our grocery lists in order of kind of the aisles on the supermarket	Claire
1	Grocery planning	grocery lists			With lockdown, the list didn't actually work. when you wear the gloves and touch the phone, and you're thinking, why am I touching my phone with gloves? Then you have to remove the gloves to touch your phone... I buy a lot of unnecessary stuff during lockdown; but before lockdown, I can actually have access to my app, and I can go through it properly	Andrew
2	Grocery planning	Grocery planning app, list, gloves, phone	planning <Broken link>	unnecessary buying due to restricted access to the app		
3	Grocery planning	grocery list <impaired link>	more careful planning		properly make a grocery list and consider everything we needed from like what we absolutely needed and what absolutely wanted	Mark
4	Grocery planning (inter-connected)	<impaired link>	precise planning		make a menu of what we're going to eat throughout the whole week and we buy groceries according to that	Kira
5	Grocery planning	grocery shopping list <impaired link>	more careful planning	Constrained by transportation facilities to carry the grocery plans to reduce number of shopping trips	whenever I make a grocery shopping list, I always try to cut down the things that are heavier, because it's just harder to carry it	Parla
6	Grocery planning	<impaired link>	more careful planning	plans to reduce the amount of time spent in the supermarket	I need to plan ahead... this time it's different because I try to just go, I try to minimize the number of times I'm going.	Parla
7	Grocery planning	list <impaired link>	more careful planning		during the lockdown, I was just trying to restrict my time in the supermarket. So, I would make a small list	Udeep
8	Grocery Shopping	grocery shop <impaired link>	adaptive buying from dairy shop/ convenience store		when I would run out of an ingredient, usually I would just buy it, but then this time going to a grocery store is a commitment. So instead, I just go downstairs (dairy shop). Buy something from the frozen aisle, and I just eat that. So, uh, that's just a major change	Parla
9	Grocery Shopping	grocery shop <impaired link>		Feels like an event in absence of other normal everyday activities	Going grocery shopping during lockdown is like an event basically, like this is something I get to go do during since I can't go anywhere	Ariana
10	Grocery Shopping	grocery shop <impaired link>	reprioritising to maximize the number of meals		prior to lockdown... there would be one meal a week that I told my roommate, "I'm going to spend a little bit more money on this meal because I want it to be something nicer or more complex..." After going into lockdown, we didn't really buy groceries with that mindset. We bought groceries with the idea of just making as many meals as possible.	Mark
11	Grocery Shopping	supermarkets <impaired link>		Evokes negative emotions	...but we completely avoid Pack N Save (supermarket) now because the rush in pack and save I can imagine is going to be outrageous	Aanav
12	Grocery Shopping	grocery trips <impaired link>	Bulk buying		I try and shop in bulk to minimise the number of trips	Ian
13	Grocery Shopping	car, supermarket, flatmates	<Broken link>	increased hardship because of nearby stores flagged location of interest	because I don't drive, I just go to the supermarket near my place, but now I have to ask my flatmates to take me to the far away one, so it's different.	Vivien
14	Grocery Shopping	Socializing with other people (-) social distancing from people (-)	<Broken link>	conflicting emotions	I want to see people but also at the same time, I don't want to be very close to them	Parla
15	Grocery Shopping			concerns about crowding	...but I just grab it and get out. Just like I don't wanna be here anymore... 'cause you've got 10 people in the aisles that are just wandering, and I'm like, "Oh no! I can't do this" ...	Talia
16	Grocery Shopping	grocery shop <impaired link>		stress over panic buying	it stresses me out because I know that I'm not panic buying. I'm just buying my normal grocery shop. But I'm competing with everybody else at the same time.	Madeline
17	Grocery Shopping	grocery shop <impaired link>	<speedy shopping>	social consideration/ consciousness	usually a line of people waiting outside, I feel bad for spending a lot of time inside... I try to make my trip as short as possible, so that other people that are waiting outside can just go back in	Parla
18	Grocery Shopping	Flatmate (-) car (-)	<Managing without car for shopping practice>	inconvenience, affected shopping practice	Outside of lockdown I go with one of my other flatmates ... she has a car and I do not so we normally coordinate to do our groceries at the same time each weekend	Claire
19	Grocery Shopping	eating out (-)	compensatory consumption	less frugality	and you're trying to like compensate for those meals that you eat outside, so you're trying to buy little fancy stuff like prawns and little more chicken	Aanav
20	Grocery Shopping	money spent	priority on buying healthy food		during the lockdown, I try to prioritize buying fruit, veges than other snacks because I know that this money is not really worth it, to buy snacks or chips.	Nicole
21	Grocery Shopping	food fridge grocery	prioritising use of available food			
22	Grocery Shopping	grocery shop <impaired link>		Semblance of freedom	we decided to finish all the food in our fridge, and then do the grocery shopping.	Marie
23	Grocery Shopping	fridge	Managing with constrained fridge space	Fear of contracting the virus	it still feels like that's the ounce of freedom that I get... it becomes one of the activities that I do daily rather than like something I had to do. It's like something that I get to do and I can choose to do more often.	Shayne
24	Grocery Shopping	premium meat, veggies	creativity in meals	less frugality	the higher chances of COVID-19, if I keep on going shopping every day. So that's why, even though the fridges are small, I try to manage with that. I wouldn't want to risk myself to go there.	Andrew
25	Grocery Shopping	Halloumi		Indulgence to beat the lockdown blues	get more premium meat and more veggies so that I can actually be a bit more creative with my meals. So like this week I've bought lettuce and stuff which I usually don't buy	Talia
26	Grocery Shopping	mask, queue		Evokes negative emotions	Halloumi, I don't always buy just because it's expensive (.) so that's quite a treat (.) that's like something special that I kind of got because we're in lockdown	Claire
27	Grocery Shopping	groceries (+) takeaway (-) fresh produce (-) dried food	More frequent grocery shopping		wear mask and stay in the queue for an hour. So it has been irritating	Mariana
28	Grocery Shopping	frozen food grocery shop <impaired link>		Constrained in buying fresh produce	it used to be once a week... now it's increased to twice a week. So now we have to make more frequently... because we're staying home and we're using more of the groceries and we don't have that take away options	Kira
29	Grocery Shopping		stocking up		It gets constrained because I didn't go shopping for anything fresh... in our fridge, there was dried food or frozen food.	Marie
30	Grocery Shopping	24/7 petrol station for off-hours food shopping (+)	Adaptive shopping		I think I'm probably buying more than I usually would, just because I know if I run out of something, it's not as easy to just pop down to the supermarket	Claire
31	Grocery Shopping	money spent		feeling the pinch due to price spike	That's a new addition. That did not exist before lockdown. the petrol station is open 24/7 and my sleep pattern makes it a bit weird sometimes	Andrew
32	Grocery Shopping	grocery shop <impaired link>	reprioritising use of available food		It's increased because the price has gone up. During lockdown, I haven't been buying more than usual. But the prices are higher, that's what I noticed.	Mariana
33	Grocery Shopping	long queue grocery shop <impaired link>	focus on safe shopping		previously it was more of like impulse buying before lockdown... Now, even if I want to eat something, then I would just wait for a few more days and then just consume what I have at home first and then shop for it.	Helena
34	Grocery Shopping	sanitizer bag debit card grocery items		concerns about safety and hygiene	Sometimes when I see the queue is quite long... I decided to move to another, less busy supermarket so that we can have a safe shopping	Nicole
35	Grocery Shopping	vegetables, dairy, eggs	sanitizing focusing on staples and essentials	survival	I would always carry a sanitizer with me in my bag to directly sanitize my debit card and my hands... and try to wash the things that have bought.	Udeep
36	Grocery Shopping	Socializing with other people (-) long wait time	<Broken link>	conflicting emotions	for me grocery shopping is about vegetables, and dairy and eggs. It's more about ingredients to prepare food, rather than having a pre-cooked food	Sidney
37	Grocery Shopping	Farmers' Market (-)	<Broken link>	negative experience	stressful...overwhelming...exciting (.) Like it's my only opportunity to leave the house and go and see other people, so I do actually look forward to it, but if I get there and it is busy I do find it stressful and overwhelming	Claire
38	Grocery Shopping			constrained in buying cheap & fresh produce	I decided to never go again during COVID-19, because I waited almost 2 hours	Sylvie
39	Online shopping	<impaired link>		poor experience of online delivery	I used to go to the Avondale market (Farmers' Market) on Sundays and would just get fresh veggies and a bit cheaper usually. But we can't do that	Talia
40	Online shopping	<impaired link>		skipped items make physical grocery trips inevitable	my first experience... I ordered online, they delivered my order and I realized they didn't put many items that I ordered	Mariana
41	Online shopping	<impaired link>		Physical shopping perceived to be more fun	majority of the list is has been delivered. But like I don't have carrots or I don't have potatoes, only two items and I need to go to the grocery store, which made me really frustrated	Mariana
42	Online shopping	<impaired link>		ridden with uncertainties	I'm just not a big fan of click and collect or that kind of stuff, I think it's just more fun to go out and go look at things I want.	Ariana
43	Online shopping	<impaired link>	Advance planning before stock runs out	lengthy delivery time	A lot of uncertainties...you never know if they have the product you want	Vivien
44	Budgeting	Budgeting app Excel spreadsheet price spike <impaired link>	ways of budgeting	Keeping a check on the budget	if I'm going to do on-line orders I need to plan it well, like one week in advance, before all my food starts to run out.	Nicole
45	Budgeting		Adaptive shopping Budget reallocation from eating out to grocery shopping		Both me and him (roommate) have our own way of budgeting. He uses an app. I've got like a big Excel spreadsheet	Mark
46	Budgeting	restaurant (-) <impaired link>	Comparative search to find the cheapest prices extra effort to keep the budget under check visual inspiration for meal planning		buy alternative things... Instead of buying whole tomatoes, we just buy the tins	Kira
47	Budgeting	Online supermarket apps list			Normally, we would go to a restaurant and eat something. But now since we don't have that access, we would spend it all in grocery shopping.	Ariana
48	Budgeting	online shopping portal			I just go online to the apps and online shopping and then I'd see which is the cheapest place to get it from, and then I just go there	Ariana
49	Meal planning	Pinterest			You know how you can shop online? I'll usually put my list on there, and estimate how much it's going to cost kind of thing... if it's way too much, I take some stuff off	Talia
					I'll go on Pinterest and I'll look up dinner inspiration on Pinterest. I like Pinterest because it's like purely visual	Claire