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An expounding study of the fast food outlets

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Abstract

Generally, Fast Food Outlets are specialized in fast gastronomy and self-service. Food dole out in fast food a restaurant are cooked in volume and kept hot, packed and is generally offered to deliver or table service may be provided. The gurugram city is intentionally picked up for this current paper since it is the prevailing business hub for NCR & Haryana. About 90 respondents were selected by adopting simple random techniques. Information was collected by interviewing the respondents by using well-structured interview schedule and the information collected pertains to the year 2015-16. Percentage analysis, mean ranking, Chi square test were carried out to draw meaningful interpretations. The majority of the consumers were the age group of 21-30 years. Married male respondents are visited the restaurant mostly. In the educational background post graduated are like to visit the restaurant. It is apparent that taste of the products was the major perception criterion followed by Speed of service, Behaviour of Staff, Location, Variety of products, Price, Customer Service, Opening Hours were the perceive by the respondent. The Relationship between the gender and the perception of the restaurant was significant. The relationship between the age and the perception of the restaurant was significant.

Keywords: Restaurant, Perception, Food, Chi-square, Demographic.

1. Introduction

A fast food restaurant, also known as a quick service restaurant (QSR) within the industry, is a specific type of restaurant characterized both by its fast food cuisine and by minimal table service. Food served in fast food restaurants typically caters to a "meat-sweet diet" and is offered from a limited menu; is cooked in bulk in advance and kept hot; is finished and packaged to order; and is usually available ready to take away, though seating may be provided. Fast food restaurants are typically part of a restaurant chain or franchise operation, which provisions standardized ingredients and/or partially prepared foods and supplies to each restaurant through controlled supply channels. The term "fast food" was recognized in a dictionary by Merriam-Webster in 1951.

Arguably, the first fast food restaurants originated in the United States with A&W in 1919 and White Castle in 1921. Today, American-founded fast food chains such as McDonald's and KFC are multinational corporations with outlets across the globe.

Variations on the fast food restaurant concept include fast casual restaurants and catering trucks. Fast casual restaurants have higher sit-in ratios, and customers can sit and have their orders brought to them. Catering trucks often park just outside worksites and are popular with factory workers.

Some historians and secondary school textbooks concur that A&W, which opened in 1919 and began franchising in 1921, was the first fast food restaurant (E. Tavares). Thus, the American company White Castle is generally credited with opening the second fast-food outlet in Wichita, Kansas in 1921, selling hamburgers for five cents apiece from its inception and spawning numerous competitors and emulators. What is certain, however, is that White Castle made the first significant effort to standardize the food production in, look of, and operation of fast-food hamburger restaurants. William Ingram's and Walter Anderson's White Castle System created the first fast food supply chain to provide meat, buns, paper goods, and other supplies to their restaurants, pioneered the concept of the multistate hamburger

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restaurant chain, standardized the look and construction of the restaurants themselves, and even developed a construction division that manufactured and built the chain's prefabricated restaurant buildings. The McDonalds' Speedee Service System and, much later, Ray Kroc's McDonald's outlets and Hamburger University all built on principles, systems and practices that White Castle had already established between 1923 and 1932.

The hamburger restaurant most associated by the public with the term "fast food" was created by two brothers originally from Nashua, New Hampshire. Richard and Maurice McDonald opened a barbecue drive-in in 1940 in the city of San Bernardino, California. After discovering that most of their profits came from hamburgers, the brothers closed their restaurant for three months and reopened it in 1948 as a walk-up stand offering a simple menu of hamburgers, french fries, shakes, coffee, and Coca-Cola, served in disposable paper wrapping. As a result, they could produce hamburgers and fries constantly, without waiting for customer orders, and could serve them immediately; hamburgers cost 15 cents, about half the price at a typical diner. Their streamlined production method, which they named the "Speedee Service System" was influenced by the production line innovations of Henry Ford.

While fast food restaurants usually have a seating area in which customers can eat the food on the premises, orders are designed to be taken away, and traditional table service is rare. Orders are generally taken and paid for at a wide counter, with the customer waiting by the counter for a tray or container for their food. A "drive-through" service can allow customers to order and pick up food from their cars.

Nearly from its inception, fast food has been designed to be eaten "on the go" and often does not require traditional cutlery and is eaten as a finger food. Common menu items at fast food outlets include fish and chips, sandwiches, pitas, hamburgers, fried chicken, french fries, chicken nuggets, tacos, pizza, and ice cream, although many fast food restaurants offer "slower" foods like chili, mashed potatoes, and salads.

To make quick service possible and to ensure accuracy and security, many fast food restaurants have incorporated hospitality point of sale systems. This makes it possible for kitchen crew people to view orders placed at the front counter or drive through in real time. Wireless systems allow orders placed at drive through speakers to be taken by cashiers and cooks. Drive through and walk through configurations will allow orders to be taken at one register and paid at another. Modern point of sale systems can operate on computer networks using a variety of software programs. Sales records can be generated and remote access to computer reports can be given to corporate offices, managers, troubleshooters, and other authorized personnel.

Food service chains partner with food equipment manufacturers are to design highly specialized restaurant equipment, often incorporating heat sensors, timers, and other electronic controls into the design. Collaborative design techniques, such as rapid visualization and computer-aided design of restaurant kitchens are now being used to establish equipment specifications that are consistent with restaurant operating and merchandising requirements.

The major fast food chains in India are KFC, McDonalds, Starbucks, Burger King, Subway, Pizza Hut, and Dominos. These chains provide mostly western products. However most Indians prefer the local cuisine such as samosas,

panipuri, pav Bhaji, vada pav etc. Major emerging food chains include Haldiram's, Faaso's, Chick King, Pitstop and Café Coffee Day.

Fast food marketing largely focuses on children and teenagers. Popular methods of advertising include television, product placement in toys, games, educational materials, songs, and movies, character licensing and celebrity endorsements, and websites. Advertisements targeting children mainly focus on free toys, movie tie-ins and other giveaways. Fast food restaurants use kid's meals with toys, kid friendly mascots, vibrant colors, and play areas to draw children toward their products. Children's power over their parents' purchases is estimated to total \$300 to \$500 billion every year. Fast food has become a part of American culture as a reward for children. To deny a child "desirable things" such as the advertised fast food restaurant can cause stigmatization of parents as the "mean parent" when it is common among other parents to comply with their child's desires.

The major focus on children by the fast food industry has created controversy due to the rising issue of children obesity in America. As a result of this focus, in 2008 a coalition was created and run by the Council of Better Business Bureaus called Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative(CFBAI), to stop ads aimed at children or to promote only what the council dubs "better-for- you" products in ads directed towards children. However, it was not until 2011 that Congress requested guidelines be put in place by the CFBAI, FDA, Agriculture Department, and Centers for Disease Control. There are two basic requirements identified in the guidelines for foods that are advertised for children: (1) The food has to include healthful ingredients; (2) The food can't contain unhealthful amounts of sugar, Saturated fat, Trans fat, and salt. The guidelines are voluntary but companies experience heavy pressure to comply. Once a company complies they have 5–10 years to comply with the guidelines. Many fast food industries have started to comply with the guidelines. In 2012 the fast food industry spent \$4.6 billion to advertise unhealthy products to children and teens according to a report by the Yale Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity. There are points of progress that include healthier sides and beverages in most fast food restaurant kids' meals. The guidelines are interested in a healthier lifestyle for children and the growing problem of American obesity.

In other parts of the world, American and American-style fast food outlets have been popular for their quality, customer service, and novelty, even though they are often the targets of popular anger towards American foreign policy or globalization more generally. Many consumers nonetheless see them as symbols of the wealth, progress, and well-ordered openness of Western society and they therefore become trendy attractions in many cities around the world, particularly among younger people with more varied tastes.

Over time, fast food restaurants have been growing rapidly, especially in urban neighborhoods. According to US research, low-income and predominantly African-American neighborhoods have greater exposure to fast food outlets than higher income and predominantly white areas. This has put into question whether urbanized neighborhoods were targeted, which causes a more unhealthy group of people compared to people from a higher socioeconomic status. It has also been shown that there is a lower chance of finding a fast food restaurant in a suburban neighborhood. In a study

of selected US locations, Morland *et al.* (2002) found the number of fast food restaurants and bars was inversely proportional to the wealth of the neighborhood, and that predominantly African-American residential areas were four times less likely to have a supermarket near them than predominantly white areas.

The fast food industry is a popular target for critics, from anti-globalization activists like José Bové to vegetarian activist groups such as PETA as well as the workers themselves. A number of fast food worker strikes occurred in the United States in the 2010s.

The fast food industry is popular in the United States, the source of most of its innovation, and many major international chains are based there. Seen as symbols of US dominance and perceived cultural imperialism, American fast food franchises have often been the target of Anti-

globalization protests and demonstrations against the US government. In 2005, for example, rioters in Karachi, Pakistan, who were initially angered because of the bombing of a Shiite mosque, destroyed a KFC restaurant.

Methodology and data collection

The Gurugram city is intentionally picked up for this current paper since it is the prevailing business hub for NCR & Haryana. About 90 respondents were selected by adopting simple random techniques. Information was collected by interviewing the respondents by using well-structured interview schedule and the information collected pertains to the year 2015-16. Percentage analysis, mean ranking, Chi square test were carried out to draw meaningful interpretations.

Results and discussion

Table 1: Socio-Economic Demographic Characteristics of Respondent

Variables with Category	Respondents (N-90)		Variables with Category	Respondents (N-90)	
	Number	Percent		Number	Percent
Age			Monthly Income		
< 20 Years	19	21.11	0-20000	17	18.88
21-30 Years	48	53.33	20001-40000	31	34.44
31-40 Years	14	15.55	40001-60000	29	32.22
41-50 Years	6	6.66	> 60001	13	14.44
> 51 Years	3	3.33			
Gender			Marital Status		
Male	57	63.33	Married	43	47.77
Female	33	36.66	Un-Married	47	52.22
Educational Qualification			Family Size		
Secondary	7	7.77	1 - 2	28	31.11
Higher Secondary	14	15.55	3 - 4	39	43.33
UG	22	24.44	5 - 6	16	17.77
PG	39	43.33	> 6	7	7.77
Others	8	8.88			

The general and socio-economic characteristics of the subjects were analyzed and the results are presented in Table-1. The results indicated that the majority of the respondents (53.33 per cent) were the age group of 21-30 years followed by less than 20 years and 31-40 Years. About 47.77 per cent of were married while 63.33 per cent were males. The majority of respondents (43.33 per cent) were postgraduates and about 24.44 per cent of consumers were under-graduates. The monthly incomes of the respondents were ranging from Rs. 20001-40000 (34.44 per cent) followed by Rs.40001-60000 (32.22 per cent). About 43.33 per cent of the respondents have a family size of 3-4 members followed by less than 1-2 members (31.11 per cent).

Table 2: Frequency of Visiting the Quick Service Restaurant

Frequency	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Weekly	7	7.77
Fortnightly	27	30.00
Monthly	25	27.77
Occasionally	31	34.44
Others	0	0.00
Total	90	100

The frequency of quick service restaurant visit by the respondents was analyzed and the results are presented in Table-2. The results indicated that about 34.44 per cent of

respondents occasionally visited the restaurant followed by fortnightly (30 per cent) and about 27.77 per cent of the respondents visited the restaurant at least monthly once.

Table 3: Perception on quick service restaurant

Attributes	Mean Score	Rank
Customer Service	6.21	VII
Behaviour of Staff	7.82	II
Location	6.73	V
Variety of products	7.09	IV
Taste of products	8.12	I
Opening Hours	5.25	VIII
Price	6.54	VI
Speed of service	7.57	III

Perception on quick service restaurant

The perception of the respondent was analysed by computing the mean score and the results are presented in the Table 3. From the results, it is apparent that taste of the products was the major perception criterion followed by Speed of service, Behaviour of Staff, Location, Variety of products, Price, Customer Service, Opening Hours were the perceive by the respondent.

Table 4: Relationship between the Gender and Perception of the Restaurant-Chi Square Test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	0.0256	5	0.000
N	90		

Relationship between the Gender and Perception of the Restaurant

The relationship between the gender and the perception of the restaurant was analysed by computing Chi-Square test and the results are presented in Table-4. The results showed that the Pearson Chi-Square value was 0.0375 indicating that the test statistic was significant at five per cent level of significance thus; there was a significant relationship between the gender and the perception of the restaurant.

Table 5: Relationship between the Age and Perception of the Restaurant-Chi Square Test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	0.473	26	0.000
N	90		

Relationship between the Age and Perception of the Restaurant

The relationship between the age and the perception of the restaurant was analysed by computing Chi-Square test and the results are presented in Table-5. The results showed that the Pearson Chi-Square value was 0.572 indicating that the test statistic was significant at five per cent level of significance thus; there was a significant relationship between the age and the perception of the restaurant.

Conclusion

The majority of the consumers were the age group of 21-30 years. Married male respondents are visited the restaurant mostly. In the educational background post graduated are like to visit the restaurant. It is apparent that taste of the products was the major perception criterion followed by Speed of service, Behaviour of Staff, Location, variety of products, Price, Customer Service, Opening Hours were the perceive by the respondent. The Relationship between the gender and the perception of the restaurant was significant. The relationship between the age and the perception of the restaurant was significant.

There are numerous challenges that face QSR industry in the areas of obesity, social inequality, food safety, energy and water problems, environmental waste management, slow customer responsiveness, and small portion sizes among others. Some observers fear that the QSR might perpetuate social divide given high levels of poverty in the country and exploitative tendencies of large agribusinesses. Underlying fears of exploitation of poor farmers are linked to their inexperience in dealing with large-scale regional and global food franchises, and moral hazard problems in contracting. The absence of fair remuneration for both farmers and fast food workers creates inequality. With the onset of the advancement in the restaurant services market, the Indian market has to offer large prospects in the fast food, casual dining and fine dining segments. The proposition made by one of the fastest growing economies in the world will offer potential entrepreneurs an opportunity to invest in this sector, which has tremendous growth opportunities.

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