

**PERSONAL FACTORS AND FAST FOOD CONSUMPTION IN
COLOMBO DIVISIONAL SECRETARIAT DIVISION****Field of Research:** Marketing Management

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PERSONAL FACTORS AND FAST FOOD CONSUMPTION

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Abstract

Consumption of fast-food in Sri Lanka is becoming an increasingly important component of the food market. The aim of this study is to assess the Personal Factors that influencing on Fast Food Consumption in relation to Burger King, KFC, McDonald's, and Pizza Hut. To achieve the goals of this research, the data were collected from convenience sample of 200 customers in Colombo Divisional Secretariat Division. The respondents provided the data by means of a close-ended questionnaire. Pearson's Correlation was used for testing the hypotheses. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS Software. This study empirically examines the significant relationship between Personal Factors (PF) as the independent variable and Fast Food Consumption (FFC) as the dependent variable. The correlation coefficient between PF and FFC indicates that the PF is useful to explain the variation in FFC.

Keywords: Personal Factors, Fast Food Consumption and Fast Food Industry

1. Introduction

Asian peoples including Sri Lankans are generally fond of cooking food items in their homes. It is understandable that on the other hand, growing knowledge and adoption of western culture bring a modification in food consumption pattern among Sri Lankan families who in particular lives in city area. Numerous factors are influencing on consumer's fast food consumption, namely growing contribution of women in the work force, long time working days, increasing household income, declining number of family, urbanization, development in tourism industry, extended life expectancy, growing level of education in consumers, rising per capita income, way of socializing, fun and entertaining, promotion activities by fast food restaurants, distribution network, and marketing system.

Introduction of fast food changes Sri Lankan culture and lifestyle towards western culture; and also different health issues and health campaigns have been the reason for the people to prefer or not to prefer fast food. Also the primary perceptions of the Sri Lankan people are that the fast food players serve only for the high income earners. In addition, fast food is perceived expensive besides being out-of-way meals in Sri Lankan culture. These complicated issues that are related to Personal Factors when influencing on Fast Food Consumption (Withanage and Jayasinghe, 2010).

Therefore this research attempts to investigate how far Personal Factors influencing on fast food

consumption in Colombo Divisional Secretariat (CDS) Division related to McDonald's, KFC, and Pizza Hut, the specific research question of this study is:

***“Does Personal Factors influences on fast food consumption
in Colombo Divisional Secretariat Division?”***

It is lack of literature in Sri Lanka to examine the relationship between Personal Factors (PF) and Fast Food Consumption (FFC). Thus, there exists a clear empirical gap with respect of the influences of PF on FFC within the context of fast food industry. This empirical gap becomes a problem to fast food restaurants to know whether their service is successful or not among the customers. Indeed, there is a need to evaluate to what extend the stimuli influenced on FFC in fast food industry. Hence, the primary objective of this study is to examine the role of PF that influencing on FFC among customers in the context of fast food industry in CDS Division.

2. Literature Review

McNeal, Stem and Nelson (1980) define that fast food is a cheap food, such as burger, pizza, fried chicken, hamburger and sandwich, prepared and served quickly. According to Adams (2005), fast food is designed for ready availability, use, or consumption and with little consideration given to quality or significance. With the rising of affluence and education level, more women involving in the working force which lead to lack of time to prepare daily meals for their family. Therefore, fast food restaurants might be their best choice to dine in because of the reasonable price, convenience, quick services, comfortable with air condition and etc. (William Applebaum, 1951)

According to William Applebaum (1951), personal factors are defined as a set of individual qualities combined together in terms of sex, age group, color, economic and educational status, occupation, religion, nationality origin, etc. This study basically proposes that these personal factors can have impacts on fast food consumption, since the marketing perspectives endorse that these individual characteristics influence consumer behavior on purchasing William Applebaum (1951). This is also applicable to Sri Lankans too, since fast food industry adopted by Sri Lankan people nowadays increase upwards constantly.

According to Solomon (2009), variables were conceptualized as follows in order to analyze the role of Personal Factors have been influencing on Fast Food Consumption regarding Popular Fast Food Restaurants.

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As Solomon (2009) indicates that Personal Factors are positively influence on Fast Food Consumption, the Hypothesis 1 (H1) of this study is:

H1: Personal Factors are significantly influencing on FFC.

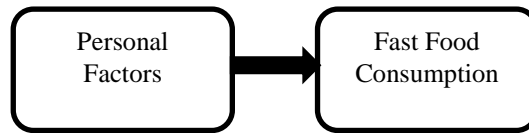


Figure 4.1 : Conceptual Framework

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Data and Sampling

The type of research is deductive and variables are measured with quantitative analysis. Primary data are collected through structured questionnaires with closed statements measured with Likert’s scale (1-5 as strongly disagree, disagree, marginal, agree and strongly agree, respectively), based on four popular Fast Food Restaurants (namely (Burger King (BK), Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), McDonald’s (MD) and Pizza Hut (PH)) in the CDS Division in Colombo District in Sri Lanka. In the CDS Division, there are 35 Grama Niladhari Divisions and in which, the total number of population is 318,048. Among 318,048 peoples in these 35 Niladhari Divisions, about two hundred (200) respondents who consume such popular fast food for their personal consumption have been identified using convenient sampling technique (see Table 1).

Table. 1: Sampling Framework

Study Setting	Customers in Colombo District
Time Horizon	Cross Sectional Research
Unit of Analysis	Customers in Colombo Divisional Secretariat Division
Sample Size	Two Hundred (200) customers
Sample Method	Convenient Sampling Technique

3.2 Method of Data Analysis and Evaluation

3.2.1 Univariate Analysis

Univariate analysis is carried out for evaluating the attributes of dimensions and variables individually based on the response in the questionnaires. For this purpose, mean values and standard deviation of the dimensions and variables are taken into consideration.

Therefore, this study initially evaluates individual characteristics of dimensions and variables. Assessing the levels of dimensions and variables individually is the secondary objective of this study with the following criteria.

Table. 2: Decision Criteria for Univariate Analysis

Range for Decision Criteria	Decision n Criteria	Decision Attribute
$X_i < -Z \sigma_x$	$X_i < 3$	Low Level
$-Z \sigma_x \leq X_i \leq Z \sigma_x$	$X_i = 3$	Moderate Level
$X_i > Z \sigma_x$	$X_i > 3$	High Level

Where X_i = mean value of a dimension/variable, σ = standard deviation, Z = value of the 95% confidence limit and σ_x = standard error of the mean

3.2.2 Bivariate Analysis

Bivariate analysis used to measure the magnitude and direction of the relationship between CA and FFC. Correlation can be categories based on possible ranges in relation to appropriate decision attributes in a corresponding way. The significance level of the correlation coefficient is considered to explore the meaningful linear relationship and analyze the hypothesis.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Choice of Fast Food Restaurants

There are several Fast Food Restaurants available in the Colombo District. Within these, Burger King (BK), Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), McDonald’s (MD) and Pizza Hut (PH) are selected for this research purpose. From 200 respondents 40.5% of consumer’s choice is Pizza Hut, 37% of consumer’s choice is KFC, 14% of consumer’s choice is McDonald’s and 8.5% of consumer’s choice is Burger King (see Table 3).

Table. 3: Distribution of Restaurants

Restaurant Choice	Frequency	Percent (%)
KFC	74	37.0
McDonald’s	28	14.0
Pizza Hut	81	40.5
Burger King	17	8.5
Total	200	100.0

(Source: Survey Data)

4.2 Choice of Fast Foods

There are several Fast Foods available in the Fast Food Restaurants. Within these, Burger, Fries, Pizza, Fried chicken, Sandwich and Ice cream are selected for this research. From 200 respondents 32% of consumer’s choice is Pizza, 28% of consumer’s choice is Fried Chicken, 22.5% of consumer’s choice is Burger, 9.5% of consumer’s choice is Ice Cream and 4% of consumer’s choice is Fries & Sandwich (see Table 4).

Table. 4: Distribution of Fast Food

Food Choice	Frequency	Percent (%)
Burger	45	22.5

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Fries	8	4.0
Pizza	64	32.0
Fried chicken	56	28.0
Sandwich	8	4.0
Ice cream	19	9.5
Total	200	100.0

(Source: Survey Data)

4.3 Reasons for Choosing Fast Food

From 200 respondents 70.5% of consumers are choosing to eat at Fast Food Restaurants for enjoying the taste and 29.5% of consumers are choosing to eat with friends / family (see Table 5).

Table. 5: Reasons

Reasons	Frequency	Percent (%)
Enjoy the taste	141	70.5
Eat with friends / family	59	29.5
Total	200	100.0

(Source: Survey Data)

4.4 Selection of Days

From 200 respondents 26% of consumers are choosing to eat fast food on Saturday and 74% of consumers are choosing to eat fast food on Sunday (see Table. 6).

Table. 6: Days

Days	Frequency	Percent (%)
Saturday	52	26.0
Sunday	148	74.0
Total	200	100.0

(Source: Survey Data)

4.5 Meal Occasion

From 200 respondents 11.5% of consumers are eating fast food as their lunch, 76.5% of consumers are eating fast food as their dinner and 12% of consumers are eating fast food as their snacks (see Table 7).

Table. 7: Meal Occasion

Meal Occasion	Frequency	Percent (%)
Lunch	23	11.5
Dinner	153	76.5
Snacks	24	12.0
Total	200	100.0

(Source: Survey Data)

4.6 Independent Variable and Its Dimensions

4.6.1 Level of Independent Variable and Its Dimensions

PF is evaluated with two dimensions: Demographic Factors and Consumer's Attitude as indicated by Solomon (2009). PF as an independent variable has high level attribute of the customers (Mean $X_1 = 4.58$ and see Table 8). In addition, most of the customers expressed generally a common opinion regarding the variable of PF (Standard deviation = 0.38). With individual analysis, it is also noted that about all customers in this study have high level attribute for the PF.

Specifically, all dimensions of PF have high level attributes in relation to their mean values (mean values of Demographic Factors $X_{1.1} = 4.76$ and Consumer's Attitude $X_{1.2} = 4.39$). Among these dimensions, Demographic Factor accounts high value of mean and Consumer's Attitude is comparatively lower than other dimension that contributes to PF.

Table. 8: Overall Measures of Independent Variable

Description	Personal Factor (X_1)
Mean	4.5756
Standard Deviation (SD)	0.37675
Decision Attribute	High Level

(Source: Survey Data)

4.7 Fast Food Consumption and Its Dimensions

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4.7.1 Level of Fast Food Consumption and Its dimensions

The FFC is assessed with four dimensions: Frequency, Expenditure on Fast Food, Trend and Status. The dependent variable FFC has high level attribute of the customers (Mean $X_2 = 4.40$ and see Table 9). Notably, most of the customers expressed the common opinion regarding the variable of FFC (Standard deviation = 0.23). With individual analysis, it is also noted that all customers have high level attribute for FFC.

Indicatively, all dimensions of FFC have high level attributes of customers in relation to their mean values (mean values of Frequency $X_{2.1} = 4.76$, Expenditure on Fast Food $X_{2.2} = 4.54$, Trend $X_{2.3} = 4.17$ and Status $X_{2.4} = 4.12$). Among these dimensions, Frequency of FFC has high value of mean; and Status is comparatively lower than other dimensions in contribution to FFC.

Table. 9: Overall Measures of Dependent Variable

Description	Fast Food Consumption (X_2)
Mean	4.3962
Standard Deviation (SD)	0.2338
Decision Attribute	High Level

(Source: Survey Data)

4.8 The Relationship between PF and FFC

The correlation analysis is initially carried out to explore the linear relationship of PF with FFC, if it exists. Results indicate that there is statistically linear significant and positive relationship ($r = 0.768$, $p < 0.01$) between PF and FFC (see Table 10). Thereby, accept the Hypothesis 1 H1 – i.e., Personal Factors significantly influences on FFC.

Table. 10: Correlation between Personal Factor and FFC

Pearson Correlation: r	0.768**
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

(Source: Survey Data)

5. CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

This study considers PF as independent variable and FFC as the dependent variable. While these variables individually have high level attributes of the customers, the Pearson’s Correlation

analysis explores a positive significant linear relationship between PF and FFC. The correlation coefficient (r) was 0.768 at the 1% level. This implies that FFC can be predicted with PF.

According to Akbay, Tiryaki and Gul (2007), Personal Factors can have positive effect on Fast Food Consumption and this is consistent with Ayo, Bonabana-Wabbi and Sserunkuuma (2012). Our study also has the same positive effect of Personal Factors on Fast Food Consumption.

Recommendation: Based on conclusion some suggestions are put forward to Fast Food Restaurants to improve their services. The fast food restaurants of Sri Lanka should focus more on Health Conscious, Food Quality, Price, Speed of Service, and Environment as consumers emphasize mostly on these factors. They also tend to compare among the restaurants based on these factors while selecting a restaurant to dine out. Thus ensuring superior quality foods with reasonable price and prompt service in a delightful environment will help the fast food restaurants to attract and retain more consumers with increased amount of consumer satisfaction and market share.

Implication: This study focuses one independent variable PF to explain FFC and to explore the relationship between them. However, it is explicit that there may be other variable(s) to be considered to explain the variation of FFC. Future studies can be devised to identify those additional variable(s) for explaining the FFC. Further, we would like to suggest that future research should include some other factors such as Consumer Characteristics, Customer Loyalty, External Environment and Healthy Lifestyle. In addition, it is also advisable to extend this study by considering other local restaurants in Sri Lanka and other nations too for further understanding of target customer's decision making behavior.

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