



A STUDY ON CONSUMER PREFERENCE ON FAST FOOD OUTLETS WITH REFERENCE TO COIMBATORE CITY

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Abstract:

Fast food industry is one of the world's fastest growing sectors in food industry. However, over a period of time, with a growth in the number of nuclear families, economic growth and increasing per capita income as well as globalization, fast food culture gained prominence in India. The study reveals that 64% of the respondents visit fast food outlets once in a week and majority of the respondents spent more than 15% of their monthly income on fast food and the most favorite cuisine preferred by the respondents is western junk foods. They also expressed that the discount offered at the fast food outlets are considered as the effective promotional activity.

Introduction:

Fast food is the term given to food that can be prepared and served very quickly. While any meal with low preparation time can be considered to be fast food, typically the term refers to food sold in a restaurant or store with low quality preparation and served to the customer in a packaged form for take-out/take-away. The fast food industry in India has evolved with the changing lifestyles of the young Indian population. The sheer variety of gastronomic preferences across the regions, hereditary or acquired, has brought about different modules across the country. It may take some time for the local enterprise to mature to the level of international players in the field.

Many of the traditional dishes have been adapted to suit the emerging fast food outlets. The basic adaptation is to decrease the processing and serving time. For example, the typical meal which called for being served by an ever alert attendant is now offered as a Mini-Meal across the counter. In its traditional version, a plate or a banana leaf was first laid down on the floor or table. Several helpers then waited on the diner, doling out different dishes and refilling as they got over in the plate.

Consumer Preferences towards Fast Food:

The powerful fragmentation of consumers nowadays, represents a tendency that should be taken into consideration, in order to identify and improve the quality dimensions of the products which are important for each category of consumers. Young people are not concerned with food preparation and that is why, they prefer to go out for their meals. They usually go to fast-food restaurants, especially when there is nobody to cook for them (while they study away from home) and also when they want to socialize. Although they have the necessary knowledge about the nutritional value of food and its effects on their body, they don't act accordingly. Fast – food restaurants are famous because they serve the food very fast, they are cheap and they easily replace homemade food. Although people, who are usually very busy working, find fast-foods advantageous, we should all be aware of the fact that fast-food products are high in calories, fats, sugar and salt. Even so, young people admit that it is very difficult for them to change their food habits - especially because they don't have time and discipline to do it. The accessibility of the location is another motive for young people to prefer fast-foods. Unlike the restaurants, which are located in less accessible areas for the young people, fast-foods are located in their way towards their home or downtown, and they are more numerous. Easiness of finding a fast-food could be associated with the lack of

time or the hurry. Choosing one particular fast-food depends on its flexibility and capacity to adapt to young people's needs. These needs are in fact young people's desires to easily find a place to eat, opened at any time, with a products display, to be able to order fast, to eat the food ordered rapidly, to have a place to socialize with their friends and to take away the food or order at home when they do not want or do not have time to have the meal at fast-food.

Literature Review:

Kara et al., (1997) examined how the perceptions of customers towards fast food restaurants differed across two countries USA and Canada. The results of the study revealed significant differences in perception between the frequent fast food buyers in USA and Canada and also differences between consumers' preferences for fast-food restaurants in relation to age groups.

Rezende and Avelar (2012) attempted to describe the eating out habits of consumers in Brazil. The study revealed that a 'search for variety' was a motivator for eating outside the home. The desire for 'convenience' was an important element on many occasions of consumption. The younger people and people with higher incomes possessed more intensive consumption and more favourable attitudes towards eating out. The study also revealed that although eating out was a very popular trend, many of the consumers did not voice any intention of eating out more frequently. An attitude towards eating out was not all so positive, with certain levels of suspicion or mistrust on the part of the consumers' frequency of buying.

Anand (2011) explored the impact of demographics and psychographics on young consumer's food choice towards fast food in Delhi, India. The key determinants impacting consumers food choice were found out to be passion for eating out, socialize, ambience and taste of fast food and convenience for dual-income families in urban India. Findings indicated that fast food companies can no longer rely on convenience as USP in India, unless the implication of same on consumer's health is given equal importance in the years to come.

Objectives of the Study:

- ✓ To analyze the preference of the consumers towards the fast food outlets.
- ✓ To analyze the influence of income on the selection of fast food buying outlet.
- ✓ To study the relationship between the nutritional information over the decision making on ordering the fast food.

Methodology:

The study was conducted in Coimbatore by selecting randomly 100 respondents who step in at major fast food restaurants. A questionnaire for the same has been prepared for this purpose. Statistical methods like Percentages and Chi-square are used.

Analysis and Interpretation:

1. Frequency of Visiting of Fast Food Outlets:

The frequency of consumption of fast food by the sample respondents in fast food chains were analyzed and the results are presented in the table 1

Frequency of Respondents in Visiting Fast Food Outlets

Table 1

Frequency	No of Respondents	Percentage
Weekly	64	64%
Monthly	25	25%
Occasionally	11	11%
Total	100	100.00%

Source: Primary data

Interpretation:

From the above table, 64% of the respondents visit fast food restaurants weekly, 25% of the respondents visit monthly and the rest 11% visit only occasionally.

2. Favorite Timing for eating of Fast Food:

The consumer's preference towards favorite time for eating fast food in an organized fast food restaurant was analyzed and the results are presented in the table 2

Timings for Visiting Fast Food Restaurants

Table 2

Timings	No of Respondents	Percentage
Morning	15	15%
Afternoon	23	23%
Evening	63	63%
Total	100	100%

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation:

From the above table, around 63% of the respondents visit fast food joints during evenings. 23% of the respondents visit in the afternoons and only 15% of the respondents prefer mornings.

3. Per Capita Monthly Expenditure on Fast Food:

The consumption expenditure towards fast food by the sample respondents was analyzed and the Results are presented in the table 3

Percentage of Monthly Income Spent On Fast Food by the Respondents

Table 3

Income Percentage	No of Respondents	Percentage
<10%	20	20%
<15%	10	10%
>15%	70	70%
TOTAL	100	100%

Source: Primary data

Interpretation:

From the above table, 70% of the respondents spend >15% of their monthly income on fast food, 10% spend <15% of their monthly income on fast foods and 20% spend <10% of their income on fast food. Hence, it is clearly evident that sample respondents spend considerable amount of their income for eating outside due to convenient lifestyle as it saves their time.

4. The Reason for Choosing Fast Food Outlets:

The reason for choosing fast food outlets by the sample respondents was analyzed and the results are presented in the table 4.

Reason for Choosing Fast Food Outlets

Table 4

Reason	No of Respondents	Percentage
Convenience	22	22%
Pricing	40	40%
Taste	38	38%
Total	100	100.00%

Source: Primary data

Interpretation:

From the above table, 40% of the respondents choose fast food outlets for the cheap pricing, 38% choose due to the taste of the fast food and 22% prefer fast food outlets for convenience.

5. Customer Preference Between eat in or Take Out:

The customer preference between eat in or take out by the sample respondents was analyzed and the results are presented in the table 5.

Customer Preference Between Eat In or Take Out

Table 5

Preference	No of Respondents	Percentage
Eat In	61	61%
Take Out	30	30%
Either-Or	9	9%
Total	100	100.00%

Source: Primary data

Interpretation:

From the above table, 61% of the respondents prefer dining inside the fast food outlets, 30% prefer take away and 9% prefer each on either of the time they visit.

6. Fast Food Outlet Preferred by the Respondents:

Fast Food Outlet Preferred By the Respondents

Table 6

Fast Food Outlets	No of Respondents	Percentage
KFC	32	32%
Mc Donalds	21	21%
Pizza Hut	13	13%
Dominos	9	9%
Subway	25	25%
Total	100	100.00%

Source: Primary data

Interpretation:

From the above table, 32% of the respondents choose KFC as their preferred fast food outlet, 25% of the respondents choose Subway, 21% choose McDonalds, 13% choose Pizza Hut and 9% choose Dominos.

7. The Selection of Fast Food Buying Outlet With Respect to Income:

To analyze the selection of fast food buying outlet with respect to income chi-square was employed. The results are presented in table 7.

Aim:

To analyze the influence of income over the selection of fast food buying outlet.

Null Hypothesis:

There is no significant relationship between the income and the selection of fast food buying outlet.

Alternative Hypothesis:

There is significant relationship between the income and the selection of fast food buying outlet.

Table 7: Influence of Income over the Selection of Fast Food Buying Outlet

Level of Significance	Degree of Freedom	Calculated Value	Table Value	Result
0.05	8	18.11	15.51	Significant

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation:

From the above table it is interpreted that at 0.05 of significance the calculated value 18.11 is greater than the table value 15.51 and there is a significant relationship between the income and the selection of fast food buying outlet. Hence null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Findings:

- Majority of the respondents, 64% visit fast food restaurants weekly.
- Majority of the respondents, 63% prefer visiting fast food restaurants in the evenings.
- Majority of the respondents, 70% spend >15% of their monthly income on fast food.
- Majority of the respondents, 40% choose fast food restaurants due to the convenient pricing.
- Majority of the respondents, 61% prefer eating in the restaurants rather than taking out.
- Majority of the respondents, 32% prefer visiting KFC.
- There is a significant relationship between the income and the selection of fast food buying outlet (the calculated value 18.11 is greater than the table value 15.51).

Suggestions:

- To provide more attractive offers and discounts to the customers.
- To print and make the consumers aware of the nutritional facts.
- In addition to the fast food few health friendly food products can be added in the menu.
- To maintain their delivery and service. Also to maintain a stability in their services and quality of food.

Conclusion:

Consumer's behavior is often studied because certain decisions are significantly affected by their behavior or expected actions. For this reason consumer behavior is said to be applied discipline.

In a general sense, the most important reason for studying consumer behavior is the significant role it plays in our lives. Much of our time is spent directly in the market place, eating or engaging in other activities. A large amount of additional time is spent thinking about products and services, talking to friends about them, and seeing or hearing advertisements about them. In addition, the goods people eat and the manner in which they use them significantly influence how they live their daily lives. These general concerns alone are enough to justify our study of consumer behavior. However, many seek to understand the behavior of consumers for what are thought to be more immediate and tangible reasons.

References:

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