



A STUDY ON CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS FAST FOOD IN MADURAI CITY

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Abstract

Fast food consumption has significantly increased in urban and semi-urban areas of India, including Madurai City. Changing lifestyles, urbanization, increased income levels, and exposure to global food culture have influenced consumer preferences toward fast food. This study examines consumer perceptions towards fast food in Madurai City, focusing on factors such as taste, price, quality, hygiene, brand image, convenience, and health concerns.

The study analyzes the responses from 100 consumers in Madurai using a descriptive-analytical research design. The findings reveal that taste and convenience are the primary motivating factors for fast food consumption, while health concerns and hygiene issues remain major considerations. Young

consumers form the dominant customer base. The study concludes that while fast food is widely preferred for its affordability and quick service, awareness regarding health impacts is gradually increasing among consumers.

Keywords:

Consumer perception, fast food, taste preference, hygiene, price sensitivity, Madurai, health awareness.

Introduction

In recent years, fast food has become an integral part of urban lifestyles. Rapid urbanization, busy work schedules, nuclear families, and exposure to global food brands have changed eating habits significantly. In cities like Madurai, fast food outlets have

expanded rapidly, catering especially to youth and working professionals.

Consumer perception plays a vital role in determining purchasing behavior. Factors such as taste, quality, price, cleanliness, service speed, brand reputation, and nutritional value influence consumer decisions. Understanding these perceptions helps businesses improve strategies and meet customer expectations effectively.

Statement of the Problem

The fast-food industry in Madurai has witnessed considerable growth in recent years. Numerous local and branded outlets operate across the city, targeting different income groups and age segments. However, despite this expansion, consumer preferences vary significantly.

While some consumers prioritize taste and affordability, others focus on hygiene, nutritional value, and service quality. Additionally, rising awareness about health issues such as obesity and lifestyle diseases has influenced food choices. Therefore, it becomes essential to study consumer perceptions to understand the key factors driving fast food consumption in Madurai City.

Objectives

- To study the factors influencing consumer preference towards fast food.
- To find the relationship between age and frequency of fast-food consumption.
- To examine consumer perception regarding quality, hygiene, and price.

- To analyse the health awareness among fast food consumers.

Methodology

Research Design

The present study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design. This design helps in describing the existing pattern of fast food consumption and analysing the factors influencing consumer preference.

Sources of Data

- The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected directly from consumers through a structured questionnaire.
- Secondary data were collected from journals, websites, textbooks, and previous research studies related to fast food consumption and consumer behaviour.

Sample Size

The sample size for the study consists of 100 respondents from Madurai City.

Sampling Technique

The respondents were selected using the convenience sampling technique. Consumers were chosen based on ease of access and availability. The sample includes students, working professionals, and homemakers.

Tools Used for Analysis

The collected data were analysed using percentage analysis, frequency tables, and

charts to present the findings clearly and systematically.

Data Analysis

Factor	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Taste	35	35
Price	20	20
Convenience	25	25
Hygiene	10	10
Brand Image	10	10
Total	100	100

Table 1: Factors Influencing Fast Food Preference

Taste is the most important factor influencing fast food preference, as 35 percent of the respondents have chosen it. This shows that consumers give highest priority to the flavor and overall taste of fast food while making their purchase decisions.

Convenience is the second most influential factor, with 25 percent of respondents preferring fast food because it is easily available and saves time. This indicates that quick service and accessibility play a significant role in attracting consumers.

Price is considered an important factor by 20 percent of the respondents. This suggests that affordability and reasonable pricing influence consumers, though it is less significant than taste and convenience.

Hygiene is preferred by 10 percent of the respondents. This implies that while cleanliness and food safety are important, they are not the primary concern for the majority of fast-food consumers.

Brand image is also considered by 10 percent of the respondents. This indicates that brand reputation and popularity have limited influence compared to taste, price, and convenience.

Overall, the analysis reveals that taste and convenience are the major determinants of fast food consumption, while factors like hygiene and brand image have comparatively lesser impact on consumer preference.

Chart 1

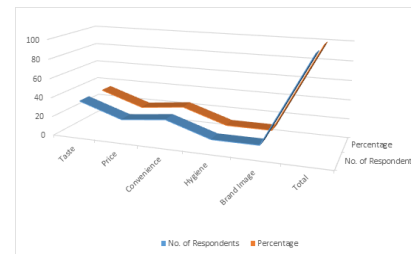


Fig 1:

Frequency	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Daily	15	15
Weekly	45	45
Monthly	30	30
Occasionally	10	10
Total	100	100

Table 2: Frequency of Fast-Food Consumption

Interpretation:

It is observed that the majority of respondents (45 percent) consume fast food on a weekly basis. This indicates that fast food forms a regular part of the lifestyle of consumers in Madurai.

About 30 percent of the respondents consume fast food monthly, showing moderate consumption among a significant section of consumers.

Nearly 15 percent of the respondents consume fast food daily, which reflects a smaller group with high dependence on fast food.

Only 10 percent of the respondents consume fast food occasionally, indicating that a limited number of consumers prefer fast food rarely.

Overall, the data reveals that weekly consumption is the most common pattern, highlighting the growing popularity and acceptance of fast food among consumers.

Chart 2

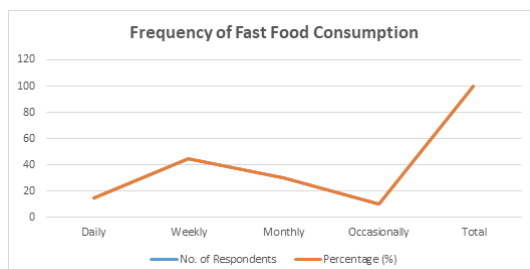


Fig 2: Frequency of Fast-Food Consumption

Factor	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Taste	35	35
Price	20	20
Convenience	25	25
Brand Image	10	10
Hygiene	10	10
Total	100	100

Table 3: Major Factors Influencing Fast Food Preference

Interpretation:

- It is observed that taste is the most influential factor, as 35 percent of the respondents prefer fast food mainly because of its taste. This shows that flavor and sensory appeal strongly affect consumer choice.
- Convenience is the next important factor, with 25 percent of respondents selecting it. This indicates that easy availability and time-saving nature of fast food attract many consumers.
- Price influences 20 percent of the respondents, suggesting that affordability is an important consideration, though less significant than taste and convenience.
- Brand image is considered by 10 percent of the respondents, which shows that brand reputation plays a limited role in influencing fast food preference.

➤ Hygiene is also given importance by 10 percent of the respondents, indicating that cleanliness and food safety are secondary concerns for most consumers.

hygiene and health awareness are growing concerns, they are secondary compared to taste and quick service.

Fast food businesses in Madurai should focus on maintaining quality and hygiene standards while also introducing healthier menu options to attract health-conscious consumers. Understanding consumer perception will help businesses improve customer satisfaction and sustain growth in a competitive market.

Chart 3

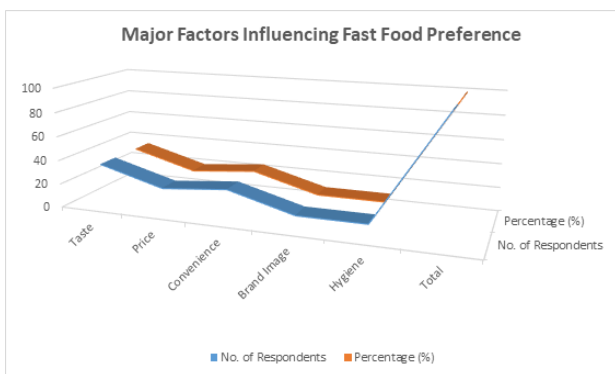


Fig 3: Major Factors Influencing Fast Food Preference

Findings

- The majority of consumers (40%) are aged 18-25, showing that youth are the primary fast-food customers.
- 45% of respondents consume fast food weekly, indicating frequent consumption habits.
- Taste (35%) is the most important factor influencing consumer preference, followed by convenience (25%).
- Health concerns are present but not the primary decision-making factor among most consumers.

Conclusion

The study concludes that fast food consumption in Madurai City is largely driven by young consumers who value taste, affordability, and convenience. Although

Websites

1. <https://www.fssai.gov.in> (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India - food safety & hygiene standards)
2. <https://www.statista.com> (Statistics related to fast food consumption trends)
3. <https://www.ibef.org> (India Brand Equity Foundation - reports on Indian food industry)
4. <https://www.nielsen.com> (Consumer behavior and market research reports)
5. <https://www.researchgate.net> (Research articles on consumer perception and fast food studies)