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Problems and Changing Needs of Consumers in Fast Food Industry: The Indian Perspective

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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 absence of healthy menu, no new varieties of fast food and slow delivery time were major problems perceived by the consumers in fast food restaurants. it could be inferred that absence of healthy menu, no new varieties of fast food and slow delivery time were major problems perceived by the consumers in fast food restaurants.

Index Terms- Fast food industry, Consumer Needs

I. Introduction

Fast food industry is one of the world's fastest growing sectors in food industry. Fast food is the food item that can be prepared and served very quickly (Webster Dictionary, 1951). Encyclopedia Wikipedia defines fast food as "food sold in a restaurant or store with preheated or precooked ingredients and served to the customer in a packaged form for take-out/take-away". Because of commercial emphasis on speed, uniformity and low cost, fast food products are often made with ingredients formulated to achieve a certain flavour or consistency and to preserve freshness.

Fast Food industry in India

The emergence of the fast food industry has, transformed urban food culture in India to some extent. In India, fast food culture emerged after independence. Eating at home used to be a significant aspect of Indian culture. 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. Similarly, children also resorted to fast food due to their exposure to global urban culture and western cuisine which accelerated their desire for cheap and delicious fast food. Moreover, fast food costs less than traditional meals commencing with appetizer and concluding with dessert. With the liberalization of the economy in 1992, new multinational fast food giants targeted India as a huge potential market with their outlets. Burger King, Pizza Hut, Domino's Pizza, McDonald's and KFC outlets are functioning in shopping malls and other public areas. Changing consumer behaviour and favourable demographics led India to witness a tremendous growth in fast food restaurant industry (Shanker, 2010).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

An attempt was made in the present study entitled " Analysis of Mutual Fund Investors" to understand the attitude, awareness and preferences of mutual fund investors, along with the factors influencing the investors in selection of fund and their preferences for various investment avenues. To be specific following are the main objectives of the present research s Objectives

The overall objective of the study is to analyze the food consumption lifestyle behavior of consumers segment for developing new marketing strategies in fast food sector. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To identify the influence of demographic factors on consumption of fast food by the sample respondents,
2. To identify the problems in consumption of fast food items and the services provided by the fast food restaurants, and

II. Methodology

The study was conducted in 2 major cities in India Hyderabad and 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, factor analysis, 't' test, multifunction regression function are used.

III. Findings and Discussions

The information collected from 100 sample respondents in the study area of Coimbatore city were tabulated, analyzed and the findings of the study are presented under the following headings.

1. Demographic Profile of Sample Respondents
2. Influence of Demographic Factors on Fast Food Consumption
3. Problems in Fast Food Consumption
4. Consumer`s Changing Need on Food related Lifestyle

1 Demographic Profile of Sample Respondents

The general characteristics of the sample respondents with respect to age, gender, education, occupation, income and marital status of the sample respondents were analyzed and the results are presented in this section.

1.1. Age

Age is an important demographic factor which determines individual person's lifestyle attitudes like thinking, decision making, risk bearing, etc. The age wise distribution of sample respondents are presented in the table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Age Distribution of Sample Respondents

S.No.	Age (in years)	Percent to total
1	Less than 25	30.00
2	25 to 35	70.00
Total		100.00

It could be inferred from the table 1.1 that 70 per cent of the sample respondents were belonged to the age group of 25 to

35 years and 30 per cent of them were in the age group of below 25 years. It shows that majority of the respondents are in the age group of 25-35 years and are classified as young consumers.

1.2. Gender

Men and women tend to have different attitudinal and behavioural orientation based partly on genetic makeup and partly on socialization. Gender role varies in terms of region and social development of a country. Hence, gender role is important in lifestyle behavior particularly in food habits. The details on distribution of sample respondents with respect to gender are analyzed and presented in the table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Gender Profile of Sample Respondents

S. No.	Gender	Percent to total
1.	Male	50.00
2.	Female	50.00
Total		100.00

It could be observed from the table 1.2 that male and female gender accounted for 50 per cent i.e. half of the sample respondents belonged to male gender and the remaining 50 per cent were belonged to female gender. So, it could be concluded that male and female gender has equal lifestyle behaviour with regard to consumption of fast food.

1.3. Education

Education plays a major role in influencing consumers in their approach and attitude towards spending and their lifestyle activity. The educational status of sample respondents are presented in the table 1.3.

Table 1.3 Educational Status of Sample Respondents

S. No.	Education Category	Percent to total
1.	Graduate	66.00
2.	Post Graduate	30.00
3.	Above Post graduation	4.00
Total		100.00

It is revealed from the table 1.3 that majority (66 per cent) of sample respondents were completed graduation, 30 per cent of respondents had post graduate level of education and only 4 per cent of them were completed above post graduate qualification. Thus, it could be inferred that sample respondents holding degree level education forms the major consumer group in the present study.

1.4. Occupational Status

The occupational status of sample respondents were analyzed and the results are presented in the table 1.4.

Table 1.4 Occupational Status of the Sample Respondents

S. No.	Occupation	Percent to total
1.	Private Employees	77.00
2.	Business Owners	23.00
Total		100.00

It could be observed from the table 1.4 that most of the respondents (77 per cent) belonged to working professionals (private sector employment) and 23 per cent were business owners. It shows that majority of the sample respondents are working group and earn income from private entities.

1.5. Income

Income level of consumers has significant role in influencing the decision making process on their own. Increasing disposable income of young consumers define their lifestyle and food habits. Hence, income levels of sample respondents were analyzed and the results are presented in the table 1.5.

Table 1.5 Income Distribution of Sample Respondents

S. No.	Monthly Income (Rs.)	Percent to total
1.	15000- 20000	30.00
2.	21000-25000	47.00
3.	26000-30000	15.00
4.	> 30000	8.00
Total		100.00
Average Income (Rs./Month)		25260

It could be observed from the table 1.5 that 47 per cent of sample respondents had monthly income ranging from Rs.21000 to Rs.25000 followed by 30 per cent of the respondents earn between Rs.15000 to Rs.20000 and 15 per cent of respondents having income range of Rs. 26000 to Rs.30000. It is also observed that only 8 per cent of them are earning a monthly income of above Rs.30000. Hence, it is inferred that majority of the sample respondents earn monthly income ranges from Rs.15000 to Rs. 25000 and the average monthly income for the sample respondents was Rs. 25260 per month.

1.6. Marital status

The marital status of sample respondents have major role in spending towards fast food. Hence, the details on marital status of sample respondents were analyzed and the results are presented in the table 1.6.

Table 1.6 Marital Status of Sample Respondents

S. No.	Marital Status	Percent to total
1.	Single	87.00
2.	Married	13.00
Total		100.00

It could be observed from the table 1.6 that among the total sample respondents, 87 per cent of them were belonged to single (unmarried) group and remaining 13 per cent were married. Thus, in the present study single, unmarried consumer groups formed the major category having convenient lifestyle towards consumption of fast food. These findings are contradicted with results of Chae and Ryu (2010) where among the total respondents in Korea, 56.3 percent were single unmarried group and 43.7 per cent belonged to married group.

2.1. Influence of Demographic Factors on Fast Food Consumption

To identify the influence of demographic variables such as age, income, gender, education, occupation and frequency of eating on fast food consumption, multiple linear regression was used.

The results indicated that coefficient of multiple determination (R^2) was 0.53 implying that 53 per cent of variation in expenditure on consumption of fast food was explained by the independent variables selected for the study.

Among the six variables identified for the study, three variables viz., age, income and occupation were found to have significant relationship with consumption expenditure on fast food.

Age of the respondent was found to be significant at five per cent level but had negative influence on fast food consumption expenditure. This implied that an increase in age of the respondent by one year would decrease consumption expenditure on fast food by Rs.91.65 per capita per month. It is clearly evident that as the age of consumer increases, the tendency to consume fast food will decease and naturally consumption expenditure will decrease.

Similarly, income of the sample respondents was found to be stastically significant at one per cent level and had positive relationship with fast food consumption. This implies that as income increases by one rupee, the consumption expenditure on fast food will increase by Rs.0.05 per month. It is clearly evident that as income increases, the consumers lifestyle changing towards convenience lifestyle.

Occupation of the sample respondents was found to be significant at 10 per cent level but had a negative influence on fast food consumption expenditure. This indicated that sample respondent who are working in private companies are found to spend less towards fast food when compared to business owners.

Hence, it is concluded that age, income and occupation of the respondents had significant influence on consumption expenditure towards fast food.

3.1 Constraints in Consuming Fast Food

The problems perceived by respondents in fast food menus and services provided by organized fast food restaurants were analyzed and the results are presented in the table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Problems in Consumption of Fast Food

S. No.	Constraints	Percent to total
1.	Unhealthy /high fat content	41.00
2.	No new variety	38.00
3.	Delivery is not fast	14.00
4.	Lack of Information about menu	7.00
Total		100.00

It could be seen from the table 2.2 that 41 per cent of respondents perceived that high fat content in fast food menu is the major problem in consumption of fast food and 38 per cent of the respondents revealed that no new varieties in fast food restaurants. Time taken for serving the fast food menu is too slow in fast food restaurants was another major constraint which was expressed by 14 per cent of the sample respondents. Thus, it could be inferred that absence of healthy menu, no new varieties of fast food and slow delivery time were major problems perceived by the consumers in fast food restaurants.

4.1. Changing Need on Food related Lifestyle

To capture the consumer's interests on changing needs of product or service is the part of lifestyle approach. Hence, the changing needs of respondents on fast food was analyzed.

4.2. Opinion on Food suits for lifestyle

Respondent's opinion on the kind of food suits for their lifestyle was analyzed and the results are presented in the table 4.2.

Table. 4.2 Opinion on Changing Needs on Lifestyle

S. No.	Particular	Number of Respondents	Percent to total
1.	Home made food	55	55.00
2.	Balanced nutritious food	16	16.00
3.	Low fat food	16	16.00
4.	More vegetable ingredients	13	13.00
Total		100	100.00

Results revealed that 55 per cent of respondents expressed that home made food is the healthy food followed by balanced nutritious food (16 per cent), low fat food (16 per cent) and food contains more vegetable ingredients (13 per cent) to lead a healthy life. Hence, It is inferred that young consumers are in need of looking for healthy food and healthier lifestyle and they consider foods which are homemade, nutritious and more of vegetable ingredients which are suitable for their healthy lifestyle.

These results were supported by similar findings observed in South Africa by Steyn and Marais (2010) among young consumers which found that 78 per cent of the total sample consumers indicated that they would choose a healthier option if it is available in fast food menu.

4.3 Respondent`s Suggestions for New Fast Food menus

The sample respondents were asked to suggest the new fast food items that are expected from the organized fast food restaurants were analyzed and the results are presented in the table 4.3.

Table 4.3. Suggestions given by Sample Respondents for Introducing New Fast Food Items

S. No.	Expectation of New Fast Food Items	Number of Respondents	Percent to total
1.	Dry Fruit Pizza	14	14.00
2.	Variety of Soups	13	13.00
3.	Mushroom Sandwitch	10	10.00
4.	Green Peas Sandwitch	5	5.00
5.	Sweet Corn Pastas	5	5.00
6.	Pumpkin Ice cream as dessert	5	5.00
7.	Garlic Pizza	5	5.00
8.	Fish Burgers	3	3.00
9.	No suggestions	50	50.00
Total		100	100.00

It is observed from the table 4.3 that 50 per cent of the respondents did not give any suggestions with regard to expectation of new fast food menu. The remaining 50 per cent of the respondents revealed that dry fruit pizzas as a new fast food (14 per cent) followed by more soup varieties (13 per cent) and sandwitch based fast food categories (15 per cent) were expected by them. Thus, it is inferred that vegetable based fast food items are expected by the young consumers.

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These findings were similar to the study done by Steyn and Marais (2010) which shows that three most popular options which the respondents would like to have on fast food menus were more vegetable options (36.5 per cent), more salad options (22.2 per cent) and more grilled foods (14.9 per cent).

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