

ATTITUDE AND PRACTICES TOWARDS FAST-FOOD IN MAKURDI METRPOIS, BENUE STATE

Sambe, N

Department of Sociology, University of Mkar, Mkar-Nigeria

Ngutors@gmail.com

Contact: +234 (0)8058543839

Abanyam, Noah Luman

Department of Sociology, Taraba State University, Jalingo

Email: noahlumun@gmail.com

Contact: +234 (0)7034928489

&

Fungu Wunan Elka

Department of Sociology, Federal University, Kashere

fungowunan@gmail.com

Contact: +234 (0)8066269951

Abstract

This study was conducted to investigate attitudes and practices of Makurdi metropolis residents towards fast food. Specific objectives were to assess the attitudes towards fast food among Makurdi residents and investigate practices relating to fast food in the study area. The study adopted survey design while convenience sampling was used to select 200 samples. Percentages were used to analyze data obtained through questionnaire. The study found that fast-food locations mostly patronized Makurdi residents included Chicken Republic, Tito Gate, Steam Fast, Dexters, Test and See and D’Fudi. Popular fast food patronized by the residents are bread, got Ice-Cream, cake/Pies and Doughnut, Yoghurt/snacks, shawarma, French fries and Burgers. The residents mostly patronized the fast-food twice and three times a week. Lunch and break-fast was the most popular meals eaten at fast- food restaurant. Quality of environment and saving cooking time were the major motivations for patronizing fast foods. The study therefore recommended for awareness creation for people to change their attitude and practices concerning fast-food and regulating the nutritional requirements by food regulating agencies.

Keywords: Attitude, Practices, Fast-foods, Makurdi, Benue state.

Introduction

Fast food, also called Ready- to- eat foods, refers to foods that are prepared and sold by fast food outlets. This food is processed in industrial fashion, a process popularly called Mcdonaldization, which is presents a fastest growing food culture globally. The demand for fast food is rising consistently and unprecedentedly globally. This seems to be driving force behind the rapidly expanding global fast-food industry with an estimated value of \$115.1 billion in 2009. Globally, fast-food market is dominated by three specific regions: United States, Europe, and Asia-Pacific. In developed

countries such as United States, Fast-food accounts for a significant proportion of country's away from-home meals (*Economist*, 2002; Datamonitor, 2005a, 2005b). Fast-food is spread through all the sectors of American society as most of the nations educational and health institutions have fast-food outlets located within them (Bowman et al 2004; Cram, 2002). In China, popularity of fast food is increasing considerable proportion of Chinese fast food restaurants feed over two million meals daily (Martin, 2005). In developing societies such as India, fast food is very popular as the industry seems to be growing at an annual rate of about by 40 per cent (Deivanai, 2006).

Fast food in industry is a highly organized food industry. The basic idea behind the operations of fast-food companies is to provide organized and efficient service delivery where access to their services is fast, easy and most convenient to their customers. The industry is focused on issues such as food quality, hygiene, service as these is most of the indices that determine patronage of food and serviced rendered by the companies (Thakkar and Thatte, 2014; Singh 2014). Thus, fast food companies render services in three categories. These are Quick Service Restaurants (QSR), Takeaways, Leisure Locations, and Mobile and Street Vendors (Parker, Schaefer and Herman 2006). These services categories are created to cover wide range of customer food needs in an effective and efficient way.

Fast food restaurants, which also known as Quick Service Restaurants (QSR), are operated by both foreign and indigenous food chains and are one of the most competitive industries in the world (Parker, et al 2006; Mustapha, Fakokunde and Awolusi 2014). Fast food companies have rapidly grown to become Multinational food chains operating restaurants in both developed and developing countries. Some of the most prominent fast food multinational fast food chains are McDonald, Burger King and Taco Bell. In developing countries such as Nigeria, some of the indigenous fast-food chains include Mr. Biggs, Nandos, Chicken and Pizza Inn which are division of United Africa Foods (UAC). Other popular fast-food restaurants in Nigeria include Tantalizers, Drum sticks, Chicken Republic, Domino's and Pizza Hut.

In Nigeria, fast food is very popular in towns and cities. (Ahmed, Hossain, Malek & Begum 2008; Salami and Ajobo, 2012). This was supported by Mustapha et al (2014) who referenced to the geometric increase in the number of fast-food outlets in towns and cities in Nigeria. Most of the fast-food restaurants in Nigeria are modeled after McDonald's, and their colourful appearances edify their rapid spreads which make them very easy to identify in the major cities and towns. The rapid Mcdonaldization of food industry in Nigeria is a phenomenon that needs to be investigated in terms of attitudes and practices relating to it.

Few studies have been conducted in respect of fast-food in Nigeria. For instance, Olise, Okoli and Ekeke (2015) investigated factors influencing customer's patronage of fast-food restaurants in Anambra State, Nigeria. Olutayo and Akanle (2009) also carried out a study on the emerging consumption pattern of Fast Food in Ibadan. This study however ignored Makurdi metropolis which has been witnessing unprecedented increases in number of fast-food restaurants. The studies also ignored attitudes and practices of the residents towards fast foods. These are the gaps that this study intends to fill. There is therefore the need to study attitude and practices of Makurdi residents towards fast food and close these knowledge and spatial gaps in the previous studies.

The main objective of the study is to investigate attitudes and practices of Makurdi metropolis residents towards fast food. Specific objectives are:

- a. To assess the attitudes towards fast food among Makurdi residents
- b. To investigate practices relating to fast-food in the study area.

Methodology

Research Design

This paper adopted a case study cross sectional survey design. This is because the design allowed the researcher to collect data from large group of respondents. Also, it allowed the researcher to analyze the data using statistics and generalize findings.

Study Area

Makurdi, town, capital of Benue state, east-central Nigeria. It lies on the south bank of the Benue River with population of 365,000 inhabitants (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2016). It was founded about 1927 when the railroad from Port Harcourt was extended to Jos and Kaduna. Makurdi rapidly developed into a transportation and market centre. In 1976, following the division of Benue-Plateau state into two states, Makurdi was selected as the capital of Benue state. Makurdi is located on the main highway network and has an airport. It is now a major transshipment point for cattle from Nigeria's northern states. From June to November, when the Niger River has high water, Makurdi serves as a port from which goods, including locally grown sesame seeds and cotton, are shipped to Lokoja (126 miles [203 km] west at the Niger-Benue confluence) and to the Niger River delta ports. The town is a local trade centre for the yams, sorghum, millet, rice, cassava, shea nuts, sesame oil, peanuts (groundnuts), soybeans, and cotton raised by the Tiv, Idoma, and Iggede people of the surrounding area. It is also the site of a boatyard that builds medium-size rivercraft. In the late 1970s an oil pipeline was built from the refinery near Port Harcourt to Makurdi. Makurdi is the headquarters of the Lower Benue River Basin Authority. Makurdi town abounds with fast food restaurants which are growing at geometric rate.

Population of the study

Population of the study includes all residents of Markurdi metropolis which is numbered about 365,000 (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2016).

Sampling Technique and procedure

The study employed a convenient sampling to select 200 respondents. The reason for the adoption was because it gave the researchers opportunity to select residents who patronized fast foods at the business locations. In the process of selection, the researchers went to selected restaurants and met with customers who were present. He informed them about aims of the study while their permission was sought in respect of being part of the study. Through this procedure, the researchers were able to select 200 respondents in Fast food restaurants in Makurdi metropolis.

Method of Data Collection

Questionnaire was adopted for data collection and was characterized by open ended questions. In the process of data collection, the researchers engaged two (2) research assistants who went to the restaurants and distributed the questionnaires. Data collection occurred simultaneously with selection of samples as the respondents were given the questionnaires to fill as soon as they were selected.

Method of Data Analysis

Data for the study was analyzed using of percentages and analytical tables.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
(a) Age		
Below 20	37	18.5
21-30	54	27.0
31-40	42	21.0
41-50	27	13.5
51-60	25	12.5
60 and above	15	7.5
Total	200	100
(b) Sex		
Male	82	41.0
Female	118	59.0
Total	200	100
(c) Marital Status		
Single	126	63.0
Married	59	29.5
Divorced	11	5.5
Widowed	4	2.0
Total	200	100
(d) Educational Level		
Primary	3	1.5
Secondary	69	34.5
Tertiary	128	64.0
Total	200	100
(e) Occupation		
Artisan/Blue collar jobber	13	6.5
Civil servant	23	11.5
Student	45	22.5
Business/Trading	68	34.0
Informal sector staff	51	25.5
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 presents socio-demographic characteristics of Makurdi residents who patronized fast food restaurants in the study. The Table revealed that most, 27.0%, of the residents were in the age range of 21-30. This was followed by those between age range of 31-40 with 21.0%, below 20 years with 18.5%, 41 – 50 years with 13.5%, 51-60 with 12.5% and 60 years and lastly above with 7.5%.

The data appear to show a pattern where there was a steady progression in the ages of residents who frequented fast food restaurants from ages below 20 to 40 and started to decline from ages of 51 – 60. This finding corroborates with Dipeolu et al (2014) study which found that that most of the fast-food consumers were within age range 21-30years with mean age was approximately 26 years.

For sex distribution, most, 59.0%, of the residents were females. This finding also agrees with a study by Dipeolu (2014) which revealed that females are the major patronizers of fast food in the Ibadan city.

In relation to marital status, majority, 63.0%, of the residents were singles, followed by 29.5% who were married, 5.5% who were divorced and 2.0% who were widowed. The result corroborates with Olise, Okoli and Ekeke (2015) which found that that majority of the respondents who patronize fast food restaurants are not married as a result are more disposed to eating outside the home in Anambra state.

In regards to the educational background, it was revealed that most, 64.0%, of the residents attained tertiary education, followed by 34.5% residents with secondary education and 1.5% who attained primary education. This suggests patronage of fast food may be connected to level of educational attainment. This study agrees with Olise et al (2015) findings which showed that patronizers of fast-food restaurants in Anambra state had either secondary or tertiary education.

In regards to occupation, most, 34.0% of the residents were traders or business people, followed by those who worked in private formal sector with 25.0% and students with 22.5%. Furthermore, 11.5% worked in the civil service while 6.5% were either artisans or blue-collar jobbers. This findings to a larger extent agrees with Olise et al (2015) study which found that businessmen/trader and Private Company Staff main category of people that patronize the fast-food restaurants in Anambra as it ignored students.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Fast food Restaurants Patronized

Perception	Frequency	Percentage
Tito gate	40	20
Dexters	21	10.5
D’Fudi	12	6
Test and See	14	7
Steam Fast	30	15
Chicken Republic	51	25
Others	32	16
Total	200	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 2 presented distribution of respondents by fast food locations mostly patronized Makurdi residents. In the Table, majority 25.5% patronized Chicken Republic, followed by Tito Gate (20.0%), other fast-food locations (16.0%) and steam fast (15.0%). Also, the residents frequented Dexters (10.5%), Test and See (7.0%) and D’Fudi (6.0%). These restaurants are processed foods such as pastries which include Bread, cakes, shawarma, pies and doughnuts, burger, pizza. They are also popular for production of desserts such as salads and Ice Cream, and pasta such as noodles and spaghetti. These are borrowed food from the industrial developed countries such as United States, England and China and Japan, as a result of modernization.

Table 3: Major fast food patronized by Respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Bread	71	35.5
Cake/Pies and Doughnut	31	15.5
Yoghurt/Snacks	23	11.5
French fries	13	6.5
Burger	10	5.0
Ice Cream	36	18.0
Shawarma	16	8.0
Total	200	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 3 show that majority 35.5% of the residents patronized Bread, 18.0% bought got Ice Cream, 15.5% of the residents patronized cake/Pies and Doughnut, 11.5% patronized Yoghurt/snacks, 8.0% frequented shawarma, 6.5% bought French fries, and 5.0% patronized Burgers. Most of the food patronized by the youth above appears to be foreign delicacies as Nigerian food was the least patronized. This dominance of bread patronage could be attributed to the perceived quality of bread produced by these fast-food outfits. This finding appears to corroborate a study which indicated that approximately 80 percent of the fast-food market in China consists of Western-style food (*Economist*, 2002). Eckhardt and Houston (2002) which revealed that many Chinese youth were more attracted to foreign and fast food most Chinese people especially youth perceived foreign brands as being more prestigious and impressive than their indigenous food.

Table 4: Frequency of Patronizing Fast-food restaurants in Makurdi

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Almost Every day	20	10.0
Once in a week	34	17
Twice a week	53	26.5
Three times a week	51	25.5
Once in every two weeks	27	13.5
Once in a month	8	4
Not Often	7	3.5
Total	200	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4 represented frequency of patronage of fast-food restaurants by Makurdi residents. The Table has revealed that most 26.5% patronized the fast-food twice weekly. This was followed by 25.5% who patronized fast-foods three times a week, and 17.0% who frequented the outfits once a week. There is 4.0% who patronized the restaurants once a month and 3.5% who often frequented fast-food restaurants. The findings have indicated that youth patronized restaurants from two to three times a week while significant proportion ate at the restaurants daily. Youth who eat daily at the restaurants appear to indicate a superior spending power compared to those who ate twice or thrice a week. This finding seems to agree with a study conducted by Lin, Guthrie and Frazao, (1999). These researchers found that the average Americans especially adolescents visited a fast-food restaurant twice weekly and that fast-food outlets provided about one-third of adolescents' away from-home meals.

Table 5: Fast-food Meals Eaten Per-day

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Breakfast	56	28
Lunch	71	35.5
Tea break	11	10.5
Dinner	38	19
More than 1 meal	24	12
Total	200	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

The Table above shows that lunch is the most popular meal eaten at fast food restaurant by Makurdi residents (35.5%). This was followed by break-fast (28.0%), Dinner (19.0%), more than one meal (12.0%) and tea-break (10.5%). This result could be connected to change in life style as a result of change in educational attainment and social class in urban areas where people have formed the habit of eating out. The resident also eating fast food for break-fast also indicate a situation in Nigeria where most people are either at work or in school during break-fats time, making it necessary for them to patronize fast foods. This agrees with Basurra et al (2021) which found that most people in Kuala Lumpur ate lunch with fast-food.

Table 6: Major Motivation for patronizing Fast foods

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Cheap	24	12
Taste	38	19
Save time to cook	47	23.5
Quality of environment	53	26.5
Symbol of modernity	26	13
Quality of service	12	6
Total	200	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

The Table above presents the motivations for patronizing fast food restaurant by Makurdi residents. The result shows that quality of environment is the major motivation with 26.5%. this was followed by saving cooking time to cook (23.5%), symbol of modernity (13.0%), taste (19.0%), cheap nature of the food (12.0%) and quality of service (6.0%).

Quality of environment is a major factor for patronizing fast food due to the fact that most of the outfits are constructed with aesthetic designs and beauty. This kind of place are likely to attract people in the state who like to spend their time outside their homes for both private reasons and business endeavours. This agrees with Basurra et al (2021) which found that most people in Kuala Lumpur patronize fast-food for convenience as they do not have time to cook. Priyadarshini (2015) also found that factor that motivate patronage of fast food are cost, rising income, and food appearance.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concludes that based socio-demographic characteristics, majority of the youth were in the age range of 21-30 while those who were 60 years and above were the least. It

was also found that most of the patronizers of fast food were and singles. Also, residents with tertiary education were the major frequenters of fast-food restaurants. Fast food locations mostly patronized Makurdi residents included Chicken Republic, Tito Gate, Steam Fast, Dexters, Test and See and D'Fudi. Most of the residents patronized Bread, got Ice Cream, cake/Pies and Doughnut, Yoghurt/snacks, shawarma, French fries Burgers. Furthermore, most of the residents patronized the fast-food twice weekly, followed by those who patronized fast-foods three times a week. Lunch was the most popular meal eaten at fast food restaurant by break-fast. Quality of environment was the major motivation for patronizing fast foods, followed by saving cooking time to cook, symbol of modernity, taste, cheap nature of the food and quality of service.

Recommendations

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations are made:

- a. There should be awareness creation for people to change their attitude and practices concerning fast-food by constantly publishing on the dangers of fast-food and the need for people to be more inclined to natural foods.
- b. Food regulating agencies should ensure that Fast food is less harmful by regulating the nutritional requirements since more and more people seem to be more predisposed to these foods.

References

- Ahmed, J., Hossain, M. L., Malek, M. A., & Begum, F. (2008). Assessment of Bacteriological Quality of Fast Foods and Soft Drinks in Relation to Safety and Hygiene. *Bangladesh Journal of Microbiology*, 25(1), 73-75.
- Basurra, R.S., Tumung, R., Kavita, C., Ribka, A., Ubong, A., (2021) Consumption practices and perception of Ready made food among University students and employees in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. *Food Research* 5 (1) pp 246-251
- Deivanai, P (2016) Factors influencing to Preference of Fast Food Restaurants. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM)*. Volume 18, Issue 8 .Ver. IV (Aug. 2016), PP 20-25
- Dipeolu A., Adewuyi., Ayinla M., Bakare A., (2014) Customer Satisfaction in Fast Food Restaurants in Ibadan Metropolis, *Journal of Marketing and Consumer Research*. Vol 5
- Eckhardt, G.M. and Houston, M.J. (2002). Cultural paradoxes reflected in brand meaning: McDonald's in Shanghai, China. *Journal of International Marketing*, 10 (2), 68-82.
- Economist* (2002). Junk Food? 365 (8302), 63.
- Lin, B., Guthrie, J., and Frazao, E. (1999). Quality of children's diets at and away from home: 1994-1996. *Food Review*, January-April, 2-10.
- Olise, M.C. and Okoli, M.I (2015) Factors Influencing Customers Patronage of FastFood Restaurants: A Study of Selected Customers of Fast Food in Anambra State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*. *United Kingdom* Vol. III, Issue 11, November 2015
- Olutayo A.O. and O. Akanle (2009): 'Fast Food in Ibadan: An Emerging Consumption Pattern' *Africa* 79(2), 2009.
- Parker, R.S; Schaefer, A.D., and Hermans, C (2006) An Investigation into Teens' Attitudes Towards Fast-Food Brands in General: A Cross-Cultural Analysis. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, Vol. 9(4) 2006
- Thakkar, Kinnarry and Thatte, R. Mrunmayee. (2014). Consumer Perceptions of Food Franchise: A Study of McDonald's and KFC. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 4: (3).