

**Problems of Fast Food Restaurant Consumers in Chennai – A Study
[With special reference to kentucky fried chicken (KFC)]**

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Abstract:

Hasty life style of the globalised society has made the fast food restaurant as a trend in the present scenario. Fast food restaurants are believed to be included with many health risk and exorbitant spending. This research work attempts to study the various problems of the fast food consumers with reference to Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) in Chennai. The primary data of the study has been collected through the structured questionnaire to 200 samples by utilising judgment sampling. Websites and online journals constitute secondary data. This research study is empirical in nature. This research paper helps to get an insight about the marketing strategies and various problems of fast food restaurant consumers of KFC in Chennai.

Keywords: Fast Food Restaurant, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), Health risk

Introduction:

Food diversity in India is an implicit characteristic of India's diversified culture consisting of different regions and state within. Traditionally, Indians like to have home-cooked meals- a concept supported religiously as well as individually. However, with times due to increasing awareness and influence of western culture, there is a slight shift in food consumption patterns among urban Indian families. It started with eating outside and moved on to accepting a wide variety of delicacies from world-over. Liberalization of the Indian economy in the early 1990s and the subsequent entry of new players set a significant change in lifestyles and the food tastes of Indians. Fast food is one which gained acceptance of Indian palate after the multinational fast food players adapted the basic Indian food requirements viz. Vegetarian meals and selected non-vegetarian options excluding beef and pork totally from their menu.

Multinational fast food outlets initially faced protests and non-acceptance from Indian consumers. This was due to primary perception that these fast food players serve only chicken and do not serve vegetarian meals. In addition, fast food is perceived expensive besides being out-of-way meals in Indian culture. Today, fast food industry is getting adapted to Indian food requirements and is growing in India. It is gaining acceptance primarily from Indian youth and younger generations and is becoming part of life. Keeping in view the Indian habits and changing preferences towards food consumption, this study has its focus to understand the problems faced by the fast food restaurant consumers in Chennai.

Definitions of Fast Food Restaurant:

According to Bender and Bender (1995) Fast food is a general term used for a limited menu of foods that lend themselves to production-line techniques: suppliers tend to specialize in products such as hamburgers, pizzas, chicken, or sandwiches”.

Merriam Webster Encyclopedia is defined fast food as “of, relating to, or specializing in food that can be prepared and served quickly”

CNBC Online News quoted "Fast foods are quick, reasonably priced, and readily available alternatives to home cooking. While convenient and economical for a busy lifestyle, fast foods are typically high in calories, fat, saturated fat, sugar, and salt and may put people at risk for becoming overweight,"

Fast Food Restaurant:

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. The industry uses "quick service restaurant" instead of "fast food" now, probably to get rid of the cheap, greasy, unhealthy stigma that comes with the "fast food" label. This is often shortened to QSR among the owners and suppliers.

Characteristics features of Fast Food Restaurant:

1. Fast preparation service of food
2. No table services
3. International standard ambience
4. Multinational food recipe
5. International marketing strategies

Marketing Strategies of Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC):

There are different strategies adopted by KFC for different events.. According to KFC, kids become the future permanent consumers and we know very well that without any marketing strategy no marketing program and no product is successful because we depend upon customers, customer not depend on us.

1. KFC is following Niche Marketing and Societal Marketing techniques.
2. KFC possess a western culture because some of the Indian people are also following that culture.
3. KFC are moving from Divisional Level to the District level by opening branches
4. KFC also offer free home delivery.
5. KFC open their outlets on reachable places.
6. KFC menu consists of more than 30 products.
7. KFC gives more priority to Family

SWOT Analysis:

Strengths

1. Huge popular brand name and high brand loyalty
2. High number of products
3. Hygienic food and quick service
4. Good advertising and marketing
5. Strong trademarks recipes.

Weaknesses

1. High fat and high calorie food not good for health conscious people
2. Franchise management globally is a challenge

Opportunities

1. Introduce better vegetarian products
2. Introduce home delivery
3. Venture into newer markets
4. More spending on the resources and development as well as introducing new food items and products.

Threats

1. Threat from other eating joints/restaurants
2. With the lifestyle of people changing due to growing awareness about healthier food people now look for something healthy, low calories and delicious at the same time.
3. Currency fluctuations

Review of Literature:

Shiffman exemplified in “Consumer Behavior Book” that there are a number of models to measure consumers’ attitudes including the attitude-toward-object model, the attitude-toward-behavior model, theory-of-reasoned-action, tricomponent of attitude model, theory of trying to consume and attitude-toward-the-AD models. In measuring consumers’ attitudes toward KFC’s Healthy Menu, tricomponent of attitude model is considered the most appropriate measuring method (Shiffman & Kanuk, 2000).

According to the WHO, India has been dubbed as Diabetic capital of the world with 37 million diabetics out of 150 million diabetics in the world. Raghavan (2003) in his research, titled “Food in a Globalised World” has concluded that food is a means of life but it has become meaningful investment for business. There is huge gap in food and health related research in Indian context despite obesity almost being an epidemic in metropolitan cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, and Kolkata and gradually rising in other urban areas too. It is an attempt of mine to analyse in Indian context the determinants and implications of consumers food choice particularly towards Ready-to-eat and discussing policy implications for the same.

Lim (2010) Customer’s ultimate satisfaction may have significant affect of atmosphere. Physical surroundings are helpful to create image in the mind of customer and to influence their behavior. Physical atmosphere of the restaurants have the significant impacts on the customers satisfaction. Lightning, furnishing, sent, music and different other atmospheric factors among them influence on customer satisfaction.

Rationale of the Study:

The research work is unique as the study deals with problems of fast food restaurant consumers. This study includes only the Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) customers in Chennai who consumes their products and services. This research work helps to understand the Marketing Strategies of Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC).

Objectives of the Study:

1. To identify various problems experienced by the fast food restaurants consumers.
2. To study the marketing strategies of Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC)
3. To suggest measures to overcome the problems of fast food restaurant consumers.

Hypotheses of the Study:

1. Ho - There is no significant association between the age and their preference towards Fast food restaurants (Chi-square test).

2. Ho - There is no significant association between the consumer’s income and their spending pattern in KFC (Chi-square test).

Limitations of the Study:

1. The researcher has chosen KFC customers for the sample where it excludes the other fast food restaurant customers.
2. The Geographical area selected by the researcher is Chennai KFC and especially KFC located in malls in Chennai.

Research Methodology:

The research work is empirical in nature. A survey questionnaire designed and distributed under Judgment sampling method to study the problems of fast food consumers in Chennai with special reference to Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC). 200 valid samples are considered for the study which is considered for primary data. Books, Journals and web sites constitute the secondary data.

Analysis and Interpretation:

The data analysis is completely done with the help of SPSS (15th version). The reliability of the data per Cronbach’s Alpha is 85.1%. In order to achieve the objectives of the study statistical techniques are used and the results are presented below.

TABLE: 1

Descriptive analysis of problems experienced with KFC by the respondents

Problems experienced with KFC	Mean	Std. Deviation
Very expensive	4.18	0.87
Less Quantity	3.75	1.01
High tax burden	3.72	1.09
Long queue and late service	3.68	1.03
Quality issues	3.58	1.08
Health issues and Hygiene problems	3.28	0.94
Parking problem	3.20	0.94
Uncomfortable ambience and environment	3.19	0.99
Not familiar with menu	3.14	0.97
Communication issues with employees	3.11	1.02
Issues in billing	3.10	1.01
Overall Average Mean Score of Variables:	3.45	

Source: Computed Data

It is inferred from the above table that price is the major problem experienced by the respondents in KFC consumers of KFC products are really feeling that the price is very expensive and exorbitant. Respondents also experiencing few other problems such as high tax burden, less quantity of products, long queue in making the order, late service and quality

issues. Respondents also experience health issues and hygiene problems in consuming products in KFC, parking problem, uncomfortable ambience and environment and some are not familiar with the menu due to more variety of products and introducing new products in KFC. Some respondents find language and communication issues and issues in billing. The overall average mean score is 3.45 so it is clear that respondents are experiencing few problems in KFC.

TABLE: 2

Descriptive analysis of health problems experienced in KFC by the respondents

Health risks	Mean	Std. Deviation
Obesity	3.32	1.17
High Cholesterol	3.23	1.25
High Blood pressure	3.00	1.17
Diabetes	2.88	1.07
Digestive disorder	2.82	1.06
Gastric problem	2.79	1.07
Cardio Vascular disease	2.67	1.03
Cancer related symptoms	2.61	1.01
Allergic problem	2.43	0.88
Other health problems	2.42	0.93
Overall Average Mean Score of Variables:	2.82	

Source: Computed Data

It is inferred from the above table that respondents find obesity as a health risk by consuming KFC products. Respondents also find cholesterol problem and high blood pressure in consuming KFC products. Diabetes, digestive disorder, gastric problem, cardio vascular disease, cancer related problem and allergic problems are the few other health risks experienced by the consumers. Since KFC product are exclusively prepared by using oil and other fat products such as cheese and Mayonnaise are the major cause for the various health risk.

TABLE - 3

Association between the age of the respondents and the often preference towards fast food restaurants

Age	How often do you prefer fast food restaurant (KFC)?					Total	Chi Square Value	P-Value
	Every day	Weekly once	More than twice in a week	Monthly once	Occasionally			
18-25	2	10	8	34	20	74	26.792	0.043*
26-35	0	14	6	30	36	86		
36-45	0	2	6	8	12	28		
46-60	0	4	0	2	2	8		
Above 60	0	2	0	0	2	4		
Total	2	32	20	74	72	200		

***95% Level of Significance**

Source: Computed Data

Hypothesis – 1

H₀ - There is no significant association between the age and their preference towards Fast food restaurants.

Interpretation:

From the above table it is inferred that the p-value of 0.043 is less than the table value at 95% level of significance. Hence null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that there is significant association between the age of the respondents and the preference towards fast food restaurant.

TABLE - 4

Association between the income of the respondents and the amount spent for one visit to KFC

Income	Amount do you spend for one visit to KFC (In Rupees)					Total	Chi Square Value	P-Value
	Less than 250	251-500	501-1000	1001-2000	More than 2000			
Up to 20000/month	6	36	26	10	2	80	97.452	0.003*
21000-40000	6	22	48	16	2	94		
41000-60000	0	0	10	6	0	16		
61000-99000	0	0	0	2	4	6		
100000 and above	0	2	0	0	2	4		
Total	12	60	84	34	10	200		

***95% Level of Significance**

Source: Computed Data

Hypothesis – 2

H₀ - There is no significant association between the consumer’s income and their spending pattern in KFC (Chi-square test).

Interpretation:

From the above table it is inferred that the p-value of 0.003 is less than the table value at 95% level of significance. Hence null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that there is a significant association between the income of the respondents and the amount spent for one visit to KFC.

Research Findings:

1. Price is the major problem experienced by the respondents in KFC; consumers of KFC products are really feeling that the price is very expensive and exorbitant. Respondents also experiencing few other problems such as high tax burden, less quantity of products, long queue in making the order, late service and quality issues. Respondents also experience health issues and hygiene problems in consuming products in KFC, parking problem, uncomfortable ambience and environment and some are not familiar with the menu due to more variety of products and introducing new products in KFC. Some respondents find language and communication issues and issues in billing. The overall average mean score is 3.45 so it is clear that respondents are experiencing few problems in KFC.

2. Majority of the respondents find obesity as a health risk by consuming KFC products. Respondents also find cholesterol problem and high blood pressure in consuming KFC products. Diabetes, digestive disorder, gastric problem, cardio vascular disease, cancer related problem and allergic problems are the few other health risks experienced by the consumers
3. There is significant association between the age of the respondents and the preference towards fast food restaurant.
4. There is a significant association between the income of the respondents and the amount spent for one visit to KFC.

Suggestions:

The health and hygiene is the importance factor to be considered by all fast food restaurants. The hasty economic lifestyle has forced the people to take up fast food often which becomes a part of life for many in long-term. Pricing strategy needs to be looked by the KFC in order to provide better choices for the consumers. Since people feel the KFC products are expensive the cheap pricing competitor can easily takes position in the market. Diet food products need to be given importance by the KFC to create a healthy disease free community. KFC needs to consider the problems faced by the consumers in their visits and experience with the fast food products consumption.

Conclusion:

Healthy society can be created only by the Health conscious contributors. The fast food restaurants should consider all the existing problems experienced by the consumers in order to take necessary steps and measures. Organisations like KFC has a great social responsibility as it got a major market share in the fast food restaurant market. By providing discounts, offers and more healthy diet products and services majority of the problems can be resolved and restricted.

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