



Factors Influencing The Customers' To Utilise The Fast Food Services

KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT *This study highlights about the factors which influence the customers to utilize the fast food services in the study area. Even though, the study area is a corporation but the people living in the study area not much aware about the fast food services. In general some people have bad opinion on fast food services and they believe that if anyone taking fast food regularly they will be suffered by obesity problems, and ulcer. In this juncture studying about the factors influencing the customers to utilize the fast food services is a vital one and to know in which strata utilizing optimum. The purpose of the study is to know the opinion of the customers regarding the best media, which helps to convey the messages and persuade the people who are living in the study area. And to analyze various data which helps to provide valuable suggestions to improve the fast food services and to create awareness about the fast food services. The rest of the paper focused on the:*

- Introduction and theoretical framework of fast food services
- Review of literature relate to the study
- Objective of the study
- Research methodology
- Analysis and Interpretation
- Findings, Suggestions and Conclusion

INTRODUCTION:

This study mainly focuses on the factors which influence the customers to utilize the fast food services. And to know the best media to create awareness about the services which helps to understand the customers' preferences. Since most of the people have different kind of opinion on fast food services in which some people have bad opinion on fast food services. Many studies are highlighting about the problems of taking fast foods. Hence, it is an attempt to know which strata customers are utilizing more this fast food services and the reason behind using this service. Based on the study information it can be suggested to the services providers to the ways to improve the fast food services. And to suggest best media to create good impression on fast food services.

Definition:

Fast foods are quick, reasonably priced, and readily available alternatives to home cooking. While convenient and inexpensive for a busy lifestyle, fast foods are typically high in calories, fat, saturated fat, sugar, and salt.

Fast food chains and restaurants have responded to the public's increasing awareness about nutrition and have attempted to help people concerned about health. For example, they now make ingredient and nutrition information available on their menus. Despite these changes, however, in order to maintain a healthy diet, it is necessary to choose fast foods carefully.

This study also try to know the real influencing factors which stimulate the customers to utilize the fast food services, through this it is easy to understand the market environment and based on that it can be suggested to the service providers about the ways and means to improve the services and to create knowledge about the fast food services to the ultimate customers by using effective media.

GROWTH OF FAST FOOD INDUSTRY

Fast foods are relatively inexpensive foods that are prepared and served quickly. The fast-food industry had its beginnings around the mid-twentieth century, and it grew tremendously during the last three decades of the twentieth century. Growth of the fast-food industry is projected to be even greater outside the United States during the twenty-first century.

Even more than hotdogs and apple pie, the hamburgers and French fries found at ubiquitous restaurant represent America's quintessential food and, in many ways, America's

quintessential culture.

The rise of the fast food restaurant would not have been possible without concomitant changes in American culture. Beginning in the 1920s, thanks in large part to developments in technology and industry, the American lifestyle began to change. Formerly distinctive regional and ethnic cultures were now meeting up with each other, blurring differences in identity. More people were moving off the farm and into the city in search of lucrative and exciting careers. In addition, the widespread use of inventions like the telephone and the increasing acceptance of mass media meant that there was a larger degree of cultural interaction.

The development of an affordable automobile and the simultaneous governmental support of new road systems physically reinforced this cultural melding, enabling car owners, especially, to go to places they had never been before. This sparked a boom in the tourist industry: travelers who once went by rail, boat, or horse, were now moving faster by car, and began to value things such as speed and convenience as part of their trips. Not only did they need affordable and reliable places to stay, but they also needed similarly reliable places to eat.

While local diners and eateries offered good, wholesome home-cooked meals, they were often located far away from main thoroughfares, making them inconvenient for the interstate traveler. Travelers, however, were not the only ones eating on the run; private dining, once a formal ritual among family members and close friends was becoming a thing of the past, and eating in public was becoming much more acceptable for everyone. The increased pace of life, especially in urban areas, meant that people no longer ate as a group around the table, but favored sandwiches and other foods that could be eaten quickly and on the go. Food carts had been familiar urban sites since the late 1800s, eventually evolving into more permanent "short order" joints and diners. Cafeterias like Horn and Hardart in Philadelphia featured Automat systems in the early 1900s that allowed people to extract foods such as pies, sandwiches, and entrees from vending machines for a penny or nickel. Food was becoming merely a fuel, like gasoline, for the human working machines.

The need for fast, reliable, affordable, and convenient food, along with an increasing acceptance among Americans of a more homogenous culture, led to the rise of the fast food industry, and in particular, of the hamburgers and French fries it

served. Purveyors of fast food sprang up in both urban areas and along the nation's highways

Nutritional value

Because the fast food concept relies on speed, uniformity and low cost, fast food products are often made with ingredients formulated to achieve a certain flavor or consistency and to preserve freshness. This requires a high degree of food engineering, the use of additives and processing techniques that substantially alter the food from its original form and reduce its nutritional value.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the various factors influencing the customers to utilize the fast food services in the study area.
- To suggest better ways and means to improve the fast food services in the study area.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The validity of any research is based on the systematic method of data collection and analysis of the data collected. The present study used both primary as well as secondary data. The primary data was collected from the customers of the fast food services in Erode Town. For this purpose, the respondents were chosen from the Erode Town limits, who were the users of fast food services. Field survey technique was employed to collect the pertinent data from the 200 selected sample respondents in Erode Town. The respondents were selected by simple random sampling from the selected revenue blocks such as Sampath nagar, Periyar Nagar, Thirunagar colony, Manickkam Palayam, and Valaiyakara Street, Kallukadai medu, and Teachers' colony of Erode Town.

Questionnaire was the main tool for collecting the data. Hence, pain was taken to prepare the questionnaire in a systematic way by covering adequate and relevant questions to ensure in achieving the research objective.

A pilot study was conducted with the few samples and it helped to incorporate certain necessary modifications. After the pilot study, first hand information was collected with the help of the questionnaires through field survey. For this purpose, a good rapport had to be established with the leading entrepreneurs, businessman, professional and the public concerned. The data collected from the primary sources were arranged sequentially and were tabulated in a systematic manner.

SECONDARY DATA

The secondary data was collected from Books, leading journals, magazines and internet.

TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS

The collected data were classified into suitable tabular forms for analysis and interpretation. Simple statistical tools like percentage method and chi-square test were used.

CONVENTIONAL ANALYSIS

The data thus collected from the primary sources were arranged in the simple tabular statements. Statistical tools like percentage and chi-square was used for the analysis of data. In connection with this two-way tables were prepared and chi-square test was also used appropriately to study the factors which influencing the customers to utilize the fast food services.

ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

Table No. 1

Age of the Respondents

Age	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Less than 30 Years	170	85
31 to 45 Years	23	11.5
Above 45 Years	7	3.5
Total	200	100

Inference:

From the above table, it is inferred that about 85 percent of the respondents were less than 30 years old. It is followed by 11.5 percent of the respondents were between 31 years to 45 years aged category. A meager percent of the respondents were above 45 years aged category.

Chart No.1

Age of the Respondents

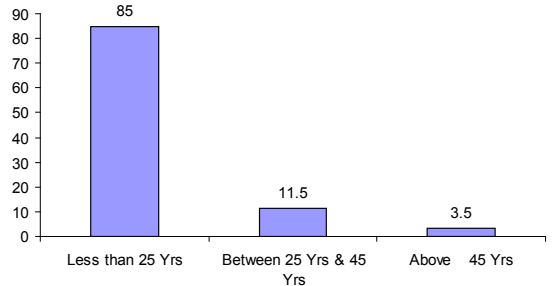


Table No.2

Gender of the Respondents

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	140	70
Female	60	30
Total	200	100

Inference:

From the above table, it is inferred that 70 percent of the respondents were male and remaining 30 percent of the respondents were female.

Table No.3

Marital Status of the Respondents

Marital Status	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Married	37	14.5
Single	163	85.5
Total	200	100

Inference:

The above table highlights that about 85.5 percent of the respondents were single, and remaining 14.5 percent of the respondents were married.

Table No.4

Educational Qualification of the Respondents

Educational Qualification	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Illiterate	43	21.5
School	47	23.5
Collegiate	74	37
Professionals	18	9
Total	200	100

Inference:

The above table survey depicts that 37 percent of the respondents were College level educated. It is followed by 23.5 percent of the respondents were School level educated.

21.5 percent of the respondents were illiterate. 9 percent of the respondents were professionally qualified.

Chart No.2
Educational Qualification of the Respondents

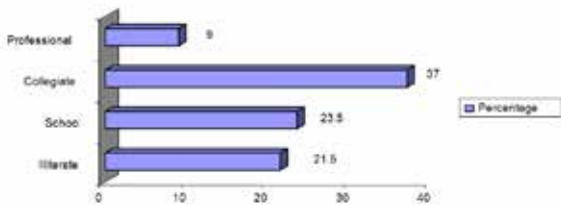


Table No.5
Occupation of the Respondents

Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Agriculturist	30	15
Own Business	47	23.5
Employee	92	46
Others	31	15.5
Total	200	100

Inference:

From the above table, it is inferred that about 46 percent of the respondents were employees' category. It is followed by 23.5 percent of the respondents were doing their own business. 15.5 percent of the respondents were belongs to others category. 15 percent of the respondents were agriculturist.

Chart No.3
Occupation of the Respondents

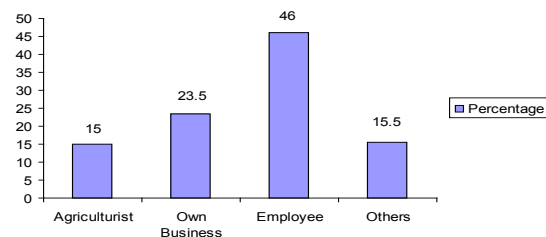


Table no. 5.1
Chi-square Analysis for Occupation & Reason to Utilize Fast Food Service

Reasons Occupation	For a Change	Need Based	For Urgency	Grand Total
Agriculturist	5	10	14	29
Own Business	22	18	25	65
Employee	45	23	38	106
Grand Total	72	51	77	200

It is found from the above table that per centage of high-level of utilization of fast food was the highest (45) among the respondents of employees group and the reason was for a change. The highest level of utilization of the fast food among the businessmen was 25 and the reason was for urgency. On the other hand, the highest level of utilization of the fast food among agriculturist was 14 respondents with the reason of urgency.

In order to find the relationship between occupation of the

respondents and the level of utilization of department stores, a chi-square test was used and the results are shown in the following table.

Table no. 5.2
Chi-square Analysis for Occupation & Reason to Utilize Fast Food Service

Factor	Calculated Chi-Square Value	Table Value	Degree of Freedom	Remarks
Occupation	6.759	16.919	4	Not Significant

Null Hypothesis (H₀) :

There is No Significant Relation ship between Occupation & Reason to Utilize Fast Food Service

Alternate Hypothesis (H₁) :

There is Close Relationship between Occupation & Reason to Utilize Fast Food Service

It is noted from the above table that the calculated Chi-square value is less than the table value. Hence the Null Hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant Relationship between Occupation & Reason to Utilize Fast Food Service.

Table No. 6
Monthly Family Income of the Respondents

Family Income Per Month (In Rupees)	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Below Rs.3000	63	31.5
Rs.3001 to Rs.5000	63	31.5
Rs.5001 to Rs.10000	42	21
Above Rs.10000	32	16
Total	200	100

Inference:

From the above table, it is inferred that about 31.5 percent of the respondents were earning Below Rs.3000 per month. It is followed by 31.5 percent of the respondents were earning Rs.3001 to Rs.5000. 21 percent of the respondents were earning Rs.5001 to Rs.10000 and only 16 percent of the respondents earning was more than Rs.10000 per month.

Table no. 6.1
Chi-Square Analysis for Family Income & Monthly Spending Amount for utilizing Fast Food Services

Monthly Spending Amount	Family income			Grand Total
	Low	Medium	High	
Rs.3001 to Rs.5000	21	19	16	56
Rs.5001 to Rs.10000	20	18	22	60
Above Rs.10000	28	23	33	84
Grand Total	69	60	71	200

It is understood from the above table that the per centage of high level of utilization of fast food was the highest (33) among the respondents of above Rs. 10,000 /- income group and the lowest (16) among the respondents of below Rs. 5,000 /- income group. The per centage of medium level of utilization of department stores was the highest (23) among the respondents of above 10,000/- income group and the lowest (19) among the respondents of below Rs. 3,000/-income group. The highest was (28) among the respondents of

above Rs. 10,000 /- income group and the lowest (21) among the respondents earning below Rs. 3,000 /- income group.

In order to find the relationship between the income of the respondents and the level of utilizing the fast food services, a chi-square test was used and results of the test is shown in the following table.

Table no. 6.2
Result of the Chi-Square Analysis for Family Income & Monthly Spending Amount for utilizing Fast Food Services

Factor	Calculated Chi-Square Value	Table Value	Degree of Freedom	Remarks
Family Income	11.101	16.919	4	No-Significance

Null Hypothesis (HO) :

There is No Significant Relationship between Family Income & Monthly Spending Amount for utilizing Fast Food Services

Alternate Hypothesis (H1) :

There is Close Relationship between Family Income & Monthly Spending Amount for utilizing Fast Food Services

It is noted from the above table that the calculated Chi-square value is less than the table value. Hence the Null Hypothesis accepted. There is no close relationship between Family Income & Monthly Spending Amount for utilizing Fast Food Services.

Table No.7
Family Size of the Respondents

Size of the Family	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Adults	172	86
Children	28	14
Total	200	100

Inference:

It is noted from the above table that about 86 percent of the respondents' family was having adults in their family and 14 percent of the respondents were having children in their family.

FINDINGS

- Majority of the respondents are less than 30 years old.
- Most of the respondents are male.
- Majority of the respondents are single.
- 37 percent of the respondents are College level educated.
- 46 percent of the respondents are working people category, and it is clear from the study that there is no significant relationship between occupation & reason to utilize the fast food service.

- 31.5 percent of the respondents are earning Below Rs.3000 per month, and it is highlights in the study that there is no close relationship between family income & monthly spending amount for utilizing the fast food services.
- Majority of the respondents' family is having adults in their family.

SUGGESTIONS

The fast food is widely recognized by the users in the study area. The present situation of the fast food can be improved if the efforts are made to implement the following suggestions and the customers' preferences of fast food services can be favorably altered.

- It is clear from the study that most of the customers are young aged, male and single category. Hence, it is strongly suggested to the fast food service providers that they have to try to cover all category people irrespective of age, gender and marital status by providing more information about the benefits and usages of fast food services. And may use focus strategy it means concentrate on a specific group and prepare distinctive (new variety of food items) food with reasonable price and good customer care services. If these strategy adopted by the service providers it will be helpful to attract all category people.
- Most of the customers in the study area are college level educated and employee category customers. Hence, it is suggested to the service providers that they have to strive to attract illiterates, businessmen and professionals by giving more offers and coupons to retain them. Especially to cover the business and professionals it is better to appoint trained sales representative and approach them periodically.
- Almost all income category people are utilizing the fast food services in the study area although it is clear from the study that the there is no relationship in utilizing the fast food services with occupation and income. Hence, the service providers may try to cover all segment people to utilize their fast food services by providing quality and fastest services with hygienic food items without any side effect.

CONCLUSION

The study is a rewarding exercises in the sense that, in addition to identifying the factors which influence the utilisation of the fast food services. Based on the present market environment some valuable suggestions are given by the researcher. In those suggestions it is highlighted that to attract all category customers they have to concentrate on quality of services and right information at right time through proper channel like television and local newspaper. These suggestions will facilitate to attract all category customers successfully and retain them with fullest satisfaction. This endeavor of the researcher will be rewarded if the respective fast food services providers carry out the solutions and suggestions.

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